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This dissertation, VALUE, NETWORKS, DESEGREGATION, AND DISPLACEMENT AT ONE OF GEORGIA'S BLACK HIGH SCHOOLS, ATHENS HIGH AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL/BURNEY-HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL, 1913-1970, by TENE HARRIS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

VALUE, NETWORKS, DESEGREGATION, AND DISPLACEMENT AT ONE OF GEORGIA'S BLACK HIGH SCHOOLS, ATHENS HIGH AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL/BURNEY-HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL, 1913-1970

by
Tene Harris

This dissertation tells the local history of one of Georgia's earliest all-black accredited high schools, Athens High and Industrial School/Burney-Harris High School (AHIS/BHHS), in an attempt to add to the collective history of the all-black segregated school. Within the history of black education there is a recent effort to present alternative interpretations concerning the once stigmatized segregated school. The research now focuses on the value that was placed on these schools by the local community, highlighting the schools' strong leadership, caring teachers, academic curriculum and extra-curricular activities, and supportive community and parents. These factors were researched within AHIS/BHHS and found to have been substantial in assessing value to the school.

Additionally new research has pointed to the networks that were formed among the principals of the all-black schools answering the *why* and *how* of the all-black schools: the *why* being explained by the common plight of the all-black schools and the *how* being answered by determining the role the networks played in disseminating common information to the all-black schools. This study researched the involvement of H.T. Edwards, principal of AHIS/BHHS, within the national, state, and local networks determining that through its black principal, professional education associations, and professional development, AHIS/BHHS was a part of this system of networks.

Also within this new literature is an alternative interpretation of the effect of desegregation on the black community. My research reflected the larger research indicating a loss within the black community of a community symbol and of a collective effort towards education upon desegregation. Another significant loss was that of displaced educators. The dissertation revealed the loss of jobs and leadership upon the closing of AHIS/BHHS.

This dissertation investigated the Clarke County, Georgia school system, pre- and post- *Brown*, focusing on the uncovered themes within the new research interpretations - the value within the segregated schools, networks among the all-black segregated schools, the costs and consequences of desegregation, and the displacement of black educators. The study employed historical methods such as archival data and oral histories. Through this local history, I have added to the historiography of the history of black education.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, the late **Dr. Patricia Pelham-Harris**. In her absence I have been able to achieve a feat that I had never aspired to, but with God's guidance and the help and encouragement from family and friends I am now Dr. Harris, just like my mother. What a great honor. I now only pray that with this new distinction I will be able to effect change as she did in her short life of 50 years.

I thank my father, **Ulysses Harris**, who when I entered my doctoral program too entered his doctoral program. You served as my editor and reviewer, reading over almost all of my earlier papers while also helping me to formulate ideas and arguments related to class discussions and readings. My sister **Nneka Harris-Daniel** has too been a constant place of support and encouragement, always there with big smile and excitement to spur me on. For my brother-in-law, **Valdamir Daniel**, thanks for allowing me to use my position as a doctoral student coupled with my argumentative spirit to further the causes of your children. Speaking of the children, **Amir, Ahmaad, and Aron**, I would like to thank you all also for your constant show of interest over the years in your Auntie's life's goals. To my extended family including my grandmother, **Ruth J. Pelham**, I would like to thank you all for being a family that has undergirded me with the spiritual, moral, educational, and familial foundation that allowed for such a great accomplishment.

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To those **AHIS/BHHS graduates, former teachers, and administrators** who so candidly spoke about their experiences during the hours long interviews, I thank you. Your contributions will now be logged in the annals of history and will go forward to help rewrite the narratives of black educational history. I am so honored that you trusted me with these private and treasured memories and pray that I did justice to them.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abbreviations	iv
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Significance and Purpose	2
Black System of Education.....	7
Methodology, Methods, and Design.....	9
Chapter Organization and Overview	17
2 HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN AMERICA	21
Schooling in the Antebellum South	27
Public Schooling in the South.....	30
3 THE EDUCATION OF BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES	52
Introduction.....	52
Black Self-Help.....	54
Northern Philanthropy	78
School Funding	92
4 NEW THEMES	101
Value.....	101
Professional Networks	109
Displaced Black Educators	113
Costs and Consequences of Desegregation.....	119
5 ATHENS HIGH AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL/BURNEY-HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL.....	125
History of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia	125
Value at Athens High and Industrial School/Burney-Harris High School, 1913-1970	144
Professional Networks	211
6 DESEGREGATION	245
The South and Desegregation	245
Georgia and Desegregation.....	250
Desegregation in the Clarke County, Georgia School System	259
Displacement of Black Educators in Athens	295
Costs and Consequences of Desegregation in Athens	312
7 CONCLUSION.....	338
References.....	354
Appendixes	363

ABBREVIATIONS

AHIS	Athens High and Industrial School
AMA	American Missionary Association
ATA	American Teachers Association
BHHS	Burney-Harris High School
EBD	Emotional Behavior Disorder
EMR	Educable Mentally Retarded
ESAA	Emergency School Aid Act
ETS	Educational Testing Service
GAE	Georgia Association of Educators
GEA	Georgia Education Association
GTEA	Georgia Teacher and Education Association
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HEW	Health Education and Welfare
HOPE	Help Our Public Education
MFPE	Minimum Foundation Program for Education
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NATCS	National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools
NCOSTA	National Council of Secretaries of the Teachers Association
NEA	National Education Association
NTE	National Teacher Examination
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
PTA	Parent Teacher Association

SBA	State Building Authority
SGA	Student Government Association
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
UGA	University of Georgia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Education for the masses became a tenet for America in its effort to establish a new nation. However, this education would not extend to its darker population until almost a century after this call. Upon the establishment of a common education for all throughout the nation, post-Civil War, blacks¹ to openly build an education that would aid in the continue liberation of a once enslaved group. In constructing this education, blacks insisted upon control but accepted monetary help from both the federal government and philanthropic organizations. The goal was to use education as a way to achieve full emancipation. However, upon the re-admittance of the Southern states to the Union and ending of Reconstruction in 1877, white Southern governments attempted to destroy this effort.

For over seven decades Jim Crow ruled the Southern heartland and regulated blacks to an unequal education. Schemes involving the diversion of local and state funds from the black schools to the white schools became a common practice for white local school boards, leaving the black community to fend for themselves. From this historical reality spawns a history of black education shaped by three major themes – black self-help, Northern philanthropy, and school funding.

The idea of black self-help has been a more recently accepted historical concept in the history of black education. Historical researchers have looked to the black members of the community and recognized them as agents in the development of a black

¹ Throughout this dissertation I will generally use the term black to denote people of African descent within the United States of America. This is my preferred term; however, I have also made use of the commonly used term African American. Only sparingly do I use Negro as it becomes appropriate in certain time-specific portions of the dissertation.

system of education; the focus has changed from the previously accepted one in which black educational history was viewed as a force that came from outside of the black community in the form of Northern philanthropy. Northern philanthropic efforts have been an overriding theme in the history of black education as white organizations were consistently credited with directing the development of black education. However, historians have been questioning this claim as the efforts of philanthropists have been noted as only a part of the story. School funding has continued to be an overriding theme of black educational history. Researchers point to the fiscal inequities between the black and white schools which in turn have been the basis for the claims for an inferior education for blacks.

These themes have pervaded the history of black education along with a dominant way of historically analyzing black education through legal losses and victories. However, new themes have been uncovered within the history of black education that allow for alternative interpretations to its current grand narrative. These new themes provide the significance and purpose of this dissertation as I investigate one of Georgia's earliest black accredited high schools, Athens High and Industrial School/Burney-Harris High School (AHIS/BHHS)² in Athens-Clarke County.

Significance and Purpose

In his article, "The Displacement of Black Educators Post-Brown: An Overview and Analysis," Michael Fultz notes that between 1954 and 1972 there was a loss of 31,584 black teachers due to desegregation. The loss in salary within the seventeen

² Athens High and Industrial School was the original name of the school but in 1963 was changed by the students and community to Burney-Harris High School. I will generally refer to the school as AHIS/BHHS; however, when attempting to make a distinction between the two I will use one name AHIS or BHHS.

Southern states between 1970 and 1971 alone totaled approximately \$240 million.³ Linda Tillman adds that 90 percent of black high school principals in thirteen Southern and Border states lost their jobs and many of them were reassigned as assistant principals or principals of middle schools.⁴ However startling these statistics are, within modern historical understandings of the process of desegregation the story of the displaced African American educator has gone untold. The loss in the Clarke County, GA school system⁵ was more subtle in that most black educators were placed in jobs upon desegregation; however, the displacement came later as they were fired due to alleged incompetence.

In addition to highlighting the devastating effects of desegregation on black educators and administrators in the loss of careers and wages, my dissertation also draws attention to the costs and consequences of closing the all-black schools which is argued to have caused a loss of “a tradition of excellence, a loss of leadership as a cultural artifact in the black community, and loss of the expertise of educators who were committed to the education of black children.”⁶ Dempsey and Noblit assert that the goodness defined within the black schools which allowed for achievement, purposes of emancipation, and a continuity of people, place, and purpose was no longer deemed to be the most appropriate

³ Michael Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*: An Overview and Analysis,” *History of Education Quarterly* 44 no. 1 (Spring 2004): 37.

⁴ Linda Tillman, “(Un)Intended Consequences?: The Impact of *Brown v. Board of Education* Decision on the Employment Status of Black Educators. *Education and Urban Society* 36 no. 280 (May 2004): 293.

⁵ In the records of the Board of Education meeting minutes the school system is referred to as the Athens City school system for the years of 1904-17. However, beginning in the 1951-55 minutes the system is referred to as the Clarke County school system. There were two separate school systems at one time; nevertheless, the black high school, AHIS/BHHS, had always served all of the black students in both the county and city. In 1955 the Clarke County and Athens City schools were unified.

⁶ Tillman, 294

definition for schools.⁷ Subsequent to the implementation of the process of desegregation, goodness in schools was instead defined as racial mixing. My dissertation looks to extend the discussion about the process of desegregation by investigating the gains and losses of desegregation within the Clarke County, Georgia school system.

According to Vanessa Siddle Walker, the devastating losses within the black schools and community can be generalized due to the commonality of black segregated schools as a result of the networks that were forged between communities and schools through the black principal.⁸ Siddle Walker has charted a new direction in the study of the black segregated school in an effort to explain the *why* and *how* of the black schools. In her study, she highlights the network of professional activities and community influences that created a systematic structure found within the black educational system. This focus on the black principal allows the historian to acquire the “best explanation for the consistency in the development of these schools across time and geography.”⁹ The black segregated high school in Clarke County, Athens High and Industrial/Burney-Harris High School (AHIS/BHHS), is characterized as having had strong principals throughout its existence. One of its principals, Homer T. Edwards, is highlighted in Siddle Walker’s book as being a part of the national and state black education associations and as having served as a mentor to other black principals throughout the state of Georgia. My study on Athens High and Industrial/Burney-Harris High School

⁷ Van Dempsey and George Noblit, “The Demise of Caring in an African-American Community: One Consequence of School Desegregation,” *The Urban Review* 25 no.1 (March 1993): 59.

⁸ Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor: A Black Principal and Professional Leadership in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2009), 5-7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

leads to a fuller investigation of Homer T. Edwards and the role he played in establishing networks that served to answer the *why* and *how* of the segregated black schools.

The significance of my dissertation lies in its connections to the scholarly movement to re-evaluate the process of desegregation and the narratives surrounding the all-black segregated schools. The grand narrative concerning the process of desegregation and the idea of integration is one of assumed consensus. Since 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the 1966 publication of the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (Coleman Report), and various other federal and local studies the assumed consensus has been the inherent value of integration and the process of desegregation which would serve as the sole mechanism for academic achievement for black students.¹⁰ Although no policy recommendations were in the federal and local reports themselves, the ideas about school desegregation and the all-black school were formed.¹¹ I seek to add to the challenge of this dominant grand narrative.

Siddle Walker challenges this narrative by seeking to change the conversation surrounding black schools during the era of segregation in the South. In her book, *Their Highest Potential*, Siddle Walker changes the conversation by moving it from one of lack and deficiency to one of value.¹² The move from deficiency to value forces a simultaneous change in focus. The focus is now shifted to the agents within the school

¹⁰Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," James Coleman, ICPSR Publication No. 6389 (Ann Arbor, MI, 1966); Meyer Weinberg, *Desegregation Research: An Appraisal* (Bloomington, Indiana, Phi Delta Kappa, 1968), 198 ; Board of Education Minutes, 24 November 1969.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," James Coleman, ICPSR Publication No. 6389 (Ann Arbor, MI, 1966); Meyer Weinberg, *Desegregation Research: An Appraisal* (Bloomington, Indiana, Phi Delta Kappa, 1968), 198 ; Board of Education Minutes, 24 November 1969.

¹² Vanessa Siddle Walker. *Their Highest Potential*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1996), 1-11.

system such as the principals, teachers, and students, a population that had previously been ignored within black educational history. Siddle Walker insists that in spite of a U.S. educational system that vigorously sought to recreate inequalities within society through gross inequities within the school system, black segregated schools countered these discriminatory practices, creating an education that was both exceptional and valued within the black community.

Adam Fairclough further adds to this discussion by stating, “Once stigmatized as symbols of Jim Crow and engines of educational failure, black schools of the era before *Brown v. Board* are now portrayed as proud institutions that provided black communities with cohesion and leadership.”¹³ This portrayal until recently has been untenable because so much of the literature on *Brown* has been written from a resolutely prointegrationist position; historians have tended to overlook skepticism concerning integration. My dissertation adds to the literature that currently challenges the prointegrationist position by uncovering the value within the black segregated schools.

The history of the displaced black educator, the costs and consequences of desegregation on the black community, the networks that were a part of the black system of education, and the value within the all-black schools will lead me to make a claim for reassessing the current position on the process of desegregation. However, I will in no way claim this to be a newly agreed upon analysis. Historians are still grappling with the complex outcomes of the *Brown* decision. Fairclough cautions current historians against presenting a utopian all-black segregated school and a completely disastrous desegregation process. Hence it is important to research the local histories of

¹³ Adam Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*: Black Teachers and School Integration,” *The Journal of American History* 91 no.1 (June 2004): 43.

communities in an effort to add to the national understandings of these monumental events.

Black System of Education

Within this dissertation I will commonly refer to the system of education that blacks in the United States experienced, particularly in the South, as the black system of education. As previously mentioned and as will later be expanded on, upon their Emancipation, blacks set about to develop a system of education that would serve further emancipatory purposes for the black community. It proved to be an insular effort as blacks fought for control of their schools through curricular and staffing preferences with little aid from whites.

Upon the close of Reconstruction, white Southern governments created a society that limited the access of blacks in the participation of the larger society. Hence blacks became further embedded into an almost separate society that required self-help, eventually developing black communities throughout the South that became, to a large extent, self sustainable. Part of this sufficiency was within the educational system. According to Siddle Walker, “a network of people and organizations throughout the South created a system of black schooling that focused specifically upon addressing the educational needs peculiar to students in the black community,”¹⁴ thereby developing a black system of education.

Siddle Walker cited three characteristics of the black system of education: professional development, the effort at the elimination of the unequal distribution of resources, and an influence within the black culture. Professional development within this

¹⁴ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 5.

system began with the principal. Black principals, also referred to as professors, led the educational community in professional development by attending both national and state level professional activities. This effort not only resulted in an improved education for black students but also the creation of a network of black educators. From this network the ideals, philosophies, and practices of the black system of education were disseminated.

Additionally, the black system of education featured the black principals as covertly attempting to prompt white superintendents and boards of education to provide equitable funding for its black schools. Although this prompting was not fully successful in attaining an equitable distribution of funds, black principals did find limited success when other black organizations found none.¹⁵ Within the black system of education this role of the black principals proved to be a vital role.

Last, Siddle Walker insisted that the black system of education was significant because of its influence. She contends that it “crafted an agenda for black education that focused specifically upon meeting the perceived educational needs of black children.”¹⁶ Therefore, education for blacks differed in its purpose and at times content from that for white students. In her research on black teachers, Michele Foster, quoted a teacher in her description of the curriculum at the black schools during segregation. The teacher explained, “[T]he teachers did quite a few things with the curriculum that did not coincide with the white school and were not sanctioned by the school board.”¹⁷ This included incorporating a curriculum that included black history whereby the students

¹⁵ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁷ Michele Foster, *Black Teachers on Teaching* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 38.

would sing the black national anthem before every class and school assembly. These practices would of course be hidden upon the anticipated visits from the white supervisor or superintendent. One of the respondents within the present study insisted that in going to a black school one did not hear about a school board; instead she insisted that the teachers, administrators, and community made their own decisions. The practices were embraced within the black system of education and disseminated throughout the networks to create cohesiveness.

The black system of education is demonstrated as it existed specifically in Georgia through an investigation of the Division of Negro Education as a part of the State Department of Education and the networks that were created between the black schools throughout Georgia. The creation of the networks were a function of being a part of this separate office within Georgia's Department of Education as well as the relationships that were formed with the state's private and public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and the mass participation in the state's black education association, the Georgia Teacher and Education Association (GTEA). From these studies, the black system of education becomes evident.

Methodology, Methods, and Design

The methodology of my dissertation is an historical analysis. Within an historical analysis one cannot hope for objectivity or permanent truths. According to Peter Novick and Carl F. Kaestle, the two represent hoped for but elusive goals.¹⁸ Novick asserted that due to the nonconsensus amongst historians, objectivity cannot be reached; whereas

¹⁸ Peter Novick. *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-17; Carl F. Kaestle, "Standards of Evidence in Historical Research: How Do We Know When We Know?," *History of Education Quarterly* 32 no 3 (Autumn 1992): 362-366.

Kaestle concluded that due to the development of new subject matter and new perspectives within history, truths have been “diversified” within contemporary history.¹⁹ Novick does not offer a resolution to this predicament although, Kaestle does suggest impermanent answers. Impermanent answers within history tell us “how we know when we know.”²⁰ This occurs when three conditions suffice: “(1) consonance of micro- and macro-levels of analysis, (2) synthesis of contradictory claims, and (3) reinforcement across regions or nations.”²¹ My historical analysis will look to present these “impermanent answers” concerning the education of blacks in the Clarke County school system.

Concerning methodology, Kaestle insists that history does not have a “highly developed methodology around which there is consensus,”²² hence historians must look to other disciplines for methods or theories. Therefore the methods that I employed were a combination of traditional and alternative historical and qualitative methods. These methods included archival research and oral histories.²³

Written Documents

The majority of the written documents used in this historical analysis were in the form of archival research. The documents proved to be very telling resources of

¹⁹ Kaestle, 362.

²⁰ Ibid., 366.

²¹ Ibid., 366

²² Ibid., 362

²³ Oral history is denoted as being an alternative historical method based upon the development of the method within the field of history. This classification does not indicate a lack legitimacy as oral history within the larger historiography of black education is integral. Traditional views of black education within historical understandings have been noted as being unreliable as the research in the next section will explain.

information related to Athens' educational system and the state's system for its black students.

In order to gain access to the historical written documents of the Clarke County school system I investigated multiple locations within Athens-Clarke County. One such place was the University of Georgia's (UGA) Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Division housed in its main library. This division holds the historical records of the Clarke County school system including tax records and the Board of Education meeting minutes. Research of the board meeting minutes allowed for a clearer understanding of the state of the school system at different times in history while also providing a limited understanding of the nature of the city and county affairs during the particular researched times. The minutes also revealed a move to a more structured system of education accompanied by more rules and regulations within the school system, creating a formality that wasn't evident in the earlier years. This may have been a part of the move to a more bureaucratic system as was witnessed in education throughout the U.S.²⁴ Last, the minutes provided a vital timeline of the history of the Clarke County school system. Although, the minutes did omit some very information regarding the school system, as I was later to realize, they did provide an essential history of the school system.

The minutes were bound in large books that held multiple decades of meeting minutes. I started with the book that began in 1904 and ended in 1917. As time progressed the organization of the minutes greatly improved. There was a gap in the sources in that there was no record of the 1955-63 board meeting minutes. I am only left to speculate as to why these vital years would be missing. However, having access to the

²⁴Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner Jr., *American Education: A History*: 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 200-204.

years prior to this time period, 1951-55, and the years directly following the time period, 1963-69 and 1969-76, helped in providing a continuity of information. At the same time the newspaper articles during these missing years helped to fill in the gap.

The board meetings provided vital information about the operation of the school system while also offering much information about the district's desegregation process from a legal standpoint. In contrast, the local newspapers housed at both the main UGA library in its Georgia Newspaper Project holdings and the Athens-Clarke County Library provided much of the story of desegregation from a humanistic point of view. I reviewed two of the county's main newspapers from 1954-72. I was also able to gain access to early issues beginning in 1975, of The Athens Voice, a black newspaper published by a former student who experienced the desegregation process in the Clarke County schools. From this newspaper I was able to gain insight into the black educator displacement efforts of the district. The newspaper also provided information regarding the lives of blacks within the newly desegregated educational system.

The Athens-Clarke County public library had in its collection the holdings from Athens' two main newspapers, The Athens Banner-Herald and The Athens Daily World. These newspapers offered detailed accounts of the process of desegregation along with the April 16, 1970 protests that were not included in the board minutes. As in many newspapers, the community's opinions regarding desegregation were included as well as op-ed pieces that provided further insight. The newspapers proved to be vital in gaining a clearer understanding of desegregation in Clarke County, GA.

Another source for written archival primary data was the Georgia Archives in Morrow, GA. During the summer of 2011 the Archives highlighted an exhibition of their

holdings on black education. Within these holdings was information regarding the black teacher professional organization, the GTEA, the summer institutes held at various HBCUs primarily in Georgia, and the Division of Negro Education in Georgia. The letters, program booklets, and various other publications provided most of the research for professional networks in black education within this study. I was able to locate multiple documents that related directly to Athens High and Industrial/Burney-Harris High School and its principals.

Since the Athens Historical Society serves as a clearing house for information on the educational efforts of blacks of Athens-Clarke County, I was able to gain documents and directional information from this organization. Eve Mayes of the historical society was of great help in directing me to libraries, online sources, and the suggestion of the Georgia Archives to locate information pertaining to AHIS/BHHS. On May 2, 2010, the society commemorated the historical educational efforts of the black community in a program which highlighted a timeline of the early development of black education, 1865-1933, through written documentation. I used this written document as a reference during the research process.

Last, I was directed by a former student of AHIS/BHHS to the official Burney-Harris High School website, theyellowjacket.com. This site presents historical data about the school including its origin and the district's eventual integration, while it also serves as a site for past graduates to remain in touch through reunions.

Oral History

A more controversial and less readily accepted method is oral history. Melanie Carter characterizes oral histories as a research method that “trouble[s] mainstream

educational theories and practices” as they prove to be “indigenous tools...that acknowledge the interdependence of the researched to the stories they share.”²⁵ Only through oral and written forms of storytelling and testimony can the voices of the marginalized other be heard and their lives presented to themselves, each other, and the world. Oral histories are challenges to the “rigidity of academically sanctioned research methods...” that are charged with being used to protect the “dominant narratives from new interpretations.”²⁶ Only through nontraditional modes of inquiry can these new interpretations be realized.

In, *The Oral History Reader*, Paul Thompson asserts that,

oral history has transformed both the content of history – by shifting the focus and opening new areas of enquiry, by challenging some of the assumptions and accepted judgments of historians, by bringing recognition to substantial groups of people who had been ignored.

Equally, oral history offers a challenge to the accepted myths of history, to the authoritarian judgment inherent in its tradition. It provides a means for radical transformation of the social meaning of history.²⁷

The volume goes on to define history as a living thing, something that is to be created within a social and present context. Oral history allows for this process. Additionally within this volume, advocacy and empowerment prove to be mainstays of oral history.

Sanjiv Kakar states that the “oral narrative is the only means for [the] poor, underprivileged...to have their say, and to record their own histories.”²⁸ In this way a

²⁵ Melanie Carter, “Telling Tales Out of School: “What’s the Fate of a Black Story in a White World of White Stories?”” in *Interrogating Racism in Qualitative Research Methodology* eds. Gerardo R. Lopez & Laurence Parker (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 29, 41.

²⁶ Carter, 29, 34.

²⁷ Paul Thompson, “The Voice of the Past,” in *The Oral History Reader* eds. R. Perks & A. Thomson (London: Routledge 1978/1998), 2, 28.

²⁸ Sanjiv Kakar, “The Intervention of Oral History,” in *The Oral History Reader* eds. R. Perks & A. Thomson (London: Routledge 1978/1998), 264.

restructuring of one's life is possible. The principles of oral history appropriately align with the purposes of my dissertation.

Collecting the oral histories of the students who attended the all-black segregated high school began with a member of my childhood church. During a visit in 2009 to this member's home, she began to voluntarily share the memories of the process of desegregation at AHIS/BHHS. This voluntary transmission of information by a former student of AHIS/BHHS served to be vital in both understanding the interpretations this particular graduate had of this process while it also served as an avenue in which to gain memories from other graduates.

Because I had spent a large portion of my life in Athens I was familiar with the stories of the great black high school. Many of its former administrators, teachers, and students filled my church every Sunday morning. I therefore, knew these members would be a great starting point in collecting this oral history. However these members were even more integral to the study as they directed to me other graduates, teachers, and administrators whom they expected would be of great help in telling this untold story.

The use of snowball sampling as a qualitative method in the social sciences is one of the most widely employed methods to identify participants. Although it is viewed as being common sense by many researchers, Chaim Noy believes that this method deserves to be employed "on *its own right and merit* [emphasis original] and not as a default option."²⁹ Through this method the researcher is able to access additional informants through information provided by other informants. This method is particularly useful when attempting to research populations that are hidden. The graduates and former

²⁹ Chaim Noy, "Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling and Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11 no. 4 (Oct. 2008): 331.

students of AHIS/BHHS can be considered hidden as their stories and stories of other all-black segregated schools have gone largely untold throughout history.

Additionally as snowball sampling makes use of natural social networks, power relations become a force. The researcher is forced to “relinquish a considerable amount of control over the sampling phase to the informant”³⁰ as the researcher is dependent upon the informant to provide access to more informants. Noy noted that “the quality of the referring process is *naturally related* [emphasis original] to the quality of the interaction.”³¹ Essentially Noy insisted that if the informant is discontented and if the researcher does not gain the informant’s trust and sympathy “the chances the [informant] will supply the [researcher] referrals decreases (and vice versa).”³² Fortunately I did not encounter problems with gaining referrals to additional informants. This was probably a result of a couple of factors.

As previously mentioned I grew up with many of the informants, so there seemed to be an established trust that prompted them to refer other informants. Additionally, many of the respondents knew my mother, one of the few black doctors in the city, and possessed fond memories of her and the stories she regularly told of her daughters. Informants whom I had never met knew of my mother and therefore perhaps extended the trust they had of her to me. Last, this is a story that is asking to be told. Agents of the school do not shy away from sharing the memories of their beloved high school and since I possessed a true interest in retelling the story, the willingness to aid in the process was there. Through my initial informant, other members of my childhood church, and referred

³⁰ Noy, 332.

³¹ Ibid., 334.

³² Ibid., 334.

informants, I was eventually able to acquire the oral histories of twelve former students, teachers, and administrators of AHIS/BHHS and the white high school, Athens High.

Chapter Organization and Overview

Each chapter is written in an effort to provide a historiography of black education. In order to properly tell the story, a broad foundation had to be laid before delving into the specific school and its history. With that in mind, chapter one gives a brief history of education in America. It chronicles the projected purpose of education as envisioned by the Founding Fathers and the rise of common schooling in America. Although common schooling was taking form in the northern part of the country, the South still persisted in its distinctive form of schooling, academies, during its Antebellum period. Private academies reigned supreme in the Southern educational system with a small number of pauper schools. However, after the Civil War, the South was required to adopt the public school system of education. The dissertation then records the history of four Southern states and their efforts to establish this new system of education. North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia experienced varied and distinct difficulties in establishing what they determined to be a Northern way of education while also sharing some of the same dilemmas. Some of them included having a population that was distinctly poorer than their Northern neighbors, families having more children, and local districts and states having to provide two separate educational systems – one white and one black. What is revealed is a crude, underfunded, discriminatory system of education that was to exist for many generations.

Chapter two provides an historical analysis of the history of education of blacks in the U.S. focusing on three major themes: black self-help, Northern philanthropy, and

school funding. Northern philanthropy and school funding have historically been the dominant themes of black education for historians which have in turn shaped the grand narrative that casts all-black segregated in an unfavorable historical position. However, black self-help, as espoused mainly by black historians, served to preserve the autonomy that blacks had within their educational system. Although this theme has not proven to be readily incorporated into the narrative of the black school, it serves a vital place within the history. It is important to document these persistent themes as they have shaped the way black education is viewed historically within the U.S.

Chapter three introduces four new themes within the history of education which acts to disrupt the long standing grand narrative of the black segregated schools. The themes of value, networks, displaced black educators, and costs and consequences of desegregation provide new interpretations to the historiography of black education. Researchers have gone to the local histories of Southern towns and their all-black schools to reconstruct a history that was not representative of the agents of the schools. The new historical interpretations speak to the varied and complicated nature of the history of black education.

Chapter four adds to the body of research on local school histories in an effort to reshape the narrative of the all-black segregated school. The history of Athens High and Industrial/Burney-Harris High School (AHIS/BHHS) is retold through oral histories and written documents from former administrators, teachers, and students. However, in order to properly situate the history of the school, the history of the town, Athens, is told. After the general history, I then go into the history of blacks in Athens and the broader history of their fight for education within this setting. In many ways Athens proved to be

distinctive as it formed around the state's flagship university, the University of Georgia (UGA). Historical records speak to its commitment to education and its mild stance on race. Both of these factors provided an atmosphere that spawned a black community that demanded and built a strong educational system.

As way of adding to the new interpretations of black educational history and the all-black segregated school, I present the history of AHIS/BHHS through the four themes. The first two themes of value and networks are presented in this chapter. The interviewees speak to the value found within their school represented by strong leadership, caring teachers, the academic curriculum/extracurricular activities, and parental/community involvement. The longest serving principal, H.T. Edwards, proved to not only be a strong leader within the school but he also served as one of the driving forces for AHIS/BHHS' connection to the network of black educators within Georgia. Within these conversations I inserted the concept of class and colorism which proved to not be a major factor within this black Southern community. The candor with which the interviewees spoke helps to complete the history the black segregated school in Athens, GA.

Chapter five details the final two themes: the displacement of black educators and the costs and consequences of desegregation. Black educators in Athens did experience displacement as the rest of the South did. Its displacement was not whole-sale as in other Southern towns but was nonetheless evident and harmful. This proved to be a consequence of the desegregation effort as the education of blacks in Athens suffered during this process. The overall sentiment expressed in the oral histories was that segregation had more harmful effects than positive ones. The positive effects were

experienced in the form of better equipment in schools and more opportunities in the economic and social lives of blacks. The desegregation of the schools was oftentimes directly linked to the desegregation of the social and economic lives of blacks in Athens; therefore, respondents regularly linked the positive effects of better access to jobs and social opportunities to that of school desegregation. However, most believed that integration has not provided a better education for black students; instead the education for blacks has suffered post-desegregation.

The chapter closes with a discussion of the grand narrative and its formation. Through the use of federal studies, the studies' corresponding histories, and the nation's image of blackness, the narrative of the all-black segregated school was formed. There is now a call to re-evaluate this narrative built upon the recognition that desegregation was not the panacea that all hoped it would be nor was segregation the problem that most have framed it to have been. Federal and district level initiatives have begun to incorporate past methods of the all-black segregated school in their present-day efforts to improve the academic achievement of their students. Whether intentional or not, the practices of the all-black schools are reappearing within the modern school systems which further adds to the importance of re-evaluation. This dissertation seeks to add to that effort.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Although this dissertation focuses on the system of black education, specifically in one community in Georgia, it is important to understand the origins of the larger educational system in the United States. Therefore I have taken time to provide a history of the education within the larger society to offer a context for what was later to form within the black community. While reading the history of the development of education for blacks one is readily able to detect the tenets that were used by the Founding Fathers in the establishment of America's educational system. Although America strayed from these tenets in helping to establish a system of education for blacks, history shows that blacks continued to pull from these original dictates to form their own system of education. An in-depth overview of the history of education for blacks in the United States will follow this larger educational history.

The basis of the educational system in the United States of America was a direct result of the Enlightenment that occurred in Europe in the late eighteenth century. As the wave of the Enlightenment enveloped the 13 colonies, a context of revolution was being formed. According to Urban and Wagoner, there was never a question within the colonies about the necessity of having an educated leadership class; however, within this revolutionary context a new wave of thought emerged concerning the education of the lay.

¹ The enlightenment called for consideration of the intellectual advancement of the populace as it proved to be the key weapon in the fight against ignorance and injustice; however, debate still surrounded the educational necessity of the general population. The push for an informed general public gained support from Thomas Jefferson and George Washington as they argued for the newly found nation, a society that would be based upon inalienable rights

¹ Urban and Wagoner, 68-69.

and independence which would not tolerate ignorance, apathy, or distrust.² As in the tenets of Enlightenment, man³ would be shaped by his education and experience in a world dominated by logic and reason and not by the hand of God. To this end education was a necessity.

The building of the new nation would require an education that could fulfill both practical and political purposes; hence, a fusion of educational theory and political theory formed.⁴ This fusion called for a useful education that would allow the lay people to pursue their individual goals of happiness while also contributing to the development and sustainability of their nation. Benjamin Franklin therefore encouraged a practical and classical education. The Founding Fathers declared their commitment to and support for an education for all, as early as 1779, Jefferson submitted an education bill that would require state supported common elementary education.⁵ In doing so he declared that “in a free society, the public has a vital interest in providing for equality of opportunity and responsible citizenship.”⁶ This no doubt came from his vision of America as a virtuous and enlightened republic situated within a classical democracy with the provision of education acting as the “most certain and the most legitimate engine of government.”⁷ Education at the elementary level would be available to all, whereas those deemed to lead would be given the opportunity to extend their educational pursuits into the collegiate level. These chosen few would be capable of leadership and worthy of the public trust. So although the Enlightenment called

² Urban and Wagoner, 69.

³ Man is used in the non-gendered form here.

⁴ Urban and Wagoner, 69.

⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁷ Ibid., 71.

for an educated populace, a practical rudimentary education would be sufficient for most while the most advanced type of education would be reserved for the leadership class. The vestiges of the class- and caste-based European society still lingered.

Although the bill was not passed in its entirety, the Virginia legislature did pass the portion that called for the creation of institutions of higher learning and a charter was granted for the creation of the University of Virginia.⁸ The granting of charters for universities seemed to be the agreed-upon path in the early days of the new nation as the Georgia legislature also passed a law for the creation of universities and in 1785 became the first state to charter a university which later became known as the University of Georgia. The movement for state governments to create and support postsecondary education as opposed to primary and secondary schools, which was initially espoused, further spoke to the newly formed nation's apprehension about creating a truly informed nation that would be led by the people. Instead a hand-picked leadership class would lead a nation of marginally educated people that would allow unison in government in order to provide the institution to persist. According to Benjamin Rush this was indeed the purpose of education. He asserted that the child does not belong to himself instead the state, and he is to forsake his family when the welfare of the country was at stake.⁹ The purpose of education for Rush was not necessarily for this individual pursuit of happiness but for the sake of the republic; hence, an educated people was additionally practical for the society in that it proved to be cheaper to educate than to punish. Noah Webster too espoused political theory within the establishment of the educational system. He asserted that education would provide "quiet Christians" who would submit to the government. Education would be used to promote order and prevent social

⁸ Urban and Wagoner, 73.

⁹ Ibid., 77.

disruption.¹⁰ Therefore, he called for a practical education, an education that would bind Americans together through moral precepts, the rules of spelling, pronunciation, and grammar.

A practical education became the type of education that was championed by the large majority of those within the fight for an education for all. For these proponents of education, it became a social necessity rather than an individual right. This change in focus prompted nearly every state in the union between 1795 and 1825 to establish a literary fund that was primarily used to fund pauper schools.¹¹ The pauper schools can be viewed as the precursor to the common schools that were later to form.

The common school movement of the nineteenth century was a response by the newly formed Whig party to the Jacksonian Common Man movement.¹² Andrew Jackson and his party saw the government as an instrument of the powerful and sought to reduce the inclusion of the federal government in the common man's life. This reduction in the life of the farmer, mechanic, and artisan would allow for greater opportunity to compete for economic and other benefits.¹³ As this movement gained greater momentum, those in the Whig party, most notably Horace Mann, took up the cause of a common education through common schooling that would continue to serve the cause of the government. Its utilitarian and instrumental focus, as espoused Webster, Rush, and others would allow the government to remain firmly entrenched in the life of the common man.

¹⁰ Urban and Wagoner, 79.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹² *Ibid.*, 95.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 94.

The common school would be free and universal. This universality did not of course extend to nonwhite Protestants; however, it did not require a pauper's oath as did the pauper schools of the past. Although the common school did not increase enrollments as enrollment in elementary schools were already increasing, it did serve as a more "efficient form of school governance and management, one that would permit the school to assimilate."¹⁴ This assimilation process was becoming more and more important as waves of immigrants flooded the northeastern states. Common schooling was viewed by the Whigs as a way to solve the major problems that were beginning to plague the cities: the threat of class warfare, the dislocations that accompanied population shifts from the rural to urban areas due to industrialization, and the need to assimilate culturally diverse immigrants into mainstream American life, particularly Irish Catholic immigrants at the time.¹⁵

As the American Northeast moved away from a primarily agrarian way of life to a more industrialized one, advantages for an educated labor class became apparent for some. To these men, common schooling would be the vehicle to provide this educated labor class. Those who espoused this belief, including businessmen and industrialists, viewed the educated worker as safe, malleable, filled with moral values, not drunken, not prone to damaging property and machinery, one who would attend church, exhibit stability in life and family, and one who would respect authority and be docile.¹⁶ Whereas the uneducated worker was one who would be dangerous, recalcitrant, ignorant, prone to stealing and damaging property and machinery, unstable in life, and drunken.¹⁷ Therefore education

¹⁴ Urban and Wagoner, 96.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

became synonymous with a support for the current economic order. William Watkins asserts that the schooling that was being formed in this new corporate industrial society emerged as central to the state's political and ideological movement which involved ideation. He defines ideation as the means of imparting and reinforcing the ideas and values that support the current economic social order.¹⁸ The economic and social order of that time supported the Whig party's members and not the common man as the Jacksonian movement asserted. Therefore the implementation of common schooling would serve to support the industrialized economy that sought to develop workers that would support the economic expansion of the rich. This government intervention would serve the interests of the rich in a disguise to provide a free educational opportunity to the common man.

However, in his appeal to the common man for common schooling, Horace Mann stressed that education would serve as the great equalizer. He stressed the individual benefit of common school as opposed to the state's benefit. Through education and thus common schooling, man could create and write his own destiny. It would further thwart the hardening of class lines that had formed in Europe by preventing the tendency toward "the domination of capital and the servility of labor."¹⁹ Additionally with an emphasis on moral education, Mann asserted that common schooling would heal divisions caused by social and economic changes. However, truthful his appeal may have been to the common man, Watkins contends that "organized education has long been influenced by the forces of the power structure, the state, and those with an educational ideological agenda."²⁰ Michael Katz agrees with Watkins

¹⁸ William Watkins. *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teachers College, 2001), 9.

¹⁹ Urban and Wagoner, 103.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

as he asserts that common schooling proved to be a way for the elite to control the masses. He says that from its inception the common school has been a class-based institution in which the wealthy have had a distinct advantage in imposing their will on the poor and working people.²¹ Critics, however, see the common school as simply an imperfect institution that attempted to mitigate the social divisions in American society to help the common man better himself.²² However one views common schooling at this time, it is evident that the tenets used to espouse and promote common schooling to both the common man and the wealthy industrialists and businessmen were later used in the development of schooling for blacks in the United States.

Schooling in the Antebellum South

As the common school was taking shape in the Northeast, traditional forms of primary and secondary education remained in the South. The South relied primarily on pauper schools and private academies to educate its populace. The South had set up literary funds to fund pauper schools prior to the Civil War, while it also boasted a multitude of private academies during its Antebellum period. Although the pauper schools were specifically designed to provide an education for those who could not afford tuition at the private academies, many poor families did not attend due to the perceived stigma that went along with these schools. However, the private academies were filled with middle and upper class families who could afford the tuition. In Georgia alone there were 219 charters for academies by 1850.²³ Due to poor attendance at Georgia's pauper schools, the state

²¹ Michael Katz, *The Irony of Early Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 273.

²² Urban and Wagoner, 111.

²³ Thomas V. O'Brien. *The Politics of Race and Schooling: Public Education in Georgia, 1900-1961* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999), 4.

apportioned funds that were to be spent on these schools but were passed along to the academies. Although these academies were extremely popular, there existed no organization or standards for these schools. They differed in the “character, intelligence, and seriousness of purpose of schoolmasters, trustees, and patrons.”²⁴ Therefore during the Antebellum period throughout the South there existed no systemization or bureaucratization of the school system as was forming in the Northeast. In general, an attitude of *laissez faire* prevailed as there was no “uniformity of textbooks, fees, teacher qualifications, length of school terms, or accreditation.”²⁵ However, the South considered the need to train its leaders to be of greater value and established a number of colleges that even surpassed many of its northern neighbors. The South boasted one college to every 666 white inhabitants in Virginia while Massachusetts had one college to every 944 white inhabitants.²⁶ Southern leaders clearly sought to maintain the class-based system through its educational process.

Researchers cite a number of reasons that did not allow the common school movement to readily become a reality in the South and replace its traditional methods of education. There were factors that fostered the voluntary parental, community, and church effort to education: a spirit of individualism, independent localism, a dispersed population pattern, and a traditional class and caste system.²⁷ These characteristics worked against the common school movement. As an example, Georgia’s constitution of 1777 called for state supported schools in every county with the University of Georgia’s charter in 1785 designed to oversee the development of the state’s education system. Its legislature, however, did not

²⁴ Urban and Wagoner, 117.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 119. Urban and Wagoner cautions the complete accuracy concerning these numbers.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

fund the mandate or effort because its law permitted but did not require the establishment of schools. It only provided “small amounts of aid to pauper schools and academies in the following decades.”²⁸ Georgia did pass a common school law in 1837 but it was repealed in 1840 in the midst of a depression. By 1858 Georgia had passed a second common school law that “increased state aid and allowed counties to tax themselves for either pauper or common schools.”²⁹ This taxation and state aid did not amount to much before the Civil War and essentially stopped with the start of the War. Georgia provided at best meager efforts before the War to provide a common system of education for its citizens.

One southern state that did take the lead in establishing a common school system was North Carolina. It passed its common school law in 1839. Monies could be distributed to support “common and convenient schools.”³⁰ In its initial stages it lacked efficiency, funding, and supervision; however, upon the appointment of a Whig, Calvin H. Wiley, in 1852 and the creation of the office of State Superintendent of Common Schools, the system gained uniformity and order. By 1860 attendance of white students stood at 70 percent with more than 90 percent of the teachers being licensed.³¹ Other states in the South began to progress in this way before the Civil War, but for the most part the South stood against taxation for educational purposes and thus could not expand its common school efforts.

As previously stated, the South differed from the North, which presented obstacles to providing a prototypical northern common school in the South. In the North the common school proved to be a way to solve problems of displacement, class warfare, and the need to

²⁸ Urban and Wagoner, 121.

²⁹ Ibid., 122.

³⁰ Ibid., 123.

³¹ Ibid., 123.

assimilate newly arriving immigrants; however, the South did not face these problems therefore, no such social control was needed.³² The South had much more to lose in personal revenue through state and local taxes and lost labor and wages through the lost of child labor. Additionally, the Southern elite wanted to keep the populace ignorant of the ideals espoused by the Northerners who shaped the common school movement. The ideals of a fluid class system in which schooling would serve as the great equalizer did not appeal to the wealthy landowners of the South. For these men, there were not problems of heterogeneity or industrialization and urbanization so the need for the common school in the South was inconsequential.³³ On the other hand, the average Southerner, still living on a farm with more children than the average Northerner, could not afford to lose the man power their children provided on the farm. For them as well, there was more to lose than gain with the implementation of common schooling.³⁴ Not until after the Civil War did the South see a funded public system of schooling.

Public Schooling in the South

Although public schooling was established in the South after the War, it did not improve much during this immediate time period. The idea of a publicly funded system of education sponsored by the state remained contentious within the South and did not garner much support. For example, a Virginian minister characterized public education as atheistic and immoral. Under an assumed pen he wrote, “the education of children is not the business of government, but the sacred and imperative duty of parents,” while he also denounced the

³² Urban and Wagoner, 124.

³³ Ibid., 124.

³⁴ Ibid., 124.

equal treatment of black and white children.³⁵ Additionally, the factors that limited the practicality of public schooling - emigration, larger families, smaller tax base, homogeneity, little need for educated worker - remained present. Nonetheless, the period during Reconstruction did see the forming and implementation of a common system of schooling in the South.

As a requirement for re-admittance into the Union, Southern states were required to develop a constitution that included public schooling for all. This represented a move to a stronger role for the federal government and a much more centralized nation.³⁶ In essence the national government was able to dictate the terms under which the Southern states would be able to rejoin the union. This was a far cry from the revolutionary days in which the states proved to be the seat of power. There was now a move to majoritarian consciousness where the majority was formed not by the state but by the nation.³⁷ This aided in the establishment of a system of common public schooling for all and eventually compulsory attendance laws. The South showed resistance to this effort before eventually capitulating.

The South viewed public schooling as a way to potentially destroy its economic, political, and social systems; however, after the War and the implementation of common schooling, the South found a way to support its new social, political, and economic systems that would mirror that of the North in which previous class demarcations would remain intact. O'Brien asserts that schooling serves as a "function to conserve the political and economic interests of those who shaped it rather than alter the societal configurations of

³⁵ Urban and Wagoner, 147.

³⁶ Ibid., 159.

³⁷ Ibid., 160.

which it is an outgrowth.”³⁸ Former slaveholders whose fortunes were lost were able to reclaim their social positions and secure it with the use of the public school system. One way to secure this position was to ensure an unequal system of education for and between the classes and races.

Pertaining to the issues of race, although newly freed blacks, the Republican Reconstruction government, and the “northern scalawags and carpetbaggers”³⁹ led the way in establishing public schools in the South, once established, white southern natives concentrated their efforts in ensuring segregated and inferior facilities and services for blacks. In many Southern states the issue of educating the black child dictated taxation policy. Southern whites refused to be taxed to support an education for the black child, as many believed it would be at the expense of their white children. This was the South’s dilemma as “many a white southerner would oppose better schools in order to prevent Negro children from sharing in the benefits.”⁴⁰ Additionally the South was vehemently opposed to an integrated public school thereby calling for two separate school systems supported by states with less than “half as much property and barely half as great an income with which to support it.”⁴¹

The resistance to funding the school through taxation also held true for upper class and urban whites who felt their tax dollars would be primarily spent in poor rural districts. These contentious debates helped to stall the development of the public schools in the South

³⁸ O’Brien, xiii.

³⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁰ Louis R. Harlan. *Separate and Unequal: Public Schooling Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 36.

⁴¹ Ibid., 35.

so that by the beginning of the twentieth century the average school year in the Southern Seaboard states was less than 100 days, representing about half the number of days for the Northeastern states.⁴² Additionally, only three-fifths of children in these states were enrolled and less than three-fifths of the enrolled were included in the average daily attendance, so barely over one-third of children were normal attendees of any school.⁴³ The expenditures on schooling were just as disparate between the northern and southern states at this time also. “The average daily expenditure per pupil in attendance in 1900 ranged from 8.2 cents in Virginia to 5 cents in South Carolina, while it was 20 cents in Massachusetts.”⁴⁴ In assessing the average school term, daily attendance, and average expenditures, the reasons become readily evident why one-fourth of the nation’s illiterate lived in the South, which had less than one-tenth of the nation’s population.

The following sections will highlight some of the southern states’ efforts at implementing this new system of education in the years following the Civil War and into the twentieth century. As will be demonstrated, the two biggest issues, segregation and taxation, proved to be the main factors that shaped education in the South for decades to come.

North Carolina

North Carolina’s main barrier to the common schooling resulted from the viability of local taxation to provide additional funding. The state’s newly crafted constitution required a minimum school term of four months, which could not be supported by the maximum property taxation allowed by its constitution. When challenged, the decision by the State

⁴²Harlan, 9.

⁴³ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 10.

Supreme Court in the Barksdale case of 1886 stated that education was not a “necessary expense”⁴⁵; therefore, the state had no obligation to do beyond what the taxes would allow. Until its reversal in 1908, education advocates channeled their energies mainly into local tax campaigns and pressure for legislative appropriations to help raise money to support the constitutionally mandated system of schooling. There was brief victory for school reformers in 1891 as white farmers demanded better and universal schools. During this time they were able to disrupt “for a decade the oligarchy which had power since the end of Reconstruction” by successfully passing laws that raised school taxes and creating higher schools for women and blacks.⁴⁶ However, these laws were erased when in 1893 these educational reformer legislatures were swept from office.

There was another shift of power in 1897 when the educational reformers regained power in the legislature and again passed laws supporting the funding of schools. These laws allowed a willing district to tax itself beyond the state and county maximum limits.⁴⁷ In this same year an act was passed to encourage local taxation for schools, requiring an election every two years in each township until a majority of qualified voters of the township would vote in favor of a local tax. However, this act did not sit well with many voters as the arguments surrounding blacks not paying taxes persisted. There were other reasons against paying taxes such as objections to taxing

one man to educate another man’s children; the poverty of the people; the unconstitutionality of the act; the fear that those who are quietly trusted to manage revenues derived from the regular state tax may not have sufficient sense or honesty to manage the educational revenue from a local tax; and the general omnibus

⁴⁵ Harlan, 47.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 52.

objection that any additional tax; however small and for any purpose whatever, will be oppressive to the people.⁴⁸

Therefore, when the vote for a local tax came up, only 12 of the 1300 districts voted in favor of the tax.

In 1898, the Democrats were able to recapture the legislature and once again abolished much of the education-related legislation including a repealing of the local tax law of 1897. Although the Democrats did not run on an education platform, they did encourage the learning of reading and writing for white men and ratified a constitutional amendment requiring voters to be able to read and write by 1900. There was a grandfather clause for whites that extended this requirement until 1908.

The struggle for a common system of education persisted as there continued to be white opposition to taxation. Negro suffrage became a sticking point for white opposition also. Additionally whites were opposed to providing an education for blacks at the expense of their white children. Whites suggested that Negro children would go to school regardless of their attire and thereby outnumber the white children. The sentiment was that it was not sensible to spend on “colored children when the opportunities of the white children were so limited.”⁴⁹ Furthermore the education of blacks would ruin him as a good farm hand as well as create competition between poor whites and blacks in the labor market. These reasons all worked together to limit local tax funds to white education. Hence by 1900 the term for the white child was about 70 days, one-third of the children in the state attended school, and the expenditure was only 2 cents per child.

⁴⁸ Harlan, 57.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 70.

North Carolina would go on to garner much needed outside support from the General Education Board in finance and support for its political educational reforms. It became more than any other southern state a place where educational campaigns were concentrated on local taxation. This effort paid off when in 1907 after five years of campaigning the Barksdale case of 1886 was overturned and local communities could levy taxes for school funding. As the years progressed more money was spent on education for white and black children, with the bulk going to the urban white child. However, “more children attended more schools, equipped as never before with books, maps, and blackboards.”⁵⁰

Virginia

Virginia’s strong state political machine, comprised of railroad and outside corporations, formed the strong hindrance to the educational campaigns of this state. However, as home to one of the leading proponents of education and public schools, Thomas Jefferson, Virginia did experience growth in its development of public schools as the idea was supported by a considerable number of native whites.

By 1900, the school term was 119 days with \$9.70 being spent on each white child. However, only one-third of the white children and one-fourth of black children were attending school. The small victories that education reformers experienced in the 1880s were wiped out during the public school famine of the 1890s.⁵¹ The expenditure per pupil declined between 1822 and 1906 lagging behind increasing attendance. And due to Virginian’s distrust of Northern philanthropy there was no push to improve education through educational reform.

⁵⁰ Harlan, 134.

⁵¹ Ibid., 136.

The state political machine, which served as the main impediment to any educational reform, stressed low taxation and fought against appropriations for public schools.⁵² Due to Virginia's dependence on railroads and other outside corporations for campaign funds, the wishes of the machine were realized. The boss was U.S. Senator Thomas Martin, a lawyer and railroad director who worked to hold down school appropriations through the election of the state superintendent and through appointments at the county level.

There was also a staunch opposition to education for blacks. This opposition surrounded issues of taxation, disfranchisement, and apportionment of school funds. There was resistance to educating blacks while simultaneously attempting to strip them of their voting rights. Education was also thought to further equip blacks to compete in the labor market against whites. Whites contended that blacks would be used as strikebreakers if they were industrially trained. Additionally when attempting to apportion school funds, white lawmakers attempted to write into law racial divisions of state funds. The proposal was eventually rejected based upon the unconstitutionality of it; therefore state tax divisions were abandoned as the "economic interests of white residents of black counties...overcame their opposition to Negro education."⁵³ The apportionment for black and white schools was handled at the county level as opposed to the state level to alleviate any constitutional concerns. As in other states, Virginia's white schools in black districts benefited greatly from state school funds apportioned to the counties that would then be distributed to the districts on the basis of school population. The white schools would receive a disproportionate share of these funds at the expense of the black schools whose numbers allowed for this greater portion of state funds. One white-county school Democrat correctly assessed the situation

⁵² Harlan, 137

⁵³ Ibid., 140.

when he asserted, “In other words, . . . you will tax the people in Frederick County to educate the negro children in the Black Belt, and then you will not apply it to the education of the negro children in the Black Belt.”⁵⁴

Although there still was opposition to state school funding from the machine, in 1906 the legislature doubled the appropriations for common schools, created a system of high school, and increased state aid to the University of Virginia. The movement to increase funding for schools was spurred along by college administrators, teachers, and the Southern Education Board. The push for more school funding and its resistance would continue to play out in the legislatures between 1907 and 1909. 1907 saw a deficit in the treasury and a waning of public support for education, while school reformers triumphed in the 1908 legislature, increasing funding of education by \$145,000 along with \$15,000 for rural high schools, \$5,000 for rural libraries, and a uniform textbook list. However, by 1909 the tide had turned again in favor of unsupportive legislators and a governor who declared that “the children going to school have too many books.”⁵⁵ This legislature kept the interests of the machine as their primary concern as steam and electric railways were only taxed one-fifth of their capitalization.

The combination of under-taxation of corporations and the draining of state coffers caused money to be transferred out of the school fund. Even when property tax values and assessments increased, school revenues were kept to two-sevenths of state revenues. The gains in school revenues came “almost entirely from county and district taxation, while the machine legislature kept the state school tax . . . at the minimum allowed by the constitution.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Harlan, 141.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 160.

Raising local tax revenues was not only a necessity in adequately funding the schools but it was also a way to distribute school funds on a discriminatory bases because local funds were less regulated than state funds. The machine successfully used racial arguments to decrease the urge to increase state taxation. However, when the people finally demanded educational funding, appropriations were made to promote racial discrimination.

South Carolina

South Carolina can be characterized as the state that incorporated the sole interests of whites as the main issue that shaped its educational system. Harlan states that “the educational movement in that state...was exclusively and openly in white interests and the main issues were which whites should be aided and how.”⁵⁷ South Carolina’s newly written state constitution of 1868 coupled with the Act of 1870 called for a state system of education; however, by the 1880s only ten towns had a graded school system and there existed only 34 local tax districts.

As early as its 1895 Constitutional Convention there was push for county home rule in education which meant a weak state school system with the primary purpose of the disfranchisement of blacks. The convention agreed that the county would be the unit of distribution for school funds with the provisions of a three mill tax and supplementary state tax for weak counties. This meant that by 1909, 96 percent of school funds would come from sources within the county and only four percent from the state at large. Additionally, “wealthy districts could levy local taxes without special legislation.”⁵⁸ With this approach in

⁵⁶ Harlan, 165.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 170.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 174.

place, white districts were in a prime position to redistribute the funds allocated to their counties for black schools to white schools. South Carolina's majority black population lended itself to such an enterprise. Similar to practices in Virginia, whites in majority black counties used black numbers to obtain larger shares of state funds and then misappropriated them based solely on race. Although records indicated that more blacks were attending schools than whites, the pirating of school funds indicated an inordinate amount of school funds being routed to the white schools. "When the white districts of black districts added the sum cheated from sister districts to that taken from Negro schools...they had as much as \$50 or \$60 for each white child enrolled, while the Negro schools received about \$1 per capita and the schools of white districts about \$5 per capita,"; thereby, making both white district schools and black schools almost equally destitute of maps, blackboards, window-panes, or desks.⁵⁹ The school terms for black and white schools were equally disparate as white school terms lasted on average 10 weeks longer than those for black children. However, South Carolina remained unable to live up to its constitutional requirement to maintain adequate school terms. This battle was fought and lost in the 1899 and 1900 legislative sessions. In 1899 the legislature established a minimum term of three months which remained in the school code until 1916. By 1901 the state was able to fund a four-month average school term but many rural districts ran shorter terms ranging from a low of six weeks for blacks to a high of twenty-four weeks for whites, although many white districts had school terms of nine, eight, and six weeks school terms.

Although all of the southern states considered the education of blacks in their efforts to establish a public system of schooling, South Carolina's majority population forced this consideration to take center stage, thereby crippling the state's larger effort at establishing

⁵⁹ Harlan, 176.

this system. Planters of the Piedmont region that boasted a large black population were reluctant to educate their “swarms of Negro tenants.”⁶⁰ South Carolinians spoke against the northern philanthropic fund, the Peabody Fund, stating that it spent enormous amounts of money on education for blacks, thereby excluding not only the funding that would have supported education for blacks but also education for the state’s white students. South Carolinians excluded their own revenues in funding their own schools as in 1903 the governor wanted to “use dispensary school funds for schoolhouses, teachers, and books in weak districts” but the bill was defeated because it was seen as “paternalism” and “negroes would be the principal beneficiaries.”⁶¹ The state instead passed its first appropriations in 1904 providing \$5,000 for rural libraries seemingly demonstrating its interest in funding educational interests.

The lack of education for blacks extended to whites also. South Carolina’s second peculiarity was its abundance of cheap labor. Mill workers of the low country were reluctant to support education if it meant the lost of their white child labor. In fact in 1901 50.3 percent of mill workers were illiterate while the figure for the entire state was 14.8 percent. These figures were used in the debate for compulsory education in South Carolina which proved to be an overshadowing topic within educational debates in this state for years.

Similar to its debate on taxation for schools, South Carolina’s debate surrounding compulsory education centered on race. Many argued that compulsory education would be too expensive because it would force the state to educate an additional 116,000 black children, thus raising taxes. An opponent lamented that “if we force the negro into the

⁶⁰ Harlan, 183.

⁶¹ Ibid., 200.

schools we would be sharpening weapons with which to cut our own throats.”⁶² Ironically, proponents of compulsory education used this same argument for its implementation. They argued that blacks were already going to school. While the white child will stay home if he is not properly equipped to go to school, the black child will “take a hunk of corn bread in his pocket, pull up his one ‘gallus’ and go along to school.”⁶³ The black child was already using his resources and it was time for the white child to do the same. These same proponents also assured whites that a compulsory attendance bill would ostensibly be for whites only as “There is not so great a fool in South Carolina as to believe that white officials will force negro children into school.”⁶⁴

Finally promises of material prosperity, appeals to humanitarianism, and the fear of “negro domination” prompted voters to pass a local-option compulsory attendance law in 1915 but one without means of enforcement.⁶⁵ The governor also won a mild compulsory attendance law in 1915 along with a larger school appropriation. One could assume that the sentiment of one legislator who said in 1909, “It was time to stop considering the negro every time the schools came up”⁶⁶ had to some extent been realized for many South Carolinians as between 1900 and 19915 the expenditures for education in South Carolina increased four-fold. The tremendous disparity between the races persisted but now South Carolina could

⁶² Harlan, 194.

⁶³ Ibid., 196.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 194.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 197.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 203.

boast of its defeat of its former reluctance of “conservative political leaders and the hesitancy of white voters.”⁶⁷

Georgia

Similar to other southern states, Georgia struggled to develop its public school system; however, Georgia’s primary obstacle was teacher pay and the urban-rural conflict pertaining to the equal share and distribution of property taxes. In 1877 Georgia’s newly submitted constitution provided for free, common schooling open to all but segregated by race.⁶⁸ The constitution barred any levying of local taxes for the purpose of supporting the schools. Instead counties received a stipend from the state from which to support their elementary or common school.⁶⁹ Similar to Virginia and South Carolina, Georgia’s whites in black counties used its black majority to gain a larger share of the state funds for their schools and then funneled that larger share to its white schools. In response to this, whites in counties with fewer blacks sought local taxation prompting whites in counties with large populations of blacks to defend the state appropriation system.⁷⁰ Georgia’s four urban counties and its cities, however, were able to levy local taxes during this time. A provision in the laws allowed these urban areas to be exempt from this prohibition. This in effect allowed for a greater disparity between urban and rural schools. By the beginning of the twentieth century, “The school property of 35 towns was twice as great as that of all rural schools, and twenty times greater than the publicly owned rural school property.”⁷¹ Another disparity

⁶⁷ Harlan, 209.

⁶⁸ O’Brien, 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 6.

⁷⁰ Harlan, 210.

⁷¹ Ibid., 211.

between the urban and rural areas caused by this provision and its exemption was the development of the state-supported high school. Urban areas, comprised of wealthy families, formed separate independent school districts, removed from the rest of the county that provided for the formation and support of locally funded high schools. This allowed urban areas to flourish in the area of secondary education while the rural areas lay behind. Schools outside of the Black Belt and those in the cities were able to grow substantially more than in the other areas.⁷² In restricting the levying of local tax, this law, in effect, hindered the development of the state-supported high school in Georgia until the 1920s in most counties. In 1903 Georgia had only “seven four-year public high schools graduating 94 students.”⁷³ High schools in the outlying areas of Georgia were not established until 1911 when the Georgia legislature passed a law allowing for its establishment. Therefore, even in the days of constitutionally mandated common schooling, Georgia still sustained an educational system that allowed the middle and upper classes, formerly educated in the academies, to obtain an advanced education that would solidify their class position.

