

**University of Missouri, St. Louis**  
**IRL @ UMSL**

---

Dissertations

UMSL Graduate Works

---

12-13-2005

# Student Experiences During the 1954-1955 Merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges

Kenneth Allen Wetstein

*University of Missouri-St. Louis*, [kwetstein@hotmail.com](mailto:kwetstein@hotmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/dissertation>

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Wetstein, Kenneth Allen, "Student Experiences During the 1954-1955 Merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges" (2005).  
*Dissertations*. 614.

<https://irl.umsl.edu/dissertation/614>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the UMSL Graduate Works at IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact [marvinh@umsl.edu](mailto:marvinh@umsl.edu).

STUDENT EXPERIENCES DURING THE 1954-1955 MERGER  
OF HARRIS AND STOWE TEACHERS COLLEGES

by

KENNETH ALLEN WETSTEIN

M.S.Ed. in Guidance & Counseling  
Eastern Illinois University, 1993

B.A. in Political Science  
Eastern Illinois University, 1991

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School of the

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS  
In Partial Satisfaction of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES  
with an emphasis in Higher Education Administration

December, 2005

Advisory Committee

Chairperson: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, Ph.D.  
Assoc. Professor, Higher Ed. Admin.

Committee: Dr. Lynn Beckwith, Jr., Ed.D.

Dr. Patricia Boyer, Ph.D.

Dr. Barton Herrscher, Ed.D.

## ABSTRACT

### STUDENT EXPERIENCES DURING THE 1954-1955 MERGER OF HARRIS AND STOWE TEACHERS COLLEGES

Kenneth Allen Wetstein

This project is a historiography of the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges following the *Brown v. Board of Education* U.S. 483 (USSC 1954) Supreme Court decision. In September 1954, these two racially segregated teachers colleges, both operated by the St. Louis Board of Education, were merged on the Harris Teachers College campus. This merger represented the first instance of desegregated public education in the city of St. Louis. Fourteen alumni who attended the two colleges during this period participated in semi-structured qualitative interviews, recalling their experiences during the merger. This study also involved the collection of data archived during this period as well as an analysis of contemporary newspaper accounts. The study presents the merger in both its historical and personal contexts. Historically, this merger symbolizes the beginning of desegregated public education in St. Louis. On a personal level, this study tells the story of the Harris-Stowe merger from the perspective of the students involved.

The data from this project suggest three major findings: 1) the merger was free of animosity and proceeded without incident; 2) despite the smooth physical desegregation, little, if any, significant social integration was achieved between the Black and White students; and 3) the students from Stowe and the students from Harris experienced the merger in substantively different ways. Factors that explain these findings are discussed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While writing a dissertation is best characterized as a solitary activity, it is impossible to claim to have completed a project of this magnitude without any help. I wish to thank the many people who provided support and comfort along the way. First and foremost: I thank the participants in this study for their generosity and openness.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Shawn Woodhouse: thank you for agreeing to take on this project under unusual circumstances. Thank you for your generosity, your strict but gentle eye as an editor, and your patience with a writer still struggling to control his colloquial tendencies. You instilled in me a discipline of thought and writing that will serve me well in future endeavors. Your leadership and guidance produced a wonderful research experience.

I also want to thank the members of my committee. Each of you has contributed to this project in important ways. Dr. Boyer: thank you for inspiring this topic. Your course on the History of Higher Education led me to the fascinating story of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges. Two years later, here we are! Dr. Beckwith: thank you for helping me cultivate participants for this study. One phone call from you opened the door to finding alumni from the period. Without your help I fear I might still be “cold calling” alumni from the St. Louis phonebook! Dr. Herrscher: ever since I ran across your contact information listed in the Harris-Stowe archive room guest book, I knew I had found a kindred spirit. Thank you for not writing a paper about the merger of Harris and Stowe eleven years ago, and thanks especially for being so supportive of, and interested in, this topic. I hope this study meets your expectations.

My classmates in the higher education program have been nothing but supportive. This network of mutual support helped me believe in my topic whenever I had doubts. I want to single out one colleague in particular: Rob Wild. Rob and I have proceeded in lock step, pushing and pulling each other through all of the milestones of the dissertation process: building our first three chapters during the exit course; preparing for comprehensive exams; presenting our proposal defenses; and working through the natural ebb and flow of the lonely process of writing. Rob: your support, insight, and empathy carried me through this project and kept me motivated and on-task.

Many professionals provided support along the way. Thanks to Marie Romano for her expert and amusing transcription work. Thanks to Marti Knorr, Librarian at Harris-Stowe, for his gracious support during my frequent visits to the archive room. Thank you to Sharon Huffman, archivist at the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, for helping me find so many original documents from the period and also for her encyclopedic memory for all manner of trivia regarding the St. Louis public schools.

My colleagues at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy have been invaluable. Sometimes a dissertation can derail the work product of even the most organized student affairs professional (I am not). Thank you to Barb Gist, Rachel Daggs, Rebecca Jones, Freddie Wills, Jennifer Roberts, and Anne Bracket for picking up my “slack” at various times. Special thanks to Dr. Ken Kirk, Ph.D., Dean of the St. Louis College of Pharmacy, for his understanding and support throughout this process.

The most important source of support has been my family. To my parents, Paul and Kate Wetstein: thank you for instilling in me a love for books, a thirst for knowledge, and an inestimable respect for the transformational power of education. I was lucky to

grow up in a house filled with love, newspapers, books, and crowded with a lot of smart people willing to discuss and argue about all of the above. My brothers and sisters form a powerful debating society! To my wife's family, the Czirrs of northern Kentucky: thank you for being my cheerleaders along the way. I have finally used up my excuse for missing so many family functions and I look forward to seeing all of you again in the near future; yes, I am finally done! To my two young daughters, Caitlyn and Chloe: thank you for greeting me like a conquering hero every time I come home. When you are old enough to read this study, you may finally begin to understand why Daddy spent so many Saturdays at the library. I plan to make up for a lot of lost time very soon!

Finally, I must acknowledge my incredible wife, Carrie. She has stood beside me through all of the high and low points of this process and never wavered in her support. Words cannot begin to describe all that she has done to make this project possible. As she likes to say: "it's the little things that make the difference." The multitude of "little things" that she did to help me along the way amount to one massive debt I will never be able to re-pay. Could I have completed this project without her? Absolutely not; and it wouldn't be worth doing anyway. For that reason, I dedicate this dissertation to her. Thank you so much Carrie. I love you!

Ken Wetstein, October 2005

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**CHAPTER ONE ..... 1**

**Introduction ..... 1**

*Background* ..... 2

*Legal History of Segregated Public Education in St. Louis and Missouri* ..... 3

*Legal History of Segregation in Public Education in America: Roberts to Brown* ..... 6

*Establishment of legal segregation* ..... 7

*Erosion of legal segregation* ..... 8

*History of Harris Teachers College, 1857-1954* ..... 10

*History of Stowe Teachers College, 1890-1954* ..... 11

*The Relationship Between Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, 1910-1954* ..... 15

*Events leading up to the merger* ..... 16

*Statement of the Problem* ..... 18

*Purpose of the Study* ..... 20

*Research Questions* ..... 20

*Significance of the Problem* ..... 20

*Method* ..... 23

*Assumptions and Limitations* ..... 23

*Scope and Delimitations* ..... 24

*Terms and Definitions* ..... 24

*Organization of the Study* ..... 27

**CHAPTER TWO ..... 30**

**Review of the Literature ..... 30**

*Legal History of Segregation in Public Education: Roberts to Brown* ..... 31

*Roberts v. City of Boston* ..... 32

*Dred Scott v. Sanford* ..... 32

*Civil Rights Act of 1875* ..... 32

*Plessy v. Ferguson* ..... 33

*Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education* ..... 33

*Berea College v. Kentucky* ..... 34

*Gong Lum v. Rice* ..... 35

*University of Maryland v. Murray* ..... 35

*Gaines v. Canada* ..... 36

*Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents* ..... 37

*Sweatt v. Painter* ..... 38

*McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* ..... 39

*Parker v. University of Delaware* ..... 41

*The Brown cases* ..... 41

*Brown v. Board of Education* ..... 42

*Briggs v. Elliot* ..... 43

*Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* ..... 44

*Bolling v. Sharpe* ..... 44

*Gebhart v. Belton* ..... 45

*Adams v. Richardson* ..... 46

*Desegregation at Colleges and Universities in the St. Louis Region* ..... 47

*Washington University in St. Louis* ..... 47

*Saint Louis University* ..... 50

*University of Missouri at Columbia* ..... 54

*Webster University* ..... 60

*High Profile University Desegregations in the South* ..... 62

*Pace of the desegregations* ..... 62

*The pioneers* ..... 64

<i>Level of political opposition</i> .....	65
<i>Degree of conflict</i> .....	67
<i>Segregation and St. Louis in the Early 1950s</i> .....	68
Conclusion .....	73
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>Method</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<i>Conceptual Framework</i> .....	75
<i>Research Paradigm</i> .....	75
<i>Sample</i> .....	76
<i>Sources of Data</i> .....	77
<i>Use of Qualitative Methods</i> .....	78
<i>Procedure</i> .....	78
<i>Interview Protocol</i> .....	79
<i>Interview Questions</i> .....	79
<i>Analysis of Data</i> .....	80
<i>Testing and Confirming Data</i> .....	81
<i>Documentation and Auditing</i> .....	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<b>Prelude to the Merger</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	82
<i>Background</i> .....	82
<i>Segregation in St. Louis in 1954</i> .....	82
<i>Segregation in health care</i> .....	83
<i>Segregation in private and public housing</i> .....	85
<i>Segregation in public dining</i> .....	87
<i>Segregation in hotels and lodging</i> .....	88
<i>Segregation in employment</i> .....	89
<i>Segregation in politics and public office</i> .....	89
<i>Anticipation of Brown and the End of Segregated Education</i> .....	90
<i>Editorial Concerns of the Local Press</i> .....	93
<i>Other Collegiate Desegregations in the Region</i> .....	98
<i>Activities of the St. Louis Board of Education and Administration</i> .....	101
<i>Intergroup Education</i> .....	102
<i>School Board Response to the Brown Decision</i> .....	106
<i>St. Louis School Board Meetings</i> .....	108
<i>June 8, 1954 board meeting</i> .....	109
<i>Executive session of June 15, 1954</i> .....	109
<i>June 22, 1954 special meeting of the board</i> .....	110
<i>Faculty Consolidation and Transition</i> .....	111
<i>Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in 1953-1954</i> .....	113
<i>Locations, Enrollment, and Academic Programs</i> .....	113
<i>Student Recollections of Harris Teachers College, Pre-Merger</i> .....	118
<i>Student Recollections of Stowe Teachers College, Pre-Merger</i> .....	120
<i>Student Awareness and Expectations of the Merger</i> .....	124
<i>Awareness of the Merger</i> .....	124
<i>Expectations of the Merger</i> .....	127
Conclusion .....	129
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....	<b>130</b>
<b>The Merger and Its Impact</b> .....	<b>130</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	130
<i>Students' Experiences During the Transition</i> .....	132
<i>Enrollment Expansion</i> .....	132



<i>Black Students' Transitions from Stowe to Harris</i> .....	134
<i>White Students' Transitions During the Merger</i> .....	136
<i>Organizations and Activities</i> .....	138
<i>Student Council</i> .....	138
<i>Athletics</i> .....	140
<i>Fraternalities and Sororities</i> .....	142
<i>Other clubs and activities</i> .....	143
<i>Cross-Cultural Interaction Between Black and White Students</i> .....	145
<i>Limited Social Interaction Between Black and White Students</i> .....	145
<i>Examples of Cross-Cultural Interaction Between Black and White Students</i> .....	147
<i>Cross-Cultural Interactions Among Students and Faculty</i> .....	150
<i>Controversies and Incidents During the Merger Year</i> .....	152
<i>Limited Controversy as Observed by Participants</i> .....	152
<i>Controversial Incidents Shared by Participants</i> .....	153
<i>Controversies Regarding Inter-Racial Dating</i> .....	157
<i>Impact of the Merger</i> .....	158
<i>Loss of Stowe; Change at Harris</i> .....	158
<i>Loss of Stowe</i> .....	158
<i>Change at Harris</i> .....	161
<i>Student Views Regarding Segregation and Integration</i> .....	162
<i>Perspective of Family, Friends, and the Community Regarding the Merger</i> .....	164
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	166
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b> .....	<b>167</b>
<b>Discussion</b> .....	<b>167</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	167
<i>Absence of Controversy During the Merger</i> .....	167
<i>Factors That Contributed to the Absence of Controversy</i> .....	169
<i>Preparations and Leadership of the School Board and Phillip Hickey</i> .....	169
<i>Swift Response Prevented Radical Mobilization</i> .....	170
<i>Excellent Conduct of the Students</i> .....	171
<i>Initial Acceptance of School Desegregation in St. Louis</i> .....	175
<i>Obstacles to Social Integration</i> .....	176
<i>Lack of Social Integration: Critical Mass</i> .....	178
<i>Lack of Social Integration: Commuter School Phenomenon</i> .....	180
<i>Lack of Social Integration: Social Expectation of the Period</i> .....	180
<i>The Harris Experience and the Stowe Experience</i> .....	181
<i>Significance of this Study</i> .....	182
<i>Limitations</i> .....	183
<i>Implications for Future Research</i> .....	186
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	187
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>190</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: Informed Consent and HSC Approval</b> .....	<b>203</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: Interview Questions</b> .....	<b>205</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: Archives</b> .....	<b>206</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: Collegian Cover Page, October 12, 1954</b> .....	<b>207</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1 - <i>Legal Developments that <u>Established</u> Segregated Education in the U.S.</i>	8
Table 2 - <i>Legal Developments that <u>Eroded</u> Segregated Education in the U.S.</i>	9
Table 3 - <i>Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges Enrollment, 1953-54 Academic Year</i>	114
Table 4 - <i>Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges Enrollment Figures, 1953-55</i>	133
Table 5 – <i>Athletic Participation by Race, Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, 1953-55</i>	141
Table 6 – <i>Organization Participation by Race, Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, 1953-55</i>	144

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision in the school integration case *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954). Chief Justice Earl Warren voiced the unanimous opinion of the court: “In the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (p. 495). This decision was the catalyst for the eventual elimination of segregated public education in the United States and signaled the beginning of the end of Jim Crow practices in public venues.

In the wake of the *Brown* decision, the St. Louis Board of Education took swift action. At its regular meeting on June 8, 1954, as a part of the “new business” portion of the agenda, the Board discussed the need to comply with the Supreme Court decision. Oscar Earhardt, Board President, issued the following statement during that meeting:

The Board of Education of the City of St. Louis has been working with its Executive Officers on the proper method of complying with the recent Supreme Court decision in the school segregation cases. I shall call a special meeting of the Board for the purpose of taking definitive action on this subject on June 22, 1954, at 7:30 p.m. (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954b)

At that meeting, barely a month after the Supreme Court’s decision was announced, the St. Louis Board of Education convened to discuss the implications of *Brown*. Philip J. Hickey, Superintendent of Instruction, presented to the Board a plan for desegregation that he had been preparing since the *Brown* case was first argued before the Supreme Court in 1952. Hickey’s plan would desegregate all of the city’s public schools,

including its two teachers colleges, over a 13-month time frame (Schlafly, 1995). The city's two racially segregated colleges, Harris Teachers College (for Whites) and Stowe Teachers College (for Blacks) would be the first to desegregate in September 1954, just three months later. The city's public high schools would follow in February of 1955, and finally, the elementary schools would desegregate in September of 1955 (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954b). By a unanimous 11-0 decision the St. Louis Board of Education voted in favor of implementing Superintendent Hickey's plan. One board member, J. Harry Pohlman, was absent and "excused from attendance," having suffered a heart attack in June of 1954. One contemporary source (Schlafly, 1995) suggests that had Pohlman been present, the professed segregationist would have represented a lone dissenting vote in an otherwise symbolic unanimous decision.

At the time of the *Brown* decision the two colleges were operated by the St. Louis Board of Education under the control of the Superintendent and School Board. Harris and Stowe provided teachers for St. Louis and it was not until 1979 that the merged Harris-Stowe became a state college by act of the Missouri legislature.

The two colleges, separate for half a century, merged at the larger Harris building (5351 Enright) less than three months after the Board's June 1954 decision. The 1954-1955 academic year at Harris Teachers College marked the first time in the history of St. Louis that Black and White students would attend a public school together. These young men and women would be the first pioneers in the desegregation of St. Louis' public schools. This project examines this historic merger, including the perspective of students who experienced it firsthand.

### *Background*

*Legal History of Segregated Public Education in St. Louis and Missouri*

Although situated in a border state, St. Louis had, by the 1950s, shed many of its “official” Jim Crow practices. Education was one notable exception. Segregated public education was still both the legal and social standard in St. Louis through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Public schools had been segregated in the state of Missouri since its admission into the Union in 1821. In fact, prior to the adoption of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the United States Constitution, Blacks had no legal rights in Missouri. This was a function of the admittance of the state to the Union as a slave state via the “Missouri Compromise.” The 1865 Missouri state constitution, crafted in the early stages of post-Civil War Reconstruction, made an accommodation for the education of Blacks when it allowed for the establishment of separate schools “for children of African descent” (Missouri Constitution of 1865, Article IX, Section 2). This provision was retained in the post-Reconstruction revision of the Missouri constitution in 1875. Separate schools flourished in larger towns and cities, but in rural areas, providing separate education for Blacks was problematic. It was impractical for rural municipalities to establish and maintain separate schools for so few students, so Black citizens often attended the same schools as White citizens (Linder, 2000).

After Reconstruction, however, Black education became increasingly neglected. In 1889, the Missouri Assembly forbade the practice of integrated school districts by passing legislation that prohibited racial mixing in the schools. This legislation was particularly damaging to Black students in rural areas, as there were never enough Black students to justify a separate school. In many of these areas, the Black students would attend the same schools as the White students. This conflict eventually led to a legal

dispute. In 1891, the Missouri Supreme Court, in *Lehew v. Brummel*, 15 S.W. 765 (MO S.C. 1891), upheld the state's order prohibiting integrated schools and ruled that rural Grundy County dismantle the integrated public school that provided an education to four Black students. The Court declared, "Color carries with it natural race peculiarities...some of which can never be eradicated" (Linder, 2000, p. 7). Because of the expense involved in the construction of separate schools to accommodate a handful of Blacks, most rural municipalities stopped providing public schools for Blacks.

There are four important instances in which segregated higher education in Missouri was challenged legally. One of these cases, *Gaines v. Canada*, 305 U.S. 337 (USSC 1938), was eventually argued before the United States Supreme Court and served as an early legal precedent in the NAACP's strategy for ending school segregation. In 1935, Lloyd Gaines sought admission to the University of Missouri School of Law, but he was denied admission because he was Black. Upon appeal to the Supreme Court, the majority opinion held that the University of Missouri must admit Gaines since the state could not possibly provide an equal education for Black students at its Black college, Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. The *Gaines* decision established a precedent at the federal level, dictating that the "separate but equal" doctrine should be consistent in its meaning — facilities and opportunities for both Black and White citizens should truly be equal. The University avoided compliance, however, by hustling to establish a makeshift law school at Lincoln University, renting a few rooms in St. Louis and hiring a few lawyers to serve as faculty.

The second major legal challenge to segregation in public higher education in Missouri resulted from Lucille Bluford's application for admission to the well-respected

University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1939. Bluford's application for admission had been accepted, but when she arrived in the fall of 1939 to register for classes, S.W. Canada, the registrar, refused to allow her to enroll because of her race. Bluford appealed to the administration of the University for permission to enroll for the upcoming winter semester, noting that additional opportunities for graduate study in journalism did not exist in any other state colleges or universities within Missouri. Rather than allow Bluford to integrate the University of Missouri, the state legislature quickly established a School of Journalism at Lincoln University, a similar tactic that was employed in the case involving Lloyd Gaines and the law school. Bluford filed suit in Federal District Court in the case *Bluford v. Canada*, 32 F Supp 707 (WDMo. 1940). The Court ruled that since the state had provided an equal education at Lincoln University, Bluford did not have grounds to file the lawsuit, citing the "separate but equal" doctrine.

The third major challenge to segregation in public higher education in Missouri was a lawsuit involving Harris Teachers College, *Toliver v. Board of Education of St. Louis*, 230 S.W. (2d.) 724 (Mo S.C. 1950). Marjorie Toliver, a Black student who attended the segregated Stowe Teachers College, was denied transfer admission to Harris Teachers College (for Whites). She filed suit in circuit court, claiming that the two colleges were not equal. Citing *Plessy*, Toliver's attorney noted the disparity between the Harris and Stowe colleges regarding both the physical facilities and quality of the academic programs. Circuit Judge James Nangle agreed, ordering the St. Louis Board of Education to admit her to Harris Teachers College. On appeal, Judge Nangle's decision was reversed by the Missouri Supreme Court. The Missouri Supreme Court stated that it

was not necessary for the educational facilities to be identically equal, only substantially equal. The Court held that the facilities provided at Stowe met this threshold.

The final challenge to segregation in public higher education in Missouri came in the form of another lawsuit, *Curators of the University of Missouri v. Bell, et al.*, (Unreported, 13<sup>th</sup> Mo. Cir. Ct.1950). This legal case eventually forced the University of Missouri to accept graduate students who could not complete their coursework at Lincoln University, the state-sponsored college for Blacks. Three Black plaintiffs had been granted admission to the University of Missouri at Columbia (one student) and to the School of Mines and Metallurgy at Rolla (two students). The ruling of Judge Sam Blair obligated all state-supported institutions of higher learning in Missouri to admit qualified Black students to any academic program that was not available at Lincoln University.

Despite these legal developments, Missouri had reaffirmed its commitment to segregation in public education in its 1945 Constitution, only nine years before the historic *Brown* decision (Schlafly, 1995). The *Brown* decision of 1954 essentially nullified Missouri's school segregation laws, although the official statutes mandating separate schools were not amended until 1976 through the Fifth Constitutional Amendment (Missouri Secretary of State, n.d.).

*Legal History of Segregation in Public Education in America: Roberts to Brown*

The history of segregated public education in the United States is inseparable from the national tragedy of slavery and its legacy of racism and racial superiority. While slavery is not the focus of this research, it is important to acknowledge that the United States, from its founding, was a nation that ascribed an inferior status to an entire race of people in its formal legal, political, and social systems. In that context, it



becomes possible to understand, but not excuse, the emergence of a system of public education segregated by race.

One useful way to interpret the legal history of segregated schools is by dividing the legal developments into two categories: 1) those events that helped *establish* the legality of segregation, and 2) those events that helped *erode* the legality of segregation (see Tables 1 and 2). This evolution occurred in a relatively linear fashion, as legal segregation in public schools was at first established during the antebellum period, reaffirmed during the post-Reconstruction era, and eventually challenged during the first half of the twentieth century.

*Establishment of legal segregation.* The phrase “separate but equal” first appeared in the context of segregation in a case from Massachusetts known as *Roberts v. Boston* (1849). The *Roberts* case was initiated by the family of five-year-old Sarah Roberts, a girl who each morning would walk past five White schools on her way to the school that the city of Boston designated for Black students. Segregation of public schools was forbidden by the Massachusetts state constitution, but the city of Boston persisted in its resistance. The Roberts family filed a lawsuit, acquiring the assistance of a young and eloquent attorney named Charles Sumner. Sumner was persuasive but unsuccessful, and the Massachusetts Supreme Court suggested that separate facilities would be acceptable so long as they were equal. The United States Supreme Court cited the *Roberts* case, a precedent only within the state of Massachusetts, as justification for the establishment of the “separate but equal” doctrine as a national legal precedent in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (USSC 1896). This “separate but equal” doctrine became a key feature in future Supreme Court decisions that upheld school segregation,

including *Cumming v. Richmond County* (1899), *Berea v. Kentucky* (1908), and *Gong Lum v. Rice* (1927) (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1.**

***Legal Developments that Established Segregated Education in the United States***

<b>Legal Case or Legislation</b>	<b>Legal Issue or Precedent</b>
<i>Roberts v. Boston</i> (1849) Mass. Supreme Court	The first case to use the language of “separate but equal,” <i>Roberts</i> allowed the city of Boston to maintain its racially segregated schools in opposition to state law so long as the schools were equal. <i>Roberts</i> was cited in numerous cases by segregationists in later years.
<i>Dred Scott v. Sanford</i> (1857) U.S. Supreme Court	Not a school segregation case, but significant because the Court established the precedent that Blacks had no legal standing, as they were not citizens, even in states where slavery was illegal. The <i>Dred Scott</i> decision assigned second-class status to all Blacks and nullified the Missouri Compromise.
<i>Civil Rights Act of 1875</i> U.S. Congress	Although this Congressional Act provided for the legislative implementation of the 13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , and 15 <sup>th</sup> Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, an attempt to include a right to un-segregated schools was rejected despite the efforts of Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts.
<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> (1896) U.S. Supreme Court	Not a school segregation case, but instead dealt with segregated railway cars in Louisiana. The Court upheld the constitutionality of Louisiana’s separate facilities, establishing a national precedent for the “separate but equal” doctrine first originated in <i>Roberts</i> .
<i>Cumming v. Richmond County Board</i> (1899) U.S. Supreme Court	A school board in Georgia closed its only Black high school due to financial difficulties. The plaintiff’s argued that the equality demanded by <i>Plessy</i> required the board to close the White high school as well. The Court disagreed and ruled that the school board did not act in an illegal manner.
<i>Berea v. Kentucky</i> (1908) U.S. Supreme Court	The Court held that the state of Kentucky was within its rights to compel private Berea College to halt the practice of integrated education. The case fortified the states’ rights position in school segregation. The <i>Berea</i> case joined the <i>Plessy</i> and <i>Cumming</i> cases as key Supreme Court precedents favoring segregation.
<i>Gong Lum v. Rice</i> (1927) U.S. Supreme Court	An Asian girl who enrolled in a white school was moved to an inferior Black school because she was non-white. The Court unanimously upheld Mississippi law and the school board, citing the <i>Plessy</i> , <i>Cumming</i> , and <i>Berea</i> cases as precedents. States’ rights and segregation were preserved for the time being.

*Source:* Kluger, R. (1976). *Simple Justice: The history of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s struggle for equality*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

*Erosion of legal segregation.* The erosion and eventual end of legal segregation in public schools took place as part of a deliberate legal strategy of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP initiated

this effort in 1929 and coordinated a steady assault on the “separate but equal” doctrine. In the 1930’s, the NAACP filed suit against segregated graduate and professional schools with the most severe disparities between opportunities for Blacks and Whites, often in border states (see Table 2). Graduate and professional schools served as useful targets, as they often represented the gateway to professions.

**Table 2.**

***Legal Developments that Eroded Segregated Education in the United States***

<b>Legal Case or Legislation</b>	<b>Legal Issue or Precedent</b>
<i>Murray v. Maryland</i> (1937) Maryland Supreme Ct.	The Maryland Supreme Court forced Maryland to admit Donald Murray to its law school. Two strategies often employed to avoid admitting Blacks were rejected: 1) establishing new academic programs at Black colleges, and 2) subsidizing out-of-state tuition for Black students.
<i>Gaines v. Canada</i> (1938) U.S. Supreme Court	Gaines applied to Univ. of Missouri law school. The Court supported the <i>Murray</i> precedent, ordering the admission of Gaines. Missouri’s out-of-state tuition subsidies were rejected, but the Court allowed the state to open an “equal” law school at Lincoln Univ. (for Blacks).
<i>Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents</i> (1948) U.S. Supreme Court	The Oklahoma Supreme Court gave the University three choices: 1) admit Ada Sipuel, 2) immediately open a Black law school, or 3) close the White school until a Black one was opened. The University chose to establish a makeshift law school, which was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.
<i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> (1950) U.S. Supreme Court	Heman Sweatt fought his assignment to Texas’ makeshift law school for Blacks. The Court finally found these alternate schools grossly inadequate and in violation of the equal portion of ‘separate but equal.’ This ruling reversed <i>Sipuel</i> in which Oklahoma’s separate school was upheld.
<i>McLaurin v. Oklahoma</i> (1950) U.S. Supreme Court	District Court ordered University of Oklahoma to admit McLaurin to graduate school. Instead of setting up a makeshift school, Oklahoma maintained segregation by isolating him while on campus. The Court intervened: he must receive the same treatment as students of other races.
<i>Parker v. Delaware</i> (1950) Delaware State Court (Chancery Court)	A Delaware Chancery Court judge ordered the University of Delaware to admit several Negro plaintiffs, finding the “colored” colleges in the state to be grossly inferior. This was the first court-ordered integration of a state-financed institution of higher education in America.
<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) U.S. Supreme Court	Five legal cases challenging segregated public schools, originating in Delaware, the Dist. of Columbia, Kansas, South Carolina, and Virginia. The Court unanimously ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in all five cases, overturning <i>Plessy</i> and making segregated public schools illegal.

*Source: Kluger, R. (1976). Simple Justice: The history of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s struggle for equality. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.*

*History of Harris Teachers College, 1857-1954*

Harris Teachers College traces its lineage to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was an urgent need for the St. Louis region to educate teachers in order to serve the growing population of an emerging commercial center. John Tice, Public School Superintendent, urged the establishment of a school designed specifically to train public school teachers – a “normal” school. These teachers could subsequently transition into the schools of St. Louis where they were in high demand. In October of 1857, the city of St. Louis opened the doors of its first normal school in one classroom of the high school at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Olive. This normal school was the first public teacher education institution established west of the Mississippi River and only the twelfth in the entire United States (Saint Louis Public Schools, 1999). The school had an enrollment of thirty students (White, 1981) and was open only to Whites. At this time, state law prohibited the education of Black citizens, so Black teachers did not need to be trained for non-existent Black schools. As a slave state, Missouri would not allow Blacks to serve as teachers in its schools for Whites. Also of note is that the enrollment of the normal school was comprised solely of women. During this period of education in America, it was customary to hire only unmarried women as school teachers. An unmarried woman could devote her entire energy to the education of children without the distraction of her own husband and children.

At first, the early curriculum of the “college” consisted of two courses in pedagogy that high school seniors were required to complete in order to be appointed as elementary teachers. The curriculum soon expanded from two pedagogy courses to one full year of academic preparation. This one-year curriculum was subsequently expanded

to a two-year post-high school academic program (White, 1981). In 1902, the normal classes were discontinued due to a tremendous growth in enrollment, which made the school larger than the facilities available. In 1904, the courses were reinstated under the name of Teachers College (White, 1981) and taught for a year in the Yeatman High School building while a new facility, built to accommodate the growing college, was erected at 1517 South Theresa Avenue. In 1905, the Teachers College moved into this facility with an enrollment of 300 students.

In 1910, the Teachers College was renamed Harris Teachers College, in honor of William Torrey Harris. Harris, a St. Louis native and former Superintendent of Schools, was a well-known pioneer in the field of public education. Harris also served as United States Commissioner of Education for a part of his career. Harris Teachers College was designated as a four-year institution in 1918 and was granted permission to award the Bachelor of Arts in Education Degree. In 1924, the College was accredited by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges (White 1981).

In 1930, Harris established a Junior College within its facilities for students who did not wish to teach but were still interested in attending college. The Junior College was suspended in 1933 due to enrollment challenges during the Depression, but it was reinstated in 1938. Harris was now involved in general education, not just teacher preparation. In 1940, men were admitted to Harris Teachers College for the first time (Saint Louis Public Schools, 1999). As enrollment grew after World War II, Harris again needed more space. Harris moved into the Blewett High School building which was located at 5351 Enright Avenue (White, 1981).

*History of Stowe Teachers College, 1890-1954*

Stowe Teachers College can trace its roots back to September 1890 and the creation of the Normal Department of Sumner High School (Harris, 1967). Sumner High School was the first Black high school west of the Mississippi, and at the time, the only high school for Black students in the St. Louis region. The establishment of this normal school became necessary as the state of Missouri initiated plans to implement separate education for Black citizens, a mandate of the 1875 revision of the state constitution (Saint Louis Public Schools, 1999). In 1877, the St. Louis School Board established the practice of “assigning Negro teachers, if they were available, to Negro schools” (Harris, 1967, p. 13). The introduction of Black into the segregated schools had a profound effect. The enrollment of Black students grew, as did the number of Black students seeking training as teachers to follow in the footsteps of their new instructors (Saint Louis Public Schools, 1999). Once this demand for Black teachers was realized, it became apparent that there was a need for educating these teachers, and for this purpose the Normal Department at Sumner High School was established.

In its early years the Normal Department was operated as an extension of Sumner High School. The initial curriculum entailed only one additional year of coursework beyond high school. In 1891, fourteen young women received the Normal Diploma in the first graduating class. Apprenticeships were soon added to the curriculum and by 1894, the course of study expanded to encompass two years of academic coursework classes, along with an experiential component or “apprenticeship” (Harris, 1967; Patterson, 1972; White, 1981).

In 1921, the Sumner Normal School was reorganized and upgraded for alignment with Harris Teachers College, which offered the A.B degree (White, 1981). In 1924,

Sumner Normal School expanded its curriculum to accommodate a four-year program, paralleling the same development at Harris Teachers College six years earlier. In 1925, the school was renamed Sumner Teachers College to better reflect the national trend of eliminating the normal school moniker (Rudolph, 1990). The institution could now grant baccalaureate degrees, and the first class to receive Bachelor's degrees graduated in January of 1929. The four-year program was divided into a Junior College which provided elementary courses for students who sought a general education, and a Senior College for students who were specifically interested in teacher preparation (Harris, 1967). All students at the college were women, and because of segregation, they were all Black (Patterson, 1972).

In 1928, the Board of Education proposed a survey of the two colleges and invited consultants from Columbia University to assist with that project. One of the key recommendations from the Survey Committee was that Sumner Teachers College needed a larger facility separate from the Sumner High School building. The Board agreed and approved an expenditure of \$2,000 for the relocation of the college to a new building to be constructed on property adjacent to Simmons Elementary (White, 1981). With this new location, the name "Sumner Teachers College" became problematic, so the school changed its name to "Stowe Teachers College" in recognition of the important contributions of the noted novelist and abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe. In fact, the school board was forced to erect temporary buildings in order to accommodate some of the elementary school classrooms displaced by the new Stowe Teachers College facility (Harris, 1967). Stowe students benefited from their proximity to the elementary students at Simmons — they now had a captive audience with whom to practice new pedagogical

methods. This “demonstration schools” concept was the forerunner of the “laboratory schools” that became prevalent in later years.

Registration at Stowe Teachers College soared from 271 students in 1929-1930 to a peak of 523 in 1931-1932 (White, 1981). The administration sought and received accreditation from the American Association of Teachers Colleges during this period but decided against seeking North Central accreditation for Stowe. Also during this period, Stowe entered into a cooperative arrangement with Lincoln University in order to offer the services of a junior college from 1933-1938. This program paralleled a serious decline in enrollment due to the Depression (Harris, 1967).

By 1938, the Lincoln Junior College was closed and the inadequacies of the College’s location at the Simmons Elementary site were a source of frustration and much discussion. From 1937-1939, many meetings and discussions were held at Kennerly Avenue Church for the purpose of improving the College. Stowe needed new facilities, and this wish was soon to be granted (White, 1981).

In 1940, Stowe moved to its own facility adjacent to the Simmons Elementary complex. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) approved a grant that supported the construction of this new site. For the first (and last) time in its history, Stowe Teachers College had its very own building. Stowe Teachers College appointed a new president at the time of this relocation, Dr. Ruth Harris. President Harris described her institution’s new home in her book on Stowe’s history (Harris, 1967):

Here on the Southwest corner of Kennerly and Pendleton Avenues was the new home for Stowe Teachers College, a building with beautiful, modern appointments; a three-storied, tan brick structure with a fourth story rise for an Art Studio on the north side of the building....As one moved through the building he came upon a standard-sized, bright and airy gymnasium with adjoining showers and dressing rooms....But of all the beauty spots in the building the auditorium



took the prize. Here was a modern acoustically-treated, all electrically-handled, cozy auditorium to accommodate 770 persons. (p. 57)

Her narrative continues on in great detail, describing what must have been in her view a wonderful facility, at least compared to the prior facilities that housed Stowe. While new and exciting, this new facility still fell short of the resources available at Harris (Freeman, 1972). Regardless, the residency of Stowe Teachers College at this site would be short-lived. In June of 1954, Stowe closed its doors as a result of a merger with Harris Teachers College.

*The Relationship Between Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, 1910-1954*

It is important to note that the city's two teachers colleges did not exist exclusive of one another. From 1910 to 1954, that which was added to or deleted from the Harris curriculum was subsequently added to or deleted from the Stowe curriculum, although not always simultaneously. Both colleges used the same course catalog and had similar admission requirements. Until 1932, the two schools shared one academic leader, Dr. J. Leslie Purdom. Purdom, who received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1918, served as President of both institutions until 1932, when W. H. Huffman was appointed as Principal of Stowe Teachers College. At times, Harris faculty would go to Stowe to teach courses when extra personnel were needed (Harris, 1967).

In 1945, the School Board received financial support from the American Council on Education to establish efforts towards Intergroup Education, a national movement designed to facilitate cooperative experiences between students of different races (Freeman, 1972). Dr. Hilda Taba was named Director of the Intergroup Education program, and she coordinated programs that encouraged interaction among Black and White students of all grade levels. Frank Sskwor served as a full-time coordinator for

this program and led an interracial committee of teachers to plan activities for the Harris and Stowe students. Students from the two colleges served on various committees together. These efforts continued until the ACE grant expired and funding was withdrawn in 1948 (Freeman, 1972). The Board recommended that the colleges should be authorized to expend funds allocated for in-service programs to retain the services of Dr. Taba and her staff. Dr. Taba and other leaders in intergroup education and human relations visited St. Louis and held workshops with school personnel from 1945 until the early 1950s (Freeman, 1972).

Despite the close coordination of curricula, periods of shared academic leadership, and occasional cooperative activities among the students, there was ample evidence that the two Colleges were not necessarily receiving equal treatment. This called into question the Board of Education's commitment to the separate but equal doctrine set forth in *Plessy*. The numbers were revealing: Stowe's new facility in 1940 had one-tenth the floor space available at Harris, including only 11 classrooms, while the classrooms at Harris numbered 48. Only 18% of Stowe faculty held doctorates while roughly one-third of the Harris faculty had Ph.D.s. Stowe had 10,000 fewer books in its library. Most importantly, Stowe, unlike Harris, was not accredited by the North Central Association of Schools (Patterson, 1972).