Georgia saw its first wave of educational reform in the 1890s. State school appropriations grew from \$0 to \$1million in the five years before 1893 and remained there until 1897. However, school funding was reduced to \$800,000 once the Conservative Democrats gained control of the legislature and did not have to worry about challenges from the Populists who advocated for educational reform. The school funding remained at this level until 1903.⁷⁴ Due to this reduction in funding Georgia regularly had problems paying its teachers. This problem was not due to its inability to raise funds but the legislature’s effort to

⁷² O’Brien, 6.

⁷³ Harlan, 28.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 213.

circumvent its obligation to keep school funding at its \$800,000 level. Teachers annually had to wait for their pay until the next annual tax collection.⁷⁵ Instead of pay they were given scrip for living expenses. This went on for decades in Georgia.

Although whites during this time in Georgia and in the South in general were able to benefit from a common system of schooling more than before the war, the system was still very much rudimentary. The school term from 1880-1920 was only two to five months and revolved around the agricultural calendar.⁷⁶ Those who visited and attended the schools during this time recall one-room school houses with one stove in the middle of the room intended to heat the entire room and 50 students of all ages cramped in the one room to be taught by one teacher who was ill-prepared. In the early twentieth century, Georgia public schools still “charged tuition, met only a few months a year and lacked basic standards for teacher preparation.”⁷⁷

The Southern Education Board attempted to wage an educational reform campaign as it had in other southern states but different from other states; in Georgia they sought the support of Booker T. Washington. His support of an industrial education for blacks appealed to the Board’s philosophies. However, by 1911 the Board felt that it had failed in Georgia despite its assurance that educational legislation had been “the direct outcome of measures formulated by the campaign committee about four years ago.”⁷⁸ This sentiment of failure may have been a direct result of the white supremacy campaigns of 1906 and the

⁷⁵ Harlan, 214.

⁷⁶ O’Brien, 6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁸ Harlan, 228.

accompanying race riot that startled the northern philanthropists and shattered their optimism for educational reform in Georgia.

This campaign comprised of fabrications concerning blacks in Georgia taking greater advantage of the school system than whites. In 1896 blacks made up 47.9 percent of the school population with barely as half as many black teachers as were white. The salaries of these black teachers amounted to one-third of the white teachers' salaries. However, whites within this campaign asserted that the education of blacks would "disfranchise poor whites and give the college Negro 'the absolute balance of power.'"⁷⁹ Newspapers made false claims of witnessing five blacks to one white going to school and assertions that "Negroes of rural sections patronizing public system of education to surprising if not alarming extent."⁸⁰ The attitude concerning the education of blacks was that "Negroes needed no education to be satisfactory farm laborers."⁸¹ This was especially true for the thousands of blacks captured within Georgia's huge convict lease program, an unfair system of imprisonment of blacks used as a profit-making venture in the South after Emancipation, which garnered much revenue for the state in turn helping to fund the school system.⁸²

In response to this sort of propaganda, the Northern philanthropists turned to those waging the campaigns – the Southern paternalists. They relied on the native Southern whites to implement the kind of education they thought would best work for their society. Their thoughts were that Northern friends had attempted to educate the blacks entirely out of their place within Southern society and it was therefore time to turn the educational process over

⁷⁹ Harlan, 222.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 222.

⁸¹ Ibid., 222.

⁸² Douglas A. Blackmon. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008).

to white Southerners who could educate blacks that would be “profit to himself” and whites alike.⁸³

Despite its attempt to limit education for blacks, Georgia did progress in its effort to provide an education for its white children. In 1903, Georgia’s law limiting the levying of local taxes was repealed; however, this same law limited state taxation. The 1905 tax act was amended to allow smaller units as well as counties to levy local taxes. Although this was much needed relief for many rural counties in developing high schools, they were still very much dependent on state funds collected from taxation levied on the cities. This state funding was used to compensate for the modest amount of wealth that was taxed in these rural counties to maintain their schools. The urban-rural divide caused a coalition of whites in white and black counties to form. This coalition formed in spite of whites from black counties having a three-to-one advantage over whites in white counties due to the practices of discriminatory funding within the black counties. Whites in the white counties were willing to put that difference aside to protect the state funding that they so badly needed. Recognizing the distribution of their taxes to rural counties and in an effort to limit their taxes, cities undervalued their properties. In particular “urban property was grossly undervalued and became increasingly so for decades, until the state eventually turned to other forms of taxation.”⁸⁴

As previously mentioned, Georgia used income from its convict lease program to finance the state school fund. It received a half-share of the income from this enterprise that netted \$82,019 in 1902. This practice of making convicts work in various business enterprises to satisfy their debt to the state began shortly after the Civil War in many

⁸³ Harlan, 222.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 239.

Southern states. The number of blacks trapped in the system during its existence is estimated to have been at least a hundred thousand and could have been as high as double that amount.⁸⁵ “By the end of Reconstruction in 1877, every formerly Confederate state except Virginia had adopted the practice of leasing black prisoners into commercial hands.”⁸⁶ The very practice that made this enterprise so profitable is the same reason that made it so atrocious. Blacks, particularly black men, were falsely accused of crimes and sent to these work sites to work off fines accrued during their fraudulent court proceedings in which many times they were never formerly charged with a crime. Other times blacks were charged with breaking laws that were decidedly designed to criminalize their behaviors. These crimes could range from being unemployed as a black man or cursing in the presence of a white woman. Nonetheless, the practice proved to be very profitable for the state of Georgia, particularly its educational system, so much so that when there were threats to discontinue the practice based upon reports and testimonials of appalling abuses, supporters of public schools were accused of being disloyal to school interests if they opposed the enterprise. The loss in 1908 of a quarter million dollars from the school fund through liquor prohibition further lessened the call to abandon the practice. One legislator commented, “morality is good but it don’t do very well with a low tax rate.”⁸⁷

Georgia did continue to make progress in its public school system. Between 1900 and 1915 enrollment increased by 30 percent and the number of teachers by 50 percent. So too did the state school funds; however, this 30 percent increase, representing half of the state revenue, was diverted almost entirely to white schools. Georgia was also able to extend its

⁸⁵ Blackmon, 7.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸⁷ Harlan, 241.

school year to a five-month average.⁸⁸ These gains continued for white students but were absent from black students' education.

Conclusion

As the South moved to implement a system of public schooling, the country as a whole was moving to a more urbanized nation. People were beginning to move from the farm to the city. "From 1860 to the turn of the twentieth century, the proportion of city dwellers in the U.S. doubled. By the end of the nineteenth century, the nation's urban population was approaching 50 percent."⁸⁹ This was a period known as high industrialization in which the work called for an educated worker, thereby putting schools in a new position to incorporate work-related skills into the curriculum.

The schools were also tapped during this time as instruments of social policy by both educators and politicians alike. Republicans believed in the "positive effects of intelligent government activity," thereby putting into place "a variety of national initiatives."⁹⁰ This was in direct contrast to Jacksonian-style Democrats who were opposed to the central government. However, most of these Democrats were replaced as a result of the Civil War, allowing Republicans to move ahead with their educational plans.

As a way to further centralize the government and its school system, a federal agency to monitor education was created. The main function of this agency was to gather educational data. Although it did not have much authority as the federal government never attempted to

⁸⁸ Harlan, 242-246.

⁸⁹ Urban and Wagoner, 160.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 161.

monitor the southern states' implementation of their school systems, the idea of the education being a centralized operation was a step in a new direction.⁹¹

Compulsory education in the United States represented a move to the majoritarian consciousness that was forming. In 1890, 27 states had compulsory attendance laws and by 1918, all 48 did. This effort, spurred by industrialization and mass immigration, began in the North, upper Mid-West, and California. Proponents of compulsory education cited hordes of immigrant children running rampant in the city streets while others expressed concerns for young children being forced to work in factories. Opponents were found in both Southern and Northern states as there was a general objection to government compulsion in any area. The urban poor and farmers cited the need for their children's labor for their family's survival. Nonetheless the majority consciousness prevailed and compulsory attendance became an enforced law and reality for the U.S.'s educational system.⁹²

U.S. schools were later to witness the rise of the graded classroom with its tests, rules, sequencing of classroom materials and activities, and its management of classrooms with "a set of factory-like rules."⁹³ This would be known as the modern school. This modern school would allow students to encounter an authoritarian order through organization, regularity, punctuality, and discipline that would prepare them for the workplace.⁹⁴ Further the school would homogenize its population to counter class divisions, corruption, ethnic conflict, crime, and violence.⁹⁵ The modern school would incorporate a bureaucratic tone that would

⁹¹ Urban and Wagoner, 170.

⁹² Ibid., 172.

⁹³ Ibid., 174.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 177.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 177.

seek to “reinforce social barriers” as opposed to breaking them.⁹⁶ Although the schools of the South at this time did not readily reflect many characteristics of this new school movement, it is important to understand the direction of the educational system to be aware of the eventual direction of the schools in the South.

⁹⁶ Urban and Wagoner, 177.

CHAPTER 3

THE EDUCATION OF BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

The historical examination of African Americans in the United States has been constantly unfolding within a perpetually contested field. Questions of objectivity and inclusion have been raised as historians have attempted to define, retell, and conceptualize the history of African Americans within the United States. According to Ron Butchart, black and white historians have consistently written from different assumptions; blacks writing from a triumphalist and vindicationist history and from “liberal progressive assumptions” and whites writing from themes of white supremacy.¹ I assert that this disunity of thought and interpretation between black and white historians, has added to the field in attempting to secure a proper understanding and interpretation of the history. Due to education’s inclusion within the history of the African American this subtopic has not escaped debate. The analysis of the historical understandings of black education within the United States has systematically excluded black voices from these explanations. Novick contends that black voices were not included in the larger historical discourse until the 1960s.² However, only through the inclusion of these voices can black educational history achieve new depths of legitimacy.

An inclusive examination of black educational history will lead the historian to the black segregated primary and secondary school. In examining segregated black schools, historians are in essence examining the system of education for blacks in the South since 3.5

¹ Ron E. Butchart, “Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World”: A Historiography of the African American Struggle for Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 28 no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 334.

² Novick, 415- 522.

million of the 4 million African Americans who lived in the United States lived in the South in the period following the Civil War.³ More than 75 percent of the black population lived in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.⁴ The Southern system of education was a structure of educational segregation through laws and eventually through custom. In this section I offer an examination of the historiography of the history of the segregated black primary and secondary schools. I will expound upon the three dominant themes presented in both the interpretations of black and white historians: black self-help, school funding, and northern philanthropy. A dominant theme among white historians is the legal fight for equality through integration. Although this theme represents a pivotal moment in black educational history, this has been the focus of black educational history to the diminution of other important themes; therefore this theme will be highlighted but will not serve as one of the three main themes.

In an attempt to examine how historians have examined segregated black schools in the South I hope to provide a space for the black and white historians' interpretations of the three most pressing themes of black education. Within these themes will be divergent views from historians that represent varied eras, philosophies, and backgrounds. I will offer a historiographic summary versus a historiographic analysis.⁵ Further I will employ the method used in Jana Nidiffer's work, "Poor Historiography: The "Poorest" in American Higher

³ Urban and Wagoner, 142.

⁴ Blackmon, 8.

⁵ In a historiographic summary the historian simply engages in a literature review, whereas in the analysis, the historian considers the actual writing of this history. Lester F. Goodchild and Irene P. Huk, "The American College History: A Survey of its Historiographic Schools and Analytic Approaches from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present," in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research Volume VI*, ed. J. C. Smart (New York: Agathon Press 1990), 201-290.

Education,” in that I will highlight influential works within the historiography of the topic.⁶ These influential works and authors will be assessed during the presentation of the three themes.

Black Self-Help

Any account of black educational history would be incomplete without the inclusion of education during slavery. The education of blacks during slavery is properly placed under the theme of black self-help because accounts of this educational era point to the eagerness of the enslaved black⁷ to obtain an education. In fact, James Anderson noted that by the close of the Civil War at least five percent of the black population was literate.⁸ Black and white historians have proffered evidence that would support this assessment.⁹ William Vaughn indicated that by 1860 between five and ten percent of the adult free and slave population in the South were literate.¹⁰ This literate population was a direct result of the educational practices of white slaveholders and missionaries. During the eighteenth and a large portion of the nineteenth century, slave-owners and missionaries proved to be advocates of education for slaves. The slave-owners wanted more efficient labor and the missionaries believed that slaves should be able to read the bible. Although every Southern state except Tennessee had a law prohibiting the instruction of slaves during this time, many whites ignored these laws

⁶ Jan Nidiffer, “Poor Historiography: The “Poorest” in American Higher Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 39 (Autumn 1999): 321- 323.

⁷ I interchangeably use the terms enslaved black and enslaved African instead of simply slave. However, slave is used in describing the ways whites viewed enslaved blacks.

⁸ James Anderson. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 16.

⁹ Urban and Wagoner; Carter G. Woodson; Vaughn.

¹⁰ William P. Vaughn. *Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865-1877* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 2.

until the insurrections of the 1830s. It was not uncommon to see both free and enslaved blacks attending schools throughout the South. This was especially true for urban communities such as Savannah, Georgia in which a woman conducted a school for blacks for over 30 years unbeknownst to most.¹¹

Carter G. Woodson indicated that the competition for a favorable perception regarding the treatment of their enslaved population spawned the move for an educated slave population by the English.¹² The English conceded to a religious education as a response to the religious education that the French and Spanish colonizers were offering their enslaved population. This was a competition waged between the Protestant and Catholic congregations. As the Catholics demonstrated liberality in the education of their slaves, Protestants took steps to Christianize their slaves, “lest the Catholics...should put the Protestants to shame.”¹³ This time period represented one of the two time periods in the history of the education of the slave. During the first time period, the introduction of slavery until the height of the insurrection movement -1835, most whites were in support of education of the slave population.¹⁴ The three classes of whites who advocated for an education for slaves were sympathizers, slaveholders, and missionaries. For these groups, education would serve the slave, business, and the church.

The first English group to focus on the work of enlightening the black American slave population was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). The

¹¹ Vaughn, 1.

¹² Carter G. Woodson. *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861; A History of the Education of the Colored People of the United States from the Beginning of Slavery to the Civil War* (Charleston, South Carolina: BiblioBazaar, 1919/2007), 28-41.

¹³ Woodson, 56.

¹⁴ Ibid., 11.

SPG was an auxiliary of the Anglican Church of England with its purpose being defined in terms of ensuring that the members of the Anglican Church adhered to the tenets of the religion while in the foreign land, America. Its mission not only included European adherents but extended to converting Native Americans and enslaved Africans. Researchers assert that this organization served a major role in the education of enslaved blacks during the colonial period in United States history.¹⁵ According to Shawn Comminey, the SPG was the first organization created for the “edification of Negro slaves.”¹⁶

Education of the enslaved black in South Carolina began with the first SPG missionary in South Carolina, Rev. Samuel Thomas. The SPG insisted that the education of this population would secure perpetual slavery in teaching docility and obedience. With that in mind, the first school was opened in 1742 as the Charleston Negro School by Rev. Alexander Garden. Garden not only believed in the education of enslaved blacks but he also believed in the education of enslaved black teachers. He likened slave education to that of slave skilled tradesmen in that neither would upset the order of the society. The school operated under this premise for 22 years until it closed its doors in 1764. Reasons for the closure of the school were the untimely deaths of Garden and its only Negro teacher, lack of funding from the Church of England, and lack of enthusiasm from subsequent organizers.¹⁷ The work of the SPG would open the door for other missionary societies to educate newly freed blacks after the Civil War.

¹⁵ Woodson, 25; Shawn Comminey, “The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and Black Education in South Carolina, 1702 – 1764,” *Journal of Negro History* 84 no. 4 (Autumn, 1999): 360.

¹⁶ Comminey, 360.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 364-365.

Colonists continued to educate their slaves as they were admonished to do so upon the mass importation of Africans to America. The French remained eager to teach the African Christianity as the Code Noir made it a requirement. Whites in America considered education as a way to make slaves more useful to the community.¹⁸

The Quakers are another group credited with the education of blacks prior to the Civil War. In fact the Quakers are credited with providing most of the education gained by blacks before emancipation.¹⁹ In establishing the first and earliest permanent well-developed school devoted to the education of the race, the Quakers carved a place for themselves in black educational history. In 1679, George Fox spoke out in favor of educating both the Native American and the Negro,²⁰ and in 1693, George Keith considered education as preparation for emancipation. By 1713, the Quakers had devised a plan for training enslaved blacks as missionaries that upon their emancipation would return to Africa and spread the Gospel. This plan was never realized; however, within their educational efforts, Quakers were able to establish local schools in North Carolina, Virginia, New Jersey, and New York where enslaved blacks were taught to read and write as early as 1731.²¹

The Enlightenment brought about a new era in education for the enslaved population as the works of Coke, Milton, Locke, and Blackstone began to pervade American thought during the era of the American Revolution. Reasons for education related to religion were combined with those pertaining to innate human rights specifically related to mental improvement. In particular, Thomas Jefferson believed that slave masters should instruct

¹⁸ Woodson, 22-24.

¹⁹ Urban and Wagoner, 126-127.

²⁰ Woodson, 37.

²¹ Ibid., 39.

their slaves so that they would be beneficial to society. This type of instruction would include industrial and agricultural branches. He was not alone in his sentiments as Benjamin Franklin too supported the educational pursuits of enslaved blacks. He served as president to The Abolition Society of Philadelphia which founded a school for blacks in 1774, that continued for about 100 years.²² In 1788 New Jersey passed an act making it mandatory to teach a slave to read. This law was passed in preparation for the emancipation of slaves in the state. During this period slave education became three-fold: 1) principles of Christian religion, 2) fundamentals of common branches, and 3) most useful crafts.²³

Although useful education for slaves had been the practice in the South for many years as they had been the artisans of this region, this new attitude of the enlightenment of the slave was not readily shared by those in the South, especially in Georgia and South Carolina. Georgia planters believed that the enlightenment of their enslaved blacks would jeopardize the institution of slavery; therefore in 1770 it re-enacted its 1740 law which imposed a fine on anyone who taught slaves to read or write or employed them in any jobs that required writing. However, slave instruction continued in the South as records indicate that blacks made up the majority of mechanics and were qualified as “tradesmen, trustworthy helpers, and attendants of distinguished men, and a few were serving as clerks, overseers and managers.”²⁴ Henry Bullock also points to the “permissiveness” of slaveholders as the impetus to the making of an educated enslaved and free class of blacks. He asserts that

²² Woodson, 47.

²³ Ibid., 57.

²⁴ Ibid., 61.

“gradually and inescapably, the indulgence of their masters led many to literacy.”²⁵ Some slaveholders taught their slaves to read in preparation to be mechanics. Other enslaved blacks became literate as a necessity in fulfilling household duties. Slaves are thought to have become literate through 1) the teachings of the slaveholders and their families, especially children, 2) contact with and observations of whites, 3) through other slaves, and 4) through self-teaching.²⁶

As the education of blacks continued during this first time period, the literacy rate rose to 15-20 percent of the enslaved and free population. Blacks were noted as being in the fields of poetry, medicine, and math. Benjamin Banneker is probably one of the most noted blacks of this time. With his manufacturing of the first clock in the United States in 1770, his almanac, and his many other contributions one is able to see the educational efforts of both blacks and whites within black educational history.²⁷

This education continued as Northern and Middle states witnessed the rise of separate schools for blacks. The separation was the result of two factors: 1) belief by whites that the teachings of blacks should reflect their eventual stations in life and 2) the requests of blacks to have their own schools.²⁸ The city of Boston opened its first school for black children in 1820. By 1828, there was a total of five schools for blacks in Boston, Salem, and Portland, Maine supported by public school money. Places in the North such as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and Alexandria, Virginia supported integrated schools for black and white children. Many Northern states enacted laws that required the

²⁵ Henry Bullock. *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 9.

²⁶ Vaughn, 2; Woodson, 143.

²⁷ Woodson, 68.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

teachings of slaves or their children in preparation for their emancipation. However, this anticipated emancipation was not an idea supported in the South.²⁹

As previously mentioned the education of enslaved blacks is divided into two periods. The first era consisted of a time in which education for slaves was supported while the second period saw a reversal of these earlier thoughts and practices. The second period developed during the industrial revolution in which views of slavery changed from patriarchal to economic. Within this economic view of slavery, there was no need for an intelligent slave. Further an educated slave served to threaten the survival of the institution as an educated slave would lead to self-assertion. The first quarter of the nineteenth century became fertile ground for subsequent prohibition of the education of the enslaved population. During this period of the industrial revolution the demand for cotton fiber rose and so did the demand for the plantation system in the South.³⁰ It was now more profitable for slave-owners to work the slave for seven years until he was no longer useful and buy another one rather than to educate him. The second force was the consistent insurgencies that were tied to the education of the slave. Gabriel's insurrection of 1800 is cited as the first major planned insurgency that placed limits on education for blacks by limiting the teachings of black pauper children in Virginia.³¹

The tides began to change against the education of the slave as many began to believe that the mental improvement of the slave was "inconsistent with their position as persons held to service."³² The drive to enlighten the masses was no longer applicable to enslaved

²⁹ Woodson, 72-73.

³⁰ Ibid., 109-110.

³¹ Ibid., 82.

³² Ibid., 108.

blacks. Therefore the enslaved black who was considered to be valuable in the eighteenth century was in the nineteenth century considered “more dangerous than useful.”³³

After the Denmark Vesey insurrection of 1822 most Southerners no longer saw any vestiges of an economic efficiency argument for an educated slave and no longer accepted the arguments concerning the teachings of Christian principles. The Nat Turner rebellion of 1831 brought more restrictions as the South attempted to prevent the spreading of abolitionist materials as well as limit the movements of enslaved blacks. Some of the restrictions included prohibitions of slaves communicating with one another, with free persons of color, and with liberal whites along with the closing all of the schools for blacks. Mississippi, in 1831, went so far as to declare that all free persons of color were to leave the state in ninety days. Florida and Delaware restricted the gathering of slaves without the presence of a white man while Alabama instituted fines for educating blacks. Georgia too enacted a law disallowing the employment of a slave or free person of color “in setting up type or other labor about a printing office requiring knowledge of reading or writing.”³⁴ South Carolina too restricted the forms of employment for blacks as clerks or salesmen. The South was basically successful in dismantling any semblance of education for blacks in the South.

In response to these prohibitions free blacks began to migrate to the North in large numbers but encountered an unwelcoming neighbor. Northern states passed laws to prevent and discourage the migration there. Connecticut passed a law prohibiting the establishment of a school for blacks who were not inhabitants of the state.³⁵ Blacks experienced this same

³³ Woodson, 109.

³⁴ Ibid., 118.

³⁵ Ibid., 122.

unwelcome feeling when they migrated to Canada. However, free and educated persons of color began leaving the South in numbers.

The numbers demonstrate the monumental effect this change in attitude towards education for blacks had. In 1850 there were 4,354 black children attending schools in the South but by 1860 the number had dropped to 3,651. However, in Georgia in 1850 there was only one black child attending school and only seven in 1860. In Mississippi in 1850 there weren't any black children attending school and in 1860 there were two. This slight increase in Georgia's number may have been the result of persistent covert schools for blacks and an insistence by the members of the Agricultural Convention in 1850 to the Georgia legislature to allow the education of their slaves as a means to increase their economic value and as a means to attach them to their masters.³⁶ Despite the South's effort to remove all educational prospects from the slave, researchers have noted that many Southern communities maintained their schools in defiance of public opinion and in violation of the law.³⁷

Enslaved blacks maintained a concerted effort to obtain an education in spite of the dismantling of virtually all outside efforts in response to the multiple slave rebellions of the nineteenth century. Thomas Webber insists that enslaved blacks had to look no further than their own community for their educational pursuits as the institution itself served to be an educative institution.³⁸ His premise for this assertion is not based on an academic education although he does assert that the desire to learn to read and write was heavily developed within the slave quarter community; instead Webber highlights education based upon secular

³⁶ Woodson, 157.

³⁷ Ibid., 150.

³⁸ Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831 – 1865* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 3-262.

and religious themes. In his description of the slave quarters, Webber insists that the enslaved blacks created a community primarily based upon themes of culture, values, and standards that were subsequently passed down to younger generations superseding the education whites hoped to impart upon their slaves. The themes that he contends were developed within the slave quarters proved to be paramount in transmitting an education that was of and by the slave community.

The non-academic knowledge espoused by whites was not successfully imparted on a wide scale to the black community; instead a native education was imparted. Children of the community learned and experienced the themes of their community at an early age. Therefore, by the time white teaching started, the slave quarter children were already engulfed within their own cultural teachings values, ways, and standards that proved to be extremely difficult to erase. Both the white missionaries and the slaveholders experienced difficulty indoctrinating their values and attitudes into enslaved blacks during the educational process. Through the use of themes and the vehicles by which these themes were imparted, the members of the slave quarter community were able to effectively guard against the teachings of the whites and form within their own community values and attitudes that resonated within themselves. Although this system of education was not necessarily an academic one it provided for a structure that would support an academic education as the times and opportunities presented themselves.

As I continue to highlight the topic of black self-help within education, I describe it as developing within multiple historical interpretations along a continuum. Historians such as James Anderson, Vanessa Siddle Walker, and June Patton locate their interpretations along

the continuum that speaks to the agency within the black community.³⁹ Whereas the interpretations of Gerald Gutek, John Pulliam, Henry L. Swint, William Preston Vaughn, and Louis R. Harlan can be situated at the opposite end of this continuum placing the inception and direction of education outside of the black community.⁴⁰

The founding and support of both private and public schools by the black community both before emancipation and after the Civil War are the primary motivations behind the concept of black self-help. Anderson in his work, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, points to the newly freedmen's development of schools such as Sabbath, native, and free schools to support their educational pursuits.⁴¹ These schools were developed and run by enslaved blacks. Help from federal bureaus and missionary societies were not refused but accepted only upon the premise that blacks would remain in charge. The Sabbath schools, also known as Sunday Schools, rivaled the importance of the nineteenth century public school in the South.⁴² Having their origin in the 1790s for white poor working children, enslaved blacks quickly took to this opportunity for a free education on their one day off. Free blacks began taking over the operation of the Sunday Schools upon the implementation

³⁹ James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Vanessa Siddle Walker. *Their Highest Potential*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1996); June O. Patton, "The Black Community of Augusta and the Struggle for Ware High School, 1880 – 1899," in *New Perspectives on Black Educational History*, ed. Vincent P. Franklin and James Anderson (Boston, Mass: G.K. Hall & Co., 1978); William P. Vaughn. *Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865-1877* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974); Louis R. Harlan. *Separate and Unequal: Public Schooling Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958).

⁴⁰ G. L. Gutek. *An Historical Introduction to American Education* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1991); J. D. Pulliam. *History of Education in America* (Columbus: Merrill & Bell and Howell, 1976); Henry L. Swint. *The Yankee Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 1941);

⁴¹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 7-12.

⁴² Urban and Wagoner, 131.

of the restrictive laws after the slave rebellions of the 1830s. Most of the blacks within these schools were free blacks but some enslaved blacks were able to attend in some parts of the South.⁴³ Nonetheless, upon emancipation, blacks played a dominant role in the operations of the Sunday Schools.

The first extensive schools for former slaves were the Sea Island schools off the coast of South Carolina which began in the spring of 1862.⁴⁴ According to Urban and Wagoner, this effort was the first of its kind in its earnest attempt to eradicate illiteracy.⁴⁵ It is characterized as having originated from General William T. Sherman's attempt to educate a population of 10,000 slaves whom he characterized as being in a state of "abject ignorance and mental stolidity."⁴⁶ His employment of teachers from the American Missionary Association (AMA) and other white teachers from the North allowed more than 2,200 children to attend school on these islands. This experiment served as the training ground for what was to eventually come during Reconstruction.

Urban and Wagoner asserted that education for blacks was further brought to the South by the Northern armies.⁴⁷ The Union army is credited with "recruiting teachers, establishing school districts, outlining curricula, obtaining textbooks, and turning confiscated homes into schools for freedmen."⁴⁸ These schools educated black troops but also the newly freed blacks that lived in the Southern territories brought under military control during the

⁴³ Urban and Wagoner, 131.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 136-137.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 137.

war. The men of the 62nd and 65th U.S. Colored Troops contributed \$6,380 from their meager military earnings to establish a school for blacks that would later become Lincoln University.⁴⁹ Those who could not afford to contribute to the schools for blacks gave of themselves in expressing their genuine desire to obtain an education. This observation was noticed by Colonel Thomas A. Higginson of the 33rd U.S. Colored Troops when he stated “that his men’s ‘love of the spelling book is perfectly inexhaustible.’”⁵⁰

The school system of the Sea Islands was probably an outgrowth of Ulysses S. Grant’s initiation of a system of education by the Union Army to educate blacks so that they could be put to work. In North Carolina and Virginia, General Butler instituted an educational program for their black troops. By 1865 approximately 20,000 black troops in the Union Army were literate while an “estimated 750 teachers were instructing approximately 75,000 blacks in all Union-occupied areas of the South.”⁵¹

The Freedmen’s Bureau is noted within the section of black self-help as historians lend varied interpretations regarding the impact of the Bureau in the education of blacks. Its founding on March 3, 1865, did not establish it as an educational institution. Not until 1866 were funds appropriated to the Bureau specifically for educational purposes.⁵² The Bureau, under its Commissioner Oliver Otis Howard, was commissioned to “seize, hold, use, lease, or sell all buildings formerly held by the Confederacy and to use the proceeds derived from these transactions for the education of freedmen.”⁵³ Federal appropriations to the Bureau in

⁴⁹ Urban and Wagoner, 137.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 137

⁵¹ Vaughn, 8.

⁵² Ibid., 10.

⁵³ Ibid., 10.

1866, amounted to \$521,000 for salaries and capital outlay expenditures with another \$500,000 appropriated the following year.⁵⁴ By 1870, there were more than 9,503 teachers who taught blacks. This number included a large proportion of native Southerners of both races with no more than 5,000 Northerners. Contrary to popular belief, numerous Southern whites flocked to the Bureau in search for a teaching position to alleviate their impoverished conditions.⁵⁵ However, due to the instruction received in schools such as Hampton Institute, many former enslaved blacks became teachers and by 1869 about half of the Bureau's teachers were black.⁵⁶ In 1866 the Bureau's general superintendent, John W. Alvord, observed the intense dedication, commitment, and love for education from the newly freed blacks that often times suspension from school was used as a punishment for misdemeanors. Also observed by Bureau personnel, Colonel John R. Lewis, Superintendent for Georgia was the preference of blacks to attend black run private schools in which tuition was higher, \$1 per month versus \$.25 - \$.50 per month at Bureau schools.

However successful Freedmen Bureau schools were, by 1867 waning interest in and support of black schools began to speed up its eventual demise. This demise was also true for benevolent society's schools as "all secular societies began a policy of retrenchment."⁵⁷ The leveling off of funds began in 1869 and extended into 1870 appropriations for the Bureau that by April 1870, it "ceased its educational work."⁵⁸ At about the time the Bureau withdrew its aid, about 150,000 blacks were regularly attending 2,677 Bureau association schools

⁵⁴ Vaughn, 10.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 16.

within the South.⁵⁹ Although the Bureau's work was much needed, this figure only represented a miniscule amount. By 1869 approximately one-tenth of the 1.7 million black children of school age were attending school. Blacks could not simply wait on the federal government to deal with the high demand for education, therefore self-help efforts outside of the Bureau had to be implemented within the black community.

O'Brien notes that in 1866 the Georgia Education Association was formed by a group of black leaders in an effort to encourage newly freed blacks to establish schools for their counties.⁶⁰ Edmund Ware, of the Freedmen's Bureau, noticed that the black leaders "were hostile to Yankee teachers and especially to the possibility of integrated schools."⁶¹ By 1867 Georgia blacks had already established 191 day schools and 45 night schools. Blacks' effort in establishing schools for their communities served as part of their overall attempt at establishing a public school system for all in the South. As mentioned earlier, blacks and Northern "scalawags and carpetbaggers" are credited with the establishment of a system of free and public education in the South during Reconstruction.⁶² From 1868 to 1870, newly freed blacks in Southern states from Virginia to Georgia, helped frame the new laws that would provide for this universal education.⁶³

In describing the small black community of Augusta, Georgia June Patton insists that the small population of freedmen living in Augusta prior to the Civil War supported two

⁵⁹ Vaughn, 19.

⁶⁰ O'Brien, 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., 43.

⁶² Ibid., 5.

⁶³ Harlan, 5.

schools that served their small community of 386.⁶⁴ Further, “Blacks in Augusta had established at least seven schools in various black churches and other parts of the community by 1865.”⁶⁵ The Freedmen’s Bureau also established eleven schools for blacks in Augusta which were partially supported by the black community. The community of schools established within the black community in Augusta was hailed as being “superior” to the schools available to whites in 1873. The *Augusta Constitutionalist* described the black schools as being “large, well ventilated and comfortable, provided with benches, desks, black boards, maps, etc... they also have convenient playground.”⁶⁶ The literature suggests that self-help proved to be both a required and treasured tenet within this black community.

At the close of Reconstruction blacks began to be systematically excluded from the very universal education that they helped to establish. State and local funds collected for black schools were diverted to white schools. This exclusion prompted Southern blacks to commence a second crusade for common schools.⁶⁷ This second crusade looked much different from the first one in that there was no federal aid. Aid for the development of education from blacks came solely from the black community and northern philanthropic organizations. James Anderson’s review of the second crusade for black common schools is detailed with accounts of great financial sacrifice exhibited by blacks.⁶⁸ In conjunction with black residents, and to a much lesser extent, Southern school districts, the Rosenwald School

⁶⁴ June O. Patton, “The Black Community of Augusta and the Struggle for Ware High School, 1880 – 1899,” in *New Perspectives on Black Educational History*, ed. V.P. Franklin and J. Anderson (Boston, Mass: G.K. Hall & Co., 1978), 49-50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶⁷ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 148-185.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 148-185.

Building program was able to travel the South building common schools for black children. The Rosenwald Fund and the black Southern community are credited with building the common schools for blacks in the first third of the twentieth century.

In 1900 only 36 percent of black children ages five to fourteen attended school with 86 percent of these children attending schools with terms less than six months.⁶⁹ These numbers and the massive migration of blacks from rural to urban areas prompted the Rosenwald Fund to aid blacks and local white governments in building the common rural schools. The first Rosenwald school was built in 1914 in Lee County, Alabama at a total cost of \$942.⁷⁰ Of this total amount \$150 was paid by the black residents in cash, \$132 in free black labor, \$360 from local whites, and \$300 from Julius Rosenwald himself.⁷¹ By 1932 this effort had built 4,977 rural black schools with a capacity to seat 663,615 pupils at a cost of \$28,408,520. Of that total cost the Rosenwald fund provided 15.36 percent, rural blacks – 16.6 percent, whites – 4.27 percent, and public tax collected largely from black taxpayers – 63.73 percent.⁷² Within these figures, black self-help is readily demonstrated. Anderson insists that “most of the cash came from rural blacks through private contributions or public tax funds with additional contributions in the form of land, labor, and building materials.”⁷³ Further, in 13 Southern states blacks owned 43.9 percent of schoolhouses while many more

⁶⁹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 150.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 153.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 154.

were reported as public domain but were paid for in large part by the blacks within that community through voluntary contributions.⁷⁴

The great sacrifices that Anderson is able to detail also speaks to the concept of double taxation that black readily accepted in an effort to circumvent the discriminatory practices of white Southern governments in the distributions of school funds. The monetary contributions in the form of cash, labor, land, and materials has been named double taxation because blacks were taxed locally to support both the local black and white schools and in addition raised additional funds to compensate for the lack of return they received from their local taxation. Although Anderson classifies this double taxation as a form of self-help he does consider it to be an acceptance of oppressive practices that may have served as a detriment to the black community. In compensating for this lack of state and local funding, blacks in essence made it more “bearable” for whites to exclude blacks from this mandated funding. However, he concedes that “it was the only way they could secure an education for their children, [and] a way to protect and develop their communities, a way to sustain passageways to better times.”⁷⁵

In the case of high school education, the opportunities for Southern blacks were even more limited. Almost all Southern rural communities with large black populations and more than half of the major Southern cities failed to provide public high schools for blacks during the time period from 1880 to the mid-1930s. Secondary education for blacks was not significantly supported by state and local funds until after 1920. This void in educational offerings was filled by private institutions within the black community. In 1890, more than two-thirds of the black children attending high school attended private schools. By 1910, the

⁷⁴ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 156.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

majority of black children were still attending private high schools; however, black children represented 29 percent of the total secondary school population but constituted only five percent of the students enrolled in the secondary grades in the South.⁷⁶ This percentage of private school attendance was exacerbated upon the Supreme Court decision in the *Cumming v. School Board of Richmond County, Georgia* court case.⁷⁷ Georgia's only black four-year high school, Ware High School (in Augusta), was closed in 1897 in order to fund the white high school. When the black community filed suit to have its school reopened, the court ruled that the school board was justified in closing down the county's only black school due to funding. This ruling sent a message to other Southern school boards that they did not have to offer public secondary education for black youths. Ware High School was not reopened until 1945.⁷⁸

In 1915 most major Southern cities still did not provide public high schools for blacks. In Georgia, there were 122 public high schools for whites in 1916 but none for its black residents who constituted 46 percent of the state's secondary school-age population. Therefore, before 1920, private black high schools were the primary providers of high school education. In 1916, there were 20,872 black students attending school and of that total 11,130 attended private schools, 5,283 attended public schools, and 4,459 attended the 28 land-grant and state normal schools and colleges in the South. There were 216 private black high schools in the South and 106 offered four-year courses of study. This dependence on private schools was great in the South as more than three-fourths of black students in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina

⁷⁶ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 188.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

combined attended private institutions.⁷⁹ “In 1916, fully 95 percent of Southern black secondary school age population was not enrolled in public institutions, and in the deep South the proportion not enrolled in public secondary schools was 97 percent.”⁸⁰ Black southerners did not systematically receive a public high school education until after World War II. Therefore, private institutions for secondary education were of immense importance.⁸¹ This kind of self-help continued until after World War II.

Vanessa Siddle Walker supports Anderson’s assertion as she demonstrates agency through self-help efforts within the context of the Caswell County High School in Caswell, North Carolina. Although Caswell County High was a public school, Siddle Walker documents the origin of this school as one chartered by several black residents to provide an education for its black county citizens. From its inception the black community continuously raised money and contributed in-kind efforts to support and sustain the school. Contributions, in the form of double taxation, such as donating a stove, a truck to be used as the school bus, land, and even paying half the funds for insurance premiums on schools were some of the demands made by the white school board of the black community. Nonetheless, Siddle Walker asserts that the community did these things and more.⁸² The desire of the black community to provide an education for their children came from within and prompted such self-help efforts.

Other historians locate the impetus for an education for blacks outside of the black community. Northern school marms, missionary societies, benevolent whites, and lawmakers

⁷⁹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 197.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 193, 196-197.

⁸² Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential*, 1-198.

are credited as being responsible for an education for blacks and not primarily self-help from the black community. Gutek, Pulliam, Swint, and, Vaughn offer historical interpretations within this analysis.⁸³

As newly freed blacks participated in and in many respects led the effort for education in the South, resentment and hostility were found within the white southern community. Henry L. Swint's *The Yankee Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* is within the racist historical interpretations of black education.⁸⁴ According to Butchart, Swint's writing was one of the last in the white supremacist historical interpretations that "summarized the case against freedmen's education."⁸⁵ He did so by attacking the Northern teachers who came to teach the newly freed blacks within the Reconstruction government. For Swint and others who write in this interpretation, it was the invasion of the Northern teachers through their northern-imposed and freedmen-directed education that caused an inept system of education. Blacks possessed limited agency in the direction of their education as Swint documents in the official reports the inclusion of "colored" teachers sent South by the Freedmen's Bureau beginning in 1869. However, these efforts of self-help are dismissed as Swint contends that a number of blacks requesting aid in establishing schools did so in an effort to simply collect pay for which they would otherwise not earn working in other businesses. Their ability and qualifications to aid in the education of children is questioned. Instead Swint points to the Southerner's willingness to direct the education of the newly freed blacks. He contends that

⁸³ Gerald L. Gutek. *An Historical Introduction to American Education* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1991); John D. Pulliam. *History of Education in America* (Columbus: Merrill & Bell and Howell, 1976); Henry L. Swint. *The Yankee Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 1941); Vaughn.

⁸⁴ Henry L. Swint. *The Yankee Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 1941).

⁸⁵ Ron E. Butchart, "Outthinking and Outflanking", 340.

“many schools were established by the native white people of Georgia.”⁸⁶ In fact, according to Swint, there was very little opposition to black education before 1867 and with the election of 1868 there were very little outward manifestations of opposition. In contrast, Vaughn states that this has been an erroneous conclusion. In fact, opposition to freedmen’s schools and teachers in particular continued into the next decade in the Gulf states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. “School burnings, destruction of textbooks, and threats upon the lives of teachers were common place” in these states while “incidents of incendiarism, violence, and abuse against bureau teachers and schools persisted through 1870 and remained a problem after education of blacks was taken over by the state governments.”⁸⁷ Swint insists that if given the opportunity Southerners would have willingly properly educated the black masses.

Although Vaughn does not agree with all of Swint’s historical interpretations of the Reconstruction period, he does subscribe to Swint’s understandings surrounding the contempt that Southern whites had for black education.⁸⁸ According to Vaughn, whites’ expressed anger and violence were primarily directed at northern whites and their perceived notions of superiority as they participated in the development of black education. Vaughn notes some Northern white teachers as characterizing their southern place of employment as having citizens who possess “no law, order, or intelligence and [are] at least two hundred years behind everything.”⁸⁹ The lack of contact these Northern teachers had with their white southern neighbors did little to help the relationship. This distrust in white Northern teachers

⁸⁶ Butchart, 134.

⁸⁷ Vaughn, 48.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 24-49.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 29.

proved to be the root of the violent reactions surrounding black education. Some white Northern teachers readily admitted that the violence was directed to them and not black education whereas the presence of black teachers aroused much less hostility among Southern whites. Since Southern whites held staunch views of how education for blacks could be used to perpetuate the master-servant relationship, the idea was that white liberal Northerners could not be trusted to teach this kind of education. Therefore Southern whites should be left to teach blacks within the social order of the South. This way their subservient education could be ensured. Those espousing this type of education did so for purely self-serving economic purposes. Upper class whites adhered to the belief that education would allow the black worker to be more efficient and thereby more profitable. The social order was to be reinforced through education and only white southerners could handle this. However, poor Southerners objected to education for blacks as it stood as a reflection of the hated period of Reconstruction.⁹⁰ Violence rang out against teachers and schools.

Vaughn adheres to the premise that education for blacks was a force that primarily came from outside of the black community. He ascribes limited agency to the black community as he credits the Northern teacher, the Freedmen's Bureau, and benevolent societies for making "literate at least one-quarter of the total Southern black population, while also beginning the training of black teachers who could work with their own people."⁹¹

Similarly self-help within the black community or any Southern community for that matter was nonexistent in the historical interpretations of Pulliam.⁹² He asserts that due to the

⁹⁰ Vaughn, 48-49.

⁹¹ Ibid., 23.

⁹² J. D. Pulliam. *History of Education in America* (Columbus: Merrill & Bell and Howell, 1976).

pervasive corruption of the Reconstruction government, the South was left bankrupt and with no means of providing an adequate education for either its black or white children. Instead, in the South, there existed only a little more than a “paper system of education” in 1870.⁹³ Pulliam further contends that the Reconstruction government did nothing as far as progress and the measures that were implemented for public education were either ignored or removed. The American Missionary Association, American’s Freedom Union, and the Freedmen’s Bureau are mentioned as efforts towards education for blacks but only in terms of a limited capacity. This limited capacity extended from the freedmen themselves as the enthusiasm expressed by the black community after the War waned as they realized they had “neither the time nor preparation” for an education.⁹⁴

Guttek places agency within the black community solely within the brief political reign that black legislators enjoyed during Reconstruction in directing their educational endeavors.⁹⁵ He notes that earlier characterizations of the Reconstruction period failed to credit the contributions of this government such as the establishment of free public schools. However, any further mention of agency or self-help within the black community ends; instead, he insists that black education after the Civil War was in the hands of the “New England school marms” along with northern charitable and religious groups who sent funds and teachers to educate the newly freed slaves.⁹⁶ There is no mention of blacks establishing or teaching in schools. Instead the book moves to a major focus on the legal history of fighting the *Plessy v Ferguson* decision that produced the separate but equal doctrine. Legal

⁹³ Pulliam, 82.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹⁵ G. L. Guttek. *An Historical Introduction to American Education* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1991).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 279.

action against segregation through the presidential committee on Civil Rights, lawsuits against institutions of higher learning, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and subsequent legal battles against segregation become the central focus of black education.

Northern Philanthropy

The theme of northern philanthropy coupled with industrial education is probably the most researched topic within black segregated schools. Similar to the other topics, historical interpretations concerning the importance of northern philanthropy and the prevalence of industrial education is heavily debated and lies on a continuum. There are those historians who insist that northern philanthropists through their generous contributions and insistence on industrial education shaped not only black education but Southern education while other historians contend that both northern philanthropists and industrial education had limited effects in shaping black education. What is more readily agreed upon is the vast amounts of money that were poured into the South's education for both white and black schools.

One could point to the genesis of northern philanthropy as the Freedmen's Bureau since some interpretations see this help extending from an outside Northern agency. Swint notes the estimate of the expense of food and clothing spent by the Freedmen's Bureau between January, 1865 and September, 1871 was \$4.5 million while the amount spent solely on hospitals approximated \$2 million.⁹⁷ Vaughn cites John Eaton, in his United States Commissioner of Education's report stating that by 1876 the Bureau had spent \$3,711,225 on the education of blacks alone.⁹⁸ This amount did not include the cost to transport teachers or of maintaining troops to protect the schools. The Bureau seemed to have spared no cost in providing for both its white and black fellow citizens

⁹⁷ Swint, 12.

⁹⁸ Vaughn, 12.

Although missionary societies had traveled to the South before the Freedmen's Bureau was established, the philanthropic efforts of these societies greatly and systematically increased upon the heels of the Bureau. In fact Swint contends that the AMA "followed the army."⁹⁹ He cites that by "1866 there were 353 teachers in the field, while an expenditure of \$377,027.78 in cash and supplies was reported."¹⁰⁰ By 1868, the number had grown to a corps of 532 teachers and in 1867 \$334,500 in cash and \$90,000 in distributed clothing had been reported .¹⁰¹ Vaughn reports that one benevolent society publication reported that all societies had spent \$13 million towards education for blacks with the Bureau matching that amount.¹⁰²

These generous contributions did not end with the Freedmen's Bureau or the AMA as numerous societies and missionaries descended upon the South with their philosophies and cash in an effort to help direct the education and future of the South. However, with these generous offerings came expectations. James Anderson contends that the missionary groups viewed the newly freed blacks as objects to be controlled and "civilized."¹⁰³ Swint also places the motives and attitudes of the Northern teacher in unflattering terms when he contends that although most of them came to the South due to religious and humanitarian interests, they also espoused the sentiment that the South had to be "renovated by Northern

⁹⁹ Swint, 12.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰² Vaughn, 12.

¹⁰³ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 6.

principles.”¹⁰⁴ Needless to say, the attitudes of the Northern missionary were neither accepted by the black or white Southern communities.

Upon the implementation of a universal system of education by the Reconstruction government, the missionary work of the Northern teacher subsided. However, Sawyer contends that an additional effect was added in the abandonment of the South by the Northern teachers.¹⁰⁵ In education there was an accommodation from the Northern teachers in the “acceptance of the Southern educator as the expert in Negro education.”¹⁰⁶ This conciliation was led by the National Educational Association (NEA). According to Sawyer, in electing a former Superintendent of Public Instruction from Georgia in 1882, the NEA accepted the paternalistic and racist views held by many Southerners and conceded their position in the education of blacks to the white Southerner. The Northerner would now view the black man through the eyes of the Southerner who knew him best. This acceptance would eventually lead to the wholesale support of “a special type of education for the majority of black Americans to fit them for their proper “place” in American society from this national educational group.¹⁰⁷

After the demise of the Reconstruction government many of the funding sources were no longer available and according to Pulliam, the South’s education system lay in bankruptcy.¹⁰⁸ He contends that in the absence of federal funds and limited state and local

¹⁰⁴ Swint, 36.

¹⁰⁵ R. McLaran Sawyer, “The National Education Association and Negro Education, 1865-1884,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 39 no. 4 (Autumn 1970).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 343.

¹⁰⁷ Sawyer, 345.

¹⁰⁸ Pulliam, 81.

funds, Northern philanthropic organizations stepped in on behalf of both races. William H. Watkins concurs with this assessment as he emphasizes the Northern corporations' success in the shaping of public policy for the nation and its institutions through their philanthropic organizations.¹⁰⁹ He contends that this happened only in the absence of governmental intervention and agenda setting.

Watkins identifies black education as an integral part within the restructuring of a young fractured country and the fight for a unified nation. The northern corporations, through their philanthropic organizations, sought to promote Northern hegemony, industrial dominance, and racial subservience. Watkins presents black education as a microcosm of the larger effort to unite the North and South into a country that could serve as an industrial giant and world economic power. He exposes this intersection by highlighting movements such as the municipal reform movement, the charity movement, and the eugenics movement as precursors to the type of education that was eventually espoused for blacks.

The municipal movement began at the turn of the century as a result of graft, corruption, and ethnic discriminations that permeated the large cities.¹¹⁰ As more Americans were leaving the countryside and moving to the cities, civic-minded reformers understood that in order for the new industrial economy to survive it needed to have unified and broad support. The reformers sought to establish this support through the school's curriculum. The curriculum would focus on good citizenship over good government where good character, health, sanitation, and the benefits of labor were stressed.¹¹¹ Watkins insists that "civic

¹⁰⁹ Watkins, 18-22.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 16-17.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 16-17.

education was an important building block in the evolution of social studies education, which in turn was a building block for minority education.”¹¹²

In the case of the charity movement, organizations such as Jane Addams’ Hull House worked to help those recently relocated populations and in doing so secured the industrial democratic order. According to Watkins, they did not challenge American industrialism at its root; instead they offered limited assistance to those who they deemed to have “inadequate self-esteem, ambition, and character.”¹¹³ Those involved in this effort are credited with developing the modern social studies curriculum in 1916 through the Committee on Social Studies. The themes found within this early social studies rendition such as health, sanitation, and Americanization were to be large components of the education for blacks.¹¹⁴

The North American version of eugenics of the early twentieth century insisted that due to biology blacks and Southern Europeans were inherently inferior and American institutions were incapable of “molding or assimilating the ‘inferior’ races.”¹¹⁵ Specifically for black Americans, education would not alter the historical status of blacks; therefore, containment and segregation proved to be the most logical answer to this biological assignment. The differences went beyond differences in skin color to mental characteristics.¹¹⁶ Therefore, the inferiority of blacks required that they occupy a subservient position within a society that called for an industrial education.

¹¹² Watkins, 17

¹¹³ Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 16-17, 108-109.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 37.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 37-40.

Northern philanthropists, who Watkins labels as white architects, sought to create a democracy that could function within an unequal racialized society in which societal issues were not politicized. This effort extended from a fear of the spreading of communism, socialism, and anarchism as witnessed in Europe.¹¹⁷ These architects also sought to strike a balance between a plutocracy and socialism. The best way to promote change without upsetting the balance of power was to infuse within the population an ideology that would support this new economic agenda. This ideology could best be promoted through a social studies curriculum that stressed obedience and accommodationism with an industrial education specifically for blacks. The industrial education that was to be the hallmark of the black system of education sought to keep blacks in a state of subservience while allowing them to make profitable contributions to the new industrialized economy.¹¹⁸ The white architects proved to be integral parts in this endeavor.

Watkins uses biographies of selected white proponents of industrial education to describe the formation of the model of education for blacks. In doing so he presents an analysis of their motives and work within universities, philanthropic organizations, and the Southern Education Board. Watkins emphasizes the philanthropic organizations in an effort to demonstrate that in the absence of governmental intervention and agenda setting, these large corporations, through their foundations, shaped public policy for the nation and its institutions. In the absence of a well-developed universal system of education in the South after the Civil war, corporations were able to infuse their social, economic, and political agendas in the reshaping of America through a concerted effort to provide an education for both blacks and whites within the South. For black Americans this education was strictly

¹¹⁷ Watkins, 9-22.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 146.

industrial. Watkins characterizes this educational undertaking as “political an undertaking as we have known.”¹¹⁹

Michael Dennis supports Watkins’ assertion as he contends that economic progress through industrial development played a major role in the kind of education that was promoted for blacks.¹²⁰ He, however, situates this effort with the Southern progressives. In “Schooling Along the Color Line: Progressives and the Education of Blacks in the New South,” Dennis states that amidst the rise of progressivism in the North, the South experienced its own form of progressivism that, in many ways, approximated the philosophies of Northern progressives. The South too pushed for “material progress, child labor reform, and the regulation of public utilities,” but along with these tenets emerged an industrial based educational philosophy for blacks.¹²¹ The philosophy undergirding this call for an industrial education for blacks in the South emerged from a class of educated progressive white Southerners. Their role within the progressive era centered on providing the “ideological framework” by which northern philanthropists could agree to in order to fund industrial education for blacks.¹²² The impetus behind the idea of industrial education presented itself during an ideological shift to racial harmony and economic progress through industrial development. According to Dennis, the Southern progressives saw economic industrial progress as dependent upon the South’s ability to promote racial harmony which would in turn draw northern investments.¹²³ Therefore the previous principles supporting

¹¹⁹ Watkins, 180.

¹²⁰ Michael Dennis, “Schooling Along the Color Line: Progressivism and the Education of Blacks in the New South,” *Journal of Negro Education* 67 no. 2 (Spring 1998).

¹²¹ Dennis, 142.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 142-143

racial extremism lost its place among southern intellectuals and were replaced by race-based educational discrimination.

According to Dennis, the men espoused a kind of education that would support the South's "emphasis on gradualism with regard to Black advancement and educational separation [that] fit comfortably into the New [South's] vision of economic expansion and neopaternalistic White supremacy."¹²⁴ The idea supporting industrial education stated that through the appropriate type of education blacks could take their proper place within the new economy. This place would relegate blacks to the land. One such model that was readily accepted by the Southern progressives was the Hampton-Tuskegee Model. Dennis contends that "Industrial education along the lines of the Hampton-Tuskegee model provided a point of ideological convergence for northern philanthropists and southern educators."¹²⁵ The model served to provide an industrial economic base for the South while maintaining the disenfranchisement and subordinate position of blacks. With this new philosophy in hand, boards such as the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board found fertile ground in which to promote their industrial system of education.

The main vehicle by which the system of industrial education was promoted is historically documented as being through the Southern Education and General Education Boards. Henry Bullock asserts that the Southern Education Board proved to be one of the "most powerful organizations in the South."¹²⁶ These boards composed of both Southern and Northern men of influence "officially began their struggle for ideological hegemony in

¹²³ Dennis, 143.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 143.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 146.

¹²⁶ Bullock, 95.

1898.”¹²⁷ Harlan and Anderson both describe the men who comprised these boards as white Northern industrial philanthropists, white Southern businessmen, and middle-class professional educators.¹²⁸ The Boards were born out of the annual meetings of the Conference for Education in the South at Capon Springs, West Virginia. During these annual meetings that met from 1898-1900 at Capon Springs and at various other locations throughout the South from 1901-1914, the two-fold objectives were to “fortify the appropriate educational and social ideology within the coalition” and to “spread the ideology beyond the borders of the coalition to obtain allegiance of other major social groups.”¹²⁹ Harlan states that according to the members of these boards, Southern education would alleviate race prejudice that was due to ignorance and race competition.¹³⁰ Through education the white man would learn to tolerate the black man while also widening the white man’s job opportunities to ease competition between the races.¹³¹

The Southern Education Board would serve as the propaganda arm while the General Education Board would provide funds for these educational efforts. The U.S. Commissioner of education, in his 1900-1901 annual report, described the Southern Education Board as “an investigating and preaching board for carrying on a propaganda of education.”¹³² Their

¹²⁷ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 83.

¹²⁸ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 83; Harlan, 77.

¹²⁹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 83.

¹³⁰ Harlan, 79

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹³² Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 85.

agenda included an education for blacks in exchange for abandoning the claims for equal status and opportunity.¹³³

Serving as the funding arm of the Southern Education Board's propaganda, the General Education Board, founded in 1902, was primarily financed by its founder John D. Rockefeller, Jr.¹³⁴ With an initial endowment of \$1million, by 1921 Rockefeller had personally donated over \$129 million. An overwhelming influence, Rockefeller and his Board ostensibly directed the work of other philanthropic northern organizations such as the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation (1907) and the Phelps-Stokes Fund (1910). Anderson describes this influence as "virtual monopolistic control of educational philanthropy for the South and the Negro."¹³⁵ Bullock concurs with this estimation in noting that, through its two boards, the Conference for Education was able to "keep their ears close to the ground" and "develop almost absolute control over those charitable funds that tended to flow southward for educational purposes."¹³⁶ Moreover, "through its fact-finding functions, the Bureau [of the Southern Education Board] became the nation's most dependable source of information about Southern education."¹³⁷

Bullock asserts that by the beginning of the twentieth century "the dominance of the conference as the dominant educational force in the South was complete."¹³⁸ However complete this takeover was, historical interpretations vary as to the effectiveness of the

¹³³ Louis R. Harlan, "The Southern Education Board and the Race Issue in Public Education," *Journal of Southern History* 23 no. 2 (May 1957), 193.

¹³⁴ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 86.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹³⁶ Bullock, 104.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

Conference for Education through its two boards, the Southern Education and General Education Boards. Additionally there are varied conclusions concerning the effectiveness of other northern philanthropic boards in implementing a wide system of industrial education for blacks within the segregated schools.

Henry Bullock presents two analyses to the question of northern philanthropic influence in providing an industrial education to blacks in the South. In researching the county training schools sponsored by the Slater Fund, Bullock argues that these schools were able to “capture the Negro public schools of the South.”¹³⁹ The trustees of the fund were able to jointly establish high schools throughout the South’s countryside with the financial cooperation of local school boards and the black population. The core curriculum for these schools was an industrial education with farming skills and techniques taught to encourage the black tenant farmers to find contentment in their current situation. According to Bullock, “The Slater Fund and other philanthropic agencies like it had inspired the development of secondary schools for Negroes, and practically any Negro child in the South could get at least two years of high school training at public expense” by 1933.¹⁴⁰

However, Bullock also notes that “at the base of every Negro child’s educational opportunity was a literary training that took precedence over industrial.”¹⁴¹ Similar to the other schools throughout the nation, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and history served to be the main components of the graded curriculum. In order to remain faithful to its sponsors, black schools had to incorporate at least a modicum of industrial education into

¹³⁹ Bullock, 158.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

their classical curriculum. Bullock notes, “By 1903 there were 13,797 Negro children receiving some kind of industrial training at the high school level in the South. Nevertheless 8,055 of these were taking ‘classical, scientific, English, and business courses as the hard core of their curriculum.’”¹⁴² Industrial education for blacks in the South is likened to “window dressings” to make “a favorable impression upon some visiting school officials whose influence with philanthropic agencies could stimulate more money for the school.”¹⁴³ Bullock characterizes the effort at an industrial education for blacks as a failed experiment that eventually led to the rise of black leaders who sought the liberation from all forms of oppression.

Michael Dennis similarly espouses the limited effectiveness of the widespread implementation of industrial education of blacks.¹⁴⁴ He insists that as white Southern progressives continued espousing their messages of an industrial education for blacks, there persisted an ardent push against this exclusive industrial education movement. Additionally, the progressives’ efforts went unmatched by actual implementation. Northern philanthropists were convinced that the Hampton-Tuskegee model would catch on throughout the South and thus continued to pour money into the industrial education movement. Black industrial schools received appropriations from Northern foundations at a rate much higher than that of black liberal arts colleges. By 1915 Hampton’s endowment stood at \$2.7 million and Tuskegee’s at \$1.9 million while the highest endowment for a black liberal arts college was only \$700,000.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the gains the Northern philanthropists hoped to see in black

¹⁴² Bullock, 162.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 162

¹⁴⁴ Dennis, 153.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

industrial education never materialized. The ideological framework of industrial education had fallen on deaf ears within the black community. Dennis also points to the lack of support received from “White southern academics to the idea of public support for Black education”¹⁴⁶ White Southern academics who did not espouse the ideas of progressivism were in no hurry to jeopardize the financial support that their institutions received from the state in order to support an industrial education for blacks. Therefore, the call for an exclusive industrial education for blacks eventually waned.

Nor were the efforts of an industrial education successful according to the historical interpretations of James Anderson. In fact Anderson contends that northern philanthropists were last to the scene in the establishment of secondary schools for blacks in the South.¹⁴⁷ Upon the stimulation of segregated high schools by the post World War I demographic, economic, and political changes that were occurring, the Southern cities responded by establishing black public secondary schools. The efforts of the Northern philanthropic organizations did not occur until after 1926. Infusing an industrial curriculum into the already established schools proved to be difficult as the larger cities in the South had already established at least one black secondary school.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the Northern philanthropies hoped to establish programs within the secondary schools that would “approximate the actual work situation of black adults and that deemphasized college preparatory subjects.”¹⁴⁹ They faced challenges as white Southerners showed little interest in the idea of an industrial education for blacks while the black community resisted this type of education. According to

¹⁴⁶ Dennis, 154.

¹⁴⁷ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 203.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 210.

Anderson, even when more funds were offered to school districts to build purely industrial high schools versus hybrid high schools that combined academic and industrial education, the Northern philanthropists could never find a willing district.

The total withdrawal of the primary Northern philanthropic organization that focused on secondary education, the Rosenwald Fund, finally came in 1931. This withdrawal came early in the economic debacle of the 1930s, the Great Depression. The Great Depression exposed the underlying workings of the southern economic system. Northern philanthropists had built their idea of industrial education on the notion of “black” jobs; however, in the South there was never a solid definition of “black” jobs; instead “‘Negro jobs’ were mostly those jobs left over after whites achieved full employment.”¹⁵⁰ During the Great Depression many of the long-standing “‘Negro jobs’ became ‘white jobs’.”¹⁵¹ Anderson says that “at the time when black workers were being pushed out of those jobs and replaced by white workers,” Northern philanthropists were “advocating and implementing secondary industrial education to train black youth in certain occupations.”¹⁵² In light of this economic turn of events, Northern philanthropists terminated their efforts at secondary industrial education without ever achieving success in the industrial education of blacks.