*Events leading up to the merger.* The post-World War II period brought about many changes that threatened the status of segregated education. Black soldiers, returning from a war that was fought to advance the freedom of others, were now less willing to endure the limitations that had been placed on their own liberty at home.

In the city of St. Louis, private educational institutions had begun to desegregate, starting with Saint Louis University in 1944 and followed by the Archdiocesan Catholic schools in 1947 (Kluger, 1976). Webster College desegregated in 1948. During the period from 1948 to 1952, Washington University slowly desegregated its graduate and professional schools and eventually its undergraduate college (Morrow, 1996). The University of Missouri opened many of its graduate schools, excluding programs available at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, to Black students beginning in 1950 (Cook, 1996). Nationally, the NAACP had won two incremental legal victories in Supreme Court decisions which compelled segregated public colleges in Texas (*Sweatt* case) and Oklahoma (*McLaurin* case) to desegregate segments of their graduate and professional schools. These events are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

A lawsuit initiated by Marjorie Toliver in 1948 [*Toliver v. Board of Education*, 302 S.W. (2d.) 590 (MO S.C. 1950)] may have been the strongest signal to the St. Louis Board of Education that the days of segregated education were nearing an end. Although the Missouri Supreme Court had overturned the lower court's order to integrate Harris Teachers College, the Board had to wonder what other legal attacks might be forthcoming.

These signs could not have gone unnoticed by Dr. Phillip J. Hickey, Superintendent for the St. Louis School District. Hickey sensed that integration was inevitable, so in 1950, he began to closely coordinate the operating policies of Harris and Stowe (Freeman, 1972). Along with the President of Harris, Dr. Charles Naylor, Hickey facilitated many contacts between the students of the two colleges during the period spanning from 1950 to 1954, often through a series of "intergroup education" programs.

When the two colleges merged under the name of Harris Teachers College in 1954, the merger was purported to have been so successful that the college served as a model throughout the country for integration procedures (White, 1981).

*Statement of the Problem*

There has been extensive research on the desegregation of certain high profile colleges and universities, especially southern public universities that witnessed the strongest resistance to admitting Black students. Comprehensive accounts of the integration of the University of Georgia in 1961 (Pratt, 2002; Trillin, 1991), the University of Mississippi in 1962 (Barrett, 1965; Cohodas, 1997; Doyle, 2001; Meredith, 1966), and the University of Alabama in 1963 (Clark, 1963) illustrate the coverage that these controversial events have received.

There has been little historical research published on Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, let alone on the historic merger of the two in 1954. Harris, in her book *Stowe Teachers College and Her Predecessors* (1967), produced an excellent review of Stowe's history from its formation until its closure in June 1954, but she does not provide an in-depth analysis of the events that characterized the merger and subsequent developments. Ruth Harris was the president of Stowe Teachers College from 1940 until its closing in 1954 (Harris, 1967).

Schlafly (1995) briefly discusses his recollections as a new member of the Board of Education during this period in his book *28 years on the St. Louis School Board, 1953-1981*. This memoir provides excellent insight into the inner workings of the St. Louis Board of Education during this historic period, but it provides neither sufficient detail

about the merger itself nor specific information regarding the effect of the merger on the students of the two institutions.

Three doctoral dissertations have been written concerning the history of Harris and/or Stowe Teachers Colleges. White (1981) conducted a historical study of Harris-Stowe graduates. His research offers some excellent historical information about the two colleges, but it provides at best a cursory account of the merger itself. His account of the merger focuses on the preparedness of Superintendent Hickey and Harris President Dr. Charles Naylor, describing their efforts leading up to the merger. In another dissertation, Freeman (1972) also described the activities of Superintendent Hickey during the merger. Freeman's research addresses the broader topic of the administrative career of Hickey, but it still manages to provide a great deal of detail about the administrative plans developed by the School Board and Superintendent leading up to the merger. Freeman also gives pertinent information regarding the climate in St. Louis and its schools during the period immediately preceding the merger. In the third dissertation, Patterson's (1972) history of Harris College, which spans the years 1904 to 1966, is quite useful in understanding the institution and its place in the city of St. Louis. Patterson's piece also provides a detailed account of the number of teachers who were involved in the transition at the time of the merger. Patterson also questions whether students ever really integrated following the merger. He examined the construct of social integration by analyzing membership patterns in student and social organizations.

None of these prior projects, however, has focused on the students who actually experienced the merger in 1954-1955. The personal stories of students who were involved in the 1954-1955 merger of Harris and Stowe need to be chronicled. The

recollections of the students who experienced that pivotal year will provide valuable insights into the positive and negative aspects of the merger, enhancing our understanding of the complexities of racial integration in higher education and in the history of St. Louis.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to identify and describe the historical events surrounding the 1954-1955 merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, and 2) to examine the impact of the merger on the lives of the students who attended these two institutions.

### *Research Questions*

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. From the perspective of the students, what were the key events related to the merger, and what circumstances surrounded those events?
2. How do the students describe the impact of the merger?
3. How might the findings of this study have significance for the study of the history of the St. Louis region and the history of higher education?

### *Significance of the Problem*

The merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in 1954 marks a historic moment in the history of higher education. The School Board of the City of St. Louis administered these two teachers colleges, essentially as feeder programs to staff the public schools in the city. In response to the *Brown* decision, the Board was undertaking a monumental task: the merger of two previously separate colleges, comprised of students intentionally segregated by race, just five short months after the Supreme Court

declared segregation unconstitutional. The desegregation of many formerly segregated public colleges and universities in the United States took place at a more gradual pace, and there were multiple procedural, political, and social roadblocks that these institutions experienced along the way. The decisive manner in which Harris and Stowe were merged may demonstrate an important point in the broader issue of desegregation: immediate compliance with the mandate of *Brown* may have been one method by which to promote a successful merger. The Supreme Court subsequently provided some recommendations for the implementation of the *Brown* decision in a case commonly referred to as *Brown II* (1955). The loosely worded opinion provided in *Brown II* suggested that schools should be integrated “with all deliberate speed,” an ambiguous phrase which left the urgency of ending segregation in the schools open to interpretation. Those communities and organizations that interpreted the ruling to mean the immediate abolition of segregated schooling denied reactionary forces in their communities the opportunity to organize opposition. Before opposition could be organized, the actual practice of desegregated education would be established “free of animosity” and the arguments against integration would seem moot. The St. Louis Board of Education appears to have benefited from just such an approach.

A thorough study of the Harris-Stowe merger will help scholars to understand the events surrounding this rapid desegregation. This research will shed light on those circumstances and characteristics that defined the merger and allowed it to progress as smoothly as it did. By contrast, if the merger was filled with strife and discontent, this project will certainly uncover evidence of these difficulties. This research will replace speculation about the merger year with actual narrative accounts of those students who

were directly involved. Finally, since the Harris-Stowe merger occurred so quickly after *Brown*, a thorough study of the period will yield a better understanding of the effect of the quick and orderly response of the St. Louis School Board to this historic decision.

A thorough literature review has failed to reveal any meaningful studies that investigate the Harris-Stowe merger. Some research, however, has been conducted on the integration of other colleges and universities. Farmer (1980) studied the institutional response to the entry of Black students on the Flint campus of the University of Michigan. That study did not, however, examine desegregation from the student perspective, focusing instead on institutional effects and the response of faculty and administrators. Shabazz (1996) conducted a broad historical survey of the desegregation of higher education in Texas colleges over a one hundred year period. Shabazz's research focused on a description of the historical events related to the desegregation of colleges and universities rather than the qualitative impact of the events on students. Thus, the minimal number of interviews that were conducted in this research study focused on providing a historical context, as opposed to how desegregation affected the personal or academic lives of the participants. Whitmeyer-Moyer (1978) conducted a narrowly focused research study on the history of the desegregation and integration of the University of Tennessee at Martin (UT-Martin) from the period of 1954 to 1978. Whitmeyer-Moyer's study includes data that was collected through traditional historical methods as well as qualitative interviews of *current* students at UT-Martin. The project demonstrated that understanding historical context is important and that it can complement qualitative inquiry in the discovery of the effects of integration in higher



education. The study is not, however, composed of interviews with those students who were involved in the initial desegregation of the institution.

Doctoral dissertations on various aspects of the history of Harris-Stowe by authors such as Freeman (1972), Patterson (1972), and White (1981) provide excellent background information about the two institutions but fail to provide an understanding of the rich experiences of students directly affected by the merger. This study complements these other works because it provides a narrowly focused narrative of the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, including the perspectives of student alumni.

#### *Method*

Data for this project were collected from various archives, contemporary news accounts of the period, and the personal recollections of students who were enrolled during the merger. Archival data were collected from the Harris-Stowe State College Archives, the Mercantile Library of the University of Missouri – St. Louis, the Missouri History Museum Library, and the archives of the St. Louis Public Schools. Contemporary news accounts of the merger year were reviewed in past issues of *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, *The St. Louis American*, and *The Argus*. *The St. Louis American* and *The Argus* were two Black weekly newspapers that were in print in St. Louis at the time of the merger. A group of fourteen students who attended Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges at the time of the merger were interviewed to discuss their recollections of the merger year. The important themes, events, and circumstances of the merger year were cultivated from these data, informing a descriptive narrative.

#### *Assumptions and Limitations*

Undertaking research about events that occurred fifty years ago is fraught with challenges and limitations. Poor data management on the part of Harris-Stowe State College and its predecessor institutions complicated the task of locating study participants. Developing a research population was also limited by the decreasing number of former students who are currently living. Some of the participants located for this study were unwilling to participate in the interview process due to health considerations. The participants were asked to describe events from fifty years ago, and the passage of time has, in some cases, influenced the quality and veracity of their recollections.

This project has also relied heavily on the existence of significant archival materials from the time period in question. Finding appropriate source material on a subject that has been lightly researched was very challenging.

#### *Scope and Delimitations*

This study focused specifically on the merger year of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in 1954-1955. Only those participants who attended Harris or Stowe/Harris during both academic years of the two-year period from 1953-1955 comprised the available population for this research study. This specific time frame was selected so that only those participants who could share recollections that included the merger year and the year immediately preceding it would be interviewed.

#### *Terms and Definitions*

Throughout this study, a number of terms are used to describe certain situations and phenomena. To avoid misunderstanding, some of these terms are included below with their definitions.

*Black*: This term is used to describe people of African-American descent. I have chosen this term for editorial purposes and because the prevailing perception is that this term is acceptable for use in the contemporary vernacular. No pejorative meaning is implied, and I apologize to readers who may be offended by this choice. At times in this study, the terms “Negro” or “Colored” may appear. The author recognizes that these terms are unacceptable to most, so when used, they are used in the context of listing the past formal names of colleges and universities or when presenting direct quotes from writers of a period who were more comfortable with these terms.

*Segregation, Desegregation, and Integration*: This study examines the merger of two colleges formerly segregated by law on the basis of race. The terms *segregation*, *desegregation*, and *integration* are important vocabulary terms in the context of the merger. *Segregation* is “the policy or practice of imposing the social separation of races separation of races, as in schools, housing, and employment” (*Webster's II*, 1999). This research project deals specifically with the legal segregation of two colleges in St. Louis, but also addresses generally the segregationist laws, policies, and practices of the region in the 1950s. *Desegregation* is the practice of eliminating “any law, provision, or practice requiring isolation of the members of a particular race in separate units” (*Merriam-Webster dictionary*, 1997). *Integration* is defined as the process of “forming, coordinating, or blending into a functioning or unified whole; to the end segregation of [a particular race] and bring [them] into equal membership in society or an organization” (*Merriam-Webster dictionary*, 1997). While many writers confuse the terms of *integration* and *desegregation*, the definitions listed above reveal an important difference. Desegregation is the elimination of segregated practices, but integration implies

something beyond simply ending physical separation. Integration requires “blending into a functioning or unified whole” and “equal membership” (*Merriam-Webster dictionary*, 1997). Throughout this paper, the author has chosen to describe the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges as a desegregation rather than an integration. As later chapters will reveal, significant evidence suggests that the students of the two institutions did not fully integrate on the Harris campus. It is important to note that much of the literature on the desegregation of colleges, universities, and other institutions uses the term “integration” to describe the phenomenon of the first participation of Black students or citizens. One will often read about the “integration” of a particular institution, despite only one or two Black students beginning their attendance and with full evidence of a lack of equality or socialization among the races. These references were perhaps made without the important sociologic distinction of physical integration versus social integration. Wherever the term “integration” is used in this study, it is due to the usage of other authors. In all other cases, the administrative act of transferring the Stowe students and faculty to the Harris campus in 1954 will be referred to as a “merger” (see below) or “desegregation,” terms more consistent with physical integration but distinct from true social integration.

*Merger:* Throughout this paper, the term “merger” is often used to describe the combination of Harris Teachers College and Stowe Teachers College in 1954-1955. This word choice is intentional, as it implies a slightly different meaning than a simple desegregation. The complexity of events in 1954-1955 should not confuse us on one key fact: an entire college, Stowe, was essentially folded into the Harris campus. The use of

the term “merger” seems to communicate some sensitivity to the sovereignty of Stowe prior to the merger of the two colleges.

*Jim Crow*: “Jim Crow” was the name given to a system of laws and public customs that promoted the treatment of Blacks as second class citizens. The term “Jim Crow” originated in a song performed by Daddy Rice, a white minstrel show entertainer from the 1830s (Cook, 1996). Rice covered his face with charcoal to resemble a black man and sang and danced a routine in caricature of a silly Black person. By the 1850s, this Jim Crow character was a standard act in the minstrel shows of the day (Kluger, 1976). It is not clear how the term came to be synonymous with the systematic legal and social segregation of Blacks. Jim Crow laws and practices emerged in the post-Reconstruction period of American history in the South and gained wider acceptance after the *Plessy* case set forth the doctrine that separate-but-equal public facilities were legal and acceptable. By 1900, “Jim Crow” was generally used as a descriptor for a system of racist laws and customs designed to subordinate and segregate Blacks. In the wake of *Plessy*, Jim Crow was practiced near universally in the South, extensively in border states such as Missouri, and sporadically in northern regions.

#### *Organization of the Study*

Chapter One (“Introduction”) of this study has provided an introduction that includes important background information, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the problem, the method, assumptions and limitations, scope and delimitations, definition of terms, and the organization of the chapters.

Chapter Two (“Literature Review”) presents a review of related literature; an in-depth chronology of the legal history of segregated schools in America; a study of the history of segregation and integration at other institutions of higher education in St. Louis and in Missouri; a discussion of three high profile desegregations of flagship state universities in the South in the decade after the Harris-Stowe merger; and a review of the climate of segregation in 1950s St. Louis.

Chapter Three (“Method”) includes a description of the methodology employed in this study, including issues regarding the conceptual framework and the propriety of qualitative methods. The chapter also describes how data were collected and analyzed.

Chapter Four (“Prelude to the Merger”) presents a descriptive narrative of the period immediately preceding the Harris-Stowe merger, presenting data collected from interviews, archival review, and contemporary news accounts. The Chapter sets the stage for an informed understanding of the dynamics of the merger.

Chapter Five (“The Merger and Its Impact”) presents a description of events of the 1954-1955 academic year at Harris Teachers College and the effect of the merger on students from the perspective of the participants, presenting data collected from interviews, archival review, and contemporary news accounts. Chapter Five provides insight into two research questions of this study: 1) From the perspective of the students, describe the key events related to the merger and the circumstances surrounding those events; and 2) How do the students describe the impact of the merger?

Chapter Six (“Discussion”) addresses the third research question of this study: How might the findings of this study have significance for the study of the history of the St. Louis region and the history of higher education? Chapter Six also explores the major

findings of the research, presents a summary and conclusions, reviews the limitations of the study, and provides recommendations for further research.

The Appendix includes 1) a copy of the Informed Consent document used in this project, including IRB Human Subjects Approval Number; 2) the list of interview questions; 3) a description of the archival resources studied; and 4) a photographic scan of the front page of the October 1954 *Collegian*, the first edition of the Harris Teachers College student newspaper in the year of the merger.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of the Literature

The legal decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954) was the catalyst for the St. Louis School Board to desegregate the public schools in St. Louis, which included the 1954 merger of the Board's two colleges, Harris Teachers College (for Whites) and Stowe Teachers College (for Blacks). To place the Harris-Stowe merger in the proper context, it is necessary to understand the historical events that created and maintained systematic segregated public education.

At the mid-point of the 20th century, segregation in public education was not only common practice in much of the United States, but it carried with it the imprimatur of the United States Supreme Court. Segregation in education was only one manifestation of a broader system of segregation of Blacks and Whites in the South and border states, often referred to as "Jim Crow" (Kluger, 1976). As a political and social phenomenon, the emergence of Jim Crow can be traced to the period immediately following the Reconstruction of the South after the Civil War. During Reconstruction, northern judges and officials, on behalf of the federal government, established new systems of political leadership and control in the South that were designed to guarantee the new civil rights granted to the former slaves through the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution (Kluger, 1976). In the post-reconstruction period, 1875-1895, political control of the Southern states reverted back to White Southerners. These leaders moved quickly to replace the progressive reconstruction framework with a system designed to preserve the separation of the races and the political and economic disenfranchisement of the former slaves. Jim Crow laws were passed in most Southern



and border states to establish as law the separation of Blacks and Whites in all public venues and accommodations, including public education (Kluger, 1976).

The denial of public education to the freed slaves and their progeny was a mere continuance of the practice of denying education to Blacks under slavery. In the view of nineteenth-century slaves owner, to teach a slave to read or write was not only a waste of time and energy, but also potentially dangerous. One way to reestablish this suppression of Black education in the post-Reconstruction era was to establish separate schools, restrict their curricula, and constrain their resources (Kluger, 1976). This system existed for nearly a century and it took people of courage and strength to battle the system in order to end segregation. A great victory in that battle was won on May 17, 1954.

The spring of 1954 marked the culmination of a series of legal landmarks in the fight against segregation that dominated the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *Brown* case finally abolished the practice of segregated public education. At its core, the *Brown* case was the culmination of a decades-long strategy by the NAACP and other concerned Americans to completely end the practice of segregation in education and other public aspects of society (Kluger, 1976). For the first time, the Supreme Court unequivocally rejected the “separate but equal” doctrine that persisted as a legal precedent for more than fifty years. To understand how our nation’s legal system came to establish and support such a flawed legal precedent that so clearly harmed one race of people, it is useful to trace the origin, establishment, and eventual demise of the “separate but equal” doctrine.

*Legal History of Segregation in Public Education: Roberts to Brown*

The legal battle against segregation in public schools had been fought for more than 100 years prior to *Brown*. A chronology of key legal cases and legislation is

included below. Understanding the historical and legal contexts of these cases provides insight into the significance of the eventual end of segregated public education.

*Roberts v. City of Boston*, 59 Mass. (5 Cush.) 198 (Mass. 1849). The Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld the policy of the city of Boston which provided separate schools for Blacks, so long as the facilities provided were equal. This represents the first legal documentation of the notion of “separate but equal.”

*Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. (19 How) 393 (USSC 1857). While not a segregation case, this momentous Supreme Court case delayed progress towards racial equality by more than fifty years. The Supreme Court held that Blacks as slaves had no legal standing, as they were not citizens. This rendered permanent the socially applied second-class status of all Blacks, slave or free. Interestingly, Dred Scott initially filed his legal case with the federal court in St. Louis.

*Civil Rights Act of 1875*, 18 Stat. Part III, 335 (1875). The Civil Rights Act of 1875 involved the statutory implementation of the three “Civil War Amendments,” the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. These amendments were passed during the aftermath of the Civil War. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 codified into law the broad freedoms of the amendments which guaranteed former slaves freedom, equal protection under the law, and suffrage. This remarkable legislation guaranteed all peoples, regardless of race or color, the full use of public facilities. Charles Sumner, a Senator from Massachusetts during this period, made an unsuccessful attempt to include the right for any individual to attend integrated schools as a provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1875. This failure was viewed as inconsequential at the time. After all, in ten short years, “the Constitution had been amended three times

and dozens of supporting bills had been passed by Congress to provide the Black man with freedom, equality, and the vote” (Kluger, 1976, p. 50). Legislators and progressive leaders of the time had every reason to believe that, in time, the practice of segregated schooling would eventually end.

*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (USSC 1896). *Plessy* was not an education case, but instead it specifically involved segregated railway cars in Louisiana. Blacks in Louisiana had become intolerant of the segregation of public facilities. In 1892, in order to challenge segregation on the railway cars of public trains, an exceedingly light-skinned Black man named Homer Plessy took a seat in a railroad car reserved for Whites only. Plessy was in fact “seven-eighths” Caucasian in Louisiana’s jumbled system of racial identification (Kluger, 1976). Plessy refused to leave the “Whites only” railway car when asked by a conductor. He was arrested, and he sued, claiming that he was being discriminated against in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. On appeal to the Supreme Court, the majority held that the provision of separate public facilities was constitutional, so long as the facilities were equal. As a result of *Plessy*, “Jim Crow” laws began to appear throughout the deep South with the apparent sanction of the Supreme Court.

*Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education*, 175 U.S. 528 (USSC 1899). A county school board in Georgia closed its only Black high school, citing financial constraints as the reason for its closure. Cumming sued, citing the Equal Protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment as the grounds for his lawsuit. The Plaintiff’s lawyers actually argued that if “separate but equal” was to be upheld as constitutional, the White high school should also be closed. The plaintiffs hoped that such a ruling would force the

school board to reinstate the Black school in order to preserve its White school. The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the school board to close the Black high school, saying that they had acted in good faith. In this case, the Court refused to even uphold the “equal” component of its own “separate but equal” doctrine.

*Berea College v. Kentucky*, 211 U.S. 45 (USSC1908). Berea College was a private college that was known for its progressive policies on race issues. Since its founding in 1859, Berea had been a center for integrated education, both at the collegiate and lower school levels. Its first collegiate freshmen class in 1869 was open to any student, regardless of creed or color (Wiggins, 1966). The post-Reconstruction legislature of Kentucky believed the biracial college to be offensive to its own segregationist views and passed legislation in 1904 that was designed specifically to end the practice of integrated education. Public colleges in Kentucky were segregated according to state law, and the legislature felt that the practice should be extended to private colleges, especially the lone renegade that dared to educate both Black and White students. The new law stated that any institution could teach members of both races at the same time only if the students were taught separately in classes conducted at least 25 miles apart. Berea sued in Kentucky’s Supreme Court, where the law was held to be constitutional. Berea appealed to the Supreme Court, which also upheld the Kentucky law, suggesting that Berea could comply with the Kentucky law and still achieve its chartered purposes without undue burden. In this ill-advised decision, the Court managed to submit completely to the states’ rights position. In just 12 years, the Supreme Court handed down three decisions, *Plessy*, *Cumming*, and *Berea*, which solidified universal segregation of education in the South and encouraged wide acceptance of the practice in

other regions. Berea College remained segregated until 1950 when a new Kentucky law permitted it to once again admit students without regard to ethnic origin (Wiggins, 1966).

*Gong Lum v. Rice*, 275 U.S. 78 (USSC 1927). This case centered on the school placement of a Chinese American girl, Martha Lum, in Bolivar County, Mississippi. Her father, Gong Lum, initially enrolled her in the White school, well aware of the poor condition of Black schools in Mississippi. The superintendent removed Martha from the White school, citing that she was yellow and as such, “colored.” She was therefore required to attend the school for Blacks. Gong Lum challenged the policy, appealing until the case reached the Supreme Court. The Court unanimously upheld the school board’s policy and the laws of Mississippi and suggested that these questions had already been decided, citing the *Plessy*, *Cumming*, and *Berea* cases. States now had complete control in determining who might attend public schools and under what circumstances. Segregated education was unassailable.

*University of Maryland v. Murray*, 169 Md. 478 (Md. 1937). Donald Murray sought admission to the University of Maryland School of Law. State law prohibited Blacks from attending the University of Maryland, but the state had passed legislation, albeit unfunded, that would pay the tuition of Black students who decided to attend colleges in other states that allowed them to enroll. After Murray applied to the University of Maryland, the state funded the out-of-state scholarship program, but by then the case had already been accepted for consideration, and Murray was not inclined to pursue an out-of-state education regardless of the state’s willingness to pay. He wanted to practice law in Baltimore, making the University of Maryland the obvious choice. The case was initially argued in Baltimore City Court, and the University relied

heavily on their out-of-state tuition policy as appropriate relief for Murray, certain they were satisfying the separate but equal doctrine. The judge was unconvinced, ruling in favor of Murray and ordering the University to admit him to the law school. The University appealed to the Maryland Supreme Court, which upheld the lower court's decision. The case is significant because it rejected two segregation strategies that were commonly used by Southern and border states: 1) the establishment of new academic programs at established yet inferior Black institutions, and 2) the appropriation of funds for out-of-state tuition for its Black students. The Maryland Supreme Court rejected both approaches as inherently unequal treatment. Murray entered the law school and at first was met with indifference. A day later, the students sitting next to him "shook his hand, wished him well, and offered to be of help if they could" (Kluger, 1976, p. 194).

*Gaines v. Canada*, 305 U.S. 337 (USSC 1938). The victory in the *Murray* case, although it established a precedent only within the state of Maryland, encouraged local NAACP branches around the country to refer cases to the national office. The St. Louis branch recommended a case quite similar to the *Murray* case. A St. Louisan named Lloyd Gaines sought admission to the University of Missouri School of Law. The case differed from the *Murray* case in that the state of Missouri was clearly ready to pay out-of-state tuition for Gaines, and as an alternative, the state was willing to fully fund a law school at Lincoln University, Missouri's all-Black University in Jefferson City. Missouri had been a leader among the segregated states in providing higher education for Blacks (Kluger, 1976). The NAACP attorneys brought suit in the circuit court of Missouri, choosing to exert the precedent of the *Murray* case immediately into a federal jurisdiction. The court ruled against Gaines, and the case was appealed. It took two and

a half years for the case to progress to the Supreme Court. Rather than assail *Plessy* and the separate but equal doctrine, Gaines' lawyer relied on it but insisted that the principle be truly enforced. The court agreed and ruled that the University must admit Gaines since the state could not possibly furnish an equal legal education at Lincoln University. *Gaines* was a significant case because it established a federal precedent that if separate but equal were to be maintained, facilities and opportunities must be truly equal. In the absence of equality, states could not segregate public education.

*Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents*, 332 U.S. 631 (USSC 1948). Ada Sipuel was an exceptional student at the State College for Negroes in Langston, Oklahoma. She applied for admission to the University of Oklahoma Law School, the only law school in the state. The law school rejected her application because a law school for Blacks with equal facilities would soon be opened. The case was filed in District Court in Cleveland County, Oklahoma, and the court ruled that the university was not required to open a Black law school until there were enough applicants to warrant its opening, and Ada Sipuel would have to wait until that time. The Oklahoma Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision, so Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP appealed the case to the Supreme Court. Marshall attacked the state's policy based upon the *Gaines* precedent and also, for the first time, launched an assault on the separate but equal doctrine, stating that "there can be no separate equality" (Kluger, 1976, p. 259). The Supreme Court referred the case back to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, indicating that the state must comply with the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment by providing Ada Sipuel with a legal education as quickly as it does for any member of any other group (including Whites). The Oklahoma Supreme Court ordered the University of Oklahoma to take action in one

of three ways: 1) admit Ada Sipuel; 2) immediately open a separate law school for her; or 3) close the White law school until it could open one for Blacks. Oklahoma immediately established a “law school” for Ada Sipuel, setting aside a roped-off section of the state capitol building and providing three teachers to serve as instructors. The state of Oklahoma made it clear that other Blacks would also be welcome to attend Oklahoma’s new “law school.” Thurgood Marshall returned to the Supreme Court, attacking the inequality of the overnight law school. Unfortunately, the Court did not agree with his position. The only thing that the *Sipuel* case established was that a state had to *immediately* offer something qualified as a “school” in order to comply with the separate but equal doctrine. The *Sipuel* case was viewed at the time as a setback in the drive to end segregated schools.

*Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (U.S.S.C. 1950). Heman Sweatt was a Black mailman from Texas who sought admission to the all-White law school at the University of Texas. Like Ada Sipuel, whose case was moving through the legal system at the same time, Heman Sweatt’s application was rejected by the University of Texas on the basis of state law that prohibited the integration of public education. Sweatt filed a lawsuit in the District Court in Travis County, Texas, and the judge ruled that the state of Texas must establish a law school for Sweatt at Prairie View University (a Black college) within six months. The state complied by renting a few rooms in Houston forty miles from Prairie View University and assigning two Black lawyers to serve as faculty. Despite this deficient arrangement, the judge in Travis County accepted that it represented substantial equality. Sweatt disagreed and appealed to the Civil Court of Appeals. The Appeals Court upheld the lower court’s decision. In the interim, the state of Texas developed a



new and “better” law school for Blacks in Austin. It consisted of three rooms in a basement, three part-time instructors who were borrowed from the faculty of the White law school, a library of 100,000 books, and student access to the law library of the White law school. Sweatt was still unsatisfied with the separate school and appealed to the Supreme Court. Representing Heman Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall advanced two arguments: 1) separate law schools for Blacks, especially make-shift ones, lacked the advantages of the all-White schools, and 2) segregation itself was harmful to its victims (Martin, 1998). This second argument was a new approach in the NAACP’s legal strategy. This new argument highlighted the psychosocial evidence of the harm caused by segregation itself, regardless of the provision of equality. The Supreme Court overruled the lower courts, identifying the separate law school for Blacks established by the state of Texas as grossly inadequate. The Court failed to fully overturn *Plessy*, but in *Sweatt* (and *McLaurin* – see below) it corrected the mistake that was made in the *Sipuel* case two years earlier. No longer could Southern states cobble together makeshift professional schools in order to protect their segregated all-White colleges and universities from integration.

*McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, 339 U.S. 637 (USSC 1950). The *McLaurin* case was another collegiate segregation case active at roughly the same time as *Sweatt*. George McLaurin was a 68 year-old Black man who in 1948 sought admission to the University of Oklahoma to earn his doctorate in education. The university denied him admission, and Thurgood Marshall filed suit with a special three-judge District Court because its decision could then be appealed directly to the Supreme Court, thereby avoiding an additional step that is normally required in the appeals

process. These special district courts were only convened in cases that involved key constitutional issues. As expected, the District Court's ruling was consistent with the relatively new *Sipuel* precedent earlier that year. The court mandated that the state of Oklahoma provide McLaurin with the education that he sought as quickly as it did for White students. The state reluctantly conceded that "Negroes seeking courses of study not available at the state's colored college might be admitted to the regular colleges and universities of the state" (Kluger, 1976, p. 267).

This was an improvement over the roped-off law school that the University of Oklahoma provided for Ada Sipuel, but the state demanded that this new remedy comply with its basic segregationist principles. In practice, this meant that McLaurin would be allowed to attend the University of Oklahoma, but his instruction would be delivered on a segregated basis. During classes he was required to sit at a desk by himself in an anteroom separate from direct contact with his White classmates and instructors. The University later adjusted this policy, allowing McLaurin to sit in the actual classroom, but his seat was surrounded by a railing marked "reserved for Colored." In the library he was assigned to a segregated desk. In the cafeteria he was required to eat in a separate area, alone, and at different times than the White students. It was obvious that the state was attempting to punish McLaurin through humiliation because he challenged the segregation of its colleges and universities.

Thurgood Marshall appealed to the Supreme Court, and the *McLaurin* case was tried on the same day as the *Sweatt* case. In *McLaurin*, the educational facilities and instruction provided were not in question, but the plaintiff challenged the equality of the educational experience at the institution due to the insidious disparate treatment that was

revealed in the *Sweatt* case. The Supreme Court agreed and ruled in favor of the plaintiff, stating that McLaurin must receive the same treatment under state law as students of other races. In *McLaurin*, as in *Sweatt*, arguments concerning the psychosocial impact of segregation were effectively used to challenge its practice.

*Parker v. University of Delaware*, 75 A.2d 225 (Del. 1950). The *Parker* case was introduced in the jurisdiction of the Chancery Court of the state of Delaware. A suit was filed against the University of Delaware on behalf of thirty students from Delaware State College for Negroes who had been denied admission on the basis of their race. Chancellor Collins Seitz heard the case. After listening to the arguments, Seitz toured the facilities of the White and Black colleges provided by the state of Delaware and determined that Delaware State (for Blacks) was grossly inferior to the University of Delaware (for Whites). He ordered the plaintiffs admitted to the White university. The state did not appeal the decision, and the University of Delaware became the first state-financed institution of higher education in America to be integrated at the undergraduate level by court order (Kluger, 1976).

*The Brown cases* (1954). *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954), arguably the most famous Supreme Court decision of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was actually the generic name given to five separate school segregation lawsuits (Whitman, 1993). The other cases were titled *Briggs v. Elliott*, 347 U.S. 497 (USSC 1954), *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954), *Bolling v. Sharpe*, 347 U.S. 497 (USSC 1954), and *Gebhart v. Belton*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954). The Court considered all five of these cases simultaneously because they dealt substantively with the same constitutional questions regarding equal protection

under the law and the constitutionality of segregated public education. The *Bolling* case did differ from the other four in that it originated in the District of Columbia, a federal jurisdiction, so the plaintiff's claims were grounded in the Fifth Amendment rather than the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which only applied to the states. One central issue was present in all of these cases: the segregated facilities provided for Blacks were at least qualitatively if not physically inferior to those provided for Whites.

In the five consolidated cases, the NAACP continued to present its new argument that the act of segregation in and of itself was damaging to the health of its victims, even when the established physical facilities might be comparable or even equal. All of the cases featured this sociological argument with the exception of the *Bolling* case. The argument was buttressed by the testimony of a series of controversial witnesses, including social psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark. The Clarks had devised a doll test as a method to gauge evidence that Black children suffered from personality dysfunction when exposed to the laws of Jim Crow (Martin, 1998). The Clarks interviewed young children in segregated school districts, asking them which doll they preferred. The majority of the Black children preferred the White doll, from which the Clarks theorized that segregation reinforced notions of Black inferiority and damaged the self-esteem of these Black children.

*Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954). *Brown* emerged from Topeka, Kansas. One of the plaintiffs was Oliver Brown, and he sued the Topeka school board on behalf of his daughter, Linda Brown, because state law prohibited her from attending the White school close to her home. Instead, she was forced to cross a busy

railway yard each day to catch the bus in order to attend Monroe Elementary (for Black students). In Topeka the Black and White schools were relatively equal in terms of facilities and curriculum. This fact was even conceded by the NAACP in its arguments at the lower court levels. Topeka was specifically chosen for this very reason as a part of the NAACP's legal strategy. A case was needed in which the segregated school facilities were equal so that the separate portion of the separate-but-equal doctrine enshrined in the *Plessy* case could be attacked on its merits alone. A special three-judge panel in Kansas upheld the policy of the school board, using the *Plessy* case as its foundation. Because it was heard in a special district court, *Brown* could be appealed directly to the Supreme Court.

*Briggs v. Elliot*, 347 U.S. 497 (USSC 1954). The *Briggs* case began its odyssey in Clarendon County, South Carolina, one of the most backward corners of the deep South. Unlike Topeka, the difference between the Black and White schools in Clarendon County could not be more disparate. While the White schools may not have been the greatest facilities ever provided for elementary education, they were superior to the Black schools which were often one-room wooden shacks without utilities, running water, or indoor plumbing. Although under *Plessy* the case would be open and shut, as the Clarendon County schools could not even pretend to be equal, Thurgood Marshall sought to make a frontal assault on the entire system of segregated schools in South Carolina. To do this, he once again filed suit in a special three-judge Circuit Court, citing the presence of key constitutional questions. After hearing the arguments, the three-judge panel, made up of one avowed segregationist, one committed anti-segregationist, and one moderate, decided in a 2-1 vote to uphold the state's segregation policy, once again

relying on the *Plessy* precedent. *Briggs* was more proof of the necessity to tear down *Plessy* in order to end segregation.

*Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954). This case originated in Prince Edward County, Virginia, where for years Black constituents had been requesting improvements in the segregated Black schools. In April 1951, students of the Blacks-only Moton High School initiated a strike to protest the construction of ramshackle tar paper huts that were built to address crowding at their school. The students and their families were protesting the county's reluctance to build a new high school for Blacks, or at the least to expand the facilities at the current high school. The student-led strike committee coordinated a school-wide assembly and convinced the entire student body to stage a walk-out. The student strike lasted two weeks and proved to be a signal to the NAACP that the Blacks in Prince Edward County were prepared to proceed to the legal arena with their fight. Continuing its new strategy of directly challenging segregation, the NAACP filed a lawsuit in the federal court of Virginia on behalf of ninth grader Dorothy Davis and 116 other students, requesting that Virginia's law requiring segregated education be struck down as unconstitutional. In the initial case, the lawyers for the state of Virginia aggressively countered the testimony of the social psychology experts with testimony from their own experts. This was the only case in which the defense pursued this strategy. The three-judge panel unanimously upheld Virginia's school segregation law. They considered it to be a venerable custom of the people that harmed neither race and indeed benefited Blacks (Kluger, 1976).

*Bolling v. Sharpe*, 347 U.S. 497 (USSC 1954). *Bolling* was a case that addressed segregated education in the nation's capital, the District of Columbia. The schools in the

District had been segregated by an act of Congress, since Congress administered the schools in the District of Columbia. While there were clear disparities among the Black and White schools in the District, that fact was ignored as a part of the emerging legal strategy that was used to challenge segregation itself. As the District of Columbia was under federal jurisdiction, the legal basis for the challenge of segregated education in the District was the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment which protected individuals from the imposition of unreasonable and arbitrary restrictions by governmental agencies and officials. The NAACP argued that segregation among students represented just such an unreasonable restriction. The District Court judge disagreed. He explained that Black schools were established for the benefit of Black students. The judge dismissed the NAACP's claim. The case was subsequently appealed and aggregated with the cluster of cases that comprised the *Brown* decision.

*Gebhart v. Belton*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954). *Gebhart* was the only case in the *Brown* decision that the NAACP won at the lower level, only to be appealed by the defense in this case in the state of Delaware. The case was originally titled *Belton v. Gebhart*; the names were reversed upon appeal to the Supreme Court because the original plaintiff, Belton, now had become the defendant. The case was originally tried in the state Chancery Court before Chancellor Collins Seitz, the same judge who ruled in favor of the NAACP in the *Parker* case involving the University of Delaware. Once again Seitz found in favor of the NAACP, ordering the immediate integration of all schools in the state. At this time, the state of Delaware sought to appeal the decision and asked to combine their appeal with the other school segregation cases looming on the Supreme Court's schedule in 1952.

The five cases appeared on the Supreme Court docket at different intervals. By June of 1952, the *Brown* and *Briggs* cases had been accepted for appeal by the Court, as the Plaintiffs in each of these cases were unsuccessful in their appeal attempts at the lower level three-judge special circuit courts. The two cases were combined, and oral arguments were scheduled for October of 1952. The Court subsequently postponed arguments for these two cases until December 1952 in order to add the *Davis* appeal. Further consolidation became necessary when the Supreme Court decided to also consolidate the *Bolling* appeal from the District of Columbia into the docket, although the *Bolling* case addressed slightly different constitutional questions. *Gebhart* completed the consolidation, as officials from the state of Delaware wished to appeal the Delaware state court decision that had ordered the immediate integration of their schools. The final date was set: the Court would hear these five consolidated cases on December 9, 1952.

In a unanimous decision announced on May 17, 1954, the Court found that segregation in public education was unconstitutional, finally striking down *Plessy*. The downfall of *Plessy* signaled the beginning of the end of segregation in all public venues beyond education. The era of Jim Crow was coming to an end.

*Adams v. Richardson*, 156 U.S. App. D.C. 267, 480 (DC Cir. 1973). As a postscript, it is necessary to briefly mention the *Adams* case. *Adams* was a class action lawsuit initially filed in 1970 against the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). The plaintiffs sought to force HEW to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. This legal approach was possible because all of the colleges and universities in question received federal monies. Black students and other interested parties were disappointed in the reluctance of many colleges and universities to halt racially



discriminatory practices on their campuses. Twenty years after *Brown*, Blacks were still struggling for the elusive equality that had been promised to them one hundred years earlier upon the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. Through years of appeals and negotiations, HEW and the offending states were finally compelled to live up to the expectations of the Civil Rights Act.

*Desegregation at Colleges and Universities in the St. Louis Region*

While the St. Louis Board of Education merged its two segregated colleges in the wake of the *Brown* decision, the desegregation experience at other colleges and universities in the region took different paths. A review of published works sheds light on the circumstances surrounding the desegregation of several other colleges and universities in the region.

*Washington University in St. Louis.* Washington University could claim to be the first college in the region to admit Black students, but that claim might be misleading. Whether the university admitted Blacks prior to 1880 cannot be answered conclusively, but it is certain that a Black man named Walter Moran Farmer attended Washington University School of Law as early as 1887 (Cook, 1996) and graduated with honors in 1889. Between 1881 and 1896, at least ten Black students were admitted to the university, at least nine matriculated, and at least seven graduated (Morrow, 1996) despite a protest against Black enrollment on the part of some White students in 1892. At some point, however, the institution discontinued the admission of Black students. In a 1912 census by the U.S. Bureau of Education, Washington University described itself as “exclusively for white students” (Morrow, 1996 p. 464).

The idea of integration was not reconsidered at Washington University until the end of World War II. The desegregation of another regional university in 1944, Saint Louis University, may have influenced the decision of Washington University to desegregate, but more than likely it was the combination of legal pressure and the changing social values of the country and the region that brought about the change. The legal pressure began in 1945 after the University rejected the applications of four Blacks who attempted to register for summer school. Aware of this problem, the NAACP announced its intention to join the city of St. Louis in a lawsuit filed to revoke the University's tax exempt status (Pfeiffenberger, 1989). For one of the largest landowners in the city of St. Louis, this was no idle threat. The University defended its discriminatory practice by citing Missouri state law. Since the state of Missouri granted the university its charter, Washington University was reluctant to challenge established state law by accepting Black students.

While the tax-exempt revocation case gathered momentum, influential citizens from the community wrote letters to Chancellor Arthur Compton to urge that the university comply with their demands for integration. Other groups that promoted racial integration included the Metropolitan Church Federation of St. Louis, the *St. Louis American* and *The Argus* (the two Black weekly newspapers), and the student body itself which voiced its concerns in the form of student newspaper articles and editorials.

Bureaucratic inertia and the conservative nature of Chancellor Compton dictated a gradual approach. Lagging behind the sentiments of his faculty, deans, and student body, Compton eventually permitted the re-integration of the university in a series of small, unplanned steps. In hindsight, Compton's reluctance may have been fueled by a

misconception of the support in the community for integration at Washington University. Compton's indecision, coupled with the Directors' reluctance to take action, placed Vice Chancellor Charles Belknap in the decisive role. While Belknap played a key role throughout the process the deans and the various schools of the college initiated desegregation. The medical school inadvertently admitted a Black student to postgraduate study in Ophthalmology but did not receive permission from the Board until June 1947, after the student had already been admitted (Morrow, 1996). In December of the same year, the school of social work admitted its first Black student after waiting two years to do so. The graduate school followed suit several months later. The remaining post-baccalaureate schools opened admission to Black students in 1949. In 1950, the school of Dentistry integrated; therefore the undergraduate program remained the sole segregated component of the student body.

In January of 1949, Walter White, the executive director of the NAACP, delivered a speech on campus. He emphasized the necessity of eliminating discrimination at home since America had just fought a war abroad to ensure democracy. Inspired by this speech, and in an attempt to capitalize on the perceived momentum of the graduate school integrations, a group of students formed the Student Committee for the Admission of Negroes (SCAN). The primary goal of the group was to advocate for the integration of the undergraduate division. Their efforts culminated in a student referendum presented in May of 1949 that addressed the issue of admitting Black undergraduate students. SCAN preceded the referendum with posters, a parade, and a campus rally. Despite the fact that the march was held on a warm, sunny day in May of 1949, the demonstration garnered fewer than two dozen participants, and the rally

attracted only 400 people who perhaps were more interested in the live music on the quad (Morrow, 1996).

The university finally opened the undergraduate division to Black student admission in May of 1952, not because of any internal or external pressure, but because the risks of integrating had become trivial. The Chancellor told a member of the Board: “The time is now ripe for a change in our admission policy, and...we...expect that opening the doors of our undergraduate schools...will have little effect on our campus life” (Morrow, 1996, pp. 469-470).

The university managed to maintain one last vestige of discrimination in that summer of 1952: it did not integrate its dormitories. Two years after Compton’s retirement, the interim Chancellor changed the policy due to the protests of student affairs professionals charged with the responsibility of administering such an onerous policy (Morrow, 1996).

*Saint Louis University.* Saint Louis University, a private, Catholic college, is the oldest institution of higher education in the region, tracing its founding back to 1818, before Missouri was even a state. It is the oldest college or university west of the Mississippi. It began humbly as a small seminary in Florissant, Missouri (Hill, 1879). One account of the university’s early history notes the presence of Blacks at the Florissant site, but likely as servants or slaves (Hill, 1879). Hill also notes that the instruction of Native American boys began as early as 1824, and the instruction of Native American girls began three years later. Hill, who was a faculty member of Saint Louis University in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, does not note if any Blacks were educated at the college during its first sixty years, the time at which his *Historical Sketch of the St. Louis*

*University* was published in 1879. During the era of segregation, multiple sources (Cook, 1996; Holland, 1961; Morrow, 1996) conclude that Saint Louis University's desegregation in 1944 made it the first white-only college or university in the state of Missouri to accept Black students for admission in the twentieth century.

The story of Saint Louis University's desegregation is detailed by Holland (1961) in a brief historical pamphlet. Holland's account, filled with recollections of mysterious anonymous sources, reads like the narrative of a confession. The names of many of the participants have been omitted, and the date of publication suggests that Holland was sensitive to protecting the identity of the witness or witnesses who shared their recollections.

The story begins with a young, Catholic black girl who had attended St. Elizabeth's parochial school in St. Louis during her childhood. At this time, no Catholic high school in St. Louis would accept a Black student (Kluger, 1976), so instead she attended Mother Katherine Drexel School for girls in Rockcastle, Virginia to complete her secondary education. Upon her return to St. Louis, she desired to attend a Catholic college, specifically Saint Louis University. The girl's mother approached the family's priest at St. Malachy parish, who was likely one of Holland's key sources of information. This priest consulted with Saint Louis University President Patrick Halloran, a Jesuit priest, along with various faculty members to discuss the possibility of integration. Halloran agreed to set up a special meeting which would include himself, the Regents, various deans, and the two parish priests from St. Malachy (Holland, 1961).

The President later decided to postpone the special meeting in order to assess the feelings of the alumni regarding integration. The President sent out a form letter to

alumni, detailing the pros and cons of integration. At the bottom of the letter, he invited alumni to register their opinion by completing a ballot indicating a “yes” or “no” vote. The delay angered the unnamed priest from St. Malachy parish, so he promptly forwarded a copy of the alumni letter to the City Editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Holland, 1961).

The *Post-Dispatch* had begun to proceed with a campaign calling for the integration of the University of Missouri, and Halloran’s letter to the alumni convinced the paper to broaden its campaign by focusing some attention on Saint Louis University’s segregationist practices. Halloran continued to delay the special meeting, so the unnamed priest mailed to the President and other key faculty a copy of Ted Le Berthon’s “An Open Letter to Mother Edwarda,” a missive originally published in the *Pittsburgh Courier* (Holland, 1961). The letter was written as an attack on the rejection of the application of a young, Catholic, Black girl who sought admission into Webster College in St. Louis, another Catholic institution. The comparison was obvious. The courage and impatience of this unnamed priest pressured the administration to act.

Eventually President Halloran convened a special meeting with the Regents, Deans, a select group of faculty of the university, and the dogged priests of St. Malachy parish. After much discussion, only two of the approximately fifteen faculty present supported integration. The remainder expressed concerns that the academic integrity of the University might be threatened if Black students were admitted, while others argued that White students would leave in droves, threatening enrollment. But the letter to Mother Edwarda had already begun to affect the campus community. Father Claude Heithaus, a Jesuit priest and professor of archaeology, defied a gag order that was

imposed by President Halloran and delivered a sermon on the sin of segregation (Padgett, 2001). Heithaus delivered his sermon in the College chapel at a Mass that many students attended. Holland (1961) describes the scene in St. Xavier College Church: “The student body arose to a man and made a public act of contrition for the past unjust...treatment of the Negro” (p. 3). The text of the sermon later appeared in the student newspaper.

President Halloran publicly rebuked Father Heithaus and exiled him to a chaplaincy in Fort Riley, Kansas as punishment (Padgett, 2001). President Halloran disciplined other outspoken priests and a great deal of controversy arose on campus. The Jesuits were divided on how to proceed.

This very public dispute, coupled with the pressure applied by the *Post-Dispatch*, aroused the interest of the entire city. The university was deluged with calls and correspondence that addressed both sides of the segregation question. In addition, Black students submitted more and more applications. The President directed the Director of the School of Social Work to admit the Black students whose applications he had already received. The School of Commerce and Finance also accepted the application of a Black student, although no official announcement had been made regarding integration of the university. It appeared that the actions of one determined priest had catalyzed a great transformation.

The victory, however, was short-lived. Soon after, in the spring of 1944, the President sent a rejection letter to a graduate of St. Joseph’s Negro High School who sought admission to the University based upon the premise that the College had not changed the policy of segregation at that time (Holland, 1961). Increased pressure from higher authorities in the Jesuit hierarchy eventually turned the tide, and President

Halloran was forced to publicly announce the admission of five Black students. President Halloran also released a statement that was published in local newspapers and explained the new policy and why the change was made.

Once desegregated in 1944, the university experienced a continued increase in the enrollment of Black students. By 1952, Saint Louis University enrolled more than 250 Black students in a student body that totaled 10,500, along with four Black faculty members (Padgett, 2001). The desegregation of Saint Louis University also had a profound effect on Catholic parochial and high schools in St. Louis. In 1947, St. Louis Archbishop Ritter declared that parochial schools under Archdiocesan control would no longer practice segregation (Desegregation Monitoring Office of the St. Louis Public Schools, n.d.). Any priests or laity who did not comply with that directive would be in danger of excommunication from the Church (Padgett, 2001). The moral authority of school integration now also carried ecclesiastical authority.

*University of Missouri at Columbia.* Founded in 1839, the University of Missouri mirrored the racial policies of its home state. Missouri was bound to its role as a “slave” state as a result of the Compromise of 1820. It was never in doubt that its university would be for White students only. By custom, practice, and law, Blacks were excluded from all public rights in Missouri, including the right to public education (Kluger, 1976). For a brief period after the Civil War, more progressive Reconstruction policies loosened the grip of racial discrimination, but only slightly. Blacks were now recognized as citizens, and schools could be established for their education, but that did not mean that schools would be integrated. Jurisdictions that attempted to integrate their schools faced lawsuits and sometimes intimidation.



In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the random chance of history cast the struggle to integrate the University of Missouri in a national light. The legal strategy employed by the NAACP for challenging racial segregation in America was hampered by two factors: scant fiscal resources, and the availability of appropriate plaintiffs with strong legal cases (Kluger, 1976). Because of these two factors, the NAACP was very cautious regarding the cases in which they invested their precious resources. The St. Louis chapter of the NAACP assured Charles Houston, legal counsel for the NAACP, that there was a case to be won in Missouri. The story awaiting Houston in St. Louis presented a tempting lawsuit upon which to expand recent victories.

The *Gaines* case has already been discussed in great detail, so only some brief highlights are shared here. Lloyd Gaines wanted to attend the University of Missouri School of Law but was denied by the Registrar and rejected in appeals to the President and Board of Curators. He filed a lawsuit, and the original decision favored the University. The NAACP appealed the decision to the Supreme Court, who in 1938 ruled that the University must admit Gaines to law school or provide truly equal facilities for Blacks to pursue legal study.

That was not to be, as the segregationists in the legislature manipulated the Supreme Court decision. If they could provide Gaines with an equal education at Lincoln University, then the University of Missouri could maintain its all-White status. So, in the throes of the Depression, the state legislature passed the Taylor Bill, introduced by an avowed segregationist from Keytesville, Missouri, which authorized funding authority for Lincoln University to offer graduate and professional education equal to that of the University of Missouri (Cook, 1996). In the fall of 1939, when Gaines should have been

the first Black student to enter the law school at the University of Missouri, the state quickly remodeled a part of the old Poro Beauty College in St. Louis to serve as Lincoln University's new law school. Louis E. Taylor, on leave from faculty of the respected Howard University Law School, was named as Dean. Unfortunately, the Dean had no work since the school's sole student failed to show up for classes. Lloyd Gaines had disappeared.

Mark Tushnet (1987) offers an account of the disappearance of Lloyd Gaines, an enduring mystery still today. While the legal appeals in Gaines' case were ongoing, the NAACP provided financial assistance for him to attend the University of Michigan, where he earned an M.A in Economics in 1937. Gaines subsequently obtained a position with the Michigan State Civil Service Department. After the Supreme Court ruled in his favor, Gaines returned to St. Louis in December of 1938 with the intention of attending the University of Missouri in the fall of 1939. Discouraged by the Taylor Bill and the prospect of attending a "bogus" one-student law school, Gaines left St. Louis for Chicago in the spring of 1939. For a time he lived at a YMCA and later boarded with members of his fraternity at the Alpha Phi Alpha house. One night, he left to buy stamps and never returned. Gaines was gone over four months before the NAACP realized that their client was missing. Legal appeals that had been made on his behalf to protest the inequality of the make-shift law school were dismissed because the plaintiff could not appear (Cook, 1996). Gaines was never found, and only rumors remain today regarding what might have happened to him.

The disappearance of Gaines and the subsequent dismissal of his appeals, temporarily protected the all-White status of the University of Missouri. Despite the

NAACP's victory in the *Gaines* case, it would be another 15 years before a Black student would be admitted to and attend an all-White public university anywhere in the South or a border state (Wiggins, 1966). During the period from 1935-1950, approximately seventy Blacks inquired about admission to the University of Missouri. The standard rejection letter explained that "the laws of Missouri provide for the higher education of Negro people of the state in Lincoln University... These laws are binding upon the officials of the University of Missouri. Therefore, your inquiry should be addressed to the President of Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri" (Cook, 1996, p. 59). It was clear that the state of Missouri was going to do everything in its power to resist integration at the University of Missouri, including funding new degree programs at Lincoln whenever necessary.

These segregationist policies, along with the Taylor Bill, failed to deter Blacks from challenging the University of Missouri's racist admissions policies. In early 1939, Lucille Bluford applied for admission to the well-respected School of Journalism. Bluford was a 1932 graduate of the University of Kansas, and was at the time working as managing editor of *The Kansas City Call*, a Black newspaper (Cook, 1996). Her application for admission had been accepted, but when she arrived in the fall of 1939 to register for classes, S.W. Canada, the registrar, refused to allow her to enroll because of her race. Bluford appealed to the administration of the University for permission to enroll for the upcoming winter semester, noting that additional opportunities for graduate study in journalism did not exist in the state of Missouri institutions of higher education. Rather than allow Bluford to integrate the University of Missouri, the segregationist legislature quickly allocated \$60,000 for the establishment of a School of Journalism at

Lincoln University, which supplemented the sum of \$200,000 that had been allocated for the establishment of the law school for Lloyd Gaines. Bluford challenged this move in Federal District Court, *Bluford v Canada*, 32 F Supp 707 (WDMo, 1940), but the court ruled in favor of the defendant citing that the Lincoln journalism school met the standard of separate but equal..

Over time, the combined effects of societal change and legal developments eventually compelled the University of Missouri to reevaluate its admissions policies. In the legal arena, the NAACP consistently and successfully litigated a series of cases that challenged school segregation, and their efforts did not go unnoticed. During the period 1947-1949, both the *Sweatt* case in Texas and the *McLaurin* case in Oklahoma were being contested in appeals that were clearly headed for the Supreme Court. Most college administrators in the South acknowledged that integration was inevitable, but they still sought ways to resist the change (Wiggins, 1966).

In the state of Missouri, a 1945 revision of the Missouri constitution included new language that was consistent with the equal protection themes present in the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Missouri Secretary of State, n.d.). In the Missouri House, a Committee on Equal Rights was formed (Cook, 1996). Sensing the changing tide, the Board of Curators for the University of Missouri recommended to the Missouri House Committee on Equal Rights a bill that would permit Black students to enroll at the University of Missouri in courses *not* available at Lincoln University. This represented a direct departure from the policy the state pursued a decade earlier in the cases of Lloyd Gaines and Lucille Bluford, where extreme efforts were made to augment Lincoln's curricular offerings any time the University of Missouri's all-White status was

threatened. The Equal Rights Committee forwarded the bill to the full House, where the bill was amended to include *all* public colleges in the state. The bill passed in the House but failed in the Senate (Cook, 1996).

It took one more legal case to overcome the resistance of the segregationists. Three Black students applied in the spring of 1950 for admission to the University of Missouri. Gus Ridgel applied for admission to the Columbia campus; Elmer Bell and George Horne applied for admission to the School of Mines and Metallurgy at Rolla, today's University of Missouri – Rolla (Cook, 1996). The legal case, *Curators of the University of Missouri v. Elmer Bell, et al.*, (1950) was heard in Missouri Circuit Court by Judge Sam Blair. Blair ruled that the segregation of Missouri's public institutions of higher education was in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 1 of the 1945 Missouri Constitution. Blair's opinion in the case ordered that the University of Missouri and all other state colleges and universities accept qualified Black applicants into any academic program or curriculum that was not available at Lincoln University. Finally, the judicial branch had accomplished what the legislature could not.

Ridgel received a letter in July 1950 regarding his official admission into the university for the coming fall semester. Bell and Horne both enrolled at the Rolla campus that same semester. Ridgel felt morally obligated to integrate the University of Missouri, despite having been accepted at Harvard and at the University of Pennsylvania with a full scholarship (Cook, 1996). Ridgel and three other Black students were admitted to graduate and professional schools on the Columbia campus that fall of 1950, including Robert Lillard (history), Hazel Teabeau (speech and dramatic arts), and Frank

Logan (counseling) (Cook, 1996). Ridgel graduated with honors, receiving his Masters in Economics in 1951. It took an additional four years and the announcement of the *Brown* decision to compel the University of Missouri to open its undergraduate admissions to Black students.

*Webster University.* During the late-1940s Webster University was known as Webster College. At that time it was still a Catholic women's college, one of three Catholic colleges in the Archdiocese that admitted women only. The other two were Fontbonne College and Maryville College (J. Hanson, personal communication, April 15, 2004). There is some uncertainty as to when Webster desegregated. It is clear from sources regarding the desegregation of other institutions in the region that Webster certainly had not admitted Black students before 1944, and it is likely that it was desegregated some time between 1946 and 1952. One anecdote from C. Denny Holland's (1961) brief sketch regarding the desegregation of Saint Louis University suggests that Webster could not have been desegregated prior to 1944. In late 1943 or early 1944, a priest from St. Malachy parish in St. Louis was advocating for the admission of one of his Black parishioners to the then-segregated Saint Louis University. This unnamed priest, in an effort to pressure the administration and faculty of Saint Louis University, distributed copies of a letter written by Ted Le Berthon to many influential members of the faculty and administration (Holland, 1961). Mr. Le Berthon's letter originally appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier*. The letter was entitled "An Open Letter to Mother Edwarda" and had been addressed to a nun at Webster College in St. Louis, which was administered at that time by the Sisters of Loretto. The letter decried the rejection of an application for admission submitted by a young Catholic Black girl

(Holland, 1961). So at least in 1943, Webster College was practicing discrimination against Black applicants. Both Holland (1961) and Padgett (2001) clearly declaim that Saint Louis University integrated in 1944, and that it was the first college or university in Missouri to do so.

Another source in the literature suggests that Webster College had not desegregated by 1951. Padgett's (2001) essay on the desegregation of Spring Hill College presents information regarding the private universities in the South that were desegregated. Spring Hill College is a Catholic college in Spring Hill, Alabama, established by the Jesuits. Padgett's article displays a table (p. 172) that was adapted from an article by Morisey (1951) that lists seven Southern and border states, including Missouri, and identifies the private colleges in those states that were no longer segregated. The seven states noted were Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Texas, and Virginia, along with the District of Columbia. The states of Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida do not appear on the list, likely because not one private college was integrated in those states by 1951. Overall, twenty private colleges had been identified as integrated institutions in September, 1951, but only two were located in Missouri: Saint Louis University and Washington University (Morisey, 1951; Padgett, 2001). This information would support the argument that Webster College had not yet desegregated by 1951. In all, twenty colleges and universities appear on the list, some large institutions and some quite small, which suggests that a college the size of Webster would not have been overlooked by Morisey.

Morisey's (1951) research, however, is called into question by a reliable source. In a personal interview regarding Webster University, Joan Hanson, a graduate of Webster College (Class of '52), recounts significant personal anecdotes regarding a Black woman named Betty Banks who was a member of her entering class in 1948 (J. Hanson, personal communication, April 15, 2004). According to Hanson, Betty Banks was the first and only Black student to attend Webster College during their freshmen year together. The level of specificity embedded in the anecdotes that Hanson shared lead me to believe that Webster College indeed must have desegregated in the fall of 1948, placing it ahead of the desegregation of the undergraduate division of Washington University. This timing does coincide with a broad Archdiocesan effort to integrate all of the Catholic parochial and high schools under its control.

#### *High Profile University Desegregations in the South*

The merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in 1954 stands in stark contrast to later desegregations of high profile universities in the South. To highlight the differences, it is illustrative to discuss the desegregations of three institutions: the University of Georgia, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Alabama. The differences between the merger at Harris and the desegregations of these three universities can be organized into four major categories: 1) the pace at which these institutions desegregated in response to the *Brown* decision; 2) the number of Black students involved in the desegregations; 3) the level of political opposition; and 4) the degree of conflict exhibited during the desegregation, often violent in nature.

*Pace of the desegregations.* In the case of the Harris-Stowe merger, the St. Louis Board of Education took immediate and decisive action. In *Brown v. Board of Education*



(*II*), 349 U.S 294 (USSC 1955), the opinion of the justices recommended that schools integrate with all deliberate speed. In the South in the 1950s, ‘all deliberate speed’ was interpreted to mean “any conceivable delay” (Kluger, 1976, p. 753). Delay was manifested in a variety of ways. In some cases, the universities would mount exhaustive legal appeals. Georgia successfully stalled the first attempts to integrate its law schools, appealing decisions long enough until Horace Ward dropped his case and enrolled in another law school. Ward had initially applied and filed suit in 1952, and he was still involved in appeals in 1957 when he abandoned the effort (Trillin, 1991).

In other cases, the colleges implemented admissions procedures that effectively ruled out black applicants. In one example, the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) began requiring applicants to have letters of reference from at least five Ole Miss alums (Cohodas, 1997). A Black student in Mississippi would find it nearly impossible to find a White alumnus of Ole Miss who was courageous enough to sign such a letter.

Sometimes the colleges would conduct exhaustive private investigations of Black applicants, searching for any character flaws that could be used as grounds for denial of admission. Polly Myers, who attempted to integrate the University of Alabama along with Autherine Lucy in 1956, was disqualified at the last minute because the trustees discovered that her child was born out of wedlock (Clark, 1993). University of Mississippi officials attempted to engage in similar character attacks. In an attempt to discredit James Meredith as an applicant, university officials investigated his voter registration information (Doyle, 2001).

Federal involvement, under the leadership of Kennedy’s Justice Department, was necessary to enforce court orders requiring the desegregation of these universities. In

succession, Georgia (1961), Mississippi (1962), and Alabama (1963) finally desegregated their flagship universities.

*The pioneers.* In September 1954, all of the students at Stowe Teachers College, along with the majority of the faculty, were merged with Harris Teachers College. This “critical mass” of Black students comprised as much as forty percent of the entire student body at Harris in 1954. In the South, a few Black student pioneers desegregated each of the White institutions, campuses that had little or no Black faculty. Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes were the lone Black enrollees at the University of Georgia in January of 1961. During their first week of classes, Hunter and Holmes were both “suspended ‘for their own safety’ after a riot” (Trillin, 1991, p. 3). This tactic had been attempted before in Alabama with Autherine Lucy in 1956, however, and a subsequent legal suit mandated their return to campus under a new court order (Pratt, 2002).

At Ole Miss, one student carried the burden of being first. In the fall of 1962, James Meredith enrolled at the University of Mississippi. Meredith’s arrival on campus incited some of the most violent opposition ever seen in a collegiate desegregation. On September 20, 1962, Meredith attempted to register for classes but was personally blocked from doing so by the governor, a scene that was repeated five days later on the 25<sup>th</sup>. On September 27<sup>th</sup>, the lieutenant governor stood in the governor’s place, denying Meredith access to register for classes. Finally, on October 1, 1962, Meredith was able to register, but not before extreme violence erupted and resulted in the injury of hundreds of people and the deaths of two people on the Ole Miss campus due to riots and gunfire on the eve of his enrollment.

At the University of Alabama, Vivian Malone and James Hood led were the first Black students to successfully enroll in June of 1963, but the courageous efforts of Autherine Lucy in February of 1956 deserve to be mentioned. Lucy lasted as a student less than a week before an escalating series of demonstrations placed her in danger. Lucy charged that the administration was not doing all it could to control the protestors (Trillin, 1991). The Board of Trustees found a convenient reason to expel Lucy - her presence posed a significant threat to the campus environment. In any event, it took another seven years for Malone and Hood to penetrate the color barrier, but not before Alabama Governor George Wallace, taking his cue from Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett from the previous fall, made his famous stand at the "schoolhouse door" (Clark, 1993). On June 11, 1963, in a grandiose moment of staged political theater, Wallace finally relented to the newly federalized Alabama National Guard. Wallace stepped aside, and Malone and Hood were registered without incident.

*Level of political opposition.* The St. Louis Board of Education faced little, if any, political opposition to its merger plans for Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges. By contrast, nearly every political unit in the South opposed collegiate desegregation. Citizens and political leaders viewed these universities as key institutions in the preservation of the heritage and values of the southern lifestyle. An overwhelming number of political and business leaders were graduates, and they expected to send their sons and daughters to attend the same institution they had attended.

In Mississippi and Alabama, the governors of each state became personally involved in blocking the enrollment of Black students at their universities. The legislatures of all three states sponsored legislation that contrived artificial barriers for

Black students who sought admission to White institutions, including transfer from non-accredited institutions. The governors and other politicians did not behave in this manner solely in defense of racial segregation. The posturing and rhetoric also served a political purpose. The politicians were pandering to the White majority who would continue to reelect them. In Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, to be in favor of integration was political suicide. After the desegregation of schools and other public venues, many of these politicians shifted their outlook according to the changing political winds. Alabama governor George Wallace, who in 1963 made his stand in the schoolhouse door, had obviously moderated his position a decade later when in 1974 he crowned the first Black homecoming queen at the University of Alabama (Clark, 1993).

In the judiciary, segregationist judges exerted maximum effort to ensure the delay of legal cases while ruling against the NAACP and its plaintiffs at every possible opportunity. During James Meredith's legal battle to enroll at Ole Miss, judicial misconduct advanced to a new level. Following a defeat in federal court, the NAACP appealed Meredith's case to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. That three-judge panel overturned the lower court's decision and chastised Judge Sidney Mize for misconduct during the previous trial as well as a clear misunderstanding of the facts and the law (Cohodas, 1997). In July of 1962, The Fifth Circuit ordered Meredith to be admitted and threatened to hold any university or state official who did not comply in contempt of the court order. Before the appeals court order could be enforced, a separate federal appeals judge, Ben Cameron, issued a stay of the Fifth Circuit's order until the University could appeal to the Supreme Court. Cameron, considered "the most dedicated segregationist on the federal bench" (Cohodas, 1997, p. 73), had not been involved with the case until this

unwarranted intervention. The Fifth Circuit set aside Cameron's stay, and he promptly issued another. Cameron eventually issued four stays and forced Supreme Court Justice Harry Black, who was responsible for the appeals that arose in the southern states, to review the case. In September of 1962, Justice Black nullified all of Cameron's stays and ordered Meredith admitted to Ole Miss. Meredith finally registered for classes at Ole Miss on October 1, 1962. In this example, as in all the others, the legal maneuvers served only to delay the inevitable (Wiggins, 1966).

In terms of political influence, the power of the White Citizens' Councils in the South cannot be understated. These quasi-political organizations were very influential in state and local politics, and their segregationist members held influential positions in their respective communities. Their membership at times overlapped with the Ku Klux Klan. In the state of Mississippi during this period, the Citizens' Council essentially ran the state government due to the amount of control it had over the state's political, business, and educational leaders (Barrett, 1965). The most insidious power of the Citizens' Councils was their ability to intimidate and silence those Whites who favored a more moderate position on race and integration. In this way, a zealous and radical minority asserted itself over a more passive and silent majority.

*Degree of conflict.* Most importantly, the violence and intimidation that was rampant at universities throughout the South was not characteristic of the events surrounding the Harris-Stowe merger. At both Mississippi and Alabama, U.S. Marshals and armed troops were present on campus to enforce the court orders that required integration. In the case of Mississippi, thousands protested on campus on the evening of September 30, 1962, the day that James Meredith was scheduled to register for classes

(Doyle, 2001). The demonstration quickly devolved into a riot, and President Kennedy mobilized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division to respond. U.S. Marshals eventually deployed tear gas, and a pitched battle between rioters and the government forces ensued. Sadly, two men were killed in the “Battle of Oxford,” and the heart of the campus was in disarray. Meredith was not allowed to approach campus due to the instability of the situation and was escorted on to campus the next day under force of arms to register for classes (Doyle, 2001).

The armed presence at the University of Alabama in 1963 was more political theater than a necessity, but Governor George Wallace insisted that he would only surrender his position under the threat of force from the federal government (Clark, 1993). The Justice Department of the Kennedy administration obliged Wallace and federalized the beloved 31<sup>st</sup> Dixie Division, formerly an Alabama National Guard Unit. In a moment of irony, Wallace surrendered his position in the schoolhouse door to a general wearing a patch with the confederate battle flag on his sleeve (Clark, 1993).

In comparison, the desegregation of the University of Georgia in January 1961 was mild. Perhaps because it was the first of the three high-profile institutions to be desegregated, and perhaps because campus leadership was more effective, events were relatively peaceful for Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes in their first days of registration and classes. On the evening of January 9, 1961, the day that Hunter and Holmes registered for classes, a number of incidents transpired, including crosses set afire near the campus tennis courts. There were only two arrests, however, and there was no violence or property damage.

*Segregation and St. Louis in the Early 1950s*

In many respects, the racial climate of the 1940s and 1950s in St. Louis was little different than elsewhere in America. Blacks migrated from the South to St. Louis in great numbers in the first half of the twentieth century. The new arrivals found an environment abounding in more subtle forms of racism (Corbett & Seematter, 1995). Social segregation among Blacks and Whites was the norm, but by custom more than law. In fact, only public education and marriage were specifically outlawed by Missouri's constitution (Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000). But custom was powerful, and in the 1940s and early 1950s in St. Louis, Black citizens could not "go to plays and movies at city theatres, eat in white-owned restaurants, swim in city pools, live in restricted covenant neighborhoods, or send their children to St. Louis and Washington Universities" (Adams, 1985, p. 59). Health care was also segregated by custom, as Black citizens were expected to receive health services at the segregated Homer G. Phillips Hospital, opened in 1937 in the Ville neighborhood of St. Louis. White residents were sent to City Hospital in south St. Louis for treatment. Ivory Perry, a social activist who was prominent in St. Louis in the 1950s and 1960s, described his first experiences with the customs of segregated St. Louis:

When I got here I found out it was almost worse than down in Arkansas. At least in Arkansas you knew what you could do and what you could not do. But in St. Louis, [they] said you could do it until you tried to do it, and when you tried to do it, they'd come up with another excuse to keep you from doing it. (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 65)

Part of the problem was that segregation as practiced in St. Louis was erratic. Seating arrangements on streetcars were not segregated, but they were in theaters and at

Sportsmen's Park, the shared home of the St. Louis Browns and St. Louis Cardinals. The public libraries were open to Black citizens, but the public pools and playgrounds were not. One public department store lunch counter downtown was open to Black citizens in the basement of Scruggs, Vandevort and Barney, but at all others Black citizens were refused service (Adams, 1985). The inconsistent and arbitrary application of social segregation must have been maddening for the Black citizens of St. Louis who were left to interpret the various inconsistencies as best they could.

Labor opportunities in St. Louis during the period were also influenced by segregationist attitudes and customs. Despite the major role that St. Louis manufacturers played in meeting the needs of the war effort, Black citizens in the city were denied many of the employment opportunities. Some employers actually recruited White workers from the South to relocate to St. Louis to work in their factories, ignoring an able and willing Black labor force that was immediately available and accessible. Those defense contractors who hired Black citizens insisted on enforcing segregation within the workplace through the provision of separate bathrooms and dining areas (Adams, 1985). As the war progressed, civil rights activists were able to advocate for the employment of Black workers in defense plants, but progress was slow and the "customs" of St. Louis proved hard to change.

The period during and just after World War II witnessed the development of organizations and movements that advanced the fight against segregation in St. Louis. One such organization was the Citizens Civil Rights Committee (CCRC), a group of Black and White women who joined together during the war to organize non-violent protests against segregated lunch counters (Adams, 1985; Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000).



Many of these lunch counters were situated in department stores. Although the department stores were happy to accept the money of Black customers within their shops, Black citizens were almost universally prohibited from eating at the lunch counters, or in some instances, even trying on clothes.

The work of the CCRC was carried forward after the war by a newly formed organization, the Committee Of Racial Equality (CORE). CORE was a national civil rights organization that was comprised of Black and White men and women who espoused non-violent means of protest against segregation in American public life. CORE had chapters in many American cities, but the St. Louis group was considered one of the most active in the nation (Lipsitz, 1995). CORE pursued the protests of segregation and discrimination in public dining facilities by staging sit-ins at lunch counters in downtown St. Louis. These protests originated 13 years before the more famous lunch counter sit-ins of Greensboro, NC in 1960. During the period from 1947-1952, CORE successfully persuaded more than a dozen downtown establishments to begin serving all customers at their lunch counters (Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000).

CORE members also protested against the discrimination directed against Black residents at Fairgrounds Park pool in the early 1950s (Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000). The discrimination at the pool was especially troubling because Black citizens paid taxes that helped to build the pool, but Black citizens were forbidden to swim there. A group of CORE members, including three Black men, visited the pool to swim. One of the men, Walter Hayes, described his experience at that CORE demonstration: "We had no problem getting into the pool. However, word spread quickly around the neighborhood. Hundreds of White residents crowded around the pool fence to vent their feelings and to

display their hatred” (Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000, p. 70). That hatred took form in short order; before long, the pool was closed, filled in, and covered with tennis courts. It was not until May of 1961 that St. Louis finally outlawed racial discrimination in all restaurants, hotels, stores, theatres, pools and playgrounds (Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000).

Any discussion of racial segregation in St. Louis must include a description of the official and unofficial discriminatory practices that influenced segregation in housing which generated the sharp racial-geographical divisions within the city. In February of 1916, the city of St. Louis held a special election to consider an ordinance that would mandate segregated housing. Statutory residential segregation was not a new idea (Kelleher, 1970); the emergence of Jim Crow laws at the turn of the century encouraged housing segregation laws to be initiated in Baltimore, MD and Louisville, KY, among other cities. St. Louis’ ordinance was unusual in that it was the first such ordinance voted directly into law by the citizenry rather than politicians (Kelleher, 1970).

The 1916 ordinance in St. Louis was based on a near-identical ordinance that was passed in Louisville in 1914. These ordinances maintained segregated housing by limiting the blocks within a city where Black residents and White residents could own private homes. If a block contained a majority of White residents, new Black residents were prohibited from moving into these areas, and vice versa. Louisville’s ordinance was eventually challenged in court, and in *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (USSC 1917) the Supreme Court unanimously declared the ordinance unconstitutional on the grounds that it violated the Fourteenth Amendment. The ordinances in Louisville, Baltimore, St. Louis and twelve other cities were outlawed. This victory against segregation in St. Louis, however, was quickly turned into a defeat. The Real Estate Board, the leading

professional organization for real estate professionals in St. Louis, quickly imposed informal agreements within its membership to control the sale of homes and property under the same guidelines that were applied in the 1916 ordinance (Schoenberg & Bailey, 1977).

The segregation and strict control of housing in St. Louis had the effect of concentrating Black residents into self-contained communities. Many of these areas became centers of Black political and social thought in the region, including the neighborhood known as The Ville (Lipsitz, 1995; Schoenberg & Bailey, 1977). Decades of segregation in these communities encouraged the rise of an entire network of churches, schools, newspapers, theaters, social clubs, and cultural organizations parallel to those in the White community (Corbett & Seematter, 1995).