Urban and Wagoner credit the Northern philanthropists with shaping Southern educational policy in terms of establishing schools and the policy of segregation. However, they do insist that this educational effort was a collaborative one when they state that the “largesse of northern philanthropists, the charitable gifts of churches and other organizations,

¹⁵⁰ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 229.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 234.

and the sacrificial giving of labor and money by southern blacks themselves” as responsible for making “inroads in the journey toward educational equality.”¹⁵³ Northern white philanthropy is noted for its efforts in building and establishing schools throughout the South for the black community. Although the authors mention the inclusion of industrial education as one of the focuses of the Slater Fund for Southern blacks, the research’s primary consideration is on the philanthropists’ efforts at shaping Southern educational policy.

Urban and Wagoner cite the work of the Peabody Fund, through its trustees in the promotion of a segregated education.¹⁵⁴ Through this policy of segregated education, the Fund would further establish a policy of unequal education through disparate funding measures. In 1869, the Fund’s general agent, Dr. Barnas Sears, “proposed that grants to black schools be scaled to one-third less than for white schools, because ‘[it] costs less to maintain schools for the colored children than the white.’”¹⁵⁵ In opposing mixed schools, Sears made a concerted effort to eliminate the clause in the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 that would have called for integrated schools. Urban and Wagoner contend that this action by Sears helped “cement the agenda of segregated schooling in the southern states for decades to come.”¹⁵⁶ Subsequent philanthropic efforts are also noted to have contributed to the long-standing separate but equal practice that continued well into the twentieth century.

School Funding

The idea of a publicly funded school system in the South was far from entrenched prior to the Civil War. The South’s educational system was built upon poorly funded pauper

¹⁵³ Urban and Wagoner, 146.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

schools and private academies for the planters' children. Any efforts at implementing a publicly funded school system met with opposition from those who resented taxation for the schooling of poor whites and Negroes. Under the theme of school funding, historians have highlighted the peculiarities of the South that served to make the establishment of this well-entrenched system of the North difficult to implement in the South. Also, within this theme are issues of taxation and unequal distribution of federal, state, and local funds. Historians who research school funding use data to point to the severe quantifiable inequities that existed between the black and white schools due to inequity in funding. However, there are those interpretations that concede to the disproportionate funding but not to the concluding inadequacies of the black school.

Upon the formation of the Reconstruction government, Republicans and black politicians sought to establish a publicly funded school system that would serve both the black and white populations. According to Anderson, this idea was introduced by former slaves who saw education as their best avenue for full social, political, and economic participation.¹⁵⁷ Black politicians and leaders joined with Republicans - in 1870, to ensure that "every southern state had specific provisions in its constitution to assure a public school system financed by a state fund."¹⁵⁸ This provision remained in the states' constitutions even after white Southerners regained control in the South. Horace Bond additionally contends that the governments set up in the various Southern states enacted laws "which placed the education of Negroes on an equitable basis with that provided for whites."¹⁵⁹ After the

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 4-32.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁵⁹ Horace Bond. *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (New York: Octagon Books, 1934/1970), 47.

demise of the Reconstruction government, historians identify the newly elected officials dismantling or ignoring of the laws that called for equal distribution of educational funds. Bond points to the laws of the 1890s that allowed for great inequities between the per pupil allocations between white and black students and the teacher salaries between black and white teachers. Once power was restored to the conservatives the practice of diverting money from the black to the white schools was well under way through consistent legislation.

According to Bond,

There were more children to be educated but less money available for their education; and if a choice had to be made between providing a wretched system for both races and providing a fairly good system for the white children as compared to a wretched system for the Negro children, the student of human nature can understand what was actually done.¹⁶⁰

The teacher certificate law was one way in which Southern states diverted funds from the black schools to white schools whereby black teachers were consistently issued lower certificate grades which required a lower pay in salary.¹⁶¹ This practice was coupled with state legislation that entitled local school boards to apportion school funds as they saw fit. Without the benefit of local taxation blacks were at the mercy of the local school board.

The literature reveals marked differences in funding between white and black schools at both the primary and secondary levels. Redcay cites past studies conducted - in the Southern states, concerning the state of black education in America.¹⁶² In a study conducted by Lance Jones of Oxford University during an extensive tour of the Southern states in 1926-1927, he noted that “vast inequalities existed in the allotment of public monies for schools

¹⁶⁰ Bond, 92.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 225-262.

¹⁶² E. E. Redcay. *County Training Schools and Negro Education* (Westport, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970).

and the discrimination in favor of white schools was greatest where Negro population seemed densest.”¹⁶³ In Robinson’s 1927 study he concluded that no state made provisions for educational equality between the races when considering the opportunity for public education of Negroes in four-year state accredited high schools in seventeen Southern states.¹⁶⁴ However Redcay does cite one study, conducted in 1921, in which the investigator, Leo Favrot, did not find Negro high schools to be overcrowded “and conditions in this respect are satisfactory for efficient work.”¹⁶⁵ The final study cited by Redcay, as a part of the National Survey of Secondary Education 1929 – 1930, found that “thirty-seven percent of all Negroes 15 to 19 years in the South resided in counties offering less than four years of public secondary work.”¹⁶⁶ The study concluded that accommodations were in favor of whites.

Other studies have corroborated earlier findings of discriminatory school funding. Robert Margo studied discriminatory funding for selected states in 1890 and 1910.¹⁶⁷ Using Louisiana as the site for his regression analysis, he examined “the effects of disfranchisement on school spending on local taxes.”¹⁶⁸ The results of his regression analysis suggested

disfranchisement reduced expenditures on black schools, enabled whites to take fuller advantage of the fiscal mechanisms..., and led to a racial distribution of school spending that more closely approximated the racial distribution of the taxable resources.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Redcay, 17.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶⁷ Robert A. Margo, “Race Difference in Public School Expenditures: Disfranchisement and School Finance in Louisiana, 1890-1910,” *Social Science History* 6 no. 1 (Winter 1982).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

Bond insisted that schools build societal orders and not the other way around.¹⁷⁰ Building upon this theme Bond examined an area within black education that earlier historians had largely ignored: the eroding condition of black education since Reconstruction. He notes that most of the teachers were not prepared or qualified to teach children, but he attributes this placement of unqualified teachers to white school board members who exhibited minimal to no interest in the proper education of blacks. However it was the black community's seemingly lack of high standards for their professionals that allowed for this kind of inadequate teaching in the schools. Bond goes so far as to insist that most of the money spent on black schools during the 1930s was wasted due to "faulty administration and ineffective teaching."¹⁷¹

Harlan researches the difficulties of the South, through an investigation of the Southern Seaboard states, in establishing a New England type of educational system while also highlighting the inequities that led to the inadequacies of the black schools. He retraces the arguments that were made on behalf of the inclusion and exclusion of blacks which were based upon the best kind of education that would keep blacks in their perpetual state of servitude. Harlan contends that the black schools were kept in a state between being "deliberately poor but not destroyed."¹⁷² Massive financial discrimination was developed out of "a conjunction of motives: increased white desire for education, white racial hostility, and efforts of taxpayers to limit taxation."¹⁷³ However inadequate education was for blacks in the

¹⁷⁰ Bond, 1-494.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 450.

¹⁷² Harlan, 8.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 268.

Southern Seaboard states between 1901-1915, Harlan contends that “Negro education, . . . , aided the Negro rather than push[ed] him down.”¹⁷⁴

Pulliam emphasizes the inadequacies of the schools for blacks as early as before the Civil War.¹⁷⁵ He notes that blacks were largely unable to enter college before 1860 due to the insufficient segregated schools that were offered. Even after the end of the Civil War blacks were only being sparingly admitted to a few Northern universities. However progress occurred between 1866 and 1936 as the literacy percentage increased from 10 percent to over 90 percent. With that improvement, the number of PhD’s awarded to blacks also greatly increased from only 28 before the Civil War to 132 by 1936.¹⁷⁶

Pulliam is unapologetic in his description of the state of Southern schools as he contends, “Many Southern statesmen deplored the low level – retarded growth of public schools but were powerless to provide adequate support.”¹⁷⁷ He goes on to say that many of the schools were ill-equipped and of poor quality. This low quality resulted from the bankrupt state in which the Reconstruction government left the Southern states in and the implementation of a separate school system for blacks. Pulliam argues that this separate school system for blacks allowed for a lower quality of schooling in the South. As he traces the educational system in the South, Pulliam never concedes to an adequate education for white Southern children but he does point to the continued inadequacies of the educational system for blacks. He notes, “By 1954 it had become obvious to the public that black

¹⁷⁴ Harlan, 255.

¹⁷⁵ Pulliam, 96.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 81

children in segregated states received a much poorer schooling than white students.”¹⁷⁸ In Arkansas the amount of money spent on the white students was \$102 per child while it was only \$67 per black student in 1952.¹⁷⁹

From this point, the research focuses on the legal battles that were waged to provide for more equitable education for blacks. Pulliam highlights an argument made by Thurgood Marshall during the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case that has been ignored by most historians. In his argument Marshall does not attack the inadequate facilities as a point of inequality; instead, he cites “prestige, teaching standards, the academic surrounding, and the inference of inferiority,” as important factors in educational equality.¹⁸⁰

Henry A. Bullock chronicles the rise of a segregated world which included provisions for a segregated and inferior education for blacks. This education is cast as inferior because it only allowed for achievement in the limited segregated world as opposed to one in which the black man could aspire to become the white man’s equal. Bullock speaks to the detrimental effects that this forced separate world had on the socialization process of the Negro. The black school was “skillfully designed to inculcate those values which would adequately adjust the Negro people to their caste conditions.”¹⁸¹ However, the basic education received in all public schools whether black or white rested upon literary instruction. Bullock argues that although the schooling was separate, “judged in terms of the value scale held for Negroes; and it symbolized America’s dual standard of academic competency,” this type of education led to the subsequent rise of African American leaders

¹⁷⁸ Pulliam, 155.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 155.

¹⁸⁰ Bullock, 155.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 157.

who sought a liberation from all forms of oppression. Black education was thus viewed as the liberating force.¹⁸² “Negro education in the South repeatedly served as the main leverage for this movement.”¹⁸³

Although the weakness of the black segregated schools is noted by historians, there has been an effort to expose the achievements of these segregated schools in spite of the inequities in funding. For the authors that point to the value within the segregated schools the focus has shifted from primarily research of the schools based upon outside forces to research based upon the agents within the schools such as the students, principals, and teachers. According to Vanessa Siddle Walker, Mary Gibson Hudley’s 1965 *The Dunbar Story*, led the way in this new historical interpretation.¹⁸⁴ She and other African American scholars “propos[ed] that confining explanations of the education in the schools to descriptions of resources have not adequately explained the kind of education African American teachers, principals, and parents attempted to provide under externally restrictive circumstances.”¹⁸⁵ The research would now begin focus on the “unintended consequences” of segregated schools, “in which African American schools strived to become intellectual institutions, despite the expectation of European Americans that any learning beyond menial employment was unnecessary.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Bullock, 166.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹⁸⁴ Vanessa Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools for African American Children in the South, 1935 – 1969: A Review of Common Themes and Characteristics,” *Review of Educational Research* 70 no. 3 (Fall 2000): 260.

¹⁸⁵ Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools,” 254.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 254.

The following chapters of this dissertation will expound upon this idea of value found within the segregated black schools as well as the new themes within the research of the all-black segregated schools. While providing an historical investigation of one of Athens, Georgia's earliest accredited all-black high schools, my dissertation looks at the agents of the school – administrators, teachers, and students – and denote the value they found within the schools. The next chapter provides an overview of the new themes of the all-black segregated schools that are being used to challenge the dominant current narrative.

CHAPTER 4

NEW THEMES

My research into the black segregated schools has led to what appears to be four important themes: value within the segregated black schools, professional networks, displaced black educators, and consequences and costs of desegregation. These themes serve to be a revision to the older themes of black education. Historically, prominent themes of black educational history focused predominately on black self-help, school funding, and northern philanthropy. Well-noted historians within the history of black education, Horace Mann Bond (1934/1970), Louis R. Harlan (1958), Carter G. Woodson (1919/2007, 1933/2000), and Henry Bullock (1967) provide a framework for the history of black education through their multiple historical interpretations focused on the traditional themes. More recently authors such as James Anderson (1988), David Celeski (1994), Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996, 2000, 2009), Vivian Gunn Morris and Curtis L. Morris (2002), and Adam Fairclough (2001, 2001, 2004, 2007) have extended study into the history of black education through newer historical interpretations, shifting the research in varied directions to further demonstrate the complexities of the history of black education. This research has revealed the four newer themes.

Value

Value within the all-black segregated schools is espoused by authors such as Siddle Walker (2000, 1996), Celeski (1994), Winifred Pitts (1999), Randolph (2004), Morris and Morris (2002), and Fairclough (2001, 2004, 2008), who document examples of the first theme within these segregated schools based upon exemplary teachers, curriculum and extracurricular activities, parental and community support, and leadership of the school

principal.¹ These four characteristics of value have served to change the conversation surrounding the segregated schools from outside forces to the agents within the schools - principals, teachers, and students- to demonstrate academic achievement.

Vanessa Siddle Walker's "Valued Segregated Schools for African American Children in the South, 1935 – 1969: A Review of Common Themes and Characteristics" highlights a focus on the people who made up the black segregated schools, namely the students and the educators to uncover the value found within these schools.² She asserts that her focus on value placed on the black schools demonstrates a shift in the published research on the history of education of African Americans during the era of de jure segregation.³ The emphasis is shifting from "one of inequalities experienced by segregated schools to understanding the kind of education African American teachers, principals, and parents attempted to provide under externally restrictive circumstances."⁴ Most of the traditional and widely accepted research surrounding the black schools of this era, "depict[s] a theme of almost complete inferiority."⁵ This deficient model is the main theme of most mainstream historical interpretations of black segregated schools.

Siddle Walker seeks to debunk this myth by considering oral histories as a mode of historical inquiry. Additional methods such as ethnographies and other qualitative methods have enabled the untold story of achievement within the segregated black schools to be formally uncovered. She does so by analyzing "case histories of particular African American

¹ Siddle Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools," 253-285.

² Ibid., 253-285.

³ Ibid., 255-257.

⁴ Ibid., 253.

⁵ Ibid., 253.

schools and communities that rely on surveys, documents, and/or interviews with individuals who attended or taught in segregated schools.”⁶ Through this method she is able to uncover themes of high expectations, home visits, teachers valued, and others that seek to expound upon the strengths of the black segregated schools.

Siddle Walker reveals a common response of value among the black community in reference to their schools. The limited resources of the schools did not diminish the school’s merit within the black community. Siddle Walker talks specifically about large well-known black schools that have been researched in reference to “stellar” histories and the value placed upon them; however, she asserts that these sentiments extended to lesser known rural schools also. In fact, she cites a one-year boycott in a coastal North Carolina town by the African American community in order to prevent the closing of their school in response to forced desegregation. (This account will be detailed in the summary of Celeski’s work.) Siddle Walker also cites Frederick Rodger’s 1967 survey of African American principals describing their schools in North Carolina during the height of de jure segregation in an attempt to “diminish some of the argument that the valuing of the schools is a contemporary phenomena that was not true in real time.”⁷

In developing the four main common characteristics of the black segregated schools, Siddle Walker is able to disclose aspects of the schools that have been overlooked. The four are: exemplary teachers, curriculum and extracurricular activities, parental support, and leadership of the school principal. Through the investigation of these aspects Siddle Walker contends to have consistently established value within the black segregated schools.

⁶ Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools,” 255.

⁷ Ibid., 262.

In supporting the characteristic of academic excellence within all-black segregated schools, David Celeski asserts that “black educators, parents, and students managed to foster in those educational institutions, despite vast unequal funding, poorer physical plants, and white school leaders determined to mold black children into second-class citizens, true quality.”⁸ His chronicling of desegregation in Hyde County, North Carolina speaks to the educational excellence and value the black parents found in their local high school. He found that the teachers were characterized as caring and in their caring, complemented a circle of training black children received in the church, family, and the wider black community. Celeski, however, does not attempt to decry segregation as a utopian situation as he states that even in the midst of this caring and nurturing segregated environment, the fact that it was segregated proved to be harmful to black children. He contends that a sense of inferiority was formed within the black child due to this separateness that also proved to serve as a counterweight to the struggles of a segregated and unequal life. Nonetheless, when threatened with the closing of their beloved high school and the dismantling of a valued symbol within their community, this small community resisted the Board of Education’s effort through a yearlong boycott of the school system. In response, their school was not closed and the symbol remained.

In his case study of E.E. Butler High School in the Gainesville City-Hall County, Georgia school system, Winifred Pitts similarly contends to have located educational excellence within the segregated black school.⁹ Pitts does point to the deficiencies within the

⁸ David Celeski. *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 13.

⁹ Winifred E. Pitts, “E.E. Butler High School Desegregation, and the Gainesville City-Hall County, Georgia, Schools, 1821-1973” (doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, 1999).

school due to the long practiced discrimination in funding; he also illuminates the efforts of the principal, Ulysses Byas, the teachers, and students in overcoming the inequities in funding. He notes that educational excellence was supported within the curriculum and the unmatched efforts of Ulysses Byas on behalf of both the students and teachers.

Upon the arrival of Ulysses Byas, the curriculum greatly improved prompting one graduate to remark that his senior high school schedule of physiology, trigonometry, chemistry, physics, and English was harder than his college schedule. Byas continued to make strides in the curriculum of the school, ensuring that as much as possible each child would have an individualized program. He likewise extolled the importance of a continuing education for his teachers. Teachers under Byas remembered him consistently encouraging them to go back to school to obtain higher degrees while they also remember him being a great source of professional development.¹⁰

As the call for integration grew louder, a former superintendent of the Gainesville City-Hall County school system remembered that “African Americans were not pressuring the board for desegregation: the pressure was for a new school on their side of town.”¹¹ This assessment is supported by those who attended the black segregated school in their statements that “African American parents were more concerned with equality than with desegregation. [P]arents were very involved (in the school) and...something was ‘always going on’ at the school. ‘It was a close community; everybody knew everybody.’”¹² The demand for an equal school on their side of town as opposed to integration with the white school attests to the value that this community found within its segregated school.

¹⁰ Pitts, 144.

¹¹ Ibid., 154.

¹² Ibid., 155.

In “The Memories of an All-Black Northern Urban School: Good Memories of Leadership, Teachers, and the Curriculum,” Randolph places this research within the northern segregated black school connecting the experiences of both the black Southerner and Northerner.¹³ She insists, “Scholars’ and the public’s contention that all-Black schools were inferior is bound by the American image of Black people and by the political movement to provide equitable and equality of opportunity for all children.”¹⁴ Not discounting the effort for a more equitable educational opportunity for black children, the author asserts that “it is now time for America’s imagination to alter its perception of all-Black institutions, such as all-Black schools by examining the actual experiences and memories of such institutions.”¹⁵

Randolph therefore examines Champion High School and identifies factors that led to the success of the school along with the value that was placed within the school by its community. These factors include the historical leadership of the principal, the investment of the teachers, the community memories of the school, and the school’s curriculum and activities. Through these factors Randolph challenges the wider public to “accept that all-Black can be synonymous with good.”¹⁶

Morris and Morris highlight a segregated black school in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Trenholm High School operated in northern Alabama as a segregated school for over 90 years before integration in 1969. Like many black schools, Trenholm was closed and eventually demolished, sending its students to the formerly all-white school. However, before this could happen, memories of value through educational excellence were created. When

¹³ Adah W. Randolph, “The Memories of an All-Black Northern Urban School: Good Memories of Leadership, Teachers, and the Curriculum,” *Urban Education* 39 (Nov. 2004).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 597.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 597.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 613.

asked, graduates of the school ranked caring, competent, and committed teachers as the number one factor in making their school good. They remember being told by their teachers that they had to be twice as good as the white students in order to succeed. According to these graduates, the teachers succeeded in this task by maintaining orderly classrooms, being fair, being competent in their subject areas, making practical applications of subject matter, having high expectations of students, and making learning fun.¹⁷ Educational excellence was supported by the leadership opportunities for black children that Trenholm provided for its students. This effort was a part of the larger effort that the high school community had for its children. The leadership opportunities afforded to the students at the high school would serve as a “critical strategy for ‘uplifting the race.’”¹⁸ Finally, the school consisted of a community of educators which included teachers, family members, and others. Many within the community considered themselves educators as they supported the educational initiatives through advocacy, double-taxation, and providing a home focused on educational excellence.¹⁹

In an effort to strike a balance between the historical interpretations that speak to the inadequacies of the segregated black school and those that highlight the value of these schools, Adam Fairclough in “The Costs of *Brown*: Black Teachers and School Integration”, addresses both interpretations.²⁰ He acknowledges that black segregated schools of the era before *Brown v. Board of Education* are being removed from their once stigmatized position as symbols of Jim Crow and “engines of educational failure” to portrayals as “proud

¹⁷ Vivian Gunn Morris and Curtis L. Morris. *The Price They Paid: Desegregation in an African American Community* (New York: Teachers College, 2002), 69.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69-72.

²⁰ Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*,” 43-55.

institutions that provided black communities with cohesion and leadership.”²¹ This previous position was due to historians’ overwhelming prointegrationist approach and their tendency to overlook any skepticism. However, Fairclough does argue that within the new historical interpretations is virtually absent the central assertion of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) argument in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregated schools generated feelings of inferiority in the children who attended them. He points to an internal struggle within the black community when the NAACP switched its strategy from one of equality to integration.

Another point of debate stems from the fact that blacks enjoyed better buildings, an expanded curriculum, and better equipment after integration. These material and curricular gains are juxtaposed against the questioned improved overall quality of education for the black community. Fairclough insists that integration destroyed the relationship of the black community to its schools by asserting that integration “undermined the position of the teacher as a mentor, role model, and disciplinarian.”²² However, the assertion that integration solely caused the demise of the black segregated school and blacks were better off in segregated schools is countered by three arguments: 1) some of the changes, such as the exclusion of corporal punishment, the decline in the status of teaching for both black and white teachers, that were regretted by black teachers were occurring at all schools during that time; 2) Jim Crow schools had been havens for incompetent teachers; and 3) teachers usually have fond memories of school leading one to put into perspective the positive memories of all black segregated schools shared by the teachers. Although Fairclough has attempted to

²¹ Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*,” 43.

²² *Ibid.*, 44.

address both historical interpretations, this debate will continue to persist within the literature and lay people alike.

Professional Networks

Education associations served a vital function within the black system of education. The principal served as the conduit in the dissemination of information, practices, and philosophies that allowed a connection between the black schools in the South.

Within much of the literature about black education, professional organizations hold a prominent place in espousing opinions related to state and federal laws and addressing state and national concerns; however, most research does not suggest purposeful networks within black education that worked to shape the ideology and philosophy of black education. Siddle Walker has been the lead scholar in uncovering established professional networks within the system of black education that explains the *why* and *how* of black segregated schools: the *why* being explained by the common plight of the all-black schools and the *how* being answered by determining the role the networks played in disseminating common information to the all-black schools.²³ She insists that this new direction rests primarily on studying the role of the black principal. Through his membership in professional activities and the influences he wielded, this integral figure within the black segregated schools was able to foster a systematic structure found within the black educational system. Due to his central position within the black educational system, the subsequent displacement of the black principals caused a dismantling of “education on which black communities depended for their uplift.”²⁴ The loss was felt by both the black principal and the black community at large. Siddle Walker’s theme of networks serves as a new phase within black educational history in

²³ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 1-291.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

the segregated South. It suggests a new layer of understanding and interpretation to the historiography of black educational history through an understanding of the networks that were formed among the black educational leadership.

Adam Fairclough's research also, speaks to the influence and presence of networks within the system of black education.²⁵ Although early participation within the black education associations were minimal as the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (NATCS) had fewer than 250 members in 1916, memberships of black teachers associations exploded in the 1920s. South Carolina's membership in the NATCS grew from 393 to 2,385 and North Carolina from 97 to 3,500. NATCS eventually grew to 5,000 members. This explosion in membership resulted as divisions among black public school teachers waned due to the decline in private schools and the erosion of the associations' elitism. The state colleges are also noted as having played a key role in strengthening the associations as they trained many of the black teachers that filled the black primary and secondary schools.²⁶ Further, state associations published regular journals, rotated the venues of their annual meetings, and organized local units who could vote on association issues. This allowed the associations to appeal to a larger audience of teachers and educators. For many teachers, membership became mandatory by their principal or their superintendents of education.

Summer institutes also proved to be fertile ground for networks as Fairclough insists that they were the place that forged the collective consciousness among black teachers.²⁷

²⁵ Adam Fairclough. *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South* (Cambridge: The Belknap of Harvard University Press, 2007).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 319-320. Summer institutes were a cheap alternative to the training of teachers. Teachers typically enrolled in a six-week course in which subjects such as biology, French, algebra, and geometry were

This served to be a place for intellectual growth, exposure to new ideas, and encouragement to regard themselves as professionals. Carter G. Woodson's idea for Negro History Week was born and disseminated at the summer institutes. It also served to be a place for recruitment for the education associations. The instructors who ran the summer institutes were many times officers of the state associations. In no small effort of the summer institutes, journal publications, and annual meetings, "By the end of the 1930s, at least half of the South's black teachers belonged to state associations. In North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, virtually all black teachers were members."²⁸

Teacher organizations were a place where national ideals were espoused from black national leaders such as E. Franklin Frazier who disdained Christian or character education at black institutes of higher education, Doxey Wilkerson who insisted that groups like the Commission on Interracial Cooperation were "positively vicious," Ralph Bunche who stated that whites would never allow the black teacher to "remodel the social order," and Horace Mann Bond who stressed the "unsoundness of relying upon the school as a cure-all for all our ills."²⁹ These ideas could easily be disseminated to local educational leaders as the NATCS, later renamed the American Teachers Association (ATA) in 1937, was dominated by college professors and high school principals. One of the Association's initiatives was to "recommend the teaching of the value of the ballot in all schools for Negroes."³⁰ ATA's bulletin read, "The franchise is the one thing we need to help us as a race right now.... A

taught to current and potential teachers. Completion of the summer institute course allowed new teachers to acquire certificates to teach. Veteran teachers could attend four-week summer institute sessions to obtain a higher grade certificate. The inexpensive nature of the summer institutes does not speak to the importance of the training.

²⁸ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own.*, 323.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 334-335.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 342.

definite campaign in all the elementary schools of the country with an adopted slogan concerning the ballot will bear fruit in the generation to come.”³¹ Networks within the black system of education can be readily identified within this context.

Morris and Morris spend a considerable amount of time in their book discussing the speeches, philosophies, and works of the NATCS and the Alabama State Teachers Association. George Washington Trenholm, a high school principal from a small town in northern Alabama who would become the president of the Alabama State Teachers Association, delivered speeches at both the Alabama State Teachers Association Annual meeting and the NATCS annual meeting. In his speech at the Alabama State Teachers Association meeting he addressed the status of the education of blacks in the state and listed 12 major changes that needed to be made. His address to this audience of Alabama’s educators can be said to have influenced the structure black education in Alabama. In his speech to NATCS, he recommended a community education model that his school had already implemented. This model would enable black communities across the South to develop and support a public high school in their own community. This was a part of the national effort of the NATCS to encourage the development of more public high schools in the South rather than increasing the number of private secondary schools in their communities.³² Trenholm’s speech helped spread the model that was already implemented in his community to other communities and states throughout the South.

Outside of Trenholm’s association activities, his school often conducted “Professional development activities for teachers to improve their teaching methods...for school personnel

³¹ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 342.

³² Morris and Morris, 28-39.

in Tuscumbia and in neighboring towns under the leadership of principals and teachers from Trenholm High School.”³³ The activities of Trenholm within the education associations and the activities within his school surrounding community speak to the networks that were formed and the forming of the black system of education.

Displaced Black Educators

The concept of the displaced black educator is discussed in scholarly research as early as 1951. The discussion then surrounded the fate of the black educator based upon the impending court cases that were challenging the concept of segregation within the schools. Then editor of the *Journal of Negro Education*, Charles H. Thompson, in 1951 stated that “the status of Negro teachers when segregated schools are outlawed has played and is playing a silent but important role in our present fight to eliminate this undemocratic process.”³⁴ However, he insisted there will not be a “wholesale dismissal of Negro teachers either in the lower or higher schools when segregated schools are outlawed” based upon the fact that there are not enough white teachers for such replacement.³⁵ However, he concluded that the threat of displacement of the 75,000 black educators should not serve as a mitigating factor in the fight for educational equality.

Paul Cooke expressed a similar view by asserting that although legislation should be sought to secure the jobs of black educators based upon merit rather than race, the greater fight for integration cannot be usurped by the question of employment of Negro teachers.³⁶

³³ Morris and Morris, 39.

³⁴ Charles H. Thompson, “Negro Teachers and the Elimination of Segregated Schools,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 20 no. 2 (Spring 1951): 138.

³⁵ Thompson, 138.

³⁶ Paul Cooke, “Safeguards for Negro Teachers in an Integrated School System in Washington, D.C.,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 20 no. 4 (Autumn 1951).

He too predicted that within the Washington D.C. school system and the educational system at large, the historical understaffing of the Negro schools would lead to increased employment for the Negro upon integration as enrollments were expected to increase.

Jack Greenberg also predicted success in the fight to keep black educators' job during desegregation although he pointed to early incidents of displacement of black teachers upon school integration.³⁷ Greenberg highlighted the early threats of black educator displacement made by "foes of integration" in asserting that "Negro teachers teaching white children is an impossibility and that should segregation go, then Negro teachers will be eliminated."³⁸ He both conceded and countered this threat by asserting that some would suffer but that through the support of the NAACP and the "alertness, cohesiveness and militancy" of black educators, there would be "almost uniformly" success.³⁹

Miller foretold the impending issues regarding integration of teaching and administrative staffs but insisted that legislation would not solve this "social problem"; instead gradualism would lead to resolutions regarding Negro employment.⁴⁰ He asserted that "as the Negro educator becomes better qualified, both in scholarship and experience, his position will become more secure and he will be able to compete successfully with others of his calling."⁴¹ However, Charles Johnson countered this claim of professional inferiority by asserting, "In at least six of the Southern states, Negro teachers have training superior to that

³⁷ Jack Greenberg, "Racial Integration of Teachers – A Growing Problem," *The Journal of Negro Education* 20 no. 4 (Autumn 1951).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 585.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 587.

⁴⁰ Ward I. Miller, "Anticipated Problems Incident to Racial Integration in Public Schools and Some Suggested Approaches," *The Journal of Negro Education* 21 no. 3 (Summer 1952): 290.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 290.

of white teachers, and in four other states, at least as much training as whites.”⁴² Therefore he predicted that although there would be a displacement of black educators at the high school level, this higher level of educational preparation would counter the initial displacement. However the black high school principal was not predicted to fare as well.

Johnson did not believe that there would be any serious displacement at the elementary school level due to the overwhelming number of students enrolled at this level coupled with the current inadequate staff level. He based this prediction on the process of desegregation in Northern and Border states where the number of Negro teachers had increased and insisted that the teacher-integration would be determined by the factor of supply and demand. Cooke too cited the statistics from New Jersey showing an increase in Negro teachers upon integration and the “Strayer Report” which indicated an overall higher educational level of Negro teachers than white teachers; however, he insisted that teacher tenure law would have to be in place in order to prevent the displacement of black educators.⁴³ He stated that tenure was one big item “in favor of the Negro teachers now in position being unaffected by integration.”⁴⁴ Therefore, Cooke insisted that “the picture of employment of Negro teachers at the time of and shortly after integration...is fairly encouraging.”⁴⁵

As evident from these early articles predicting the future status of the black educator, the outlook seemed promising. Although there had been some instances of wholesale

⁴² Charles S. Johnson , “Some Significant Social and Educational Implications of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Decision,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 23 no. 3 (Summer 1954): 367.

⁴³ Paul Cooke, “The Negro Teacher in the Washington D.C. Integrated School System,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 23 no. 1 (Winter 1954): 5-6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

dismissals upon integration, the overall prospect for mass displacement of black educators did not appear to be a viable threat. Even in 1960 Albert Spruill, in his article, “Negro Teacher in the Process of Desegregation of Schools,” foreshadowed optimism for the black educator, stating that “though Negro teachers in these (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and West Virginia) states have lost considerable ground in terms of employment and some have been displaced, the majority have been retained in the public schools and in their respective fields of academic preparation.”⁴⁶ However, the height of desegregation had yet to come as during the first ten years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision only 3 percent of schools in the South had been desegregated.⁴⁷

Upon mass implementation of the *Brown* decision in the South, displacement of black educators rose sharply. Jones cites Samuel Ethridge, spokesman for the National Education Association (NEA), in 1965 stating that 5,000 black teachers would be displaced in 17 southern states as a result of school desegregation.⁴⁸ By May 19, 1972, Ethridge and Donald R. Shire reported a loss of 6,000 black teachers with an additional 25,584 projected to be lost as a result of failure to hire, or a slowdown in hiring black teachers between 1954 and 1970. They went on to predict the loss of a quarter of a billion dollars annually to the black community. The black principals fared even worse as they were eliminated upon the closing of the black segregated schools. In a ten-year span, 1965 to 1975, in Florida alone 166 black

⁴⁶ Albert W. Spruill, “The Negro Teacher in the Process of Desegregation of Schools,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 29 no.1 (Winter 1960): 84.

⁴⁷ Faustine Jones, “Ironies of School Desegregation,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 41 no. 1 (Winter 1978): 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

principals lost their jobs.⁴⁹ Arnez reports a 1970 survey indicating in 75 school districts in two states a “large proportion of Black principals had been demoted to positions of administrative assistants, assisting visiting teachers, classroom teachers, co-principals, and principals from senior high schools to lower level schools” while many others were fired.⁵⁰ The author goes on to report the fate of the black teacher by looking at Mississippi and Louisiana’s dismissals of their black teachers and the displacement of black teachers through subject assignments for which they were not certified, re-assignments to teach lower grades and special remedial classes, and the practice of transferring the most highly qualified black teacher to the formerly all-white schools and replacing that teacher in formerly all-black schools with the least qualified whites. The misuse of the National Teacher Examination (NTE) is also cited by Arnez as being a method to eliminate many black educators.

In his research on the displacement of black educators, Fultz highlights the work of the Race Relations Information Center (RRIC) and its report, *Displacement of Black Teachers in Eleven Southern States*. In the report, the author, Robert Hooker, draws attention to three escalating trends of the 1960s of which one was the discriminatory use of the NTE to justify racist hiring practices.⁵¹ The use of the NTE as a punitive measure began as early as the late 1940s as states used the test’s scores as a way to avoid paying black teachers equitable salaries. The reincarnation of its use in the 1960s, particularly in the Southern states for hiring purposes caused alarm among black teachers. In 1970 North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas used the test for certification purposes, which was believed to be a way

⁴⁹ Barbara A. Sizemore, “Educational Research and Desegregation: Significant for the Black Community,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 47 no.1 (Winter 1978): 63.

⁵⁰ Nancy L. Arnez, “Implementation of Desegregation as a Discriminatory Process,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 47 no. 1 (Winter 1978): 40.

⁵¹ Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-Brown,” 26.

to avoid hiring black teachers in the newly integrated schools.⁵² These teachers seemed to have been justified in their concerns.

In the midst of the height of black educator displacement, educators filed lawsuits and appealed to the federal government for relief and protection. The Office of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) on January 14, 1971 sent a letter to school districts indicating that the practices associated with displacement of black teachers should stop with a return to their full positions and back pay.⁵³ Additionally the federal government threatened to withhold funding from the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) of 1972 from districts if “any policy, practice or procedure existed which has resulted in substantial loss of minority educators following desegregation.”⁵⁴

Black educators as early as 1956 spoke out against integration in response to the looming prospects of job loss. Haney notes that the Mississippi Negro Teachers Association in 1956 formally supported the black-white equalization plan “which had been purposely designed by the state legislature to discourage school desegregation.”⁵⁵ Another coalition of black educators in Columbus through the Parent-Teacher Youth Council announced its opposition to integration. Fairclough notes that former teachers have questioned whether the benefits of *Brown* outweighed its costs.⁵⁶ When interviewed, one former black teacher noted that “if we had stayed separate, but equal, our children would have been better off

⁵² Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*,” 27.

⁵³ Arnez, 41.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁵ James E. Haney, “The Effects of the *Brown* Decision on Black educators,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 47 no.1 (Winter 1978): 91.

⁵⁶ Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*,” 44.

educationally.”⁵⁷ Although research suggests that most black teachers were willing to accept displacement in exchange for desegregation, the idea of uncontested support for desegregation from black educators cannot be sustained.

Costs and Consequences of Desegregation

In light of the displacement of black educators and the additional economic loss to the black community, the theme of costs and consequences of desegregation has been proffered. In most accounts of desegregation, scholars have analyzed this effort from a federal judiciary and national policy focus.⁵⁸ Historians specifically limited their studies to school desegregation in the South after 1968, thereby discounting the dismantling of the black educational communities and the struggles against this.⁵⁹ Therefore, the new narratives concerning the costs and consequences of desegregation attempt to take into account the effects this process had on the local communities who experienced it.

Researchers have noted that upon desegregation, a disproportionate number of black schools were closed leaving a vacuum within the black community.⁶⁰ This institution that once served as a symbol of hope and liberation for the community and its people was dismantled in the name of equality. However, concerns arose as early as 1952 pertaining to the viability of black students being able to gain opportunity for full participation within an integrated setting.⁶¹ Miller asserts that black parents expressed concern whether “a large

⁵⁷ Fairclough, “The Costs of Brown,” 44.

⁵⁸ Celeski, 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁰ Celeski; Walker, *Their Highest Potential*; Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 2001; Morris & Morris; Tillman; Dempsey & Noblit.

⁶¹ Miller, 289.

number of Negro students would have much chance to take part in athletics, music, and dramatics, especially to play leading roles.”⁶² The concern was that only the black students who were the exception would be able to participate in such events in an integrated setting and until large proportions of black children were afforded this opportunity, the segregated setting offered greater possibilities.⁶³

These concerns seemed to have come to fruition as large numbers of black students moved from participating in constructive extracurricular activities to being overly represented in suspensions, expulsions, drop-outs, and special education classes. According to Arnez, a 1975 report by HEW’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) stated that black children were suspended at twice the rate of any other ethnic group.⁶⁴ A Southern Regional Council report indicated that between 1971-72, “large numbers of minority students [were] induced to drop out of many recently desegregated school systems.”⁶⁵ These students represented the “most aware and aggressive Black student leaders.”⁶⁶ Arnez goes further to report that over 80% of students classified as educable mentally retarded (EMR) in 505 school districts in five Southern states were black although they only represented 40% of the total district enrollment. Upon the loss of the segregated school, its educators, and the symbol of freedom, the costs and consequences of desegregation become evident.

These findings have led Tillman to assert that upon desegregation, black children were placed in racist contexts within the school and classroom settings that they had never

⁶² Miller, 289.

⁶³ Ibid., 289.

⁶⁴ Arnez, 31.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 31.

before experienced.⁶⁷ Prior to desegregation, black teachers and principals served as role models, supporting their students in educational efforts that allowed for personal, community, and racial progress. Upon desegregation, “there was a loss of a tradition of excellence, a loss of leadership as a cultural artifact in the black community, and a loss of the expertise of educators who were committed to the education of black children.”⁶⁸ Black parents no longer felt confident that their children were being prepared to compete by teachers who cared. Tillman asserts that “A collective vision for educating African American children, an African American epistemology of teaching, and an agenda for African American education were interrupted.”⁶⁹

Demsey and Noblit in “The Demise of Caring in an African-American Community: One Consequence of School Desegregation,” insist that the goodness of a school was no longer defined by community embeddedness but moved to a definition based in constitutional requirements and local political needs.⁷⁰ Desegregation established new rules about what good meant. The legal remedy of desegregation defined good as what permitted racial mixing. Therefore the moral definition of education attached to emancipation and the struggle for equality was disrupted.⁷¹ Upon the massive closing of the segregated schools, the continuity of people, place, and purpose that was provided by the segregated school was lost. The policy of desegregation served to destroy the black segregated school and an idea about what good education meant. Demsey and Noblit contend that “we did not understand what

⁶⁷ Tillman, 299.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 294.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 299.

⁷⁰ Demsey and Noblit, 48.

⁷¹ Ibid., 48.

these schools provided for African American children.”⁷² Instead these schools were “stigmatized as undesirable educational settings by the political process that surrounded school desegregation and were disproportionately closed as a part of the process.”⁷³ This political process did not consider the meanings and hopes that the black communities attached to their schools.

In their assessment of school desegregation Irvine and Irvine assert a condition of iatrogenesis in which the “prescription or schedule of treatment produces an unintended and unanticipated ailment far worse than the original disease for which medical treatment was sought in the first instance.”⁷⁴ In their assessment, the costs and consequences of desegregation were far worse than the inequalities that black students faced in segregated settings. To analyze this point, they used three levels: the interpersonal, institutional, and community. Using these levels they attempted to show the primary and secondary effects of desegregation on black student achievement.

The interpersonal level pertains to the interactional relationship between black students and their white teachers. As previously mentioned, the relationship between the teacher and the student proved to be a vital one within black educational settings. Desegregation may have significantly altered this relationship by placing whites and blacks in the same settings without dramatically altering the nature of racism and racial stereotypes. Irvine and Irvine insist that interactions in the classroom between the teacher and the student changed from a two-way interaction that included only the student’s ability and social class

⁷² Dempsey and Noblit, 47.

⁷³ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁴ Russell Irvine and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, “The Impact of the Desegregation Process on the Education of Black Students: Key Variables,” *Journal of Negro Education*, 52 no. 4 (Autumn 1983): 411.

to a three-way interaction of student ability, social class, and race.⁷⁵ Additionally they assert that desegregated schools began to disproportionately discipline black students while at the same time holding low expectations for them.

The secondary desegregation effects are pronounced at the institutional and community levels. Desegregation has proven to be “disruptive to the integrity of the black community’s historic institutional systems [while it] altered its base of communal solidarity.”⁷⁶ At the institutional level the autonomy of black schools disappeared leaving the sociological and psychological needs of black students unaddressed. Additionally, there was massive displacement of black educators with their replacements being underqualified whites. Black students’ interests were no longer met.

Finally, at the community level, integration disrupted the collective stake in education that the black community had. The concept of the collective whole, struggle, and will was replaced by the individual achievement value position “whereby the individual is perceived as the entity who achieves success through merit and effort.”⁷⁷ Whether at the primary or secondary levels, Irvine and Irvine contend that desegregation did not produce the desired results; instead it produced far-reaching (un)intended consequences.

Irvine and Irvine offer an assessment of the process of desegregation that aligns with more recent interpretations of the costs and consequences of this process. These assessments speak to the disruption of the purpose of education, the community’s collective effort towards education, and the secured place the black student had within this process. This idea

⁷⁵ Irvine and Irvine, 413-415.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 413.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 420.

of costs and consequences will be later explored within the Clarke County education setting.

CHAPTER 5
ATHENS HIGH AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL/
BURNEY-HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

History of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia

In order to properly understand the history and work of one of Georgia's earliest accredited black high school, Athens High and Industrial School (AHIS), we must first understand the city in which it developed. Originally home to the Creek and Cherokees, the land that was to eventually become Athens-Clarke County was ceded between 1733 and 1835 to Georgia officials.¹ Records indicate that as early as 1785 William Few had been given 1,120 acres of this land by Georgia Governor Samuel Elbert in honor of his service as a Revolutionary War hero and veteran.² Few eventually sold this land in 1799, upon his return to New York, to Daniel Easley, a settler and land speculator, who already owned land on the east side of the Oconee River. In 1801 portions of this land once again exchanged hands when Easley sold 633 acres to a committee who was charged with finding a location for a state university.³ In 1785, on January 27th the Georgia General Assembly chartered the University of Georgia, becoming the first chartered state-supported university in the nation, but due to financial difficulties the college was not opened until 1801 with the purchase of the land. Only 37 of the 633 acres were kept as the remaining were sold to support the school. Upon the selling of the land, Athens was created. Athens developed as people began to move to this previously sparsely inhabited land to attend and support the school. The town

¹ Gary L. Doster, *A Postcard History of Athens, Georgia* (Athens, GA: Athens Historical Society, 2002), 1.

² Frances Tailaferro Thomas. *A Portrait of Historic Athens and Clarke County* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press 1992), 2.

³ Doster, 1.

was named Athens in honor of the center of classical culture in Greece.⁴ The county, Clarke, was established on December 5, 1801 and named after Elijah Clarke, the Revolutionary War hero and frontier adventurer. Athens would eventually develop to be the center of economic, educational, and the social make-up of northeast Georgia.⁵

According to a Phelps-Stokes study of 1913, Athens' early comers were attracted by its educational facilities; therefore they are described as being "superior people socially" with their descendents continually giving tone to the town.⁶ The study further notes that Athens' leading citizens were college educated making it natural "that Athens should be a town of unusual culture, possessing a citizenry of a different type from that of the newer industrial centers."⁷ Athens boasts having the first opera house in the region which was later converted into the region's first vaudeville theater. It is further noted as being the shopping mecca for several surrounding counties.⁸

However, in the immediate surrounding county, most of the citizens' lives were dominated by agriculture in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Although initially enslaved blacks were not abundant in Athens and Clarke County due to the inability to grow staple crops, with the rise of cotton slaveholding increased dramatically. By 1810, there were 2,500 slaves among the county's 7,628 inhabitants. Within Athens' city limits that supported 273 townspeople, there were 134 slaves. The number of planters who owned 20 or more

⁴ Thomas, 12.

⁵ Doster, 1.

⁶T. J. Woofner Jr., Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies. "The Negroes of Athens, Georgia," No.1, *University of Georgia Bulletin* Vol. 14, no. 4. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1913, 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸ Doster, 2.

slaves doubled between 1802 and 1810.⁹ With this growth in the cotton industry, Athens became an important cotton trade center, “the second largest inland cotton market in the state and the sixth largest in the world.”¹⁰ It had the first cotton mill south of the Potomac that was in operation as early as 1830. In another source, Athens is credited with having three cotton mills opening between 1829 and 1833, becoming second to Savannah in capital invested in manufacturing by the 1840s.¹¹ Athens continued to hold this title as having the second largest cotton mill in northeast Georgia with the chartering of the Southern Manufacturing Company in 1902.

As cotton continued its reign as “King,” the slave population of Clarke County steadily rose. “By 1850 Clarke had joined the Black Belt of the South, with slaves outnumbering the free population.”¹² In 1860 there were 5,660 slaves in Clarke County, which had 11,218 total residents. In Athens and the County’s seat, Watkinsville, whites outnumbered blacks by very slim numbers.¹³ Despite the great numbers of enslaved blacks within the county and city, only about 10 percent of whites were slaveholders and less than two percent owned twenty or more slaves. Only 544 whites out of 5,500 countywide owned slaves. With this sharp demarcation between those relatively few whites who owned slaves and those who did not, Athens historians have noted that by 1840 “a fairly well-defined class system at the top and half the population living in slavery at the bottom” had formed.¹⁴ The

⁹ Thomas, 25-26.

¹⁰ Doster, 1.

¹¹ Thomas, 51.

¹² *Ibid.*, 30.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

majority of whites were urban and rural. This well-defined system of class would perpetuate itself throughout the years.

In his Phelps-Stokes study, Woofner characterizes the race relations between whites and blacks as having been “practically free from any great friction.”¹⁵ He goes on to say that “possibly no other town or section in the South was there a higher type of slave-holding people to be found.”¹⁶ He further noted the postbellum relations as being “most cordial.”¹⁷ This sentiment may have come as a result of the enslaved population making up about half of the factory workers in Athens with slaveowners also hiring out their slaves during down seasons allowing for enslaved blacks and white workers to work side by side.¹⁸

By 1860 Athens had taken its place as the center of industry, intellect, and influence within northeast Georgia. A reporter of the Gazetteer of Georgia wrote that “no place surpasses it in refinement, morals, splendid residences, good society, and learned men.”¹⁹ The election of 1860 would reveal just how different Athens proved to be from its surrounding neighbors. The town and county were divided in support of moderate and secessionists candidates in the election. Athens’ democratic candidate of choice proved to be one who denoted a support for peace with the surrounding Clarke County being even more so for the same course.²⁰ However, peaceful Athenians attempted to be, they were decidedly Democrats as Lincoln did not garner any votes from the town or county. A week after

¹⁵ Woofner, 7.

¹⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹⁸ Thomas, 32.

¹⁹ Ibid., 70.

²⁰ Ibid., 70.

Lincoln's election on November 10th, this peace was to be tested as a mass town meeting of white citizens gathered to patrol every ward in the city while warning Clarke County planters to be on alert to possible slave insurrections. In the meeting, these citizens "condemned the election of "Black Republicans to Presidential offices" and stated its determination never to submit to their rule, if our state will authorize us to resist."²¹ By all accounts this commitment to peace had faded. Prominent Athenians led the statewide effort to secession. Georgia declared itself out of the Union on January 19, 1861 with three prominent citizens from Clarke County signing the Ordinance of Secession. Athens held a parade to celebrate its secession.²²

The war called many of Athens and Clarke County's men to fight. Three hundred men from Athens died while 100 University of Georgia Alumni and students also died.²³ However, Clarke County itself escaped most of the devastation of the war; nonetheless there was much work that needed to be done to recover from the years of neglect.

During the Federal occupation of Athens, which continued until 1866, Athens was able to recover through banking, insurance, its cotton stockpiles, and the wartime profits its oldest business, Athens Manufacturing Company, had earned through the production of Confederate uniforms. Other businesses such as music shops, a photography studio, groceries, clothiers, and numerous other ventures opened, and Athens had twice as many businesses as before the war by 1866.²⁴ This rapid recovery effort did not characterize all of Athens' citizens as in January 1865, "the Inferior Court of Clarke County had appropriated

²¹ Thomas, 71.

²² *Ibid.*, 72.

²³ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

twelve thousand dollars in bonds to ward off starvation among destitute families of Confederate veterans.”²⁵

The reopening of Athens’ largest employer and main business was a part of the recovery effort and the University reopened on January 3, 1866 with 78 students. By 1868 the enrollment had increased to 300, the largest in school history, partly due to the number of veterans who were entering the University upon the largesse of the legislature that offered to pay for tuition and other expenses. Many of these returning soldiers were not prepared for the curricular demands of a university and therefore attended the University’s high school, Rock College.

During the rebuilding years, Athens officially became the county seat in 1871 when it was relocated from Watkinsville. As a compromise to this relocation, a new county was formed, Oconee County, out of the southwestern section of Clarke County with its seat of government being Watkinsville. With this move, Clarke County now has the distinction of being the smallest county of Georgia’s 159 counties.

In addition to its physical restructuring, Athens’ industry continued to expand in the areas of streetcars, railroads, electricity, manufacturing, and aviation. The Athens Railway and Electric Company served as the forerunner of the Georgia Power Company in Athens. It was started by a Texan in 1885 as a streetcar company with streetcars being pulled by mules. The streetcars were converted to electric power in 1891 and the company became the Athens Electric Railway Company in 1895. By 1898 it began providing electricity for Athens’ homes and businesses also. The streetcars eventually became a bus system in 1930 but only lasted until 1934. During this time, in 1927 the Athens Railway and Electric company was incorporated as a part of the Georgia Power Company.

²⁵ Thomas, 105.

While the new businesses of streetcars and electricity were developing, cotton manufacturing continued to be a profitable business in Athens. The Georgia Factory and the Southern Manufacturing Company kept Athens as a leading location in the cotton industry. Additionally the five railroads that served Athens proved to be vital in Athens' redevelopment after the war. Athens' railroad companies advertised that their trains carried passengers and freight via the shortest and most direct routes, an obvious way to bring business and passengers to and through the city.²⁶ Last, Athens resident, Benjamin Epps, is credited with building the first airplane that was flown in Georgia in 1907, just four years after the Wright Brothers' famous flight. The present airport in Athens is named in his honor.²⁷

Athens continued to expand and grow with the University. Between 1860 and 1870 "the combined population of city and county increased over 40%, topping the state's 16.4% increase and the nation's 13.2% population growth."²⁸ It remains one of the state's most populated counties. In 1990 the Athens City and Clarke County governments merged to become Athens-Clarke County which serves a population of 115,000.²⁹

Blacks in Athens, Georgia

At the beginning of the Civil War there were 1,892 enslaved blacks and one free black living in Athens. However, the quasi-free population increased dramatically as the War waged on and planters allowed their slaves to earn wages for the master who was away from the plantation, while other enslaved blacks were permitted to independently hire themselves

²⁶ Doster, 141.

²⁷ Ibid., 137.

²⁸ Thomas, 206.

²⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. State and County Quick Facts <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1303440.html>. (accessed January 18, 2012).

out in Athens. Although this practice occurred before the War, it greatly increased as the need for more sources of income arose. Additionally, the cost-saving measure of urban slaveholders abandoning their slaves on their property and allowing them to live in a “quasi emancipated state” occurred more frequently during this time.³⁰ Prominent Athenian Mary Ann Cobb described her use of this arrangement:

“They have to work to buy their meal and wood. Aggie takes in sewing, Ben works out by day and Vickey was to go out as a washerwoman by the day. All they can save from their support is their own. All I required of them was to take care of the house and lot – and cow and calf and make me a garden in the spring.”³¹

This practice was not cheap as the city council required a license for free and enslaved blacks to live off the premises of their guardians and owners at a cost of five to twenty-five dollars. However, during these times, this policy was hard to enforce and the tax was rarely paid.³²

To further discourage blacks from any modicum of freedom, laws were passed in Athens to control the black population as concerns of insurrection and unrest arose. Curfew for blacks was set at 9:00 pm and work became increasingly hard to find as ordinances were enacted to restrict the mobility of slaves.³³ Moreover few industries would employ slaves thereby, regulating most slaves in Athens to household servants. When slaves did find employment in buying and selling food and other farm and garden products, the council passed an ordinance against that practice.³⁴ The council passed an additional ordinance that had with it a fifty-dollar fine and a punishment of twenty lashes to any slave involved in the

³⁰ Thomas, 95.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 96.

³² *Ibid.*, 96.

³³ *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

enterprise of transporting customers and goods to and from the depot as this competed with whites already involved in this business.³⁵ Not all slaves were left to fend for themselves as by 1864 blacks were heavily involved in sustaining the war efforts in Athens, at one time making up almost half of the work force at the Cook and Brother Armories. Some even went with their slaveholders to the frontlines of the War as servants.

Emancipation came to Athens around 10:00 am on May 4, 1865, signaled by a group of Union cavalymen riding into the city.³⁶ Official Emancipation did not come until May 15th to the approximate 5,000 enslaved blacks in Athens and Clarke County. There was celebration in the streets and a hoisting of the American flag by former slaves in front of the Town Hall; however “Emancipation had no immediate effect in Athens as the city continued to charge a fee to Athenians whose slaves lived off their lots.”³⁷ Despite this charge, many newly freedmen attempted to hire themselves out to make money for themselves as they moved off the plantation while others attempted to become independent farmers. However, many remained on the plantations.

Disturbances between whites and blacks occurred shortly after Emancipation as blacks were charged with stealing from their former masters and whites attempted to mete out punishments at will. The influx of blacks into the city from northeast Georgia rural areas in the summer and fall of 1865 only served to exacerbate the already tense situation. Due to the squalid conditions that many newly freed slaves were forced to live in, a smallpox

³⁵ Thomas, 97.

³⁶ Michael Thurmond. *A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History* (Athens, GA: The Green Berry Press, 2001), 4.

³⁷ Thomas, 99.

epidemic broke out in the black community killing 5,000 blacks.³⁸ It lasted in Athens for nearly five months until it was eradicated by February 15, 1866. It is believed to have been brought to Athens by Northerners during the War.

Although there was a concerted effort by many blacks to find work, a peculiar situation arose in Athens at the end of 1865 in which a number blacks refused to accept works from white landowners who would require them to commit their labor to that land for the upcoming year. Black Athenians, like other newly freed blacks, were looking forward to the Union's promise of 40 acres and a mule; accordingly they did not want to tie themselves to the white man's land that would restrict them from developing their own land in the new year.³⁹ However, U.S. Brigadier General Davis Tilson was summoned to Athens by its white citizens to address the blacks of Athens in late autumn of 1865 to tell them that there would be no distribution of 40 acres and a mule by Christmas and to return to work on their old plantation or face punishment for vagrancy and stealing. This call was due in part to the previous claims of theft and the near starvation of the newly freed blacks.

Blacks began to settle into jobs as shopkeepers, barbers, restaurateurs, carpenters, masons, and blacksmiths. These jobs were available as they had been trained in these crafts during slavery. Upon Emancipation, blacks were able to continue in these occupations as whites remained out of the artisan class during slavery and immediately following Emancipation. Instead whites were interested in agriculture and in the professions and merchandising. This would later change during the Industrial Revolution.

As black Athenians made a place for themselves, they developed their own communities and by the summer of 1867 had purchased 70 homes in Athens. The 1913

³⁸ Thurmond, 10.

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

Phelps-Stokes report indicated that “the stable element of Athens negroes are acquiring property. In one or two individual cases, members of the race are quite well-to-do.”⁴⁰ Blacks owned their own residences, churches, lodges, and buildings. The first black fire company was organized in 1866 as well as the first black church. By 1912, the total property returned for taxation was \$277,464, representing the possession of 681 property owners denoting black property ownership to be concentrated in the hands of a few blacks. This property was mainly located in the most undesirable parts of towns where cheap property could be located. On these lands, blacks were able to establish communities in which churches and social and fraternal organizations were formed in an effort to provide a sense of community and personal identity.

As black Athenians began to form and settle into social and economic life, they too sought participation in civic and political life. In the summer of 1867 the registrar’s report revealed that 450 whites and 675 blacks voters were registered in the county.⁴¹ Final voter registration showed well over 900 white voters in Clarke County with only one voting in the election to call a constitutional convention to draft a new state constitution. Approval of the convention was won despite white voters abstaining. This active voting pattern among blacks prompted groups of 20 to 30 men to band together to form the Klu Klux Klan in Clarke County. This group specifically sought to terrorize black Athenians who were politically active and outspoken.

Nonetheless, black voters went out in record numbers to vote on April 24, 1868 to elect Georgia’s first black delegates to the Georgia State Legislature from Clarke County. Alfred Richardson and Madison Davis became the first two black men to represent Clarke

⁴⁰ Wooftner, 7.

⁴¹ Thurmond, 19.

County in the legislature. Both men were elected to second terms; however, Richardson died of pneumonia during his second term after having survived two violent attacks by the Klan in which he was shot and his house was burned. Davis went on to have a fulfilling career as a legislator in two terms. He then served as Athens' first black postmaster, serving two terms (1882-1886 and 1890-1893). Black legislators represented Athens in the state's General Assembly between 1868 and 1871. After 1872 and the end of Reconstruction, blacks were not represented in Georgia's legislature for more than 100 years. However, "Clarke County blacks...remained active in the Republican party, and several served as delegates to state and national conventions."⁴² Not until the election of Michael Thurmond in 1984 did another black represent Athens-Clarke County in the Georgia legislature.

With the political doors closed for the most part to black Athenians, they continued in their efforts at community building. However, this effort was stymied by the Industrial Revolution. The new opportunities that were opening in the mills were not open to blacks; therefore, they remained tied to the land through work in agriculture. At the same time, the once black-only jobs as artisans were now being taken over by whites who were migrating to the city. By 1913, carpenters and plumbers were nearly all white; Greeks were replacing blacks as waiters in the restaurants, the pressing clubs that blacks used to own were now being run by whites who were then hiring blacks to work for them, and the most successful barbers were now white. The only profession that blacks were hanging on to was plastering. These changes relegated blacks to being mostly wage hands, croppers, or renters with many working as sharecroppers.

Blacks therefore, turned to their community for their livelihood. They began to enter professions such as teaching, preaching, real estate, shop-keeping, medicine, newspaper

⁴² Thomas, 115.

reporting, editing, and postal services that mostly serviced their community. Black Athenians serviced their own community through its three newspapers. While few towns in Georgia even had black newspapers in the late nineteenth century, Athens had three: Athens Blade (1879-1889), Athens Clipper (1887-1894), and Progressive Era (1899).⁴³ This community became more and more segregated so that by 1900, 5,190 blacks were living in Athens in segregated communities. Histories of Athens insist that segregation in Athens was due not to municipal laws but to economic and social factors.⁴⁴ Athens' black communities were able to support themselves until the passage of Jim Crow laws and the financial reverses of the early 1920s caused the black middle class community in Athens and throughout the South to suffer major blows. "After the boll weevil destroyed the cotton crop and the depression hit the nations, many black Athenians moved north in search of better opportunities."⁴⁵

Despite the disruption, Athens blacks have continued to make strides in business, education, and politics. The election of Michael Thurmond to the Georgia legislature not only ended over 100 years of nonblack representation in Clarke County but his election also made him the only black to represent a majority white district. Keith Heard won the seat in 1992 and still holds it.⁴⁶ In 1974 Charles Mack became the first black elected to the Athens City Council. Ed Turner began serving on the council in 1980 and served eight years.⁴⁷ In the midst of their strides in politics and business, blacks in Athens probably made the most noteworthy advancements in the field of education.

⁴³ Thomas, 115.

⁴⁴ Thomas, 160; Woofner, 10-12.

⁴⁵ Thomas, 163.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 205.

Education in Athens

Similar to other Southern communities, Clarke County did not support a public school until 1886. However, its cities, particularly Athens, Salem, and Watkinsville, boasted a number of private grammar schools and academies for both sexes.⁴⁸ The county is said to have held its own from the outset of its origins in education for white children. “According to U.S. Census figures, a dozen or more schools were in operation in Clarke County throughout this period; enrollment of schoolchildren exceeded four hundred.”⁴⁹ These private schools were usually run by a single teacher who took in students from the surrounding communities. Some of the schools were large enough to have grades and a teacher for each subject. However, education in Athens for whites during this time was primarily in the form of private tutors paid for by parents.

Education for blacks before Emancipation is not documented outside of one black literate woman who would steal newspapers to read about the War and pass it along to her fellow black Athenians. Upon emancipation, education for blacks in Athens began in earnest. Upon the reopening of the University of Georgia in 1866, free blacks stormed the campus prepared to seize control of the campus in an effort to gain an education.⁵⁰ This could have been the reason that prompted the AMA in January 1867 to send its first teachers to Athens to begin formal instruction for the newly freedmen. By the end of the month, almost 200 freedmen were receiving instruction from them.⁵¹ This effort proved too little for black Athenians as a second attempt to seize control of the University was attempted in late 1867.

⁴⁸ Thomas, 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁰ Thurmond, 59

⁵¹ Thomas, 111.