The informal agreements that were enforced by the Real Estate Board evolved into a formal system of restricted covenants. The covenants required homeowners to sell their homes to people of the same race. The restricted covenants of St. Louis and other cities were challenged in a legal case that eventually reached the Supreme Court. In *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (USSC 1948), a unanimous Court declared the practice unconstitutional and in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

### *Conclusion*

Thus, in 1954, the St. Louis School Board found itself in a pioneering position. While the status of segregation in the city's public institutions was in a state of flux, the School Board made the decision to desegregate all of the public schools in St. Louis, including Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges. By taking immediate action, the Board of

Education communicated that, in St. Louis at least, the process would be pursued with deliberate speed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Method

This study investigates the experiences of students relating to the merger of Harris Teachers College and Stowe Teachers College during the 1954-1955 academic year. The study is interpretive, relying on personal recollections and archival data in order to construct a descriptive narrative of the events of the merger year.

#### *Conceptual Framework*

This study attempts to describe the circumstances and events surrounding the merger of two previously segregated colleges, particularly from the perspective of students who experienced the merger. The study examines the disconnect between the physical integration of the two colleges and the lack of social connection among the students involved. Conceptually, this phenomenon is supported by literature on social integration. Some sociologists have suggested that true social integration of formerly segregated populations would only occur under certain positive conditions (Allport, 1954), and that some of these conditions would include three components—if there were common goals, where there was equality in status, and a level of intimacy of interaction (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004). Applying this conceptual framework helps to explain a collegiate merger lacking in significant social integration despite proceeding with limited controversy.

#### *Research Paradigm*

This study was conducted using an inductive approach, employing a loose construction that allows collected data to dictate the inquiry. Employing the research paradigm of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), this study reconstructs and

explains the stories relative to the events of the year under study. Each significant piece of data plays a role in informing a thick, descriptive narrative (Geertz, 1973) imbued with the interpretation of the principal investigator.

### *Sample*

Students who experienced the merger first-hand were interviewed. This sample population was inherently limited by several factors. First, participants must have attended the teachers colleges for at least one year when they were separate, and at least one year when they were merged. Student enrollment for the newly merged Harris Teachers College in 1954-1955 was comprised of two groups: students in the four-year Teachers College (TC) program who pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Education and students in the two-year Junior College (JC) program who pursued an Associate in Arts degree. In order to meet the participation criteria for this study, participants must have been a Harris TC graduate from the classes of 1955-1958, or a Harris JC graduate from the class of 1955. All participants in this study were considered “Harris” graduates because Stowe last graduation was held in June of 1954.

Other characteristics combined to make the study population quite narrow for cultivating a study sample. First, the age range of potential participants is roughly 68 to 72 years of age, which is at or near the average life expectancy of individuals in the general population of the United States. In addition, some participants were challenged with significant health issues that prevented or interfered with their participation in this project.

The process of identifying and locating prospective participants was further complicated by the lack of alumni contact information available in the Harris-Stowe State

College alumni database. Harris-Stowe State College has limited electronic resources available detailing the contact information of alumni of this period. Basic investigative techniques were employed to find living alumni from the period by cross-checking names from the *Torch*, the Harris Teachers College bi-annual yearbook, against publicly available address and telephone records, including the White Pages. As participants were discovered through this method, their personal contacts often led to other participants. This limitation dictated a process of sampling that methodologically is described as “convenience sampling.” The initial convenience sampling process led to a “snowball” effect as new participants provided leads for finding (and disqualifying) other potential participants within the population. Sixteen individuals were invited to participate, and fourteen agreed to be interviewed.

#### *Sources of Data*

In order to strengthen the accuracy of the narrative, data for this study were collected from three types of sources. This approach ensured that triangulation of data would be employed whenever possible. The three types of sources were: 1) general archival materials; 2) qualitative interview data collected through semi-standardized interviews (Berg, 2001) with participants who were students at Harris Teachers College during the period under investigation; and 3) news accounts from the period under investigation.

General archival data were obtained from the Harris-Stowe State College Archives, the Western Historical Manuscript Collection (WHMC) in the Thomas Jefferson Library of the University of Missouri – St. Louis, the Missouri Historical Society Library, and the archives of the St. Louis Public Schools. Interview data were

collected in electronically recorded interviews conducted with participants who attended Harris Teachers and Stowe Teachers Colleges during the period being studied. News accounts of the period were reviewed through the survey of past issues of *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, *The St. Louis Argus*, and *The St. Louis American* on microfilm at the Central Branch of the St. Louis Public Library.

#### *Use of Qualitative Methods*

Since this study concerns itself with historical events, as well as the meaning of those historical events for those involved, a qualitative approach is the natural choice. This choice is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994), who suggest that the use of qualitative methods has “always been the staple of some fields in the social sciences, notably anthropology, history, and political science” (p. 1). The most influential qualitative perspective employed in this study is that of Clandinin and Connelly (2000) in their description of narrative research. In narrative research, the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. This information is then retold by the researcher in a narrative chronology. Thus, the story of the participant is combined with the stories of other participants and the researcher to form a collaborative narrative (Creswell, 2003). The use of semi-standardized (Berg, 2001) interviews will support an inductive method of inquiry.

#### *Procedure*

Human Subjects approval was secured from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri – St. Louis to ensure that the procedures followed during the interview process were consistent with ethical practice. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format in a period of time that roughly coincided with



the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Harris-Stowe merger. All of the interviews were recorded electronically, including phone interviews, using a digital voice recorder. The recordings were then transcribed into digital text to aid in data analysis.

#### *Interview Protocol*

Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings. Several interviews were conducted in the Archives Room of Harris-Stowe State College. This “neutral” setting put participants at ease and facilitated the use of archival yearbook documents from the 1954-1955 academic year. Several other interviews were conducted in the homes of participants, at their request and with their permission. Finally, some participants preferred to conduct their interviews via telephone. Participants were encouraged to review past yearbooks prior to being interviewed in the interest of facilitating memory recall. Interviews ranged in length from 24 minutes to 72 minutes. Included in the informed consent process was the option for participants to select the option of having their quoted responses associated with an alias in any published work. All participants chose to have their names published in this study and rejected the use of an alias.

#### *Interview Questions*

The semi-standardized interviews followed the order of questions listed below, but each individual interview was dictated by individual circumstances whereby the researcher and the participants were allowed to deviate from the list when circumstances warranted digression. The list of questions is included below:

1. Tell me about your experience at HARRIS or STOWE (whichever school they attended in the academic year prior to the merger) in the year(s) before 1954-1955.
2. How did you find out about the merger?

3. What were you expecting the merger to be like going into the experience?
4. (IF STOWE): Describe the difference between the facilities, faculty, administration, support services, student organizations, activities, extra-curriculars, etc. between your original college (Stowe) and the Harris campus.
5. How receptive were the administrators and teachers at Harris to Black students?
6. Tell me about your experience at Harris Teachers College in the 1954-1955 academic year, the merger year.
7. Tell me about some experiences from 1954-1955 when you were in a situation where you had a significant interaction (more than just a passing greeting or acquaintance) with a fellow student of a different culture (worked on a committee together, were in the same club, lab partners, or study group, etc.).

Possible follow-up questions:

- a. In your view, how did the merger “go?” What was the climate/atmosphere like on campus, in the halls, etc.? How did you feel at the time?
  - b. Tell me about any controversies or unusual incidents that either you or one of your classmates experienced.
8. External environment: how was the integration perceived by your friends; your family; the community?
  9. How did the merger impact your personal views of integration/segregation?
  10. Was the merger psychologically harmful to the students involved? If so, in what ways?
  11. Tell me about your life and career path after the 1954-1955 academic year.
  12. What do you want to talk about that I have not asked about or we haven’t discussed today?

### *Analysis of Data*

The text transcripts of the interviews were manually analyzed employing a content analysis theoretical framework (Berg, 2001), in a style best described by Shank (2002) as “thematic analysis.” In this particular case, themes were dictated by the need to

present a narrative flow. Key chronological themes were identified prior to the manual thematic analysis of the interview text, seeking data that would inform a rich narrative. The narrative generated by the data from interviews was combined with data collected from other sources to complement and complete the narrative.

#### *Testing and Confirming Data*

Two key methods were employed to test and confirm the data collected in this project. First, triangulation between multiple data sources helps to ensure that the emerging themes are valid. Second, the interview data was cross-checked within itself to check the meaning of outliers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### *Documentation and Auditing*

All data collected for this project will kept by this researcher. The informed consent release signed by participants applies only to this published project. Personally identifiable information in the recordings or transcripts of interviews will be redacted before release to any outside parties.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Prelude to the Merger

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to identify and describe the historical events surrounding the 1954-1955 merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges; and 2) to examine the impact of the merger on the lives of the students. The legal decision handed down in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC 1954) in May 1954 was the catalyst which caused the St. Louis School Board to merge the formerly segregated Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges. Within four months of the Supreme Court's announcement, the two colleges would be merged, the first instance of desegregated education in the St. Louis public schools. The months immediately preceding the merger were critical to the success or failure of that venture. This chapter discusses the environment and important events prior to the merger in September 1954, including: 1) background information about the climate in St. Louis and the broader region immediately preceding the merger of the two colleges; 2) the activities of the St. Louis Board of Education in preparation for the merger; 3) a description of the two colleges immediately preceding the merger; and 4) student awareness and expectations of the pending merger.

#### *Background*

##### *Segregation in St. Louis in 1954*

The students who attended Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in the 1950s represented a generation of young people who had lived their entire lives under segregation, coming of age during segregation's waning days. As discussed briefly in

Chapter Two, the segregated climate in St. Louis in the 1950s represented a patchwork of often contradictory policies and customs. Only the institutions of marriage and public education were segregated by law. In practice, however, a confusing system of segregation customs and practices made navigating everyday public interactions maddening for Black residents of the city. Many White citizens were often ignorant of the injustices suffered upon their Black peers. During the spring and summer of 1954 in St. Louis, a number of controversies and incidents reminded careful observers that segregation was still a major problem for the city, including public venues such as hospitals, housing, dining facilities, hotels, employment, and politics.

*Segregation in health care.* Perhaps the most egregious example of segregation in St. Louis during this period was the segregation of the city's two hospitals. In 1937, the city of St. Louis opened Homer G. Phillips Hospital, its second hospital, in the "Ville" neighborhood on the city's north side. This placed the hospital in geographic proximity to most, but not all, of the city's Black residents. Homer G. Phillips was designated as a segregated hospital for Black patients. The establishment of Homer G. Phillips Hospital was widely regarded in the Black community as a positive development, as it placed state-of-the-art health care for Black residents within their neighborhoods. In addition, the hospital became an important professional resource for Black physicians, nurses, and other medical professionals in the region. The opening of Homer G. Phillips allowed the city's original hospital located just south of downtown, referred to as City Hospital Number One, to become reserved for White patients only. Both emergency and non-emergency patients were required to visit the appropriate hospital based on their race.

The inherent flaw in this arrangement became apparent over time. In August of 1954, Dr. Robert Elman, chief of staff at Homer G. Phillips Hospital, addressed the annual convention of the National Medical Association in Washington, D.C. regarding this topic in particular. The National Medical Association was a professional organization that was parallel to the American Medical Association (AMA), but it was organized by and for Black physicians at a time when the AMA would not accept Black physicians as members. It was not uncommon for Black professionals to have separate professional societies due to established segregation during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his address to the delegates, Dr. Elman spoke about the segregated hospitals in St. Louis and stated, "Rigid segregation may lead to disaster. The seriously injured should be treated at the closest hospital, rather than subjecting the patient to the added risk of transportation across the city solely because of the color of his skin" ("Dr. Robert Elman raps hospital bias," 1954, p. 1). Dr. Elman was referring to the dangerous practice of transporting and transferring patients between Homer G. Phillips and City Hospital based on race. In the interest of maintaining segregation, patients would sometimes be driven past one hospital in order to be transported to the other more fitting for their race, often placing them at mortal risk ("The paper was right," 1954).

At least two deaths were directly attributed to this misguided policy, one just days after Dr. Elman's prophetic warning. In late August, 1954, 7-year-old Robert Thomas Payeur was struck by a truck at the intersection of Newstead and San Francisco. Although the scene of the accident was only 16 blocks away from Homer G. Phillips Hospital, Payeur was instead transported 85 blocks to City Hospital Number One because he was a White patient ("Pass Phillips - one dead," 1954). Payeur's injuries were serious

and he died en route to the hospital. More than a year earlier, another tragic event unfolded. On March 20, 1953, 15-year-old John Hughes drove himself to Homer G. Phillips Hospital due to a gunshot wound that he suffered. Hughes, who had a lighter complexion, was mistaken for being a White patient and thus was transferred by ambulance to City Hospital for treatment. Upon arrival at City Hospital, the staff learned that Hughes was in fact a Black patient, so he was sent back to Homer G. Phillips for treatment. Unfortunately, Hughes died during the return trip ("Pass Phillips - one dead," 1954). In these two cases, at least, segregation was not just an inconvenience or a humiliation — it was a matter of life and death.

The deaths of Hughes and Payeur, and perhaps the criticism of Dr. Elman, finally resulted in a positive change. During the first weekend of September of 1954, Chief of Police Jeremiah O'Connell and City Hospital Commissioner Walter Hennerich jointly issued an order that hospital patients in serious condition should be carried to the nearest facility, regardless of race. The policy had been issued quietly and without fanfare, but was implemented the very first week after the announcement ("Police carrying out hospital edict," 1954).

*Segregation in private and public housing.* Another example of segregation in St. Louis in the 1950s was the separation of the races regarding the geography and accessibility of housing options. In 1916, St. Louis enacted into law, by popular vote, an ordinance which restricted home buyers to residential blocks in which the majority of homeowners were the same race, whether White or Black. The law insured that Black citizens could only purchase homes on residential blocks where there was already a majority of Black residents. Although this ordinance was quickly overturned by the

United States Supreme Court in *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (USSC 1917), the Real Estate Board of St. Louis quickly adopted the guidelines of the 1916 ordinance as professional standards. The Real Estate Board was the professional organization responsible for licensing and controlling real estate professionals in the city. Agents would have to follow the segregationist guidelines or risk the loss of their license.

Real estate agents in St. Louis practiced this form of discrimination, often called “restricted covenants,” until these activities were successfully challenged in the Supreme Court in 1948 in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (USSC 1948). The Court declared that the restricted covenants violated the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The net result of this 30-year period of housing discrimination, however, was the concentration of Black residents in specific geographical areas of St. Louis, particularly in the northern sections of the city. By the decade of the 1950s, the vast majority of Black citizens in St. Louis were still living in relatively confined neighborhoods (Schoenberg & Bailey, 1977). Stowe Teachers College was established and had flourished within one such neighborhood known as “the Ville.”

Regardless of the law, decades of segregation in housing had created a climate of intolerance. One White participant in this study described the reaction of her family and other White families when Black residents first began to move into their neighborhood:

My father was very prejudiced and we lived in north St. Louis [and] at the time I was going to Beaumont (High School). And Blacks started moving in the area where I lived. I was near Benton School on Terry Avenue, and as soon as they [Black residents] came...we moved. We were, I think, the third family that sold. (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

The end of formal segregation in housing created new residential opportunities for Black families in St. Louis. Unfortunately, this change likely also served as a catalyst for the



phenomenon of “White flight” that defined urban development in the St. Louis region for the second half of the twentieth century.

While segregation in private housing had finally been abolished by law, if not entirely in practice, the purposeful separation of the races in public housing in St. Louis was still public policy in 1954. In July of 1954, the St. Louis Housing Authority announced that it would continue to segregate its facilities on the grounds that there existed a "natural aversion" between the races ("Housing Authority stands pat," 1954, p. 1). This horrendous policy, steeped in ignorance and negative stereotyping, was changed just a year later when the Housing Authority announced that the newly constructed Igoe Homes, phase II of the Pruitt-Igoe public housing project, would be integrated when it opened in the summer of 1955 ("Integrated Igoe homes pose question," 1955).

*Segregation in public dining.* Public dining facilities were yet another area in which Black and White citizens were routinely segregated in the early 1950s. There was no official law or policy mandating segregated dining facilities, but the practice was widespread. In the downtown area, the department stores, with the notable exception of Scruggs, Vanderfort and Barney, would not allow Black citizens to eat at their lunch counters. This practice became the focus of a number of protests and sit-ins by the Committee on Racial Equality (CORE). The CORE sit-ins led to more than a dozen establishments ending segregation at their lunch counters (Kimbrough & Dagen, 2000). Despite these gains, segregated public dining facilities were still common practice at many public dining facilities.

One of the most blatant examples of this form of discrimination took place in the same week that Harris and Stowe students first merged on the Harris campus. In

September of 1954, the National Baptist Convention, USA gathered in St. Louis for their annual convention. The National Baptist Convention was the largest organization for Black Baptists in the country. Because of the convention, thousands of church members visited the downtown area near the convention site, some for an entire week. In an embarrassing example of racism, some downtown businesses and restaurants went “on vacation” to avoid serving these Black convention delegates (“Area cafes dodge delegates,” 1954).

*Segregation in hotels and lodging.* In early 1954, the hotels in St. Louis finally ended their ban on accepting Black patrons. One of the reasons for ending the ban was to cease the negative publicity that the policy was generating for the hotels and the city. One source of negative publicity surfaced as hotels discriminated against the Black ballplayers from the newly integrated Major Leagues. Jackie Robinson, the first Black professional baseball player in the Major Leagues, played for the Brooklyn Dodgers beginning in 1947. A year later, the Dodgers added another Black player, Roy Campanella. The Dodgers were a frequent opponent of their National League rivals, the St. Louis Cardinals. The ban on Black patrons caused the Dodgers’ Black athletes to seek lodging with Black families when in St. Louis since the team hotel, the Chase Park Plaza, would not accept them as guests. Among the Black players, this practice was called “going native” (“Ball players segregate,” 1954, p. 1).

This hotel ban only exacerbated the negative image of the city of St. Louis within professional baseball. The abolition of the hotel ban was not enough for some players. While Jackie Robinson joined his teammates at the Chase during the 1954 season after the ban was eliminated, teammate Roy Campanella refused to stay at the hotel.

Campanella declined because although he could sleep at the Chase, the hotel would not allow him to eat in the restaurant or use other public facilities in the hotel. His “self-jimcrowing” (“Ball players segregate,” 1954, p. 1) became a very public form of protest against continued segregationist practices.

*Segregation in employment.* During the post-World War II era, segregation in employment was practiced through a series of informal arrangements. Most notably, the trade unions in St. Louis were dominated by Whites. These organizations effectively denied Black workers opportunities for apprenticeships and membership in their organizations (Lipsitz, 1995). Builders and contractors in St. Louis compounded the effect of the labor segregation by colluding with the trades to deny Black workers opportunities to work on major construction projects (Stein, 2002). As in many other aspects of daily life, Blacks in St. Louis had to find support for employment within their own community. The segregated school system provided attractive employment opportunities for a growing Black professional middle-class. Working for the Board of Education was an attractive option for upward mobility (Corbett & Seematter, 1995), and jobs in the Black schools were reserved for Blacks.

*Segregation in politics and public office.* Like many other cities in the Midwest, St. Louis did not deny Black voters the ability to vote. Political integration in St. Louis occurred before equality in other areas was achieved (Stein, 2002). Black voters often became part of various political coalitions in St. Louis electoral politics, in the first part of the twentieth century as members of the Republican party and subsequently as members of the Democratic Party in the 1930s (Stein, 2002). In the early part of the twentieth century, the city adopted the practice of dividing its territory into geographical

districts. These divisions guaranteed that the high concentration of Black citizens in segregated neighborhoods would eventually yield the election of Black candidates to elected office. The first Black candidates were elected in the 1920s into lower level positions such as constables and justices of the peace (Stein, 2002). These geographical divisions evolved into a system of wards. In the early 1940s a wave of political reforms created a new ward map that virtually guaranteed that the city would initially have two Black Aldermen, and eventually four or six ("Ward elections assure minority," 1941). By the mid-1950s, Black politicians were visible both in ward and aldermanic positions. Jordan Chambers was a well-known politician of the period and one of the first Black alderman while T.D. McNeil served as the first Black state senator in Missouri (L. Beckwith, personal communication, November 10, 2005). Unfortunately, Black political leadership had not yet achieved the level of Mayor or Chair of the Board of Alderman. In effect, Black political leadership was guaranteed within specific wards of the city due to housing segregation, but Black residents had insufficient political power to win the city-wide mayoral race (Stein, 2002). St. Louis did not elect its first Black mayor until 1993.

*Anticipation of Brown and the End of Segregated Education*

In 1954, segregation in public education was the law in 17 states and the District of Columbia. These 17 states, all either former Confederate states or border states, included Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Four additional states permitted segregation in public education but did not require it: Wyoming, Kansas, New Mexico, and Arizona

("States affected by segregation bar," 1954). These twenty-one states were most dramatically affected by the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown*.

For many, the spring of 1954 was a time of cautious optimism. In the spring of 1954, most observers were expecting the long-awaited opinion of the Court regarding the constitutionality of segregated schools. Oral arguments for *Brown* had been conducted 17 months earlier in December of 1952. In 1950, the Court had established precedents in the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* cases (*Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629; *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, 339 U.S. 637) that were encouraging to anti-segregationists because they challenged separate professional schools that were hastily organized in order to satisfy the "separate but equal" doctrine.

At least one civic group in St. Louis was expecting a positive outcome from the Supreme Court decision. In early February, 1954, the Metropolitan Church Federation, the highest council of the Protestant church in the greater St. Louis area, in a unanimously supported resolution at its executive board meeting, pledged their "heartiest cooperation to integration of the schools should the U.S. Supreme Court declare segregation unconstitutional." ("Church body to aid integration," 1954, p. 1).

Another observer captured the anticipation of the *Brown* decision. Robert Maynard Hutchins, the well-known former chancellor of the University of Chicago, was invited to St. Louis in February 1954 to serve as a speaker at the annual Urban League dinner meeting. In his address, Hutchins expressed his feelings about the expected demise of segregated education and he emphasized that school segregation is "doomed on economic, legal, and moral grounds..." ("Segregated schools on their way out," 1954, p. 1). Hutchins also mentioned the *Sweatt* case and the Supreme Court's assertion in that

case that “separate cannot be equal” should have some bearing on the awaited *Brown* decision.

During this same period, integrated collegiate education, wherever available, attracted more and more Black students from the South. During the 1953-1954 academic year, the last year before the *Brown* decision, the National Scholarship Service and Fund, the pre-cursor of today’s United Negro College Fund (UNCF), reported a 180 percent increase in the number of Black students moving from segregated high schools in the South to integrated colleges in the North and South (“Desegregation in colleges causes shift,” 1954). Clearly, the national current was moving away from segregated college education.

The *St. Louis American*, one of the two Black weekly newspapers of the period, perhaps best summarized the cautious optimism of the period in an expectant editorial published May 6, 1954:

This is THE month - the Supreme Court is scheduled to hand down its momentous decision for or against public school segregation...While the consensus is that the 'verdict' will be against segregation, there is a strong undercurrent that five of the Justices will compromise enough to 'save face' for the Dixiecrats...With prayers of HOPE the BIG decision is awaited this hopeful month of May 1954. ("This momentous month," 1954, p. 6)

The Supreme Court’s announcement was met with excitement and energy in the Black community of St. Louis. The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in reaction to the announcement by the Supreme Court, indicated that it would petition the Missouri State Attorney General and the St. Louis Board of Education to undertake integration in public schools immediately (“Will ask state schools to integrate,” 1954). Dr. Ruth Harris, president of Stowe Teachers College at this time, hailed the announcement with a sign on the bulletin board

outside her office exclaiming “three cheers and hurrah!” (“Principals hail decision,” 1954, p. 1). In the same article, Dr. Harris was quoted as saying that the *Brown* decision was “the second greatest happening in the life of the Negro in America. It is that vital,” perhaps second only to the Emancipation Proclamation (“Principals hail decision,” 1954, p. 1). Dr. Harris also offered an opinion on any possible negative consequences of implementing desegregated education: “The matter of transition may mean sacrifice to some of the group...but it will be nothing compared with the benefit children will reap from it” (“Principals hail decision,” 1954, p. 1). In a prophetic irony, Ruth Harris experienced her own personal sacrifice; the end of segregation signaled the end of her presidency at Stowe Teachers College.

#### *Editorial Concerns of the Local Press*

Four substantial newspapers were published in the city of St. Louis during the period studied: the *St. Louis American*, the *St. Louis Argus*, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The *Argus* and the *American* were both weekly newspapers that served the Black community. The *Globe-Democrat* and the *Post-Dispatch* were the major daily newspapers. During this period, the *Globe* was published as a morning edition, and the *Post* was published as an evening edition.

The editorial pages of these four local newspapers took an active interest in the developments regarding the end of segregated public education, in particular how it might be handled by the St. Louis Board of Education. Local editorial opinion moved through a series of transitions as developments regarding the issue of segregated education evolved. Two key events during the first half of 1954 influenced the transitions in the editorial positions of the local newspapers: the announcement of the

*Brown* decision on May 17<sup>th</sup>, and the June 22<sup>nd</sup> announcement of the School Board's plan to desegregate the public schools.

Prior to the *Brown* announcement, the two Black weekly newspapers, the *St. Louis American* and the *St. Louis Argus*, published editorials that promoted the end of segregation. In March of 1954, the *Argus* editors published an editorial that challenged any thoughts of gradualism that might be advanced as a solution to ending segregation. The editorial was written in responses to the claims made by Dr. Queen, a Washington University sociologist, during a presentation he made for "Brotherhood Week" in February 1954. Brotherhood Week was a planned week of activities designed to promote better relations between citizens of different races and religions. Dr. Queen cited two concerns regarding the integration of education as cause to consider a slow or gradual approach: 1) the possibility that Black teachers would not be hired when segregation ended, and 2) Black students "would not have the opportunities for leadership they now have as outstanding students in segregated schools" ("Real or imagined," 1954). The editors of the *Argus* rejected both of these claims, so grounded in stereotyped notions of inferiority, and suggested that those students and teachers with skill and ability would be recognized within an integrated framework as well.

As the days moved closer to the anticipated *Brown* decision, both the *American* and the *Argus* featured editorials expressing positions in favor of integration. The *American* editors conveyed their expectations in the May 6, 1954 edition, noting with hope that "the BIG decision is awaited this hopeful month of May 1954" ("This momentous month," 1954). For the *Argus*, editorial attention was given to the success of integration that was already apparent in the region within those educational institutions



which had already integrated: Saint Louis University in 1944, the Archdiocesan schools in 1947, and Washington University in 1948. In its May 14, 1954 edition, the last before the *Brown* announcement, the *Argus* made perhaps the best argument for immediate integration. Noting the success of these earlier integrations, the editors wrote:

...the basic fact of these reports..., that Negro and white students have for some months now freely participated in classroom situations with an "absence of tension," is of monumental significance. The absence of tension and, as some have feared, violence in other localities and particularly in the St. Louis area should satisfy the doubtful that white and Negro youth are quite capable of academic association in peace and harmony, with benefit to both groups. ("Look around you," 1954, p. 14)

The two daily newspapers reacted positively to the *Brown* announcement of May 17, 1954. The *Post-Dispatch* hailed the decision as the most important Supreme Court action since the *Dred Scott* case of 1857. The *Post* also seized the opportunity to urge quick action in response to the Court's decision in its May 18, 1954 editorial:

There is work to do now in St. Louis, throughout Missouri, and in the 21 states that have either required segregation or have permitted it in varying degrees, [and] in the other states that have prohibited segregation but have winked at the practice. ("More powerful than all the bombs," 1954, p. 2B)

The *Globe-Democrat* also welcomed the decision, but sounded a much more gradualist tone in their editorial dated May 19, 1954:

This newspaper believes that the Supreme Court is right and that after the proper adjustments have been made - and in the South this will not be easy - the wisdom of the court ruling will be recognized...Missouri will make the adjustment as soon as the Supreme Court rules specifically on enforcement next fall. ("No segregation," 1954, p. 8A)

The editorial focus of the local newspapers quickly moved to speculation and recommendations about how the St. Louis Board of Education should respond to the Supreme Court's decision. Nationally, the cities of Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C. quickly announced school board decisions to implement integration.

In Baltimore, the board decided to integrate in September of 1954, while Washington announced a phased plan to integrate its schools in stages. Baltimore's case was particularly cogent for St. Louis, as the cities had some strong similarities. Baltimore and St. Louis, respectively, were the two largest segregated school systems in the country, and they were both situated in border states. The announcements made in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. increased the attention on the St. Louis Board of Education. In the June 4, 1954 edition of the *Argus*, the editors praised the speed with which Baltimore and the District of Columbia acted. The St. Louis board was urged to do the same ("They move ahead," 1954). On June 7, 1954, just one day before the St. Louis Board of Education's regularly scheduled June meeting, the *Post-Dispatch* cited the Baltimore announcement in its own editorial, urging immediate action:

...the important question here is what the St. Louis School Board intends doing. Missouri and Maryland are among the 17 states in which segregation in public education was mandatory. If the largest city in Maryland now decides that it can integrate its public school system next fall, what is holding back the largest city in Missouri from doing the same thing? A segregated school system does great violence to the democratic concept. The St. Louis School Board would not be out of order if it moved firmly ahead and declared the end of segregation effective with the opening of schools next fall. Why wait? ("Why wait?," 1954, p. 2C)

At its June 8, 1954 meeting, the Board of Education announced that it would convene a special meeting on June 22 to discuss and announce its plans to comply with the Supreme Court's decision. The June 11, 1954 edition of the *Argus* continued its strong support for immediate integration:

St. Louis should integrate its schools *right now*...It is a fact that St. Louis will have to integrate at some time anyway, and this city will not have the same trouble doing so as may occur in other areas...The Board of Education has announced it will take action on June 22. It will be good if it doesn't put it off any longer. ("Integrate now!," 1954, p. 14)

The outcome of the June 22, 1954 Board of Education meeting was the announcement of the three-phase plan for integration. The *Globe-Democrat*, *Post-Dispatch*, and *Argus* all responded with editorials. In the June 24, 1954 edition of the *Globe Democrat*, the editors shared a bit of hopeful, if not naïve, optimism about integration: “Another few years will find, we predict, segregation's end has produced a better democracy, a notable eradication of prejudices, [and] generally improved - and cheaper - education for St. Louis children” (“Ending segregation,” 1954). The June 24, 1954 *Post-Dispatch* editorial page was more critical of the Board’s choice to delay the integration of the high schools and elementary schools (“Plan for integration,” 1954), as was the June 25, 1954 *Argus* editorial which echoed similar sentiments of disappointment in, but acceptance and support of, the school board’s integration plan:

While we would desire rapid compliance with the Supreme Court school ruling outlawing segregation in public schools we can appreciate the reasoning followed by the St. Louis Board of Education this week in designing a three stage program for complete integration. It is to be hoped that September will see quite as meritorious an effort in the just and equitable distribution of teachers in the Harris-Stowe consolidation as we have evidenced in the Board's diligent handling of this issue since May 17. (“A reasonable plan,” 1954, p. 14)

As the Board of Education and the administration moved forward with the implementation of the merger plans over the course of the summer, concerns re-emerged within the Black community about the fate of Black teachers in the public schools during the process. On July 8, 1954, the *Argus* published an editorial that urged Black teachers to reject any mantle of inferiority and to prepare themselves for the coming challenges, arguing that the Black teachers have as much skill as their white colleagues and should be retained whenever possible (“Teachers integration,” 1954). An editorial from the *American* dated August 8, 1954 conveyed a similar message, but with a more cavalier

attitude about the impact of integration on the employment status of some of the Black teachers:

During the first few transitional years, the lot of the Negro teacher may be hard. But, as one of my colleagues pointed out, if a teacher is qualified to teach Negro children, she should be considered qualified to teach ANY children. However, those who fail appointment, or reappointment, will turn to the allied professions or be absorbed by industry...So, if no one of us is retained in his present position, we say, "Integrate - then let the chips fall where they will or may." (Mosby, 1954)

By the end of the summer, the significance of the desegregation of the public schools in St. Louis and throughout Missouri was remarkable in contrast to events that developed in southern states. During the week that Harris and Stowe merged on the Harris campus, the Mississippi legislature considered legislation that would close all of its public schools in order to avoid integration. The *Post-Dispatch*, in an editorial dated September 9, 1954, placed the integration of Missouri schools in sharp relief: "Time is running out on race discrimination in this America. Missouri at least can tell time a little better than some states" ("A halfback walks to school," 1954).

#### *Other Collegiate Desegregations in the Region*

In the summer of 1954, Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges were not the only institutions to grapple with segregation. By 1954, of course, two universities in the St. Louis area had already desegregated with some degree of success. In May of 1954, speakers from both Washington University and Saint Louis University participated in a panel presentation to discuss the progress of interracial classes at an event sponsored by the Nursery Foundation. At this event, Dean Haack from Washington University noted that "there has been no problem in the classrooms" and that an "absence of tension" had been achieved ("No problem in mixed schools," 1954, p. 1). Haack also stressed the need for college authorities to make certain that Black and White students have ample

opportunity to know each other. Washington University's progress on this issue was praised by the editors of the *St. Louis American*, noting that "five years ago the conscience of the [Washington University founding] fathers reasserted itself. The school now wears no yoke under its scholarly mantles. Its portals are opened to all" ("Washington University makes," 1955, p. 6).

Speaking on behalf of Saint Louis University, Mrs. Theo Shea, associate director of their Human Relations Center, suggested that Black and White students appeared to accept each other well in classes, but that few Black students were yet officers in campus organizations ("No problem in mixed schools," 1954). By 1954, there was already an established track record for success in collegiate integration.

As the summer of 1954 progressed, a series of announcements were made about the desegregation plans at other public colleges and universities in the state of Missouri. On July 16, 1954, the Curators of the University of Missouri announced that, by unanimous vote, all divisions of the University of Missouri would now be open to all races ("School desegregation on in Missouri," 1954). Four years earlier, the University of Missouri had opened admissions in its graduate programs, but limited such enrollments to academic disciplines that were not offered at then-segregated Lincoln University. This new announcement opened all graduate and undergraduate programs at the University of Missouri, including the School of Mines, to "any person, regardless of race, ...enrolling under the usual entrance requirements" ("Missouri U. abolishes all segregation," 1954, p. 1). The president of the Board of Curators, Powell McHaney, commented on how the University would handle full integration, stating that facilities would be open to all students, regardless of race. McHaney noted that graduate students

had been living in the residence halls since their admission in 1950 with no “difficulties arising from that policy” (“Missouri U. abolishes all segregation,” 1954, p. 1).

On the same day that the University of Missouri Board of Curators announced the decision to integrate their institutions, the Board of Regents for Southwest State College in Springfield, Missouri also acted unanimously to abolish segregation in their college immediately. The Board of Regents for Southwest disclosed that a careful analysis of the Supreme Court decision in the *Brown* case and the written opinion of Missouri Attorney General John Dalton led them to believe that this was the only proper course of action (“Southwest State College,” 1954).

The Curators’ decision at the University of Missouri brought attention to the segregation policy at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, the state’s segregated university for Black students (“Curators in opening,” 1954). Like the University of Missouri, Lincoln’s segregated admissions policy was built on the foundation of the Missouri constitution which designated segregated public education as the law. The Supreme Court decision in *Brown*, however, superseded that law, calling into question segregated admissions practices at all public colleges and universities in the state. The Lincoln University Board of Curators responded in due time, announcing in early August that it would open admission to all races beginning with the fall 1954 semester. In addition, since the law school at the University of Missouri would now be open to all races, the Lincoln Curators voted to close the Lincoln University law school by the end of the 1954-1955 school year (“Lincoln to open,” 1954). The Lincoln University law school, established in St. Louis in 1939 to prevent Lloyd Gaines from enrolling at the University of Missouri, operated in St. Louis with a limited enrollment for 15 years.

By the opening of classes in the fall of 1954, Missouri was cited by the NAACP as a leader among border states which had begun to desegregate public schools. The NAACP's initial survey included cities and localities in five states, including Arkansas, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia. At the collegiate level, the NAACP report specifically pointed out the forthcoming integrations in Missouri at the two teachers colleges in St. Louis, along with the colleges and universities previously mentioned: the University of Missouri and its school of mines, and Southwest State College in Springfield. The article also mentions the integration of Central Missouri State College in Warrensburg and Joplin Junior College in Joplin, today known as Missouri Southern State University ("School bell rings death knell," 1954). The merger of Harris and Stowe was part of the vanguard of post-*Brown* collegiate desegregation.

*Activities of the St. Louis Board of Education and Administration*

When the Supreme Court outlawed segregated education with the announcement of the *Brown* decision, the St. Louis Board of Education was compelled to enact a dramatic change that, up until May 17, 1954, had only been a hypothetical consideration. The Board of Education was not totally unprepared, however, at the moment of the *Brown* decision. A series of events in the decade prior to *Brown* made the inevitability of desegregated public education hard to ignore. Specifically in St. Louis, three high-profile collegiate desegregations brought attention to the status of segregated education. In succession, Saint Louis University (1944), Washington University (1947), and the Archdiocesan schools of St. Louis (1947) transitioned to a non-segregated system. Just two years later in 1950, the University of Missouri admitted its first Black students to its

graduate schools. Also in 1950, the St. Louis School Board of Education was nearly compelled to integrate the White-only Harris Teachers College as a result of the legal case *Toliver v. Board of Education of St. Louis*, 230 S.W. (2d.) 724 (Mo S.C. 1950). The Board was initially ordered to integrate Harris in Circuit Court, but prevailed upon appeal at the Missouri Supreme Court. The local and regional instances of desegregation, along with the near-miss in the *Toliver* case, must have weighed on the minds of the School Board and administration during this period.

### *Intergroup Education*

For pragmatic and progressive considerations, the Superintendent of Instruction, Phillip J. Hickey, approached the likely end of segregation by implementing programming and strategies that would prepare the staff and students. The “Intergroup Education” program was the most structured of these efforts. In today’s terms, “intergroup education” could be considered the rough and early equivalent of modern diversity training. The focus of intergroup education was to encourage people of different racial and religious backgrounds to interact with one another to overcome the prejudices that had arisen in segregated society.

In 1945, the American Council on Education (ACE) invited St. Louis to participate in a nationwide study of practices in public schools instituted to promote better human relationships (Sskwor, 1951). Dr. Hilda Taba, a consultant and specialist in intergroup education from the University of Chicago, served as a consultant for the St. Louis Public Schools in the coordination and promotion of its efforts for intergroup education. The primary focus of the Intergroup Education program was to train and develop schoolteachers in techniques that would help them promote “better human



relationships” (Sskwor, 1951, p. 1). Beyond the teacher training, there were a number of programs implemented to bring segregated students together for activities and interaction. A lot of these activities were programmed for elementary and high school students, but students from Harris and Stowe were also involved in a number of structured opportunities for interaction.

Beginning in the 1949-1950 academic year, a group of representatives from Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges instituted a Stowe-Harris Exchange Program under the auspices of the Intergroup Education effort. Frank Sskwor, who was responsible for managing Intergroup Education for the St. Louis Public Schools, described this Stowe-Harris Exchange Program in his annual report for the 1949-1950 academic year:

Representatives of Harris and Stowe, our racially-segregated teachers colleges, took the initiative and arranged for an exchange of visits. Fifty students from Stowe visited Harris and a talent show, inspirational talk, and discussion groups were set up. Four weeks later, fifty Harris students returned the visit to Stowe and participated in a similar program, including two activity groups (recreation and dramatics). Later, the Harris Dramatic Club presented a play for the Stowe students. Arrangements for a Stowe musical group to appear at Harris were stalled by the heavy end-of-term program in each school. (Sskwor, 1950, p. 3)

In addition, Sskwor notes that students from Harris and Stowe joined students from colleges throughout Missouri and Illinois while attending an all-day workshop on human relations co-presented by the National Student Association (NSA) and the National Council of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) (Sskwor, 1950).

The 1950-1951 annual report for Intergroup Education indicates that a similar program was implemented the following year (Sskwor, 1951). Other documentary evidence indicates that this program evolved into a series of Human Relations conferences between the two colleges that were conducted each year up until the merger, two events each year ("Harris T.C. is host," 1953; "Intercollegiate Conference Program,"

1953a; "Intercollegiate Conference Program," 1953b; "Intercollegiate Conference Program, November 1952," 1952). The conferences included workshops and discussion groups that addressed a broad range of topics. While the merger of the two colleges was never a formal topic, these events likely helped to prepare student leaders from the respective institutions for more interaction post-merger. One participant in this study remembered the intergroup education programs and felt that they were clearly designed to prepare students for the future integration: "There was a feeling...that this was leading up to something else and before the [*Brown*] decision, there was a lot of talk, you know, integration, [but] everybody thought it was miles away" (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005). Another participant who recalled some of the intergroup education programs gave this account:

I know we met on more than one occasion and I remember going over to the old Stowe College...and Stowe came over [to Harris] and we had, at one time, a...basketball game, and I was teamed up with some Black students. I'm not a basketball player, but we won, and oh, it felt pretty good, you know, [I] kind of became friends with those people. (E. Ortleb, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

The bi-annual meetings between Harris and Stowe student leaders began to be referred to as the "Harris-Stowe Conference." The Stowe College Yearbook, *Les Collegiens*, indicates Harris-Stowe Conferences were held on the following dates: November 19, 1952; April 15, 1953; and December 2, 1953.

During this same period, the greek-letter organizations from the two colleges made efforts to interact. By the spring of 1953, an organization known as the Inter-Collegiate Fraternal Council (ICFC) of Stowe and Harris Teachers Colleges was formed. The ICFC had formed as an outgrowth of the Inter-Collegiate Conference between the two colleges which was held in November of 1952 at Harris Teachers College ("Variety-

Talent Show Program, May 1953," 1953). The Council's primary purpose was to forge a closer relationship between the students of the two colleges ("Estella Brown heads," 1954). In May of 1953, likely as a result of communication between Harris and Stowe students at the Human Relations conferences, the ICFC presented its Variety-Talent Show of 1953 ("Variety-Talent Show Program, May 1953,"), the first major project of the ICFC. Twelve different Greek organizations representing both Harris and Stowe presented songs and dramatic presentations at this event which was held in the Y.M.H.A. auditorium. The ICFC must have had a regular meeting structure because in March of 1954, the Council elected four new officers, two from Harris and two from Stowe, to serve as its new executive council ("Estella Brown heads," 1954). The merger of Harris and Stowe six months later rendered the ICFC obsolete.

In a moment of historical foreshadowing, representatives from the student government of both Harris and Stowe were actually in attendance at the last Board of Education meeting held prior to the *Brown* announcement on May 11, 1954 (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954b). They were visiting the meeting as observers at the invitation of Oscar Ehrhardt, board president. A picture of Ehrhardt, posing with the students in attendance, appeared in the May 20, 1954 edition of the *St. Louis American* ("May 17 - unanimous," 1954). At the time of the meeting and the photograph, no one knew that they would be united on the Harris campus in just four short months.

Activities of the Intergroup Education Program helped pave the way for positive interactions among students during the waning days of segregation. In May of 1954, the St. Louis School Board shifted its focus from intergroup education to integrated education. The value of Frank Sskwor's participation in the intergroup education efforts

was apparent, and he was subsequently hired as a full-time faculty member at Harris by the School Board at the time of the merger. Someone with Sskwor's experience would be important to have on campus as the two groups of students joined on one campus.

*School Board Response to the Brown Decision*

As the *Brown* decision was announced on May 17, 1954, there was immediate speculation about how the St. Louis Board of Education would approach the integration of the schools, including its two teachers colleges. On the date of the announcement, a Board of Education spokesman told the *Post-Dispatch* that school children in St. Louis would attend the school closest to their home, regardless of race or color. Oscar Ehrhardt, president of the Board of Education stated: "Certainly, if we eliminate segregation in the schools, we will not maintain separate teachers' [sic] colleges. That is my personal opinion" ("Integration also being planned," 1954, p. 1). Prior to 1954, the administration engaged in planning strategies to implement desegregation of the system. William Sellman, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Colleges, noted the intergroup education efforts established by Hilda Taba in the prior decade. "We knew it was coming. We knew we had to be prepared," Sellman said ("Integration also being planned," 1954, p. 1). The Board and the administration seemed ready and able to implement the integration of the public schools in St. Louis, a situation that the editors of the *St. Louis American* praised ("St. Louis is ready," 1954).

In a short period of time, the rhetoric from the Board and the administration shifted. Just one day following the Brown announcement, the May 18, 1954 *Globe-Democrat* notes that board president Oscar Ehrhardt stated that "the board would have to be guided by an official legal interpretation of the court's ruling...the Board chair was

reluctant to move forward without legal guidance” (“Separate facilities here,” 1954, p. 1A). Phillip Hickey, Superintendent of Instruction, asked Emmet Carter, attorney for the Board of Education, to confer with him to discuss the court decision (“Officials here go forward,” 1954). There was some uncertainty as to how to proceed with integration plans in light of questions revolving around the Supreme Court’s announcement that it would hold hearings in the fall of 1954 to determine when and how to end segregation. The *St. Louis Argus* confirmed these legal concerns, reporting that “just when the integrated system will be undertaken depends on attorneys for the Board of Education” (“Teachers jobs secure’,” 1954). The Board of Education’s plans were temporarily delayed until the legality of integrating the schools could be determined.

The legality of integration was also questioned due to a conflict between the Supreme Court ruling and the laws of Missouri regarding segregation. In Jefferson City, the *Brown* announcement elicited somewhat ambivalent reactions. Governor Phil Donnelly declared that the state of Missouri would conform to the Supreme Court ruling and that the ruling likely nullified the segregation clause of the Missouri constitution. Donnelly would not, however, reconvene the legislature for a special session in order to resolve this conflict (“Missouri will conform,” 1954), suggesting that such action could wait until the next regular legislative session in January of 1955. Although the United States Supreme Court ruling called into question Missouri’s constitutional requirement for segregation in education, Attorney General John Dalton suggested that the constitution would not need to be amended. Dalton also echoed the opinion of Governor Donnelly that the legislature could wait until January of 1955 to grapple with legislation to remedy the conflict (“Missouri will conform,” 1954). Hubert Wheeler, State

Commissioner of Education, believed that Missouri would not have a problem complying with the Court's decision but hinted that some parts of Missouri that "have followed Southern precedents in racial relations" might present some level of opposition ("Missouri will conform," 1954, p. 3A). Wheeler was referring to the bootheel area of southeast Missouri and an area in north central Missouri known as "little Dixie" ("Missouri will conform," 1954).

Various officials publicly discussed the more specific issue of the integration of Harris and Stowe during the immediate post-*Brown* period. On May 18, 1954, Oscar Ehrhardt, board president, "expressed the opinion that the [May 17] court decision also will result in integration of Harris and Stowe Teachers' [sic] Colleges..." ("Officials here go forward," 1954, p. 1). The consideration of merging Harris and Stowe may have had as much to do with enrollment issues as the court decision that banned segregation. According to the May 21, 1954 edition of the *St. Louis Argus*, Phillip Hickey, Superintendent of Instruction, said that "with reference to Harris and Stowe Teachers' [sic] College...a limited enrollment presents the possibility of a merger...the question has been discussed a number of times because enrollment at both schools has fallen off" ("Teachers jobs secure'," 1954, p. 1). This statement aligned with the sentiment of many that the integration of the schools provided an opportunity to implement some cost savings, a view shared in the *Globe-Democrat* in June of 1954 ("Ending segregation," 1954). Maintaining "separate but equal" schools incurred a great deal of added costs.

*St. Louis School Board Meetings*

By coincidence, the Board of Education had scheduled a special meeting for the evening of May 17, the day the *Brown* decision was issued. The Board met as scheduled,

but the agenda did not include a discussion of the Supreme Court case but was instead filled with discussion about authorizing construction and renovation in a variety of school buildings (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954b).

*June 8, 1954 board meeting.* The first regular monthly meeting of the St. Louis School Board following the *Brown* decision was scheduled for June 8, 1954. The main item of discussion at this meeting was the debate and approval of the new teachers' salary schedule. In the *Official Proceedings* (Vol. LX) of the meeting, it is noted that several individuals and organizations sent communications to the board offering their support and cooperation regarding the conversion of the St. Louis public schools to a non-segregated system, including the Urban League, the YWCA, the St. Louis Council on Human Relations, the School Administrator's Club, and the Elementary School Principals Association (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954b). Response to these communications was deferred to the "new business" portion of the meeting, whereupon board president Oscar Ehrhardt announced that the "board has been working with executive officers of the schools on a proper method for accomplishing this objective [integration] and... a special meeting of the board will be held on the matter Tuesday, June 22, at 7:30 p.m." ("Board approves new," 1954, p. 10A). At the same meeting, an update was given regarding the legal opinion of John Dalton, Missouri Attorney General, on the legality of integration. Dalton was expected to issue a legal opinion to the State Board of Education by July 1 regarding the steps that school boards in Missouri might now take to end segregation ("City teacher pay boost," 1954).

*Executive session of June 15, 1954.* Before the June 22 meeting, the board's executive committee met to discuss plans to integrate the schools, including the two

colleges. At this meeting, members “discussed for about an hour and a half plans for the integration of Negro and white schools here [in St. Louis]” (“Board to disclose,” 1954, p. 8A). The outcome of those discussions was not revealed to the public until the next meeting of the Board which was held on June 22, 1954.

*June 22, 1954 special meeting of the board.* The topic of the June 22 board meeting was the presentation and approval of a plan developed by Phillip Hickey, Superintendent of Instruction, for the integration of the schools in St. Louis. Hickey’s plan dictated the integration of the schools in three phases, beginning with the two teachers colleges and the special schools immediately in September 1954 (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954b). The remainder of the public schools would follow in February and September of 1955. The school board acknowledged that the plans announced by Baltimore, and particularly Washington, D.C.’s step-by-step approach, had influenced their own planning and decision-making (“Segregation end in high schools,” 1954). Perhaps more importantly, Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges were the first public colleges or universities in the state of Missouri to announce plans for integration as a result of the Board’s announcement.

The St. Louis Board of Education announced this decision in advance of any state or federal legal guidance. As of June 22, 1954, no opinion from the state of Missouri had yet been announced regarding the legality of public school desegregation (“Segregation end in high schools,” 1954). The United States Supreme Court would not hear testimony on the implementation of *Brown* until October of 1954. The St. Louis Board of Education acknowledged that the plan had been adopted “without benefit of direction from our state authorities” and indicated that subsequent state action “may dictate



modification of the program” (“Segregation end in high schools,” 1954, p. 1). Missouri Attorney General Dalton finally issued his opinion in early July of 1954, declaring that school districts could begin integrating immediately. He also confirmed that the Missouri state constitution was invalid in light of the Supreme Court ruling (“Attorney General rules,” 1954).

### *Faculty Consolidation and Transition*

The announcement of the merger of the two teachers colleges presented a set of logistical challenges for the school board administration. Phillip Hickey, Superintendent of Instruction, described the process as “simply the transfer of faculty and student body at Stowe to the Harris building” (“Stowe-Harris staff arranging merger,” 1954, p. 1). The Harris building was chosen because it was larger than the Stowe building and had better facilities. The Stowe building was filled to capacity, while the Harris facility was underused and had the capacity to accept many more students. In addition, Stowe’s location in the heart of the segregated Black community in north St. Louis would have made it an unpopular location in the social expectations of the period (L. Beckwith, personal communication, November 10, 2005).

Planning for the merger began immediately. The task of sorting out the details of the merger was assigned to three individuals: Charles Naylor, President of Harris Teachers College, Ruth Harris, President of Stowe Teachers College, and William Sellman, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Colleges (“Stowe-Harris staff arranging merger,” 1954). One of the more difficult tasks faced by this group was the assignment of faculty for the newly merged institution. Phillip Hickey’s plan, approved by the Board, included a provision that, whenever possible, both

teaching and non-teaching employees would retain their present assignments or be transferred “only to meet the needs of the service” (“Public school plan adopted,” 1954, p. 1). At the newly merged college, the duplication of numerous faculty positions would justify a certain number of transfers, including the high-profile post of college president.

Speculation about faculty assignments at the newly merged institution was resolved at the Board of Education’s regularly scheduled meeting on July 8, 1954, when transfers and re-assignments were announced. In the Black community, the biggest shock was the re-assignment of Dr. Ruth Harris, the last president of Stowe Teachers College. Dr. Harris was a central figure at Stowe and had an impressive reputation due to her work at the college. Dr. Harris was not chosen for the presidency at the merged Harris Teachers College, but was instead re-assigned to the position of Director of Education, Elementary Division within the Office of the Superintendent of Instruction at the same salary (“New post for Dr. Harris,” 1954). The news that Ruth Harris would not be the president of the newly merged college came as a surprise to some Stowe students.

One student commented:

I remember there was a big issue as to who was going to be president; should it be Ruth Harris or should it be [Charles] Naylor? And we were all surprised that it was not Ruth Harris because of the fact that we thought her credentials would outshine anybody and so we were a little taken aback that it was him [Naylor] instead of her. (A. Sharpe, personal communication, January 4, 2005)

For the rest of the faculty of the two colleges, re-assignments allowed the School Board to reduce the total staff at the collegiate level. In the 1953-1954 academic year, the last year the two colleges operated separately, their combined faculties totaled 91 members (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954a). That number was reduced to 70 faculty in the year of the merger, 1954-1955 (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1955a), as

Harris lost 12 of its 55 faculty, and Stowe lost 11 of its 36 faculty. Two of the faculty at Harris during the merger year were not faculty members at either institution in the prior year, including Frank Sskwor, the former coordinator of the intergroup education program, who was added to the social sciences faculty at Harris (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1955b).

The loss of nearly a third of the faculty from Stowe likely raised concerns for a portion of the Black students as they prepared for the merger. Some students considered enrollment at other institutions. Dr. Ruth Harris addressed these concerns in a comment to the *St. Louis Argus* in which she urged all Stowe students to enroll at Harris, even if they were worried about readjustments. Dr. Harris said, "I'm confident there will be enough of our own [Black] staff members there to make them [students] feel at home" ("New post for Dr. Harris," 1954, p. 1).

#### *Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in 1953-1954*

##### *Locations, Enrollment, and Academic Programs*

Harris Teachers College was located at 5351 Enright, the same site where the two colleges would merge in September of 1954. Harris inherited this location from Blewett High School after Blewett was combined with Soldan High School. Stowe Teachers College was located at 2615 Pendleton Avenue, at the intersection of Kennerly Avenue. The southeast corner of this crossroads, at 4248 West Cottage Avenue, was occupied by Sumner High School, Stowe's former home. Stowe had been in its own building since its construction and opening in 1940 (Harris, 1967).

Enrollment data from the St. Louis Board of Education (1954b; 1955b) reveal that the combined enrollment of the two segregated institutions prior to the merger totaled

853 students during the fall semester of 1953 and 1,106 students during the spring semester of 1954. The full enrollment/attendance figures for Harris and Stowe Teachers College during the 1953-1954 academic year are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

*Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges Enrollment, 1953-54 Academic Year*

	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Avg. Daily Enrollment</b>	<b>Avg. Daily Attendance</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Fac./Student Ratio</b>
Harris Teachers College, Fall 1953	570	547	531	34	16:1
Stowe Teachers College, Fall 1953	324	305	298	28	11:1
<b>TOTAL Teachers Colleges, Fall 1953</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>13:1</b>
Harris Teachers College, Spring 1954	676	528	502	33	16:1
Stowe Teachers College, Spring 1954	430	340	332	28	12:1
<b>TOTAL Teachers Colleges, Spring 1954</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>14:1</b>

*Source:* Saint Louis Board of Education (1954c). *One-hundredth annual report (1953-1954)*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Both colleges were organized into two divisions: a Teachers College (TC) and a Junior College (JC). Students in the Teachers College programs at both Harris and Stowe undertook a nine semester curriculum that culminated in the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree. The “extra” semester involved an expanded experiential component in which students were required to engage in “apprentice teaching” during the eighth semester of the curriculum (L. Beckwith, personal correspondence, November 10, 2005). The Teachers College programs also administered several tests and imposed progression requirements that were applicable to students from admission until the completion of the

senior year. These standards ensured that the teacher preparation programs maintained a certain level of rigor. Several participants from both institutions recalled these experiences, and one gave a particularly rich description of the rigor of the TC program:

At a given time, you had to take a test to determine whether or not you could go into the teachers college; it was not automatic. And there were some individuals who could not get through. There were some students who just could not make it and ended up going to Lincoln University or some other places because they could not get through Stowe. Stowe was not easy, it was difficult; and getting into the teachers college was just not easily done. And it weeded out the ones who were not serious or strong. (A. Sharpe, personal communication, January 4, 2005)

Students in the Junior College programs at both Harris and Stowe were required to complete four semesters of coursework in order to graduate with an Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree. Some JC students transferred into the Teachers College program before or after receiving their A.A. degree, an experience described by one participant: “I went to junior college to kind of get the little stuff out of the way, and I was at Harris and I saw the Teachers College and I said, ‘well, that’s kind of interesting.’ So then I joined over, graduated and... [it was] the best decision I ever made” (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004). A Stowe student described her experience, recognizing very early that she wished to transfer into the TC program:

I registered at Stowe...and I registered in the junior college. The first day that I reported we were in student orientation, or our student orientation was about to begin, and I had a conversation with myself. And so, I got up out of the auditorium, went into the Registrar’s Office and changed my registration from the junior college to the teachers college, and so that’s how I became a teacher. (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

Most JC students, however, stayed in the junior college program and subsequently entered the work force or transferred to another four-year college or university after they received their A.A. degrees.

The teachers colleges (TC) programs naturally attracted students who strongly identified with the teaching profession. One participant recalls his strong interest in teaching:

I had an inkling that I wanted to do something with teaching. My goal was to become a biology teacher. When I talked to the counselors at Southwest High School, they said, yes, teaching was one of the things it looked like I ought to get into...And they suggested Harris and I had not heard of Harris, but it was something I could afford. (E. Ortleb, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Another student remembers first pursuing a job in the business world:

I think it was the year after high school. I worked at the bank in downtown St. Louis. I hated it. I just knew I wasn't cut out to be in the office. So, in my life, I really wanted to be a teacher. (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

Many other students, however, did not have a desire to be teachers, and thus enrolled in the JC program. For some of these JC students, an interest in teaching would then emerge over time, as described by participants from both Harris and Stowe:

Well, I entered Stowe, [and] it was my intention to go for two years. And so I entered into the junior college division because I didn't think I wanted to be a teacher at the time. And it turned out that after two years, I decided to transfer over into the teachers college, but I had taken a lot of courses that were not required for teachers college. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

And then when I got the Associate of Arts [at Harris], I decided to go on into the teachers college...I just came to realize that teaching would be something that I really enjoyed...I probably should have just entered the teachers college in the first place. (M. C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

For a lot of the students, however, having a vocational identity that was consistent with the education field was subordinate to a greater concern: family economics. Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges were the only institutions of higher education that many of these students could afford. Conflicting accounts regarding the tuition rate at the two colleges in 1953-1954 make it difficult to determine the precise amount with any

certainty, but it is clear that \$50 would cover the entire academic year, which included books and fees. One alumnus cited cost as the primary reason she chose Stowe Teachers College:

You know why I picked it? Because my parents had no money. We had no money. My mother's family were sharecroppers. My parents never finished high school, neither one of them. But they wanted to make sure that we went. My sister and I went. So that was understood, we were going. At the time, when I was growing up, I wanted to be a lawyer and that was just out of the question in terms of that. So we ended up teaching. I did not make a mistake. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

One participant recalled that, although she had been accepted into Saint Louis University, she attended Harris Teachers College because her mother and grandmother said:

...we cannot afford to send you there [St. Louis University]. And my mother had a friend and a distant cousin who had both taught and were teaching at the time in the City. And she talked to them, and they said, send her to Harris Teachers College. And my grandmother was thrilled and she said, we finally got some use out of our tax money, because everybody had gone to parochial school. And so I applied to go to Harris. (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Another participant had a similar experience when she chose Harris over Fontbonne College:

So, money was an issue. I knew that Harris was a good [school] if you wanted to be an elementary teacher. The people at Fontbonne [College] called my mother and she told them, nicely, no, I think my daughter is very happy with the situation and she is planning on going to Harris. And that was the end of it. (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

A Stowe alumnus recalled that "Stowe was in town, and this is unbelievable, the tuition was \$30 a year. And we had a problem getting the \$30, believe me" (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005).

In addition to the low tuition costs, students could attend the two colleges while still living at home, some close enough to walk each day. Being able to afford a "sleep

away” college seems to have been a dividing line for many families. One Stowe alumnus described the problem this way:

I had not really wanted to go to Stowe...I wanted to go away to school. I was the oldest of five children. My father could not afford to send me away to go to school. And so, I went to Stowe. It was the only alternative (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005).

The low tuition of these institutions made college accessible to entire generations of families, and several of the participants in this study described older or younger siblings who also attended the two colleges.

For some participants, their parents or family were unwilling or financially unable to provide this advanced education, so they themselves worked part-time jobs to pay, a phenomenon similar to today’s college environment. As one participant stated: “I couldn’t afford anywhere else. It was the most reasonable since...I had to work my way through college” (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005).

*Student Recollections of Harris Teachers College, Pre-Merger*

The recollections of participants who attended Harris Teachers College during the year prior to the merger were quite positive. The alumni regularly cited the close-knit campus and the bonds that developed between students and faculty at the small college. Many also expressed a certain level of pride in the quality of the education that they received while at Harris.

The faculty members at Harris Teachers College were highly regarded by the Harris students during the years preceding the merger. One participant shared her perspective on the positive relationships that faculty had with students: “It was just like we were one big happy family, including the teachers” (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005). A similar comment was shared by another



participant: “They [the faculty] treated us like adults...but they cared about us. They definitely cared about us” (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004).

Many of the faculty who were specifically praised served as advisors to the students’ organizations and clubs, which likely facilitated many of these positive relationships.

Some students shared their impressions of the quality of the Harris faculty:

What impressed me the most was the fact the teachers were all, I thought, very good teachers, many of them Ph.D. people, and [they] were concerned about you as an individual. The classes were not large and so we had an opportunity to interact with the faculty and, in fact, became very close friends with the biology faculty, people you know through the years, to this day even. (E. Ortleb, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

More praise for the Harris faculty came from another interviewee:

It [Harris] had a high number of doctors with Ph.D.s, but also, as I look back on it now, Harris was kind of a retirement home for teachers in the St. Louis public school system at that time who were kind of beyond their years, ready to retire, so they put them over at Harris so they could share their experiences with the upcoming group. So we had a lot of teachers who had a lot of years of experience teaching in school, but they went to Harris to teach these education courses. (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004)

The small size of Harris Teachers College gave some students the impression that the college was merely an extension of their high school experience. One participant described Harris as a “higher education high school...I really just felt like I was continuing high school” (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005). In a similar sentiment, another Harris alumnus shared: “To me, it was just an extension of high school” (A. Constantin, personal communication, February 18, 2004). Another person described it as “...like a little bit of high school taken to the next level” (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004). The fact that Harris occupied the former Blewett High School building during this period may have contributed to these feelings.

Student life at Harris Teachers College could be described as the classic archetype of white collegiate America in the 1950's. One student cited the activities as especially important: "I enjoyed it very much. I guess doing the different activities made you feel more a part of the school" (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005). Another alum described student life at Harris in this way: "It was just very enjoyable. [We] had friendly sock hops, and sorority things, [and] fraternity things" (M. C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005). Contributing to this idyllic picture is a recollection from another participant:

Life was peaches and cream. It was just a very comfortable place to be...I thought Harris was rather unique in that there were a lot of people that belonged to different social clubs and organizations...There were sororities and fraternities, but it seemed that friendships overlapped. It was just fun, a lot of fun. A lot of people to meet. Like I say, the friendships just overlapped [with] no kinds of ostracizing. (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

Another alumnus described life at Harris in this way:

It was euphoric. It was a fantastic school. To this day, our best friends are still all from Harris. We were an exceedingly tight knit group. We all loved the school, we took part in all the sports, [and] we took part in all the social activities. We just... it was euphoric! (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004)

Yet another participant described the social scene at Harris in this way:

Colleges and fraternities were a big thing in those days. If you were in the quote, "in crowd," you belonged to either a fraternity or sorority. Each of those different organizations had their own little functions like a prom, or participate in a skit night, and we would all be a member of or go to whatever it was they were offering, you know. So we all knew everybody. (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004).

### *Student Recollections of Stowe Teachers College, Pre-Merger*

Stowe Teachers College was much more than a college for many of its students — it was a family. The recollections of many Stowe alumni describe this feeling: "Stowe

was a family-like atmosphere. It was a small school; the students identified one with the other. They also identified with the faculty there” (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). Another student from Stowe commented that “it was like a little family, a community-like school, where most people knew most other people there” (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005). Yet another student said, “Stowe was like...a family school. You got very close to everyone there” (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005). For Stowe student Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson, memories of Stowe stir feelings of pride: “I think there was a lot of pride. We had a lot of pride about being able to go to college” (personal communication, January 10, 2005).

Like their Harris peers, most students chose Stowe because they had a strong interest in the teaching profession. In the words of one participant: “I always wanted to be a teacher. I think, had you spoken to me in the third grade, I probably would have told you that I wanted to be a teacher” (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005).

Many Stowe alumni make reference to their experience at Stowe as one which broadened their knowledge of culture and aesthetics. Gloria (Abbington) Rosenblum described Stowe as an “Afro-American finishing school. Not only were we taught academics, we were, I would say, polished off as far as etiquette and proper behavior were concerned” (personal communication, January 24, 2005). This aspect of the Stowe experience was almost universally attributed to the president of Stowe Teachers College, Dr. Ruth Harris. One student described Dr. Harris in this way: “Well, she did have high, strict standards. But as I think back on her, she was marvelous...she polished us off very

nicely” (G. Abbingtion-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). Dr. Harris was also credited with introducing the students to the arts and culture: “I also remember that Dr. Harris, and you had to think of the times, the segregated times, made very sure that we as a student body had exposure to various cultural kinds of things for us” (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005). Yet another Stowe alumnus described the purpose of these cultural activities in this way:

Dr. Harris made sure we were exposed to a lot of cultural things that we would not have ordinarily been exposed to. Because this was a time when the whole city was segregated, more or less, and we couldn't go to many other things that were in the city that maybe we would have wanted to go to at that particular time. So she would bring in cultural activities to give us a chance to be exposed to those things. . (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

These cultural events were presented in auditorium sessions that were held once per month. Presentations sometimes involved dramatic and musical performances by students from other colleges and universities. At other assemblies, professional performers would entertain and enlighten the Stowe students, demonstrating art and music from a variety of cultural perspectives. Perhaps the most significant of these presentations was the visit of the famous Black poet Langston Hughes in March of 1954. In one of the last of these assemblies presented at Stowe, Hughes “gave readings from some of his poetry, and re-counted significant episodes in his life” (Stowe Teachers College, 1954a).

The faculty at Stowe also made a lasting impression on the students. In one description, a student said: “We found the teachers to be terribly professional and efficient and good, as a matter of fact. So we got right into the business of going to school” (A. Sharpe, personal communication, January 4, 2005). Another participant had this to say about the faculty at Stowe:

The thing I remember most was I felt that it was small enough where people really cared about the students and faculty and you had kind of a more intimate relationship even with the president, Dr. Harris...I remember really knowing teachers, faculty members, being able to talk with them...A lot of the faculty members at Stowe...had come from really good schools, but the only place they could teach at the time was at Stowe [due to segregation]. So you had some really, really good teachers. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

From another Stowe alum, the faculty received praise for how thoroughly they prepared the students for the teaching profession:

I think Stowe did a dynamic job of preparing teachers to teach. I mean, if you wanted to be a teacher, I think Stowe was the place to go because those professors, even though it was an all-Black college, I think they really put their all into making sure that we knew everything we were supposed to know in order to teach...The professors at Stowe were very enthusiastic and gave us a lot of things that we could use in the world as well as in teaching when they would teach their classes...If you graduated from Stowe Teachers College...you came out actually knowing what to do in the classroom. . (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

Some participants described the Stowe building as overcrowded during its final years: “We were so crowded that we had...7:00 o’clock [a.m.] classes and...classes late in the evening, I remember there was a 6:30 [p.m.] class. And we never had enough room...” (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005).

Another Stowe alumnus said: “It was a very, very close knit kind of thing because the rooms were tight, everything was tight at Stowe” (A. Sharpe, personal communication, January 4, 2005).

Student life at Stowe was vibrant and an important part of the experience of many students. One student described the atmosphere in this way: “It was lively. We had great basketball games; we of course, didn’t have football. I can remember I was on the track team. I ran track; but our ballgames were great. We just always had something going

on” (G. Abbingtion-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). According to another student, the cafeteria was a focus of social interaction:

The center of attraction at Stowe as far as socialization was the lunchroom, the cafeteria. It was highly competitive as far as fraternity and sorority life is concerned. There were the Kappas sat here, the Omegas sat here, the AKAs and the Deltas sat different places, so it was very structured...Everybody had their little niche in the lunchroom. And sometimes, we would break out in songfest. (A. Sharpe, personal communication, January 4, 2005)

These fraternities and sororities were another important component of student life at Stowe. These organizations served the student body by providing numerous social outlets for the students, as described by one alumnus in this way:

The Greek-letter organizations and their activities made it seem as much like a campus as possible. We had no campus. We had a little park across the street [Tandy Park] in front of school. The greek-letter organizations would have their activities which provided a social atmosphere to the school because they had their activities there at Stowe, and they interacted, and there was always something going on of a social nature from the sororities or fraternities which gave us a chance to intermingle socially. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

Another participant recalled “hell week” during which all the Greek chapters would prepare their pledge classes for initiation:

I think the thing that was really outstanding were the sororities and fraternities. That was the biggest social outlet for many of us and there was nothing more important than what we would call “hell week.” Each organization would have hell week at a certain time and everybody had to dress alike according to their sorority or fraternity and go through the halls and go through certain rituals. And after that one week, we had a greek party, [with] a big band and everybody came to it. (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

### *Student Awareness and Expectations of the Merger*

#### *Awareness of the Merger*

Student recollections of how they learned of the merger were varied. The academic semester in spring of 1954 extended well into June, but it is doubtful that either

college was still in session by June 22, 1954 when the Board announced its plan to start with the merger of Harris and Stowe that fall. Stowe held its last commencement, albeit unknowingly, on June 14, 1954. Most participants in this study do not recall any formal assemblies or other activities on campus to announce the merger. Most participants do acknowledge, however, that there was some level of student awareness on their campus before classes ended in June. One student described the awareness of the merger among students on campus at Harris Teachers College in this way:

It seems to me that when we left [in June], we knew that there would be a merger; that the Stowe students would be coming over to Harris, on our campus. I don't really think anybody at [Harris] really knew much. I'm talking about the teachers and the deans, administration. I don't know that they knew a lot about what was going to happen. They just knew that they were going to make the merger. (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

Between the Supreme Court's *Brown* announcement on May 17, 1954 and the School Board's announcement on June 22, 1954, there had been much public speculation about the likely merger of the two colleges, including comments that both Board President Oscar Ehrhardt and Superintendent of Instruction Phillip Hickey communicated to the press ("Integration also being planned," 1954; "Officials here go forward," 1954; "Separate facilities here," 1954; "'Teachers jobs secure'," 1954).

It appears that the idea of a merger between the two colleges was discussed almost immediately on both campuses following the announcement of the *Brown* decision, and in some cases even before *Brown*, at least in the form of rumors. At Harris, in particular, participants in this study remembered two different faculty members mentioning integration, including the Sociology class of Frank Sskwor, coordinator of the intergroup education program for the St. Louis public schools (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004). One Harris student shared a particularly interesting

classroom anecdote from Dr. Lindel's Economics class regarding the Supreme Court's

*Brown* announcement:

I had Dr. Lindel for Economics class, and we walked into class that day [May 17, 1954] and there was a radio there. Now, in those days...there wasn't much equipment in the class, so to have a radio in class was...we were all kind of quizzical about it. One of the fellows said to him, he said, "Hey doc, how come we've got a radio?" And he said, "Well, in case you don't know there's going to be a very important announcement made by the Supreme Court and I want you to hear it." He turned the radio on for us to hear the...Supreme Court announcement. And when he turned the radio off, he said, "Do you understand the impact of this?" Of course, we were all in awe, you know. And he said the Board of Education...will have to make a decision about how integration will come about. And of course, it was talk back and forth of what was going to happen. And then, the rumors were that Harris and Stowe would be integrated, but the decision had never been made whether we were going to move to Stowe or if Stowe was going to move into the Harris Teachers College building. (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Other students had less clear recollections of how they became aware of the pending

merger:

I really think it was at the end of the school year...that I realized that the school [Stowe] would be closing and we'd be going to Harris. I really didn't care because I didn't identify so much with that school anyway. (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

In going back to the other question you asked, how we found out [about the merger], part of it was because it became, I guess, state law that schools had to be desegregated. So we knew that law had passed. Or whatever had passed and then we knew that we would be merging. (M.C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

I believe we might have been told before-hand. I don't believe that I just got ready to go to school in September and found out we had to go to another school. That doesn't ring a bell with me, thinking like that. Because I'm sure somebody must have told us that we had to change schools. Because at that time, they were talking about desegregation and things like that, and so I'm sure something must have been on the news or in the newspaper or something, but I can't recall clearly just how I remembered getting that information. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

I think it was just mentioned and it was something that I think was decided to try and overcome the prejudices that were prevalent at that time. And there was no



need to keep two teachers colleges going, you know. I guess the Board of Education was looking to try and consolidate at the same time. I think some of the teachers probably mentioned it [on campus at Harris]. (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

### *Expectations of the Merger*

The students from Harris and Stowe began the merger year with a wide variety of opinions. For nearly every student, the merger would be the first time that they had attended school in a non-segregated environment. Some of their expectations about the merger centered on the anticipation of interacting with the opposite culture, as expressed by one Stowe student: “I guess...I may have given some thought to being surrounded by people who don’t want you there” (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). For one Harris student, the merger stimulated curiosity about confronting stereotypes ingrained in her through the prejudiced opinions of her father:

I lived all my life with the [prejudiced] attitudes and I really was curious myself, I guess you would say, to see what it was like to be with Black people, and, were they all that bad? I never really had hatred for them. I was so curious, because I couldn’t see all of them being as my father described them. (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Many students, particularly the White students who already attended Harris, had minimal expectations regarding the merger experience. For some Harris students, the merger represented their first awareness that Stowe Teachers College existed, a telling indicator of the power of decades of segregation. Most expected little to happen in regards to the merger, and most expressed a level of acceptance. In the words of one Harris student: “I wasn’t thinking one minute of it” (A. Constantin, personal communication, February 18, 2004), and another student indicated, “I wasn’t looking toward it [the merger] as anything uncomfortable. I just knew it had to be and I just really accepted it” (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005). Yet another

Harris student said, "I think it [the merger] was going to be something new and different. I don't think I had high expectations; I don't think I had low expectations. I just thought it was gonna' be the same" (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February, 25, 2004).