In response to this second attempt, the first official school for blacks was started by the Freedman's Bureau in 1868. The Knox School, named for Major John J. Knox, the Freedman's Bureau chief assigned to direct the Reconstruction program in Athens, included a grammar and high school. It boasted a quality scholastic curriculum and instruction in carpentry, typesetting, printing, and sewing. In its 1904 examination booklet some of the classes listed were general history, psychology, Greek, algebra, Latin, natural physiology, and grammar. Initially the teachers were white Northern women who were sponsored by the AMA. Later the white teachers were replaced by black northern teachers, much to the pleasure of local whites. Whites in Athens held very negative views of white northern teachers who descended upon the South in the name of education. The teachers were labeled "nigger teachers" and met with resistance from those whites who believed that educated blacks were dangerous and untrustworthy.⁵² Some white Athenians put their thoughts into action when in November of 1868, they disrupted classes at the Knox School forcing its white teachers to flee the building.⁵³

Despite these and other threats, the school continued even after the Bureau withdrew its support upon the closing of Reconstruction. The AMA gained control of the school with funding coming from private donations and student tuition. Tuition ranged from \$.50 to \$1.25 per month, and for \$5 to \$8 per month students could board local homes.⁵⁴ Support came from Andrew Carnegie in 1913 to build a modern three-story structure on the Knox Campus that contained all of the "available conveniences of the day."⁵⁵ At this time the

⁵² Thurmond, 60.

⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁴ Thomas, 111.

⁵⁵ Doster, 86

Phelps-Stokes study revealed that the Knox Institute was the only school in Athens, private or public, that contained the equipment for vocational training, which was considered to be a new field at this time. In 1921, the Knox School, renamed Knox Institute and Industrial School earned the distinction of being the “first high school for Negroes ever accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the University of Georgia.”⁵⁶ So important was this school to Athens and the surrounding region that by the 1924-25 school year, the school supported a total of 339 students from five states, 28 counties, and 38 cities and towns. Its teachers were highly educated as most were trained at Atlanta University and Fisk University.⁵⁷

Athens became a center for black undergraduate education in Georgia for over 50 years after the Civil War, due to its school offerings of the Knox Institute, The Methodist School(1876), Jeruel Academy(Union Baptist – 1881), and other smaller private schools sprang up in and around the city. These schools offered primary, intermediate, industrial, and nurse’s training. With its collection of private schools, by 1913, 33 percent of the black children in Athens were enrolled in private schools. The public schools for blacks that were supported by the city of Athens were so overcrowded that daily attendance was limited; hence, both the black and white community continued to rely upon the private schools for black education.

Athens started its first public schools for whites and blacks in 1885. For more than fifteen years, beginning in 1870 with the establishment of the free public school system in Clarke County, Athenians resisted the idea. Opponents thought that public schools were a Northern idea being imposed on Southern culture that would create a greater tax burden.

⁵⁶ Thurmond, 63.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 63-64.

Additionally some local whites were afraid that “free schools for blacks could lead to serious consequences for the social system which white Athenians wished to preserve.”⁵⁸

This was the same social system that was crafted during the Antebellum period. However, there was a call from Athens newspapers that admonished Athenians not to be behind in the race for knowledge. Proponents of a public system of education spoke to University of Georgia literary societies about the virtue of a public school system while black legislator Madison Davis supported it in the Georgia General Assembly.⁵⁹

Accordingly, the city erected two two-story buildings, one for white children and one for black children, and classes officially began in 1886. Clarke County began its public school system more than ten years before that in 1872 and by 1916 there were 28 schools equally distributed between blacks and whites operating in the rural parts of the county.⁶⁰ However, they were run on an unequal basis as black students represented 63 percent of the total county student population in 1916 but black schools only received 33 percent of the financial appropriations that year.⁶¹

Nonetheless, upon the implementation of the public school system in Athens, the ratio of white school children to black school children was 39 to 41. In the first year, the two public school buildings had a total of 742 students enrolled with only one teacher.⁶² To alleviate the overcrowding in the white school, the city in 1893 remodeled the building used for the black school and gave it to the white students. Blacks were then given a one ten-room

⁵⁸ Thurmond, 84.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁶¹ Ibid., 76.

⁶² Woofner, 24

building. Enrollment of black students was not at pace with whites due to crowded conditions. White attendance however, skyrocketed as a result of expansion of white facilities. One of the first black schools, West Broad Street School built in 1896, was so cramped that the school ran two sessions. The first session ended at 11:30pm while the second session lasted until 2:30pm. The school had six classrooms and a small library, six teachers and one principal, and supported grades one through nine. Despite these unfavorable conditions, the 1913 Phelps-Stokes report indicated that students were actually learning.⁶³ In 1911, a four-room grade school was built as the need for more schools for blacks was realized. The teaching corps increased to seventeen with the enrollment of black children increasing to 1001. With this expansion the average daily attendance increased to 620, an increase of 201 over the average attendance in 1908.⁶⁴

Although only twelve towns in Georgia in 1913 had a high school, whether public or private, and five where a high school was a part of the public school system for blacks, Athens supported three private high schools and one public high school for blacks.⁶⁵ Athens proved to be a pioneer in black secondary education for the state of Georgia.

Both the private and public high schools incorporated little vocational training into their curricula. Woofner notes that special courses for blacks adapted to the needs of the students were rarely used in these schools. Instead blacks received the same type of instruction that whites students received in their schools. The call for industrial education came from the black community as whites expressed no interest in black education. Industrial education is evident in the West Broad School under its principal, Samuel F. Harris, who was

⁶³ Woofner, 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 28.

to eventually become the principal of Athens High and Industrial School, and to some extent in the Knox school. Woofner notes that the appearance of vocational curriculum in the black schools indicated an awakening from both races to the necessity of “cultivating a cooperative spirit.”⁶⁶ This was a response to his observation that “the whites are loathe to offer their services because they do not know how the negro would receive such an offer, and the negroes are slow to call on them, fearing that the whites will not be willing to come.”⁶⁷ It seems as though they came upon the call for an industrial education. The Athens Board of Education gave a grant to the West Broad Street School to “employ an agricultural graduate from Tuskegee to take charge of the work” on 100 acres of land for the school’s garden in an effort to develop their agricultural department. This did not last long as the summer months brought desertion of the program.⁶⁸ However, throughout the years, industrial arts remained a staple in Athens black high schools.

The black private schools eventually closed in Athens as the public school system assumed the responsibility for education. The Knox Institute closed in 1928 due to financial difficulties and Athens High and Industrial School relocated to its Carnegie building in 1933. The Athens and Clarke County school systems continued to grow as Clarke County opened its first demonstration school in 1932. Also, both school systems employed Jeanes teachers who acted as supervisors to rural black schools focusing on curricula, teaching methods, and the physical facilities of the schools. Similar to other Southern communities, the Athens schools experienced a series of events that served to shape its educational system and the people and communities that were a part of it. The next chapters will delve deeper into the

⁶⁶ Woofner, 32.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 31-32.

system of education for blacks in Athens, Georgia and reveal the reasons Athens became the focal point of black undergraduate education in Georgia during the 50 years after the end of the Civil War.⁶⁹

Value at Athens High and Industrial School/Burney-Harris High School – 1913-1970

Although the precise origin of Athens High and Industrial School (AHIS) is unclear, by 1922 it was one of the few, if not the only accredited black high school in the state of Georgia.⁷⁰ It is further noted as being the first public four year high school for blacks in the state of Georgia with a founding date of 1916.⁷¹ However, its origin points to two schools, West Broad and Reese Street schools, as early as 1911.

Samuel F. Harris, AHIS's first principal, is said to have had the "confidence of the white people in the town"⁷² which can be conceivably assumed as the reason for the school's growth and its distinction as an accredited school. This confidence probably propelled him to approach the Athens School Board of Education as early as 1915 with a request of an additional grade to the school then known as Reese Street School.⁷³ This fact would then lead one to believe the origins of AHIS to be the Reese Street School, thus allowing the school to gain the title of the first public four year high school for blacks in the state of Georgia. In that same year he also requested \$20 to "complete the payment for \$100.00 worth of apparatus."⁷⁴ Additionally, in 1917 he submitted an invitation to the superintendent requesting "the

⁶⁹ Thurmond, 61.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 88; Thomas, 162

⁷¹ Caption. *Zebra Magazine*, Vol. 17 (68), 2010, 8

⁷² Woofner, 26.

⁷³ From the Athens Board of Education Minutes, Athens, 27 April 1915, in the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia. (Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press.).

⁷⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 27, June 1915.

attendance of the Board upon the commencement exercises on Wednesday, and that a member of the Board be delegated to deliver the diplomas.”⁷⁵ All three of Professor Harris’ requests were fulfilled by the Board indicating at least a modicum of cooperation between the white school board and what was considered to be one of Athens’ prominent educational leaders.

The invitation came from Harris with him being listed as the principal of Reese Street School, the same school year AHIS is indicated as being founded with Harris as its principal.⁷⁶ Other documents indicate Professor Harris as the principal of the West Broad School in 1911,⁷⁷ and AHIS as originating from this school in 1917.⁷⁸ Although it may prove difficult to point to the exact origins of AHIS, one can be sure of the value that the community found within the school.

Professor Harris believed the black community could get the most value from the high school through a curriculum that had strong vocational components. He incorporated industrial training in the curriculum which received \$4 a month for supplies.⁷⁹ He also opened evening vocational classes to adults at the school where they could learn masonry, cooking, sewing, home nursing, carpentry, and the rudiments of bookkeeping.⁸⁰ He did, however, equip the school with a laboratory for the physics class that was offered at the school. Additionally Harris started the first summer school for black teachers at the

⁷⁵ Board of Education Minutes, 22, May 1917

⁷⁶ Thurmond, 88.

⁷⁷ Woofner, 31.

⁷⁸ The Yellow Jacket, A Brief History of Athens High and Industrial School and Burney-Harris High School, www.yellojacket.com/history.htm (accessed December 5, 2011).

⁷⁹ Thurmond, 137.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 139.

University of Georgia in 1926.⁸¹ However, he was not alone, in his efforts as Mrs. Annie H. Burney is credited with being a strong eighth and ninth grade teacher as well as Harris' long time assistant principal. In 1934 Burney assumed the principalship when Harris became ill. This appointment was short-lived as Professor Aaron Brown was designated as principal the following year. That same year, 1935, Professor Harris died. Not much is documented on Mrs. Burney after she left the principalship; however both educators were honored for their service to Athens High and Industrial School in 1964 when the school was renamed in their honor to Burney-Harris High School.

During Professor Brown's tenure, he expanded the extracurricular activities of the school. He believed that activities such as the glee-club, Tri-Hi-Y and Hi-Y, the Athletic Association, the debating club, and the dramatic club served to promote the educational growth of his population of students who he assessed to be economically and socially disadvantaged.⁸² In 1938, Professor Brown was followed by Professor Charles Duvall who would not only serve as principal of AHIS but also as the supervisor of Negro schools in Athens.

Duvall served during a difficult time in which the high school was in jeopardy of losing its accreditation due to financial constraints.⁸³ One graduate of the school during this time described the school as being inadequate in terms of materials and resources. He

⁸¹ Thurmond, 88.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 88-90.

⁸³ Charles W. Duvall to Robert Cousins, November 7, 1939, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23529, Folder12-6-71 Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Morrow, GA.

described the building as sub-standard and in a state of disrepair.⁸⁴ Nonetheless the school continued in its effort to provide an education for its students as Professor Homer T. Edwards Sr. assumed the position of principal in 1945.

Professor Edwards served in this position for twenty-three years and is probably one of the most well-known principals along with Professor Harris. He served as principal during some of the most pivotal eras of the school: the construction of a new building, the changing of the school's name, and the beginning of desegregation. Although desegregation began under him, he retired before its completion in 1968 and was succeeded by E.T. Roberson. Mr. Roberson served as principal during the school's last years in existence as a high school as a new era of education in the South was ushered in. The men and women who served as leaders of the school worked in such a way to ensure that it brought value in the form of educational opportunities to the black community in Athens. The value of the school was demonstrated through strong leadership, caring teachers, community and parental involvement, and the academic curriculum and extracurricular activities. The next sections will demonstrate just how successful they were.

Strong Leadership

For all intents and purposes, the black principal of the black high school served as the educational leader for the black community. In *Hello Professor*, Vanessa Siddle Walker contends these professors were conduits between the educational system and the local community.⁸⁵ In describing the principals of the black schools he attended in North Carolina, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia, Norris Fault stated, "Principals are more like politicians.

⁸⁴ Bob Paris interview, by author, Athens, GA, August 11, 2011. Profiles of Paris and all of the interviewees are in Appendix A.

⁸⁵ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 9.

They're the ones that goes to all of the meetings, try and get the funds to run the schools. [They were] always in the community attending this conference or this workshop or this meeting”⁸⁶ He went further to say that they were constantly visiting the churches, a point that will be further developed as the idea of networks within the black system of education is expounded upon later in this dissertation.

Nevertheless, black principals were relied upon by not only their staff but the larger community to formulate and direct the educational goals and paths for that local black community. This fact was not lost on the Athens community during the days of segregation. Although more will be offered about the principals of Athens High and Industrial School/Burney-Harris High School (AHIS/BHHS) and their larger leadership roles, the immediate role they played within the educational lives of their students and staff served to add value to the school.

Professor Duvall is characterized by Bob Paris, 1947 graduate of AHIS, as being a “good principal.” He added, “He would get involved with the students and see that things went well with whatever material they had to work with.”⁸⁷ Sidle Walker attributes this kind of involvement to their feelings of obligations to a system that rescued them. Since they were now leading this system they were required to provide an escape for the students they were leading. Having gone to school under both Duval and Edwards, Paris was able to characterize both. Of Edwards he said,

I was real impressed with him because he believed in keeping children in school. Heretofore, if you got into a lot of trouble they expelled them from school. He didn't expel anybody. He said you can't learn in the street. I was real impressed with him for that. He believed in giving kids a chance even

⁸⁶ Norris Fault, interview by author, Athens, GA, October 18, 2011.

⁸⁷ Paris, Interview.

though they had some disciplinary problems and I admired him for that. He would go out of his way to try and keep kids in school and I thought that was remarkable.⁸⁸

Paris' opinion of Professor Edwards extended to him as a teacher also:

He taught English. He was also a principal and he taught. I had his class. He was a good teacher too. And he was to give you assignments to learn poems and all that kind of stuff. That sort of created in a youngster to memorize things. To me it did. I always enjoyed his class.... He was a good teacher.⁸⁹

It was not uncommon for black principals to teach classes also. This was probably a function of both limited resources and a desire to remain intimately connected to the students and the curriculum. Eileen Newsome, class of 1947, also indicated that Edwards' teaching position was more of a function of necessity as she stated, "Not only was he a principal but during that time the principal had to do everything."⁹⁰ He too served as her English teacher. Of him she says, "He would just push me."⁹¹ This pushing came not only in the classroom for Mrs. Newsome but in other ways also. She says that because he knew she took private typing lessons he would call her to his office to type some of his letters. Edwards did not have a secretary to fill this role so he not only allowed Mrs. Newsome to type these important papers but he would also allow her to compose some of the letters before typing them. In recounting this story Mrs. Newsome expressed great pride in this opportunity and saw it as an honor.

Similar to other students who went to AHIS/BHHS, Mrs. Newsome shared another relationship with Professor Edwards as he served as the organizer and pianist for her youth choir at church. This phenomenon of principals and teachers having multiple relationships

⁸⁸ Paris, interview.

⁸⁹ Paris, interview.

⁹⁰ Eileen Newsome, interview by author, Athens, GA, August 4, 2011.

⁹¹ Newsome, interview.

with their students as the deacons in the churches, the Sunday school teachers, and as neighbors was very common in the black communities of the segregated South. In Athens, blacks occupied certain sections of the city as a reflection of both racial and economic segregation patterns. In his history of Athens, Thomas contends, “Some blacks – domestics and professionals – lived in predominately white neighborhoods early in the century, but black neighborhoods increasingly became distinct and segregated from white neighborhoods. Probably this separation occurred as free blacks formed a sense of community through black churches and black educational institutions.”⁹² As a result there was a familiarity within the black community. This familiarity was beneficial when it came to ensuring that students were committed to doing what was right in and out of school. William Billows, class of 1961, indicated that “Mr. Edwards was a member of Ebenezer, the teachers went to Ebenezer so when you walked down that hallway you just had to walk straight. It wasn’t no if, and’s, or but’s about it. [O]f course he went to Ebenezer so we knew each other. Our families were close.”⁹³ Paula Hill shared these sentiments as she too attended Ebenezer Baptist Church:

I saw H.T. Edwards seven days a week. There were all church folks. They punished you when they needed to and they didn’t play with you. I may have been a little partial because they knew I worked in the church. I used to sing. I loved to talk and all of them were my church members. That’s why I always thought they were good. And I think everybody else got the same vibe from them. We had very good administrators.⁹⁴

As expressed in William Billows’ comments, the principal created an atmosphere of respect and discipline that was supported by the teachers, parents, and community alike. Esther Seaborn, class of 1967, characterized Edwards as firm, strict and no-nonsense. She

⁹² Thomas, 158.

⁹³ William Billows, interview by author, Athens, GA, August 11, 2011.

⁹⁴ Paula Hill, interview by author Athens, GA, August, 6, 2011.

said, “All the principals were very firm. They said what they meant and they meant what they said.”⁹⁵ Varner Dawes agreed stating that “He was a smart, kind, and stern principal.”⁹⁶

Although Fred Jones insisted while that in general black principals were stern disciplinarians, he did not see Edwards as one.⁹⁷ Instead he said he was a very nice man and a really good educator but in his opinion not much of a disciplinarian. He conceded that his propensity to attempt to get into as much trouble as possible may have been a factor in his assessment. He characterized Principal E.T. Roberson, 1968-1970, as “a little autocratic.”⁹⁸ He felt as though Roberson “carried discipline too far the other way.”⁹⁹ However, accompanying these characterizations of disciplinarian come descriptions of Edwards being someone you could trust. Someone you knew had your best interest in mind and someone who would not turn on you.¹⁰⁰ Dawes similarly described Edwards as being very smart. He said “He kind of reminded me of Dr. Mays because he was always quoting literature and at the same time he was loving and supportive.”¹⁰¹

The principal’s leadership of the school was recognized as much by the teachers as it was by the students. Siddle Walker speaks about the principal being a model leader for his staff by embracing professional tasks and modeling the values he espoused.¹⁰² Teachers and students alike within AHIS/BHHS stressed that everyone within the school was clear as who

⁹⁵ Esther Seaborn, interview by author, Athens, GA, August 4, 2011.

⁹⁶ Varner Dawes, interview by author Athens, GA, August 5,2011.

⁹⁷ Fred Jones interview by author , Athens, GA, September 9, 2011.

⁹⁸ Jones, interview.

⁹⁹ Jones, interview.

¹⁰⁰ Seaborn, interview.

¹⁰¹ Varner Dawes, interview.

¹⁰² Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 5-10.

was the leader of the school. In recounting Professor Edwards and E.T “Doc” Roberson’s tenure as his principals, Fred Jones insisted that “both of them were recognized as the head of the school so there was never a question who was the principal of the school and I don’t think anyone ever challenged that.”¹⁰³ William Billows insisted that with the respect that Edwards had from all of the students, he too had the respect of all of the teachers. This respect may have come as result of what Benedict James’ describes as being an excellent overseer for the students and one who paid a lot of attention to the faculty.¹⁰⁴

Mr. James’ knowledge of Edwards comes from his experience as a student at AHIS and a band instructor at BHHS. While teaching, Mr. James told Professor Edwards that due to the shabby conditions of the band uniforms, the band would not go on the field; instead they would play in the stands. Edwards agreed with this decision and further agreed to accommodate James’ request to make an appointment to talk to the Superintendent and Board of Education to request funds to purchase new uniforms. According to the Board of Education meeting minutes, the men petitioned the board for new uniforms on February 8, 1968 and the purchase was approved April 11th.¹⁰⁵ This support of his teachers probably extended from the requirement he had of his teachers to serve in multiple capacities within the school.

While working under Professor Edwards after returning to her alma mater, Eileen Newsome stated that Professor Edwards commented to his teachers that “a teacher does it all.”¹⁰⁶ Similar to the multiple roles he held, he expected his teachers to pick up paper in the

¹⁰³ Jones, interview.

¹⁰⁴ Benedict James, interview by author, Athens, GA, September 15, 20 11.

¹⁰⁵ From the Clarke County Board of Education Minutes, Athens 8 February, 1968 and 11 April 1968, in the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia. (Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press.).

hallway, assume duties at home football and basketball games, and whatever else was necessary to the proper functioning of the school. Mrs. Newsome recounted an incident in which a teacher complained about having to work the home games and stating that that responsibility was not in her contract. According to Mrs. Newsome, Professor Edwards' response was, "No that's not all on the contract but the word teacher is and that means you have responsibilities."¹⁰⁷ Newsome remembered,

We had to be on duty if it was a game. There was a roster and you were responsible for selling hotdogs or maybe you were responsible for tickets at the door, or collecting the tickets, or selling drinks, all that. You had to be there. That was your responsibility when I was a teacher at the high school.¹⁰⁸

The responsibility of the teacher further extended into acting and dressing as a role model. This sentiment was likewise expressed by Professor Ulysses Byas in Siddle Walker's *Hello Professor*. Siddle Walker asserts that one of Byas' examples of modeling leadership was through professional dress. The idea of teachers dressing in a professional manner served three purposes: 1) to allow black students to see the formal; 2) as a way to demand a modicum of respect in the segregated South; and 3) as a way to show black students what could be beyond the restrictions of segregation.¹⁰⁹

As a teacher at AHIS, Eileen Newsome adhered to the strict dress code enforced by the norms of the black schools as well as by Professor Edwards. Of the dress code she said,

Teachers wore heels all the time, walked to and from school in heels. You were dressed like a teacher. We always thought that you were supposed to be dressed like a teacher, as leader and not like students. It's just when integration came that we learned you don't have to wear heels. We were

¹⁰⁶ Newsome, interview.

¹⁰⁷ Newsome, interview.

¹⁰⁸ Newsome, interview.

¹⁰⁹ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 178-179.

always told and taught that during that time you didn't dress like the students. During *that* time teachers were dressed.¹¹⁰

The idea of professional dress for black teachers in Athens not only permeated the halls of AHIS/BHHS but all of the black schools in Athens. Bob Paris, who worked both at the black and white schools, recounted the dress code for teachers at his black schools,

[T]ell you the truth, white schools before integration was more relaxed about dress codes and things like that. I had to wear a tie in the black schools. You know you got to be, you got to look professional. I was supposed to be a role model and that's what I did. In the white schools they can go in, in all types of old rags and we couldn't afford to do that. I had a teacher in Morehouse [who said] "We have to be above. You can't behave like these white teachers. You got to act professional. You got to act in a certain way above criticism. There are certain things that you do that they just don't do." And that's the way it was in the public schools. Teachers had to dress professionally. It was required by the principal. You dressed professionally. You don't come in here with tattered clothes on. You need to dress like you're a professional. Black principals required you to do that.¹¹¹

Black teachers were able to witness this norm as they attended state and regional conferences of the various education associations. Webster Anderson, who attended the GTEA conferences during his tenure as the band director at AHIS/BHHS, commented that even at these gatherings of black educators, dress was very important. "It [regional and state conferences] was kind of like the Easter parade. You know everybody all dressed up."¹¹² Requiring appropriate attire from his teachers was a duty Edwards and other black principals were proud to assume as well as varied other roles and duties.

As the leader of the black schools, black principals had to traverse two worlds – the black world as its educational ambassador and the white world as its employee. The black

¹¹⁰ Newsome, interview.

¹¹¹ Paris, interview.

¹¹² Webster Anderson, interview by author, Athens, GA, September 30, 2011.

community expected him to attend to the educational needs of the community, even if that meant demanding equality from the white school board, while the white school board expected a kind of loyalty to the segregated established school system. Homer T. Edwards is noted for playing both roles well. In an interview with his son - Howard Edwards, he said of his father that he would request general funds from the Board of Education but steer or appear to steer these funds towards the industrial arts curriculum in the school or its sports programs. Edwards noted that his father knew of the board's attempt to keep the black community happy by providing funds for athletics. In this way the Board could thwart the requests for funding for science and other core subjects. Nonetheless Professor Edwards is noted as having incorporated reading, math, English, and science within the curriculum. (More will be offered about the curriculum later.) Additionally Edwards recounts that his father was able to "work in extracurricular activities (chorus and music) as long as it didn't require extra money,"¹¹³ which points to the dire need of band uniforms that Benedict James found the school in when he started teaching in 1966.

Nevertheless, Professor Edwards did petition the Board on several occasions for improvements at AHIS/BHHS. In one of his petitions to the Board on August 11, 1965, he joined a contingent of black leaders and organizations who sent a letter to the Board requesting improvements of the grounds at Burney-Harris, East Athens, North Athens Elementary, and Lyons Junior High. Specifically these improvements were to include:

1. Adequate driveways, 2. Suitable parking area, 3. Construct suitable play area for organized play, 4. Improve the drainage of the Burney-Harris Athletic field, 5. To landscape and construct play area and Athletic field at Lyons, and to re-surface road leading to the school, 6. Landscape and construct suitable play area driveways, parking area at the East Athens Elementary School, 7. Library and books at East Athens.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Howard Edwards, interview by author, Athens, GA, September 9, 20 11.

However, because black principals had to remain cognizant of their school boards, Edwards was limited in his ability to demand fiscal equity within the schools.¹¹⁵ Webster Anderson offered an explanation regarding this predicament:

They [teachers at AHIS and Professor Edwards] were doing the best that they could. See I learned some sense. There were some things he couldn't do. He wouldn't have gotten *anything* for black folk. He was doing the best that he could most time. And most time most of us [teachers] were doing the best that we could. But he needed a larger help of people speaking up. He didn't have that. Athens was very short of real black leaders. They wouldn't stand up and be counted for nothing. Most of them didn't.¹¹⁶

Fairclough states that blacks in the cities were less fearful of approaching their boards of education for needed materials and in expressing their support for principals; however, black communities in the rural towns were less apt to take these actions and positions. Although Athens did not resemble the surrounding counties in their rural geography and many times their philosophy on formal education, Athens was also not Atlanta. Athens tended to walk that fine line between rural and city. Fred Jones contended that “Athens was a little different, a little further ahead in terms of human relations.” He went on to say that “What makes Athens unique is the smaller land area and a university that started the whole thing and even though we couldn't go, it still sat there and so that changed some of the dynamics and some of the thinking.”¹¹⁷

However different Athens may have been, it still had to contend with an issue that Fairclough says was rampant during this time, informants. Fairclough claims that white superintendents relied upon black principals to keep them abreast of the happenings within

¹¹⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 11, August 1965.

¹¹⁵ Fairclough *A Class of Their Own*, 286.

¹¹⁶ Anderson, interview.

¹¹⁷ Jones, interview.

the black community.¹¹⁸ This did not prove to be the case in Athens. In Athens, the white establishment relied upon black teachers to fulfill this role. Being aware of this, Professor Edwards guarded against this dissemination of information through his hiring process. Bob Paris, a native of Athens, recalled that when attempting to secure a job at AHIS upon his return to Athens, he was told by Professor Edwards the he would not be hired. Specifically Paris recalled Edwards' reasoning,

Now this is his story, I asked him why, he said well you see I don't like to hire local people because their parents work for the white man or they were domestics and they would take what's going on in the school back to the...you know just talking, you see how the connection works? If something happened in the school, a white person knew it before the black people knew what was going on because their parent worked for Mr. such and such or was in this person's family working and they would talk and these people would hear about it and he says that he didn't want to get involved in that kind of thing because some of these white people who had their good servants would call him and get on him about some things that they didn't agree with. That was the type of thing that went on. The principal would try his best to hire outside people rather than local people although it seemed unfair.¹¹⁹

Since Paris' grandparents worked for the superintendent's parents in their home, he said that that put him in connection with the superintendent, thereby excluding him from a job at AHIS. He was however, able to secure a job at the black middle school with the help of the superintendent. The requirement for native Athenians to have to secure employment in other counties is also recounted in an article in one of Athens' magazines for the black community.¹²⁰ The article, paying tribute to a long time educator of AHIS/BHHS, recounts the difficulty she had in securing a job in Athens' schools because she was a native Athenian. Because she was denied employment in the Clarke County school system, her fist teaching

¹¹⁸ Adam Fairclough. *Teaching Equality: Black Schools in the Age of Jim Crow* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), 15.

¹¹⁹ Paris, interview.

¹²⁰ "Tribute to Ms. Elizabeth G. King," *Zebra Magazine*, Volume 6 Issue 28, 1998, 17.

position was in a surrounding school district. Only two years later, 1945, was she given the opportunity to teach at AHIS, the date coinciding with Professor Edwards' first year as principal at AHIS and his entrée into Athens and its educational scene.¹²¹ This practice seemed to have started shortly thereafter. This is not to say that Professor Edwards did not hire native Athenians during his tenure as Eileen Newsome and Benedict James were both native Athenians who worked for twenty years and three years, respectively, at AHIS/BBHS. Nevertheless, the general hiring practice of Edwards and other black principals in Athens is clear. This practice would have an effect on the displacement of black teachers in Athens upon integration as Athens is not noted for having large displacements of black teachers because many are said to have returned to their hometowns upon integration.¹²²

As the narratives of black segregated schools are challenged, research is able to reveal that part of the value of the segregated schools identified by the agents of the schools - teachers, principals, students, parents, and the community – is strong leadership. The leadership of AHIS/BHHS from its inception by Professor Samuel F. Harris to his modern-day counterpart, Professor H.T. Roberson, has allowed the school to develop and sustain its legacy of value within the black community in Athens, Georgia. Accompanying this strong leadership were the school's caring teachers. This factor too served as a major component within the segregated school.

Caring Teachers

For the black community, its teachers have served in the role of educational leaders also. Upon Emancipation many of the one-room schools for blacks were started by single

¹²¹ Homer T. Edwards was born in McRae, Georgia and did not relocate to Athens until the beginning of the 1945-1946 school year upon his acceptance as principal at AHIS

¹²² Newsome, interview; Paris, interview; Billows, interview; James, interview

black teachers who saw the need within the community.¹²³ Education was deemed a necessity in the fight for equality and was therefore viewed as a liberator. Although some have argued as the true nature of education as emancipator,¹²⁴ this fact was not lost on the generation of blacks who worked to establish a system of education for blacks.

Immediately following Emancipation, white northern teachers filled the ranks of teachers in the black schools; however, by 1869, black teachers in the South outnumbered their white counterparts.¹²⁵ The profession continued to grow so much so that “between 1890 and 1910 the number of blacks who were employed as teachers rose from 15,100 to 66,236. In the census years of 1890, 1900, and 1910, black teachers represented about 44, 45, and 45 percent, respectively, of professional blacks.”¹²⁶ Fairclough indicates that by 1940 a U.S. Census survey of black professionals counted 1,000 lawyers, 3,500 medical doctors, 17,000 - ministers, and 63,000 schoolteachers.¹²⁷ In recounting his options after graduation from Morehouse College in 1951 Bob Paris indicated,

You know if you can't make it no where else you can always teach. I had done some teaching while I was in high school so I had a pretty good resume' (laughs). I was always impressed with black teachers anyway. Teaching was about the only thing offered to black folks and selling insurance and I wasn't about to walk the streets selling insurance.¹²⁸

Although teaching may not have been Mr. Paris' first career choice, once in it, he gave it his all.

¹²³ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 4-5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9-11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁶ Foster, *Black Teachers on Teaching*, xvii.

¹²⁷ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 5.

¹²⁸ Paris, interview.

Similar to black principals, black teachers were dedicated to offering an avenue of upliftment and liberation for their communities by providing a quality education. Many of the teachers who worked in Athens, whether from the Athens community or not, were familiar with the conditions of their students because they had experienced those same conditions in the communities they grew up. Fred Jones insisted that “all [of the teachers] felt a responsibility to the students to do the best they could and the teachers therefore felt a personal responsibility to deliver a quality product.”¹²⁹

Additionally, many of the teachers lived in the same community as their students. Therefore, the familiarity that characterized the black principals of the schools also applied to the teachers. Paula Hill commented that AHIS/BHHS was a neighborhood school where most of the teachers walked to and from school because they did not live far. Students were bound to see one of their teachers in the hair salon, one of the few grocery stores in the community, or at church.¹³⁰

As a part of their commitment to upliftment through education, teachers assumed multiple roles as a part of their duties as educators. Michael Fultz summarizes the situation of the black teacher when he states, “No other group of African American professionals...shouldered so many additional responsibilities considered essential to ‘success’ in their work.”¹³¹ Black teachers were asked to be counselors, doctors, disciplinarians, truant officers, concession stand workers, janitors and the like. This

¹²⁹ Jones, interview.

¹³⁰ Paula Hill, interview.

¹³¹ Fairclough, *Teaching and Equality*, 14.

requirement was not lost on the black teachers in Athens. Bob Paris said of his teachers at

AHIS:

Teachers seemed to be more involved with the student in terms of personal instruction and beyond that. They dealt with...I've had teachers who, when I was sick administered medicine and when I didn't have clothes they would find me some clothes. You know that type of thing, make sure you had something to eat and they were not afraid to visit your home.¹³²

He remembered when he returned to Athens to become a teacher having to fulfill multiple roles also. One role was that of a truant officer.

I can recall when I was teaching at West Broad I had one or two students whose parents were not really interested in formal education. I'd leave my class, with permission of the principal; I'd leave my class and go get kids up out the beds and brought them back to school. But the one or two students that didn't show up I'd go and get them, both male and female! I wanted you to be educated to the point where you can elevate yourself from the situation that you're in now.¹³³

Eileen Newsome too remembered her days as an elementary school teacher having to fulfill her duties as a truant officer.

When the second bell rings they would call the room and if you had over five absentees you had to call and you had to record that in her [principal] office and if this person was called over so many times in that month you had to make a home visit. You documented that.

She went on to say that the principal would come to her class and tell her to get someone to cover her class while she checked on the absent students. Many times she said she would ask the teacher next door to cover her class. She would then get a student to walk with her to the absent student's house because many of the students did not have a phone. However, she did

¹³² Paris, interview.

¹³³ Paris, interview.

say that the truant officer dealt with the chronic cases but she emphasized, “We would have to deal with it first. That’s your job.”¹³⁴

Regular home visits aside from truancy type visits were also common within the black community. In fact, according to Bob Paris and Eileen Newsome they were required. Varner Dawes remembered the practice of teachers visiting the students’ homes well. He said, “The teachers would come to your house. That works. What ultimately happens is that the kids know that you care about them and the parents know that you care about them and it’s amazing how far that goes.”¹³⁵ He went on to recount a time when a teacher made a call to his house.

One time the teacher and I opened the door at the same time. She was coming to my house to tell my momma that I was arguing with her about a math problem, but I was right too! She was not happy that I was right. She came to tell my momma that I was ugly.¹³⁶

Although this incident was not the most positive for Mr. Dawes, he asserted, “In general the whole atmosphere was a positive one.”¹³⁷

Paula Hill too remembered home visits from teachers at BHHS. She said that if someone misbehaved in school, the teacher would require the student to remain after school so that they could walk him or her home to tell the parents. After the home visit the parent would require the student to walk the teacher home or at least half way. Therefore, Mrs. Hill said that many students did not misbehave in school because the student knew the teacher would see the parent.

¹³⁴ Newsome, interview.

¹³⁵ Dawes, interview.

¹³⁶ Dawes, interview.

¹³⁷ Dawes, interview.

Teachers were willing to assume multiple roles in an effort to properly educate the whole child. Mr. Paris indicated that teachers were interested in the “total person rather than specifics,”¹³⁸ allowing this all-encompassing concern to manifest itself in the form of motivation. Fairclough asserts that black teachers enjoyed close relationships with their students based upon their empathy towards their students and their intimate knowledge of the black community, enabling them to motivate their students.¹³⁹ This motivation was a motivation to succeed in spite of the desperate situations many black Athenians found themselves in. Ester Seaborn recalled of her teachers at BHHS,

They were really good teachers because they cared about what they did. They cared about the students. They cared about instilling in us integrity, honesty, and all the things it was going to take to make us be able to make it in the world that we’re living in now. The foresight that they had, the difficulties we would have to encounter and overcome living in the then segregated world. They taught us a lot of life skills.¹⁴⁰

Bob Paris said of his teachers,

They were great motivators, good teachers although they, the techniques.... The way that they taught was different. Of course they didn’t have the same kind of materials. They had to be creative, very creative in trying to get the subject matter over to the students. They just didn’t have the wealth of materials that they have today. But as I foretated there was an advantage in that they took a personal interest in you. So I would say that there were advantages to segregation because the black teachers took a personal interest in the black students and they were great motivators.¹⁴¹

In speaking about the faculty he joined after returning to his alma mater as the band director, Benedict James said of his colleagues, “[T]hey were young teachers, full of energy, just a

¹³⁸ Paris, interview.

¹³⁹ Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*,” 49-50.

¹⁴⁰ Seaborn, interview.

¹⁴¹ Paris, interview.

burst of energy from everybody that taught. They were interested in students. They had a caring faculty. They wanted students to excel and not to waste their time.”¹⁴²

Teachers at AHIS/BHHS not only used their teaching techniques, preparation for the future, and their genuine interest in the students as motivators for their students to succeed, but also they were not shy about using corporal punishment. In his research, Fairclough found that many black educators have coupled the decline of discipline in the present-day schools with the removal of corporal punishment and cite this as a result of integration.¹⁴³ Although Fairclough contends that rather than it being a result of integration, the removal of corporal punishment actually proved to be a function of the disfavor that the practice had fallen into with society. In recounting the use and subsequent removal of corporal punishment during his time in the public school system, Norris Fault countered Fairclough’s assertion stating, “That’s why they took it [corporal punishment] out because white folks weren’t going to let you hit on their kids period. So look at your policy and follow your policy when punishment was taken out of the school and prayer was taken out of the schools. All was about that time.”¹⁴⁴ However, before it was removed from schools, teachers at AHIS/BHHS used it as an additional motivator for their students.

Paula Hill considered the corporal punishment she received at the hands of her teachers as excellent motivation to behave appropriately at school and excel in academic lessons. She said,

So I think the teachers did an excellent job keeping us in line and they didn’t mind whipping your behind. They would take you in there and say either one

¹⁴² James, interview.

¹⁴³ Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*,” 45-46.

¹⁴⁴ Fault, interview.

hard one or three small ones. In your classroom you got popped. If you had a math class and you went to the board and you couldn't get that math problem they would pop you across your knuckles. And you act up, they send you to the office...they paddle you. And nobody wanted to go to the office because you knew they were gonna either use that long wooden paddle or that black strap. So that was the key to staying out of trouble in high school.¹⁴⁵

Benedict James echoed this same sentiment concerning students not wanting to go to the principal's office when he was a teacher. He said, "They didn't want to go to the office and face them. They were strict! That was a carryover from when I was in high school myself because Professor Edwards would, he would get you. If you went in there wrong you just went in there wrong, if it was his son or daughter. You had to pay the consequences."¹⁴⁶ For Varner Dawes, consequence was the strap his administrator had when he was in the ninth grade. "I was in the ninth grade and they had a strap. They would tear you up in high school. You weren't causing a problem."¹⁴⁷ Esther Seaborn was just as emphatic in her description of corporal punishment when she was a student. "They'll pop you in a minute! Doc Roberson [E.T. Roberson] would get that strap and say 'hold out your hand or bend over'! Wasn't any back talk or saying the teacher lied. If the teacher said it, they meant it."¹⁴⁸

As these teachers were using varied methods to keep their students motivated they also admonished their students to not internalize the racist beliefs that permeated society. Fairclough contends that the "white South *failed* to construct a true 'caste system' because black people never internalized racist values."¹⁴⁹ Black teachers were integral in this effort as

¹⁴⁵ Hill, interview.

¹⁴⁶ James, interview.

¹⁴⁷ Dawes, interview.

¹⁴⁸ Seaborn, interview

¹⁴⁹ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 19.

they created an atmosphere of support while challenging their students to believe in themselves and not accept the stereotypes that society attempted to imbue within them.

Esther Seaborn said,

The black high schools taught a sense of self...you *are* somebody. They [whites] might think that you're nobody but what they think doesn't matter. It only matters what you think about yourself. You can be, you can do anything that you want to be, anything that you want to do. The only thing that holds you back is you. Those were the life skills - integrity, dignity, and honesty.¹⁵⁰

Vanessa Siddle Walker echoes these sentiments in her research in asserting, “Despite the daily insults of a segregated environment, black educators characteristically restructured negative societal messages.”¹⁵¹ The cultivation of an ethos of racial pride was in part due to the inclusion of the study of black history into the curriculum. Fairclough says that in black schoolteachers, Carter G. Woodson found a natural constituency¹⁵². This constituency would advance his commitment to the widespread development and implementation of lessons that would highlight and spread the rich history of the Negro. In her research on black teachers, Michel Foster relays a story told by a former teacher that speaks to black teachers’ efforts to infuse into the standard curriculum information concerning black history and black culture. This former teacher said that although not sanctioned by the school board, black teachers taught their students a lot about their race through the singing of the Negro National Anthem and other activities. When white school officials did visit the schools, this part of the lesson would be put aside to demonstrate adherence to the prescribed curriculum.¹⁵³ Eileen

¹⁵⁰ Seaborn, interview.

¹⁵¹ Vanessa Siddle Walker, “Second-Class Integration: A Historical Perspective for a Contemporary Agenda,” *Harvard Educational Review* 79 no. 2 (Summer 2009): 273.

¹⁵² Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 43.

¹⁵³ Foster, 38.

Newsome recalled that black history was incorporated into the social studies curriculum at AHIS. Even though the specific projects may have not been required, many students participated nonetheless.

We really went out for black history during the time when I was a student. We fixed posters. That was a part of extra classwork. We enjoyed it. It wasn't something required but voluntary. You got extra points. We enjoyed it. We really went out for it. We wanted to see who had the best scrapbook. Nobody was scared not to do it.¹⁵⁴

In light of these assertions, one has to question the soundness of the Supreme Court's opinion in its *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision stating that "segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored child"¹⁵⁵ leading to a sense of inferiority. This sense of inferiority was then agreed upon by the Justices to effect the motivation of a child to learn. Finally the court concurred that "Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system."¹⁵⁶ I found no evidence of this within AHIS/BHHS. When asked if he thought segregation created a sense of inferiority within him and his classmates, William Billows responded,

No I don't think so. But I really don't think it was the case because black kids, the way we dressed, shirt tail always in, crease always in the pants, shoes always shining, that is not a person that has low esteem of himself. That's someone who has high...you had to be clean even when we had patches on the pants. Pants had to be clean; your shirt had to be clean. So I think sometime that people back then that really had it made or was looking out of a different window than what I was looking out...I don't think we had that low self-esteem. I think that it was always high. I really do because my parents and

¹⁵⁴ Newsome, interview.

¹⁵⁵ *Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, 494 (1954).

¹⁵⁶ *Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, 494 (1954).

look like everybody in my class parents had put in them you are somebody. You black but you somebody. And that stayed with me. And I think if a child grow up hearing that he's special than he's not gonna have a low esteem of himself. He's gonna always have it high. He's gonna walk straight. We obeyed the rules because we didn't want to fight every day. We said yes sir to the white man and yes ma'am to the white lady and you went on 'bout your business but you had in your head, "I'm better than him." It was always I *am better than you!* You're not better than me.

Norris Fault is likewise committal in his response when he said,

No. Going to school and church was probably the two institutions that developed the child's self-esteem. Now how the parent felt could have been different. You learned to speak in front of crowds in black churches, you developed some of your gifts and talents by singing, playing instruments and someone there had to be the valedictorian at the school.¹⁵⁷

The notion of inferiority within the black segregated schools is also born out of black schools receiving second-hand materials from white schools. In an attempt to address this, I asked the interviewees if receiving the books and materials from the white schools had a detrimental effect on their self-esteem. For those students who said that their school received second-hand books, their response was an emphatic no. Varner Dawes said,

Growing up my mom would bring things home from the white homes she worked in. We were accustomed to making due with whatever we had. Our parents were so creative and so ingenious...that creativity always...we knew what we wanted for the future. We were not focused on second hand stuff and the present. Whatever book you could get that had the material in, that could get you from point A to point B, give me that book. We didn't care if it were third hand. I didn't even give it a lot of thought. We knew they were second hand books but we didn't care.¹⁵⁸

Bob Paris too talked about the materials that AHIS had when he was a student.

[T]hey never to my knowledge, bought new desks or new materials for black schools. We always had to go to one of the white schools to get discarded books and desks and all kinds of things that were necessary for our school.

¹⁵⁷ Fault, interview.

¹⁵⁸ Dawes, interview.

We had to get the discarded ones. They would buy new things for the white school and give us the old stuff.¹⁵⁹

When asked if that had an effect on him he responded, “Not really because during that time that was something that we grew up with and we thought that that was something that was normal and acceptable.”¹⁶⁰

The Supreme Court’s decision also hinged on the opinion that separate but equal could not exist, agreeing with the plaintiffs that “segregated public schools are not ‘equal’ and cannot be made ‘equal.’”¹⁶¹ However, some students of AHIS/BBHS insisted that they did experience a separate but equal educational system in Athens. Fred Jones insisted that a later argument waged by some white teachers in Athens upon integration insisting that black students were ill-prepared by the black schools was faulty because the school system had in fact provided “separate but equal.” Of this argument he said,

The bad side of it is they failed because what they provide was separate but equal. So in fact their reason for not wanting integration was just a total farce because it was an admission of their failure but they really didn’t fail. [laughs] A better argument would have been we don’t need integration because they already have equal education which would have then argued for not maintaining separate because it’s redundant and a waste of money so they were in a no-win argument.¹⁶²

In assessing the “separate but equal” doctrine, Norris Fault spoke from a different situation in that he had experienced education in both black and white schools. Of his black schools he experienced in three southern states - North Carolina, Alabama, and Columbus, GA – he said that due to the teachers’ creativity and not the equalization of resources, he in fact

¹⁵⁹ Paris, interview.

¹⁶⁰ Paris, interview.

¹⁶¹ Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483, 488 (1954).

¹⁶² Jones, interview.

experienced separate but equal. He said, “[The teacher were] more creative because of lack of resources. As far as preparing you, I would say comparable to that once I got into integrated schools. It would appear to have been separate but equal, which was the big movement back in the ‘50s and ‘60s.”¹⁶³ These admissions of Athens’ achievement of a “separate but equal” educational system by AHIS/BHHS students were unexpected but followed the pattern of value these students found within these schools.

The equality came not from the resources but from the teachers’ abilities to use what little they had to effectively teach the subject matter. The idea of professional competence within the black educational system is one that has been hotly contested. Fairclough contends that Jim Crow schools served as “havens for incompetent teachers.”¹⁶⁴ Charles S. Johnson, in his study of Negro youth in the rural South conducted between 1935 and 1940, stated that the black teachers who were themselves products of an inadequate system of education were ill prepared and “hardly qualified to foster development of wholesome, well-adjusted personalities in their pupils.”¹⁶⁵ For this reason the black teachers helped to perpetuate the results of this system. He additionally asserted that too often, unqualified teachers were able to fill the ranks of the profession due to the teaching appointments that were made based upon “political influence and personal manipulation.”¹⁶⁶ The training and experience of the black teacher were not as important as the personal acquaintance one had with the

¹⁶³ Fault, interview. Norris Fault was one of the black students who was asked to attend a previously all-white school upon his family’s move to Athens in 1966.

¹⁶⁴ Fairclough, “The Costs of *Brown*,” 45.

¹⁶⁵ Charles S. Johnson. *Growing up in the Black Belt: Negro Youth in the Rural South* (New York: Schocken Books, 1941), 104.

¹⁶⁶ Johnson, 106.

superintendent, a recommendation from an influential white citizen, or a reputation for efficient domestic service.

However, by 1954 Johnson presented a counter-argument to the claims of professional inferiority of the black teacher by asserting that black teachers in six Southern states had training superior to their white counterparts and in four others had equal training. Fairclough additionally insists that the practice of patronage began to decline steadily after 1920.¹⁶⁷ During this time, state requirements for teacher certifications required higher levels of education that by 1952, 72 percent of black teachers had college degrees, up from 12 percent in 1930. Even with the attainment of college degrees and state certifications, Siddle Walker, insists that teachers continuously engaged in professional developments in the form of summer schools and professional organizations' conferences and that by 1949-50, black teacher's preparation surpassed that of white teachers in many Southern states.¹⁶⁸

However, E. Franklin Frazier continued to question the competence and motive of the black teacher by asserting that even well-prepared black teachers did not believe that they could compete with their white counterpart. He asserted that if blacks, including teachers, were to compete with whites they would have to "assume a more serious and responsible attitude towards their work."¹⁶⁹ Moreover, he asserted that teachers of his day did not identify with their students, considered to be part of the Negro masses, but instead looked upon teaching as primarily a source of income. He went on to say, "In many cases they have

¹⁶⁷ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 50.

¹⁶⁸ Siddle Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools," 266.

¹⁶⁹ E. Franklin Frazier. *The Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1957), 216.

nothing but contempt for their Negro pupils. Moreover, they have no real interest in education.”¹⁷⁰

Generally, AHIS/BHHS students spoke highly of their teachers’ levels of competency to impart educational material. Esther Seaborn said of her math teacher, “Mrs. Adams didn’t play, but she knew some math!”¹⁷¹ Benedict James agreed when he described his teachers as excellent who knew subject matter.¹⁷² However, Bob Paris spoke to the deficit that his school experienced in the area of science. He said,

They didn’t have a science lab. They had some jelly jars and sodium and then they didn’t have a teacher who was resourceful who was really interested in. As a matter of fact I taught the class!(laughs) The teacher’s wife was teaching at Union [a private black high school] and he would say “Paris take over the class I gotta go and see about my wife.” And he would go to Union to see about his wife. That kind of stuff went on. I understood it [science] and I would take over the class. I don’t recall anybody ever being in the science lab because I would go in there and blow it up every once in a while.¹⁷³

Paris admitted that the teachers were better before he went to World War II. The teachers were dispersed during the war and when he returned the teachers were not as good. They had a science teacher before he was drafted but when he returned there was no science teacher. This poor background in science caused him to later abandon his dreams of becoming a doctor when he arrived at Morehouse and determined that he would not be able to pass a chemistry class. However, when speaking of the time period he taught, he described himself and his colleagues as good teachers due to their creativity. He said, “Yes, you had to be creative. You weren’t going to get the stuff that the white schools were getting. Black

¹⁷⁰ Frazier, 236.

¹⁷¹ Seaborn, interview.

¹⁷² James, interview.

¹⁷³ Paris, interview.

teachers were able to compensate for the deficiency in equipment.”¹⁷⁴ He went on to state that he believed the homemade materials teachers made were superior to the ready-made materials that black teachers later received upon integration. He said, “Sometimes you can be robbed of certain skills and imaginative creativity by giving you ready-made stuff. That’s what happened when we came together, we are no longer creative because everything is ready made.”¹⁷⁵

During this same time period in Athens, William Billows described his teachers at AHIS as wholly competent. Of his teachers he said,

They all were good. They all were strong teachers. I don’t think we had a teacher in that school that was weak. They were very well learned and they could put it out to you. They gave it to you where you could understand it if you wanted to get it. They made it simple enough for you to understand.¹⁷⁶

Black teachers were regarded as being competent largely due to their educational advancements. This desire for continued professional development began in an official and on-going capacity with Professor Harris in 1926 when he established the first summer school for black teachers in at the University of Georgia.¹⁷⁷ This strong statement made by AHIS’s principal no doubt set the tone for educators and education for future generations to come.

Although Eileen Newsome majored in French at Clarke College, she later attended a residential eight-week NDEA Foreign Language Institute at Hampton Institute to earn a certificate in the Teaching of a Foreign Language. She stated that only 60 participants were accepted into this program, and she had to take a test to be admitted. Likewise Bob Paris recounted, “The teachers had to be up to standard professionally. They had to go to school

¹⁷⁴ Paris, interview.

¹⁷⁵ Paris, interview.

¹⁷⁶ Billows, interview.

¹⁷⁷ Thurmond, 88.

and get advanced training in how to teach and what to teach. The teachers that came out, they were well prepared to teach because they went under tough teachers at Atlanta University.”¹⁷⁸

The educational training and continued professional development black teachers in Athens pursued, allowed them to be able to confidently teach alongside their white counterparts upon integration. In direct contrast to E. Franklin Frazier’s pronouncement, there not did appear to exist a fear of competition with white teachers. In speaking directly to the ability of the black teachers in Athens to compete with the white teachers, Billows recalled his father’s experience as a teacher in the integrated setting,

They [white teachers] were surprised to find out that a black teacher was smart. They actually was because he used to say that they used to sit back and marvel at the teachers, the black teachers of what they actually knew and I think that a lot them was a lot smarter than the white teachers. And that’s another thing, he said it made the white teachers to buckle down to start really teaching rather than just being there because they became fearful that the black teachers were going to be a lot smarter than they were and the students were going to pick up on that. My daddy was a smart man. In fact all the teachers.¹⁷⁹

There did not seem to exist in the black Athens community any doubt concerning the competency of its black teachers from the AHIS/BHHS community; however, questions concerning the support of the status quo did arise.

Fairclough contends that some historians argue that black teachers possessed a lack of militancy due to the privileged status that whites bestowed upon them.¹⁸⁰ Historians have suggested that black teachers could not be counted on to challenge the system of segregation

¹⁷⁸ Paris, interview.

¹⁷⁹ Billows, interview.

¹⁸⁰ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 44.

rather, they would instruct their students in the ways of adapting to it. Fairclough quoted activists from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference when they dismissed some black teachers as being “the most Uncle Tom group around” after finding little support from this group.¹⁸¹ Fairclough has likened this stance of the black teachers to being a dichotomy between their institution-building efforts and the integration thrust of the Civil Rights movement. Although this does have legitimacy, I did not find this to be true for Athens. Instead what seemed to be present in Athens was a fear of job loss, not due to integration as many teachers and students alike did not consider integration to be a reality for Athens, but within the segregated system, as a reprisal from the white establishment. Two of the interviewees gave a vivid picture of this struggle in Athens. For this reason they will be quoted at length.

Bob Paris said,

We didn't hear anybody protesting. Leaders in Athens didn't rock the boat, especially educators. If they had a position that would be prestigious enough that they could organize and protest and all that kind of thing, they never said anything. Not to my knowledge because I guess they feared for their job if they had a job they said “why rock the boat?” and they went along with what was going on I suppose. [*Did that change when you became a teacher?*] If so it was some outside person, not one within the school system. I think the most vocal one that would speak out against disparities between the whites and the black was Webster Anderson. He was an administrator too. He was a teacher. He did a tremendous job. He did more as an educator to fight for more rights for the black students than anybody I know. Other people in positions they were “I got this.” If they did they did it in the background somewhere that I wasn't aware of. But it was obvious what he was doing. I can't think of anybody else that I know of that was as vocal as he was in trying to better things for the black students.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 45.

¹⁸² Paris, interview.

I asked if as teacher he rocked the boat. His response was,

NO! (laughs) I got to eat! You had very few people... Webster Anderson put his job on the line to stand up for what was right. Consequently he retired as an assistant principal but he could have been principal but he was too controversial. Lots of things that went on required somebody to speak up but you didn't get it because those same folk that you thought were up there were there protecting their jobs, deep down in them they knew it was wrong. They could have said a whole lot but they wouldn't say it because it would put their livelihood in jeopardy. I don't recall of anybody who spoke up [losing their jobs]. When you're economically independent then you can talk. Especially if you have a family you're not going to put your family in jeopardy.¹⁸³

These striking and telling comments were followed by Webster Anderson's assessment of the leadership vacuum within Athens and his attempt to secure an equal education for the black students in Athens. Of this commitment he said the following:

Teachers are afraid of the unknown and therefore will not gripe about things. I don't need the job if it's going to deprive *these* kids out of all of the things that I was deprived of. I was never popular for it but I never regretted it to the point that I wouldn't do it again. There were blacks who loved the status quo as it was because they benefited from it. Some of them did very well because it kept the rest of them where they were, in their place. Black folk just didn't have the people to speak for them and lead them truthfully. I can see why some of those people were afraid to speak up because it meant their job. I didn't get along very well with the status quo. I just don't like injustice!! I always spoke up in the public school system. I spoke up and became an enemy of the Board of Education, not that I wanted it but they didn't want anybody saying anything! There was a superintendent that used to tell me "I like you but your views are very radical." He probably was one of the best superintendents for black people but black people didn't realize that. All the things I did I felt was right. I didn't try and start a war, I was accused of it but I didn't try and start it. I'm still committed to what's right. The school district probably had pressure to get rid of me. Any black who speaks up for blacks, whites don't trust that.¹⁸⁴

In speaking about black teachers' relationship to the main Civil Rights organization in Athens, the NAACP, he stated,

¹⁸³ Paris, interview.

¹⁸⁴ Anderson, interview.

The blacks in Athens have never been that supportive of the NAACP, only a handful. They've always had hell getting teachers in it until they got in trouble, then they come for help. They realized then that that was the only organization that's going to stand up and fight for them. Many times they weren't even members of it. I've been a lifelong member of the NAACP.¹⁸⁵

Webster's comments are very telling of the outward fight for educational equality that appeared to be nonexistent. This experience coincides with other historical perspectives of black teachers noted earlier. However, another perspective demonstrates the fights that black teachers waged in their own way to dismantle the oppressive system of segregation.

As mentioned earlier, Henry Bullock connected the themes of educational oppression to the subsequent rise of African American leaders who sought the liberation from all forms of oppression. He says that liberating responses have come from an attempt to maintain the status quo, and that the unequal education for the Negro has elicited these liberating responses. In effect unequal education for the Negro has been the catalyst in the movement "toward the complete emancipation of the Negro American as a person."¹⁸⁶ Fairclough insists that many historians have postulated that the black struggle for education was in and of itself a struggle for equality and thus the dismantling of a segregated world.¹⁸⁷

Although black teachers in Athens are not noted for their outward political fight for equality, they have been noted by their students as waging their own war on inequality within the school house and classrooms. Similar to other black teachers who were noted for preaching the "necessity of individual achievement" and also working to "promote equal opportunity for all," Marcus Thomas recalled of his teachers at BHHS. "They were excellent. Very caring supportive and very much involved, not only in educating myself and my

¹⁸⁵ Anderson, interview.

¹⁸⁶ Bullock, ix.

¹⁸⁷ Fairclough, *Teaching and Equality*, 56.

classmates but they had keen focus on preparing us for the future and to go out and make a difference in life and try and help improve conditions for the world, particularly for African Americans.”¹⁸⁸ Thomas, who would go on to become Athens’ first black delegate to the General Assembly since Reconstruction and later Georgia’s Labor Commissioner, insisted that his Civics teacher was the one who lit the fire of activism in him. “Mr. Marvin Billows, he was my civics teacher and I loved Mr. Billows. He lit that fuse in me politically and in civics class we had just been in Civil Rights and all the things that were going on so Mr. Billows kind of sent me on this path of my political career more than anybody else.”¹⁸⁹ In their own way black teachers in Athens were waging a quiet war to fight inequality, but they were doing this through their students.

Esther Seaborn echoed these same sentiments when she asserted that the teachers at AHIS/BHHS taught their students how to think. She said that they taught them how to think outside the box, to make it work. The teachers wanted their students to use whatever they had to make it work for them. In the face of unequal materials they were to make those materials work for them to obtain an equal or even better education than the white students, no excuses. Even if black teachers in Athens did not envision the white Board of Education providing an equal education for their students, they would overcome this lack of materials to provide one that would prepare them for a world that was to come.

William Billows said that even though the teachers never spoke about integration they seemed to have alluded to it in the way they chose to motivate their students to achieve. Of one teacher he said,

¹⁸⁸ Marcus Thomas, interview by author, Atlanta, GA, October 18, 2011.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas, interview.

Mr. Troutman, our shop teacher, he never mentioned it [integration] but if he ever saw anybody getting slack in his class he would always point out the window to Athens High School and say “them blue-eyed boys over there, they studying. When you out here acting a monkey, they’re studying so what you need to do is buckle down before those blue-eyed boys get way ahead of you.” He would just leave it at that and we would always pull those grades up because we wanted to equal up to those blue-eyed boys.¹⁹⁰

It is evident that at least some black teachers in Athens envisioned a different world for their students, one that they as teachers must prepare them for. Black teachers may not have been vocal in expressing their displeasure to the white world but they nonetheless worked against this system of inequality in their everyday roles as teachers. Quoted in Fairclough, James Anderson insists that, “There was nothing naïve about a belief in learning and self-improvement as a means to individual and collective dignity. It was not the end of their struggle for freedom and justice; only a means toward that end.”¹⁹¹ Fairclough goes on to assert that black teachers worked within the confines of segregation to resist ideas of white supremacy, racism, and inequality and helped to undermine Jim Crow in their own ways inside their classrooms. This can definitely be said of teachers at AHIS/BHHS as they waged this struggle primarily through the academic curriculum and the schools extracurricular activities.

Academic Curriculum and Extracurricular Activities

Both the academic curriculum and the extracurricular activities offered at the segregated black schools have long been questioned and considered to be unequal to the white schools of that era. Coleman asserted in 1966, that black students in their segregated

¹⁹⁰ Billows, interview.

¹⁹¹ Fairclough, *Teaching and Equality*, 67.

schools had less access to curricular and extracurricular programs.¹⁹² The study further noted that black students have less access to fully developed programs of extracurricular activities “that might be related to academic matters (debate teams...and student newspapers).”¹⁹³ This report appears to have become an integral part in the accepted understanding of black schools related to their academic curriculum and extracurricular offerings as the dominant narrative of black segregated schools was formed.

In reexamining these parts of the black schools, Vanessa Siddle Walker insists that the offerings in these schools were sufficient in the teachers’ and principals’ efforts to support the future aspirations of their students.¹⁹⁴ Within her research she found that black school leaders actively sought to provide the same academic curriculum at their schools as was provided at the white schools. Although there were limits to this effort in the form of financial constraints and resistance by white board members to expand the curriculum, the fight was still fought and in many instances won.

The academic curriculum at AHIS/BHHS is spoken of as early as 1911-1912 in the Phelps-Stokes study. In the study it is mentioned that the curriculum at the black high school is not that different from that at the white high school. For the authors of the study, this posed a problem because, in their estimation, the curriculum did not prepare the black students of Athens with what their lot was to be as a black adult in Athens. Instead the authors suggested that more attention be given to vocational training.¹⁹⁵ Subsequently Professor Harris developed an impressive vocational and industrial program at the local black high school;

¹⁹² U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 9-14.

¹⁹³ U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 14.