Some Stowe students approached the merger with similar levels of ambivalence. One described their own expectation of the merger as "something different; I didn't know what to expect" (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005). Another Stowe student described her feelings more directly:

I was very blasé. I didn't care. I was going from one building into another building. I had never had any experience with integration. I was not afraid to do it and I did not feel that I was in any peril because I had seen White people, you know, [and] they didn't look any different, so I was my same self. (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

The idea of desegregation in public education was not new to Stowe students, but desegregation had never been discussed in any specific detail regarding the merger of their school with Harris. For some, a certain level of skepticism had arisen around the possibility of desegregation:

And let me say this while I think about it. I can remember when they [the faculty at Stowe] would work with us, that they would always tell us, that we were being prepared for the integration; we laughed, ha ha ha ha, integration! The instructors would say, you cannot function when integration comes unless you do such, and so we kind of doubted a bit. But our instructors, they worked hard, and they worked us hard, because they could see it all coming. And we were kids and we couldn't see it like that. (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

For Stowe students, the merger would involve a greater level of transition, including attending classes at a different campus with new, unfamiliar people:

I'm sure that there was some apprehension because we were leaving a beautiful building, relatively new, familiar territory, you knew your way around, to move to another building that was big and kind of ugly in its own way, to me. So I think there might have been some apprehension about how that was going to be, and how we were going to be received. We were going over [and] you knew you

would know some people...you knew you weren't going to be by yourself. You knew that much. But you didn't know what to expect, you didn't know if you were going to be well-received or not. But I don't remember being paranoid about it. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

Other Stowe students also took comfort in knowing that familiar faces would be joining them in the move to the Harris building:

I wasn't so concerned about it [the merger] because all of us were going, so I knew that everybody that I knew at Stowe was going to go to Harris. So I knew that I would know quite a few people there. If I had been the only one going to this new environment, you know, or just two or three of us, but I knew the whole school was going. And so it didn't really concern me too much and then, a lot of the professors were going. And so I was not very nervous about it or anything. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

### *Conclusion*

As September approached, the students began their preparations for the new school year — some with apprehension, some with curiosity, and some with ambivalence. For better or worse, the students from Harris and Stowe were thrust together at the Harris building. As the labor day weekend ended, the students could anticipate that the first day of classes would begin on Thursday, September 9, 1954 ("Stowe teachers shifted," 1954). The *St. Louis Argus* heralded the new school year with a businesslike statement, perhaps foreshadowing the efficient way in which the two colleges would merge: "Stowe Teachers College students and prospective students are expected to report to Harris Teachers College, 5351 Enright Avenue, at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 9. Students are expected to bring \$15 as registration fees" ("Stowe students to report," 1954). On September 9, 1954, without flurry or fanfare, the formerly segregated students of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges would be the first students to attend a desegregated public school setting in the city of St. Louis.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Merger and Its Impact

#### *Introduction*

The local newspapers marked the arrival of the opening of St. Louis' first desegregated public educational institution in various ways. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported the significance of the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers College in understated tones: "[The] first step in racial integration in the public schools was taken today when both white and Negro students began classwork [*sic*] together at Harris Teachers' [*sic*] College..." ("St. Louis public schools open," 1954). A *St. Louis Argus* editorial (September 3, 1954) placed the Harris-Stowe merger in its proper historical context:

It [the merger] will be a democratic experience, but one with which too many of our citizens are not familiar. Next week, for the first time in the history of the city, white and Negro students will attend school together in the upper divisions of public schools. Harris and Stowe Teachers' [*sic*] Colleges have been merged, and beginning Thursday, students of both schools will attend classes in the Harris building...Not only will the student body be integrated, but the staff will be composed of White and Negro Instructors. We are proud of our city, one of the first in the nation, for having taken this step forthrightly, following the opinion of the Supreme Court." ("Back to school," 1954)

The *St. Louis American* also contributed its opinion. The *American*, on the opening day of classes on September 9, 1954, published an editorial reminding the teachers and parents of their role and the need to keep a positive attitude:

The top responsibility is upon the adults, the parents, the grown-ups who are the ones where the fears, the reprisals, the inhibitions, the duplicity and reactions to the change are most susceptible to subversive action. Even a negative attitude may lend to the small counter-democracy group of declared 'white supremacists' agitating for rebellion against the U.S. Supreme Court." ("A negative attitude," 1954)

The students were not necessarily aware of the historic nature of the merger. One Stowe student expressed some awareness of the importance of the merger in this way: “We wanted it to work. We wanted to set the record [straight] that separate schools were not right, [but] our whole focus was on getting out of there [and graduating]” (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). By contrast, another Stowe student, Maggie (Pullett) Webb, did not recognize the significance of the merger until later in life:

I didn't feel it at the time. But now when I look back on it, I can see that it was a historical moment in time. But I really did not feel that it was that important. Although I realized for a long time that we had been shut out and not able to do the same things as the Whites and to go to school together. I didn't really think that I was getting a better education, I just thought, you know, that this was something that they were changing. (personal communication, January 25, 2005)

In the minds of many students, preparations to begin another semester of college superceded any thoughts of making history. In the words of Harris student Mary Carol (Krueger) Kluesner: “It was ruled that the schools would merge and so we did. We were kind of sheep that came along the way and you did what you were told. I don't remember any conflicts” (personal communication, January 12, 2005). While the merger may not have signified a great historical moment for the students, it certainly changed their lives significantly, and the changes affected the participants in this study in a variety of ways.

### *Students' Experiences During the Transition*

The first research question for this project was: from the perspective of the students, what were the key events related to the merger, and what circumstances surrounded those events? Interview data and other information collected during this

study suggest several observed phenomenon from the merger experience: enrollment expansion; a transition experience that was significantly different for the Black students and the White students; changes that occurred within some of the student organizations and college activities; rare but interesting examples of cross-cultural interactions between students; and rare examples of controversial racial incidents. These phenomenon are discussed in the following sections.

### *Enrollment Expansion*

One dramatic change during the year of the merger was the significant increase in enrollment in the Teachers College. Table 4 shows a comparison of the enrollment figures for the newly merged Teachers College in 1954-1955, the year of the merger, and the enrollments of the two separate colleges for the prior academic year (Saint Louis Board of Education, 1954c, 1955c). The fall semester registration, enrollment, and attendance figures at the newly merged Harris campus exceeded the combined totals of the two campuses during the prior year by more than 21 percent. During the first semester, the merged college served one-fifth more students than the previously separate colleges with seven less faculty members, yielding a teacher reduction of 11 percent. The spring semester witnessed a more modest increase over the pre-merger enrollment figures, as registration exceeded that of the prior year by a total of 9 percent.

The students experienced some minor effects as a result of this increased enrollment. For the Harris students, hallways that had once been open and easy to navigate became a bit more crowded. One participant noted that the cafeteria became more crowded (A. Constantin, personal communication, February 18, 2004).

**Table 4.**

*Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges Enrollment Figures, 1953-55*

<i>Fall Semester Comparison</i>	Registration	Avg. Daily Enrollment	Avg. Daily Attendance	Number of Teachers	Fac./Student Ratio
Pre-Merger Combined Enrollment, Harris AND Stowe Fall 1953	894	852	829	62	13:1
Merged Enrollment (Harris Campus) Fall 1954	1084	1038	1008	55	19:1

  

<i>Spring Semester Comparison</i>	Registration	Avg. Daily Enrollment	Avg. Daily Attendance	Number of Teachers	Fac./Student Ratio
Pre-Merger Combined Enrollment, Harris AND Stowe Spring 1954	1106	868	834	61	14:1
Merged Enrollment (Harris Campus) Spring 1955	1207	954	899	55	17:1

*Source(s):* Saint Louis Board of Education (1954c). *One-hundredth annual report (1953-1954)*. St. Louis, MO: Author.  
 Saint Louis Board of Education (1955c). *One hundred and first annual report (1954-1955)*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Perhaps less tangible was the increase in the faculty-to-student ratio. During the year prior to the merger, Stowe students enjoyed healthy 11:1 and 12:1 faculty to student ratios (see Table 4 above). Their Harris peers experienced faculty ratios of 16:1 during the year before the merger. At the newly merged Harris campus, the faculty to student ratio was 19:1 during the fall semester and 17:1 during the spring semester. This improvement in the faculty to student ratio occurred despite an increase in registration and the lack of a concomitant increase in faculty. How was this possible? Table 4 demonstrates that while registration increased during the spring 1955 semester, the

average daily enrollment and average daily attendance figures were considerably lower than the fall 1954 semester. None of the data collected for this study sufficiently explain this apparent shift in student attendance behaviors.

*Black Students' Transitions from Stowe to Harris*

The Stowe students' transition was more difficult than the experience of their White peers. The Stowe students relocated to a different building, whereas their White counterparts had a numerical advantage as well as the comfort of attending school in familiar surroundings. One Stowe student described her feelings during the transition:

The building was larger. Teachers were new and different. I had my sorority sisters I could bond with. But as you went along, as people decided to branch out, you had to come to the conclusion: "I've got to make my way," because you're in a much larger school and things are going to be different. You didn't have the closeness with the teachers because you didn't know them that well. (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson described her memories of the welcome that the Stowe students received at Harris: "They didn't put out the red carpet; they just expected you to assimilate yourself with them. Because their numbers were still greater" (personal communication, January 10, 2005).

Many of the Stowe students were disappointed with the Harris building: "When you got to Harris, Harris was more like Sumner: big, sprawling, large building. I stayed annoyed the whole year" (A. Sharpe, personal communication, January 4, 2005).

Another Stowe student expressed dissatisfaction not only with the Harris building, but also with the faculty and students:

And we were not happy [about the move]. You know, we went over there and saw this big, ugly, dingy [Harris] building and Stowe was a beautiful building. It [Harris] was larger and all; [but] it needed to get rid of the bad faculty. Few of the [Harris] professors were as good as the ones we had, we just did not realize. We didn't have bad faculty. We just didn't have it. You couldn't work for



Marion Harris [Stowe president] unless you were tip top. Dr. Harris would not permit bad staff members, but we saw some [faculty] that just really needed to go. The thing that amazed us is the caliber of student was not as good. We were amazed that there were some students who really, really struggled. We had one [White] girl in our class who was struggling and we helped her. But just generally, they [the Harris students] just weren't as on top of it as we were. (G. Abington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

Another Stowe student was also disappointed in the Harris facility and the welcome of the faculty and students there:

It [Harris] was big and old and dumpy and it didn't give me the feeling of being in a college. I don't know how I got the feeling of being in a college at Stowe because it was just a little building. But for some reason, that was lacking. I just didn't like the visual effect that I got from Harris when I went into the building. The climate there, I didn't feel that we were welcomed into Harris like they were happy to see us. I didn't get that feeling that they're so happy that we're coming over and we're going to be so welcome there. I didn't have that feeling. I just had sort of a standoffish feeling from people there at first. Later on, there were some students that I got to know a little better and they didn't seem quite so standoffish. From what I've heard from other people I know, there were some teachers that didn't seem to welcome the students from Stowe. Other people have told me of their experiences of the teachers that were there that didn't seem too happy to have those students from Stowe over there. There were some professors at Harris that had the same enthusiasm that I happened to see in the professors at Stowe, but I don't know if all of them did. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

Another participant indicated that some Stowe students had been told that they could arrange their schedules to take their courses with Black faculty if they chose:

I tell you what, there was one teacher I will not call by name... "now when the integration comes, it will be fixed that a Black student can go all the way through college with Black teachers and a White student will be able to go all the way with White." It could have been true. I really didn't look into it. But he [the teacher] kind of opened our eyes to that and I thought, ooh, that would only make sense that you had two teachers in history, one Black, one White. And if it was possible to go in there and ask the Registrar to put you with a certain teacher; but I didn't do that. (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson and Maggie (Pullett) Webb, students from Stowe,

both mentioned a marked difference in the social events at Harris:

And then you came to Harris and they were doing square dancing, which was a difference for what you do for fun as a student. I just thought that the activities that were planned were more White oriented. That happens everywhere...The dominant culture is what is predominant. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

At Stowe, we had a social life because we did have different functions that we all attended, like I mentioned the sororities and fraternities had a lot of social functions that we attended. And there were social functions put on by the school [Stowe], cultural programs and things like that. At Harris, we had none of that. You know, my social life was relegated to the group that I was in, which was Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. That's the social life that I had on campus and we had no dances or things like that like we had at Stowe. I remember somebody mentioning something about a square dance once in a while. But, I didn't participate in that. I guess my memories sort of like blur of Harris because I didn't remember anything specific that stood out to me that I could say I really loved at Harris. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

For some Stowe students, the merger caused difficulties in the transfer of credits transferring from Stowe to Harris. At the time of the merger, Arthur Sharpe needed to complete two semesters of coursework. The fall semester would be occupied by his off-campus student-teaching experience. In the spring, Sharpe expected to need only 12 more credit hours to graduate. As he tells the story:

Instead of me having 12 hours, I had 24 hours my last semester. I was snowed under with 24 hours that I had to take, taking over [re-taking] many of the courses. If I had been taking all of them with the Black teachers that I was familiar with, I could have dealt [with that]. Many of the {Black} teachers knew who I was, what I was all about, that was no problem. But I ended up with a lot of the White teachers and that meant I had to go and actually [work]. I was a little upset about it. (personal communication, January 4, 2005)

#### *White Students' Transitions During the Merger*

The transition for the Harris students was much easier. The Harris students had the advantage of returning to their home campus and were simply joined by the students and faculty from Stowe, an insight revealed by one interviewee: "They were probably more uncomfortable than we were. After all, it was our campus, not theirs. The Stowe

students probably had more to lose than the Harris students” (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005). For Harris alumnus Andrew Constantin, there was no discernable change: “Nothing had changed from the year before as far as I was concerned” (personal communication, February 18, 2004).

Regardless of the circumstances, the new students from Stowe made a definite impression on their Harris peers:

The students that came over were, I felt, extremely intelligent, well-dressed... They were very, the ones I talked to were very social... they were better dressed than most of the White students. I am sure those first... who came from Stowe in this very beginning had come from the upper crust of the Black community. There was no doubt in my mind after meeting them. (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

A similar sentiment was expressed by another White student:

We envied how well they dressed. The boys all seemed to come with sports coats on and everything. And it seemed like they had a lot more money than we did. And then any [Black] students that I had in my classroom were all fine... We found that the Stowe students were so proud of being in the teachers college, you know, they walked with great pride... I don't think we [Harris students] had that. I can remember that I didn't. But they certainly came in with it and they were living up to it, you know. (M. C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

Some of the Harris students perceived a change in the climate at Harris during the second semester. One Harris student explained, “It seemed like the first semester, everything was fine. But then as it went on, that's when reality set in” (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004). Peggy Carroll shared a similar observation:

There was a big change with the second semester... The school definitely changed. I don't feel that it was that first semester after integration. I believe it came after that first semester. And I can't say that the caliber of the White students didn't change also. But it was just, they were picky about who they took. Let's put it like that. And then, all of a sudden, I guess it was quantity versus quality. (personal communication, January 17, 2005)

The enrollment figures presented in Table 4 above certainly support Carroll's position, at least regarding the growth in enrollment.

For some of the Harris students, the addition of the Stowe students and faculty provided them an opportunity to independently observe the opposite race:

I think it [the merger] made me realize that the Black professors: some were very good, and some were not so good. The White professors: some were very good, some were not so good. And it just gave me that, that thing, you know; there's very good and not so good in every way, in all cultures [and] races. (M.C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

### *Organizations and Activities*

The merger of the two colleges also involved the consolidation of student organizations and activities for both schools. In some cases, duplicated organizations were merged. The membership in some organizations was racially mixed while others remained segregated by race. This section describes the level to which student organizations and activities, athletic teams, fraternities and sororities, and other organizations evolved into racially mixed groups. Tables 5 and 6 presents data regarding the various organizations sponsored by Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges and their disposition after the merger, as accurate as available in the yearbooks of the period (Harris Teachers College, 1953, 1955; Stowe Teachers College, 1954b).

*Student Council.* One of the first challenges for the newly merged student bodies was the dilemma of consolidating the independent student government organizations that existed at each college. Once merged, each class would have two sets of legitimately elected officers — one from Stowe and one set from Harris. Three participants in the study shared anecdotes related to this particular problem and the manner in which it was

resolved. Ed Ortleb, who was elected senior class president at Harris just prior to the merger, described the students' idea of a shared class presidency:

And then the actual change came to place and there was a big question: what was going to happen to the Student Council? You know, we had one president there and one president here and how was that going to work? And as I recall, we shared the presidency, I think it was Edgar Burnett and I shared the presidency when they came over. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Another Harris student, Rich Cadice, described a discussion with President Naylor, Dean Clucas (Dean of Men), and other members of the student government:

We were just called into the office with Dean Clucas and Dr. Naylor; this was in September of that year. And then..."how are we going to decide on the presidency of the student body?" Okay, one semester for the guy from Stowe, which was Cleveland Thomas. And then you [Cadice] take the second semester...and you know, that's fine; I have no problem with that. (personal communication, February 25, 2004)

Arthur Sharpe, a Stowe student and leader, shared an anecdote regarding the presidency for his graduating class:

I was sure that I was going to be president of the class. And my friends came to me and said: "Look here. We would probably do a little better if by chance we had somebody who was White [elected] president," because of the fact that they probably had some things that they could do that we as Blacks could not. And I looked at them and said: "Are you kidding me?" And they said: "Try us out and see." So they elected Pete Condit [a White student] to be president of our class instead of me and we had the numbers. (personal communication, January 4, 2005)

The compromise achieved in the formation of the new student council was discussed in the first post-merger edition of *The Collegian*, the student newspaper of Harris Teachers College. In a front page article, titled "Student Executive Committee Formed," the process of determining the new student governance structure was explained:

With the beginning of this fall semester at Harris Teachers College the Student Council faced a problem. Here were two colleges put together, each having a set

of officers for its student government. This could present a number of difficulties. A meeting was certainly needed and so the Student Council Advisor, Dean Clucas, invited the two groups of officers to meet with him. Various program conflicts caused the first meetings to be failures since a representative group could not be gotten together. Before long a meeting was scheduled and everyone was able to attend. Progress was beginning. At this meeting were discussed such things as what type of governing body to form, who would be president or chairman of this body, and who would be on the staff of officers. Careful thinking went on and various ideas were discussed. The final decision was to combine the two groups of officers and form an Executive Committee. The two presidents would act as chairman of the committee, half a semester each. ("Student executive committee," 1954)

A total of eight students formed this Executive Committee — four from Harris and four from Stowe. A scan of the photograph that appeared in the *Collegian* article regarding the Student Council is included in the Appendix of this study.

The new co-presidents of the Student Council, Rich Cadice and Cleveland Thomas, greeted their classmates with a welcoming letter that was published on the front page of the first student newspaper. Their joint letter to the student body ended with a challenging note to their fellow students: "You get out of something just what you put into it." The student council officers encouraged their classmates to become involved in the activities of the newly-merged college.

*Athletics.* The sports teams were one example of activities in which Black and White students mixed together, and in some cases, to a significant degree. Table 5 lists the sports programs that were available at the two colleges prior to the merger, as well as the status of sports teams during the year of the merger based on data provided in the yearbooks of the two institutions (Harris Teachers College, 1953, 1955; Stowe Teachers College, 1954b).

In women's sports, some teams were racially mixed, including basketball, field hockey (1 Black player), and volleyball (2 Black players). Other women's teams had

only White participants, including softball, cheerleading, and tennis, although it is doubtful that this was a result of any formal exclusionary policy.

**Table 5.**

***Athletics Participation by Race at Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, 1953-55***

<b>ATHLETIC ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Sports Groups Harris TC Pre-Merge 1953-1954</b>	<b>Sports Groups Stowe TC Pre-Merger 1953-1954</b>	<b>Integration of Sports Groups Harris Teachers College Post-Merger 1954-1955</b>
Women’s Athletics Association	X	X	Integrated; 17 Black members, 40 White
Field Hockey (Women)	X		Integrated; 3 Black players, 20 White
Softball (Women)	X		Non-Integrated
Basketball (Women)	X		Integrated: 4 Black players, 10 White
Volleyball	X	X	Integrated; 2 Black players, 13 White
Cheerleaders	X	X	Non-Integrated
Tennis (Women)	X		Non-Integrated
Lettermen’s Club	X	X	Integrated, 1 Black member, 10 White
Baseball Team (Men)	X	X	NO DATA
Basketball (Men)	X	X	Integrated; 6 Black players, 8 White
Tennis (Men)	X		NO DATA
Track Team (Men)	X	X	Integrated; 10 Black members, 12 White

Note: Data in this table only reflect the accuracy of the student Yearbooks.

*Sources:* Harris Torch Yearbook, 1953 and 1955; Stowe Les Collegiens Yearbook, 1954.

Participation in several of the men’s sports teams were also racially mixed. Both the basketball team (6 Black players) and the track team (10 Black players) had significant numbers of Black and White participants. The 1955 yearbook does not include photographs or documentation of a men’s tennis team or a baseball team, but a student from the period indicates that those activities were sponsored at Harris during the year studied and were indeed composed of students from both races (B. Herrscher, personal communication, November 10, 2005).

Two participants in the study shared memories of their cross-cultural experiences with the sports teams. Harris student Ed Ortleb recalled a road trip with the basketball team:

I think we had trips together to Rolla when our student basketball team, we went together on one bus. We had went together to play. It was a mixed group and we had a lot of fun. It was an enjoyable experience. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Another Harris athlete recalled a similar experience:

The thing I remember about when the integration took part we would go on a trip [to] a track and tennis meets at Greenville, Illinois. We would all get on the bus, and there'd be Blacks and Whites and we'd sing, you know, and they'd participate in our track and tennis and that was about it. That's how we integrated; with sports, on these trips to different colleges to participate in athletics; we all mixed together. (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004)

*Fraternities and Sororities.* The Stowe students arrived at Harris with established, strong Black Greek organizations. As described briefly in Chapter Four, the fraternities and sororities at Stowe were an important social connection for the students at Stowe. During the merger, all of these organizations continued their activities on their new campus. The Black Greeks at Stowe were heavily represented in various leadership capacities within the Stowe student body. The Greek-letter organizations that were active at Stowe included two fraternities (Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi) and three sororities (Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, and Sigma Gamma Rho). All of these organizations survived the initial transition to Harris although both the Omega Psi Phi fraternity and the Sigma Gamma Rho sorority were not pictured in the 1955 *Torch* yearbook.

The fraternities and sororities at Harris also played an important role in the social fabric of their campus. Like their Stowe counterparts, the Harris Greeks were well-



represented in student leadership roles, including the student council. There were eight sororities on the Harris campus prior to the merger, including two sororities that were restricted to Junior College women only: Alpha Sigma Tau, Delta Sigma Epsilon, Omega Delta Pi, Phi Ro Kappa (JC), Pi Kappa Sigma, Sigma Beta Phi (JC), Sigma Sigma Sigma, and Theta Sigma Upsilon. There were also two fraternities that existed on the Harris campus prior to the merger: Lambda Beta Lambda and Sigma Tau Gamma.

During the time of the merger, the Greek organizations remained active and essentially operated as two separate systems. Although the College had been desegregated, the Greek-letter organizations maintained mutual segregation.

One participant, who wished to remain anonymous, recalled that there had been major policy discussions within her White sorority about whether their national organization would withdraw the Harris charter if a Black woman ever sought membership. The leadership of the sorority was afraid that the organization might have to accept a Black woman as a member if any expressed interest. Beyond issues of individual membership, interaction between the Black Greeks and the White Greeks was relatively rare.

*Other clubs and activities.* In a number of other clubs and activities, students of different races began to interact. Table 6 (above) lists a variety of other student organizations that existed within the two colleges prior to the merger, as well as their status during the year of the merger based on data available in the yearbooks of the two institutions (Harris Teachers College, 1953, 1955; Stowe Teachers College, 1954b).

**Table 6.**

***Organization Participation by Race, Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, 1953-55***

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Harris: <i>The Torch</i>, 1953</b>	<b>Stowe: <i>Les Collegiens</i>, 1954</b>	<b><i>The Torch</i>, 1955 Harris Teachers College Yearbook Group Photos</b>	
			<b>Black students</b>	<b>White students</b>
<b><i>ARTS &amp; LITERARY ORGANIZATIONS</i></b>				
Yearbook	X	X	2	7
Student Newspaper	X	X	1	30
Quarterly (Literary publication of STD)	X		<i>None</i>	8
Chorus (Mixed)	X	X	31	45
Modern Literature Club	X		<i>None</i>	9
Men's Chorus	X		7	10
Women's Choral Group	X		NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Player's Guild (Theatre Group)	X		8	15
Shakespeare Club	X		NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Orchesis	X		2	12
Beginning Modern Dance	X		22	5
<b><i>ACADEMIC &amp; HONORS SOCIETIES</i></b>				
Kappa Delta Pi (Academic Honor Society)	X		1	11
Tri Beta (Honorary Biological Society)	X		1	11
Pi Delta (Honorary Math Society)	X		NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Sigma Tau Delta (Hon. English Society)	X		2	27
International Relations Club	X		2	10
Future Teachers of America (FTA)	X	X	7	25
German Club	X		3	19
Psychology Club	X		5	14
Biology Club	X		5	17
French Club	X		NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Spanish Club	X		5	12
<b><i>SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS</i></b>				
Activity Club		X	NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Beta Tau Omega (Service Sorority)		X	NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Red Cross	X	X	7	7
<b><i>OTHER ORGANIZATIONS</i></b>				
Camera Club		X	NO PHOTO AVAILABLE	
Independent Women's Association	X		27	26
Tri-I (Independent Women)	X		<i>None</i>	6

Note: Data in this table only reflect the accuracy of the student Yearbooks.

Sources: Harris *Torch* Yearbook, 1953 and 1955; Stowe *Les Collegiens* Yearbook, 1954.

Organizations that contained significant numbers of members from both races in their group photos included the Choirs, the Player's Guild (theatre), Orchestras, Beginning Modern Dance, Future Teachers of America, Biology Club, Spanish Club, Red Cross, and the Independent Women's Association. Several other organizations showed a lesser degree of racial balance, as only one or two Black members appeared in their group photos during that first year, including the *Torch* yearbook, *The Collegian* student newspaper, Kappa Delta Pi academic honor society, Tri-Beta biology honor society, Sigma Tau Delta English honor society, International Relations Club, and the German Club. See Table 6 for a breakdown of the membership of organizations pictured in the 1955 *Torch* yearbook.

*Cross-Cultural Interaction Between Black and White Students*

*Limited Social Interaction Between Black and White Students*

The logistics of the merger itself created numerous opportunities for the Black and White students to interact, whether it was in the classroom or in a variety of college-sponsored organizations or activities. Despite these many opportunities, instances of significant social interaction between Black and White students outside the classroom environment were described by participants in this study as being rare.

Many Harris students discussed the lack of social interaction between the races. In the words of one Harris alumnus: "The most that I could get acquainted with any of them [Stowe students] was really there at school and then not in any social situation, just in the classroom" (N. Linke, January 12, 2005). Another Harris student discussed the lack of social interaction: "I know I really don't think I did [interact]. I sort of had empathy for them [the Black students], and they pretty much, as I recall, stayed to

themselves too” (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005). This sentiment was echoed by the comments of another Harris alumnus:

Our lunch room was, you know, social. And, you always sat with the same people. And I think at first [after the merger] it was like: “you know, you come sit with us.” But little by little, it was a Black table, a White table. A Black table; a White table. It just segregated itself. (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004)

Harris student Andrew Constantin described his limited interaction with his Black peers in this way:

My little bit of interaction is when we had gym and I sorta’ played quarterback, and there was a couple of fast guys out there who were Black and I’d say: “head on out, I’ll throw it as far as I can and you run as fast as you can,” and that’s the way it worked...I didn’t socialize because I basically didn’t know anybody. And it wasn’t that I didn’t want to socialize, it’s just that I didn’t. (personal communication, February 18, 2004)

Mary Carol (Krueger) Kluesner, another Harris student, described the lack of social interaction in this way:

I had some Black students in some of my classes who talked with me enough in class. I don’t know; the only time you had off was like five minutes between classes and you ran outside real quick and then you went back in. But as far as being in programs with them [the Black students], after school activities, I wasn’t. (M.C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

Many of the Stowe participants provided similar descriptions of the level of social interaction between Black and White students. There was a sense that much of the interaction between Blacks and Whites took place within the context of organizations and activities, like those discussed in the previous section. Stowe student Arthur Sharpe described it this way:

Most of them [the Whites] were just fine, especially my class, which are the ones that I interacted with most. And some of them were able to deal with you and you dealt with them and we laughed and talked and so forth. There are a number of activities...that we participated on campus in and with [the White students]. (personal communication, January 4, 2005)

Another Stowe student described this situation in this way:

Unless you worked on a committee or something with some of the students at Harris, you didn't get to mingle with them too much outside the classroom. Now, some of the other people that were working in these groups would probably tell you that they worked [together], but I don't think there was any social interactions, like going to homes or anything like that. And actually participating in parties and things like that together. I don't think there was that type of interaction. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

For Stowe student Shirley (Woods) Boone, the matter was quite simple:

I wasn't there to socialize, so it didn't matter to me that they [White students] were friendly to me, one way or the other. I cannot remember making any really good friends that were not a Black student, but then I didn't make a lot of friends with the Black students either, so social activities were not important to me then. I went there, went to my classes, and left. That's the kind of student I was. I went in. I did my thing. I got up. I left. I did not interact with them. Whether they wanted to interact with me, I don't know. (personal communication, January 24, 2005)

Stowe student Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson had this to say about the limited social interaction:

We went through graduation; I don't think that we had the close relationships with individuals. As I look through these pictures here [in the yearbook], especially across racial lines, I don't think it was there. Because I think people were already established with their friends and it just wasn't there. (personal communication, January 10, 2005)

Yvonne (Stevenson) Kincade, another Stowe participant, was more philosophical in her explanation:

Now some people say I'm naïve, people perceive that, but to me, I try to take things as they come. I was aware everyone wasn't going to like one another, but I felt that was something I couldn't change. I believe you can legislate laws, but you can't legislate hearts. You've got to let people take time and become adjusted. So as far as I was concerned, it wasn't what you'd call the highest level, but we were getting along as best we could. We had all wanted integration; we had all fought for it and...protested, so now it was here. We can't go back. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

*Examples of Cross-Cultural Interaction Between Black and White Students*

While the prevailing trend among the students demonstrated a lack of interaction, some participants in this study shared anecdotes about their interactions with students from the other culture, some of which resulted in relationships and friendships that crossed the cultural divide. Many of these anecdotes described interactions that were limited in nature and highlighted how foreign these students were to each other as a result of years of segregation:

I was in Tri-Beta, which was a national biology society. I remember when we would have meetings; we would go to different kids' houses and have a meeting. And even after the Stowe kids came...my friend Gerri and I, we drove up to north St. Louis, God knows where we were, and found wherever we were going and went to someone's house and went to the meeting and didn't think a thing of it. And, we would go...we went somewhere out on the Meramec River to collect rocks and bugs and whatever we were collecting. We all sat down for lunch and the one man next to me said: "Would you want one of my sandwiches?" I guess I had forgotten my lunch or something. And I kind of looked at it, and it was a potato salad sandwich. And that stuck in my head: a potato salad sandwich? You just kind of looked and you would see the different...culture. (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004).

This story, and many others, gives the impression that these students felt that they definitely needed to expand their normal boundaries, whether geographic or personal, in order to interact with one another beyond the classroom or formal group activities.

Gloria (Abbingon) Rosenblum shared her perspective on this issue:

But you know, we don't want to be in their sorority; we don't want to go dancing with them; we don't want to do any of that. We were just still focused on academics. So it wasn't a thing of if you accepted us or not, we were probably too busy; we were overlooking you [the White students]. That's the kind of...not intentionally. There were a few [White students], if they made a move, reluctantly, we watched them. They have to come to me for me to want to be bothered, because I was too busy. (personal communication, January 24, 2005)

Some of the participants shared anecdotes of special significance because the stories described interactions that were exceptional. Angie (Vitiello) Geers recalled a

poignant moment in which she realized the pervasiveness of segregation and its impact on her Black classmates:

I don't remember what kind of situation it was in; it's just vague in my mind. It seems to me we were all in the gym at Harris and it was time to break for lunch. We were mixed, Black girls and White girls, all girls, in the gym, and we were ready to take off for lunch and we said [to some of the Black students]: "Come on, go with us." Well, we were going to Steak 'n' Shake and they couldn't go [because of segregation]. And so that's kind of...it hit me like a thunderbolt. They couldn't go and I felt really bad about that because I thought: that's really unfair. (personal communication, January 16, 2005)

In another anecdote, a Harris student tells of a friendship that formed in the hallways near the lockers:

I have to tell you, I made very good friends with a girl whose name was Celerstine [Briggs] Johnson... Our lockers were near each other and we just started chatting. Anyway, we just started talking and became friends and wound up being in a class together. When she got married, I was invited to her wedding. In fact, their Dad owned a car repair shop over on Union and I used to take my car to them. Nice people. (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Stowe student Yvonne (Stevenson) Kincade also shared a story about the development of an acquaintance with one of the White students:

I remember one girl that I talked with a lot, Teresa Malloy. She and I, we sort of had the same personalities. We weren't aggressive; we sort of stayed [quiet], and we met in gym and we just kind of started talking. I will never forget her as long as I live. We would always just talk. She was very quiet, real nice. We would talk and we would see each other from time to time about things in general and what was going on and what we liked and what we didn't like to do. It was something that connected us. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Another Harris student recalled an instance in which she intentionally sought to interact with her new Black peers:

I personally wanted to try and make acquaintances with some of the Black girls. To talk with them and, not to be buddies, but, you know, just to talk to them. And there was one girl in particular that we had sort of a friendship as far as Black and White friendships went at that time. Her name was Anita, that's all I remember...I think she was trying to do the same thing that I was, trying to see what we were all about. (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Ed Ortleb, a Harris student who was a senior at the time of the merger, took advantage of this new social setting to join his classmates for a party:

I remember Bernadette [now his wife] and I were dating and I didn't have a car and we took a streetcar, bus or something up to Edgar Burnett's [Black student and class co-president] house and his girlfriend's for a party, which was unusual. Bernadette lived north, so it wasn't new for her. I was going into somewhat unfamiliar territory, but it was something very different. Black and White students were there and we had a very nice evening. It was very comfortable. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Ed Ortleb reciprocated the invitation during the graduation of the Class of 1955 (January):

And when we had graduation party, the night of graduation, I had it here in my basement. And we had Black and White students here. Everybody [in the class] was invited; most of them had their own parties to go to. And we were all 21, so we could all drink. And we had drinks here [at his house] and refreshments; I guess my mother made refreshments and so forth. We had a lot of parties in this house, with my friends and what have you. And that last one, we decided, well, it would be nice to be where we knew we could [all] get together because we knew that they [the Black students] couldn't go to all the places [due to segregation]...I remember Dr. Brummett, he was from the Harris faculty and was one of the senior class sponsors, he came for the party. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Despite these remarkable examples of cross-cultural interaction, they are rare in the context of the larger theme of limited interaction, at least in the social context.

#### *Cross-Cultural Interactions Among Students and Faculty*

Several students cited positive interactions with faculty members from a culture different than their own. Angie (Vitiello) Geers, a Harris student, mentioned one particular math teacher from Stowe, probably Dr. Victor Reef, who made a positive impression:

I had a Black man for math and I really liked him. I mean, he really helped me a lot and kind of kidded me along. Always told me: 'Vitiello is a day late.' But he got me to the point. (personal communication, January 16, 2005)



Norma Linke, another Harris student, specifically mentioned that there were “two Black teachers that I really, really got a lot from” (N. Linke, personal communication, January 12, 2005), including Dr. Herman Dreer, who taught English and History courses.

Another Harris student, Ed Ortleb, remembered with fondness John Ervin from the Stowe faculty:

They just came over and suddenly, we had some Black professors. John Ervin, who happened to be one of the first professors, he was in Educational Psychology, I think, he came over and I thought a lot of... [and] took a great liking to him. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Dr. Ervin would later play an important role in the selection of Ed Ortleb as an instructor who would teach evening classes in Ecology and Field Ecology at Washington University later in his career, a relationship that began during the first semester of the merger.

Andrew Constantin, a Harris student, shared an anecdote about his experience with the choir director after the merger. Constantin wanted to sing under the direction of Helen Louise Graves, the choir director at Harris. He enrolled in the Junior College at Harris in 1953 primarily for that purpose. For one year, Constantin was able to sing in the Harris choir under Graves. At the time of the merger, Graves was transferred from Harris to a position with the school district. Graves’ transfer made Wirt Walton of Stowe the choir director for the newly merged colleges. Despite losing his musical mentor, Constantin quickly established a rapport with the new director: “Wirt Walton became the choir director at Harris Teachers College. It [having a new director] went fine. I was a soloist there [at Harris], and in fact, he took me one time to solo in his church, an all-Black church” (personal communication, February 18, 2004).

Another Harris alumnus shared a positive story regarding a former Stowe faculty member. After failing the Health course taught by former Stowe faculty member Dr.

Clayda Williams, Peggy (English) Carroll re-enrolled in the course the following semester. Her instructor for the second course was another Stowe transplant — Dr.

Nathaniel Watlington. Peggy described her experience with Dr. Watlington:

So the first day we're in there, he starts asking questions [and] I'm raising my hand...After class, he says "what are you doing in here? I want to ask you some questions." And I gave all the [correct] answers, and he said "why are you taking this course?" I said I had to take it over again. So he said to me: "Well, who did you have?" I said Dr. Williams and he looked at me and said: "Don't worry about it; everything will be okay." (personal communication, January 17, 2005)

A review of the newspapers during this period revealed an example in which Black and White faculty worked together for the benefit of students. An article published in the November 4, 1954 edition of the *St. Louis American* described a trip organized by Dr. John Ervin (formerly of Stowe) and Dr. Mabel Seidlitz (of Harris) for some of the students at Harris ("Students from Harris College visit," 1954). The group visited a fourth grade classroom at Lincoln Elementary, presumably to observe instruction. Notably, Lincoln Elementary was a Black segregated school at this time, as the elementary schools would not desegregate until the following fall semester, some 11 months later.

### *Controversies and Incidents During the Merger Year*

#### *Limited Controversy as Observed by Participants*

On the whole, the merger of these two colleges proceeded with very little controversy. In light of the events that would unfold during the upcoming years on the national level, the relative ease of the merger of these two colleges in St. Louis is somewhat remarkable. A number of Harris alumni described the merger as a smooth and problem-free experience:

It was something that was going to happen. No equivocation. Well, okay, so here it is...I don't recall any bad incidents. I thought it went very well. I can't think of any problems that confronted me as a student or as a student council president or anything else. (E. Ortleb, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

I don't recall there being any tensions so to speak. Truthfully, I can say I don't recall any incidents. I am sure that there were some because of us being one of the first schools to try integration, but it seemed to be going okay. Maybe that was just for appearance sake. (N. Linke, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

I thought the merger went very well. I had no problem with it. The students were great and it just went smoothly. That's why when all the other stuff happened with cities rioting and all of that...it had never entered my mind that that might happen. (M. C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005)

I would say I think it went peacefully as far as I'm concerned. There were no real bad disruptions. There were no factions that I'm aware of that were pitted against one another. So I'd say, I think I felt all of us, Black and White, handled it pretty well for having been thrust into this situation. (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

Some Stowe students also indicated that the merger was relatively quiet:

If there were [any bad incidents], they don't stick out in my mind, except the thing I told you about the [one] professor. I don't know what to say except that, I mean, it was a decent experience. I don't remember anything that unpleasant about it. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

I don't remember any [bad incidents]. Now, I won't say it didn't happen. I don't remember anything unpleasant because I think my whole emphasis was: you're that close to graduation, get out. I don't remember anything happening. (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

#### *Controversial Incidents Shared by Participants*

As one might expect, several participants in this study were able to recall some controversies and incidents that occurred during the merger year that may be attributed to racial tensions or negative perceptions. These instances seem to have been rare, but the circumstances of each incident left an impression on the students involved.

One major procedural controversy was discovered after the first racially mixed class graduated in January of 1955. During the period of segregation, Black graduates of Stowe, when hired by the St. Louis Public Schools, would be initially hired at the rank of “substitute” teacher. Their White counterparts from Harris would be classified as “on probation,” a higher and more secure position within the hierarchy of the teacher ranks.

Arthur Sharpe described the problem in this way:

First graduating class. And the White kids were all talking about “I’m going to this school, what school did you get?” And the Black kids were looking at each other because the White kids graduated on probation, the Black kids graduated as substitute teachers. Graduating from the same school now, same degree; White kids go on probation, Black kids go as substitute teachers. [Edgar] Burnett, then, he was the spokesman for his class, went into his counselor and said: “What is this and why is this?” And [they] knew [Superintendent] Hickey very well and I think he called. So when my class graduated [June of 1955], if you passed the test, you went on probation. (personal communication, January 4, 2005)

Quick action on the part of Edgar Burnett and other student leaders solved this problem of discrimination before it impacted future graduating classes.

For one Stowe student, a particularly nasty incident that took place in the cafeteria still elicits strong emotions nearly fifty years later:

I was coming out of the cafeteria line with two or three friends and a [White] professor elbowed me, and as she elbowed me, she said: “Nigger, get back.” And I was so surprised I...it hurt and I was angry. And the other thing we decided, since we were graduating in two or three weeks, don’t take it higher up. Because higher up, you never know where their heads are about this. They may not like being integrated either. So that’s something I had to bite the bullet and swallow hard. My friends were so busy reminding me, don’t do anything foolish. You’ll be out of here in two weeks. (G. Abington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

One White participant described a situation in a class in which she believed that a Black teacher ignored a group of Black students who were cheating:

I tell you what. This really upset me. There were three Black students that were in that class and I could even tell you their names, but I won’t. I really got upset

about this; he gave really tough, tough, tough tests and I floundered in that class. And these three gals would just walk out of the door because they had an excuse [to use the restroom]; they had the answers stashed and they would brag about it after the test was over. And he [the instructor] let them go. Now, no White teacher would ever, ever let you out [during a test]. (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Many Stowe participants also believed that some of their new White professors were biased or culturally insensitive:

Sometimes too, maybe out of our bunch, maybe there might have been three or four A's, [and] then we missed and got a B. But we used to tease, B for Black and it beats a C for colored. We used to sort of feel like sometimes we weren't graded fairly. (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

A friend of mine was telling me when she went to Harris, she came over from Stowe but she was a little ahead of me. She had this instructor, as soon as the class started in September, the instructor said: "well, I don't give any A's so don't come in here expecting to get an A in my class," and said [that] she knew some of these students that were in the class had gotten A's at Stowe and they were A students. At the end of the year, the instructor actually had to give a few students A's in spite of saying that, and reluctantly did so. And I heard of other people talking about instructors that were unfair with the grades, sometimes a grade wasn't what they thought it should have been, and they had to confront the instructors about the grades. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

There was a teacher that I had a feeling would have rather not dealt with me, but I took the attitude: I won't deal with him. He was one of these loud, obnoxious kinds of people. He made it clear to me that I wasn't his favorite, but he wasn't mine. So it didn't matter. He directed his conversations to the White students. (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

When you went over to Harris, you had people who were probably as well educated, but not as used to, in my opinion, to dealing with Black kids. So you had people who did some strange things. We had one professor, he shall remain nameless, he would tell this story in class of how God made man, and how God made the red man and he made the Black man...and he would tell that kind of stuff in class and that was not a good way to be, you know? They didn't have a sense that that was offensive to people. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

Mary Ellen (Mueller) Cadice, another Harris student, described her own experience of perceived discrimination by one of her new Black instructors:

I remember my Dad was taken to the hospital one night, and I went to my teacher, who was Black. And we were gonna' have this big test. I said: "My Dad was taken to the hospital last night. Could I take my test on Friday?" "No you can't," [the teacher said]. And I just looked at her and I said: "I can't?" She said, No, you can't. You take it today just like everybody else." And that kind of put me back, because I had never, never...Any teacher I ever went to with any problem, they were there for you. Now, as a teacher, there was no reason why she could not have let me take that on Friday. No reason. But I kind of felt like it was, well, I just felt she was saying..."Now here I am, and I am Black and you're gonna' do what I tell you." That's how I felt. (personal communication, February 25, 2004)

She then shared a very positive assessment of a different Black faculty member:

But then Pelagie Greene, who I dearly loved, she was gonna' fail me in handwriting. And I had gotten one of my papers back and I was just in tears one day and I went in her office. I was just crying. I said: "I cannot do this. I cannot do this handwriting." I don't know, we got to talking, and I told her that I was left-handed and I had been forced as a child to write right-handed. And she said: "Why didn't you tell me that?" Well, I said: "Well, I didn't know. What? Why?" She said: "You CAN'T ever write that way," because my brain was telling me I should still write with this [her left] hand. I do everything else left-handed. And she was so understanding and so fair and she says: "I'll pass you. I don't care what you do. It won't be a problem." So that was the two extremes of what I had met with Black teachers.

In the absence of distinct and visible racial differences, would students have been so ready to attribute racial discrimination as the cause of these aforementioned incidents?

It is impossible to tell, but the ubiquitous narrative of the "unfair college professor" becomes more complex when the factor of race is included in the dialogue. Angie

(Vitiello) Geers provided a comment that describes the problem of assigning behavior as a racial characteristic:

You know what, to me, I think I don't know that there was any real big difference [between the two faculty groups]. We had our favorites and then we had those that we didn't like as well, you know. And that was probably...maybe a few on

each side. We made jokes about the White faculty as well as the Black faculty. (personal communication, February 16, 2005)

### *Controversies Regarding Inter-Racial Dating*

In the social history of America, interracial dating and marriage between Blacks and Whites have been charged issues. In the context of 1950s St. Louis and its slow emergence from the Jim Crow era, the topic of interracial relationships was particularly sensitive. Several participants in this study recalled incidents of controversy involving the issue of interracial dating at Harris during the year of the merger. One Harris student shared this anecdote:

I had one incident that I remember. I think it was on Wednesday. It was an open volleyball game. It had to probably be in the fall of the [merger] year. It was warm and it was outside and it was just an open game and if you had some free time, you could go and play. So my friend and I went. I don't remember how many weeks we did this. I think we only did it once a week; it depended on your schedule. And one night, I got home and I got a phone call from a Black boy that was playing volleyball and [he] wanted me to go out. It was really just...I really handled it poorly. I said, oh I couldn't, you know. And I kind of dodged him and, you know, I didn't want to run into him. It kind of spoiled the game because we didn't go back. I didn't want to go back. I thought, you know, that's what you get for being overly friendly. I think he mixed up my signals. I was trying to be friendly and he thought it was something else. (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

Yvonne (Stevenson) Kincade, a Stowe student, also shared a story about interracial dating:

I will never forget one girl, I don't remember her name, [she] couldn't stand Blacks. But the day I found out she went to a Black nightclub with a Black fella', I thought...we just said: "What?!" She was White, couldn't stand Blacks, but then we found out she had gone with a Black guy and we were flabbergasted. There were probably more than that, who in the daytime had very few dealings; but at nighttime would go out with others. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Harris alumnus Mary Ellen (Mueller) Cadice described a controversy in her sorority regarding the issue of interracial dating:

I do remember at that point there was no interracial dating. I mean I don't remember seeing it or hearing it or anything. And some of the Black guys were calling a lot of the White girls. I did see one White girl in tears because after he called her, and he kind of, you know, harassed her at school. A few of the girls [in her sorority] who were, um, should I say 'less attractive,' they started dating Black guys, and that's when the sorority really had problems because that was frowned upon. And one of them [a woman from her sorority] went on vacation with one [a Black guy]. It was like "that's it," you know? So that's one of the reasons I got out [of the sorority]. (personal communication, February 25, 2004)

### *Impact of the Merger*

The second research question for this study was: How do the students describe the impact of the merger? The merger impacted the lives of the students in different ways. The loss of Stowe Teachers College fundamentally changed the collegiate experience for the Black students. The new students and faculty at Harris challenged the somewhat sheltered experience of the formerly segregated Harris campus. As the students began to work together on the same campus, many had occasion to change their views on integration and segregation.

### *Loss of Stowe; Change at Harris*

Some of the participants in this study described feelings of loss as a result of the merger. For Stowe students, the physical loss of Stowe as a building was nothing compared to the emotional loss of Stowe as an experience. For Harris students, some of them felt that the merger changed Harris into an institution that they later could not recognize as the school they attended prior to the merger.

*Loss of Stowe.* The closing of Stowe resulted in a powerful loss for the Stowe students, one that was not immediately recognized by everyone at the time. Stowe's role in the Black community of St. Louis was more than training teachers for work in the public schools. Stowe was a part of the fabric of the community. It was situated in the



heart of one of the areas strongest Black communities. It was an important institution that helped to shape future Black leaders. Most importantly, Stowe helped foster a positive identity for these Black college students. Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson described this positive identity when she said: “I think there is something lost in integration. There is sometimes a sense of pride in who you are as an African American” (personal communication, January 10, 2005). Maggie (Pullett) Webb described the role that Stowe played in the formation of its students:

I just liked Stowe so much better. But I thought that I was getting a better education [at Stowe], because I think it was more nurturing. I think the Black instructors sensed the things that we were missing as far as the cultural parts of our lives because we had not been exposed to a lot of the things that we should have been exposed to. And they [the Stowe faculty] tried to fill the gaps. (personal communication, January 25, 2005)

Stowe served as a conduit of Black culture and history for these students, something that was not present at Harris. This deficiency was emphasized by one Stowe alumnus:

I can tell you one thing that we missed [at Harris], which was very apparent: Black History Week. That was always played up. I don't remember anything [about Black history] at Harris. For a while, you missed some of your own culture. (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

The faculty members at Stowe were pivotal in the personal development of these young men and women. In the era of Jim Crow, teaching was one of the few professions that Black citizens could pursue. Ironically, it was the sin of segregation itself that created the need for Black teachers. Educators and ministers shared the same high level of respect within the Black community. In Black St. Louis, Stowe Teachers College was the portal through which so many of these leaders had passed.

Shirley (Woods) Boone discussed the loss of some of the Stowe faculty during the merger with some degree of resignation, suggesting that due to the pervasive racism of the period, one should expect that Black faculty would suffer:

I felt, even at the time of the integration, we did lose a lot of our faculty that were not included when we went to Harris. I did make note of that. I didn't think of it as an issue. I guess I accepted it as the way things were; that was then and this is now. (personal communication, January 24, 2005)

The loss of Stowe was compounded by the loss of its president, Dr. Ruth Harris. Dr. Harris was not transferred to Harris Teachers College during the merger. Dr. Harris had been the heart of Stowe Teachers College and was identified by most of the Stowe students as being responsible in many ways for their development and professionalism. Her leadership was universally praised. One Stowe participant said:

I've forgotten who the president [of Harris] was, but I will say this...couldn't touch Ruth Harris. Could not touch Ruth Harris. And Harris has yet to get a president like Ruth Marion Harris. They don't make them like that anymore. (G. Abington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

Stowe alumnus Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson shared her perspective on the failure to appoint Dr. Harris as the president of Harris after the merger:

I don't think it was something that people jumped up and down about. You've got to remember that St. Louis, in all the racial turmoil that's gone on, we've been relatively kind of quiet. So people here are a little bit more conservative than they would be other places. But I think there are people who always felt that she had been wronged. I heard people say they at least could have made her a vice president or something. (personal communication, January 10, 2005)

In the area of student life, it is clear from the recollections of Stowe students that the Black Greek organizations suffered when Stowe was closed. The traditional activities of new member recruitment were always conducted in the cafeteria of the Stowe building. Once at Harris, Stowe students were unable to engage in these activities in the same way. In the words of Maggie (Pullett) Webb: "That's something that disappeared"

(personal communication, January 25, 2005). Other participants indicated that the Black Greeks no longer hosted dances and other social events on campus at Harris, a regular occurrence at the Stowe building. The leaders of the Black Greek organizations routinely served in leadership positions in the student government. The Black students were a numerical minority at Harris, making it more difficult for the natural leadership cohort of the Black students to rise to leadership positions in elected student government positions.

Many of the Stowe students acknowledged that Stowe Teachers College was, in essence, a sacrifice for the greater cause of integration. But many regretted what was lost. Stowe student Gloria (Abbingdon) Rosenblum summed up the feeling in this way: “It needed to happen; but when was this school [Harris], and I knew it was a good school, going to be as good as the one we left?” (personal communication, January 24, 2005).

*Change at Harris.* Some of the Harris students expressed the sentiment that the merger had somehow changed the character or quality of the institution. Whether it was in fact a decline in standards, or the prejudiced assumption that the quality of the institution diminished as a result of the admission of supposedly inferior Black students, more than one participant expressed this concern. One Harris student described the change in this way: “I feel that the family type of school that we started in, by the time I graduated, was gone” (M. E. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004).

Another Harris student lamented what she perceived as declining academic standards:

The school definitely changed. I don't feel that it was that first semester after integration. I believe it came after that first semester. And I can't say that the caliber of White students didn't change also. But it was just that [before], they were picky about who they took, let's put it like that. They did not take everybody. And then, all of a sudden, I guess it was quantity versus quality. That's what it came down to. Of course, with the Supreme Court decision, I guess they were in a position where they could not have afforded...because you

do not want [an admissions decision] to appear it's racial bias. (P. Carroll, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

*Student Views Regarding Segregation and Integration*

Attending the first desegregated public educational institution in St. Louis either confirmed or challenged the views of the participants regarding segregation and integration. Two Stowe participants credited the values of their parents for their preparation regarding the merger:

I think there were some of the people, in my opinion, [who] were not as fortunate as my sister and I were, to have a home where hate was not taught. But there were some people there [at the colleges] who never liked White people and didn't even [like them] afterward because they thought they had been grossly mistreated by them. And so what happens is, when you do that, you always keep yourself in a situation where you don't have to deal with Whites. I've never done that. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005)

My father had talked with me about it. You're going into a new situation, take people as they are. The main thing was, we don't look at the color of the person's skin, go by how they treat you... You've got to look at the person; don't look at the color of the skin, because you're going to find some people your own color [who mistreat you]. (Y. Kincade, personal communication, January 13, 2005)

One Stowe student said that her experience with the merger of the two colleges had confirmed her belief that segregation should be ended in all aspects of public life — in “everything. You know, it's too bad we had this stain on our history. And it's an ugly stain. I was always for integration because we're all human beings” (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). Another Stowe student expressed ambivalence about the merger and its impact on her views regarding integration:

I went all the way through Harris without having any feelings one way or another about the integration. I knew it was an integrated situation. The integration, like I said, did not impact on me negatively nor did it impact on me positively. I would have been perfectly content to have continued at Stowe. I did not feel that I was being imposed upon by having to go to Harris except that I was more of a distance

from Harris than I was from Stowe. (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

One Harris student said, "Since I didn't have any bad experience with it [the merger], I didn't care that they had joined. I had a good experience with the integration" (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005). Norma (Gerstner) Linke graduated from Harris Junior College with an A.A. degree right after the merger year in June of 1955. She later transferred to the University of Missouri. While at the University of Missouri, Norma recalled reuniting with a Black student with whom she had become friends while at Harris named Anita, and how the specter of racism interfered with their friendship:

There were maybe four or five Black students in the girls' dorm [at the University of Missouri]. And they were segregated [into separate rooms]. And we were back to segregation again at Mizzou. I worked in the cafeteria and I clicked students as they came through, their meal passes. And Anita came through one of the first days that I was there and she recognized me right away. And so we just more or less talked there in the cafeteria. The group of Black students were good at playing bridge I guess, so I was invited. Well, I played bridge at one of the jobs that I had before I went to Mizzou, so I thought, "Oh, that would be great!" But that never came about. I didn't get there [to the game] because the White girls in the dormitory told me I was not to associate and possibilities I could lose my cafeteria job and [threatened] they would report it. (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Ed Ortleb's experience at Harris during the merger helped to prepare him for service in the integrated military when he was drafted soon after graduation:

I don't know what feelings I had [about segregation] because I really did not have contacts with the Blacks. We always lived in south St. Louis. I knew Black people from work at the grocery store, but they were maintenance [workers]. So I really didn't have much contact with them. You didn't see them at the shows that I went to, you know, the plays, the ballets or anything else. So I really didn't have much contact with them and I don't know that I had an opinion about them. And all the contacts at Harris [were] very favorable. So when I got into the service, you know, it was Black and White, it didn't make any difference to me. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

For Harris alumnus Angie (Vitiello) Geers, the merger gave her a new perspective on the problems of segregation:

I probably thought it [integration] was a good thing. I had seen some of the injustices...I thought at that point it was good. The merger made me think more about how the other people lived. I didn't give it any thought until that point. (personal communication, January 16, 2005)

The realization that Black students would not be welcome in the same restaurants that she patronized caught her by surprise: "That's what was kind of a shock, you know. I thought, ohhhh. It really was an eye-opener for me" (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005).

Maggie Pullett Webb, a Stowe student, articulated that the merger positively influenced her own views about segregation:

It made me see in a way that people were the same, they weren't different; there were no differences intellectually as well as things that you wanted out of life. There were no differences. I was more acceptable to the idea of being integrated. At first, I really had no interaction with the White community, and that [the integration] made me more accepting of other people and their views, and I'm hoping that our being there made them [the White students] more accepting of people of a different race.

#### *Perspective of Family, Friends, and the Community Regarding the Merger*

The smooth progress of the merger, coupled with a relatively low amount of controversy surrounding the events of the initial desegregation of public schools in St. Louis, mitigated the impact of the merger on the lives of the students within their homes and communities. The students were also maturing to an age where they had a great deal of autonomy over their lives, which created some insulation from the wavering views of their family members. For most, the merger and its significance was simply not a topic of discussion, as exemplified by this response from a Harris student describing to what extent the merger was discussed at home: "Not at my house" (P. Carroll, personal

communication, January 17, 2005). A Stowe student remarked: “It wasn’t talked about [at home]. The only thing we talked about school was that you had to finish college” (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005). Harris student Mary Carol (Krueger) Kluesner responded this way: “It wasn’t discussed at all in my family. And with nothing that you would go out in; neighbors didn’t say anything about it” (personal communication, January 12, 2005). This sentiment was expressed by nearly every participant in the study.

For at least one participant, however, the merger did cause a bit of controversy at home. Norma Linke, whose father had a low opinion of Black people, described the dynamics of the merger in her home in this way:

Oh, he [her father] didn’t like it [her attending an integrated school], but there was nothing he could do about it. And since he didn’t even pay...I was paying for it. He couldn’t really object to it. Oh, I’m sure he didn’t care for it at all. (personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Two of the interview participants suggested that the merger may have caused some students to transfer rather than participate in desegregated education. In the words of Stowe student Yvonne (Stevenson) Kincade:

The ones who just said: ‘No, I’m not going to school with the Caucasians,’ just didn’t come [to Harris]. There were a lot that said: ‘no way, I’m going up to Lincoln University.’ There was a lot that didn’t even try. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

A Harris participant shared an opinion that suggested the same phenomenon: “I’m sure there were probably some [who decided to transfer]. That probably did happen, but I’m not aware of any” (N. Linke, personal communication, January 17, 2005). While there may have been some students who opted for transfer rather than merger, it must have been a select few. This type of anecdote did not appear during interviews with any other

participants in the study, and the enrollment data indicates a 20 percent increase in enrollment during the year of the merger. This dramatic increase in students suggests that very few students chose to transfer to avoid attending a non-segregated institution.

### *Conclusion*

In November of 1954, the *St. Louis American* published an announcement that a neighborhood meeting would be hosted at the St. James A.M.E. Church on November 21, 1954. One session of the neighborhood meeting was titled "A Community Takes the Next Step in Integration With the St. Louis Public Schools" ("Integration' to be discussed," 1954). The article mentioned that a group of students at the meeting would discuss "How Integration is Working at Harris Teachers College" ("Integration' to be discussed," 1954), in a sense, the question of this study. Unfortunately, no transcripts or report of that meeting can be found.

With the benefit, and perhaps handicap, of fifty years of hindsight, the memories of the participants reveal a merger experience that was free of animosity and controversy, but also limited in its scope. The stories told by the participants in this study describe a college environment that was physically integrated, but on the social level, still operative as two relatively distinct institutions. The lives of the students were definitely affected by the merger, but perhaps not in the deep and lasting ways one might expect.



## CHAPTER SIX

### Discussion

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to identify and describe the historical events surrounding the 1954-1955 merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges; and 2) to examine the impact of the merger on the lives of the students. The data from this study suggest that three important themes emerge from this research: 1) the merger was relatively smooth and free of major controversy; 2) while the two colleges physically merged, there is ample evidence that the social integration of these formerly segregated students was limited; and 3) the students from Harris and the students from Stowe had very different experiences during the year of the merger. This chapter focuses on these findings and identifies factors that may have contributed to both the lack of animosity and the lack of social integration. This chapter also discusses the limitations of the project and suggests possible future research opportunities stemming from the findings of this study.

#### *Absence of Controversy During the Merger*

Much of the data collected in this study suggest that there was a lack of animosity during the merger of these two colleges. Yvonne (Stevenson) Kincade talked about the success of the merger in her interview:

I'll be very frank with you. When you came up, I thought, I never really thought of it [the integration] as an unusual experience. It was just something you had to go through. And we went through it and we made it and I must say that the students, both Black and White, conducted themselves very well. When you come into a new situation, [and] you don't know what's going to happen, if you go in there with a positive...that's all we were trying to do, make the best of it. (personal communication, January 13, 2005)

Several news accounts of the period support the conclusion that the merger proceeded smoothly. The October 15, 1954 edition of the *St. Louis Argus*, published one month following the merger, included a front page article that commented on the merger of the two colleges. The article included a photograph of the new mixed race executive committee of the student council, the same photograph that appeared in the October 12, 1954 edition of the Harris student newspaper, *The Collegian*. A scanned duplicate of that photograph is included in the Appendix of this study. The article states that “the first few weeks of racial integration at the Harris teacher’s *[sic]* college has been ‘a satisfying success’ [quoting Harris president Charles Naylor]” (“Harris College moves ahead,” 1954, p.1). During the prior week, Superintendent Phillip Hickey was a guest speaker at the School Administrator’s Club at the invitation of its new chapter president, Dr. Ruth Harris. As described in the October 8, 1954 edition of the *St. Louis Argus*, Hickey took the opportunity to mention the success of the merger plan during the first semester of implementation:

Hickey emphasized the opportunity which St. Louis has to set up a pattern for the rest of the nation in the matter of integration of school facilities. The teachers college and special schools are serving both Negro and White pupils now and Mr. Hickey reported [that] the changeover has been smooth. (“Hickey tells administrators of integration,” 1954, p. 13)

On the national stage, St. Louis was recognized for the success of these early efforts. Thurgood Marshall, the architect of the NAACP’s legal strategy that challenged segregated schools, was quoted in a press conference in New York during which he mentioned that resistance to integration has been the exception rather than the rule. Marshall specifically cited successful integration in Baltimore, Washington D.C., St. Louis, and other border state cities (“Integration proceeds,” 1954). The swift decision to

act, along with the absence of any animosity during the merger experience at Harris, placed St. Louis in a positive national spotlight to end segregation in its schools. The factors that contributed to this success are discussed in the next section.

*Factors That Contributed to the Absence of Controversy*

By most measures, the merger of these two racially segregated colleges was accomplished with a minimum of negative incidents and controversy. How was this accomplished? Several factors can be identified — the leadership and foresight of Superintendent Hickey and the school board; the decision to act immediately after segregation was outlawed by the Supreme Court; the exceptional maturity and professionalism of the students and staff of the two colleges; and the initial acceptance of desegregation in the St. Louis community. No single factor fully explains the phenomenon of the smooth merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, but it is likely that each of these factors worked in concert with the others to create a climate that fostered a positive merger.

*Preparations and Leadership of the School Board and Phillip Hickey*

One reason that the merger of the colleges may have proceeded smoothly was the exceptional leadership and foresight of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Instruction, Phillip Hickey. The emergence of Hickey's plan, so soon after the *Brown* announcement, allowed St. Louis to join Baltimore and Washington, D.C. as early leaders in the effort to end segregation in the public schools. This plan was not developed over the course of three weeks; it was the culmination of several years of planning.

Hickey demonstrated forceful leadership in the implementation of his plan.

Hickey's emphasis on a successful transition was made apparent by his comments at a teacher in-service meeting during the week that classes were to begin in September 1954 ("St. Louis has accepted desegregation," 1954). A September 8, 1954 *Globe Democrat* article described Hickey's presentation to the teachers:

It is the teachers in the classrooms who must play the key role in making a success of racial integration in the St. Louis public schools, Superintendent of Instruction Phillip J. Hickey said yesterday. That was the point on which Hickey laid the emphasis in an addressing 850 high school and teachers college teachers, white and Negro, at a pre-school training program session. A start to integration will be made Thursday in the teachers colleges and special schools...Hickey said the class room teachers "represent the important part of the educative process," and commented "That integration be made to work smoothly and fairly is more than an obligation. It is a directive from your employer, the Board of Education. We also believe that it is an implied directive from your indirect employers, the people of the City of St. Louis." ("Teachers held key to success," 1954, p. 3A)

The *Post-Dispatch* also covered Hickey's presentation to the teachers during the in-service meeting. The *Post* noted:

Hickey warned the assembled teachers: "If you assume an apprehensive, defeatist attitude in your home or among your closest friends, that attitude will reflect itself, perhaps unconsciously, in your classroom teaching. The attitudes of you, the teachers, will determine the general trend of conduct in the entire school system. I have confidence in your good judgment and in your integrity. We should not minimize the problem of integration or build it up into a monster." ("Hickey tells teachers," 1954)

The message from the school board administration was clear: the merger must proceed smoothly, and the faculty members within the schools were expected to do everything possible to ensure success. Hickey's rhetoric communicated the high expectations of the school board and the citizens of St. Louis to the teachers.

*Swift Response Prevented Radical Mobilization*

The swift response of the School Board to the *Brown* decision may also explain why there was little controversy involved with the merger. Immediate action to merge these two colleges during the first semester following the *Brown* decision may have pre-empted any significant opposition. There was a span of only 78 days between the formal announcement of Hickey's plan on June 22, 1954 and the first day of classes on September 9, 1954. Any significant segregationist opposition in St. Louis had little time to organize resistance. One Harris participant described her perception of a segment of the White population in Missouri: "Missouri has a large, how do I want to say it? Redneck population. And a redneck, in my estimation, always feels that they are above anybody else, and they would definitely be better than a Black person" (M. C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005). The immediate action of the Board may have denied these "rednecks" their opportunity to organize resistance to the merger of the two colleges.

#### *Excellent Conduct of the Students*

The exceptional group of students involved in the merger may also have contributed to its success. Some participants in this study noted the maturity of the students as a positive factor. Harris student Ed Ortleb suggested that the merger may have been successful because the students were older (personal communication, January 13, 2005). Mary Ellen (Mueller) Cadice said: "We were going to be adult about it" (personal communication, February 25, 2004).

In addition, most of the members of this particular subgroup of college students shared the same vocational identity — the vast majority of them aspired to be elementary school teachers. In addition, most of them fully intended to work for the same employer:

the St. Louis Board of Education. Finally, a number of the participants in this study indicated that they approached the merger with a positive attitude. All of these factors combined to generate a student population that was professionally focused, mature, invested in common educational goals, and positive in their outlook. These attributes likely contributed to a successful merger.

The positive attitude of the students manifested itself in a number of ways. For some, the cordial atmosphere among students contributed to the positive feelings: “I really thought the girls [from Stowe] were nice. I really had no preconceived ideas. I was young and altruistic” (A. Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005). Another Harris student noted, “We were friendly and they were friendly” (M. C. Kluesner, personal communication, January 12, 2005). Kluesner also mentioned that many students exhibited a certain respect for authority: “All the people that I knew, we had just been brought up with: ‘you do what you’re told’” (personal communication, January 12, 2005). Stowe student Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson shared a similar perspective:

We were raised in a Christian home and so you were taught to be obedient, that’s one thing. Recognize the authority. We were not taught racism in the home. My parents didn’t believe in all that. You just dealt with people as they dealt with you and that’s the way we were brought up. (personal communication, January 10, 2005)

Other students described a certain pragmatic determinism that guided their behavior during the merger: “We’re going to be working together as teachers in the St. Louis school system, you know. We have the same job focus in mind when we finish our undergraduate degree” (E. Ortleb, personal communication, January 13, 2005). A similar attitude was shared by Norma (Gerstner) Linke:

I guess the main thing was that we were all there for an education and if this is where we had to go for the education, we were going to make the best of it. It was just accepted. This is the way it was going to be and if you wanted to go to Harris, that was it. So I don't think that [integration] really bothered anyone, unless they had deep-seated prejudices that didn't come to the surface. (personal communication, January 17, 2005)

Many students avoided negative behavior because they didn't want to cause problems. One Stowe student stated that "we weren't that political, the students. We were putting forth an effort to not have incidents. We weren't looking for anything ugly and we were hoping that nothing ugly would happen" (G. Abbingtion-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005). A Harris student described her approach to the merger:

Everyone was trying to make it [the integration] that way [positive]. I mean, I certainly wasn't looking for trouble. I wanted to go on with what I was doing. I wanted things to stay as they were. I didn't want to make any changes. Had I wanted to make trouble, I guess...when the Black boy called me [for a date], I would have gone to the administration. I didn't want to do that. I just wanted to go on and continue having the school as it always was to me. A nice place. A friendly place. I don't think I ever spoke to anybody that ever said: "We're tired of this or that" [the integration]. We all just..."Right, make the best of it" is what I felt was going on. I might have been looking at the world through rose-colored glasses, I don't know. (A Geers, personal communication, January 16, 2005)

For some of the Black students, another factor may have influenced behavior in a positive way. Some of the participants in this study discussed their desire to avoid trouble. Celerstine (Briggs) Johnson described the problem in this way:

And always in these Black/White situations, as long as you [the Black person] don't cause any trouble, they [the Whites] can put up with you. I mean...don't agitate, you know? And if there was some agitating maybe here [in the integration], I didn't see it. I sure there was some since [then]. But I didn't see any people particularly going out to agitate. We were always trying to get along. (personal communication, January 10, 2005)

Arthur Sharpe described feeling the same way, against his own nature, on a couple of occasions. Sharpe was required to repeat a series of courses during his Senior II

semester, courses he had previously taken at Stowe Teachers College. This increased his course load from 12 semester hours to 24. Sharpe may have been inclined to make some noise regarding this unfair decision, but in his words: “I was told by a couple of my teachers, don’t even do that” (personal communication, January 4, 2005). In another instance, Sharpe lost an election for class president to a White candidate, in part because many of the Black students supported the White candidate. Sharpe’s friends discouraged him from making an issue of this perceived betrayal. This go-along-to-get-along approach to the merger may have minimized the conflict, but it must have affected the students who sacrificed their own feelings and interests for the common good. Arthur Sharpe credited the excellent leadership skills of fellow Stowe student Cleveland Thomas regarding these situations: “Cleveland is very level-headed, very suave, a very cool person who could quell something of that nature...he would not want that [protest or upheaval] to happen” (personal communication, January 4, 2005).

It is also important to note that some of the participants mentioned another very good reason to demonstrate positive behavior — the need to stay in college to avoid the draft. During the years preceding the merger, as well as during the merger, the United States was still conducting a military draft. To avoid conscription and a possible trip to the Korean War, male students who were continuously enrolled in college could defer their draft eligibility. Arthur Sharpe described the importance of the Registrar, Vincent Freeman, to draft-eligible male students: “Freeman, he was the Registrar at Stowe and as a matter of fact, he and I were quite alright because he kept getting me deferments. Every year he would send in something and I would get deferred” (personal communication, January 4, 2005). Harris student Ed Ortleb knew that the draft was



inevitable if he ever left school: “As soon as I got out [of Harris], I [figured] I was going to be serving Uncle Sam, which turned out to be very true” (personal communication, January 13, 2005). Ed Ortleb received his draft notice in March of 1955, just two months after he graduated from Harris Teachers College. Arthur Sharpe graduated from Harris in June of 1955, and by December of 1955 he was assigned to basic training with the U. S. Navy. Staying in college, which required staying out of trouble, was important for the male students.

*Initial Acceptance of School Desegregation in St. Louis*

The initial acceptance of desegregation on the part of the St. Louis community may also have influenced the nature of the merger. One participant suggested that one reason the merger was positive was that “we were expecting it to happen” (E. Ortleb, personal communication, January 13, 2005). Certainly the intergroup education program helped to prepare students for the integration of the schools, but the above comment implies that the entire city anticipated integration. The successful integrations of Saint Louis University, Washington University, and the Archdiocesan schools were instrumental in preparing residents of the city for the same development within their public schools. The Archdiocesan schools, in particular, represented a large number of the pupils in the St. Louis area. The total absence of resistance to the Archdiocesan integration was a strong indicator of local tolerance for the idea.

Superintendent Hickey certainly expressed his feeling that the time for integration had come during his address to the teachers at the September, 1954 in-service program:

“The people of this city, for the most part, have accepted the fact that segregation is at an end with a wise calmness and a sincere intent to accept it gracefully,” Phillip J. Hickey said Tuesday while addressing teachers at Roosevelt High School. “Our local people,” he added, “have always had a deep respect for the

laws of our land and rabble-rousers and hatred vendors have had little success.”  
("St. Louis has accepted desegregation," 1954)

While the community appeared to be prepared for the physical integration of the schools, those that were interviewed for this study indicated that few of the students of Harris and Stowe were willing to commit to a full social integration on the Harris campus.

### *Obstacles to Social Integration*

A review of the literature on social integration and racial self-segregation in higher education suggests that limited social integration between Black and White students during the merger could have been anticipated. One early theorist (Allport, 1954) suggested that social contact between Black and White individuals would be positive if it occurred under certain conditions—the existence of common goals, where there was equality in status, and the intimacy of interaction (Gurin et al., 2004). In the case of the Harris-Stowe merger, one could argue the extent to which these three conditions were present. Concerning the first condition (common goals), most of the students shared one important goal: the desire to graduate and serve as elementary school teachers in St. Louis. The second condition (equality in status) is more complicated. The data collected in this study suggest that there were no instances of institutionalized status differences between the Black and White students. Black students, however, may have perceived that their status was not equal to that of the White students due to years of experience with segregation and prejudice. As the “new” students on campus may have added to these feelings, exacerbating the perceived inequality. Finally, the third condition (intimacy of interaction) was not present to a sufficient degree to foster positive social contact. Participants in this study did share some examples of contact between Black and White students that approached intimacy, but these instances were considered

rare and unique by those who shared them. Allport's (1954) theorized conditions for success had not been met.

The data collected in this study support the conclusion that there was little social integration between the Black and White students during the merger experience.

Physical integration (desegregation) had been achieved quite efficiently, but true social integration was quite rare. Modern critiques of desegregation note that simply putting Black and White students together in the same building is insufficient in producing a benefit to either race (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004).

One participant acknowledged that it seemed as though there were actually two colleges occupying one space (A. Geers, January 16, 2005). During the first semester of the merger year, an article that appeared in the *St. Louis Argus* inquired about the extent to which the students had actually socially integrated on the merged campus:

“The teacher's [sic] colleges of St. Louis have desegregated, but they have not integrated,” was pointed out last Sunday night in a panel discussion “Integration of the St. Louis Public Schools,” held at Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church, Washington and Compton Avenues. The assertion was made by Dr. Albert Lindel, professor of social sciences at the Harris teacher's [sic] college, who showed a pictorial record of the school during the program. He said he had been unable to secure “the kind of pictures I really want” - those of colored and white students going about their activities together. Dr. Lindel said it was heartening to him that as an assignment teacher during the period of enrollment at Harris this year, he did not receive from any pupil one question regarding the race of a teacher. (“Desegregated, yes,” 1954)

This criticism of the merger may be too harsh, however, since Dr. Lindel's observation was made during the first two months of the merger year.

The best illustration of the lack of social integration among the participants in this study was shared by Rich Cadice. Rich was a January, 1956 graduate of Harris Teachers College and attended Harris throughout his tenure. Rich was very active at Harris; he

was a member of a fraternity, played on sports teams, and shared the first bi-racial co-presidency of the student council with his counterpart from Stowe, Cleveland Thomas.

Rich described a time later in his career as a principal when he discovered that he had something important in common with one of the teachers in his building:

It came upon me by accident. One of the teachers when I was a principal, I said: Shirley, you and I graduated from Harris at the same time in the same class!" She says: "Oh, really?" I say, "Yeah, look it [sic], your picture's in the book [yearbook] with me. Same class!" So here, we were classmates. I didn't remember her, you know. Because we were, we just, you know, she had her world and I had my world, I don't know. But she later became a member of my teaching staff, was a damn good teacher, she was a really good teacher. And a nice person; I met her husband and so forth. Just a nice person. (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2005)

Here were two alumni from the same graduating class who clearly had no knowledge of each other. Not until they worked together in the same building years later did their friendship begin. Few of the Stowe and Harris students were able to cultivate these cross-cultural relationships while in college, representing a lost opportunity. This study suggests three possible explanations for the lack of social integration during the merger:

- 1) a "critical mass" of Black students and faculty transferred from Stowe to Harris, preserving existing social networks and reducing the need for the students on either side of the cultural divide to take social risks to form meaningful cross-cultural relationships;
- 2) Harris was a college comprised of commuting students who were unwilling or incapable of making a large investment of time and energy in any aspect of campus life or the development of new friendships; and
- 3) the social climate of the period discouraged cross-cultural social relationships.

*Lack of Social Integration: Critical Mass*

At the time of the merger, the entire student body and a large portion of the faculty transferred to the Harris building together. Unlike other collegiate desegregations, the Harris merger did not involve a high-profile cohort of a few pioneering Black students. Instead, the Black students transferred as a large group, or with a “critical mass” of friends, acquaintances, and faculty. Because of their sheer numbers, the Black students were not compelled to cross cultural boundaries in order to develop a support network. Black students could maintain existing friendships and insulate themselves from any serious social isolation. The “critical mass” of Black students also excused White students from making efforts to engage in cross-cultural socialization. The observations of two participants, one Black student and one White student, highlight this idea of critical mass and how it was perceived on both sides of the cultural divide:

“We went through graduation; I don’t think that we had close relationships with [White] individuals. As I look through these [yearbook] pictures here, especially across racial lines, I don’t think it was there. I think people were already established with their friends and it just wasn’t there” (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2005).