¹⁹⁴ Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools,” 267-271.

¹⁹⁵ Woofner, 28.

Clarke County superintendent commented that this kind of work “is entirely too good to be given to the Negro exclusively.”¹⁹⁶ The superintendent suggested that the white boy be given this same opportunity.

Upon Professor Harris accepting the principalship at AHIS/BHHS he immediately incorporated an industrial program that would last until its closure in 1970. During H.T. Edwards’ tenure as principal, he too extended the vocational and industrial arts curriculum. According to his son, in addition to the core curriculum of the liberal arts, he wanted to provide access to an education in which his students could utilize immediately upon graduation from high school. Edwards was aware that many of his students would become cooks, brick masons, seamstresses, homemakers, and carpenters so he ensured that the curriculum offered at AHIS/BHHS was holistic in its approach.¹⁹⁷ Edwards himself had a background in vocational agriculture so he understood the need for both a vocational/industrial education and a liberal arts one.

Male students who attended AHIS/BHHS expressed fond memories of their industrial arts class that was required of every male in the school. Due to limited materials, the shop teacher stretched out the making of their bookcase or shoeshine box for an entire year. According to Varner Dawes and Fred Jones, they spent the first semester understanding the different types of wood and being able to perfectly draw their design.¹⁹⁸ Not until the second semester were they able to use the wood and the machines. Fred Jones commented that the industrial arts class was “intense.”¹⁹⁹ Marcus Thomas recalled this process also, “I made my

¹⁹⁶ Thurmond, 139.

¹⁹⁷ Edwards, interview.

¹⁹⁸ Dawes, interview; Jones, interview.

¹⁹⁹ Jones, interview.

bookcase. That was a rite of passage. [laughs]. You had to make the bookcase or a shoeshine box. I made my bookcase. It was horrible. I knew I wasn't going to make a living with my hands."²⁰⁰

Female students, on the other hand, were required to take home economics. In the years that Eileen Newsome attended AHIS, she said the home economics classes actually made the lunches for the entire school because the school did not have cooks.²⁰¹ However, by the time Esther Seaborn began AHIS/BHHS in 1963, the home economics curriculum did not include making lunches for the school, although it did continue in its sewing, cooking, and childcare efforts.

Although both the industrial arts and home economics classes were required for all students at AHIS/BHHS and produced fond memories for its students, the liberal arts classes served as the main focus of the curriculum. When asked about their academic curriculum all of the respondents mentioned the core classes of math, science, social studies, history, and English. Dawes and Jones mentioned the use of tracking at AHIS/BHHS. Fred Jones described it as follows,

Your curriculum was based on your academic standing from your junior high school so you might be placed in a higher math class because of your previous standing but it had nothing to do other than what your previous standing may have been. We progressed to higher levels of everything, math, science.²⁰²

Dawes recalled his academic track when he said that he was on an accelerated track where he took algebra I, & II, trigonometry, geometry, English I-IV, and social studies. He remained

²⁰⁰ Thomas, interview.

²⁰¹ Newsome interview.

²⁰² Jones, interview.

on this track throughout his time in high school.²⁰³ However, despite the track the students may have been in, all spoke to the rigor of the curriculum and the results that were produced in them because of their exposure.

William Billows says of the curriculum, “It was tough because they was preparing the students for college. Each child, they was prepared to go to college and so the academic part of it, each teacher took very seriously.”²⁰⁴ Fred Jones added to this discussion by asserting that,

We did dissections and math experiments and stuff. I even took a typing class but it was great because I learned the keyboard and that still serves me today. We had a very diversified curriculum. Teachers were interested in teaching you process. Not just you getting to the finished product. My algebra teacher was just the best teacher ever. She taught algebra, you knew some algebra when you left her class. We had teachers who had an understanding of what they taught. Our teachers made us learn and recite so we had to learn passages of Shakespeare and stand up and recite it and we had to learn stuff and recite which taught you how to speak, learn some public speaking.²⁰⁵

Within the discussion, he further elaborated on his curriculum by speaking about the precision that his typing teacher demanded which made the class very hard. He further spoke about his English teacher who he said spoke impeccable English. Jones fondly recalled that if a student addressed her in anything other than impeccable English she would stop right there and correct the student. The geometry teacher was a carpenter so he was able to incorporate real-life knowledge and skills into the curriculum, which harkens to his previous statement of teachers being more interested in teaching process. There was one last striking comment he made about his French class. He mentioned that they had sound booths. I did not expect this kind of technology at a segregated school or any school for that matter in the mid to late

²⁰³ Dawes, interview.

²⁰⁴ Billows, interview.

²⁰⁵ Jones, interview.

1960s. The presence of this technology speaks to his point he made about Athens achieving a separate but equal educational system.

Although Marcus Thomas did not speak specifically about each subject, he spoke to the overall curriculum at AHIS/BHHS and its effect.

It prepared me to finish my K-12 career at Clarke Central [the integrated school] so most of my education, all but one year was in the segregated system. Not only was I was able to be successful at Payne College but also in law school at the University of South Carolina. It's a cumulative impact in terms of education. It's really no one year. It's a cumulative impact of twelve years plus four years that will prepare you to go to a major law school and then graduate and pass the bar which is even more significant. So when I say that I was well prepared my educational career speaks for itself.²⁰⁶

Although the idea of preparedness and rigor became the general theme of the respondents related to the academic curriculum of AHIS/BHHS, there did prove to be some deficits within the AHIS/BHHS and Clarke County School system curriculum as a whole. Fred Jones said that when he arrived to Morehouse he encountered other students from big cities who had taken calculus but he said he knew of no calculus class at the white high school, Athens High, either but it might have been. However according to him this was minor. What was not minor was the deficit that Bob Paris encountered during his tenure at AHIS.

Unlike Fred Jones who entered Morehouse in 1969, when Bob Paris began his tenure in 1947, he did not feel AHIS had prepared him for his matriculation. Of the curriculum he said,

We just didn't have a variety no way. It just wasn't up to snuff like the big schools in Atlanta. When I went to Morehouse I heard of subjects that those kids were talking about, subjects I had never heard of. Just didn't have it in Athens. Schools just weren't equipped. I was president of the class [at AHIS]. I was an honor student and I didn't know doodlie squat. When I got to Morehouse I had to come from *way* behind. Now if I had been up to snuff I might have made the Dean's list several times but I was trying to catch up with what was going on. When I got to Morehouse those kids were talking

²⁰⁶ Thomas, interview.

about subjects I had never heard of. They came from big high schools in Tennessee and around Atlanta, Booker T. Washington, all those schools, college courses really.²⁰⁷

His indictment of AHIS's academic curriculum really served as an indictment on the Athens school system as a whole in asserting that the courses were not available in Athens at all.

This is the same evaluation that Fred Jones gave of Athens in that calculus was not offered at AHIS or Athens High. In his assessment, Bob Paris also made it clear that Athens proved to be the outlier in black schools offering a variety of courses. It did not seem to be the norm, at least not for the black schools that were located in urban areas. The urban vs. rural argument has been one that persists in the reevaluation of black segregated black schools and schools in general. As mentioned in his history of high school development in Georgia, O'Brien identified the urban-rural conflict as one of the major obstacles in the development of its public system of schooling. The urban areas, comprised of many wealthy families and not restricted by tax levying laws, were able to develop its high schools much earlier providing opportunities to its students that were not available to students of rural areas.²⁰⁸ These factors created a stark difference between the schools which is reflected in the black segregated school also. Therefore, scholars are hesitant to change the dominant narrative until a proper understanding of the differences between rural and urban black schools can be properly assessed. Changing the narrative of all black schools to fit those of the urban black schools that possessed more materials and greater access to highly educated teachers will not suffice for those rural schools that struggled to offer a variety of courses and highly qualified teachers. Bob Paris' comments show just how much work still exists within this effort of reevaluation.

²⁰⁷ Paris, interview.

²⁰⁸ O'Brien, 6

Paula Hill spoke to a part of the curriculum that no longer exists in schools today, prayer and scripture.

When you got to school it was the first thing you did. You stood up, you pledged, you said a bible verse *every* morning and they prayed *every* morning. Even in high school, you prayed. You see that's what made it so much better because every child said a bible verse. Every child listened to the prayer. We had prayer in school. So that's what made our school run so smooth because we had people that were constantly praying. We were taught pride, dignity, love, and respect.²⁰⁹

She attributed these unofficial infusions into the curriculum a vital part of the overall academic curriculum of the school. Without it, the school would not have functioned appropriately with its academic rigor and corresponding extracurricular activities.

Although the Coleman report indicated that black schools did not sufficiently sustain extracurricular activities that supported the academic curriculum, Siddle Walker found this to be contrary to what she uncovered in her research. Since the 1920s, she contends, the black segregated schools have offered a variety of clubs and activities that served multiple purposes. These extracurricular activities were designed to: 1) focus on musical ability; 2) emphasize speaking abilities; 3) prepare students for future responsibilities; 4) reinforce values the school and community believed were important; 5) recognize scholastic accomplishment; 6) enhance interest in academic content areas; and 7) encourage individual student interests.²¹⁰ A main reason for the variety of offerings was the limited resources of the students. Siddle Walker points to an understanding by the school that many of its students would not be able to afford private lessons to develop their talents or opportunities to be exposed to various experiences. Therefore, it became the school's responsibility to fill this vital role.

²⁰⁹ Hill, interview.

²¹⁰ Siddle Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools," 268.

Professor Aaron Brown probably did the most in establishing an extracurricular program at AHIS during his tenure as principal, 1936-38. As previously mentioned, he established a variety of clubs and organizations that fall solidly into the categories that Siddle Walker laid out. He established

[T]he Athletic Association, whose purpose was to train girls and boys to be great athletes; debating clubs to stimulate interest in the conclusion of problems; dramatic club, to train students who are more interested in dramatization; glee club, to train students who are interested in singing; Tri-Hi-Y and Hi-Y, to create, maintain and extend throughout the school and community high standards of Christian character.²¹¹

This foundation would serve as the starting point in establishing a full extra-curricular program at AHIS/BHHS.

The interviewees spoke fondly of the extracurricular activities that AHIS/BHHS offered and the specific ones they participated in. Paula Hill remembered being a part of “Anything they would let me be a part of.”²¹² She participated in the student government association (SGA), the flag corps, DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), and won many spelling bees. Esther Seaborn too fondly remembered her participation in extracurricular activities. She recalled being on the safety patrol and going on their annual trip to Washington D.C., being a part of the Debutantes and learning to do the Waltz, and being a part of the marching band. Of her experience in the band she said, “We thought we were something in our uniforms.”²¹³ She likewise remembered the school offering chorus and having excellent football and basketball teams.

²¹¹ Thurmond, 90.

²¹² Hill, interview.

²¹³ Seaborn, interview.

The bands at black high schools and colleges have historically been noted for their grand ability in musicality, performance, and showmanship. The Yellow Jacket Marching Band at AHIS/BHHS was no exception. Eileen Newsome said, “We had a good band. Those students went to school on band scholarships.”²¹⁴ At the same time they were showcasing their ability, they were also marching in used uniforms from the white school. Newsome remembered, “Dr. Anderson, he used to have parents patch them up.”²¹⁵ Not until 1968 when Benedict James approached the Board of Education to request funds did the school finally receive new band uniforms, in the history of the school. However band directors, Webster Anderson and Benedict James insisted that Professor Edwards was very supportive of the band and the music program at AHIS/BHHS. Anderson went on to say,

He was very supportive of music. Music is very expensive to have in your school so if you don't have the money to spend for it you're gonna always have problems. But he had the necessary ingredients of supporting it. It's not a hobby as such. I used every trick in the book to get instruments. I got music companies to credit parents. I got music companies that would use the rental system. If the students did well the parents would purchase it. I got in contact with the army bases to get their surplus instruments, very reasonable. All kinds of things.²¹⁶

When Benedict James replaced Anderson as band director he too found support in Professor Edwards. He said, “Schools spent so much money every year on instruments, having them repaired. That was in the budget.”²¹⁷ Before assuming his post as band director, James attended and graduated from AHIS and credits the school with having a hand in the establishment of his career in music.

²¹⁴ Newsome, interview.

²¹⁵ Newsome, interview.

²¹⁶ Anderson, interview.

²¹⁷ James, interview.

As a matter fact that's where I first started my musical career although I came from a musical family, but as far as getting a band organized that happened while I was in eighth grade. Yes, they had a music class, you could take and all types of music was introduced to students by the teacher in that class. I was fortunate enough to be under three different band directors which was a big help to me. Dr. Webster Anderson was the one who introduced me to jazz in high school and was also instrumental in me getting a music scholarship.²¹⁸

Likewise, as a student at AHIS, William Billows participated in the band. This proved to be the highlight of his tenure at the school. "Band was good because I was a music major [in college]. I think I put more into it, band and music, than anything else because I knew that's what my major was going to be. It was good, it was strong."²¹⁹

The major sports teams at AHIS/BHHS were its basketball and football teams. The girls' basketball team is noted as having been a legendary team consistently having winning seasons and winning several tournaments and region championships.²²⁰ Its football team too was noted for its ability. Before joining the Georgia High School Association in 1967, the team played in several Thanksgiving Day games at the University of Georgia football stadium.²²¹ After joining the Association and moving to 8AA, AHIS played all white schools, playing Athens High three times but never winning. They faced stiff competition when playing other larger schools throughout the state and the Carolina's but always seeming to end the season with winning records.

Marcus Thomas recalled that the contact between AHIS/BHHS and Athens High on the football field in those three games would serve to be vital during the subsequent consolidation of the two schools. Thomas insisted, "That was the process of getting people

²¹⁸ James, interview.

²¹⁹ Billows, interview.

²²⁰ "Tribute to Ms. Elizabeth G. King." *Zebra Magazine*, Vol. 6 (28), 1998, 17.

²²¹ Board of Education Minutes, 8, November 1967; .Allen, Walter Jr, "Coach James Lewis Holston, The Glory Days," *Zebra Magazine*, Volume 13 Issue 55, 2006, 6-7.

acclimated of associating with different races.”²²² AHIS/BHHS would eventually send three of the nation’s top players to the University of Georgia in the historic signing of the Athens Big Three in 1971.²²³ They were persuaded in part by Webster Anderson to remain in Georgia instead of accepting offers from the University of Michigan. Although these players graduated from the consolidated new school, Clarke Central High School in 1971 upon the final integration of the Clarke County School district, they are still claimed as AHIS/BHHS’s own.

In addition to the extracurricular activities, AHIS/BHHS featured all-school activities that were open to the public also. Siddle Walker notes that these types of school/community activities were common within the black community.²²⁴ Activities associated with graduation were some of the most revered in the black community in Athens. Bob Paris recalled the grandeur of the baccalaureate services of AHIS/BHHS. He said, “The church played an important part in the black community because many of the activities in connection with the graduation were done at the black church.”²²⁵ The preacher would deliver a sermon at the service and the entire community would show their support through their attendance in their finest wares. Other activities, like seniors giving their last will and testimony and senior prank day were also remembered as days of enjoyment by Paula Hill.²²⁶ These activities were all leading up to the grand finale, graduation.

²²² Thomas, interview.

²²³ Walter Allen Jr., “Coach James Lewis Holston, The Glory Days,” *Zebra Magazine*, Vol. 13 (55), 2006, 6-7.

²²⁴ Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools,” 270.

²²⁵ Paris, interview.

²²⁶ Hill, interview.

Bob Paris recalled graduation as being really festive. It would take place in the gym of AHIS/BHHS and the students would march through the gym wearing blue and gold with their parents and the entire community looking and cheering them on. The social activities that were apart of graduation were a staple in the Athens community and cherished deeply. Bob Paris and Paula Hill remembered these indispensable activities being eliminated upon integration. Bob Paris said the social events were cut out; he said that instead whites held the once community- and school-based activities in “private that would exclude you.” He went on to say, “We probably couldn’t afford to do it the way they did it. But we missed out on a whole lot of things... They just dropped everything. They eliminated so many of the most beautiful activities black folks really looked forward to, to keep you from being a part of it.”²²⁷

The extracurricular programs at AHIS/BHHS supported the strong academic program that was offered in both the liberal arts and vocational fields while it also served to connect the school and its community. These programs were supported by the strong leadership of the school and its teachers. Students were able to develop their talents in music, sports, dance, and other talents as well as connect with the community in celebratory ways. The extracurricular activities and the academic curriculum provided the students at AHIS/BHHS with a valued educational experience.

Community and Parental Involvement

Within the black system of education, the idea of community control is a strongly embedded one. Historians have noted that soon after the Civil War, newly freed blacks

²²⁷ Paris, interview.

insisted upon control of their school with outside assistance only.²²⁸ This insistence enabled the black community and its school to form a partnership that persisted into the twentieth century. Of the school and community relationship found in Athens Marcus Thomas insisted,

The desegregated system was more a community-based system that the schools were seen as part of the community because physically and intellectually and operationally they were. [T]hey were centrally located in communities where students lived and parents lived and worked. Consequently it was easy for the parent to be involved.²²⁹

One way the community showed support for its school was through financial contributions. As previously mentioned, black communities have long participated in a system of double-taxation in which they are taxed by the local and state governments to support the local schools and then placed an additional, informal tax on themselves to supplement the paltry sums that are provided by the local and state governments. The parents and community within the Athens community were not able to escape this reality. Through their participation in the local parent teacher association (PTA), parents at AHIS/BHHS built the gym at the original AHIS. Bob Paris remembered,

Yes it was a matter fact we had some real dedicated parents in the PTA. The gym that was there was pretty much constructed and paid for by the parents, by the PTA. They paid, they sold things: fish fries, chitterlings dinner, made cakes and pies. Didn't get it from the Board of Education. So you had the wonderful participation of parents because without them a lot of the things that the school had wouldn't have been without the parents raising the money and buying it and paying for it.²³⁰

In addition to building the gym, the parents also redesigned the band's marching uniforms as previously mentioned by Eileen Newsome. This stood to be a task because

²²⁸ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 4-9; Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 7.

²²⁹ Thomas, interview.

²³⁰ Paris, interview.

Athens High and AHIS/BHHS did not share the same colors. Parents were given the responsibility of essentially making new band uniforms that were gold and blue from old red and white tattered uniforms. The money, time, and materials that went into this effort were not reimbursed by the Board of Education. Additionally, Howard Edwards shared that due to meager budgets of their school and surrounding black schools, AHIS/BHHS would feed the opposing team after athletic competitions.²³¹ The home economics teachers prepared and served the teams and their coaches to compensate for the lack of funding that black schools suffered from in general.

As previously mentioned, this lack of funding created a deficit in the materials that black school received. To compensate for this, teachers used their ingenuity and creativity but also their paychecks. As a teacher in the black schools in Athens, Bob Paris said, “You had to spend your own money to buy stuff. You didn’t get an allowance for all that kind of stuff. Teachers spent a lot of their own money.”²³² There was an expectation within black communities in the South that the community would take care of its schools in the face of unequal funding. This was not lost on the black community in Athens, GA.

The PTA served as the entry point for many parents to become involved in the school and to ensure that their children were succeeding academically. When asked whether there was parent and community participation within and support for the school, all of the interviewees said yes, through the PTA. Esther Seaborn said that the PTA meetings were a place for parents and teachers to communicate, forming a relationship that allowed the

²³¹ Edwards, interview.

²³² Paris, interview.

parents and teachers to know each other.²³³ Eileen Newsome remembered, “We didn’t have any problems about parents and PTA, parents came to PTA meetings.”²³⁴ William Billows too insisted that parents regularly attended PTA meetings.

Yes, parents were always at Parent-Teacher meetings. Parents would always come by the school to check and see how their kids were doing. If there was a play or basketball game you would have parents all over the place. They would be checking on *too* how is my child doing, which the child knew that then. They wouldn’t just come to the play or just come to the game, they would also find the teacher and ask them how you doing. Yes, it was a lot of that then. I don’t see that now but it was a lot of that then. The parent was really interested in what the child was doing in school.²³⁵

This avid participation was probably a direct result of the value that was placed on education within the black community in Athens. Varner Dawes elaborated on this,

They [parents] knew that education was a way for their kids to improve their lives so they were behind them totally and completely. Everybody was committed to learning. It was a community thing. We had the support of the community and the school and it’s amazing what the community and school can do as one.²³⁶

This dedication and reliance upon education as a means of liberation proved to be a common theme amongst black communities in the South. Fairclough notes that black teachers and parents viewed education as democracy’s great equalizer; thereby pushing black children to succeed educationally in ways that were not open to them. Parents would “‘scheme and save and labor, sometimes for years in advance, to secure an education for their children.’”²³⁷

In some instances, however, parents did not seem to be supportive of the school and its purposes as indicated by Webster Anderson,

²³³ Seaborn, interview.

²³⁴ Newsome, interview.

²³⁵ Billows, interview.

²³⁶ Dawes, interview.

²³⁷ Fairclough, *Teaching and Equality*, 9-10.

Sadly enough during segregated schools blacks didn't always get the support they wanted. A lot of black parents would use the school to get rid of their kids for certain many hours of the day. A lot of them didn't have any interest in what you were trying to do except for whatever they wanted.²³⁸

In cases such as these, the smallness of the Athens community in general and the black community in particular played an important part. Fred Jones contended, "The students who succeeded in the black school probably did have certain advantages. In many cases they came from families that at least valued education, probably had education."²³⁹ Nonetheless due to the intimacy of the black Athens community, the value in education "was a value that could be spread to those not necessarily your own children."²⁴⁰

Through the PTA, parents and teachers formed relationships, financial obligations were met, and the value of education was disseminated to many students. Additionally, the PTA served as an avenue for advocacy. Siddie Walker defines these advocates as "parents and community leaders who interposed themselves between the needs of the school community and the power of the White school board and made requests on behalf of the school."²⁴¹ Athens had its share of advocates. Webster Anderson insists that on a number of occasions he was able to count on the strong parents support at AHIS/BHHS. "Yes, they saved my life more than once. [laughs] They knew what I was trying to do and they spoke up."²⁴² They spoke up to the Board of Education as pressure was mounting on the board to dismiss Anderson due to his unwavering and vocal commitment to speaking out against the injustices that he saw occurring within the school system.

²³⁸ Anderson, interview.

²³⁹ Jones, interview.

²⁴⁰ Jones, interview.

²⁴¹ Siddie Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools," 271.

²⁴² Anderson, interview.

Additionally, on a number of occasions community leaders approached the board about issues related to the educational equity within the school system. One such instance has been previously mentioned when on August 11, 1965, a letter was sent to the Board of Education from the PTA council, Interested Citizens, and the Men's Civic club resubmitting their requests for improvements for the grounds of all of the black schools in Athens.²⁴³ Previous to this request, black Athenians approached the board in 1963 with a petition for desegregation as mandated by the 1954 Supreme Court.²⁴⁴ Led by Rev. Hudson of Ebenezer Baptist Church and president of the Athens NAACP chapter, they requested that the board officials comply with the decision of the *Brown* case. In doing so the 135 petitioners asserted,

In the long run, [it would] be in the best interest of the total community, in that, it will make it better for quality of education for all children in the county. In addition thereto, it will relieve many of the inequities which presently exist in the public schools in Athens and Clarke County.²⁴⁵

Although the petition did not immediately resolve the issue of segregation and desegregation, there was a more concerted effort to implement the board's then four year old Freedom of Choice policy. Similarly the parents complained to the board concerning the differences in course offerings they saw between AHIS/BHHS and Athens High. Webster Anderson remembered this fight well. He said that within the black community comments were being voiced, "Well at the white high school the kids are taking this, taking that and then there was this big move to get all the kids out of the black schools and go to the white schools."²⁴⁶ However loud this call may have been, it did not gain enough strength at that time to speed

²⁴³ Board of Education Minutes, 11, August 1965.

²⁴⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 14, August 1963.

²⁴⁵ Board of Education Minutes, 14, August 1963.

²⁴⁶ Anderson, interview.

up the process of integration although it did seem to support the fight that Anderson waged - to get equitable resources at the black schools. He said the answer was not necessarily having the black students go to the white schools; instead “the answer was to get those same courses offered at *all* the schools.”²⁴⁷ Nonetheless parental and community advocates within the Athens community were integral in voicing the needs of the AHIS/BHHS. They used an avenue that may not have been as available to the school leadership and teachers. In this way the school worked in tandem with the community to meet its needs.

Finally, Siddle Walker uncovers a form of parental and community involvement and support that was unrelated to presence, advocacy, or finances. This form of involvement and support allowed the teachers and principals to concentrate almost totally on the educational process without many distractions from disciplinary problems. According to Siddle Walker, parents “participated in the complementary reinforcement of community values” that supported ideas concerning respect.²⁴⁸ Fred Jones found this idea to permeate the entire community.

Also for the time respect for teachers was important and it was stressed by the community in general so even if the parents did not have, were not educated they still had respect for the educators and so children were encouraged or made to be respectful and be obedient and that’s certainly a part of the educational process.²⁴⁹

Varner Dawes too recalled the attitude of respect that was an understood fact at AHIS/BHHS. He said, “They had men and ladies in the building who you knew you had to respect. So it was respect.”²⁵⁰ There was a concerted effort on the parts of AHIS/BHHS

²⁴⁷ Anderson, interview.

²⁴⁸ Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools,” 272.

²⁴⁹ Jones, interview.

²⁵⁰ Dawes, interview.

students to adhere to the levels of respect and behavior that were expected because of the consequences that would be involved upon waiver from these expectations. Dawes recalled, “You don’t want nobody going home telling your parents you weren’t paying attention.”²⁵¹ Fred Jones too insisted, “There was always an expectation that what went on in school would eventually come back home and we had a desire to make sure that anything that got back home was positive not negative.”²⁵² Because the parents instilled this sense of respect for the teachers and principals any waiver from that would call for corrective measures from both the school officials and the parents. William Billows summed it up well,

A child do wrong in school the teacher spank them, whoop them, beat them down or whatever it was. When the parent made it to the school they asked one question, “what did he do?” And as a child that child knew he was going to get another whooping when that child got home. Back then the parent had the support of the teacher and the teacher had the support of the parent so the child knew when he got to school he was coming for one reason, to *learn* and to obey.²⁵³

Paula Hill expressed the same sentiments. When asked if a lot of students got into trouble she responded,

No, because you didn’t want to get paddled and then when you got home you were gonna get another one. So who wanted to get in trouble? I’m trying to remember if I saw a fight. If I did maybe one but there was not fighting, cursing because we had respect for the teacher, total respect.²⁵⁴

Community and parent involvement proved to be a vital aspect of the educational process at AHIS/BHHS and a factor in the value that was found in the school.

²⁵¹ Dawes, interview.

²⁵² Jones, interview.

²⁵³ Billows, interview.

²⁵⁴ Hill, interview.

Class and Colorism

Although education served as a connecting force within the black Southern communities, historians and sociologists have been able to uncover stratifications within the structure of black society. These stratifications have been noted to be based upon class and color. Ideas concerning class and color stratifications will be explored as they occurred within the larger black society and how and if they were reflected within the black community in Athens.

Class stratifications within the black community have their origins in the forced sexual encounters between the enslaved black woman and her white owner. Due to the owner's kinship to this offspring, the mulatto children were often granted privileges that other enslaved blacks were not. Some of these privileges included jobs as servants in the owner's house, training in skilled labor, and manumission. In fact, mulattoes formed the majority of the free black population before the Civil War.²⁵⁵ Therefore, upon Emancipation, mulattoes had a head-start on newly freed blacks, thereby making up disproportionate numbers of the middle and upper classes. From these beginnings, sociologists have researched how color has and continues to play a role in the stratification of blacks within the educational system, job sector, and class status.

In a study conducted by Freeman et al. in 1966, their findings demonstrated that within the black middle-class, color operates "as a determinate of chances to achieve status."²⁵⁶ Color was not proven to be an overriding factor in the status of middle class

²⁵⁵ Bart Landry. *The New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1987), 23-24; Howard E. Freeman et al., "Color Gradation and Attitudes among Middle-income Negroes," *American Sociological Review* 31 no. 3(June 1966): 366.

²⁵⁶ Freeman et al., "Color Gradation and Attitudes among Middle-income Negroes," *American Sociological Review* 31 no. 3 (June 1962), 373.

blacks; instead “it operates as do other family status indicators to limit and outline the course of [African-American] lives both with the Negro community and the larger American society.”²⁵⁷ Indeed the function of color is not confined to the black community as demonstrated in studies showing that light skinned blacks had a greater opportunity for prestigious employment by the white gatekeepers than did dark skinned blacks.²⁵⁸ Ransford’s findings revealed that for non-college graduates “the light are in higher status occupations than the dark.”²⁵⁹ However, the data, collected in 1965, also show that high educational attainment can override color preferences of both white and black alike. On the other hand, Keith and Herring demonstrate that as late as 1991 “complexion continued to be a significant predictor of... educational attainment, occupation, and income among black Americans.”²⁶⁰

However important color proved to be for the white community, Ransford’s results showed a declining importance of color in light of educational attainment within the black community. This supports other research during the 1960s that indicated that color within the black community lost its primal importance during the time period in which the black middle class expanded significantly and when blacks began to assert “black is beautiful”.²⁶¹ Keith and Herring support this finding in asserting that blacks began to think differently about their blackness; however, this new thinking did not translate into the white world. Nonetheless,

²⁵⁷ Freeman et al., 374.

²⁵⁸ H. Edward Ransford, “Skin Color, Life Chances, and anti-White Attitude. *Social Problems* 18 no. 2 (1970) ; Verna Keith and Cedric Herring, “Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 97 no.3 (Autumn 1991).

²⁵⁹ Ransford, 170.

²⁶⁰ Keith and Herring, 777.

²⁶¹ Norval Glenn, “Negro Prestige Criteria: A Case Study in the Bases of Prestige,” *The Journal of American Sociology* 68 no. 6 (May 1963); E. Franklin Frazier; Keith and Herring.

within the black community status began to be based upon education and other criteria of success.²⁶²

A study conducted by Norval Glenn found that “formal education has been the most important determinant of Negro prestige...ranking above occupation, income, and all other prestige criteria.”²⁶³ Color, ancestry, and status of employment became less important as the black community became more heterogeneous due to new opportunities during the 1960s. Landry notes that upon blacks’ entrance into the industrial sector, especially in the northern cities, the black middle class expanded thereby reducing the importance of color as a status factor within the black community.²⁶⁴ This was in part due to darker blacks becoming more educated and economically successful and marrying into the old mulatto families thereby darkening the complexion of the black elite.

However, vestiges of colorism specifically within the educational system did linger as Morris and Morris note the role colorism played within the educational system of a small town in northwest Alabama (1965-1980).²⁶⁵ Some of those attending the once segregated school noted favoritism on the part of some teachers for those students who were fairer skinned. This preference extended into extracurricular activities such as the majorettes in which most of the participants were lighter skinned and into the dating preferences of boys who seemed to have preferred lighter skinned girls. This color preference was noticed in a study conducted by Seeman in 1946 when he showed that pre-adolescent groups of Negro children based their choice of friendship on skin color even when they admitted that color

²⁶² Glenn, 657.

²⁶³ Ibid., 657.

²⁶⁴ Landry, 67-70.

²⁶⁵ Morris and Morris, 80-86.

was not a motivation.²⁶⁶ The findings showed that the children had a strong commitment to light skin with skin color differences being associated with differences in friendship and reputational status.²⁶⁷

Besides distinctions of color within the black community, class stratifications also served as real divisions within the community. Jones as well as Davis, Gardner, and Gardner in two separate studies uncovered three distinct classes within the black community: upper, middle, and lower.²⁶⁸ In regard to education, Jones noted the differences in educational attainment for the three classes, stating that in the upper class education was a must while middle class families made extreme sacrifices to ensure the education of at least one child. On the other hand, the lower class persons were found to be the least educated. Although education was respected and valued, “their low economic status prevents their providing these advantages for their children.”²⁶⁹ Jones further discovered that education was deemed to be the most important criteria of social class.

Although there were class differences among the black community, these categorizations did not and do not allow for a one-to-one comparison with the classes of the white population. Jones’ study revealed that the upper class were not defined according to their wealth, rather their status was based upon their “attitudes toward wealth, together with what they are able to do with the little they possess because of the limitations imposed upon

²⁶⁶ Melvin Seeman, “Skin Color Values in Three All-Negro School Classes,” *American Sociological Review* 11 no. 3 (June 1946); 320.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁶⁸ Clifton R. Jones, “Social Stratification in the Negro Population: A Study of Social Classes in South Boston, Virginia,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 15 no.1 (Winter 1946); Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner. *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941).

²⁶⁹ Jones, 10.

them in social and economic life.”²⁷⁰ These limitations further defined the black middle class. Landry insists that those blacks who occupied the middle class have not been able to “seek shelter in the anonymity and security of the broad-based American middle class in the way upwardly mobile white ethnics have.”²⁷¹ Instead their skin color has marginalized this class and continuously connected them to the plight of the lower class. In this way Landry insists that we must speak of a black middle class and a white middle class.

In fact, Patillo-McCoy, in her 1999 study, speaks to this continued existence of differences between the two classes.²⁷² The black middle-class neighborhoods of today are “characterized by more poverty, higher crime, worse schools, and fewer services than white middle-class neighborhoods.”²⁷³ Moreover, unlike the white middle-class, the black middle-class is connected to the poor “through friendships and kinship ties, as well as geographically.”²⁷⁴ Additionally, the black middle-class will experience educational, social, political, and economic policies that adversely affect the poor at a disproportionate rate than their white middle-class counterparts.²⁷⁵

However seemingly attached these social groups may have been to one another, Davis, Gardner, and Gardner pointed to the antagonism among the three separate classes, with each possessing dogmas of derision.²⁷⁶ These dogmas conveyed sentiments of colorism,

²⁷⁰ Jones, 8.

²⁷¹ Landry, 22.

²⁷² Mary Patillo-McCoy. *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁷⁶ Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary Gardner, 230-235.

cleanliness, and educational attainment. In fact, according to Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, the idea of solidarity within the race and race pride did not become a factor unless a member of the upper class was attempting to dissolve these antagonisms.²⁷⁷ The middle class used dialect and folk humor to connect to the lower class.

This apparent derision has led Fairclough to conclude that studies of famous social scientists such as Charles S. Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, John Dollard, and Allison Davis have suggested that “African American teachers often favored middle-class children and discriminated against those of darker complexion.”²⁷⁸ In Davis and Dollard’s study of black communities in New Orleans and Natchez, Mississippi, the researchers assert that children of the upper and upper-middle classes more readily obtain the approval of their teachers.²⁷⁹ This approval is in part due to the teacher’s reward she obtains from the parents of her upper-middle and upper class students, thereby solidifying her position within the class system. In witnessing this, the lower class child’s educational aspirations become low. According to Davis and Dollard this lower class child “learns from his family and teachers that the chances for a person in his lower-class position to finish high school and college, and to become socially mobile through education, are so slight in view of economic position and classways of his family, that they scarcely exist.”²⁸⁰

As thorough as this research presents itself to be, it strikes me as being inconsistent with other research pertaining to black education. In multiple scholarly works the

²⁷⁷ Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary Gardner, 236.

²⁷⁸ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 46.

²⁷⁹ Allison Davis & John Dollard. *Children of Bondage: The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1940), 286.

²⁸⁰ Davis and Dollard, 286.

monumental sacrifices of members of the black community in an effort to gain and provide an education have been documented²⁸¹; therefore, it would be inconsistent for this effort to be usurped by the middle class teachers from the larger community in an effort to appease the ranks of the upper-middle and upper class families. Three-fourths of the black population represented the lower class during this time²⁸², making it hard to understand how education was working primarily for the upper-middle and upper classes which constituted an even smaller portion than if the middle class were included as they were not in the Davis and Dollard study. The sharp increase in the literacy statistics also don't bear out this interpretation in that by 1910 the literacy rate for the black community was at 70 percent from a low of 5 percent in 1860.²⁸³ Additionally in 1870 only 9.2 percent of blacks between the ages of 5 and 20 were enrolled in school but by 1930 this figure had increased to 60 percent.²⁸⁴ Were the literacy and attendance rates continuing to rise in the face of class and color discrimination from teachers and low educational aspirations from three-fourths of the population?

In order to properly answer this question and assess the impact of class and colorism within the black community in Athens I asked the interviewees questions concerning class and colorism within the educational setting at AHIS/BHHS. Presented below are their responses. I have included entire responses to ensure an accurate account of the effect of class stratifications within AHIS/BHHS community.

²⁸¹ John Dollard. *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1937); Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*; Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential*.

²⁸² Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary Gardner, 221.

²⁸³ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 31.

²⁸⁴ Dollard, 203.

Fred Jones and William Billows both had fathers who worked as teachers and/or administrators within the school system. Fred Jones' father worked as the middle school principal when Fred Jones attended middle school and high school. He later went on to become the curriculum director for the entire school system before full integration. William Billows' father Marvin Billows, worked as a principal in a rural county and later transferred to AHIS/BHHS to work as a social studies teacher. As noted above, he is credited by Marcus Thomas as being the teacher who set him on his successful path in politics.

Since their parents were a part of the educational system putting them squarely in the middle class I asked if they thought they received any special privileges from teachers due to their economic class. In asking this question I made the interviewees aware of research by Fairclough in his assertion that those black students who would later grow up to become teachers usually did well in school and would therefore have positive memories of their experience in the all-black schools.²⁸⁵ Although these gentlemen did not become teachers, they nonetheless excelled at AHIS/BHHS and could therefore be placed in this category. Below are their responses in full.

Fred Jones responded,

About the only thing I felt was that if I did anything wrong I would be more sternly punished and punishment is sometimes a great incentive to work harder but teachers certainly gave me no special consideration in a positive respect [laughs] but you know maybe the fear of punishment was enough to make me do better. When I went to college nobody knew my parents and yet I felt I had the same relationship with my college instructors as I had with other instructors, but in a segregated environment there seemed to be a closer relationship between the teachers and the students in that the teachers would call the students by name and give them almost a personal challenge to do better. They would also speak of your friends and let you know that they knew who your social circle was and make comments either positive or negative about your associates. And so the teachers had a knowledge of your total environment. The teachers themselves were in general products of the

²⁸⁵ Fairclough, "The Costs of *Brown*", 45-46.

community. They did not come from other places so they grew up on the same streets and the same communities and they generally had no economic advantage historically over the students they were teaching. And so they still had a personal knowledge of streets and communities and churches parent and grandparents and other people that they would call on to make education more personal and they would use that in a positive sense. The teachers knew who your girlfriend was or your boyfriend was, what sport you played and they used that to incentivize you to do better or to make positive changes. There was always an expectation that what went on in school would eventually come back home and we had a desire to make sure that anything that got back home was positive not negative. I know for a fact that applied to every student, not just children of educators. Of course for our community we didn't have very much of an elite class. Teachers were probably the most elite, teachers, preachers, and the one doctor [laughs] and the mortician. So it's not like we had a ton of folks in any elite class. I can tell you that there was not enough class stratification for it to matter. [laughs]²⁸⁶

When asked about the presence of colorism within the AHIS/BHHS community he responded insisting that this concept did not play a central role.

It's interesting that you bring that up because you often hear about people who were high yellow and what not but since they were few and far between and most of the discussion of people who were light was never real positive. In fact most people who were real light didn't seem to enjoy that distinction real much. I don't know that it had much of an impact anyway. Unless it affected the way the person thought of themselves. Certainly if a person perceived his color as a positive or negative then it probably had an impact but that came more from the inside than the outside and it was probably already established before the person even came to school. In most cases what happened after a person came to school was an extension of what happened was started before they even came to school. [*No special treatment from teachers?*] No, none.²⁸⁷

This same question concerning special privileges, classism, and colorism was posed to William Billows. He immediately said he saw no validity in these claims. The remainder of his response is below.

I would like to know where they picked this up at. No, my brother, my sister, nor I were shown any special privileges or teachers taking more time on us. If anything they were harder on us because of who we were. And I can truthfully

²⁸⁶ Jones, interview.

²⁸⁷ Jones, interview.

say when I was in high school I didn't have a serious bone in my body. I was there for the fun. The teachers had to buckle down on me harder because they knew that William Billows wasn't going to do anything unless you made him do it. He was there to have a good time.²⁸⁸

From their responses I would assert that generally colorism nor classism played a significant role in the lives of the children of teachers who attended AHIS/BHHS and in the black education community in Athens as a whole. There may have been some instances of favoritism based upon class and color but a general statement can be made as to the absence of stratification based upon these factors for teachers' children.

The question then must be asked whether class and colorism played a part in the lives of those students whose parents were not a part of the school system and who were not a part of the middle class. Below I have included the responses of four interviewees who fit those descriptions.

Marcus Thomas did not feel as though his experience at BHHS was marred by classism and colorism. He said, "I would not have benefited from being one of the light-skinned. [laughs] Obviously that wasn't one of my attributes. Daddy sharecropped cotton so obviously we were not middle class. I had a positive experience."²⁸⁹ As mentioned above, Marcus Thomas would later go on to become the first black person elected to the Georgia General Assembly from Athens since Reconstruction and later serve as Georgia's Labor Commissioner. He attributed his preparation to assume these roles to his educational foundation that was formed at BHHS.

Paula Hill too considered her time at BHHS to have been a positive experience. She insisted,

²⁸⁸ Billows, interview.

²⁸⁹ Thomas, interview.

I had a great experience and I was black, dark-skinned and I had a wonderful experience. I just didn't see where the light-skinned... To be perfectly honest I dealt more with my family and their friends and everybody was dark-skinned. My momma was very light-skinned but we took after our daddy. It never fazed me. I couldn't see the difference. Blanche [a student at BHHS] was light-skinned; she didn't get treated no different from me. To me they [light-skinned students] really didn't do that much. They weren't as active as the dark-skinned. I just can't see it [colorism]. Everybody treated everybody's children the same because they lived right there in the same neighborhood. The light skinned people kept to themselves probably because it was more of us [dark skinned] than them. I think they were more miserable than we were. I can't see where a teacher thought a child of light color got any different treatment than a dark-skinned child. I don't remember a light-skinned child being much up front in nothing. All our cheerleaders were dark, football, basketball, officers in clubs. Everything was dark-skinned. So no they didn't get any special treatment.²⁹⁰

In speaking about classism she specifically referenced Marcus Thomas and his economic status. Of his situation she said he “came from nothing but he was smart and he wasn't treated badly by the teachers because he was so poor.”²⁹¹

Paula Hill's comments bring up a number of points related to the arguments concerning colorism. She pointed to the fact that AHIS/BHHS had a large contingent of dark-skinned students and as a result most of those who participated in largely seen activities were the dark-skinned students. Therefore she alludes to a kind of reversal effect of colorism, in which light does not lead to special privileges but a harder existence. However, Hill did not say that teachers treated light-skinned children worse; she instead insisted that everyone was treated equally.

Pertaining to classism, she contended that students were not looked down upon by teachers due to their economic status as evidenced by the treatment of Marcus Thomas. In fact, Varner Dawes spoke to this point of classism as he too occupied the working class

²⁹⁰ Hill, interview.

²⁹¹ Hill, interview.

position growing up in the housing projects in Athens. He insisted that in the environment he grew up in everybody was committed to learning as a way to improving one's life. This commitment transferred to the school environment also. He said,

To be honest with you we didn't have that problem at Burney Harris because they were recognizing kids from Broad Acres, Rocksprings [housing projects in Athens], whoever could do the work. If you could do the work... now the counselors had an issue, they were classist but I never had an issue with my teachers. They knew I was poorer than poor. A lot of my classmates who grew up in Broad Acres and Rocksprings, all of them are successful. A lot of successful people came out of the projects.²⁹²

He went on to say that if you had talent, the teachers recognized it. He remembered a comment someone made in reference to the key to being successful must have been living in the projects because so many people who achieved a level of success came from the projects. Finally he insisted that there were people other than just those from the middle class who classified the school as being a good school. However, he did mention a counselor who did exhibit vestiges of classism. He said,

I had a counselor who had problems with students in public housing. They were very elitist. They didn't like kids from public housing and they had problems, thinking that why are you smart, why do you know more than these other kids who don't live in public housing? But in general the teachers were lovingly kind.²⁹³

The counselor at AHIS/BHHS seemed to adhere to the notions of classism noted in the previously referenced research; however, this did not appear to be a widely held sentiment amongst the educators at AHIS/BHHS. To be sure that this lone statement by the counselor is not dismissed, one can assume that there did exist within the AHIS/BHHS and black community in Athens notions such as classism and colorism even if they were confined to certain pockets within the community.

²⁹² Dawes, interview.

²⁹³ Dawes, interview.

In reference to colorism, Dawes similar to Hill and Jones made reference to the home life before transferring to the school culture. He said, “In my house it [colorism] was not an issue because my momma was brown. I can’t remember teachers treating anybody differently because academically you had to perform. You could be lighter than light but if you couldn’t do the problem it didn’t make any difference.”²⁹⁴ He made reference to his mother being brown because he could be considered light-skinned but for him light or brown did not matter because he saw examples of both in the home. He saw that in his home all family members were treated the same and he noticed how this same equality of treatment occurred in his school setting.

The nearly total absence of treatment of students based upon social class and color at AHIS/BHHS indicates that the literature presented by sociologists and historians did not ring true for all black communities. Instead the literature that speaks to the cohesiveness of the black communities in their efforts to establish centers of learning more closely aligns itself with the historic segregated black schools. It is futile for one to believe that there did not exist stratifications within the black community, but this division did not play itself out in the educational settings in such a way that hindered the development of the majority of black students. In other words, the classism and colorism that may have existed did not prove to be determinative for those within the AHIS/BHHS community. I believe that the experiences of the students at AHIS/BHHS bear this out.

Professional Networks

Vanessa Siddle Walker has taken the research concerning the narrative of the black segregated school in the South into a new direction. In a personal conversation with Siddle

²⁹⁴ Dawes, interview

Walker in 2009 she insisted that we did not need another Caswell County.²⁹⁵ Instead it is imperative for the research to move in the direction of the *how* and *why* of Caswell County along with the *how* and *why* of the other black segregated Southern schools that resembled Caswell County High School. To properly investigate these questions researchers must look to the professional networks that characterized the black system of education.

Professional networks had many different faces for black educators of which three will be discussed: 1) the black principal, 2) professional education associations, and 3) professional development. The existence of the professional networks alone did not work to create the black system of education; instead it required school leaders to disseminate this information from the national and state level to the regional, local, and eventually individual school levels. Principals served to be this instrument. As the conduit between the community and the school, the black principals also served as the conduit between the professional organizations' goals, missions, and strategies for the black schools and the local schools' realization and implementation of those goals, missions, and strategies. Siddle Walker asserts that the black principal served to disseminate the ideology that dominated the black system of education.²⁹⁶ Without an understanding of the role of the black principal, "coexisting in a broader professional world of black schooling, the stories of multiple similarities among individual schools, including the similarity in mission, defy explanation."²⁹⁷ Black principals were responsible for "linking the larger vision for black education to individual school communities."²⁹⁸ They worked with the community to supplant the attempt by the white

²⁹⁵ Vanessa Siddle Walker, personal conversation, March 2009. Caswell County High School is the black segregated school that is researched in Siddle Walker's book, *Their Highest Potential*.

²⁹⁶ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 9.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

superintendents and boards of education to provide an inferior education. In doing so the principals were also responsible for encouraging professional development among teachers. Therefore, the individual efforts of principals provided for a framework of a black system of education that sustained and propagated itself throughout the South and well into the twentieth century.

As discussed, Fairclough noted that there was an explosion of membership in the black professional organizations which resulted in virtually full participation from black educators. Siddle Walker noted that many schools reported 100 percent membership in the state and national professional organizations.²⁹⁹ Within these organizations ideas were espoused, teaching techniques were developed and disseminated, and legal strategies were formulated. Specifically in Georgia, the GTEA provided a space for these types of discussions that now helps to explain the *how* and *why* of many black schools in Georgia. This organization's impact on Georgia's schools and AHIS/BHHS in particular will be expounded upon later. However, similar to the other state teacher associations, black educators participated in it on a large scale.

Professional development for black teachers occurred mainly in the form of summer institutes, acquisition of post-graduate degrees, and local school professional developments. Summer Institutes were provided at HBCUs for the purposes of extending and improving teaching techniques and pedagogies as well as to train new teachers. Black teachers were constantly pushed by their principals to acquire post-graduate degrees in the efforts to strengthen the profession and the teaching of their students. In his dissertation, Winifred Pitts cited Ulysses Byas, principal of a high school in Gainesville, GA, as constantly encouraging

²⁹⁸ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor* 9.

²⁹⁹ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 314; Siddle Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools", 266.

his teachers to go back to school as he believed higher levels of education was the key to reaching one's potential.³⁰⁰ Siddle Walker noted that by the 1930s black teachers' average level of education increased to where only 6.8% of black high school teachers were more poorly prepared than white teachers.³⁰¹ Black teachers continuously improved their level of teaching certificates and a number were even acquiring the Ph.D. from prestigious Northern universities.³⁰² For those teachers who could not or would not return to school, local black schools offered on-going professional developments at the school sites or in conjunction with other black schools in the district. The district-level and school-level professional developments served to foster a cohesion amongst the educators in that district or school which led to a continuum of educational excellence.

Professor Homer T. Edwards

Athens High and Industrial School/Burney-Harris High School existed within this framework of the black system of education. The school's long-time principal, Homer T. Edwards, is noted for being actively involved in professional networks that served to connect AHIS/BHHS's ideology to that of the larger one that guided the black Southern segregated schools. The principals who preceded laid the groundwork for this perspective. From its inception AHIS/BHHS has served as a place of liberation through learning. This goal of AHIS/BHHS coincides with the mission of black schools throughout the South upon emancipation. Its first principal, Professor Harris, began the first state summer school for black educators in 1926 as a way of continued professional development for not only Athens'

³⁰⁰ Pitts, 144.

³⁰¹ Siddle Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools," 266.

³⁰² Ibid., 266.

teachers but for the surrounding area also.³⁰³ Under Professor Brown the school's extracurricular offerings greatly expanded, reflecting one of the factors that led to educational excellence in the black segregated schools. Professor Duval was actively involved in the GTEA, participated in the accreditation processes of AHIS/BHHS, and remained in regular contact with the Director of Negro Education for the state of Georgia.³⁰⁴ The activities of the preceding principals allowed Professor Edwards to continue and expand the connectivity of AHIS/BHHS to the larger ideology expressed within the professional networks.

Homer T. Edwards was born on November 11, 1908 in McRae, Georgia to Frank Edwards and Willie Grimes.³⁰⁵ He attended private schools throughout his primary and secondary grades until he enrolled in Georgia State and College, now Savannah State University, in 1927. Professor Edwards excelled in his studies as an Agricultural Education major and with a double minor in English and music, graduating as valedictorian in 1931. He went on to earn a master's degree in education at Atlanta University while later completing further study at the University of Michigan and New York University.

Education proved to be a likely career for Edwards as he got an early start teaching a high school class while he was still a high school student.³⁰⁶ He began his career in education as principal of Jefferson County Training School, Louisville, Georgia in 1931 and in 1938 became principal of McDuffie County Training School in Thomson, Georgia. According to

³⁰³ Thurmond, 88.

³⁰⁴ L.M. Lester to Principal C.W. DuVual, Athens H.& I. School, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23528, Folder 12-6-71 NTEC – Advisory Council Meeting 1940, Morrow, GA.

³⁰⁵ “Celebration of Life for Professor H.T. Edwards, Sr.” Funeral Program for H.T. Edwards, Ebenezer Baptist Church, West; Athens, GA, 2007.

³⁰⁶ Edwards, interview.

his son, Edwards taught effectiveness and efficiency in farming since most of his students in the rural Georgia counties came from the farm and would likely return to the farm. He too had experienced the life in rural Georgia and could appreciate a career in farming. This appreciation for practicality within black schools continued when he moved to Athens upon the acceptance of the principalship at Athens High and Industrial School in 1945. With this post he also became the supervising principal of all black schools in Athens. As the principal of AHIS/BHHS for twenty-three years, Professor Edwards aligned the ideology and educational structure of his school with that of the overarching mission of black segregated schools in the South.

As outlined above, AHIS/BHHS possessed the four characteristics that black schools of that era boasted in accounting for their educational excellence: 1) strong leadership, 2) caring teachers, 3) academic curriculum and extracurricular activities, and 4) parental and community support. The four characteristics were integral in meeting the perceived educational needs of black students. In order to properly live out this mandate, Siddle Walker insists that black educators looked to both the thinking of the black intellectual elite as well as the best practices espoused within white northern schools of education.³⁰⁷ Siddle Walker contends, “Black educators’ understanding of best practices was also mediated by their access to, and interaction with, the intellectual elite of the black race.”³⁰⁸ Although the elite could not be found in every local community espousing their belief concerning black education, their presence at national and state professional associations’ conventions allowed for their interaction with local black educational leaders. Within these interactions black

³⁰⁷ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 7.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

intellectuals became integral to the problem-solving that occurred in black communities in an effort to develop an educational agenda “for black students that was designed to lift a people up into full democratic citizenship.”³⁰⁹ Additionally, according to James Anderson, the rise in doctorate earnings in education from black educators between 1920 and 1951 from predominately white institutions came largely from eighteen elite white graduate schools.³¹⁰ Their presence at these institutions allowed for them to be a part of national conversations about education. Professor Edwards was no exception.

In attending Atlanta University Professor Edwards was no doubt in contact with the black intellectual elite. As a part of the requirements to gain a master’s degree, in 1946 he submitted a paper entitled “A Proposed Plan for Initiating and Developing a Music Program in the Athens High and Industrial School, Athens, Georgia.” This is particularly of interest in that during this general time, the Athens Board of Education did not provide additional funding for music at AHIS/BHHS. His son, Howard Edwards recounted Professor Edward’s ability to incorporate subjects such as music and chorus into the curriculum as long as the black schools didn’t require additional money from the district. As demonstrated above, the band directors used old uniforms from the high school to march in while they also used creative ways to secure instruments for their students. However, as Webster Anderson recounted, Edwards was dedicated to the music program at AHIS/BHHS. This dedication extended from his personal interest and background in music but was nonetheless influenced by his attendance at Atlanta University.

³⁰⁹ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 8.

³¹⁰ James Anderson. “Toward a History of Bibliography of the Afro-American Doctorate and Professoriate in Education, 1896 to 1980,” in *The Black Education Professoriate*. SPE Monograph Series. (Minneapolis; Society of Professors of Education 1984); 27.

Through his attendance in the master's program, Edwards was able to formulate a plan that would incorporate the implementation of a comprehensive music program at AHIS/BHHS. When asked if Professor Edwards was able to implement a music program at AHIS/BHHS, as his paper suggested, band directors Webster Anderson and Benedict James both responded in the affirmative.³¹¹ As the years progressed the music program improved as funds were made available by the Board of Education. As mentioned, the band finally received new uniforms in 1968 under the direction of Benedict James and money was dedicated to the repair of instruments. Although at the time Edwards wrote the paper, the financial support of the district was not available, this did not preclude him from espousing an ideal and setting about to implement it.

Another program that Edwards saw as essential to the high school was its public relations program. According to a paper written by Edwards in 1950 as a part of his University of Michigan studies, he insisted that the principal should serve as its leader in its public relations program in the secondary schools. In "The Principal as a Leader in the School's Public Relation Program: Some Agencies and Techniques" Edwards contended that "public opinion is one of the most potent forces in a community for the promoting or hindering the acquisition of equal educational opportunities – an American ideal – the school cannot neglect its obligation to foster it."³¹² The principal is thus responsible for the "maintenance of understanding and cooperation between the public schools.... In fact, the success of the actual program of instruction in the schools is often dependent, to a large

³¹¹ Anderson and James, interviews

³¹² Homer T. Edwards, July 1950, Term Report, School of Education, University of Michigan. Archived at his son's house.

degree, upon the nature of the relationship existing between the public and their schools.”³¹³

In these sentences Edwards espoused the essential connection between the school and the community it serves with the principal serving as the conduit between the two.

Although it is not clear whether Edwards’ idea of community and school relationship originated while attending this predominately white institution, he nonetheless further developed the idea with vestiges readily seen in the structure of the AHIS/BHHS educational program. This speaks to Anderson’s point that while attending these predominately white institutions, black educational leaders were able to participate in the larger discussions surrounding education while implementing these ideas in their own school.³¹⁴ Edwards was able to uniquely incorporate the idea of public relations in realizing educational equality for his students, possibly an unintended consequence of the course.

Throughout his papers Edwards continued to espouse beliefs about education for democracy while schools being that place to foster democracy. In a paper entitled “Secondary Education for Democracy: Principles and Problems” submitted for a class at New York University in 1955, Edwards continuously quoted well-known education philosophers in detailing his own philosophy of education. He heavily endorsed George Counts’ book, *Education and American Civilization* (1952), in that he believed it demonstrated how education can make democracy very real. Edwards went on to quote Harold Benjamin when he talked about education for freedom through tolerance of differences, the cultivation of every socially valuable idiosyncrasy, and a maximum of original contributions to the general welfare.³¹⁵ Last he quoted Don Dodson when he said

³¹³ Edwards, July 1950, Term Report.

³¹⁴ Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 8.

that since the 1954 *Brown* decision, the front lines of the battle for democracy had changed from Korea and Indo-China to Richmond and Atlanta. All of the references leading to the final one are very telling of Edwards and the ideological efforts he waged at AHIS/BHHS. These efforts were developed from both the white and black intellectual elite demonstrating how national and state ideologies can filter down into local educational endeavors through the principal. The limited number of white Northern universities and black Southern universities that black principals attended help to answer the *why* and *how* of the black segregated Southern schools.

What is further revealed in these papers is the dedication that black schools had to the tenets of this nation espoused by the Founding Fathers. Professor Edwards demonstrated that he knew, understood, and agreed with these tenets and his attempt to implement them within his school would not be a secret. Specifically in the area of high school dropouts he insisted that

dropping out of school is a serious and complex problem. Since I believe that the school can, should, and must contribute much to the individual, I believe that it must make every effort to hold him long enough to direct his growth and development into acceptable channels in order that he may be an asset to the culture and not a liability.³¹⁶

As previously mentioned, the Founding Fathers asserted that the building of a new nation would require an education that could fulfill practical and political purposes related to a useful education. This would allow the lay people to pursue individual goals while also contributing to the development and sustainability of the nation. Edwards counted his students as those that would fulfill that call even if the rest of America did not.

³¹⁵ Homer T. Edwards, August 1955, "Secondary Education for Democracy: Principles and Problems," School of Education, New York University. Archived at his son's house.

³¹⁶ Edwards, August 1955, "Secondary Education for Democracy: Principles and Problems".

It was earlier noted by Bob Paris that Professor Edwards did not believe in expelling students from school due to bad behavior. Instead Edwards believed in keeping children in school because he further deemed that they cannot learn in the streets. Remaining in school would allow the student to become an asset to his black community, a feat that was well worth the effort.

As scholars recognize the similarities of the black segregated schools one can readily assert that this knowledge and understanding was not only confined to Homer T. Edwards. In fact one can postulate that this challenge can be generalized to most black principals throughout the South. In a final paper by Edwards in which he critiqued George S. Counts' *Education and American Civilization* for a class at New York University in 1954, he made some very strong and idealistic statements that reveal his commitment to education, democracy, and America's promise. Edwards insisted that the American ideal of the "infinite dignity and worth of every individual regardless of 'race, creed, color, or previous condition of servitude', is certainly one worth perpetuating."³¹⁷ The idea of perpetuation shows Edwards' belief that this ideal existed at the time he wrote the paper. Not only did Edwards believe that this ideal existed but he further had hope that America would continue to make it more real.

That this great American civilization must come to grips with communism, no one can rightfully deny. To do this, I venture to say that the one big task for Americans is that they will make democracy so real, so telling, and so fruitful, that there will be no room in this great commonwealth for breeding nor nursing the seeds of any other form of government.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Homer T. Edwards, Summer Session 1954, "A Critique of "Education and American Civilization" by George S. Counts," New York University. Archived at his son's house.

³¹⁸ Homer T. Edwards, Summer Session 1954, "A Critique of "Education and American Civilization" by George S. Counts," New York University. Archived at his son's house.

For Edwards no other form of government would lend itself to the emancipatory possibilities that democracy had for its black citizens. The professor of the class agreed with Edwards in commenting that this proclamation was the meat of teaching. So as Edwards espoused these beliefs, they were confirmed by his professor thereby solidifying his commitment to the resolve that would result in implementation at AHIS/BHHS.

The success of these teachings and implementations were evidenced in the statements by former students in which they expressed how prepared they were to tackle current societal issues while also being prepared for a world that was yet to come. Edwards insisted, “Our whole educational set up in this country exemplifies our implicit faith in education as an instrument for helping us to realize our American ideal.”³¹⁹ AHIS/BHHS as well as other black segregated schools throughout the South served to be a place for the preparation of this realization brought about by the combination of the expectations of the African American community espoused by black intellectuals with the New England model of curriculum to form a special type of education for black students.³²⁰

Georgia Teacher and Education Association (GTEA)

Organized on April 14, 1926 at the Stewart’s Chapel A.M.E. Church in Macon, Georgia, the Georgia Teacher and Education Association (GTEA) became the leading educator professional organization for blacks in Georgia for forty-three years.³²¹ The organizing members’ general aim was to effectively provide larger leadership of various

³¹⁹ Homer T. Edwards, Summer Session 1954, “A Critique of “Education and American Civilization” by George S. Counts.”

³²⁰ Siddle Walker, “Valued Segregated Schools,” 266.

³²¹ GTEA Handbook. History of Georgia Teachers and Education Association Appendix, 1958, Georgia Archives Special Collection Black: Education, Box RCB – 23167, Folder12-6-61GTEA Association (1958), Morrow, GA.

means that advanced the cause of education. In essence, they were not tied to any particular method but were instead dedicated to the promotion of education for blacks in Georgia. Similar to many black education associations, the early membership numbers were small but even in its small size its capacity to have state wide influence was not lost. The delegations proved to be large enough to schedule meetings in multiple large cities garnering support and exposure in the most populated areas of the state. As the membership and influence increased, its official publication, *The Herald*, was founded in 1928. This organ would be concerned with the “best development of teachers and educational leadership within the community.”³²²

As the membership, work, and influence increased paid positions were instituted. These positions included a field agent, president, secretary, and three laymen. These positions are credited with giving more structure to the organization by facilitating its efforts in its local and national educational goals: 1) to effect improvement in the quality of teachers, 2) increase in salaries, 3) improvement of school housing and equipment, 4) appointment of more Jeanes Supervisors, 5) enforcement of compulsory education laws, 6) improvement in transportation of pupils, and 7) appropriate plans for consolidation of schools.

The second and third decades of the organization, 1936 – 1956, saw a clearer definition in the role of the executive secretary as well as direct efforts to improve school practices. In a letter dated December 23, 1954 to the regional directors by C.L. Harper, Executive Secretary of GTEA, Harper requested a regional meeting to follow up on the study of the framework of the curriculum because “every teacher should be in position to apply its

³²² GTEA Handbook. History of Georgia Teachers and Education Association Appendix, 1958, Georgia Archives Special Collection Black: Education, Box RCB – 23167, Folder12-6-61GTEA Association 1958, Morrow, GA.

principles in her class room.”³²³ He emphasized that all teachers should attend the regional sessions. Further he noted that the organization sought “The Adequate Program of Education” which called for “adequate physical facilities such as acreage, buildings and equipment, but more important than these, it demands teachers adequate in training, adequate in skills and techniques – in spiritual growth so as to inspire our youth and to channel their thinking and activities into efficient and noble living.” This letter demonstrates GTEA’s effort at professional development for the proper education of black children.

Also during this period in GTEA history local groups began to assume a more specific focus that addressed the needs of the local community in addressing the will of the people. However, the larger state program did not go unattended as “the work of the association began to be more fully facilitated by consultants and leaders throughout the state and nation.”³²⁴ The organization became an affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA) and its Board of Directors began sending delegates to NEA’s national meetings. The GTEA also affiliated itself with the American Teacher Association (ATA), the Minimum Foundation State Program, the National Council of Secretaries of the Teachers Association (NCOSTA), and had a hand in the financial provision for implementing sick leave on the state level.

As the group continued to grow in the area of teacher development and student achievement its membership experienced a steady climb reaching 9,000 by 1956 with total assets of more than \$90,000 by 1957. In a 1945 report issued in *The Herald*, Dekalb County

³²³ C.L. Harper to Regional Directors of GTEA, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23531, Folder12-6-1GTEA – Regional Meetings 1955, Morrow, GA.

³²⁴ GTEA Handbook. History of Georgia Teachers and Education Association Appendix, 1958, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23167, Folder12-6-61GTEA Association (1958), Morrow, GA.

is noted as having 100 percent participation from its teachers in the payment of their dues.³²⁵ GTEA could enjoy such strong participation because it served as the core means of growth among Georgia teachers in its attempt to serve the state, nation, and world. GTEA had a long and influential existence and in 1969 it, along with many black education associations in the South, merged with NEA.

While it was in existence, Professor Edwards rose to the rank of president but before serving as president he was the Regional 5 Director. He assumed this first post in 1946 only one year after assuming the principalship at AHIS/BHHS. In a letter addressed to Professor Edwards, January 2, 1946, Robert L. Cousins, Director of the Division of Negro Education in Georgia, reminded Edwards of his attendance at multiple GTEA regional meetings the previous year and his willingness to attend the meetings this year. In order to do so Cousins asked Edwards to forward him the time and place of the meeting in his region. Mr. Cousins stated that his role would be to participate in discussions after local unit presidents had given their reports at the regional meetings. These reports, he insisted would reveal the conditions in the various systems. The reports would then be made available in *The Herald*. Cousins then closed the letter by offering advice to Edwards concerning the best way to disseminate information to the local units from the regional directors.

This letter offers evidence of networks extending from the state level to the local educational units. Due to Edwards' position as a regional director it is evident that Athens black schools were involved in regional and state level discussions and activities that would have affected the activities in the local school, one being AHIS/BHHS. Additionally Athens-Clarke County teachers were featured in an article in the 1958 winter issue of *The Herald*

³²⁵ *The Herald*, XII no. 1 (November 1945), Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23531, Folder12-6-71GTEA – Regional Meetings 1955, Morrow, GA.

entitled “Athens-Clarke County Teachers Work Together to Plan an Effective Elementary Science and Mathematics Program.”³²⁶ In the article, the teachers, principals, and the supervisor of Clarke County Schools are recognized as having acknowledged the need of a better science curriculum within their educational system. As a result, elementary and high school teachers partnered to develop a curriculum that would better acquaint the students with the meaning, method, and impact of science in today’s world. They were also noted as having invited consultants from the University of Georgia to provide an overview for the work that was to come. From this work in science spawned an additional rewriting of the curriculum in the language arts program. The group brought in a consultant from Atlanta University who presented information on listening, reading, speaking, and writing to help with this endeavor.

The workshops and curriculum rewrites in the Clarke County school system is indicative of the local networks that were present within the district and the opportunities for professional development offered at the district and school levels. Interviewees supported this notion of professional networks and professional development in the Clarke County school system and at AHIS/BHHS specifically.

When asked if he participated in the GTEA, Webster Anderson responded, “We had no choice. We had to be. They took it out of your money every month, the dues. I was a part of that.”³²⁷ Bob Paris too remembered his membership in the GTEA as a requirement. He said that it was required of teachers and teachers adhered to this requirement unless one was a rebel. He went on to say,

³²⁶ “Athens-Clarke County Teachers Work Together to Plan an Effective Elementary Science and Mathematics Program,” *The Herald*, XXIV no. 2 (winter 1958), Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23167, Folder 12-6-71 GTEA Association 1958, Morrow, GA.

³²⁷ Anderson, interview.

Your professional organizations were more or less black as it was. They were black organizations. In our community in our schools it was required of us to participate. Every time we got a raise these organizations raised their dues so we didn't get a raise so to speak. You paid those dues anyway whether you attended the meetings. You had to pay the dues. That was required of you. I was member of all of the organizations, voluntarily or involuntarily. [laughs]³²⁸

Benedict James recalled his membership being a function of his principal, Professor Edwards. He insisted "I wouldn't be afraid to say that if Professor Edwards had anything to do with it then the teachers were involved in it."³²⁹ He went on remember going to meetings with other teachers, specifically one person he used to frequently see who was from Greensboro, Georgia.

In fact documents show that educators at AHIS/BHHS as well as other black schools in Athens were a part of GTEA as evidenced by their attendance at the 41st and 43rd Annual Conventions. The 41st Annual Convention, held in Atlanta, Georgia in 1959, had in attendance Farris T. Johnson representing Region 4 as its director.³³⁰ Farris T. Johnson served as both the principal of Lyons Junior high school as well as the Curriculum Director of Clarke County Schools upon integration. Also H.T. Edwards is listed as having presided over the sectional meeting of the Association of Secondary School Principals.

At the 43rd Annual Conventions in Atlanta, Georgia in 1961, Mrs. Rowena McCree, Counselor at Athens High and Industrial School, is recorded as giving the report at the Guidance and Counseling Department Business and Professional meeting.³³¹ Additionally,

³²⁸ Paris, interview.

³²⁹ James, interview.

³³⁰ GTEA 41st Annual Convention Booklet, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23528, Folder 12-6-71 Publications 1959, Morrow, GA.

³³¹ 43rd Annual Convention Booklet, 1961, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23527, Folder 12-6-71 GTEA Convention 1961, Morrow, GA.

as recorded in the Clarke County Board of Education meeting minutes, on July 10, 1969 E.T. Roberson, principal of BHHS and president of the local unit of GTEA, requested from the superintendent \$150 to defray the costs of sending delegates to the NEA convention in Philadelphia.³³² This is the first time, recorded in the minutes, that black educators had approached the superintendent and board for funds to attend the professional meetings. However, the minutes do reveal multiple requests and grants from white teachers to attend professional meetings. Professor Roberson's request was approved by a unanimous vote after discussion.

Additionally, the GTEA conference was placed on the official calendar of the school system for the 1970-71 school year for the first time.³³³ The placement read - GEA, GTEA or Professional Day. In the past the GEA conference always had a place on the system's calendar without ever a mention of GTEA or Professional Day; however upon integration and the consolidation of the GTEA and NEA, the GTEA was recognized. However, this lack of recognition from the school system did not temper the participation of Athens' black educators in this professional organization or their participation in other professional networks. In place of support from the local school system, black educators in Athens obtained the support of the states' department of education through its Division of Negro Education.

Georgia State Department of Education – Division of Negro Education

The GTEA enjoyed a close working relationship with Georgia's Division of Negro Education. This relationship was not confined to Georgia as by the 1920s the relationship

³³² Board of Education Minutes, 10 July 1969.

³³³ Board of Education Minutes, 12 February 1970.

between black teachers and their state departments of education officials was improving³³⁴ The expansion of state departments of education were welcomed by black teachers and their organizations because it brought minimum standards to education and some dismantling of the local power structures that served to keep the black schools on an unequal bases with the white schools.³³⁵ Further the departments took a greater interest in teacher education and certification requiring and many times funding attendance at summer schools. Further, the directors of the divisions of Negro education worked in tandem with other directors in the state departments of education to further the cause of the education for blacks in their respective states. According to Fairclough, “They could persuade other white officials, including local superintendents, to take a greater interest in the education of blacks.”³³⁶

Specifically in Georgia, the GTEA and the Division of Negro Education had a symbiotic relationship in which both groups supported the goals, objectives, and programs of the other. When during the Great Depression the GTEA faced financial hardships, the director of the Division of Negro Education, John Dixon, persuaded white education associations to financially assist the organization.³³⁷ He then urged superintendents to press their black teachers to join the association. Some school systems even required their teachers to pay the dues, taking it directly from their checks and forwarding it to the GTEA via Dixon.³³⁸ Evidence points to this method being used in the Clarke County system as both

³³⁴ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 317.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 317-318.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 317.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 318.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 318.

Bob Paris and Webster Anderson, in the above comments, spoke to dues being mandatory and the money being taken out of teachers' checks every month.

Participation in and attendance at the two organization's conferences was a way in which both organizations demonstrated their support. In March 8, 1957, Robert L. Cousins, Director of Negro Education in Georgia, wrote to the President, Executive Secretary, and Regional Directors of the GTEA informing them of the Annual Conference of Principals and Jeanes Supervisors with a request that they give consideration to the use of the science theme in their eleven regional meetings and one state meeting. Cousins went on to say "For the past three (3) years your Association has cooperated with the State Department of Education in emphasizing the same theme each year and I think we have achieved notable results."³³⁹ In addition to his request for common themes, Cousins also offered the services of Dr. Virginia McNamara, State Department of Health, to attend GTEA's eleven regional meetings in her position as the new School Health Educator. Cousins went on to request an invitation to attend the upcoming GTEA regional meetings as he acknowledged his attendance at nine of the eleven meetings during the 1956-57 sessions. He stated that if allowed to attend the meeting he would call on the local school officials in each region to engage in discussions. These discussions would allow for full cooperation between black educators and the State Department in their collaborative efforts to "enable the youth of today to be better prepared to cope with the problems in a world of change and increasing demands for competency."³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Robert L. Cousins to the President, Executive Secretary, and Regional Directors of the GTEA Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Morrow, GA.

³⁴⁰ Robert L. Cousins to the President, Executive Secretary, and Regional Directors of the GTEA Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Morrow, GA.

This letter alone is telling of the many different ways the networks and cooperation existed within the black system of education. The letter indicates an ongoing collaboration between Georgia's educational representative for black education and the association that represented black educators of the state. Not did only a collaboration exist, but almost an equal collaboration, a collaboration where respect was given to both organizations for their work and efforts in the education of blacks. Additionally both organizations seemingly wanted to provide continuity amongst the black schools in the state of Georgia. The Principals and Jeanes Conference would provide a theme that would be delivered by GTEA to the rest of the state. Because the Annual Conference of Principals and Jeanes Supervisors was a program conducted by the Division of Negro Education, Cousins saw the responsibility of delivering this continuity to be equally shared between the GTEA and his Division of Negro Education. An equal collaboration would then need to be formed and fostered. If Cousins had any hope of enlisting the cooperation of the GTEA a level of mutual respect and understanding would have to be the crux of their relationship.

This relationship is seen in the previously mentioned letter written from Cousins to H.T. Edwards, Region 5 Director of GTEA, in 1946 requesting an invitation to his region's annual meeting. In another letter that year, January 19th, from the Region 9 Director of GTEA to Cousins, he was invited to attend their annual region meeting.³⁴¹ The Director went on to acknowledge the effort Cousin continued to make in black education. In a memo to black principals on May 22, 1947 from Cousins, he called attention to the principals' meeting in connection with the GTEA in Columbus, Georgia in which he discussed certain special

³⁴¹ Cousins to H.T. Edwards, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23531, Folder 12-6-71, Regional Meetings – GTEA, Morrow, GA.

programs of study during the summer of 1947.³⁴² He summarized the programs and requested that the principals present them to their staff. These collaborations continued to be a staple of the GTEA and the Division of Negro Education.

The groups' close working relationship was also evident in the process to equalize teacher salaries in Georgia. Unlike many Southern states whose black organizations had to file lawsuits to achieve an equalization of salaries, Georgia's education association, GTEA, worked with its state department to achieve this result without the help of the courts. The leaders of the GTEA promised to "exhaust all resources to get what we want within the school system of the state...before appealing to outsiders for aid."³⁴³ In so doing the two groups were able to agree upon a plan in which Cousins would equalize salaries in stages over 10 years. In this compromise the two organizations thought it best to avoid the backlash of the white public sentiment in an effort to keep this topic from entering the gubernatorial race of 1942 and becoming fodder for the common enemy of Governor Gene Talmadge. The GTEA received criticism from the NAACP and other black intellectuals as being too accommodating ; however over the years the GTEA continued to press for the equalization of salaries. In a 1945 edition of *The Herald*, the Executive Secretary of the GTEA, C.L. Harper, published a letter to Georgia school superintendents urging them to continue in their efforts to have only one salary scale, meeting the decision of the United States Supreme Court and of many Federal District Courts.³⁴⁴ The letter pressed for the abolition of differentials in

³⁴² Georgia Archives Special Collection – Black Education. Box RCB – 23531 Folder 12-6-71 Regional Meetings – GTEA 1946-1954, Morrow, GA.

³⁴³ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 348.

³⁴⁴ C.L. Harper to Georgia School Superintendents, *The Herald* (1945), Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Morrow, GA.

salary schedules of teachers based on race, this only three years after the implementation of the agreement.

The GTEA waged its equalization efforts locally as indicated by the Clarke County Board of Education Meeting minutes. In an April 1949 letter to W.R. Coile, Superintendent of County Schools, the GTEA submitted a resolution adopted by its Delegate Assembly. One of the topics in the resolution was salary equalization. The resolution called for “Employment of teachers from local funds above the state allotment to be the same in the Negro and White schools.”³⁴⁵ The resolution went on to demand the elimination of all differentials in the state salary schedule for teachers based solely on race as well as equity in curricula, equipment, and salaries. The GTEA further asked to be advised on how Clarke County would remove the deficiencies in the education offered to their black students. However, the resolution made clear that the association was not asking for white children to be denied what they already had to give Negro children. Instead they requested the proper development of all children’s ability. In a letter dated May 1949 to C.L. Harper, Executive Secretary of GTEA, from Superintendent Coile, he responded that they had received the resolution, turned it over to the board for study, and received a response from the board agreeing to give “due consideration to a solution of the matters involved.”³⁴⁶

Salaries were eventually equalized between the races in Georgia in 1951³⁴⁷ and in a 1952 Board of Education meeting, the Clarke County Board of Education too equalized the

³⁴⁵ From the Athens-Clarke County Board of Education Minutes, Athens, April 1949, in the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia. (Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press).

³⁴⁶ Board of Education Minutes, May 1949,

³⁴⁷ Siddle Walker, “Second-Class Integration,” 277.

salaries for black and white substitute teachers.³⁴⁸ The ability of the Directors of the Division of Negro Education to work collaboratively with the GTEA also allowed collaboration between other black educational groups in Georgia.

As previously mentioned the Annual Principals and Jeanes Supervisors Conferences were conducted by the Division of Negro Education. These conferences sought to foster cohesiveness among the black schools through their principals and the districts' corresponding Jeanes Supervisors. In a letter dated, May 17, 1960, to an invited guest, T. A. Carmichael, Director of the Division of Negro Education, informed the potential guest speaker that due to the nature of this conference, "There will be a different group of Principals attending each group session. This will give you an opportunity to present your program to most of the Principals and Supervisors of the Negro Schools of Georgia."³⁴⁹ This captive audience would serve as a primary vehicle for the dissemination of pertinent information throughout all of Georgia's black schools.

That year the theme was "The Responsibility of the Educational Leaders for Improving the Intellectual Climate in the Schools."³⁵⁰ In a letter to Dr. Kimball Wiles from the College of Education at the University of Florida, inviting him to speak at the conference, T.A. Carmichael informed Dr. Wiles that a stimulating talk from him on curriculum and instruction would be helpful to the Negro educational leaders in Georgia. Carmichael viewed these conferences as a way to help improve the instructional climate in all of the black schools in Georgia, categorizing these schools into a group unto themselves that could be

³⁴⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 28 August 1952.

³⁴⁹ T. A. Carmichael to Oileen Williams Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Morrow, GA.

³⁵⁰ T.A. Carmichael to Dr. Kimball Wiles from T.A. Carmichael, May 18, 1960, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Morrow, GA.

attended to as if a separate educational system. He commented in this letter that he was concerned about the rigid curriculum in the Negro High Schools in which some high schools required all of their students to take all of the subjects offered. Dr. Wiles' discussion of curriculum and instruction would facilitate an improvement he felt was needed within the black schools in Georgia. The Principals and Jeanes Supervisors conference would make possible this improvement. As a way to ensure the disseminate and implementation of the information from the conferences the Division of Negro Education annually conducted five follow-up conferences for principals and Jeanes Supervisors at Atlanta University, Paine College, Savannah State College, Albany State College, and Fort Valley State College.³⁵¹

Athens' principals were staples at these conferences as early as Professor DuVaul's tenure. He is noted as having attended the Principal's Conference in 1940.³⁵² In this same letter from Director of the Division of Negro Education, L.M. Lester, DuVaul is requested to attend the Advisory Council on Teacher Education that is to be held at Fort Valley State College. As a way to decrease the costs of the trip, Lester requests that he ride with other attendees to the conference, a practice that proved to be common with many black educators. The tradition of participation continued with H.T. Edwards as he is noted to have attended the 1958, 1959, and 1960 Principals and Jeanes Supervisors Conference. Specifically at the 1959 conference, Professor Edwards is recorded in the program as being on the Georgia Council of Principals representing the Secondary Schools.³⁵³ For the 1960 conference in

³⁵¹ T.A. Carmichael to Dr. H.S. Shearouse, August 22, 1960. Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Morrow, GA.

³⁵² L.M. Lester to Principal C.W. DuVual, Athens H.& I. School, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23528, Folder 12-6-71 NTEC – Advisory Council Meeting 1940, Morrow, GA.

³⁵³ Seventh Annual Conference of Jeanes Supervisors and Principals, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23530, Folder 12-6-71, State Conference of Jeanes Supervisors and Principals 1959, Morrow, GA.

which Carmichael assured the invited guest that he would have an audience of most of the black principals and Jeanes Supervisors, Edwards served on the coordinating committee as the president of the secondary school group.

In addition to the principals of Athens being a part of the conferences, their Jeanes Supervisors were also represented. According to the Board of Education meeting minutes, Clarke County received its first Jeanes Supervisor in 1945. The agreement to support a supervisor was a part of an agreement with Oconee County in which the two school systems would share one. In a letter dated June 29, 1945 from Robert L. Cousins to Superintendent Coile and E.N. Anthony, Superintendent of Oconee County schools, Cousins asked the two superintendents to partner together to support a Jeanes supervising teacher to “eliminate waste in Negro schools.”³⁵⁴

He went on to say that this would be the best thing these men can do for their Negro schools. Cousins continued by saying that Jeanes Supervisors would enable the Negro schools to be ready for the rigid inspection that would be happening the following year. He listed the duties of the Jeanes Supervisors as: visiting schools to help teachers with their instructional programs, organizing patrons to do more for the schools, holding meetings of teachers, helping to secure and get teachers located in school communities, distributing textbooks, and checking on very important records and reports needed. Cousins ended the letter by stating that “71 counties employed Jeanes Supervising teachers for the past year and we anticipate that the number will reach about eighty for the coming year.”³⁵⁵ In the same

³⁵⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 3 July 1945.

³⁵⁵ Board of Education Minutes, 3 July 1945.

meeting that the letter was read, the Board agreed to support a Jeanes Supervisor contingent upon its approval by the Oconee County Board of Education.

By 1958 Mrs. Ella Billups was serving as the Jeanes Supervisor for both Clarke County and Oconee County school systems. She is noted in the Sixth Annual Conference of Jeanes Supervisors and Principals' program as being the Georgia Jeanes Association financial secretary.³⁵⁶ Bob Paris remembered the Jeanes Supervisors in the Athens school system.³⁵⁷ He recalled not being particularly fond of their apparent intrusion into his classroom and as a response to this invasion he would release the white lab rats that were in his classroom to scare the supervisors away from his class. Nonetheless they were a staple in both the black schools in Athens-Clarke County and represented at state and local conferences.

The State Department's Division of Negro Education conducted the Principals and Jeanes Supervisors conferences, however, this as well as other conferences and trainings were well supported financially by the Southern Education Foundation. In a form letter dated May 5, 1960 from T.A. Carmichael to H.T. Edwards and four other principals, Carmichael informed the principals that their travel to the Principals and Jeanes Supervisors Follow-up Conferences will be paid in full by the Southern Education Foundation.³⁵⁸ As Fairclough noted, agents of the division of Negro Education in Southern states were able to wield their

³⁵⁶ Sixth Annual Conference of Jeanes Supervisors and Principals Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23530, Folder 12-6-71, State Conference of Jeanes Supervisors and Principals 1958, Morrow, GA. Gladys Knight is on program as being a soloist.

³⁵⁷ Paris, interview.

³⁵⁸ T.A. Carmichael to H.T. Edwards, Daniel Davis, R.W. Campbell, Andrew Lewis, and H.N. Stinson, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23530, Folder 12-6-71, State Conference of Negro Supervisors and Principals 1960, Morrow, GA.

influence in a variety of arenas. One such space was the philanthropic world.³⁵⁹ Foundations such as the General Education Board, the Rosenwald Fund, and the Southern Education Foundation were all noted as channeling money into the black system of education. Specifically in Georgia, the Southern Education Foundation was one such organization that contributed heavily to black education.

In 1955 Cousins sent a letter to J.C. Dixon, former Director of the Division of Negro Education and then current Vice-President and Executive Director of the Southern Education Foundation requesting funding for the 1955-56 fiscal year for a number of in-state and out-of-state training activities for both principals and Jeanes Supervisors.³⁶⁰ The \$4,500 requested for in-state training included field service for Jeanes Supervisors and principals, expanding and enriching the 1955 workshop for principals, and follow-up work for the 1955 workshop for principals. Funds for out-of-state training covered activities such as the participation of Jeanes Supervisors, principals, and teachers of health and physical education in a 6-week Health Education Workshop in Durham, North Carolina, participation of four principals who held master's degrees in a full summer load at Tuskegee Institute, participation of one principal who held a master's degree in a full summer quarter at Peabody College, and participation of one principal who held a master's degree in a 4-week program at Oklahoma and Oklahoma A&M. The variety of in-state and out-of-state trainings speak to the dedication of all involved in the education of black children in Georgia.

In addition to their funding of various training opportunities and conferences, the Southern Education Foundation financially supported the summer institutes held mainly on

³⁵⁹ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 317.

³⁶⁰ Cousins to J.C. Dixon, February 6, 1955, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23528, Folder 12-6-71 S.E.F. 1955-56, Morrow, GA.

the campuses of Georgia's HBCUs. Fairclough pointed to this support as being the "biggest contribution to the growth of the black teachers organizations" made by the multiple foundations. He went on to say that by World War I these institutes were attracting larger and larger enrollments; by 1928 54 percent of all black teachers in black public schools attended them. Teachers attended for a variety of reasons including pending expiration of teaching certificates, an aspiration to increase the grade of a teaching certificate, and a desire for professional growth and development.³⁶¹

The fact that the institutes were held at black colleges and universities heightened the collaboration between the K-12 and post-secondary educational levels. As indicated by Siddle Walker, black principals were influenced by the black intelligentsia who held positions at these colleges and universities.³⁶² The institutes proved to be a place for intellectual growth, exposure to new ideas, and encouragement to regard themselves as professionals. Out of the summer institutes was born the proliferation of Negro History Week as Carter G. Woodson first introduced this on a large scale at a summer institute.³⁶³

The Southern Education Foundation funded summer institutes and workshops coordinated by the Division of Negro Education and facilitated by the state's HBCUs. In 1963 alone the Foundation funded six institutes and workshops. In a letter dated June 17, 1963 T.A. Carmichael wrote to the presidents of both Savannah State College and Albany State College requesting that they submit requisitions for the tuition, board, room, and fees for fifteen teachers recommended to attend their institutes.³⁶⁴ The Southern Education Fund

³⁶¹ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 319.

³⁶² Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor*, 8.

³⁶³ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 323.

provided grants for each teacher to attend. The Foundation similarly provided funds for the Reading Workshops in 1963 that took place in five different Georgia counties.³⁶⁵ Jeanes Supervisors would serve as the facilitators for these workshops. In that same summer, the Foundation funded a Summer Project for the Improvement of Reading in Selected School Systems Not Served by Jeanes Curriculum Directors in four counties.³⁶⁶ Last during the same year, the Foundation made available three fellowships to Atlanta University for study on the 6th Year Level.³⁶⁷ Horace Mann Bond of the Graduate Council at Atlanta University wrote a letter on May 22, 1963, to Mr. Carmichael requesting recommendations of worthy candidates that could take part in this program. The fellowships provided study in the fields of: educational administration and supervision, guidance and counseling, elementary education, and secondary education with special emphasis in biology, chemistry, English, French, mathematics, and social studies.

Although I do not have records of black teachers in Athens attending the summer institutes at the HBCU's, we do know that the first state summer school was founded by Professor Harris of AHIS at the University of Georgia in 1926. It may well be that AHIS/BHHS teachers in fact did attend summer schools either at UGA or throughout the state. Additionally Bob Paris spoke about the post-graduate work that many black teachers completed. He stated, "Most of the folks in Athens who went for advanced degrees went to

³⁶⁴ T.A. Carmichael to the presidents of Savannah State College and Albany State College, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23530, Folder 12-6-71 Albany State College 1963 and Savannah State College 1963, Morrow, GA.

³⁶⁵ Rebecca Davis to T.A. Carmichael, May 14, 1963 Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23533, Folder 12-6-71, Summer Reading Workshop 1963, Morrow, GA.

³⁶⁶ T.A. Carmichael to Dr. Claude Purcell, June 21, 1963, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23533, Folder 12-6-71 Summer Reading Workshop 1962, Morrow, GA.

³⁶⁷ Horace M. Bond to T.A. Carmichael, May 22, 1963, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23533, Folder 12-6-71, Atlanta University 1963, Morrow, GA.

Atlanta University.” Mr. Paris himself later enrolled in some correspondence courses at Georgia State University but recalled that when school officials discovered he was black made him transfer to Savannah State.³⁶⁸

The relationship forged between the Division of Negro Education, GTEA, Georgia’s HBCU’s, and the Southern Education Foundation formed a coalition whose objectives and successes focused on the education of black students in Georgia. To this end, support was offered within the coalition to the respective organization’s programs and goals, as well, respect became the foundation for this working relationship. In a letter of May 16, 1960 from T.A. Carmichael to W.E. Pafford, Carmichael demonstrated an understanding of the importance of continuing to work in a respectful manner. To fully illustrate this realization I will quote the letter below:

In my memorandum to you last fall I agreed that I thought it would be all right for the Area Representatives to serve as consultants, or in an advisory capacity, to the Negro schools in their Self-Studies in preparation for an Evaluation. I did not intend for this to mean serving on the Evaluation Committees.

Under the stress, strain and tension of the present racial situation, I strongly advise against this practice. I do not feel that the Area Representatives, or any other white person should be on the Visiting Committee for the Evaluation of any Negro school.

When the day arrives in Georgia, that we can use Negroes on the Visiting Committee to Evaluate white schools, then we will be free to use white people on the Visiting Committee in Negro schools.³⁶⁹

The candor and willingness to address the issue of racism within his state is both surprising and refreshing but helps to explain the reason behind the successful working relationship of these organizations. Although I am cautious about assuming that what existed was a utopian

³⁶⁸ Paris, interview

³⁶⁹ T.A. Carmichael to W.E. Pafford, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23530, Folder 12-6-71, State Conference of Negro Supervisors and Principals 1960, Morrow, GA.

situation, I contend that what did exist was a space to make a concerted effort to improve the education of blacks in Georgia on the part of state level education officials.

The question to be asked and answered through researching professional networks is the *how* and *why* of black schools. How did many black schools look alike and why did they look alike? The *how* can be explained through: 1) the principal and his attendance at the elite white universities and HBCU's; 2) the principals' connection to the black intelligentsia; 3) professional organizations; 4) the respective states' departments of education - division of Negro education; and 5) summer institutes. All five played a major role in disseminating ideologies and educational practices throughout the segregated black schools of the South. In Georgia there existed an Advisory Council on Teacher Education in Georgia Colleges for Negroes. Its stated purpose was to "provide an opportunity for discussion and cooperative planning on the part of those responsible for the program of teacher education in the several institutions."³⁷⁰ In essence it sought to ensure a standard teacher education program for its black teachers that would be taken into the black schools throughout the state of Georgia. Bob Paris explained the similarity of black schools when he said that because most of the teachers who earned advanced degrees went to the same school "naturally they would be influenced by the same folk."³⁷¹

The *why* is then explained by the common plight that the black schools of the South faced. In an article of *The Herald* that highlighted the teachers of Athens working together to develop a better science curriculum, the teachers in the program stated, "We realized that, although we came from different schools, we had many common problems. We became

³⁷⁰ Working Agenda, Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23528, Folder 12-6-71, NTEC – Advisory Council Meeting 1940, Morrow, GA.

³⁷¹ Paris, interview

aware that good human relations can shorten the time in solving common problems.”³⁷² This can not only be said of the schools in Athens but of the schools in Georgia. Throughout the literature, program booklets, and letters, GTEA officials, college presidents, and the Division of Negro Education agents speak to the issues concerning black schools in a singular fashion. Although there did exist differences between rural and urban schools, when defining and addressing the plight of the black schools there is a singleness of focus, a commonality that attests to the issues that black schools in Georgia faced. Webster Anderson concurred with this analysis when he stated, “We had the same problems. If you’re experiencing the same problems you’re going to be on alert to those problems.”³⁷³ I dare say this can be generalized to black schools in the South.

When investigating the networks and determining the *why* and *how* of the black schools, what is also revealed is the overall compulsory nature of this network. As previously mentioned, many districts made participation a mandatory component of their teachers’ professional careers. Therefore, would this involuntary participation have an adverse effect on the outcomes of these networks? Through the research, the outcomes proved to be professional development, improved curriculum development, dissemination of best practices, teacher salary equalization, greater equity in supplies, and capital improvements all leading to an improved educational experience. These achieved outcomes appear to be evidence enough that the compulsory nature did not adversely affect the desired purposes of the black educational network. Moreover, compulsion within the black educational school setting appeared to be the *modus operandi* for black schools as referenced

³⁷² “Athens-Clarke County Teachers Work Together to Plan an Effective Elementary Science and Mathematics Program”, *The Herald* XXIV no. 2 (winter 1958), Georgia Archives Special Collection: Black Education, Box RCB – 23167, Folder 12-6-71, GTEA Association 1958, Morrow, GA.

³⁷³ Anderson, interview.

by the interviewees in terms of professional dress and assignment of duties outside of the classroom. An additional requirement would therefore not seem out of the norm causing push back and a less than genuine effort.

As the black schools of the South were experiencing successes in providing educational value to their constituents while also forming the professional networks that sustained and extended these successes to a wide array of black schools, there was a movement underfoot that would eventually serve to disrupt these efforts. The effort towards desegregation, as eventually pursued by the NAACP, proved to be one that would have dire consequences for the networks that were formed amongst the black educational professionals as well as the black schools. Although desegregation would prove to be a point of division within the black community, the original efforts of equity and equalization in funding and teacher salaries, as pursued by the NAACP and black educational organizations, enjoyed much support. Nevertheless, upon the NAACP's change in focus, its insistence on desegregation, and the *Brown* decision, black education would experience a dramatic change.

CHAPTER 6

DESEGREGATION

The South and Desegregation

In understanding the process of desegregation in the South, it is important to note that this changed was characterized by struggle and contestation among and between the races. The process cannot be described as a development that progressed through agreed upon tactics, policies, and procedures; instead it manifested itself in the form of starts and stops, reinventions, and drastic measures that eventually gave way to an agreed upon system of desegregated education. In light of this, a detailed description of this process in the South as well as in Georgia has been included.

Although the original efforts of blacks for equal educational opportunity did not focus on integrated schools, by 1954 this was the direction of the country. The 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision changed the course of educational history following the initial fight of the NAACP and other regional and state groups centered on the equalization of education specifically through funding and salaries . Since the founding of the first schools post-Emancipation, blacks consistently demanded for control of their schools in the form of curriculum and personnel choices. As early as 1866 the Georgia Education Association, a coalition of black leaders, encouraged newly freed blacks to establish schools in their respective counties.

Additionally as reported by a Freedmen's Bureau agent, blacks were not receptive to Yankee teachers and were equally hostile to the possibility of integrated schools. However, in spite of the local control and segregation that was insisted upon, the black community knew they required financial assistance from the federal governments and philanthropic

organizations. Equal funding from federal and state agencies became a demand of black Southern representatives during Reconstruction. However, as Reconstruction ended, the fiscal equality dissolved into systematic inequality in funding that saw money being diverted from black schools to their white counterparts.

This practice continued well into the twentieth century as black groups consistently fought against it. However, in the early 1930s hints of a change in effort appeared. After World War I blacks began to demand for more opportunities in graduate and professional trainings. As a result, schools such as Howard University and Fisk University increased their offerings but could not accommodate blacks in all of the areas they demanded training in.¹ Since attendance at the Northern white universities was not an option for all blacks, many African Americans began to seek admission to white Southern universities. Southern white universities had not desegregated at this time; therefore, their remedy was to offer blacks scholarships to attend out-of-state universities.² This option however was not well received by all.

In 1933 Thomas Hocutt of North Carolina filed a suit seeking admission to the University of North Carolina's school of pharmacy. He lost his suit but it was promptly proceeded in 1935 with a lawsuit by Donald Murray who successfully gained admission to the University of Maryland's law school. He never attended the school as the decision was overturned by the Maryland Court of Appeals; however, the precedent was set.³

¹ John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 6th ed. (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1988), 364.

² *Ibid.*, 364.

³ Franklin, 364.

The first successful lawsuit of this kind occurred in 1936 in the case of *Missouri ex rel. Gaines vs. Canada, Registrar of the University, et al.*⁴ In this case Lloyd Gaines appealed to the Supreme Court for admission to the University of Missouri law school and won. The Court ruled that “it was the duty of the state to provide education for all its citizens and that the provision must be made within the state.”⁵ Further the court said,

To provide legal education for white residents within the state and to fail to do so for blacks “is a denial of the equality of legal right to enjoyment of the privilege which the State has set up, and the provision for the payment of tuition fees in another States does not remove the discrimination.”⁶

This decision and subsequent successful court cases by black plaintiffs in the fight for admission into previously all-white Southern universities’ professional degree programs, caught the attention of Southern state and local officials in reference to K-12 educational possibilities. To white Southerners the successes in post-secondary education proved to be a sign for possible action in elementary and secondary education. As a preemptive measure to this possibility, Southern states initiated and implemented programs that sought to equalize the funding between their white and black schools. Due to this new effort from Southern states, the NAACP and other black organizations that had long sought equalization in funding and salaries realized victories. As noted, Georgia entered into an agreement with the GTEA to equalize teacher salaries over a ten-year period while it also implemented a state-wide equalization program, the Minimum Foundation Program for Education (MFPE). The MFPE was initially proposed in 1946 as a way to improve the education of students in

⁴ Franklin, 365.

⁵ Ibid., 365.

⁶ Ibid., 365.

Georgia without a focus on race; however, it was eventually used as a mechanism to equalize K-12 education to forestall impending desegregation.⁷

The efforts of the Southern states to finally equalize the funding between the schools came too late for the NAACP as by 1951 it had changed its strategy from one of equalization in K-12 education to integration. The NAACP's plan to attack the very nature of segregation was waged in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case that eventually made its way to the Supreme Court in 1954. The opinion of the court, that "To separate them [children in grade and high schools] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority,"⁸ put in motion events that would change the face of education in the South. What is also to be noted in the decision of the Court is its conclusion that "there are findings below that the Negro and white schools involved have been equalized, or are being equalized, with respect to buildings, curricula, qualifications and salaries of teachers, and other 'tangible' factors."⁹ Hence the success of certain states' equalization efforts did not weigh in the decision of the Court. Similar to the plaintiffs, equalization was no longer the issue, rather it was segregation.

Segregation would not fall easily in the South as the *Brown* decision prompted resistance and protest from Southern and Border states. By 1957 the Southern Education Reporting Service reported the legislatures of 14 states as had adopted more than 200 new laws and resolutions designed to prevent, restrict, or control school desegregation.¹⁰

⁷ O'Brien, 56-60.

⁸ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483,494.

⁹ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, 492

¹⁰ Marvin D. Wall and James T. Lesson, Jr., Southern Education Reporting Service, "Status of School Segregation-Desegregation in the Southern and Border States," 1957, 2.

Oklahoma was the only state in the study that enacted legislation to encourage desegregation. In Georgia by 1957 there were no school districts that had been desegregated. The report noted Georgia as having maintained segregation at all grade levels for both public schools and teachers.

The Southern Education Reporting Services continued to publish these reports and by 1964 the report showed that not much progress had been made. In *A Statistical Summary, State by State, of School Segregation-Desegregation in the Southern and Border Area from 1954 to the Present* (1964) the statistics reveal that ten years after the *Brown* decision only 10.8 percent of blacks were in desegregated schools.¹¹ However, in the South only 2.14 percent of black students actually attended schools with whites. Of the region's black students in desegregated schools only 17 percent of these were in the South and the other 83 percent were in the Border area schools. In fact the 1964-65 school year was the first year in which desegregation started at both the public schools and public college levels in every Southern and Border state.¹²

This year coincided with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which forbade racial discrimination in any activity or program that receives financial support from the Federal Government.¹³ Georgia would have a lot of catching up to do to meet the new federal guidelines as by 1964 only .377 percent of blacks were in schools with whites. The Civil Rights Act also forbade discrimination in the hiring and assignment of faculty which posed an additional problem for five Southern states – Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi,

¹¹ Reed Sarratt, Tom Flake, and Jim Lesson, Southern Education Reporting Service, "A Statistical Summary, State by State, of School Segregation-Desegregation in the Southern and Border Area from 1954 to the Present," 1964, 2.

¹² Sarratt, Flake, and Lesson, 2.

¹³ The United States Commission on Civil Rights, 'Federal Rights under School Desegregation Law,' CCR Clearinghouse Publication Number 6, June 1966, i.

and South Carolina – as their public school teachers remained completely segregated. For other states in the region some desegregation of the faculty had occurred. However, in four states – Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia – a large portion of black teachers had lost their jobs during the early stages of desegregation, a point that will be developed later within the paper.¹⁴ As the South struggled its way through desegregation, Georgia proved to be a state in which the battle would be hard fought.

Georgia and Desegregation

Georgia's reaction to the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision was complete defiance. Its governor, Herman Talmadge, had pledged that during his tenure integrated schools would never come to Georgia and this decision forced him to take drastic measures to live up to this promise.¹⁵ To contextualize this resistance we must consider Georgia's educational history and its struggle to provide a suitable and equitable education for all of its citizens.

Georgia's struggle in implementing a universal education after the Civil War came in the form of a rural and urban divide and its ability to pay its teachers. Funding levels and laws in Georgia allowed for a deep divide in the development of its rural and urban schools, causing urban schools to develop rapidly and its rural schools left with miniscule state-only funding. Additionally, the mandated state-only funding at low levels prevented Georgia from being able to pay its teachers on time. As white schools and white teachers were being deprived of equal funding, so too were Georgia's black schools and teachers. Georgia had made a practice of regularly diverting funds meant for black schools to white schools leaving black students and teachers with underfunded schools. The idea of disturbing this system

¹⁴ Sarratt, Flake, and Lesson, 2.

¹⁵ O'Brien, 69.

that had proved successful for Georgia's white elite was not one that was going to be readily accepted. However, by the end of World War II a new movement was being waged to equalize education in Georgia.

World War II exposed deep educational deficiencies in America and specifically in the South and with the turnaround in the economy, Southerners looked to address these deficiencies financially. The 1944 study, *An Inventory of Public School Expenditures*, exposed wide variations in spending levels across the nation.¹⁶ The call was then issued for state and local governments to provide a "basic level of expenditure assured for every child."¹⁷ For Georgia this came in the form of the MFPE, the state's equalization program. Prompted by a call by the Georgia General Assembly in 1946, the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Georgia conducted a study and investigation of Georgia's school and found that the state's rural and black schools were vastly underfunded. His study concluded that the state should assist the local school systems with financing its public system of education. On January 24, 1949 the program was approved by the General Assembly; however the language of the bill only accounted for the elimination of geographic and class disparities omitting racial disparities.¹⁸ Nevertheless, as the possibility of an integrated education gained traction, race became a component of the equalization effort.

The white teacher association of the state, the Georgia Education Association (GEA), supported the report and the program and in 1945 sent a scathing report on the educational system in Georgia to the Clarke County Board of Education. In doing so it also encouraged the Board to submit its own report of its school. It directed its members to take account of

¹⁶ O'Brien, 54.

¹⁷ Ibid., 55.

¹⁸ Ibid., 59-60

their own school systems and inform the community that the schools were not up to par. In response, Clarke County did submit its system report. It evaluated both its black and white schools; this report was presented at the December 4, 1945 board meeting.¹⁹ The white schools were noted for having inadequate plumbing, no central heating – stoves used, no modern seating, no instructional aides such as projectors and radios. The rooms at some of the schools were cited as being overcrowded with of some schools having no library space and schools in need of an auditorium. The buildings were in need of renovations, enlarging, and reconditioning with modern instructional aides being sorely needed. The black schools in the report fared much worse. The buildings were cited as being very crude, unfit, uncomfortable, dilapidated, and a disgrace. Additional rooms and equipment would need to be added to “make it possible to honor them with title of a school house. The buildings and equipment are a reflection on any community that calls itself Christian and civilized.”²⁰

The report went on to describe the plight of teachers and teaching in the Clarke County school system. White teachers were paid a monthly salary of \$99.40. “They feel that present salaries are inadequate to meet present living conditions and are seriously considering other avenues of employment.”²¹ However, Negro teachers were employed at a monthly salary of \$61.44 with two with less than high school training. With that in mind, the report said that applications for teaching positions in Athens is “A thing of the past with both white and negro schools when vacancies occur, we have to hunt and beg somebody to help us out. Nobody seems to be looking for a chance to teach school anymore.”²²

¹⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 4 December 1945.

²⁰ Board of Education Minutes, 4 December 1945.

²¹ Board of Education Minutes, 4 December 1945.

²² Board of Education Minutes, 4 December 1945.

In light of these findings, on May 4, 1948, the board unanimously approved the “recommendations embodied in this report, and urge[d] our elected representatives to the next session of our General Assembly to give favorable consideration and support to the recommended program and use their best efforts towards having the same adopted and enacted into law.”²³ The report that was presented to the board was the 1946 report from the University of Georgia committee recommending the MFPE. This would be especially helpful for Clarke County as it was noted as having the lowest tax rate in the state for its schools. Further the Board of Education meeting minutes indicated that there was no “district nor countywide school bonds in the county, nor is there any local district tax for maintenance,”²⁴ making the proposed increase in state funding under the MFPE program favorable to the district.

In this same year, black leaders realized some successes in their fight for equalization in educational funding. Georgia saw its black per pupil funding increase from 37 percent of the white average to 62 percent, a corresponding increase from \$16.70 to \$74.85.²⁵ The GTEA continuously fought for parity in school expenditures, filing petitions with the state, city, and county boards of education. Notably the petitions did not seek admission to white schools, rather funding parity for black students. Although the funding for black schools was markedly increasing, a study by the Southern Regional Council showed a \$545 million disparity between white and black schools across the South. With this in mind and the prospect of integration being extended to K-12 as an effect of the NAACP’s victories in

²³ Board of Education Minutes, 4 May 1948.

²⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 3 August 1948.

²⁵ O’Brien, 65.

desegregating post-secondary education, Governor Talmadge introduced race into the MFPE effort for the first time.

In a radio address to the white citizens of Georgia he said that “they would have to fund improvements in their schools or face the prospect of court-ordered desegregation.”²⁶ This address was partially in response to the lawsuit waged in Irwin County, Georgia in which black plaintiffs demanded equality in transportation, books, teacher pay and average number of teaching days. He said that the enactment of the MFPE would help to preserve the Southern way of life – segregation.

Talmadge would gain more support during the 1950 state Democratic convention in which the policy of resistance was formed. His official platform fully supported the financing of the MFPE with a pledge to maintain segregation. The delegates announced their willingness to go to jail before they would “let Negroes and whites go to school together.”²⁷ The stage was set for the resistance that was to come.

In response to the 1950 lawsuit filed against the Atlanta School Board for the desegregation of its schools or the equalization of its schools, political boss Roy Harris called for a private school plan in Georgia. On February 16, 1951 the Georgia General Assembly took steps to make the plan happen.²⁸ Tied to the appropriations for the MFPE was a clause that only allowed money to be used in this program as long as the schools remained segregated. In the event of forced desegregation, the law required that all funds to public schools be cut off. Additionally admittance of just one black student to the university system

²⁶ O’Brien, 68.

²⁷ Ibid., 70.

²⁸ Ibid., 84-85.

would also require the denial of funds to all units of the university system. These measures in essence tied the operation of K-12 and post-secondary education to laws of segregation.

While Georgia took measures to secure its stance on segregation through punitive actions, its equalization program went into effect on April 1, 1951. This could not come soon enough for Athens education officials as on January 25, 1951 a board member asked if there was anything the board could do to get the money Athens was due from the MFPE. To this the superintendent responded that Athens would get its share when the program was funded.²⁹ The subsequent funding of the MFPE called for an increase in teacher salaries, the hiring of 800 teachers, and provided for equal teacher and pupil expenditure for both races. In addition to the MFPE, the state set up the State Building Authority (SBA) as a wide-scale building effort to improve the facilities of the state's schools. Athens seized this opportunity. In a board meeting held February 22, 1951 the board discussed the site for the proposed new AHIS although it appears as if these plans were proposed prior to the MFPE. In addition the question was asked if the board could secure money from the State Building Authority to get an auditorium and gym for the new white high school.³⁰ In a subsequent board meeting in March there was a statement about using the leftover money from building the new white high school to be used for "equalizing school facilities in the Athens system."³¹ A Board member responded that "since the State Building Authority has been created we would have \$200 per teacher per year for capital outlay coming from the Minimum Foundation funds and school facilities could be equalized without using the balance left in the bond fund."³² Athens

²⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 25 January 1951.

³⁰ Board of Education Minutes, 22 February 1951.

³¹ Board of Education Minutes, 29 March 1951.

³² Board of Education Minutes, 29 March 1951.

would go on to request additional funds from the SBA to complete the white high school, build a new elementary school for blacks, and make additions to six existing buildings all by the summer of 1952.³³ In addition Athens would also use the funds from the MFPE to equalize salaries for principals of white and black elementary schools according to the state salary schedule.³⁴ Athens proved to be a model school district in its effort to make adequate its school system while equalizing the facilities between whites and blacks and holding off desegregation.

By 1953 with the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision pending, Governor Talmadge attempted to secure the implementation of his private school plan by giving the General Assembly the authority to “provide public funds for private education and ‘discharge [itself] from all obligation...to provide adequate education for its citizens’”.³⁵ This would allow state, county, and local funds to be diverted to tuition grants for students to use the money to pay for segregated private schooling. Therefore when the ruling of *Brown* was announced it was no surprise that Talmadge vehemently spoke out against the decision, stating that “Georgians...will not tolerate the mixing of races in the public schools, or any other public tax-supported institution.”³⁶ The reaction in Clarke County was a bit more muted. On June 10, 1954 the Clarke County Board discussed the ruling with the superintendent, stating “that since the ruling had been made he had received no communication of any kind from any individuals or groups concerning this ruling. Mayor Wells stated that he was not in favor of the Athens Board of Education entering into any type

³³ Board of Education Minutes, 26 June 1952.

³⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 27 September 1952.

³⁵ O’Brien, 91.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

of agreement pertaining to segregation before the final disposition is made of the matter by the United States Supreme Court.³⁷ At the next meeting, the board announced that the plans for the new Negro high school had been completed and plans for seven projects, including the new Negro elementary school, were 95 percent complete.³⁸ In fact over the next year a total of nine projects would be in the works. Specifically on June 1, 1955 a new layout for the AHIS's Home Economics Department was suggested to ensure that this department was comparable to the one at the white high school. The superintendent insisted that "this should be one of the strongest departments in the Negro high school and that the Board of Education should be in a position to say that the Home Economics Department at the Negro high school and white high school are equal in every respect."³⁹ Therefore, in the face of this decision, business would proceed as usual. This was not particular to Athens as the SBA continued its building effort throughout the state.⁴⁰

This continued effort was made possible in part by an approval of the private school amendment on November 2, 1954 by Georgia voters. There would be no concerted effort to adhere to the Supreme Court's decision any time soon. Over the next three years the Georgia legislature would pass over 20 pieces of legislation meant to stall the implementation of the *Brown* decision.⁴¹ However by the winter of 1957 new conversations concerning the issue of public schools versus quasi-private schools were occurring among white Georgians. The moderate tones extending from these conversations were strengthened upon the 1958

³⁷ Board of Education Minutes, 10 June 1954.

³⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 8 July 1954.

³⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 9 June 1955.

⁴⁰ O'Brien, 103.

⁴¹ Wall and Lesson Jr., 1957.

bombing of the wealthiest and oldest synagogue in Atlanta. This bombing is said to have been the beginning of social change in Georgia in that it forced moderates to mobilize “in support of decency, law and order, racial tolerance, and ultimately public schooling.”⁴²

One of the groups that resulted from this social change and moderate mobilization was HOPE, Help Our Public Education Inc. The group, chartered on December 9, 1958, was a non-profit organization of parents that sought “to give direction, guidance, information, and program to all citizens of Georgia who desire to continue the operation of the public schools of the state.”⁴³ HOPE was careful not to place the issue of integration as an issue within its effort; instead, its primary focus was on keeping the schools in Georgia open in the face of impending desegregation. In essence they were willing to accept some degree of desegregation. Their efforts to keep the schools open would require a repeal of the private-school plan. The group also endorsed legislation that would allow for local school boards to address the issue of desegregation at the community level. By 1960 as HOPE garnered considerable support for its initiative, Beverly Downing, the head of HOPE in Athens, commented on the interest and enthusiasm connected to keeping the schools open and was hopeful that her organization would be instrumental in doing just that. This call was supported by many of Atlanta’s white business leaders who saw the potential closing of Georgia’s schools as a hindrance to the economic development of the state and its major city. Upon a second bombing on December 12, 1960 at a black elementary school, the call for moderation increased.⁴⁴

⁴² O’Brien, 149.

⁴³ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 183-185.

On the eve of the desegregation of the University of Georgia, Georgia's flagship university, Governor Vandiver, who once said, "Neither my child nor yours will ever attend an integrated school during my administration, no not one,"⁴⁵ could no longer ignore that desegregation had come to Georgia. He declared to the Georgia General Assembly "we cannot abandon public education" and then asked for the passing of legislation that would guarantee the right of education to every child.⁴⁶ Knowing that legislation called for him to close UGA upon its desegregation, he called for the appeal of the requirement that would have resulted in funds being cut to the University. However, before doing so he exhausted all efforts at resistance to demonstrate his commitment to segregated education in Georgia.

Upon the court-ordered integration of UGA, Vandiver was forced to introduce four bills that would repeal the other resistance laws but that also contained new provisions to secure a modicum of segregation including legislation for a new tuition grant program for children to attend private schools, local options for closing and reopening schools in desegregated crisis, and provisions for "local pupil placement boards, which would make it more difficult to litigate school issues in the federal court by setting up extensive procedures for local appeals."⁴⁷ The laws secured the future of K-12 and post-secondary public education in Georgia by stemming massive resistance in favor of localized resistance.

Desegregation in the Clarke County, Georgia School System

Similar to the muted response of the Board of Education to the *Brown* ruling, the response of the citizens of Athens was subdued also. In an article in the town's main

⁴⁵ O'Brien, 148.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 187.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 190.

newspaper, the Athens Banner-Herald, Athenians were polled to assess their reaction to the *Brown* decision. Although the reactions ranged from one citizen accusing all nine Supreme Court Justices to working for the devil to another admonishing everyone to keep quiet about it, the author found that most Athenians were simply waiting to see what time would do to bring about a resolution to the issue.⁴⁸ However, in a letter to Governor Talmadge from a female citizen, published in the paper, she insisted that his reaction to the decision in no way reflected all of the citizens of Georgia. She said that she and others had been “thoroughly disappointed and disgusted with the remarks you and other of our elected officials have been making in the past week, concerning the segregation issue.”⁴⁹ She went on to say that it was time for people such as herself and other like-minded individuals to speak up to demonstrate that not all Georgians thought as he did. She and others would not support the maintenance of segregation.

However strong this one citizen’s views were, two years after the integration of the University of Georgia and Governor Vandiver’s repeal of the resistance laws, Athens was still operating a dual school system. At the August 14, 1963 Board of Education meeting, there was a report on the process of building three black schools, East Athens and North Athens Elementary Schools and Lyons Junior High School.⁵⁰ In addition, lighting on the AHIS football field was scheduled to be completed before the following weekend. At this same meeting, as previously noted, a petition, signed by 135 people for desegregation as mandated by the 1954 Supreme Court decision was presented to the board. The petition

⁴⁸ Leon Driskell, “Athenians are Polled on Segregation Ruling,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, May 21, 1954, 1.

⁴⁹ Mrs. Fink, “What the People Say,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, May 25, 1954, 8.

⁵⁰ Board of Education Minutes, August 1963.

asked that county officials comply with the order to relieve the inequities within the system. Additionally several pupil transfer applications were present and a request was made that a committee be appointed to review the applications.

Until this point the only desegregation that had taken place in Athens had occurred at the University of Georgia. The integration had not gone smoothly but events leading up to the event demonstrated the passion that surrounded the University. In the face of rumors that Governor Vandiver would order President Aderhold to close the integrated university, 400 students gathered to protest with the crowd eventually growing to 1,000 students marching through the streets of Athens.⁵¹ The crowd was ultimately calmed down by William Tate, Dean of Men at the University, but not before a loud message was sent to the Governor.

Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes officially integrated the public school system in Georgia in January of 1961 but by January 11th an angry mob of white students converged on Hunter's dorm hall shouting "Nigger Go Home."⁵² During the attack fires were started and bricks were thrown at her dorm window. Tear gas was eventually used to subdue the crowd and both Hunter and Holmes were removed from the campus that night. The students were allowed to come back to campus by court order on January 16th amidst the cry for their reinstatement from faculty members.

William Billows remembered this time well as he recounted the events that took place in the black community concerning the integration of UGA.

⁵¹ Thomas, 200.

⁵² Ibid., 202.

I remember it all well. I remember the Killians inviting the Klan to come by because they would have shotguns and everything waiting for them and no one showed up. Athens then really became a boiling pot.⁵³

He said that the black community was aware of what was going on on campus through the news media and they surmised the type of impact that it would have on the city. Although they had no control over what would happen on campus the black community decided that it needed to do something “to show these people.”⁵⁴

One way to stem the tide was through non-violent protest led by Rev. Hudson of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Billows said,

He was a preacher but he wasn't scared of nothing! A pistol tottin' preacher. He was a good man. He kind of led things. A lot of people don't know it but King [Martin Luther King Jr.] even spoke at Ebenezer. We took the front row when other churches were in the back. Ebenezer has always just had strong leaders. We had it together. It was organized very well. That was during Charlayne Hunter and Holmes' thing that we took to the streets of Athens. Hot, white folks everywhere, black people everywhere but we did change some things. We changed a lot of things.⁵⁵

A second less nonviolent method was through the physical intimidation of any outsiders who dared to enter Athens with the idea of stirring up trouble. Billows explained how blacks controlled the main route in and out of Athens. Therefore, outsiders who attempted to enter Athens would have to go through the black community in order to get to the campus and Holmes and Hunter. Billows explained,

Blacks controlled that strip and if we did not approve of what went on we went down to the school [AHIS/BHHS] during the day and lined bricks up behind the hedges and we would let the brothers know that you need not come down Broad Street tonight and any car that made it down Broad Street would get bricked. And that's when they realized “you know we're being kind of

⁵³ A prominent black family in Athens who's son had been one of the first blacks to integrate a white school in Athens. The Killians were also members Ebenezer Baptist Church under Rev. Hudson; Billows, interview.

⁵⁴ Billows, interview.

⁵⁵ Billows, interview.

stupid, these people control everything coming into Athens until you get down to the University of Georgia. We might need to start making some peace here. Somebody needs to start compromising and getting things done.” Young black men just decided that we’ll stop the traffic and we did. It’s because of the way they were acting downtown. I guess it was just to show them that if you’re coming to Athens to see what’s going on with Charlayne Hunter and all that’s going on at the University you gotta come through my neighborhood and we ain’t gonna let you in. It was a hard time.⁵⁶

Desegregation had not presented itself as a smooth process for UGA and now the Clarke County School was set to begin its process. School officials seemed determined not to let this violence play itself out again.

In 1959 the Board adopted policies concerning the assignment and transfer of pupils in its own desegregation effort. The provisions of the policies were: “a) Pupils continue to be enrolled in the school to which they are assigned until they have completed the work in that school and are assigned to another school., b) Any parent who desires to do so may apply for a transfer in school assignment, stating the reasons for the request., c) Factors to be used in considering transfer applications are enumerated.”⁵⁷ The Board stated that since the adoption of the policies, a number of transfer applications had been made and considered with many of them being approved and some being rejected. However, until recently no parent had requested a transfer from a black school to a white school, but within recent weeks the Board of Education had received applications from parents, involving seven pupils, requesting transfers to white schools. This no doubt was connected to the petition for desegregation presented to the Board by the Athens Chapter of the NAACP.

The Board went on to make a bold and telling statement concerning its stance on desegregation:

⁵⁶ Billows, interview.

⁵⁷ Board of Education Minutes, Athens, 26 August 1963.

The Board would prefer to continue the custom of maintaining separate schools for white and Negro pupils. It is the definite belief of board members that this is the sentiment of the majority of both races in this community, in terms of the welfare of all concerned. At the same time, it is recognized that separation in schools cannot be legally compelled or required. This matter has been tested repeatedly in courts and all people are familiar with the results of court action in such cases. The Clarke County Board of Education believes that schools should remain under local control and that the administration of school affairs should not be under the direction of a federal court. The Board believes further, that the citizens of Clarke County share this belief. Therefore, the Board has given fair and impartial consideration to the transfer applications without regard to race and in careful accord with the adopted policies....The cooperation and understanding of all citizens and their children will be most important as this change from traditional practice and custom is made. Officials of Athens and Clarke County and all school authorities will work together to insure and maintain orderliness. All people of good will want our community to avoid the turmoil and strife that has been suffered by so many others.⁵⁸

In this same meeting a resolution regarding the petition from the Athens Chapter of the NAACP for adherence to the *Brown* decision was rendered:

[T]his Board is advised that the orders contained in the Court decisions referred to are directed only to the parties in those cases, and not to this Board; and further, that Clarke County Board of Education is not maintaining segregation of races in public schools under any law or regulations or policies; but on the contrary, adheres to a Board policy regulating the assignment and transfer of students in its public schools, designed to enable the Board to plan its classroom and teacher assignments, transportation and curriculum in an orderly manner for the general welfare of all students: ...under this policy any parent or guardian of a student dissatisfied with the assignment of such student, or having valid reasons for desiring that such student be assigned to a different school, may file an application for transfer in the form provided, and such application will be considered and acted upon by the Board or its authority, in a manner consistent with the best interests of the student involved and the Clarke County School System as a whole; ...in an interview with the Board's Pupil Placement Committee, Rev. Hudson admitted, in effect, that proper handling of applications of individual applicants in accordance with the Board's policies is all that is being sought; Therefore, Be It Resolved that the petitions referred do not demand any action by this Board and that it continue to adhere to its policies as herein set out, and that Rev. Hudson(pastor of Ebenezer), the person filing such petitions, be furnished.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 26 August 1963.

⁵⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 26 August 1963.

The Board went on to insist that its voluntary transfer policy achieved the desegregation order of *Brown v. Board of Education* without admitting that such an order was applicable to their district. Although the massive resistance to desegregation had ended in 1961 with the repeal of Governor Vandiver's laws and the integration of UGA, Athens had certainly taken up the local resistance made possible by Georgia's new laws. The Board clearly took advantage of the local pupil placement provision and the freedom of choice plans that were becoming popular in Southern states as a way of bypassing the *Brown* mandates. Although different in many respects from its surrounding counties, in this case, Athens toed the line in the face of desegregation.

At this same board meeting the Pupil Transfer Committee reported that they had considered the applications for students wishing to transfer, of which three had been sanctioned by the NAACP, with all but one being approved for transfer.⁶⁰ In his September 1963 report, the Superintendent reported the successful carrying out of the desegregation plan without any incident.⁶¹ However, the report also showed that seven of the nine transfer requests were denied. Of those seven, five came from black parents wishing to move their children to white schools. History within Athens indicates that there were not two but five black students who integrated the school system that year - four black girls – Wilucia Green, her sister Marjorie Green, Agnes Green (no relation), and Bonnie Hampton – and one black boy, Scott Michael Killian.⁶² However, there is no indication in the Board minutes of this total. Nonetheless the Clarke County school system became officially integrated in 1963.

⁶⁰ Board of Education Minutes, 26 August 1963.

⁶¹ Board of Education Minutes, 11 September 1963.

As for the denials, the report indicated that they were based upon the presumption that the transfer would disrupt the orderly administration of school operations and would present problems in regard to transportation and would not be to the best interest of the student involved. Also even though the application was filed before school term began the committee claimed it could not be addressed then and “it is to the best interest of the student and the school system that transfers of this kind not be made during the school year.”⁶³ Over the next couple of years, applications would continue to be submitted to the Pupil Transfer Committee with no clear acceptance or denial protocol.