They came over with their own Black fraternities. Their fraternities stayed within themselves and our fraternities stayed within ourselves. The Black kids kind of stayed with their group, you know, and did their thing and the Whites did the same. None of them integrating too much, no. (R. Cadice, personal communication, February 25, 2004)

For Black students, the critical mass of peers likely helped to alleviate some of the initial discomfort of the transition. This critical mass also served as a natural barrier to the interactions that could have taken place between the Black and White students. Critical mass reinforced the well-established social patterns and segregated groups that existed before the merger. This phenomenon of “self-segregation” has occurred

throughout the history of higher education in the United States and still troubles commentators today (Duster, 1991; Feagin & Sikes, 1995; McCormack, 1998; Tatum, 1997).

*Lack of Social Integration: Commuter School Phenomenon*

The fact that Harris Teachers College was a commuter school may also have been a factor that discouraged true social integration. Sometimes, when students live together in close proximity to one another, they are compelled to socialize at a deeper level. No such opportunities existed at Harris Teachers College, a completely non-residential campus. For many of the students, attending classes was their only contact with the campus. While this approach was not applicable to every student, as evidenced by the many students who participated in various student activities, several participants in this study mentioned this factor in their interviews:

One of the things that makes [sic] a difference at Harris was that this was a commuter college, you know. You did not...you came to do what you had to do, you studied, and you went home. And I think that made a difference in relationships, too. (C. Johnson, personal communication, January 10, 2004)

Unfortunately, I wasn't one of the party kids. I couldn't afford the sorority. [With] working and going to school, I was in there and out. (G. Abbington-Rosenblum, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

I just went to class and I performed the things I had to do in order to get grades from the class and I graduated. That's why my memories of Harris are not as clear as my memories of Stowe. (M. Webb, personal communication, January 25, 2005)

I went there. I went to my classes. I left. (S. Boone, personal communication, January 24, 2005)

*Lack of Social Integration: Social Expectation of the Period*

The social conventions and expectations of the period may also have influenced the lack of social integration among the students. In St. Louis during the 1950s, it may

have been too much to expect these students to cross the cultural divide to form strong relationships. Decades of forced segregation engendered false stereotypes and negative assumptions between the two races. Even for those students who could overcome the tradition of segregation and the prevalence of stereotypes, would the community accept these cross-cultural friendships? Participants in this study described relationships between Black and Whites that drew negative attention, especially romantic relationships. The society at large was not prepared to fully accept the social integration of these two segregated groups. In the fifty years since the time of the merger, the racial climate has slowly improved. Many would argue that even today the racial climate in St. Louis is still handicapped by the vestigial effects of segregation and racism. These students may have done the best that they could within the context of 1950s St. Louis.

*The Harris Experience and the Stowe Experience*

Another theme that emerges from this study is the recognition that the merger experience of the students is dependent on the variable of race. The attitudes and recollections of the Harris students differ from those of the Stowe students. While the personal stories of the students were rarely in direct conflict with one another, the difference between the memories of the Harris and Stowe students is more a matter of degree.

Many of the Harris alumni would at first understate the significance of the merger during their interviews, as if it was not a major issue for them. And that appears to have been the case. For the Harris students, the events of the merger probably did seem insignificant. The Harris students remained at their own campus, retained their own social structure within the school, and had a numerical advantage over the Stowe

students. Comfortable in their own environment and secure in their pre-established social order, the Harris students viewed the merger as a mere enlargement of their student body. Upon further inquiry, the Harris students who participated in this study would slowly begin to recall the events and circumstances of the merger. Of course these Harris participants made noble efforts to interact with their Black classmates, but they did so as a member of the majority group in both school and society.

The Stowe students encountered greater risk and lost more due to the merger. Their recollections reflected this sentiment. The Stowe students were expected to navigate their new environment and at the same time accept the loss of their beloved college with grace and ease. Segregation perpetuated the false idea of the inferiority of Black citizens. The experience at Stowe Teachers College, however, had begun to deconstruct this myth in the minds of these students. Their memories of the merger at Harris are necessarily different from their White classmates; they arrived at the Harris campus with a different set of life experiences and expectations. If they shared an assessment of their merger experience that was more sensitive to the transition, it is likely because they encountered a greater degree of change. For most Stowe participants, the merger with Harris cannot be divorced from its logical antecedent: the closing of Stowe Teachers College. Whatever the circumstances, the experience for these students at Harris would never match their experience at Stowe.

#### *Significance of this Study*

The third research question of this study was: how might the findings of this study have significance for the study of the history of the St. Louis region and the history of higher education? This study improves our understanding of the less-known arena of



segregated schooling in St. Louis: the teachers colleges. In addition, this study preserves some of the oral history of a generation of men and women who grew up under the shadow of segregation and participated first-hand in the transformation of our region from the era of Jim Crow, through the civil rights movement, and into our modern conversation on issues of race.

In the area of higher education research, this project tells a different story of collegiate desegregation. The Harris-Stowe merger was not an epic integration struggle played out on the national stage. It was straight-forward collegiate merger of two formerly segregated institutions. Despite its low profile, study of the Harris-Stowe merger reveals a universal challenge in studying the end of segregation in higher education: to what extent has the progress in collegiate desegregation been a false victory? The findings of this study suggest that while physical integration can be achieved rather quickly and without incident, the goal of true social integration remains elusive. There are still significant barriers to social integration of Black and White students even in today's post-segregation environment.

#### *Limitations*

Several limitations can be identified in this study. The first limitation arises from sampling issues inherent in the study. It is difficult to generalize the findings of this project beyond the fourteen participants to the entire population of students who experienced the merger. In addition, this sample was neither randomly generated nor randomly assigned. These issues of sample size and random assignment are not usually a primary concern in a qualitative study, but they nonetheless have an impact on the results of this project. It is certainly possible that other participants within the study population

might describe dramatically different experiences with the merger. Because “snowball sampling” was employed in the recruitment of participants, one could argue that the participants were all drawn from clusters of similar students with similar experiences. Also, some members of the larger study population might have declined to participate in the study due to negative or uncomfortable experiences as a result of the merger. In fact, two members of the population refused to participate in the project. These two individuals did not state their reasons for refusal, but it is possible that they encountered negative experiences during the merger they did not want to discuss.

Another limitation of this study is its heavy reliance on interview data. The author acknowledges his own relative inexperience with this form of data collection. Would a more experienced interviewer have been able to elicit more information from participants? Did the age, gender, and cultural background of the interviewer negatively influence participant responses? While the interview questions were honed through discursive revisions, the interview process is by necessity a subjective endeavor. Preservation of transcripts allows other researchers to analyze the data and to assess the relative quality of the interviews.

The format of the interviews was problematic. Three of the fourteen participants participated in a phone interview. Phone interviews were necessary to accommodate the health issues of two of the participants, and one participant simply felt more comfortable conducting a phone interview rather than a personal interview with a stranger. These phone interviews were shorter in length and lacked the nonverbal cues that are often apparent in face-to-face interview situations. By a sheer calculation of words collected, the phone interviews sometimes yielded 50 percent less content than face-to-face

interviews. The eleven personal interviews were conducted in a variety of settings, including public venues and the private homes of individual participants. It is impossible to detect the impact of these differences, but the inconsistent interview conditions prevented a more standardized approach.

The trustworthiness of the interview data can also be challenged in this study. The participants were asked to describe and discuss their experiences and feelings regarding a series of events that took place 50 years ago. Many of the participants freely admitted that some of the questions challenged their own memory of the events of the merger and how they were affected. Although memory challenges may have interfered with the collection of certain types of data in the interviews, the ability to apply fifty years of collective wisdom and experience may have actually added richness to the data collected in this project that would not have been available if we were discussing the merger immediately after it happened. These participants had the benefit of a lifetime of perspective regarding the merger and the place it occupied in each of their personal histories.

Finally, as an interpretive narrative, this study is naturally infused with the biases and interpretations of the author. Other researchers may analyze the data collected in this project and discover different themes and issues. A different researcher might draw different conclusions about student experiences during the merger using the same data set. Ultimately, this study reveals only one interpretive narrative of the student experiences of the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges, and this narrative does not supplant other possible narratives. While this study is interpretive in nature, the author clearly grounds his conclusions within the collected data.

### *Implications for Future Research*

This study recommends several potential avenues of inquiry. First, there are significant opportunities for study using the same population of participants. While there may be 100 or more living alumni of Harris Teachers College who attended the teachers colleges before and after the merger, the size of this population is dwindling over time. Recording and archiving their memories of this historic event would preserve these stories for future generations. Of particular interest to this researcher would be an in-depth study of the first racially mixed graduating class at Harris, the class that graduated in January 1955. The 1955 *Torch* yearbook lists 45 students in this class, and seven were Black students. Sharing the professional and personal biographies of this group of pioneering students would tell us even more about the historical significance of the Harris-Stowe merger.

The collection of interview data from faculty during the period was intentionally avoided for this study. In part, it was assumed that few faculty members from this time period would still be alive. Interviews with students from the period revealed that some of the faculty are indeed still alive and that they could either strengthen or disconfirm some of the conclusions of this study.

In the realm of action research, it is still possible to address the social rift between the students of this period. The fiftieth anniversary of the merger presents a unique opportunity to reunite the alumni of the merger. It is apparent from interaction with the participants in this study that groups of alumni still gather on occasion – but usually in groups within their own race. Gathering alumni from both cultures would allow alumni to challenge the significance of the merger and its impact on their lives while also

compelling them to acknowledge one another and their shared experience. This interaction would generate a fascinating data set for further study into the issues of the merger.

This project also raises serious questions about the connection between the desegregated status of the schools in St. Louis and the larger issue of urban sprawl and “White flight” in the second half of the twentieth century. The desegregation of the schools beginning in the 1950s may have been a catalyst for “White flight,” which was likely accelerated by the bussing program instituted later to address geographical segregation in the St. Louis public schools. While no one factor is fully responsible for the complex urban and housing developments of St. Louis during the latter part of the twentieth century, it is likely that the desegregation of the public schools played some role. A study of this question would enrich our understanding of St. Louis’ complex history on questions of race.

### *Conclusion*

The study of history is often justified with the recognition that “past is prologue.” In this particular study we have learned about various challenges regarding racial integration that are still present today. Fifty years after the merger, we still see college students who segregate themselves by race. We still witness the ignorance of stereotypes that serve as substitutes for true understanding. We still confront cultural barriers that inhibit progress regarding important social and political issues. These challenges are not new. The experiences of the participants in this study teach us about ignorance, tolerance, respect, professionalism, and making the best of difficult situations. These are

universal lessons that will have importance in this new century as much as in the last century.

While one can conclude from this study that the merger of these two colleges was accomplished without controversy, this does not suggest that the task was completed without fault or failure. The most profound negative consequence of the merger was the loss of Stowe Teachers College and the impact of that loss on the Black community in St. Louis, as well as the students. That loss is impossible to measure but is tangible nonetheless. To some Stowe alumni, the sacrifice of Stowe in the name of desegregation was not worth the cost.

The biggest failure of the merger was the missed opportunity for the formerly segregated students to cross the cultural divide and build meaningful relationships with one another. The students who participated in the merger and those who followed were unable to fully integrate. Even today, the alumni of the first desegregated graduation class of January 1955, celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, do so as separate racial groups. Fifty years later, the students who participated in the merger are still divided, for the most part, by race.

Our 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective compels us to make this criticism, but it may be unfair to have expected more of students, in this time, of this generation. Many of the participants in this study were proud of their attempts to interact with their new classmates, and considering the social and political climate of the time, who among us would have (or could have) done more?

This historic merger's place in history is as the first step in a long struggle to ensure access and equality in public schooling in St. Louis. The Harris-Stowe merger

demonstrated to the city of St. Louis that the public schools could be desegregated in a professional manner and without incident. The merger allowed the students of these fine institutions to begin to replace the ignorance and stereotypes fostered by lifelong segregation with new experiences and knowledge of mixed cultural interactions. For a city about to begin its long struggle with desegregation, where better to start than with future teachers? The students of the Harris-Stowe merger should be proud of the role that they played as part of the first steps toward integration of the St. Louis Public Schools.

REFERENCES

Adams, P. L. (1985). Fighting for democracy in St. Louis: Civil rights during World War II. *Missouri Historical Review*, 80(1), 58-75.

*Adams v. Richardson*, 156 U.S. App. D.C. 267, 480 (D.C. Cir. 1973).

Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Area cafes dodge delegates with 'vacations'. (1954, September 10). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Attorney General rules that schools can integrate now. (1954, July 8). *St. Louis American*, p. 1.

Back to school. (1954, September 3). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 14.

Ball players segregate themselves. (1954, May 6). *St. Louis American*, p. 1.

Barrett, R. H. (1965). *Integration at Ole Miss*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

*Berea College v. Kentucky*, 211 U.S. 45 (U.S.S.C. 1908).

Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

*Bluford v. Canada*, 32 F Supp 707 (WDMo. 1940).

Board approves new teachers' salary schedule. (1954, June 9). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 10A.

Board to disclose non-segregation plans Tuesday. (1954, June 16). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 8A.

*Bolling v. Sharpe*, 347 U.S. 497 (U.S.S.C. 1954).

*Briggs v. Elliott*, 347 U.S. 497 (U.S.S.C.. 1954).



*Brown v. Board of Education (I)*, 347 U.S. 483 (U.S.S.C. 1954).

*Brown v. Board of Education (II)*, 349 U.S. 294 (U.S.S.C. 1955).

*Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (U.S.S.C. 1917).

Church body to aid integration. (1954, February 12). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

City teacher pay boost plan is approved. (1954, June 9). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 2A.

Civil Rights Act of 1875, 18 Stat. Part III, p. 335 (1875).

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clark, E. C. (1993). *The schoolhouse door: Segregation's last stand at the University of Alabama*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cohodas, N. (1997). *The band played Dixie: Race and liberal conscience at Ole Miss*. New York: The Free Press.

Cook, D. C. (1996). Shadow across the columns: The bittersweet legacy of African Americans at the University of Missouri (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, 1996). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57(11), A4879 (UMI No. 9712796).

Corbett, K. T., & Seematter, M. E. (1995). No crystal stair: Black St. Louis, 1920-1940. *Gateway Heritage*, 16(2), 82-88.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

*Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education*, 175 U.S. 528 (U.S.S.C. 1899).

Curators in opening Missouri U. put Lincoln Curators on the spot. (1954, July 22). *St. Louis American*, p. 6.

*Curators of the University of Missouri v. Bell, et al.* (Unreported 13th Mo. Cir. Ct. 1950).

*Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, 347 U.S. 483 (U.S.S.C. 1954).

Desegregated, yes: but not integrated at teacher's colleges, says church panelist. (1954, November 19). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 13.

Desegregation in colleges causes shift. (1954, November 26). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 2.

Desegregation Monitoring Office of the St. Louis Public Schools. (n.d.). *Chronology of desegregation in St. Louis*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Doyle, W. (2001). *An American insurrection: The battle of Oxford, Mississippi, 1962*. New York: Doubleday.

Dr. Robert Elman raps hospital bias in city. (1954, August 13). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

*Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 393 (U.S.S.C. 1857).

Duster, T. (1991, September 25). Understanding self-segregation on the campus. *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Ending segregation. (1954, June 24). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 8A.

Estella Brown heads Harris-Stowe council. (1954, March 11). *St. Louis American*, p. 14.

Farmer, V. L. (1980). A White university's response to Black students' entry (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 41, 551.

Feagin, J. R., & Sikes, M. P. (1995). How Black students cope with racism on White campuses. *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 8(Summer 1995), 91-97.

Freeman, R. R., Jr. (1972). The St. Louis public schools, 1938-1956, with emphasis on Philip J. Hickey, Superintendent, 1942-1956: A study of the school board - superintendent relationship (Doctoral Dissertation, Washington University, 1972). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 33(08), 4002A (UMI No. 735037).

*Gaines v. Canada*, 305 U.S. 337 (U.S.S.C. 1938).

*Gebhart v. Belton*, 347 U.S. 483 (U.S.S.C. 1954).

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

*Gong Lum v. Rice*, 275 U.S. 78 (U.S.S.C. 1927).

Gurin, P., Nagda, B. A., & Lopez, G. E. (2004). The benefits of diversity in education for democratic citizenship. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(1), 17-34.

A halfback walks to school. (1954, September 9). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 2B.

Harris College moves ahead under program. (1954, October 15). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Harris, R. M. (1967). *Stowe teachers college and her predecessors*. Boston: Christopher Publishing House.

Harris T.C. is host to Stowe students. (1953, December 17). *St. Louis American*, p. 10.

Harris Teachers College. (1953). *The Torch*, 1953 (available in the Harris-Stowe State College Archives). St. Louis: Author.

Harris Teachers College. (1955). *The Torch*, 1955 (available in the Harris-Stowe State College Archives). St. Louis: Author.

Hickey tells administrators of integration. (1954, October 8). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 13.

Hickey tells teachers of their role in successful racial integration. (1954, September 7). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 3A.

Hill, W. H. (1879). *Historical sketch of the St. Louis University*. St. Louis, MO: Patrick Fox Publishing.

Holland, C. D. (1961). *The St. Louis story retold: The integration of St. Louis University* [Pamphlet] (available in the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Thomas Jefferson Library, University of Missouri - St. Louis). Omaha, NE: Author.

Housing Authority stands pat on bias. (1954, July 16). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Integrate now! (1954, June 11). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 14.

Integrated Igoe homes pose question on future policy in public housing. (1955, March 24). *St. Louis American*, p. 1.

Integration also being planned for Harris and Stowe Colleges. (1954, May 17). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 1.

Integration proceeds with only few trouble spots, Marshall says. (1954, September 30). *St. Louis American*, p. 1.

"Integration" to be discussed at St. James Sunday. (1954, November 18). *St. Louis American*, p. 10.

"Intercollegiate Conference" program, April 1953 (available in the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, "Desegregation Historical Files," Box 1 of 28 [1937-1959], File #23). (1953a). St. Louis, MO: Stowe Teachers College.

"Intercollegiate Conference" program, December 1953 (available in the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, "Desegregation Historical Files," Box 1 of 28 [1937-1959], File #23). (1953b). St. Louis, MO: Harris Teachers College.

"Intercollegiate Conference" program, November 1952 (available in the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, "Desegregation Historical Files," Box 1 of 28 [1937-1959], File #17). (1952). St. Louis, MO: Harris Teachers College.

Kelleher, D. (1970). St. Louis' 1916 residential segregation ordinance. *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, 26(3), 239-248.

Kimbrough, M., & Dagen, M. W. (2000). *Victory without violence; The first ten years of the St. Louis committee of racial equality*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.

Kluger, R. (1976). *Simple Justice: The history of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's struggle for equality*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

*Lehew v. Brummel*, 15 S.W. 765 (Mo S.C. 1891).

Lincoln to open, drop law school. (1954, August 6). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Linder, D. O. (2000). Before *Brown*: Charles H. Houston and the *Gaines* case. Retrieved April 7, 2004 from the University of Missouri - Kansas City Law School, Faculty Member Douglas O. Linders Projects Page, website:  
<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/trialheroes/charleshoustonessayF.html>.

Lipsitz, G. (1995). *A life in the struggle: Ivory Perry and the culture of opposition (Rev. ed.)*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Look around you. (1954, May 14). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 14.

Martin, W. E., Jr. (1998). *Brown v. Board of Education: A brief history*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

May 17 - unanimous, "segregation is unconstitutional". (1954, May 20). *St. Louis American*, p. 1.

McCormack, A. S. (1998). Revisiting discrimination on campus: 1998, 1992 and 1996. *College Student Journal*, 32(3), 378-393.

*McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, 339 U.S. 637 (U.S.S.C. 1950).

Meredith, J. (1966). *Three years in Mississippi*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

*The Merriam-Webster dictionary*. (1997). Springfield, MA.

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Missouri Secretary of State. (n.d.). Guide to African American History. In African American history initiative of the state of Missouri archives. Retrieved March 3, 2003 from <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/africanamerican/guide/rg105.asp>.

Missouri U. abolishes all segregation. (1954, July 17). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 1.

Missouri will conform to school ruling, says governor. (1954, May 18). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 3A.

More powerful than all the bombs. (1954, May 18). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 2B.

Morisey, A. A. (1951). A new trend in private colleges. *New South*, 6, 1-3.

Morrow, R. E. (1996). *Washington University in St. Louis: A history*. St. Louis, MO: Missouri Historical Society Press.

Mosby, R. (1954, August 5). Let the chips fall. *St. Louis American*, p. 6.

A negative attitude on school integration can help a bigoted handful. (1954, September 9). *St. Louis American*.

New post for Dr. Harris. (1954, August 20). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

No problem in mixed schools in St. Louis. (1954, May 14). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

No segregation - historic ruling! (1954, May 19). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 8A.

Officials here go forward with plans to halt separation. (1954, May 18). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 1.

Padgett, C. S. (2001). "Without hysteria or unnecessary disturbance:" Desegregation at Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama, 1948-1954. *History of Education Quarterly*, 41(2), 167-188.

The paper was right - man was taken to City Hospital Number One. (1954, February 25).  
*St. Louis American*, p. 13.

*Parker v. University of Delaware*, 75 A.2d 225 (Del. 1950).

Pass Phillips - one dead. (1954, August 20). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Patterson, R. H. (1972). Harris Teachers College: 1904-1966. (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1972). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 33(03), 1096A (UMI No. 7223994).

Pfeiffenberger, A. M. (1989). Democracy at home: The struggle to desegregate Washington University in the post-war era. *Gateway Heritage*, 10, 14-25.

Plan for integration. (1954, June 24). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 2C.

*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (U.S.S.C. 1896).

Police carrying out hospital edict. (1954, September 3). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Pratt, R. A. (2002). *We shall not be moved: The desegregation of the University of Georgia*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Principals hail decision with open acclaim. (1954, May 21). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Public school plan adopted - full integration here by September, 1955. (1954, June 23).  
*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 1.

Real or imagined. (1954, March 5). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 14.

A reasonable plan. (1954, June 25). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 14.

*Roberts v. City of Boston*, 59 Mass. (5 Cush.) 198 (Mass. 1849).

Rudolph, F. (1990). *The American college and university: A history*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Saint Louis Board of Education. (1954a). *Directory of the St. Louis public schools 1953-1954*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Saint Louis Board of Education. (1954b). *Official proceedings of the board of education of the city of St. Louis* (Vol. LX). St. Louis, MO: Author.

Saint Louis Board of Education. (1954c). *One-hundreth annual report (1953-1954)*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Saint Louis Board of Education. (1955a). *Directory of the St. Louis public schools 1954-1955*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Saint Louis Board of Education. (1955b). *Official proceedings of the board of education of the city of St. Louis* (Vol. LXI). St. Louis, MO: Author.

Saint Louis Board of Education. (1955c). *One hundred and first annual report (1954-1955)*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Saint Louis Public Schools. (1999). *St. Louis public schools: 160 years of challenge, change, and commitment to the children of St. Louis*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Schlafly, D. L. (1995). *28 years on the St. Louis school board, 1953-1981*. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Schoenberg, S., & Bailey, C. (1977). The symbolic meaning of an elite Black community: The Ville in St. Louis. *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, 33(2), 94-102.

School bell rings death knell for segregation in some southern towns. (1954, September 2). *St. Louis American*, p. 2.

School desegregation on in Missouri. (1954, July 23). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 6.

Segregated schools on their way out and opponents can do little, says speaker here. (1954, February 26). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Segregation end in high schools here set for next February. (1954, June 23). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 1.



- Separate facilities here to be abolished eventually. (1954, May 18). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 1A.
- Shabazz, A. (1996). The opening of the Southern mind: The desegregation of higher education in Texas, 1865-1965 (Doctoral dissertation, University of Houston, 1996). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57, 4514.
- Shank, G. D. (2002). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (U.S.S.C. 1948).
- Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents*, 332 U.S. 631 (U.S.S.C. 1948).
- Southwest State College open to all. (1954, July 17). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 1.
- Sskwor, F. M. (1950). Fifth Annual Report on Intergroup Education (available in the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, "Desegregation Historical Files," Box 1 of 28 [1937-1959], File #13). St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Public Schools.
- Sskwor, F. M. (1951). Intergroup Education in St. Louis, 1950-1951: Sixth Annual Report of the Consultant (available in the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, "Desegregation Historical Files," Box 1 of 28 [1937-1959], File #16). St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Public Schools.
- St. Louis has accepted desegregation says Hickey. (1954, September 10). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 6.
- St. Louis is ready now - so is Missouri. (1954, May 27). *St. Louis American*, p. 8.
- St. Louis public schools open; enrollment of 91,250 likely. (1954, September 9). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 3A.
- States affected by segregation bar. (1954, May 18). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 1B.
- Stein, L. (2002). *St. Louis Politics: The Triumph of Tradition*. St. Louis, MO: Missouri Historical Society Press.

- Stowe students to report to Harris College. (1954, August 27). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.
- Stowe Teachers College. (1954a). *Les Collegiens, 1954*. St. Louis: Author.
- Stowe Teachers College. (1954b). *Les Collegiens, 1954* (available in Harris-Stowe State College Archives). St. Louis: Author.
- Stowe teachers shifted: Harris teachers to integrate when schools open Thursday. (1954, September 2). *St. Louis American*, p. 1.
- Stowe-Harris staff arranging merger - Board puts integration plan to work. (1954, June 25). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.
- Student council executive committee formed. (1954, October 12, 1954). *The Collegian*, p. 1.
- Students from Harris College visit Lincoln School. (1954, November 4). *St. Louis American*, p. 15.
- Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (U.S.S.C. 1950).
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). *"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Teachers held key to success of integration. (1954, September 8). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 3A.
- Teachers integration is an interregnum problem. (1954, July 8). *St. Louis American*, p. 6.
- 'Teachers jobs secure' - - Hickey, 'Board to handle changeover with ease' says supt. (1954, May 21). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.
- They move ahead. (1954, June 4). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 14.
- This momentous month of May? (1954, May 6). *St. Louis American*, p. 6.

*Toliver v. Board of Education of St. Louis*, 230 S.W. 724 (Mo S.C. 1950).

Trillin, C. (1991). *An education in Georgia: Charlayne Hunter, Hamilton Holmes, and the integration of the University of Georgia*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Tushnet, M. V. (1987). *The NAACP's legal strategy against segregated education, 1925-1950*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

*University of Maryland v. Murray*, 169 Md. 478 (Md. 1937).

"Variety-Talent Show of 1953" program, May 1953 (available in the St. Louis Public Schools Archives, "Desegregation Historical Files," Box 1 of 28 [1937-1959], File #23). (1953). St. Louis, MO.

Ward Elections Assure Minority Representation. (1941, September 17). *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 1.

Washington University makes an auspicious start of its 2nd century. (1955, February 17). *St. Louis American*, p. 6.

*Webster's II new college dictionary*. (1999). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

White, C. L. (1981). A study of Harris Stowe State College graduates (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1981). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 43(07), 2257A. (UMI No. 8223747).

Whitman, M. (1993). *Removing the badge of slavery: The record of Brown v. Board of Education*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishing.

Whitmeyer-Moyer, D. (1978). The desegregation-integration process at a public university in the South (Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee - Knoxville, 1978). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 39, 4634.

Why wait? (1954, June 7). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 2C.

Wiggins, S. P. (1966). *The desegregation era in higher education*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing.

Will ask state schools to integrate at once - NAACP to petition Mo. Board. (1954, June 4). *St. Louis Argus*, p. 1.

Zirkel, S., & Cantor, N. (2004). 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*: the promise and challenge of multicultural education. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(1), 1-15.

## APPENDIX A: Informed Consent and HSC Approval



Office of Research Administration  
8001 Natural Bridge Road  
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499  
Telephone: 314-516-5897  
E-mail: ora@umsl.edu

### Student Experiences During the 1954-1955 Merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

HSC Approval Number 040614 W

Principal Investigator Kenneth Wetstein

(PI) PI's Phone Number (314) 588-0939

#### **Why am I being asked to participate?**

You are invited to participate in a research study about the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in the 1954-1955 academic year. This project is being conducted by Ken Wetstein, a student in the Ph.D. program for Higher Education Administration at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, Assistant Professor of Higher Education, is supervising Mr. Wetstein in this research. You have been asked to participate in the research because you were a student during the period being studied, and your memories and recollections will be invaluable to furthering our knowledge of the subject being studied. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the research. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Missouri or with Harris-Stowe State College.

#### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research project is intended to explore the personal recollections of students who experienced first-hand the merger of Harris and Stowe Teachers Colleges in the aftermath of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. Learning about your experiences and the experiences of your peers will contribute greatly to our understanding of the integration of higher education during this important historical period.

#### **What procedures are involved?**

If you agree to participate in this research, you can expect:

- The researcher will arrange with you a mutually convenient time, spanning at least 90 minutes. The researcher will ask you a series of questions about your experiences/memories of the 1954-1955 academic year.
- The interview will be audiotaped so that a transcript can be made at a later date.
- The researcher MAY wish to schedule a follow-up interview with you, based on developments in the ongoing research and if there is a need for additional information.
- As a participant, you will be invited to share with the researcher any documents or other data that may add to our understanding of the events of the period (i.e. diaries, journals, letters, essays, written assignments, photographs, memorabilia, etc.). You will not be obligated to share any of this information; only invited.

#### **What are the potential risks and benefits to taking part in this research?**

**RISKS:** Some participants may be reluctant to discuss the events of 1954-1955, especially if they experienced events or situations that were unpleasant. Reviving memories of this time period may bring emotional feelings or distress.

BENEFITS: While there may be no direct individual benefits to you by participating in this research, your participation may bring to light important observations and memories about a critical period in the history of higher education in St. Louis.

**What about privacy and confidentiality?**

Your confidentiality as a participant will be protected. Your name will only be connected with your responses in the data collection phase of this project. Publication of the results from this study will not include your name or any identifying information without your permission.

**Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?**

You can choose whether or not to participate in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You also may refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. If you decide to end your participation in the study, please complete the withdrawal letter found at <http://www.umsl.edu/services/ora/IRB.html>, or you may request that the Principal Investigator send you a copy.

**Who should I contact if I have questions?**

The researcher(s) conducting this study is Ken Wetstein, and his contact information is listed below. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact in whatever manner convenient to you.

**HOME:**

919 Rutger Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
314-588-0939

**WORK:**

4588 Parkview Place  
St. Louis, MO 63110  
314-446-8351

**E-MAIL**

kwetstein@hotmail.com  
kwetstein@stlcop.edu  
kaw6d9@umsl.edu

**What are my rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at (314) 516-5897. You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records. **Remember:** Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University or Harris-Stowe State College. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

I have read the above statement and have been able to express my concerns, to which the investigator has responded satisfactorily. I believe I understand the purpose of the study, as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I am willing to participate in the research described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Kenneth Wetstein**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Printed Name

**Please Check One of These Items:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Please use an "alias" when discussing my responses in any published work

\_\_\_\_\_ Feel free to use my own name when discussing my responses in any published work

**NOTE: All participants in this study agreed to have their name used publicly.**

## **APPENDIX B: Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about your experience at HARRIS or STOWE (whichever school they attended in the academic year prior to the integration) in the year(s) before 1954-1955.
2. How did you learn about merger of the two colleges?
3. What were you expecting the merger to be like going into the experience?
4. Prior to the merger what was your perception of Stowe Teachers College (or Harris for Black participants)?
5. (IF STOWE): Describe the difference between facilities at Stowe and Harris.
6. Tell me about some experiences from 1954-1955 when you were in a situation where you had a significant interaction (more than just a passing greeting or acquaintance) with a fellow student of a different culture (worked on a committee together, were in the same club, lab partners, or study group, etc.).
7. Tell me about your experience at Harris Teachers College in the 1954-1955 academic year, the year of the merger.
8. Possible follow-up questions:
  - a. In your view, how did the integration “go?” What was the climate/atmosphere like on campus, in the halls, etc.? How did you feel at the time?
  - b. Tell me about any controversies or unusual incidents that you either experienced yourself or witnessed others experiencing.
9. Outside of the College, how was the integration being perceived by your friends; your family; the community?
10. Tell me about your life and career path after the 1954-1955 academic year.
11. What do you want to talk about that I have not asked about or we haven't discussed today?

## APPENDIX C: Archives

Two archives proved especially valuable during this project: the archives of Harris-Stowe State University and the St. Louis Public Schools Archives . Harris-Stowe State University's holdings included their comprehensive collection of the *Official Proceedings of the St. Louis Board of Education*, a detailed accounting of the meetings and minutes of the St. Louis Board of Education. Harris-Stowe has a full set of the proceedings dating back into the nineteenth century. Harris-Stowe also has a nearly full set of the annual *Directory of the St. Louis Public Schools*. This Directory is published annually and includes staff lists for each "building," including Harris and Stowe when they were still under the authority and control of the St. Louis Board of Education. Harris-Stowe possesses copies of these directories for most academic years from the 1930s forward. Another great resource at Harris-Stowe is their collection of the *Annual Report(s) of the St. Louis Board of Education*. In general, the Annual Report tends to be a dense document that reports a great deal of financial data regarding the St. Louis Public schools, but the annual reports also list enrollment and attendance figures for all of the schools under the Board's jurisdiction. Finally, Harris-Stowe's archived yearbooks were an incredible find. Harris-Stowe has collected yearbooks for both Harris TC and Stowe TC well before the merger. The Board apparently provided budget for only one yearbook each year, so the two institutions alternated their publishing schedules by year. The Stowe yearbook was titled *Les Collegiens*, while the Harris yearbook was known as *The Torch*. The yearbooks from the period of this study were fascinating and provided an interesting glimpse into the lives of the students.

The St. Louis Public Schools Archives provided a bounty of original documents from the time period leading up to the merger. In particular, a search of their files yielded a series of documents related to the intergroup education effort, including annual reports on the intergroup education program and event programs from intergroup activities hosted at both institutions. These documents were found in file folders within a group of archived documents labeled "Desegregation Historical Files." These desegregation files are stored in an imposing group of 28 boxes, but the boxes follow events in chronological order so I was able to find all of the items of interest in Box Number One (1937-1959). These files proved very dangerous, however, as I stumbled across several other possible dissertation topics while rummaging through the folders!

Two other archives provided information that was also helpful. Both the Missouri Historical Society's Archives and the University of Missouri – St. Louis' Western Historical Manuscript Collection contained books and documents that strengthened my understanding of issues involving race and segregation in St. Louis during the 1950s.



APPENDIX D: Collegian Cover Page, October 12, 1954

# THE COLLEGIAN

*Learning without thought is labor lost; Thought without learning is dangerous.*

Vol. 40—No. 1

HARRIS TEACHERS COLLEGE, ST. LOUIS, MO.

## Activities Begin With Class Ele

### S.C. Presidents Give Newcomers Warm Welcome

Now that things at Harris have attained a state of "normalcy," the Student Council belatedly extends its heartiest welcome to all newcomers to Harris Teachers College.

The rush-rush atmosphere of registration, opening day at Harris, and other activities has affected Student Council just as it has so many other organizations.

However, with the meetings of the classes, both Junior and Teachers College, and the election of class officers and good, efficient Student Council representatives, the first Council meeting will be held in a matter of days. With the opening of this first full session, plans and ideas about the forthcoming school term will begin to take shape. Some of these plans include an important vote for the purchase of the house which is to be used as a Student Union Building, an all-school party and many other matters which we hope will make the students' stay at Harris a memorable one.

We, the officers of your Student Council, again give all newcomers a sincere welcome and hope that you will take advantage of the various activities Harris has to offer—COLLEGIAN, TORCH, Intramurals, Greek Letter and Honorary organizations, Red Cross and a host of others. We would like to conclude with this thought, "You get out of something just what you put in it."

Representing you and Harris Teachers College,

Richard J. Cadice  
Cleveland Thomas

Presidents of Student Council

### Introducing



The members of the Student Executive Committee. Left to right: Elizah Hill, Rich Cadice, Dean Clucas (Advisor), Cleveland Thomas, Jim Boone, Reva Katz, Dottie Bieser, and Ed Ortleb.

## Student Executive Committee Formed

With the beginning of this fall semester at Harris Teachers College the Student Council faced a problem. Here were two colleges put together, each having a set of officers for its student government. This could present a number of difficulties.

A meeting was certainly needed and so the Student Council Advisor, Dean Clucas, invited the two groups of officers to meet with him. Various program conflicts caused the first meetings to be failures since a representative group could not be gotten together. Before long a meeting was scheduled and everyone was able to attend. Progress was beginning. At this meeting were discussed such things as what type of governing body to form, who would be president or chairman of this body, and who would be

on the staff of officers. Careful thinking went on and various ideas were discussed. The final decision was to combine the two groups of officers and form an Executive Committee. The two presidents would act as chairman of the committee half a semester each. Since two of the Stowe officers are apprenticing this semester, the group decided to have the Stowe president appoint two people to serve in their place.

At the last meeting the Committee became concerned with the election of student council representatives. It was decided that a group of around 40 students would be large enough to represent the school and yet small enough to work effectively at meetings. Using the advisory lists the group figured out that one representative for every 35

students or fraction thereof, would establish a group of approximately 37 and they decided to use this quota. The Committee discussed the question of forming a new Constitution since the present one will not be serviceable. A constitution committee will be formed to draw up a new one.

Members of the Executive Committee are: Richard Cadice, Cleveland Thomas, Dottie Bieser, Jim Boone, Reva Katz, Elizah Hill, Ed Ortleb, and Marina Lee.

### Newspaper Beckons Newsmen-At-Heart

The COLLEGIAN extends a welcome to all new students at Harris and all returning students, and invites all who are interested to join the staff of the paper.

The scan above is the cover from the first edition of *The Collegian*, the Harris Teachers College student newspaper, published October 12, 1954. This edition of the student paper was shared with me by participant **Ed Ortleb**. Note that Ortleb appears in the far right of the photograph. Another participant of this study, **Rich Cadice**, appears second from the left in the photograph. The scan also includes the text of the welcome letter from the new co-presidents, Cadice and Cleveland Thomas. The other article in the scan describes the formation of a new student executive committee, made up of elected student leaders from both Stowe and Harris.