By March of 1965 and with the earlier passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Superintendent Wood of Athens stated the he had received no official information concerning the signing of the statement of compliance and until the entire situation was clarified he would suggest no further action be taken by the Board.⁶⁴ However, action was taken at the June 19th meeting as a resolution by the Board was set forth to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In an accompanying statement, the Board asserted that “all pupils in its school have a freedom of choice to attend any school in its system, without regard to race, color, or national origin...and pursuant to such practices and policies, desegregation of all twelve grades has been accomplished.”⁶⁵ The policies within the resolution consisted of 1) Freedom of choice, 2) Initial Registration in which at age six a parent can register their six year old at the school of their choice, 3) Transportation on a non-discriminatory basis, 4) Personnel Assignment on a non-discriminatory basis, and 5) Notification of Pupils, Parents,

⁶² Thurmond, 96.

⁶³ Board of Education Minutes, 11 September 1963.

⁶⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 10 March 1965.

⁶⁵ Board of Education Minutes, 19 June 1965.

and the Public of the Board's policy.⁶⁶ This policy came days before the June 30th deadline for compliance to the Civil Rights act and days before an Athens Banner-Herald Op-ed piece.

In the article, reflecting the opinion and views of the newspaper, the editors admonish Federal officials to not penalize children in the face of Southern school districts' attempt to abide by the arbitrary and imprecise rules for desegregation. In the wake of Clarke County preparing to submit its plan for desegregation the editors suggest that the federal government should "give conditional acceptance to all the plans that show an honest effort to abide by the law and then help the systems work out the details later."⁶⁷ This was suggested as the school district was in jeopardy of losing federal funds amounting to \$55 million for education if Clarke County's plan was not accepted. However, the editors stated that the system had been partially integrated for the past two years but was asked to submit additional data that would presumably satisfy the federal government. Within the article is a tenor of annoyance with federal officials and an accusation that they were more interested in their bureaucratic red tape than the education of children. This sentiment of only Southern officials being truly concerned about the children proved to be a common one that did not escape Athens.

As the Board waited for a response to its submitted plan for desegregation, the superintendent reported that by September 8, 1965 there were approximately 200 Negroes attending formerly all-white schools in Athens.⁶⁸ He went on to report that there was desegregation of the buses with minor problems. However, by 1966 there were problems with its Freedom of Choice plan. The problems were due to overcrowding in some schools

⁶⁶ Board of Education Minutes, 19 June 1965.

⁶⁷ "Children Should be Given Priority in Working Out School Integration," *Athens Banner-Herald*, June 17, 1965, 4.

⁶⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 8 September 1965.

and under-enrollment in others coupled with transportation issues.⁶⁹ The Superintendent saw the solution to this problem as raising the maximum number of pupils per teacher to 33 even as he said this would serve as an “imposition on teachers and an injustice to children.”⁷⁰ He went on to say that he saw this as the only acceptable plan for now but encouraged the Board to adopt a plan for the 1967-68 school year that would require students in a district to attend a particular school. The structure of the Freedom of Choice plan was crumbling.

However, until a new plan could be worked out, the board went forward with the approved plan with the superintendent presenting the district’s desegregation efforts to HEW. The superintendent reported that in his meeting HEW representatives were pleased with the desegregation efforts and that “everything was in order and acceptable.”⁷¹ The questions that were asked consisted of the district’s anticipated enrollments and faculty desegregation plans. The superintendent further stated that the “conference was a pleasant one and that he felt our position had been stated definitely and positively.”⁷² In response to the questions concerning their faculty desegregation plans, the Board moved forward with its own faculty desegregation plans by moving a maximum of ten classroom teachers for the upcoming school year. However a resolution had yet to come concerning the overcrowding and under-enrollment of schools due to the Freedom of Choice plan.

As of September 14, 1966 it was noted in a board meeting that the school system had classroom space but that some of it was in previously all Negro schools.⁷³ By the summer of

⁶⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 28 May 1966.

⁷⁰ Board of Education Minutes, 2 June 1966.

⁷¹ Board of Education Minutes 10 August 1966,

⁷² Board of Education Minutes, 10 August 1966.

⁷³ Board of Education Minutes , September 1966.

1967 the board estimated that 24 percent of black children in the district would be attending formerly all-white schools in the 1967-68 school year with about 200 attending Athens High School. By this date no white student had asked to be transferred to formerly all-black schools.⁷⁴ In that same summer, Clarke County received good news from Harold B. Williams, the Acting Assistant Commissioner of the Equal Educational Opportunities Program, stating that the district was making reasonable progress in the desegregation of its students and faculty.⁷⁵ Further, based on the reports he did not foresee any problems regarding the district's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act during the upcoming school year. Neither he nor his office would make any further review of the district's compliance unless they received complaints about the operation of the plan or if the actual progress falls below the district's estimates. He ended the statement by offering the help of his office in carrying out its desegregation plan. For all intents and purposes, Clarke County seemed to be in the clear.

Not long after this affirmation of its plan, the district faced its first issue with its faculty desegregation plan. One of its black teachers, Mrs. Betty Holston, who was transferred to a formerly all-white elementary school, was transferred back to her all-black school due to the difficult work environment at her new school. According to reports from both the Athens Banner-Herald⁷⁶ and the Board of Education⁷⁷ Mrs. Holston was sent back to her all-black school due to complaints from white parents at Alps Road Elementary School

⁷⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 14 June 1967.

⁷⁵ Board of Education Minutes, 12 July 1967.

⁷⁶ Rick Parham. "Transfer of Teacher, Priority Shift Involved," *Athens Banner-Herald*, December 1967, 1.

⁷⁷ Board of Education Minutes, 13 December 1967.

and in particular a prominent white businessman. GTEA's executive secretary, Dr. H.E. Tate, attended a meeting of parents held by Superintendent Wood to discuss the matter. Dr. Tate and his organization were present to investigate the matter in light of the "growing trend on the part of local school officials to illegally transfer, demote, dismiss, displace, or otherwise fire Negro teachers."⁷⁸ Wood insisted that Mrs. Holston agreed to the transfer but GTEA officials retorted that she in fact had not agreed to the transfer but was transferred nonetheless. In a statement to the Board, Wood criticized the white parents at Alps Road for not accepting a black teacher at their school and creating an undesirable situation for the teacher. He said these same parents were now singing her praises in the wake of her transfer but it was unfortunate that this "helping hand was not extended when it was needed."⁷⁹ Wood went on to make some very telling remarks:

It is unfortunate that a capable and qualified teacher was not accepted as such at a time, both this year and last, when this was most important for her. Happily, this situation has not existed in other schools where we have Negro teachers in formerly all-white schools and vice-versa. My position is that capable teachers are capable teachers, regardless of race, and I do not intend to have any capable teacher remain in an unacceptable atmosphere. If the atmosphere has changed, as may be indicated by the recent upsurge of support for a teacher who has constantly been placed in another light, I am delighted. This tends to bear out my basic thoughts and plans for meeting the needs of a progressive school system in 1967 and years to come. It is my intention to assign other competent and capable Negro teachers to the Alps Road School, as needs of the school and availability of teachers may permit. My only regret is that it was not possible to assign two more Negro teachers to the school in 1967-1968. The large contingent of Negro pupils in the school means that such assignments are entirely reasonable. It is hoped that they will be welcomed and have the unfettered opportunity to serve, as has been the case in other schools.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Rick Parham. "Transfer of Teacher, Priority Shift Involved," *Athens Banner-Herald*, December 1967, 1.

⁷⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 13 December 1967.

⁸⁰ Board of Education Minutes, 13 December 1967.

These comments shed light on the relative calmness that accompanied the desegregation process in Athens. As many Athenians have noted, although the desegregation process was not without problems, it was not like other districts throughout the South. Both Bob Paris and Webster Anderson spoke highly of Superintendent Wood in respect to his character and his willingness to do what was right. Of Superintendent Wood, Bob Paris said,

Our superintendent, he was pretty progressive. He tried to do what was right. I understand because I had some contact. I did parties and things for him. He really caught hell for a lot of things that he did that were supposed to be done that was right to do. Others gave him hell. He was a Southerner but he was a good man. He did a lot of things that were right that they gave him hell for.⁸¹

Bob Paris was also one of the teachers that Wood transferred from his all-black to school to a previously all-white school. Paris remembered his first assignment at the all-white school as being truly unpleasant. He recalled the principal as having been a graduate of the Normal School and an old maid who “didn’t quite like integration.”⁸² He recalled an incident in which there was a white teacher on the second floor and black kids running down the steps,

And she came to the top of the steps and said “you niggas stop that running!” You know that kind of thing. Well what could I say. I couldn’t go tell the principal because she was gonna back her up. I imagined she said nigga too. Those were the kind of situations we had to work in.⁸³

He described the principal and situation as racist as he went on to explain the disciplinary policy at the school.

When they needed some spanking for the black kids they called me and I did it for a little while, didn’t have that many kids. I said why isn’t it she doesn’t ask me to do the white kids?! So I went to her and said well I don’t think that I want to do this anymore. Now that’s one time I spoke up. If I can’t discipline

⁸¹ Paris, interview.

⁸² Paris interview.

⁸³ Paris, interview.

all of them I'm not gonna discipline the black ones. I got in trouble then. They were ready to get rid of me then. I punished the black kids and they took care of the whites. That's when I had to go to Clarke Middle school which was so much better. I was over there seventeen or eighteen years until I retired.⁸⁴

As he mentioned that after a year at that school he was moved to one of the formerly all-white middle schools. This school offered a very different experience and population as he was more familiar with the students because of his position as the maitre d' at the local country club. Working there he had come into regular contact with these students and their parents, allowing for a more positive experience.

I had no problem. I got along famously with the kids. It worked out great for me because the kids knew me and they showed the same respect for me as they did all the rest of the teachers. As a matter of fact, more because they knew me. As a matter of fact kids would race to try and get in my class because they knew I didn't take no crap. I started out setting up proper report. No problems, never. Mr. Paris don't play. None of them messed with me, black or white. A child is a child, skin color doesn't make a difference. They were good.⁸⁵

Webster Anderson was also asked by Superintendent Wood to move to a formerly all-white school during the initial days of faculty desegregation. However in his case he was only asked to take the job for one year and if he did not like it he could return to Mr. Wood and be reinstated as the music teacher at Burney-Harris. Wood retired before that year was over so Anderson remained in that position. He laughs about it now. Wood asked Anderson to take the assistant principal position at the formerly all-white high school Athens High. Anderson describes his appointment and promise of a one-year agreement as an appeasement.

I guess he knew he was getting out and he had to appease me to do it because he needed someone to do it. He needed somebody that was black who he

⁸⁴ Paris, interview.

⁸⁵ Paris, interview.

considered had the training as well as the fortitude to stand it because it wasn't good to stand. I was the assistant principal when it was still Athens High School. I went there when there were only two black teachers at Athens High school. Ms. Hawke was there in Spanish and I was there as assistant principal. I was certified in administration. Probably wouldn't have gotten it had I not been certified.⁸⁶

He did not recount his tenure at Athens High as filled with horrific events. Mr. Anderson's experience at the formerly all-white school paralleled his at AHIS/BHHS in that he continued to fight for an equal education for all students. He did however, describe one incident he had with an administrative aide.

I had problems the first year with another assistant principal. He was an administrative aide and I was an assistant principal he just took it upon himself to switch me to the administrative aide and himself to the assistant principal. I went and told the principal that "hey I can't take this. You're gonna have to tell this guy what he really is or have to let me know what I really am and I'ma leave." After he told that joker that, he *still* did things to be the assistant principal and not the administrative aide. He didn't have one course in administration, not one. [Laughs]⁸⁷

Mr. Anderson remained at Athens High during the crucial years of integration and served an integral part in the eventual consolidation of the two high schools. The scattering of teachers continued as the district implemented its Freedom of Choice plan but the time was coming in which this plan would no longer be appropriate for the district.

By February of 1968 the Board came the conclusion that it could not continue the Freedom of Choice plan. It stated,

It is impossible to predict and control enrollment in any given school, Some schools are overcrowded and other schools have vacant classrooms, To plan an orderly transportation system is impossible from the standpoint of spending the transportation dollar wisely, and the tremendous amount of

⁸⁶ Anderson, interview.

⁸⁷ Anderson, interview.

communications and paper work occupied a disproportionate amount of time of the professional staff to the extent that there was unnecessary confusion.⁸⁸

Therefore the district implemented a plan in which only those elementary schools that were in the inner-city would operate under the Freedom of Choice plans while the other elementary schools would operate under a districting plan that would take effect in the 1968-69 school year. The proposed Enrollment Plan would combine geographic attendance and freedom of choice plans.⁸⁹ The Board insisted that it would provide control over the distribution of pupils while also meeting the legal requirements under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Notably the Freedom of Choice Plan would continue in the junior high and high schools with plans being made for the completion of a third high school. The plan was also to increase the desegregation of the professional staff.

With the implementation of this plan the Board expected that there would be no school with only the enrollment of one race for the 1969-70 school year. At that time five of the eighteen schools had not been integrated. To achieve this goal the board said that it would require the elimination of freedom of choice. This was a bold statement made by the Board as it evidenced a concession that whites would not voluntarily transfer their children to previously all-black schools. In fact by that time more than 750 black students were enrolled in formerly all-white schools with over 40 professional staff members serving in integrated settings but no white student had voluntarily transferred to an all-black school.

Although the plan proved acceptable to the Board the school system was asked by the HEW to “formulate further districting plans and submit them the latter part of November.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 8 February 1968.

⁸⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 12 March 1968.

⁹⁰ Board of Education Minutes, 10 October 1968.

The November deadline was not met and by January 1, 1969 The Daily News reported that the school system was in non-compliance with desegregation requirements.⁹¹ This non-compliance resulted from two-thirds of the district's black students attending all-black schools. Under HEW guidelines this had to be eliminated by the county. In the meantime federal monies to Clarke County were to be diverted in that the district would retain all of its current federal funds but would not be eligible for future federal funds. For Clarke County this amounted to more than \$600,000. The district was reassured at the January 9th Board meeting by the representative of the HEW Atlanta office that funds would not be cut off before the end of the year. By March when the district had still not submitted a plan, HEW sent a letter to Mr. Wood stating that because an acceptable plan had not been submitted in January to eliminate the dual system the deferment of funds would be within the next 90 days.⁹²

In a specially called April 29, 1969 meeting for the purpose of adopting a desegregation plan, a plan was adopted that called for addressing the racial imbalance in all of the schools including the junior high and high schools.⁹³ An interim plan for the high school consisted of dividing the county so that the high school students would attend Burney-Harris and Athens High School. Once the new high school was built the Board would adopt a plan using all three high schools for the 1970-71 school year. The plan addressed the desegregation of the professional staff and the elimination of the dual school system with a neighborhood and geographical districting plan.

⁹¹ Sharon Bailey. "Clarke Misses Integration Deadline," *The Daily News*, January 1, 1969, 1.

⁹² Board of Education Minutes, 13 March 1968.

⁹³ Board of Education Minutes, 29 April 1969.

Upon the completion of the plan, Wood and the district's attorney traveled to Washington to submit the plan. In the meeting the plan was neither accepted nor rejected with the HEW saying that it was not sure if what was presented was the best plan.⁹⁴ Mr. Wood indicated to the HEW officials that he and his committee had worked with the officials in the Atlanta office and it was the opinion of the officials that the work "had been done well and thoroughly and that the plan reviewed would be acceptable and approvable if submitted."⁹⁵ In response, HEW stated that someone would come to Athens soon to work on the plan with the district officials.

Two men from Washington were sent to work with Clarke County school officials but they received final word on July 2nd that their desegregation plan had not been accepted. Clarke County would have 20 days to submit an effective plan.⁹⁶ At this critical time in Clarke County's history, the district received a new superintendent, Dr. Charles P. McDaniel, who was charged with getting the district in compliance. His first task was to present three desegregation alternatives for the Board to consider: 1) Stay with the rejected plan and appeal, 2) Adopt "Plan B" or a similar plan as endorsed by HEW, or 3) Take the geographical zoning plan that was adopted and make enough adjustments so that it would be acceptable to HEW and to the school system.⁹⁷ The board initially decided to stick with the rejected original plan and ask for a hearing from HEW.

⁹⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 8 May 1969.

⁹⁵ Board of Education minutes, 8 May 1969.

⁹⁶ Board of Education Minutes, 10 July 1969.

⁹⁷ Board of Education Minutes, 10 July 1969.

In this meeting where the decision was made, telling discussions were had that lead to a better understanding of the make-up of Clarke County. In discussing the three alternatives, Mr. Jones, a Board member, said that he did not believe that

By setting up all-white schools and busing Negro children to all areas of the school system to achieve a racial balance in their interest of equal educational opportunities, the Board was solving the problem. He said that Negro children who found themselves in nothing but a sea of whites might develop an inferiority complex to such an extent that it would change the course of their lives. He said that the Board should not let HEW tell the community that they have so much money that they would give, but if you don't do certain things you won't get it. He said that he believed the Board should do all that is in its power to go one step further with the plan it had submitted, and that he knew the school system would survive without Federal money. He said further, "I believe that all schools should be integrated and some should be predominately white and some should be predominately Negro. The easy way is possibly sowing seeds of discontent to shatter peaceful relations that this community has enjoyed for so many years."⁹⁸

His comments echo those of many southern officials concerning three issues of the time.

The first issue is that of the sovereignty of their state and local control or home rule. He insists that the proper place for decisions concerning the local school is at the local level, further arguing that his community will not be held hostage by the federal government's subsidies to the local school system. Additionally he laid claim to a peaceful and harmonious relationship between the races that he contended existed in his county. This had been a long-standing assertion from whites throughout the South. However, his comments concerning the feelings of blacks in all-white settings are surprising. This assessment of the black child's feeling is in sharp contrast to those expressed by Thurgood Marshall in his argument and those rendered by the Justices in the *Brown* decision in that they contended that all-black

⁹⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 16 July 1969.

settings would cause feelings of inferiority. It seems as though the feelings of black children were used by both sides to accomplish their unique goals.

Nonetheless, in a subsequent meeting the board rescinded its decision to go the HEW for a hearing and instead submitted a new plan which was a modification of the Neighborhood Plan.⁹⁹ The new plan would require busing of children from four predominately black pockets to three elementary schools and one pocket zoned for children to walk to one school, thereby achieving desegregation of all schools. The plan then called for all other children living outside of the one and one-half mile walking distance from school to be zoned into a school by geographical zoning. The elementary schools would retain grades 1-6 with all being integrated, the percentages ranging between 49 percent black at a formerly all-black school to 20 percent at a formerly all-white school. Thirteen of the elementary schools would be used while one of the white schools would be used to house the special programs of the Clarke County School District.

The new plan was approved by the Board amidst a healthy discussion at two different meetings. One Board member commented that the white administration is to be condemned for the condition of the East Athens Elementary School, not the Negro. "In the past the Negro has gone to this school and now if the shoe fits we will have to wear it."¹⁰⁰ This was in response to white parents complaining about sending their children to the once all-black school. White parents also complained about sending their children to the formerly all-black North Athens Elementary School that was located in close proximity to the poultry plant in Athens. When this site was being vetted in 1952 as the proposed site for the new Negro

⁹⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 30 July 1969.

¹⁰⁰ Board of Education, 30 July 1969.

elementary school the objection was laid to rest by one of the board members when he insisted that his office was in the vicinity and he had “never noticed any odors coming from the poultry plant.”¹⁰¹ However, now in the wake of white children attending the school concerns were again being raised. The school was eventually torn down. Another board member expressed his frustration as other white parents who complained about having their children bused to schools outside of their neighborhoods. He said that he as well did not want his children bused but all children will get a good education at all of the schools because “all schools will be made equal.”¹⁰² He further informed the parents, “The Negro is not wanting to go to your school any more than you want to go to his.”

Upon the start of the 1969-70 school year, the superintendent reported that all had gone well on the first day of school. Additionally all schools had a majority of white enrollment except one formerly all-black elementary school, all schools except BHHS had a majority of white teachers, and extensive expenditures had been made to get the buildings and grounds in shape – this presumably in response to white students attending formerly all-black schools. Additionally, although HEW had accepted the district’s plan for desegregation, the district had not provided an acceptable plan for its high school. The district was given 60 days for submission of a desegregation plan for these schools.¹⁰³

In the November 24, 1969 Board meeting the superintendent submitted a report with recommendations for curriculum revisions. In his report under the topic *To pursue the elimination of the dual school system* he gave the following statistics: 1) The Clarke County

¹⁰¹ Board of Education Minutes, 31 July 1952.

¹⁰² Board of Education Minutes, 14 August 1969.

¹⁰³ Board of Education Minutes 9 October 1969.

school district has a racial composition of about 33%-67%, 2) Much of the 33% is educationally deprived, 3) By the time the 33% enters first grade, frequently they are far behind their counterparts in readiness to do school work, 4) For many of these pupils, the achievement level continues to lag, and this lag increases as they approach the upper grades, and 5) Pupils who have difficulty in succeeding in school – either Negro or white—turn frequently to acts of hostility and aggression.¹⁰⁴ These statistics are immediately followed by the desegregation plan for the 1971-72 school year in which BHHS would be closed as a high school. The plan called for grades 9-12 to be in two schools - one located at the new high school site and the other housed in the present Athens High School building. The schools would provide the same offerings and be of the same size, 1200 to 1500 students. Attendance zones would be drawn to accomplish this. However, since the new high school would not be completed by the fall of 1970 the plan would be to only house the tenth grade at BHHS while placing all eleventh and twelfth grade students at Athens High School.

The statistics dove-tailed perfectly into the superintendent's plan to close the all-black high school instead of using it as one of three high schools in Athens as the previous superintendent, Wood had suggested. Once the superintendent was ostensibly able to show that the all-black schools were not and had not been able to properly educate their students, thereby handicapping 33 percent of Athens' school-age population, it proved easier to gain board approval to vote against its previous plan to allow BHHS to remain open. However easy it was for Superintendent McDaniel to convince the Board to shut down Burney-Harris, it would prove much more difficult to sell this idea to the black community of Athens.

¹⁰⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 24 November 1969.

The Closing of AHIS/BHHS

Unlike the reaction to the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown*, the reaction to the closing of AHIS/BHHS was anything but muted. Although there had been rumors of its potential closing it did not become reality until the December 11, 1969 Board meeting when Superintendent McDaniel's desegregation plan was accepted. For Paula Hill and her classmates it was all too much. When confronted with this decision she said,

It was the hardest thing in the world. They kept saying it in 10th grade. Then they said it when we got in 11th grade. Class of '70 was the last official class to finish. They told us our junior year that that would be our last year...devastated!¹⁰⁵

She was not the only one who shared this same sentiment, Marcus Thomas also expressed his desire to remain at Burney-Harris, "I didn't want to go to Clarke Central [formerly Athens High] to be honest with you. I was perfectly happy at Burney-Harris High School."¹⁰⁶ The strong attachment that the students and community had to AHIS/BHHS would lead to a fight to preserve the school's legacy both physically and mentally.

Upon the decision to close Burney-Harris a committee of students, school administrators, and teachers was formed to determine the plan for consolidation; however, according to Marcus Thomas this was not the original strategy. Thomas asserted that the original strategy was for the district to follow in the steps of other school districts to simply close the all-black school and send its students to the all-white school, but this was not to be in Athens. Varner Dawes said that due to the slated closing of two of the previously all-black schools, North Athens Elementary and Lyons Middle School, the community was prepared to protest the closing of Burney-Harris.

¹⁰⁵ Hill, interview.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas, interview.

There wasn't much protest in the proposed closing of the two previous schools due to their locations. North Athens was located by the poultry plant and as previously mentioned when integrated, white parents raised concern about its location. In the case of Lyons Middle School, it was located by the local airport next to a rock quarry. Dawes recalled that at some points during the school day the workers would dynamite the area and the rocks would fly everywhere causing the students to have to take cover. Upon integration, that school was closed. Now Burney-Harris was on the chopping block.

Although the committee was formed, with Webster Anderson serving on it, black students at Burney-Harris did not feel there was a true and concerted effort to address their concerns. Webster Anderson said that the students were asking questions and not getting any answers or the kind of answers that they wanted to hear. Marcus Thomas who was also a member of the committee, said "We had become frustrated with the lack of progress as it related to the things that we felt were important. We were upset because of...issues dealing with the name, colors, where would our principals go and our coaches, whether or not it was going to be an equal consolidation as opposed to displacements."¹⁰⁷ The stage was then set for a show down of sorts.

The specific impetus to the incident that occurred on April 16, 1970 at Athens High is somewhat unclear. Some attribute it to the lack of progress on the committee, some say it was the intramural basketball game that had taken place the night before at Athens High, while others attribute it to an April 15th article in which the word "militant" was used to describe a group of Athens High black students. A brief description of the three is warranted.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, interview.

Marcus Thomas explained that on the morning of the 16th a group of Burney-Harris students met that morning to discuss the lack of progress with the committee. The committee was designed to discuss things such as the name of the new school, the school's new colors, mascot, and the like. As previously mentioned this was to be a consolidation of the schools in which elements of both schools would be brought together to form a new school. Paula Hill described the passion that she and other black students took to the meetings. She said,

The negotiations were, we were not going over there being no Trojans. We're not going wearing no red and white, we're not going unless we be part of every organization, and the cheerleaders we had are going to be on the cheerleading squad, band members gonna participate. We don't want anything. We don't wanna be called Athens High. We don't want this!¹⁰⁸

Up until that point no progress had been made and Thomas and other Burney-Harris students felt as though they weren't "getting a fair shake in the debate and the discussion."¹⁰⁹ He went on to say that he and another student told the group assembled outside of the school that they were going to Athens High to speak to the black assistant principal, Mr. Webster Anderson, about their concerns. He went on to say,

We went over to Athens High to talk to Mr. Anderson and that meeting didn't go well. The two of us went to tell them that unless they began to fairly address and consider the concerns we had raised that basically it was getting ready to be trouble. So we went over and we were ushered off campus [laughs] and on our way back the students [Burney-Harris] had gotten in the street and was headed towards Athens High so we stopped and talked to them and told them what had happened.¹¹⁰

For Thomas this was the main impetus to the event that was to occur later that day. However he did admit that other issues had been brewing at Athens High with their black students that could have attributed to the coming incident.

¹⁰⁸ Hill, interview.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas, interview.

¹¹⁰ Thomas, interview.

Norris Fault was one of the 120 black students who attended the 1600-student Athens High School during the initial days of integration. He recounted the issues that he faced while attending the predominately white school and the battles that blacks faced at the school. He recalled white students hollering nigger in the hallways, walking to one side of the hallway when a black person was in the hall, and hollering “nigga drinking out of the water fountain” when a black student would use the fountain.¹¹¹ He described it as crazy. Therefore by the time he was an upper classman in high school he became disillusioned with school. He said,

I guess then we became a little resentful because we wouldn't go to school half the time. We would skip, just wouldn't go! Didn't even want to be bothered with them. Sometimes you got frustrated and didn't want to deal with the whole situation so we just take off. Dr. Webster Anderson caught us a couple of times and disciplined us of course. He was always the one who would talk with us and let us know the value of this experience in education especially the young men.¹¹²

With the accumulation of years of unfair treatment tensions were high and the events surrounding the annual Athens High intramural game only added fuel to the fire. The intramural game was usually played in the spring at Athens High. This year there were four blacks on the team but none were allowed playing time during the game. Fault went on to describe the event.

It was a good game but they didn't ever put any of the black players in the game. That day we're all in there [the gym]. They got upset and said “hey, they're not gonna let us play.” So they got angry and walked across the court. When they walked off the court they said “we've had enough” and gave the black power fist and then in the bleachers it started an argument and it was like a rumble and it was like a powder keg waiting to happen. This was it, the last straw. We done had enough. Knowing that this is March and they hadn't done anything about integration about how this thing is going through our heads and once it got heated up, fighting, really.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Fault, interview.

¹¹² Fault, interview.

¹¹³ Fault, interview.

The Athens Banner Herald reported on this event in an April 15, 1970 article stating that a scuffle had broken out at an intramural basketball game between the classes the week prior. The article went on to talk about another incident involving pushing at a basketball contest the next day in which the game turned into an all-white senior team versus an all-black freshmen team.¹¹⁴ At this game a soda can was thrown by a black student who was a student at Burney-Harris. The article went on to report that tensions had been high because black students at the high school felt that they were being discriminated against in the selection to clubs and organizations while they also reported incidents of discrimination at the hands of the teachers. Additionally black students expressed their displeasure in the slow movement of the school consolidation committee to address their concerns and the denial of their rights. Due to these issues rumors of unrest were circulating and attendance was down at Athens High.¹¹⁵

This same article is the article in which “militant” was used to describe a group of 35 black students at Athens High who were leading the protest. According to Athens High principal, Don Hight, the use of the word became the impetus to the incident that was later to come. A day after the incident, in an interview with the Athens Banner-Herald, Hight recalled the events that led up to the April 16th event. He said that “a large number of black students were gathered in the lobby of the auditorium discussing a newspaper article.”¹¹⁶ According to him the students became “incensed with the use of the word militant and the

¹¹⁴ Chuck Cooper, “Attempts Are Being Made to Ease Tension at AHS,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 15, 1970, 1,5.

¹¹⁵ Chuck Cooper, “Attempts Are Being Made to Ease Tension at AHS,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 15, 1970, 1,5.

¹¹⁶ “Schools Operating Without Difficulty,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 17, 1970, 1.

article in general.”¹¹⁷ Some refused to go to class because they wanted to remain and talk about the article and that’s when Hight said he received a call from E. T. Roberson, principal of BHHS, stating that some of his students were on their way to Athens High. Therefore whether one attributes the final impetus to a failed meeting with Webster Anderson, an intramural game, or a newspaper article, the scene was set for an uprising in Athens.

Marcus Thomas said that after being ushered off campus and sent back to BHHS, they met up with the students who were outside waiting for their return and all decided to return to Athens High. He said,

I remember we went up there, myself and another student and talked to Mr. Hight who was the principal and by that time security guards were coming and no progress again and so we went back on the hill and I told the students what had happened and what he said. I don’t know who but somebody said well we’re gonna rush him, we’re going in here. So at that point students just rushed Clarke Central [Athens High at that time] and it was a may lay. It was just bizarre unlike anything I had ever seen before in my life. They were running up and down the hall pushing and punching. People were screaming and calling cops. I remember the cops came and it was horrible. I was just around. I remember being in the hallway because I wasn’t familiar with the school. I had never been in Athens High and I was just there. I remember one moment this police officer pulled his gun out because this other guy had squared off with the policeman...and you see something happening in slow motion and you think he’s about to get killed. The assistant chief came and grabbed his gun and said “put that damn gun away.” I never will forget that. Someone could have died right there. Eventually they got us out of the building. We went back to Burney-Harris and that just set off what occurred the days after that.¹¹⁸

Paula Hill remembered that the incident was to be used as a method to not have to attend Athens High. They figured that if they destroyed the school they wouldn’t be sent there.

Their sentiment was “we ain’t coming over here.”¹¹⁹ After returning to Burney-Harris they

¹¹⁷ “Schools Operating Without Difficulty,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 17, 1970, 1.

¹¹⁸ Thomas, interview.

¹¹⁹ Hill, interview.

went about destroying that school also. As the paper reported, the students “smashed flower pots, discharged fire extinguishers, knocked out windows and broke glass panels in doors.”¹²⁰

To this she said that they figured since they weren’t going to be allowed to remain at their beloved school they would destroy it too. To this day she chuckles and says she doesn’t really know why they did that.

Webster Anderson recounted the incident with one of outrage and understanding.

The students came over. They marched over. I think the part that really got me, that made me a little sore was that they started raiding the school like going through classrooms, and throwing chairs and destructive kinds of things. I wasn’t for that. I even got caught in a door when that happened. It was an angry group of kids who felt that they weren’t being heard. And their basic reaction was the thing that Martin Luther King preached against, violence. All of them weren’t violent but there was enough violence going on that it dictated some strange things. But it was not surprising, not to me because they were asking questions and not getting any answers, the kind of answers that they wanted to hear. Sometimes you get answers but that’s not what you want to hear. So it alarmed this whole community and it said that hey these young people are saying something to us. They’re not necessarily segregationists, they’re not necessarily integrationists, they just want to know what’s right, what are we going to do about some things. I was not only there I was in the midst of it. I contained some students enough so we could sit down and talk about some things. So it was an occasion that probably could have been avoided if we had moved faster in the things that we said we were going to do. That lip service, those students were saying it’s time out for lip service, what are you gonna do?¹²¹

As a result of the students’ actions a restraining order was placed on thirteen named students including Norris Fault and Marcus Thomas, and John Doe one through 100 to cover the approximate 125 students involved in the incident. The students knew that this was just the beginning for their direct action. Norris Fault said that they knew that they would have to be proactive in their upcoming deliberations and protests so as to not be cut off and separated

¹²⁰ “Schools Operating Without Difficulty,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 17, 1970, 1.

¹²¹ Anderson, interview.

by impending disciplinary actions. He said he and a group of black Athens High students met with a group of Burney-Harris students to plan their next steps. In that meeting he was named the leader of the movement and they decided to march to the Board of Education building to present their grievances.

The Athens Banner-Herald reported that on April 22nd, after obtaining a permit from the mayor, a group of black students and ministers marched to the Board of Education building and met briefly with Superintendent McDaniel.¹²² The Superintendent assured the group that he would meet with the board to review and discuss the grievances and report back to the group their decision.

In the mean time attendance remained low at Burney-Harris while it went back to normal at Athens High. The superintendent issued a warning to students who did not return to school that if not out for legitimate reasons they would be suspended when they eventually returned to school.¹²³ Marcus Thomas insisted that the only reason the superintendent agreed to meet with them was because students refused to return to school. He said “We ended up in a meeting with him [Superintendent McDaniel] but this lasted because we stopped going to school. So basically we just shut it down.”¹²⁴

The students along with three ministers who served as their advisors met with Dr. McDaniel and the school board April 20-24 to voice their grievances. After an executive session of the board the following Tuesday, April 28th, the Board issued a statement on Wednesday the 29th addressing the grievances. In two separate lists, the group issued a total

¹²² “Group Gathers at Education Board Offices,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 22, 1970, 1,12.

¹²³ Hank Johnson. “Attendance Still Down at School: ‘No Problems’ with Students McDaniel Says,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, April 28, 1970, 1.

¹²⁴ Thomas, interview.

of fourteen grievances to the board. Of the fourteen some included: 1) more black teachers in supervisory positions and department heads at Athens High, 2) concern of the non-renewal of black teacher's contracts, 3) a lack of understanding of backgrounds and black cultures by white teachers, 4) concern over "continued white domination and control as well as attempts to dehumanize, degrade and destroy black children's feeling of worth, such as removing all black identification models such as black principal at Burney-Harris," and 5) incorporation of multi-ethnic textbooks and black studies programs.¹²⁵

After the grievances were presented to and addressed by the Board, Webster Anderson said this was when the consolidation committee began meeting two to three times per week. During these meetings they began to determine the crucial aspects of the new school that was to form. He said,

We met sometimes two or three times a week to try and determine what was going to be the name of the school. It's like not wanting to lose anything that you had but gain more. You had to lose something in integration. Both groups had to lose something. So that's how the school colors came about. They were one color from Burney-Harris and one color from Athens High School. I was there all that time and those were very crucial meetings because you're meeting and talking and we all worked very hard to try and come up with something that was fair.¹²⁶

Eventually compromises were made that determined the new colors of the school - red and gold, the school's new mascot - a gladiator, and the school's new name - Clarke Central High School. Athens High was officially changed to Clarke Central at a July 9, 1970 Board meeting with an explanation that the name would be used as

a directional code to describe the high school. This is a Clarke County school and a county school system, and this more accurately describes the population

¹²⁵ Jan Collins, "School Board: Replies Given to Grievances," *Athens-Banner Herald*, April 30, 1970, 1.

¹²⁶ Anderson, interview.

which the high school serves. He [Board member] advised that this would set a logical pattern for schools in the future and, in light of the uneasiness, the motion represented a good faith attempt.¹²⁷

During the negotiations, the court cases against the students were settled with a cease and desist order which, as Marcus Thomas said, put an end to the demonstrations but allowed the negotiations to become much more equitable. When asked why he thought whites in Athens were more receptive to the demands of the black community he explained,

Because we were right. Athens is not a liberal town but Athens is more tolerant than some other places and it was just a unique moment in time and in history. I can't articulate all the reasons why. I don't think that students reacted as cohesively as we did [in other towns] and then we had some adults who supported what we were doing and luckily at that moment in time the white leadership listened and responded.¹²⁸

To this same question Norris Fault too attributed it to the uniqueness and peculiarity of Athens that has previously been discussed. He said, "Athens is a peculiar community. You got a lot of educators here and during that time you had law professors part of the movement. You had Students for a Democratic Society and the university community had gotten involved." In their perspectives this prompted the white leadership in Athens to make concessions that allowed for a smoother integration process. Nevertheless, Webster Anderson still expressed strong feelings towards the white leadership's commitment to doing what was right in the process. He said,

I didn't think we were ready for integration. They [white leadership] never tried to show that they were ready. And I don't think they wanted to get ready because they felt that if they contest some things that it would go away but it doesn't go away all the time. There was resentment, a lot of that.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Board of Education Minutes, 9 July 1970.

¹²⁸ Thomas, interview.

¹²⁹ Anderson, interview.

For him, the integration of Clarke County schools was not smooth and equitable because there was no real desire for integration on the part of the white leadership and the effort was half-hearted which produced like results. Through the process he said, “We’ve learned that integration didn’t mean everything that we thought it meant and segregation wasn’t as bad as we thought it was. We began to see some good things in both of them.”

As the protests from the black community were waging, the white community waged its own battle. Parents of white students in the University Heights subdivision filed a lawsuit against the district in light of the desegregation plan that was accepted by the Clarke County Board of Education and to be presented to HEW as the district’s accepted desegregation plan. In this plan their children would be bused to East Athens Elementary School, a former all-black school that was located next to the poultry approximately four and a half miles away from their subdivision.¹³⁰ As the University Height parents planned their legal action strategy, parents of the Oconee Heights subdivision too expressed their displeasure in the desegregation plan and dispatched multiple telegrams of protest to HEW offices in Washington.¹³¹ The protesters in this subdivision claimed discrimination in that their children would be bused four miles away to the previously all-black North Athens Elementary School. The parents insisted that they were not fighting desegregation and in fact were fighting for Negroes as well as white children. Their request was to allow their children to remain in their neighborhood school.

Their protests did not deter the Board from submitting its plan with its approval occurring December 11, 1969. In response parents filed a lawsuit protesting the approved

¹³⁰ Chuck Cooper, “Parents’ Protest: Legal Action Decision Due,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, August 4, 1969, 1.

¹³¹ Chuck Cooper, “Parents Protesting Mix Plan,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, August 5, 1969, 12.

desegregation plan also having filed appeals.¹³² According to the Board of Education minutes, January 8, 1970, the suit would go to the Supreme Court with the Board being encouraged by their attorney to file a cross-appeal. On October 13, 1970 the case of *McDaniel v. Barresi* was argued in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. According to the parents the Board's desegregation plan violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Supreme Court of Georgia upheld both claims but on appeal the U.S. Supreme Court rejected them. On April 20, 1971 the Court decided that the Clarke County Board of Education took appropriate measures to disestablish the dual school system and in doing so properly took into account the race of its elementary school children in drawing attendance lines.¹³³ Upon this decision, the case was sent back to the Clarke County Superior Court and eventually the "Georgia Supreme Court issued a judgment vacating its former opinion in the desegregation case and adhering to the judgment of the United States Supreme Court."¹³⁴ This last action brought a close to the legal desegregation fight, putting to rest the future of desegregation in the Clarke County School district.

In the midst of the court cases, the 1970-71 school year opened without much noise. The Athens Banner-Herald reported that all went quite well on the first day of school.¹³⁵ Despite the turmoil that occurred the previous spring, when polled, school principals reported minimal problems with the start of the new school year. Marcus Thomas attributed this relatively quiet opening to the previous spring protests. He said,

¹³² Board of Education Minutes, 8 January, 1970.

¹³³ *McDaniel v. Barresi*, 402 U.S. 39, 41 (1971).

¹³⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 10 June 1971.

¹³⁵ Mike Christensen, "12,000 Attend Classes: Opening of Schools Goes Well in Clarke: Enrollments Still Below Projection," *Athens Banner-Herald*, September 1, 1970, 1.

Part of the myth is that integration went smoothly in Athens. By the school year [1970-71] everything had already been decided. So the decision really was forced in April and May because that's what changed the whole strategy about how they were going to go about doing it. See that's what is critical is what happened in April and May so by September the decisions had been made. We were the Gladiators by September. We were Clarke Central by September.¹³⁶

Additionally prior to the opening of the school year Dr. McDaniel made a plea of cooperation to the community for a peaceful desegregation process. He urged teachers and principals to "be tolerant of misunderstandings, but deal fairly, firmly, and decisively with all disciplinary problems."¹³⁷ In addition he asked parents to "discuss the school situation with their children urging and insisting on proper behavior."¹³⁸

The school year progressed in an integrated fashion with many trials and tribulations that had to be faced by the students of Clarke Central. Marcus Thomas said

We were dealing with a whole lot of other things that year because that's the year that we ended 84 years of segregation in the public school system in Clarke County and I always say that we had sixteen, seventeen year old kids that were asked to go and change 84 years worth of educational history. Because the schools had been segregated for 84 years there were other issues beyond academic that seemed to come to the forefront and there was just getting through a day without a fight or a riot you know [laughs] or some larger issue that seemed to be extremely prevalent during that time period.¹³⁹

Although progress was being made, by May of 1970 the Board received a report filed by representatives of the Athens Human Relations Council and the One Hundred Percenters Club warning of an explosive situation between whites and blacks at Clarke Central High

¹³⁶Thomas, interview.

¹³⁷ Mike Christensen, "Lid on Summer: Schools Starting Classes Monday: Cooperation Plea Issued By McDaniel," *Athens Banner-Herald*, August 30, 1970, 1.

¹³⁸ Mike Christensen, "Lid on Summer: Schools Starting Classes Monday: Cooperation Plea Issued By McDaniel," *Athens Banner-Herald*, August 30, 1970, 1.

¹³⁹ Thomas, interview.

School.¹⁴⁰ After talking to a representative number of both black and white students, the two organizations concluded that a number of concerns needed to be addressed before the district experiences a repeat of last year's protests. Some of the grievances were: 1) acts of irresponsibility between students, 2) concern with the attitudes of administration and faculty as appearing to be racist and discriminatory, 3) the harsh and discriminating treatment and language from the head football coach, 4) the possession of mace by the security guards, 5) and the incorporation of black heroes in U.S. History and literature classes. Some of these grievances were those expressed by the black contingent of students the year prior; therefore, the organizations asked that the board review the items and persons mentioned in the report and act before the year was out. Dr. McDaniel responded by pledging to provide a school built upon fairness and respect.

In spite of the turmoil that filled the first year of complete desegregation at the high school level, Clarke County had its largest graduation in history. On June 4, 1971, Clarke Central High School graduated 532 seniors as a part of the 1971 class.¹⁴¹ The first graduating class of the newly consolidated school had four speakers, two black and two white along, with other equal numbers of black and white students to participate in the ceremony. Additionally two preachers, one white and one black, gave the invocation and benediction respectively. The theme of the graduation as "The Need for Open Minds in a Changing World." It seemed as if at least for ceremonial purposes there was an attempt at equality.

¹⁴⁰ Joe Taylor. "'Explosive' Situation in Schools," *Athens Banner-Herald*, May 14, 1970, 1,2.

¹⁴¹ "Clarke Central Graduation Largest in County History," *Athens-Banner Herald*, June 4, 1971, 12.

The following day, June 6, 1971 eight seniors received their diplomas from the recently opened private high school, Athens Academy.¹⁴² This private school was founded in 1967 during the height of Clarke County's desegregation efforts. Three years later Athens Christian opened in 1970 to all grades with Athens Montessori and Prince Avenue Christian School opening eight years later in 1978.¹⁴³ Athens followed the trend of many Southern communities that experienced the opening of private schools for white students upon the desegregation of their school systems. This abandoning of the school system can still be witnessed in Athens as subsequent chapters will demonstrate.

Displacement of Black Educators in Athens

Although revered within the black community as purveyors of social and racial uplift, the position of the black teacher has long been a precarious one. As employees of the state and representatives of the local school system, the nature of the African American teacher was one of dependency and voicelessness. According to Michael Fultz this voicelessness came as a result of their powerlessness in the development of educational policy and their inability to fully voice their displeasure in the inequities of the school system.¹⁴⁴ Although their work in the classroom was laudable by any accounts, as Fultz explains, the duties that were imposed upon black teachers were not asked of any other subgroup in the African-American population and were not tempered with understanding if not achieved. Additionally in the fight for educational equality, the contributions and accomplishments of the black teacher were often slighted in an attempt "to emphasize the discriminatory neglect

¹⁴² "Eight Seniors Presented Diplomas from Academy," *Athens Banner-Herald*, June 6, 1971, 9.

¹⁴³ Thomas, 208.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Fultz, "African American Teachers in the South, 1890-1940: Powerlessness and the Ironies of Expectations and Protest," *History of Education Quarterly* 35 no.4 (Winter 1995): 413-415.

and impoverishment of African-American education generally.”¹⁴⁵ Therefore, their position within the inequitable educational system was expendable.

As noted above, in an article published in the *Journal of Negro Education* in 1951, Charles H. Thompson insisted that upon desegregation of the school system, there would not be a wholesale dismissal of the black teacher; however, the threat of displacement did not serve as a mitigating factor in the fight for educational equality.¹⁴⁶ The jobs of 75,000 black educators would have to be weighed against the definitions of an equitable education for black children and in the assessment, an equitable education came out on top. There was a mixed reaction to this impending threat of job loss from both teachers and the community.

According to Fairclough, the NAACP’s initial strategy of equalization was only a means to an end. Full integration served to be the goal.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, by 1950 Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund set out to dismantle the separate but equal doctrine. Before this change in strategy, teachers had been heavily involved in the efforts of the NAACP serving as plaintiffs in their numerous equalization cases involving teacher salaries while also leading the fight within their own professional organizations in the fight for school bus transportation, equal facilities, curriculum development, and lunchrooms.¹⁴⁸ In states such as Louisiana and North Carolina, black teacher associations financed the NAACP lawsuits in the area of education. Additionally the American Teachers Association gave money to the NAACP’s Legal Defense and Educational Fund referred to as the Inc Fund.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Fultz, “African-American Teachers in the South,” 421.

¹⁴⁶ Thompson, “Negro Teachers and the Elimination of Segregated Schools,” 138.

¹⁴⁷ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 62.

¹⁴⁸ Siddle Walker, “Second-Class Integration,” 274-275.

¹⁴⁹ Fairclough *Teaching Equality*, 59.

By the late 1940s there had been significant progress in the form of educational equalization under the separate-but-equal doctrine thanks to black teachers and their professional organizations. This was especially true in Georgia as the GTEA became the driving force for teacher pay equalization, per-pupil spending equalization, abolition of one teacher schools and replacement with consolidated schools, and provision of black graduate and professional school opportunities.¹⁵⁰ Therefore the change in strategy was one of contention.

In a 1953 survey of black educators in South Carolina at the State A&M College, half preferred to work in a segregated work setting; however, the respondents believed that three-fourths of the black teachers in the state of South Carolina preferred the segregated setting. This sentiment can be tied to the response of three-fourths of the respondents believing that upon desegregation there would be a great amount of job displacements. Doddy and Edwards insist that the ideology of the desegregation movement spawned from the black middle class and those like-minded whites.¹⁵¹

In fact Fairclough demonstrates that the idea of a grass-roots effort at desegregation within the black community was false. Constance Baker Motley of the NAACP admitted that the organization did not get any grass root activity around school desegregation.¹⁵² Instead it was a top-down initiative. Upon learning of the NAACP's strategy to attack segregation itself, W.E.B. DuBois commented, "most Negroes would prefer a good school with properly paid colored teachers, to forcing children into white schools which met with injustice and discouraged their efforts to progress."¹⁵³ NAACP officials were to later uncover this same

¹⁵⁰ O'Brien, 78.

¹⁵¹ Hurley H. Doddy and G. Franklin Edwards, "Apprehensions of Negro Teachers Concerning Desegregation in South Carolina," *The Journal of Negro Education* 24 no. 1 (Winter 1955): 40.

¹⁵² Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 376.

sentiment from many black middle class parents in Atlanta's efforts to desegregate its schools. Black middle class parents in the Atlanta City School district went as far to say that the white school that the desegregation policy would bus their children to was inferior to their neighborhood school.¹⁵⁴ Joseph Lowery even said that busing to just have a certain number of black students sitting with a certain number of white students bordered on racism. The call seemed to have gone back to equalization from integration.

Nonetheless, the 1950s saw the NAACP's strategy change in an effort to overturn *Plessy v. Ferguson* and bid farewell to separate-but-equal. This worried some black teachers because whites were none too eager to insist that desegregation would mean the loss of teaching jobs for blacks along with the shutting down of black schools and the phasing out of black colleges.¹⁵⁵ Jack Greenberg of the NAACP conceded that their single focus on eliminating segregation in the schools did not allow the organization to appreciate the devastating effect that their strategy would have on black teachers.¹⁵⁶ However, upon the *Brown* decision, the GTEA was one of many black educational organizations that passed organizational resolutions in supporting it. Black organizations in both North Carolina and Tennessee spoke out in favor of the decision, citing the need to adhere to the dictates of Supreme Court. The executive secretary of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers said "I know our teachers feel that if it is a question of losing our jobs or having segregated schools, we will take the job loss."¹⁵⁷ Many black teachers were willing to put aside their

¹⁵³ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 63.

¹⁵⁴ B. Drummond Ayers Jr. "Atlanta Strikes and Integration Bargain," *New York Times*, April 25, 1973, 10.

¹⁵⁵ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 63.

¹⁵⁶ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 405.

desire for financial security for what was deemed the greater good. Unfortunately this is exactly what they had to do.

From the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s black educators at all levels were summarily displaced through demotions, firing, forced resignations, nonhiring, token promotions, reduced salaries, diminished responsibilities, and coercion to teach subjects or grade levels other than those for which they had experience or were certified.¹⁵⁸ In 1965 Samuel B. Ethridge of the NEA predicted that 5,000 black teachers would be displaced in the South due to desegregation; however by 1970 over 38,000 black educators had been displaced in the 17 Southern states.¹⁵⁹ An investigator, in 1970, assessing this phenomenon insisted that “what is happening...is not *integration*; rather it is *disintegration* – the near total disintegration of Black authority in every area of the system of public education.”¹⁶⁰ According to Siddle Walker, black educators wanted real integration that reserved the authority of the black educators¹⁶¹; however this was not be realized in the process of desegregation.

William Billows witnessed this in Athens during its integration process. He explained,

I think the biggest hurt was to the black teachers. Because all of a sudden they were in a classroom they had no authority over. They could tell a black student, “shut up” and put the fear of God in him but once you got the white kids in that room he did not have any control over his classrooms anymore and they still don’t. They just became teachers that could not teach. They

¹⁵⁷ Haney, 90.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*,” 14.

¹⁵⁹ Jones, “Ironies of School Desegregation”, 11; Mildred J. Hudson and Barbara J. Holmes, “Missing Teachers, Impaired Communities: The Unanticipated Consequences of *Brown v. Board of Education* on the African American Teaching Force at the Precollegiate Level,” *Journal of Negro Education* 63 no. 3 (Summer 1994): 388.

¹⁶⁰ Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*,” 14.

¹⁶¹ Siddle Walker, “Second-Class Integration,” 278.

could not control, they could not do anything. They're hands were tied. And didn't no one care. All of a sudden no one cared.¹⁶²

His observations revealed a second form of the removal of black authority within the classroom. This type of elimination occurred even when black educators were retained within the integrated settings. The inhospitable atmosphere of the integrated setting did not allow the black educator to assert their authority in the same way that was acceptable in the all-black setting, making the authority of the black educator non-existent.

The fate of the black principal was much worse. Testimony before the Equal Educational Opportunity Committee revealed that black principals were being eliminated with “avalanche-like force and tempo.”¹⁶³ The hundreds of principals in the Southern states were reduced to dozens through various means including firing and demotions. Principals were demoted to being principals of junior high or elementary schools, given a token job in the central office with no real responsibility, kept on as a co-principal or assistant principal to the white principal, and demoted to a teaching or non-teaching position. The purging of the black principal aided in the displacement of the black teacher in that he/she was no longer able to recommend them for hiring.

There were attempts by black educators, their professional organizations, and the NAACP to stop this massive hemorrhaging; however, the efforts were essentially ineffective. Due to the manner in which laws had been devised in the states, each case would have to be fought in each district throughout the South. Teachers in their respective states could not combine their legal actions into one case; instead the filing of each teacher's own case in their respective district would diminish the effect of collective action while also stretching

¹⁶² Billows, interview.

¹⁶³ Fultz “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*,” 28.

thin the limited resources of the NAACP. Furthermore, black teachers were not having great success in their court cases. One of the earliest cases filed by black teachers claiming racial discrimination in their firing was decided in favor of the school district with the court deciding that the district acted on “good faith” in firing the black teachers.¹⁶⁴

As previously mentioned, HEW attempted to intervene by sending a letter to school districts indicating that dismissals of black teachers should cease while threatening to withhold funding from the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) of 1972 if those practices and policies were found to be evident in the school system.¹⁶⁵ However, as the practice of nonhiring became more popular, these tactics were no longer effective. The HEW Office for Civil Rights reported that when black and white teachers left the teaching ranks, districts would disproportionately hire white teachers to fill all positions. Furthermore the expanded use of the National Teachers Examination (NTE) began to be used heavily to disqualify black teachers from being hired through denials of certifications while also to avoid paying black teachers equal salaries.¹⁶⁶

In Mississippi the National Education Association along with its state affiliate, the Mississippi Teachers Association, filed suit against one of its school districts saying that its use of the NTE violated the teacher’s Fourteenth Amendment because it was discriminatory and arbitrary.¹⁶⁷ The court ruled in favor of the eight teachers invalidating the district’s cut-off score of 1,000 used in the hiring and dismissing of teachers. The judge further noted that the NTE did not measure classroom teaching performance “nor does it measure many of the

¹⁶⁴ Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*,” 20.

¹⁶⁵ Arnez, 41.

¹⁶⁶ Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown*,” 27.

¹⁶⁷ “Mississippi Court Rules Against NTE Requirement,” *Atlanta Daily World*, July 15, 1971.

qualities that school superintendents may wish to know about prospective teachers.”¹⁶⁸ He relied upon the testimony of Dr. James R. Deneen, the senior program director in charge of the teaching examinations at the Educational Testing Service (ETS), when he stated that there was no positive or negative correlation between NTE scores and teacher effectiveness.

Although this court case proved to be a victory for the eight black teachers involved, the use of the NTE continued to be used in the hiring or non-hiring of teachers throughout the South and the nation. This method along with policies concerned with facial hair in which three black male teachers in Mississippi were dismissed due to their mustaches, caused the continued displacement of black educators.¹⁶⁹ Georgia was one of its worst perpetrators.

In 1971 the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) asked for an investigation in the transfer of black teachers after the state was noted as being a leader in dismissals of black teachers.¹⁷⁰ The group charged that black educators were being “dismissed without due process, being reduced in position, and being assigned jobs for which they had little or no training” and therefore, led all states in the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in the dismissal of black teachers and the hiring of white teachers.¹⁷¹ Georgia not only followed the pattern of the 17 other Southern states but took the lead while Athens too yielded to the policies of displacement concerning its black teachers.

As previously noted, upon the transfer of a black elementary school teacher from her post at the previously all-white school back to her all-black school, a representative from the

¹⁶⁸“Mississippi Court Rules Against NTE Requirement,” *Atlanta Daily World*, July 15, 1971.

¹⁶⁹ “Mustache Case is Won by Black Mississippi Teachers,” *Atlanta Daily World*, November 12, 1972.

¹⁷⁰ “GAE Asks Investigation of Transfer of Negro Teachers; Ga. Leads Section in Dismissals,” *Atlanta Daily World*, March 21, 1971.

¹⁷¹“GAE Asks Investigation of Transfer of Negro Teachers; Ga. Leads Section in Dismissals,” *Atlanta Daily World*, March 21, 1971.

GTEA came to Athens to ensure the proper handling of the situation. As early as 1967 the GTEA began examining transfer cases attempting to temper the illegal transfer, demotion, and dismissal of black teachers in Georgia. Dr. Tate said that the GTEA remained in constant contact with black teachers who were having professional problems and especially those who taught in predominately white settings.¹⁷² Additionally in their grievances to the school board, the Athens High and Burney-Harris contingent of black students expressed their concern of the non-renewal of contracts of long-term black teachers, called for the status of the black football coach equal to that of the white football coach, and the consideration of hiring black teachers when vacancies occur. They too were concerned with the future employment of their black educators upon the closing of their high school and its consolidation with the white school.

During the process of consolidation, as a member of the biracial committee, Norris Fault expressed concern early in the process about the fate of the black teachers in Athens. He said,

The thing that really got me was that they were going to get rid of some of our black teachers. The whole thing was their certification. So that really ticked us off. It wasn't that they weren't educated enough. They had the credentials to teach *black* kids but now when you talk about them teaching *white* kids they wanted to check their credentials and as far as their certification. So that meant some *black* teachers are finna [going to] get fired or sent somewhere.¹⁷³

Although black teachers in Athens were not summarily dismissed upon the consolidation of the high schools, Norris Fault was correct in his concern that there would be displacement of teachers in Athens based upon credentials and certification.

¹⁷² Rick Parham. "Transfer of Teacher, Priority Shift Involved," *Athens Banner-Herald*, December 1967, 1-2.

¹⁷³ Fault, interview.

Presumably, being aware of the federal attention, attention from the GTEA, and lawsuits that followed whole-sale dismissals of black teachers, Clarke County school officials took a decidedly different approach to the displacement of its teachers. Its displacement remained so far under the radar that some of the black teachers did not recognize it. This was due in part to a couple of factors. First, as previously mentioned H.T. Edwards did not make a habit of hiring Athenians to teach at AHIS/BHHS; therefore when teachers left the Clarke County school system to return to their hometown to teach this was acknowledged as voluntary and not a part of the effort at displacement. Second, most black teachers were incorporated into the previously all-white high school or sent to other schools within the school system so again it appeared that everyone was placed and no one lost their job. Third, Athens used credentials as a method of displacement. Black teachers were fired after being placed at a new school due to their lack of certification. Finally, Athens' displacement came as a result of non-hiring of black teachers.

When asked what happened to the black teachers and principals in Athens upon integration answers varied depending upon the position and involvement of the person responding. Varner Dawes and William Billows, who graduated from AHIS/BHHS prior to the consolidation of the high schools, expressed similar views about the displacement of black educators upon integration. Varner Dawes was aware of the mass displacement that occurred in the rural surrounding counties upon integration as he was teaching in one of the counties, Oglethorpe County, but was spared his position as a math teacher. He said that in Oglethorpe County less than ten black teachers were kept after the closing of its black school, one being himself and another of the ten being his wife. However he said that "Athens wasn't

as bad because it had a population that would protest.”¹⁷⁴ William Billows, whose father was a teacher at AHIS/BHHS and eventually transferred to the new high school in 1972, agreed that black teachers were not summarily displaced but were spread all around. However, he admitted that he did not know where many of the black teachers were transferred to. He went on to say,

I don't think too many wound up at Athens High School. I think some of them did but not many. They might have got elementary school or something like that but a lot of them was not transferred to the high school. Most of them found a spot and some of them went back home And a lot of them retired...just got out of it.¹⁷⁵

Paula Hill, who spent her senior year at the newly consolidated high school, Clarke Central, confirmed William Billows' assessment when she said that a lot of her black teachers from BHHS did not come to the previously all-white school. She said that she believed that most of teachers went to the middle school. On the other hand, Marcus Thomas, who also spent his last year at Clarke Central, remembered that displacement did happen, not only to the teachers but also the principals. He said,

Our principals rarely became principals over there at the white schools. Yes it [displacement] did happen. They weren't necessarily kicked out because they had tenure but they may not have necessarily been doing what they were doing or they may have had less significant jobs.¹⁷⁶

He later published a newspaper in Athens, The Athens Voice, in which he highlighted the displacement that occurred in Athens. In a June 15, 1975 article entitled, “The Beat Goes On: McBride “Demoted”; Roberson “Shifted”; Hill “Recommended”; Allen “Overlooked,” he

¹⁷⁴ Dawes, interview.

¹⁷⁵ Billows, interview.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas, interview.

reported on the displacement that continued to plague the Clarke County School System.¹⁷⁷ According to the editors, McBride was demoted from the principalship at a middle school to an assistant principalship to Clarke Central High School; Roberson was shifted from Clarke Central to the other high school as an assistant principal to make room for McBride; Milton Hill was recommended to the principalship at Barrow Street School from an assistant professor at UGA; and Walter Allen was overlooked to assume the principalship at Clarke Central from his assistant principalship at Clarke Central. Instead this position was given to a white, Frank Malinowski, a former elementary school principal. In response to these new assignments, one local educator was reported as saying “The beat goes on and the rip-off continues.”

Two weeks later in the June 28th issue, the newspaper reported on the numbers in the Clarke County educational system.¹⁷⁸ According to the article, since 1969 the total number of black instructors declined from 113 to 95 while the total number of white instructors increased from 333 to 364. The numbers in administration showed a decline in the number of principals from four black principals to one. This number would rise upon the hiring of Milton Hill as the principal of the Barrow Street School to two. However, the number of assistant black principals rose during this same time period from two to five. When looking at the white administration, the number of white principals and assistant principals remained relatively the same, fourteen and five respectively. These numbers served to in contrast to the student population change in the school system in which the black population rose and a steady decline of the white student body. For many blacks this proved to be a dangerous

¹⁷⁷ “The Beat Goes On: McBride ‘Demoted’; Roberson ‘Shifted’; Hill ‘Recommended’; Allen ‘Overlooked’”, *The Athens Voice*, June 15, 1975, 1.

¹⁷⁸ Michael Thurmond, “It’s a Game of Numbers,” *The Athens Voice*, June 28, 1975, 1.

combination as the educational interests of Athens' black student population was threatened. This will be further discussed as part of the costs and consequences of desegregation.

When asked of teachers and administrators, the fate of the black educator in Athens upon complete integration, the answers too varied. Mr. Benedict James had left the school system to pursue his musical career prior to the final consolidation of the two high schools; therefore, he said he did not quite know what happened to many of the black teachers. However, he did say that "some went to Atlanta and others got jobs elsewhere but if you wanted to stay you could."¹⁷⁹ For Mr. James there was no indication of displacement of black educators in Athens. The fact that teachers left was, in his eyes, a voluntary move. This too was the sentiment of Eileen Newsome who said that "Nobody lost jobs."¹⁸⁰ Upon integration she was moved to Athens High, teaching both there and the tenth graders who were housed at Burney-Harris. When the new high school opened in 1972, she was placed there as one of the foreign language teachers where she taught French until she retired. Mrs. Newsome explained that a number of people who were not Athenians were close to retirement so they went back home upon integration or found jobs in their hometowns. However she reiterated that "No black teachers lost their jobs because when they switched around everybody had a job."¹⁸¹ For her choosing to retire in the face of integration or choosing to go back to one's hometown did not indicate a form of displacement; however, others in Athens saw this as a form of discreet displacement.

Webster Anderson, who served as assistant principal at Athens High before complete integration and the consolidation of the high schools, insisted that the pressure that was

¹⁷⁹ James, interview.

¹⁸⁰ Newsome, interview.

¹⁸¹ Newsom, interview.

placed on the black teachers who were transferred to previously all-white schools for certification was so intense that some teachers who were close to retirement decided that retirement was the better option. He confirmed the sentiments expressed by William Billows when he stated above that some teachers just got out of education all together. Certification proved to be a major issue in Athens as it swept the country upon mass integration. Similar to other Southern states Athens used the status of certification to eventually dismiss a number of black teachers. Mr. Anderson did not believe that black administrators and teachers were losing their jobs due to a lack of qualification as he asserted that the most qualified persons were not getting the jobs,¹⁸² Mr. Paris held a different view. He said,

All of us were integrated. Were dispersed to various schools on various levels nobody was fired. Now maybe after they got there for a while and they weren't competent enough to hold a job they might have been fired but I don't remember anybody being fired, not because of integration.¹⁸³

For Bob Paris, who had been one of the first black teachers placed at previously all-white schools, there was an equitable and fair assigning and eventual firing of black teachers upon integration. The loss of jobs was not due to integration but the competency of the black teachers. This is a far cry from his praise of black teachers while he taught in the all-black schools. He praised black teachers not only for their caring nature but also for their creativity that he said he did not find in the white schools. His explanation of the fate of black teachers in Athens does not reconcile with his previous assessment of their competence. However, Mr. Paris did go on to explain that there were some positions blacks held that he's sure had to be eliminated or were eliminated. He went on to explain,

¹⁸² Michael Thurmond. "Walter Allen: 'I am Unbought and Unsold,'" *The Athens Voice*, July 12, 1975, 1.

¹⁸³ Paris, interview.

There were some changes made where we [black teachers] had been doing certain types of things would no longer fit into this integrated situation. When you were teaching black kids you could tell them “now you gotta behave yourself. We got to do some stuff here to get you above where you are.” There are certain things that you did black on black, you couldn’t do black or white or white on black. What I could say to a black kid in a black situation [segregated school setting], I could say some things I couldn’t say in integrated. It would be out of place, it wouldn’t fit the situation and then you could get in a *lot* of trouble.¹⁸⁴

For Mr. Paris the integrated setting was not friendly to the culture of the black teacher and the educational techniques used in the black educational setting. This inhospitable integrated school culture therefore, proved to be a factor in the displacement of the black teachers in Athens.

As an administrator Webster Anderson was privy to the tactics the school system employed to displace its black educators. He agreed with many of the other respondents who insisted that most black educators were placed in schools; however, he was able to gain inside knowledge of what that placement really meant. One year he said he was given a job to go to Atlanta to check on the certifications of all of the teachers although he insisted that he was really sent to check on the certification of the black teachers. As frustrated as he was about this predicament he was placed in, he partly blamed this situation on the black schools and their principals. He explained,

The black schools had a lot of teachers who were not in place. They might have taught one or two courses in their major and one or two courses out of their major field. That was [a] trap for people. The black principals had hired those teachers because they didn’t have enough money to hire other teachers so they put these people in those places knowing that they weren’t certified in some of those areas. Then when integration came along those teachers went to other schools and some of them didn’t do well [Because they were in that area they weren’t certified in]. They had taught a long time in that area. Nobody seemed to bother about it in the black schools and those principals knew darn and well that some of those teachers were not certified in what they were doing. The white folks didn’t want them to teach their children if they weren’t

¹⁸⁴ Paris, interview.

trained in certain things. So [they] go over thinking that they're gonna do just that [teach in the area they were used to teaching in].¹⁸⁵

What resulted was displacement, intimidation, and/or penalization. Dr. Anderson told a story about a colleague who he pleaded to get certified but refused to and the resulting action. He said,

In less than six months they were at him. They let him come on teaching what he taught and set him up. They were monitoring his exams, getting copies of it, checking on the errors in his exams, the typing. All kinds of stuff. You gotta be prepared either to fight it or take it. It's not easy especially when you're the least prepared. That's why I got a doctorate and even with that you're not secure.¹⁸⁶

He then went on to talk about the fate of the black teachers in the school system.

All those who weren't teaching in their fields had to seek certification in their fields. [If they didn't] They didn't have a job that's all. They were demoted right out of the classroom, right out of a job. Some black principals became book deliverers to the school.¹⁸⁷

For Dr. Anderson, displacement of black educators was a stark reality in the Clarke County school district. He knew that it not only affected other black educators but it directly affected him. As reported in The Athens Voice, he was constantly overlooked for higher positions within the school system due to his outspoken nature and his race. In 1975 after twenty-two years in the school system and the earning of a doctorate he remained an assistant principal while his colleagues, both black and white, who were less qualified, were continuously promoted to higher positions. He said that he applied for principalships and the

¹⁸⁵ Anderson, interview.

¹⁸⁶ Anderson, interview.

¹⁸⁷ Anderson, interview.

assistant superintendency but was never even interviewed for the jobs.¹⁸⁸ To this he explained saying,

I remember I was told, I was an assistant principal that's all I ever made. I was told that's all I was gonna ever get too. [laughs] I accepted that, couldn't get a raise or anything, it cost me having a big mouth. [laughs]¹⁸⁹

The reality of job loss proved to be a reality within the black community upon desegregation which may have been why Constance Baker Motley of the NAACP said that black teachers served to be a “major foe of school desegregation” in the NAACP’s initial strategy change.¹⁹⁰ By 1970 the NEA reported a “near total disintegration of black authority in every area of the system of public education.”¹⁹¹ Black educators in the nation as well as in Athens were being systematically removed from the classrooms and administrative positions in mass numbers. The early belief of some black educators that desegregation would bring about monetary and social benefits of being in schools with whites as whites would go to black schools with black students going to white schools soon faded. There would be no merging of the faculty, staff, custodians, and activities as once thought.¹⁹² The displacement not only affected the personal lives and incomes of the educators but it also eliminated an educational system that “both sought to eradicate injustice and foster psychological resilience in the face of overt oppression within black boys and girls.”¹⁹³ Instead what replaced it was a system that proved to be hostile to the black culture and those who sought to preserve it

¹⁸⁸ Michael Thurmond. “Walter Allen: ‘I am Unbought and Unsold,’” *The Athens Voice*, July 12, 1975, 1.

¹⁸⁹ Anderson, interview.

¹⁹⁰ Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 64.

¹⁹¹ Fairclough, *A Class of their Own*, 402.

¹⁹² Siddle Walker, “Second-Class Integration,” 277.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 273.

within the school system. The next chapter will elaborate on the intended and unintended costs and consequences of desegregation nationally.

Costs and Consequences of Desegregation in Athens

Upon the strategy change of the NAACP from equalization to integration, there arose varied assessments, assertions, and opinions from both the black and white communities. There were those who assumed that black educators would retain their jobs while others forecasted a loss in jobs for blacks within the field of education. Further assessments were made regarding the equality of education that black students would acquire in a desegregated setting. Black parents were concerned that only the exceptional black students would be able to be involved in extracurricular activities in the desegregated school while the rest would be relegated to second-class status.

Assertions were likewise made regarding the new strategy. At a Hungry Club Lecture in Atlanta, Georgia in 1950, Benjamin E. Mays spoke to the NAACP's new strategy and the prospect of an integrated school. Of this prospect he asserted that "The stress [of desegregation] is not on mixed schools, but on the inequality that results from the dual educational systems."¹⁹⁴ He went on to say that the intention of the NAACP's lawsuits was not a desire to have black students going to school with white students but rather to provide an equitable education for America's black students. This would not be accomplished under the separate-but-equal doctrine. John Wesley Dobbs of Atlanta and the city's first black Republican leader asserted that "It's not that we want to push ourselves on the white people, but you can't hold a high paying job unless you have an education."¹⁹⁵ The assertions from the black leadership concerning desegregation rested on mixing as a means to accomplish the

¹⁹⁴ O'Brien, 83.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 103.

goal of equality. However, one assertion proved to have a detrimental effect on the education of blacks in as far as historical purposes and future educational opportunities. As a part of the change in strategy, Thurgood Marshall put forth a claim that segregation created “psychological roadblocks that prevented blacks from attaining equal status.”¹⁹⁶ This assertion would later be used to create a grand narrative of the inferiority all-black schools which resulted in mix schools becoming the ends and no longer the means. This will be explored later.

Additional assertions were made by the white community upon the dawn of desegregation. In Louisiana a former white principal reported on the statement of the school district’s leaders who said, “The niggers want integration, but they’re going to have integration on our terms.”¹⁹⁷ In light of this sentiment, the district in essence went about erasing the legacy of the district’s three black schools by closing two of them and converting the high school to a middle school. All of its artifacts, including the school’s name, were removed from the school system both physically and tangibly.

Closer to home, a prominent political figure within the Democratic party of Georgia, recommended that his party take the lead in the inevitable desegregation of Georgia’s schools reasoning that since there was to be desegregation in Georgia “the only question left was whether this integration will be under the control of the ‘friends of segregation or the proponents of integration.’”¹⁹⁸ He and his party identified themselves with the friends of segregation; therefore, having desegregation under their control would stand to benefit their ideological and political standings.

¹⁹⁶ O’Brien, 88.

¹⁹⁷ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 403.

¹⁹⁸ O’Brien, 174.

The opinions surrounding the change in strategy were varied as well. As mentioned above there were those who supported the idea of removing segregation from the public school system, namely middle class blacks including black educational associations. However, within this population were some black institutions of learning that stood against desegregation. The all-black Board of Trustees of a rural training school that housed a black elementary and secondary public school issued as statement repudiating and condemning desegregation and approving the principal of racial segregation.¹⁹⁹ Additionally Joseph Holley, president of the historically black Albany State College in Albany, Georgia, also supported segregated education. He went so far as to link the efforts at desegregation to those of communism.²⁰⁰

His link of pro-black to pro-red was to the delight of many Southern whites who likewise held the opinion that desegregation was undesirable. Many whites associated the call to desegregate with a desire to have black boys mingle with their white girls. This idea was so strong and prevalent in Bibb County, Georgia that its board of education approved a plan that called for separate schools for boys and girls upon the implementation of desegregation as a way to keep black boys away from white girls. This of course was not peculiar to Bibb County as some black Athenians attested to the existence of this type of thinking in Athens also. Bob Paris insisted that upon integration many of the school's social events were eliminated, "because they [whites] didn't want them black boys dancing with those white girls."²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ O'Brien, 84.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 116.

²⁰¹ Paris, interview.

Due to the wide variations of assessments, assertions, and opinions that accompanied the effort to desegregate one can readily understand the difficulties that went along with this process. Webster Anderson opined, “Integration was a strange thing. You’re really trying to bring people together that had never sat down and talked to each other before. So they were afraid of the unknown.” Marcus Thomas too understood the enormity of the situation he and his classmates faced as they integrated the previously all-white high school. He said,

People were just unfamiliar. Human beings are uncomfortable in situations they aren’t familiar with. You have all of these biases and preconceived notions. No one knew what to expect. The big question was could white teachers teach black children and could black teachers teach white children. It was a real issue that had not been explored.²⁰²

The first year of complete desegregation would prove to be a telling one that would serve to set in motion the practices, policies, and procedures for the coming decades.

The First Year – 1970-71

As Marcus Thomas asserted, the 1970-71 school year brought to an end 84 years of segregation in the Athens-Clarke County School system and more importantly, this monumental task was placed on the shoulders of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen year olds. Therefore, there were bound to be trials and tribulations as two groups of people who had never truly interacted were expected to seamlessly blend in a forced assembling. In a November 12, 1970 board meeting it was reported that student behavior was still an issue.²⁰³ Security specialists were hired at both Burney-Harris and Clarke Central’s campuses from 12pm-4pm to keep outsiders off campus. This was the third time since the beginning of the school year that behavior had been mentioned in the board meeting minutes. In light of this

²⁰² Thomas, interview.

²⁰³ Board of Education Minutes, 12 November 1970.

Clarke Central had recently adopted a behavior guidelines book for its students and the board suggested that the junior high schools do the same. However, Webster Anderson attributed most of the problems not to the students but rather to the unwillingness of the Board of Education and the Superintendent to do what was right. He said,

Ninety percent of the problems the school district had with integration was that they weren't committed to do right in the beginning. In assignment of teachers, making sure that clubs made a place for black kids, recognize that black kids bring in their own clubs. There are some things that could have made integration smoother. They didn't have a commitment to that. If you talked about it and pushed that like I did they call you a troublemaker, don't want to work with the status quo. If you did what was right we wouldn't have half that problems that we did. The school district went through *turmoil* during integration! And all of it was because they didn't want to do what was right. They [the superintendent and the Board of Education] knew what was right. They all were a part of the conspiracy.²⁰⁴

For many black students who experienced the consolidation their senior year, their main objective for that year was to just get through it. Paula Hill and Marcus Thomas both attest to the fact that most just got through that year and were eager to move on. In fact many seniors left after they had completed their required classes for the day, leaving only a handful of black seniors in the school. Hill and Thomas were two of the few black seniors who remained the entire day. Hill insisted that she remained at the school because she wanted to remain aware of all of the happenings in relation to senior activities while at the same time wanting to see how this whole integration experiment was going to work out. Her objective was to "make sure that these folk don't try and take this school over."²⁰⁵ Although Mrs. Hill was resistant to leaving Burney-Harris and relocating to the previously all-white high school, she insisted that because the decision had been made to consolidate the schools, the new school was just as much the black students' school as it was the whites'. At the school she

²⁰⁴ Anderson, interview.

²⁰⁵ Hill, interview.

would assert, “This is our school too. We didn’t ask to come here.” This was said in response to white students telling the black students that the school was theirs. Hill went further to contend,

We didn’t want to come. Yall didn’t want us to come so whatever *white folks* told us to come, that’s who yall need to be mad with. Go back to yall folk and tell yall folk yall don’t want us here because we ain’t got nothing to do with it. We ain’t going nowhere so you take your tail to a private school because we ain’t going nowhere. And that’s what a lot of them did, went to private school.²⁰⁶

In light of these assertions, Hill was determined to remain at the school so that she and her fellow black students would become an integral part of the new school’s climate and culture. Therefore after she was finished with her classes she would remain in the school and walk the hallways monitoring the treatment of other black students. She said she was never concerned about any authority figure bothering her and they did not. In the midst of her monitoring she would find out about senior class meetings either through happenstance or through the black assistant principal who would alert her to the unpublicized meetings. Upon hearing of the meetings Hill made sure to bring other black students to them while alerting the white students that she needed to be a part of the meetings. She would say,

Y’all ain’t finna [going to] make no decisions for us, not *all* the decisions. We couldn’t make a decision to tell them what we thought so don’t yall try make no decisions and then bring it to us and say this is what we thought. We want to be in there on the planning.²⁰⁷

Marcus Thomas too remained at the school all day because he not only served as co-president of the senior class but he was also a star football player. He said he remained at the school because “It was our school and because I was a student leader then it was my responsibility to interact and try and represent as best I could the concerns and the needs of

²⁰⁶ Hill, interview.

²⁰⁷ Hill, interview.

the people who had elected me.” He became one of the senior class presidents because he had been the junior class president at Burney-Harris; therefore, in the transition to the newly consolidated school he still felt a responsibility to his black classmates. However, his outlook on his role as a representative began to change upon an opportunity in which he was given the chance to address an integrated group of people at the school for the first time. After this experience he said he no longer saw himself as just a representative for the black students but for all students. However, even as things began to change for him there was still dissension between the white and black students.

When asked about the interactions between whites and blacks at school Hill explained that there was not much interaction between the two groups outside of sports. She said in the cafeteria whites sat with whites and blacks sat with blacks. This too held true for the classroom. She ensured that the seating arrangements were not discriminatory in the classrooms. Of this she said, “We learned not to go to the back. We ain’t sitting in no back. We’ll sit in the middle but we ain’t sitting in no back. Let them white folks sit in the back.”²⁰⁸ Marcus Thomas too assessed the interactions saying,

It wasn’t magic. You had to get to know people. [I]t was just having to work out the relationships between groups of people who had never had any relationship or interaction with each other. People were trying. I mean it wasn’t contentious every day. People were trying to make it work.²⁰⁹

One place that it seemed to work in the long run was athletics, specifically football. Both Athens High and Burney-Harris had enjoyed successful football programs prior to the consolidation. However, upon full integration, the previous white coach, Raymond Sellers, retained his position as the head football coach while Burney-Harris’ head coach, James

²⁰⁸ Hill, interview.

²⁰⁹ Thomas, interview.

Holston, became the assistant coach. Raymond Sellers expressed his displeasure in the reality of desegregation by not playing any of the black players. Paula Hill remembered,

We had a super team at Burney-Harris but when we got there, they didn't want our guys to play. They [whites] only wanted their quarterback to start, their players and all that. So you had a lot of problems as far as that sport thing. And you had a lot of guys to just quit playing sports that was *good* because of that. You know you're good and you've been starting...just pitiful.²¹⁰

This did change in part to the principal, Don Hight, who eventually fired Raymond Sellers.

Thomas remembered meeting with Hight many times in his office during this tumultuous first year. He said,

I spent a whole lot of time in his office just talking to him and him talking to me. We got to be real good friends. Because I just did not understand white people. [laughs] He would help me try and work through some of the issues I was having. He would share things that he didn't understand either and he was trying. There were many whites who never forgave him because he really did try to be fair.²¹¹

One of his decisions that many white Athenians never forgave Hight for was the firing of Sellers. However, this had to be done because according to Thomas even the white students knew Sellers had hard feelings towards black people. That first year of complete integration, the football team went 1-9 because he refused to play any of his black players. This was unacceptable in a town that thrived on its winning football teams, both black and white. Thomas insisted that Sellers deserved to be fired because the football program had really disintegrated to almost nothing.

Upon the firing of Sellers a committee was formed to select a new football head coach. This is when Billy Henderson came to Athens. Webster Anderson was on the committee that brought him to Athens and declared that the coming of Billy Henderson, a

²¹⁰ Hill, interview.

²¹¹ Thomas, interview.

white man, was the best thing that ever happened to Athens. He said, “The football team turned around from walkouts and boycotts to number one seed championships, because he was determined to play people who could play, white, black, blue, or polka dots.” By 1977 Clarke Central had won a state championship. Varner Dawes, a graduate of AHIS/BHHS, said

The '77 victory changed the whole thing. When you start winning football, basketball, or whatever it is, people tend to forget about all the other problems that you have and start focusing on other issues and it helps the school. When you're winning people tend to want to work together now. Athletics can soothe the beast.²¹²

To this day Billy Henderson is held in high regards in Athens.

Paula Hill, Marcus Thomas, and the rest of the class of 1971 completed their senior year in what proved to be a pivotal year for the entire Athens community. Hill said there were many discussions at church to prepare them for the days of integration. They were told to continue to pray and to keep a segregated mind. They were admonished to,

Think for yourself like you always do. Don't go over there and be a push-over. You weren't a push over at Burney-Harris, don't go over there being a push over. Don't feel like you're being intimidated because of blue eyes and blonde hair. Jim Crow law has passed so drink what you wanna and eat what you wanna but still it's gonna be segregated. So you're gonna have a few in number that's gonna be integrated.²¹³

She took the advice to heart and was able to proceed through her senior year as a leader within the school. The prophesy of the advice concerning the true nature of integration would later be realized within the Clarke County School Systems and school systems throughout the nation.

²¹² Dawes, interview.

²¹³ Hill, interview.

Marcus Thomas, who would eventually become the first black to represent Athens in the Georgia Assembly since Reconstruction and who would also go on to serve as Georgia's Labor Commissioner for many years, noted that his experiences during the years of desegregation in Athens defined his life. Of this time he said,

So it was quite a moment in time for all of us who were there. It was a special moment and that in many ways defined my whole life! Because at that point when I faced other challenges, if I could do that when I was eighteen it wasn't as great a challenge at twenty-five. You know trying to take on the political status quo. You know that's just life.²¹⁴

However intact the first class was able to make it out, there still exists today segregation within the class. To this day there is a white class reunion and a black one. In 2011 the two classes celebrated their fortieth class reunions, one held in the summer for the white graduates and one held in October for the black graduates. Marcus Thomas was only able to go to the white reunion; however, when speaking about the two he says that this division demonstrates that there is still work to be done. Paula Hill serves as the coordinator for the black reunions and does not make it a practice to attend the white ones. She says that she and her black classmates consider themselves to be Burney-Harris and Clarke Central graduates so this is where the separation comes from. However, she did admit that she did not have any desire to attend the white reunion. She is perfectly happy with the Burney-Harris/Clarke Central class reunions.

The Impact on the Community

For blacks in the South the school not only represented the educational hopes and aspirations for its individual students but also for those of the entire community. Thus the school became intricately tied to its community, developing into a community symbol. Constance Baker Motley of the NAACP pointed to this dedication to the school as a

²¹⁴ Thomas, interview.

community institution as a reason for limited support of the strategy of desegregation.²¹⁵ One of the arguments against the NAACP's new strategy advanced by many within the black community was the potential dismantling of the black school. The school was considered personal property of the black community in which great pride was taken. For many, the schools themselves had been the idea or birth-child of a single teacher or community member, supported financially by the black community through double-taxation, that had grown into the institution it was. Therefore the argument of the inferiority of the black school became an argument that stood to divide the black community.

Marcus Thomas also experienced this sense of ownership within Athens' black community in relationship to AHIS/BHHS; therefore, he insisted that their fight was a community school issue. He said, "[I]t wasn't that they were all black, it was because they were centrally located in the communities where students lived and parents worked."²¹⁶ He went on to contend that because of the fight that was waged to preserve the legacy of AHIS/BHHS the building was never torn down and today a museum is now being constructed within the recently renovated building. For him this can be contributed to the fight that was waged forty years ago in the spring of 1970 with him and his black classmates. This fight was waged not only in the face of white school officials who wanted to dismantle the community's symbol but also those blacks within the community who saw integration as the best way to an equitable education. Of this battle he said,

The older people thought that this is what everybody wanted. You have to understand that the adults had fought for years to integrate the schools so that everybody would have an equal education then here we are saying no we don't want to go over there. There's a dichotomy and a diversion of opinion.

²¹⁵ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 376.

²¹⁶ Thomas, interview.

Because everybody had been fighting to integrate the schools so that everybody will have an equal education because education at the all black schools were not up to par. So until that morning who knew that you had black kids saying no we want to maintain elements of what we know is good or has been good for us and good for the community.²¹⁷

His comments demonstrate that even within the black community in Athens there arose sharp divisions concerning the strategy towards desegregation. However, what seems not to have divided the black community is the impact desegregation had on its community.

I ended all of the interviews with the same question, *What was the impact on the African-American community during desegregation?* From this question spawned a list of costs and consequences experienced by the black community with a few indications of gains. One comment that seemed to summarize the feelings of many of the respondents came from William Billows, a 1961 graduate of AHIS. He responded, “So respect we lost but good books we gained.”²¹⁸

The overriding gain that was expressed was the opening up of opportunities for blacks partially within the school system but mainly within society. There were only two respondents that saw gains within the school system due to desegregation. Bob Paris spoke about the new materials that black students were able to receive in an integrated setting. Varner Dawes also spoke to the positives saying due to integration no longer could the stereotype of the intellectual inferiority of the black student be perpetuated because now blacks and whites were in the same classroom. He explained,

The kids were together and were able to form some relationship even though they segregated themselves in many cases. At least they’re in the building where you can’t pretend anymore that you’re smarter than I am because you’re white because I’m in a class with you. We’re sitting there together and those lies that the parents had told those kids about black children, that was

²¹⁷ Thomas, interview.

²¹⁸ Billows, interview.

over because the white kid would tell the parent “that’s not true, so and so is smarter than I am.” So you couldn’t perpetuate those stereotypes about white people being smarter than black people just because of their race.²¹⁹

The positive result was not due to increased academic ability of the black student due to their proximity to the white student as the Coleman Report suggested²²⁰; rather, the gain was the dismantling of the stereotypes perpetuated by white society.

The rest of the positive effects that extended from desegregation came through more opportunities within society. The respondents recognized the new opportunities that were available to them in jobs and day-to-day living. Eileen Newsome said,

Thank God we can get on the bus when we want to get on the bus and we don’t have to worry about sitting on the back seat. If we’re driving we can go to restaurants and eat and all that. We have a choice. We are allowed to enjoy things that we couldn’t during segregation.²²¹

Norris Fault said that due to desegregation, “We do have a black chief of police. We have a black warden. We have several black principals and vice principals. We have black board members, black city officials. So that’s all positive.” William Billows also spoke to the opportunities that were opened to blacks upon desegregation such as high-paying jobs at UGA. However he was sure to point out the limitations of these opportunities for blacks. He said,

I can remember that jobs I had put in applications for that I wasn’t qualified for. After desegregation I went and put in an application for the same job and I was overqualified for it. So it was going to be used either way that you

²¹⁹ Dawes, interview.

²²⁰ U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The Coleman Report indicated that blacks in schools with a higher proportion of whites have a greater sense of control. Additionally when minority students from a home without much educational strength are put with schoolmates with strong educational backgrounds, his achievement is likely to increase. Whites, were found to have stronger educational background than blacks. Furthermore the minority students’ academic achievement is more heavily dependent upon the schools they attend than majority students.

²²¹ Newsome, interview.

weren't going to get that job, that good paying job. [Y]ou could sit down and be interviewed but you weren't going to get the job.²²²

Desegregation did not prove to be the panacea that many had hoped it would be, in education or society.

For Paula Hill the desegregation efforts of protests and demonstrations were strictly focused on equal rights and not necessarily integration. She explained,

Let us come in the front door if we were going to come in your store and spend our money. It wasn't about we wanna just come in here. We wanted to come in because we were spending money and we should have that right to come in any door we want to because they [whites] could've come in any door that want to. They paid \$.50 to sit where they wanna. Why can't we pay \$.50 to sit where we wanna [in reference to riding on the bus]? That's really what it was about. Why they have to have the rights to be ahead of us when we're paying the same thing they're paying. That was the key to demonstrating. We're demonstrating for the same rights that they had since we gotta pay the same amount of money. That was the bottom line. Give me the same respect as you give them since I am paying and you are paying.²²³

This sentiment did not seem to be too far removed from the sentiment of many blacks around the country. Equalization not integration appeared to be the cry. Williams Billows too expressed the fight for equalization as opposed to integration.

We just wanted the same books, be able to stay at a hotel when we travel, eat at a restaurant. We did not want to go to school with the white children. We did not want it, never. What we wanted somewhere down the line got lost.²²⁴

However adamant certain parts of the black community stressed equalization, the change in strategy was final and desegregation became a reality.

For Paul Hill this reality tore the black community apart mentally, morally, and familially. Mentally she asserted blacks began to be involved in activities that before

²²² Billows, interview.

²²³ Hill, interview.

²²⁴ Billows, interview.

desegregation was not a part of the black cultural milieu. She said, “We don’t think like we used to. We didn’t commit no suicide, that wasn’t us. You know what we do and what we don’t do.” Esther Seaborn too commented on the new activities blacks became involved in upon desegregation. She explained,

They [blacks] took on a lot of the white ideas and white discipline. We never knew what time-out was because there was no time-out. I guess if you’re around something or somebody for a period of time you start picking up their habits and I guess vice versa. I think they [black students] lost a lot of blackness.²²⁵

She went on to say that once integration started the integrity that black people had instilled in their children was lost because it was no longer enforced. For Seaborn this re-enforcement was a part of the school culture. Integrity as well as respect for oneself, one’s elders, and each other were stressed in the black schools; however, upon desegregation this was no longer a focus.

Paula Hill too mourned the loss of these morals of pride, dignity, love, and respect that were taught at the black schools. She believed that integration hurt the black community morally because it took away the black community’s Christian belief. She remembered the integration of Bible verses and prayer in the everyday life of the black school that was not continued at the integrated school. Of this she said,

[W]hen you get over there [Clarke Central High School], you ain’t got no prayer! You ain’t got no Bible study! You don’t have that anymore. Those are the things that integration took away from us. It took us back so many years.²²⁶

As previously mentioned, Fairclough asserted that some of the elements of the black school that black teachers lamented were being systematically removed from the general school

²²⁵ Seaborn, interview.

²²⁶ Hill, interview.

system in the U. S. and therefore cannot be attributed to integration itself. This could possibly be considered one of those elements. The change that occurred in reference to scripture readings and prayer in the schools within the experience of blacks in the Clarke County school system happened so abruptly and in connection with the high school consolidation, that it was readily blamed on desegregation. However, this change had taken place in many other communities within the United States upon the Supreme Court rulings of 1962, 1963, and 1964.²²⁷ Therefore, the blame could not be solely placed on desegregation.

Another factor that one may find hard to place on the desegregation of the schools in Athens is the last consequence Mrs. Hill attributes to desegregation – the demise of the black family. She said desegregation hurt the black family because,

[W]e don't sit down and eat together like we used to. Black parents didn't play that junk that you come in here with McDonald's, you come in here with Burger King, and you come in here with Wendy's, because you didn't have the money to buy it first of all. We let this fast lane of what the other race do confuse our race.²²⁸

This appears to have been a change in society at large rather than a result of desegregation. The advent of fast-food and T.V. dinners along with economic opportunities that provided the occasion for many Americans to be able to afford these luxuries were occurring during this time and therefore could not be considered a cause and effect of desegregation.

Nonetheless Hill is adamant in her belief that desegregation did not serve to be a positive

²²⁷ William C. Bostner Jr., Kate R. Kaminski, and Richard S. Vacca, *The School Law Handbook: What Every Leader Needs to Know* (Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, 2004), 68. The Supreme Court Rulings of the *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp*, 1963; *Engle v. Vitale* 1962; and *Chamberlin v. Dade County Board of Education*, 1964 addressed the recitations of officially sanctioned prayers and Bible readings and devotional exercises in public schools saying that they violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

²²⁸ Hill, interview.

occurrence for the black community and strongly asserted, “I hate to this day that we ever integrated the schools.”

Similar to Hill, Fred Jones, insisted that desegregation did not prove to be in the best interest for the black community. He said, “It’s largely been an acceleration of our separation and our fragmentation in our own social structure.”²²⁹ In his conclusion he believed that the Christian faith of the black community took a hit. He said “We used to actually have a pretty good foundation in Christianity which was kind of all for one and one for all kind of thing. That’s no longer our feeling anymore.”²³⁰ Instead he said that for those blacks who were able to profit from the limited opportunities that were opened upon desegregation, a mass mentality²³¹ formed in which a spirit of benevolence towards the black community formed. He went on to say, “So it just accelerated after segregation because it gave some of us legitimate access so we could actually develop our talents but in developing our talents we did not have a commiserate development in our degree of humility and humanity.”²³²

For Varner Dawes the humility and humanity were an integral part of the community in the educational development of its children. Upon integration this was lost. He said, “In terms of education a lot of that was lost because you had the total community believing in our children. Now you have some whites and some blacks who don’t believe in our children and that has hurt the integration process.” This disbelief came from “the black community being disenfranchised with the schools and not trusting. See you got trust issues. You lost the

²²⁹ Jones, interview.

²³⁰ Jones, interview.

²³¹ This is a colloquial term used frequently within the African American community to refer to other African Americans who are deemed to be accommodationists, conforming to the pleasures of the white man.

²³² Jones, interview.

community connection.” He also said that what was lost were those intangible things that allowed for success within the black educational setting.

Things that are an integral part of the community that you can’t write down, the intangibles that were lost during integration. The community believed in the students and school so the kids responded. That’s what we need to get back to whether it’s an all-white school or an all-black school the community needs to believe in that institution and those kids and they will respond accordingly.²³³

Upon integration black parents in Athens tended to shy away from participation in school activities, different from what they did in the segregated setting. Benedict Johnson noticed the difference upon integration. He said,

Parents would come to check on a child if they need be and would give the teacher 100 support to get that student in line. Whatever it took they were 100 percent with that. When they integrated school a lot of that stopped especially as far as the parents’ interaction with the teachers, coming to meetings and seeing whatever the child is doing to get them straightened out. After schools were integrated, the parents weren’t on top of it.²³⁴

He went on to say that he felt the parents were still interested in the child but did not seem to “answer to what was being needed. Varner Dawes attributed that to the feeling that black parents got from the newly integrated schools. He said,

A lot of parents feel like the school doesn’t want them there now. When they integrated a lot of black parents were not invited to be a part of the PTO. All of the officers were basically white. They didn’t want teachers there so you know they didn’t want parents there. During integration you had to fight and prove yourself. It was an ongoing battle.²³⁵

Although he said parents should have come to the PTA meetings in spite of the unwelcoming environment, as a former administrator he also contended that the administration of the schools should have sought the parents out and brought them into the school environment.

²³³ Dawes, interview.

²³⁴ James, interview.

²³⁵ Dawes, interview.

This was the duty of the integrated school that went unfulfilled. Since this did not happen, Eileen Newsome said that PTA participation at meetings waned so much that Cedar Shoals High School stopped having them as often.

However swift the participation fell off after integration, Fred Jones contended that much of the parent participation was coming to an end before integration, at least in Athens. He attributed this to the population growth that the city and county experienced. He said that as the community got bigger its black population became less in touch. “We became more complacent at each level of accomplishment. We became less energized. It started before integration with certain areas of advancement and liberation.” Jones said that he’s not quite sure if the waning of parental and community support was a result of “fatigue because we had struggled for a while...you give us a little bit and we think we got it all. So sometimes our perception of success can be your worst enemy.” This waning of support did prove to be an enemy for black students as they continued in the new integrated setting.

The commitment that the community and the school personnel had to the black students were the prized factors that were also lost during desegregation. Eileen Newsome discussed that during segregation,

It was nothing for me to stop in the hall and chastise a black when they were too loud. I could do it in the integrated situation but I wouldn’t do it the way that I would do it as I did there. I would just take that person aside in my room and talk to them because I don’t want the child to be embarrassed, or nothing like that. I would do it differently. I could see how black children were doing better in certain cases when they were in a black environment.²³⁶

She stressed that in the all-black schools even though they didn’t have all of the proper materials and the advanced technologies of the day, they were still able to produce a good product. To this achievement she said, “In the black schools we did better. I’m going to be

²³⁶ Newsome, interview.

frank with you. Blacks did better than now even with the new techniques and technology they have now.”

For Bob Paris this decline in academic achievement was a direct result of the white teachers that black students encountered upon desegregation. He said that upon integration the personal attention that the black teachers took with the black students disintegrated. He went on to explain, “Most white teachers didn’t get that involved to that extent. Now that was the disadvantage in integration as opposed to segregation because the black teacher would be more involved even to the point that they would involve the parents.”²³⁷ He further explained that the discipline deteriorated upon integration due to the cultural norms that existed in the South.

White teachers wouldn’t try to discipline the black kids. They were afraid to discipline them. Black teachers dared not. What you did and said in a black school you couldn’t do it in an integrated situation. Them white folks ain’t gone let you talk to their kids the way you can talk to black kids. They [white teachers] didn’t want to teach blacks, didn’t want to deal with them period and so you find a difference in the education that they’re gonna get under a person who doesn’t want to be bothered with them and one who’s gonna die and go to hell if you don’t get this. You didn’t get that personal drive from the white teachers that you got from the black teachers. That black teacher is going to make you do what you need to do to grow. That white teacher says “get it or don’t.”²³⁸

To this reality Benedict James says that the school system is going to have to hire people who really care who will not look at students from the color of their skin. He went on to say, “You have a job to do and do it the best you know how. To hire people that really care and that want students to excel in whatever they’re doing in education.” This would be the solution to the lack of good teachers that black students have to face in the schools today. However optimistic Mr. James might appear to be, he conceded that he might not live to see

²³⁷ Paris, interview.

²³⁸ Paris, interview.

the day that this will ever happen, a day that people will be completely free to live to do whatever one wants to do without being looked down upon or being stereotyped. He does believe that black people have come a long way. He said, “It took years to get where we are. I’m grateful that I am able to do some things I wasn’t able to do. It’s just not quite right yet.”

I don’t think it will ever be quite right for William Billows. He assessed the situation and said,

And as I look back, the black schools, the black teachers, the black man and woman lost more with integration than they gained. We did not gain a thing we lost. And I believe if things would have remained the same we would have strong black men and women than we do now. The jails would not be full of dope heads, black men. They would be further ahead because the black teachers did not allow what the children are allowed to do now.²³⁹

Marcus Thomas held a different view, even though he was adamant about not wanting to go the white high school and adamant that he and his fellow classmates were not going to allow the legacy of AHIS/BHHS to be destroyed, he said of desegregation, “I think overall it’s been positive. No one wants to go back to that segregated system. If you weigh it all up positive and negative, clearly it was the right thing to do. Overall the city and the students who attended the schools have benefited from it.” However, the negative legacy that was left by desegregation was the narrative that was born. He explained,

The mistake was that we made the assumption that any and everything that was associated with the all-black system was bad. There are many lessons and strategies and ideas that were very successful in that system that could be transferred and utilized today that I think would help the consolidated system function much more successfully for young people. And that’s just a problem in society. It’s in neighborhoods. When neighborhoods become majority black, white people move out and think that somehow the neighborhood is not as good as it was when it was all white. That’s just a bias and a prejudice that we continue to have.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Billows, interview.

²⁴⁰ Thomas, interview.

This narrative has pervaded the historical record and consciousness of the United States for decades. In an attempt to challenge its validity, scholars such as Vanessa Siddle Walker, Adam Fairclough, David Celeski, and others have researched these schools from the point of view of the agents including principals, teachers, and students. Their research has uncovered accounts of academically successful all-black schools that stand in stark contrast to the grand narrative. However, their research does not attempt to recast the segregated schools as a utopian experience. Instead this new reinterpretation endeavors to bring much needed balance to the accepted understanding of this country's segregated past.

Grand Narrative

The grand narrative that has been imbedded within our nation's psyche and culture pertaining to all-black schools can trace its modern roots to multiple reports that were commissioned during the efforts of desegregation. The most popular report is the "Equality of Educational Opportunity Study" report of 1966, also known as the Coleman Report after its author, James Coleman. The study reported that in almost every category the black school's facilities, its curriculum, its staff and, the black family were educationally inferior to its white counterparts. The second federally funded study, the "Racial Isolation in the Public Schools of 1967", which evaluated racial isolation's effect within education.²⁴¹

In reference to the black school's academic curriculum and accompanying extracurricular activities the Coleman study found limitations in these areas due to the school's inadequate physical facilities. Further the black child attended a school that was likely to be unaccredited offering less college preparatory classes while white students had more access to schools with developed extracurricular activities further enhancing their

²⁴¹ Weinberg, 198 .

already superior academic programs. The study did not spare the principals and teachers of the schools, indicating that the black teachers were inferior in terms of types of colleges attended, years of teaching experience, salary, educational attainment of mother, and the score on a vocabulary test.²⁴² From this standpoint alone the black school looked bleak.

However bleak the black school may have looked alone, the addition of family background added to the miserable state of the education of black students. The report indicated that on average, the black child has fewer classmates whose mother graduated from high school. Additionally the black child comes from a larger family in which fewer of his/her siblings were enrolled in college preparatory classes and have taken fewer courses in English, math, foreign language, and science.²⁴³ In essence the black family could be of limited help to the black child.

Although this is not an exhaustive summary of the study, its main points have been presented. Within these points, the study concluded that minority students would benefit greater from having a quality school than whites. Additionally black students benefited educationally from being in schools with whites.²⁴⁴

One of the study's major goals was to investigate the lack of equal educational opportunities in the United States. The problem was found solely in the black schools and their inability to provide not only an equal education but also an adequate education. These results helped in the development of a grand narrative of black schools that still exist today.

²⁴² "Equality of Educational Opportunity," 14.

²⁴³ "Equality of Educational Opportunity," 14.

²⁴⁴ "Equality of Educational Opportunity," 21-22.

The second federal study that looked at racial isolation was concerned with “the causes, extent, effects, and remedy of school segregation.”²⁴⁵ Similar to the Coleman study, it found little to no positive effects of an all-black environment. Blacks were able to achieve positive academic results when in majority white educational settings. According to the study the greater number of white students in a class the better average achievement for all of the students. The study was very specific in that the racial balance must not just be in the school but specifically in the classroom as “Negro students in a segregated classroom...do not benefit even if the school as a whole is racially balanced.”²⁴⁶ Additionally, “the performance of Negro students is substantially higher in majority-white than majority-Negro schools” even when teacher quality and school social class is taken into consideration.²⁴⁷ The only positive effect of the all-black school was on the aspirations of lower class white boys when they were placed in segregated settings. These students tended to aspire to higher goals when in predominately black schools. This aspiration juxtaposed to lower class and high performing black boys who held higher aspirations in integrated versus segregated schools. Ironically, the study showed that the black school helped in the aspirational development of students from lower class backgrounds who may not have been the highest achieving students. This seemed to have been the general population of black schools but they were nonetheless cast as inadequate for their own communities.

These studies appear to have served as the lynch pin from which federal, state, and local governments hung their argument on to close all-black schools and displace black educators. According to Siddle Walker, HEW was blamed by some Georgians in the

²⁴⁵ Weinberg, 199.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 200.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 201.

development and advancement of the perception of an inadequate and inferior education being synonymous with a black education.²⁴⁸ Their policies and push to a desegregated education system allowed white school boards and superintendents to systematically close black schools and displace black educators.

This took place in Athens as the desegregation plan changed from keeping Burney-Harris opened as a high school and used among two and ultimately three high schools in Athens to its abrupt closure. This desegregation plan was approved by HEW as opposed to the one that allowed Burney-Harris to remain opened. As the final plan was being presented to the board, the new superintendent, Dr. McDaniel delivered a scathing report about the education of blacks in Athens at the hands of the all-black schools. The November 24, 1969 report indicated that much of the city's black population was educationally deprived as compared to their white counterparts.²⁴⁹ McDaniel asserted that this educational deprivation would lead to acts of hostility and aggression. In response to these assertions the superintended presented the new desegregation plan that called for the closing of the town's only school that had not been desegregated and the town's only black high school. For him, the other board members, and anyone else who read the report, the call for Burney-Harris' closing seemed like the most logical thing to do so that the deprived 33 percent would no longer be subjected to an inferior education and no longer be a nuisance to society.

However untrue and incomplete the developing narrative may have been it nonetheless formed rapidly and has demonstrated staying power for the past half-century. As previously mentioned, upon the efforts of desegregation, the definition of goodness changed from embeddedness within the community, education for emancipation, and education for

²⁴⁸ Siddle Walker, "Second Class Integration," 277.

²⁴⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 24 November 1969.

equality to what permitted racial mixing.²⁵⁰ With this new definition in place the objective was now on placing as many black students with white students in classrooms as possible, at all costs. The costs have been so substantial that Robert Carter of the NAACP's General Counsel and lead attorney in the *Brown* case now says that since *Brown* singularly requires equal educational opportunity "if that can be achieved without integration, *Brown* has been satisfied."²⁵¹ He stresses that the goal was not integration but equal educational opportunity which they viewed as synonymous with an integrated education. However, upon the total destruction of the black schools, the near complete displacement of black educators, and the development of a narrative that brings disgrace to a once valued community symbol, he sees a need to reevaluate the blind integration efforts and refocus on equal educational opportunities

²⁵⁰ Demsey and Noblit, 48.

²⁵¹ Robert L. Carter, "A Reassessment of *Brown v. Board*," in *Shades of Brown: New Perspectives on Social Desegregation*, ed. Derrick Bell (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1980), 27.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

One of the main purposes of this dissertation was to trouble the waters of mainstream thought concerning the all-black segregated school. Using written documents and oral histories I sought to join the ranks of Vanessa Siddle Walker, Adah Ward Randolph, Linda Tillman, Adam Fairclough, James Anderson, and many more who provide research that stand against the grand narrative. These researches systematically work to remove the brick wall of stereotypes, racism, and years of limited research that seek to cast the segregated black schools as bastions of inferiority.

In reevaluating the black schools, specifically of the South, the effort has been to take into account the stories from those who actually attended the schools. Previous historical accounts have hinged on folklore supported by reports that have been commissioned by the federal government. While the federal reports should be valued for the research they provide, they should not be considered the last and final word on the topic. In order for a complete story to be told the accounts of the agents of the school must also be incorporated. As Peter Novick admits, the voices of black historians were not incorporated into the larger interpretation of history until the 1960s so any interpretation before that can be considered incomplete.¹ The same can be said of the history of the all-black segregated school.

The inclusion of alternative interpretations of all-black schools has led to value being found in the school in the form of educational excellence, the uncovering of professional networks within the black educational system, the displacement of black educators, and the costs and consequences of desegregation. Each of these factors had

¹ Novick, 415-522.

been overlooked within the accepted historical interpretations of the black schools thus creating the skewed grand narrative that exists today. The creation of the narrative can be said to have had a hand in creating the lack of educational opportunities that exists for black students today. By not properly researching the past educational system that had educated blacks for over one hundred years giving way to literacy, leadership, and economic development for this once enslaved population, a disservice was done to this population. As quoted in Fairclough, a black man of the segregated system insisted,

There is inescapable irony in the fact that those older schools provided much of what is lacking in today's postsegregation schools: the desperately needed psychological support...[and] a sense of the historical continuity of the educational experience of their race through the existence of the school itself.²

Therefore, historical efforts may have a hand in correcting current educational practices and policies.

Although there is inherent value, necessity, and plain excitement in historical research, connecting its applicability to present-day solutions, especially within the school system, is of great importance also. My Ph.D. program at Georgia State University has enabled me to make this connection by recognizing the importance of historical research in addressing and working to remedy the present-day concerns within the educational system. This value comes as an addition to the intrinsic importance of historical research as I will not make a claim that historical research has to have a primary utilitarian function in order to be valuable. This has been a hotly debated topic within the history of historical research as Novick so ably pointed out in his research. However, I do believe that if one finds a utilitarian function within specific historical research this serves as an invaluable asset.

² Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 65.

In taking a look at the current state of education for black students one can readily see the inequities that have persisted throughout the years and new ones that are (un)intended consequences of desegregation and current policies. The areas of discipline, special education, the dropout rate, and the retention of students are all areas that black students have fared horribly in within the United States educational system and Clarke County also.

By the second year of complete desegregation in Clarke County, 1971-72, the school district was still attempting to settle into its new mode of operation. In an October 14, 1971 school board meeting, after the report of an incident in which black students were accused of breaking a window at the high school, the principal was asked by a board member if “actions to be taken against the black students would be the same as that taken against white students and asked if there were two standards of discipline.”³ This was not the first time discipline had been a topic of discussion at the Board meetings since full integration. In fact, at no other time in the history of the Clarke County Board of Education had discipline been such a reoccurring subject at the meetings. This would prove to be a precursor to the focus on discipline that would follow within the school system in Athens and throughout the nation.

Nonetheless, in this same meeting the principal of Clarke Central High School, Don Hight, added that he had been pleased with the reactions of students to desegregation this year unlike the previous two years. The attitudes of the students had greatly improved but “there were still some hard core problems – both black and white.”⁴ In response to this glimmer of hope offered by the principal a board member replied, “My

³ Board of Education Minutes, 14 October 1971.

⁴ Board of Education Minutes, 14 October 1971.

point is I hate to hear the comment that a certain class of students should be allowed to take over the school. It shouldn't be done, no matter what color he is!"

⁵ Another board member replied that the new discipline code recently adopted by the board would be "equitably administered and the problems solved by the administration."⁶ This equitable administration has proven to be elusive for blacks within school districts across the country since desegregation. As Athens increased its focus on discipline so too did the rest of the country. According to 25 years of research on discipline within the nation's schools, there has consistently been an overrepresentation of black students receiving a variety of school punishments. Specifically there has been a consistent racial disproportionality in the use of school suspensions for black students as black students are three times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts.⁷ Research further shows that over-representation became more severe upon school desegregation. This disparity in the meting out of discipline has occurred in the face of investigations that show that black students do not misbehave at a significantly higher rate than other students.⁸

Discipline wouldn't prove to be the only issues faced by the newly integrated black students; instead special education would serve to be a dumping ground for many of the students. As early as 1973 Athens experienced an overrepresentation of black

⁵ Board of Education Minutes, 14 October 1971.

⁶ Board of Education Minutes, 14 October 1971

⁷ Russell J. Skiba et al, "The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment," *The Urban Review* 34 no. 4 (Dec. 2002): 320; Children's Defense Fund, America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summary Report, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-summary-report.pdf> (assessed January 4, 2012).

⁸ Skiba et al, 322; Children's Defense Fund, "America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summary Report," <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-summary-report.pdf> (assessed January 4, 2012).

students enrolled in its special education program. In June of 1975, The Athens Voice reported that 82 percent of all special education students were black although whites outnumbered blacks two to one in the school system.⁹ By 1974 the numbers had not improved as Clarke County had one of the highest percentages of blacks labeled educable mentally retarded (EMR) in the state. Today Clarke County still has a higher percentage of black students in its special education program than the percentage for the state of Georgia. In fact Clarke County's percentage of black students labeled emotional behavior disorder (EBD) is almost double that of the state of Georgia.¹⁰ Today blacks make up 64 percent of the special education population in the school district, a far cry from the earlier 82 percent but higher than the 54 percent of the total population of black students in the school system.¹¹

When one looks at the disaggregated data of special education in Clarke County, these are startling results. Of the total population of students labeled EBD, 182, all but 12 are black while all of the students labeled with an intellectual disability in Clarke County are black.¹² On the other hand the population of the gifted program in Athens is overwhelmingly white even though whites only comprise 20 percent of the Clarke

⁹ Michael Thurmond, "82% of all 'Special Education' Students are Black," *The Athens Voice*, June 21, 1975, 1.

¹⁰ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," [http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=105&PTID=51&CTID=56&Source=Disproportionality by Disability&PID=38&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=105&PTID=51&CTID=56&Source=Disproportionality%20by%20Disability&PID=38&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010) (assessed January 5, 2012).

¹¹ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (assessed January 5, 2012).

¹² The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," [http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=105&PTID=51&CTID=56&Source=Disproportionality by Disability&PID=38&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=105&PTID=51&CTID=56&Source=Disproportionality%20by%20Disability&PID=38&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010) (assessed January 5, 2012).

County school population.¹³ These statistics are consistent with national statistics that indicate that blacks students are more likely than any other student to be in a special education program for mental retardation or emotional disturbance.¹⁴

In addition to being disciplined at a higher proportion and placed in special education at a disproportionate rate, black students are additionally retained more often than whites. The Children's Defense Fund reported that black students are almost twice as likely as white students to be retained in a grade throughout the U.S.¹⁵ In Clarke County, almost 72 percent of the students retained are black.¹⁶ The school district seems in line when it comes to the status quo for its black students.

In light of the difficulties that black students face in the school system it is no wonder that black students have a higher dropout rate than any other group of students in the U.S. Black students are more than twice as likely as white students to drop out of school with only 59 percent of them receiving a regular diploma in 2006.¹⁷ In Clarke County the high school graduation rate in the 2009-2010 school year was 70.1 percent.¹⁸

¹³ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (assessed January 5, 2012).

¹⁴ Children's Defense Fund, America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summary Report, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-summary-report.pdf> (assessed January 4, 2012).

¹⁵ Children's Defense Fund, America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summary Report, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-summary-report.pdf> (assessed January 4, 2012).

¹⁶ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (assessed January 5, 2012).

¹⁷ Children's Defense Fund, America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summary Report, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-summary-report.pdf> (assessed January 4, 2012).

However when examined according to race, the graduation rate for black students was 64 percent and for whites, 86.9 percent.¹⁹ The disparity is consistent with national trends.

Additionally there is a disproportionate disparity in the types of diplomas that black and white graduates earn. For the graduating class of 2010 in Clark County, 51.7 percent of the college preparatory diplomas were awarded to white students whereas only 31.1 percent were earned by black students. Blacks earned 64.7 percent of the vocational diplomas while whites earned 15.8 percent of the same kind. Additionally 90 percent of the special education certificates were awarded to black students along with 75 percent of the certificates of attendance. The figures were 7.5 percent and zero respectively for whites.²⁰

National trends have also indicated that white females have disproportionately filled the ranks of the teaching profession since desegregation. Over the past ten years, whites have consistently represented over 80 percent of the teaching population with 76 percent being female.²¹ With the shift in population and the limited number of minorities in the education field, in 1994 Hudson and Holmes insisted that the U.S. was moving to a system in which only 5 percent of its teachers will be of minority background with 35

¹⁸ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (assessed January 5, 2012).

¹⁹ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (assessed January 5, 2012).

²⁰ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (assessed January 5, 2012)

²¹ National Center for Education Statistics. "The Condition of Education," http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tsp.asp (accessed January 5, 2012).

percent of its students having a minority background by 2000.²² As of the 2009-2010 school year blacks made up 16.8 percent of the total primary and secondary populations and whites, 54.1 percent. However, the total minority population was 45.2 percent.²³

The educator and student national statistics are reflected in the student and staff population statistics in the Clarke County Schools. For the 2009-2010 school year there was a total of 807 white teachers, 210 black teachers, and 16 Hispanic teachers. Of those teachers 798 were female and 263 male. Therefore, whites were 76 percent of the total teaching force with 75 percent of the force female. Blacks were only 19.7 percent of the population.²⁴ This is in sharp comparison to the 20 percent that white students comprise of the total student population and the 54 percent blacks comprise.

Before desegregation, whites comprised 66 percent of the student population; therefore, the last 40 years has seen an almost 50 percent decline in the number of white students attending the public schools in Clarke County. However the county has not seen a proportional decline in its white general population. As of 2010 whites represented 61.8 percent of the population and blacks 26.6 percent.²⁵ The white flight phenomenon is evident within the Clarke County school district if not in Clarke County itself.

²² Hudson and Holmes, 388.

²³ National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/snf200910/tables/table_02.asp (accessed January 23, 2012).

²⁴ The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, "2010-2011 Report Card – Clarke County," <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&CountyId=629&T=1&FY=2010> (accessed January 5, 2012).

²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. State and County Quick Facts <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1303440.html> (accessed January 18, 2012).

According to a clearinghouse for private schools, Private School Review, Athens currently hosts nine private schools with over 2,600 students attending them.²⁶ Of those students 45 percent are white and 3 percent are black. The Review insists that 46 percent of the population is other students, but after accounting for American Indian (1.3), Asian (2.4), Hispanic (2.5), black (3.3), and white (45) populations, I am hard pressed to understand what category the other students fall under. Athens, much like the South, is not known for its great diversity so this raises a red flag. The only other commonly listed racial categories that were not listed in the Review's list are the Persons Reporting Two or More Races and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander categories. According to 2010 population figures these populations represented only 2.2 and 1.1 percents respectively.²⁷ I can only assume that the other students chose not to self-identify and were thus placed in this ambiguous category. Nonetheless, the private school population has a disproportionate number of white students in its population when compared to the public school population. Additionally, when speaking to whites in Athens informally, the common belief is that they will allow their children to attend public school in Athens for primary education but upon entrance into middle school, they then choose educational alternatives.

Now that the current state of education for blacks is well understood, at least in the above categories, the question is now – how can historical research be used to correct

²⁶ Private School Review, "Athens Private Schools," http://www.privateschoolreview.com/town_schools/stateid/GA/townid/1457 (accessed January 6, 2012). Although the review lists Athens' private school population at 2,674 when adding up the population figures provided by Athens' most populous four private schools - Athens Academy, Athens Christian, Prince Avenue Christian School, and Athens Montessori – provided by their websites, the figure is 2,712. Therefore one can assume that the current private school population is over 3,000.

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. State and County Quick Facts <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1303440.html> (accessed January 18, 2012).

current educational practices and policies that have proven to be so detrimental to the black student population? Before we move to possible solutions there must be an understanding that the current state has been created by hegemonic policies and are thus not inherent in the subjugated population. Those in education must move away from what Joyce King calls a dysconscious racism in which white norms and privileges are tacitly accepted.²⁸ Dysconsciousness itself is “an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things given.”²⁹ These uncritical ways of thinking further lead to accepting “certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages white people have as a result of subordinating diverse others.”³⁰ This type of racism has been played out in the wide acceptance of Ruby Payne’s culture of poverty philosophy.³¹ Her assertions move the focus from the inequitable practices of the schools to the ascribed differences within the culture of essentially black and Hispanic students which have caused them to suffer within the educational system. There is never an assessment of the system, rather a single focus on the unusual culture of minorities.

For others within the school system, the culture of black students shouldn’t even be considered within the school setting or at the most at a very ceremonial level.

²⁸ Joyce E. King, “Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and the Miseducation of Teacher,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 60 no. 2 (Spring 1991): 135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

³¹ Ruby K. Payne. *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc., 2005).

Upon the desegregation of the nation's school system, black schools were systematically closed and black students were forced to integrate themselves into the established culture at the white schools. The trophies, mascots, school songs, black educators, and black history were systematically removed from the educational system as the black community was not permitted to integrate these cultural artifacts into the new school system. This proved to be a tacit acceptance of white norms within the schools that produced feelings of alienation in black students thus creating a cycle of underachievement.

In response to this underachievement, there have been efforts from the federal government and local school districts to restore certain characteristics of the all-black segregated school to the school system. This restoration does not seem to be a conscious effort to glean educational insight from the all-black schools but nonetheless it is. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has partnered with Attorney General Eric Holder's office, the Department of Justice, to address the school-to-prison pipeline and disciplinary practices and policies that work to push students out of school into the justice system.³² Their Supportive School Discipline Initiative aims to support good discipline practices while also ensuring a safe place for students to learn. The initiative wants to further ensure that school discipline policies and practices comply with the nation's civil rights laws. Duncan has expressed concern about the rising rates and disparities in discipline in the nation's schools. In essence, the federal government wants to keep students in school and out of the prisons. This practice of keeping students in school

³² U.S. Department of Education. "Secretary Duncan, Attorney General Holder Announce Effort to Respond to School-to-Prison Pipeline by supporting Good Discipline Practices," <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-duncan-attorney-general-holder-announce-effort-respond-school-prison-p> (assessed January 4, 2012).

harkens to H.T. Edward's practice of rarely suspending students from school. As previously noted, Bob Paris insisted that Professor Edwards never expelled anyone from school because he believed that students couldn't learn anything in the streets. However Paris asserted that upon integration that changed. He said, "Too often people don't want to be bothered with troublemakers. If you're a troublemaker 'get out of my hair, get gone.' All of that popped up with integration. Teachers weren't going to...if you can't behave yourself, get!"³³ The effort to reverse these unproductive strategies has begun on a national level with the federal government leading the way.

An additional program of the federal government is an effort to recruit more black male teachers into the nation's school system. As a part of the U.S. Department of Education's TEACH Campaign that aims to raise awareness to the field of teaching while also recruiting more teachers for the next generation, Arne Duncan stressed the need for more black male teachers. He insisted that there is a great need in this area as black males comprise less than two percent of the teaching profession. Their presence in the field will allow black students to see what is possible as they act as role models for this population of students.³⁴ This disparity in the population of black male teachers is in no doubt a consequence of the massive displacement of black educators that occurred upon desegregation. Forty years later the federal government is beginning to understand the important role black teachers played in the education of black students and working to remedy this historical atrocity.

³³ Paris, interview.

³⁴ Homeroom: The Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education, "Secretary Calls Black Men to the Blackboard," <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2011/02/secretary-calls-black-men-to-the-blackboard/> (assessed January 6, 2012).

The federal government has also embraced the idea of the all-black school and its belief in the symbiotic relationship between itself and the community as incorporated it into its Promise Neighborhoods program. Associated with the more recent efforts of Jeffrey Canada and his Harlem Children's Zone Initiative, the goal of President Obama's administration is to develop a program that will serve to build a continuum from the cradle to a career by providing both educational programs and family and community supports placing successful schools at the center. Arne Duncan was quoted as saying, "Promise Neighborhoods recognizes that children need to be surrounded by systems of support inside and outside of the classroom to help them be successful in school and beyond."³⁵ This was the call from the black neighborhoods of the segregated South. The schools knew that they were not alone in the education of black students. They relied heavily on the black community for financial aid, advocacy at the district level, and if need be disciplinary support from the parents. The schools further served as a community symbol for liberation through education as well as serving as a meeting place for religious, communal, and social gatherings. Today's Promise Neighborhoods harken back to the values found within the all-black segregated neighborhoods of the South.

Last, there is an effort within districts across the country including St. Louis and Denver, to incorporate home visitations into the requirements of their classroom teachers. Districts, philanthropists, and teachers unions have been working to develop home-visit projects to determine the impact of parent and home engagement on the student's

³⁵ U.S. Department of Education. "Obama Administration Announces 2011 Promise Neighborhoods Grant Winners: 20 Communities Secure Funding to Plan, Implement Cradle-to-Career Education Model," <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/obama-administration-announces-2011-promise-neighborhoods-grant-winners> (assessed January 6, 2012).

behavior and academics.³⁶ The premise is that visits to the students' homes will provide insight into methods that can be used to improve academic outcomes for students while also prompting engagement of parents in their child's academics. This is a page taken directly out of the all-black segregated Southern school. As Bob Paris and Eileen Newsome explained, home visitations were a requirement of black teachers in the black schools; however, upon integration they were no longer continued. Paris insisted that white teachers were unwilling to go to black students' homes so the practice eventually faded from the public school practices. Whether the elimination of home visits was a direct result of desegregation or the move away from home visitations in the U.S. as in the medical field, the practice stopped, leaving a gaping hole in the school to home continuum. School districts now recognize this gap and the importance of closing it through relationship building in home visitations.

Four modern day efforts in the field of education have reflect the practices and make-up of the all-black segregated school of the South. Therefore the question begs - What else can be learned from these schools of the past and properly incorporated into today's modern-day schools. While watching *Waiting for Superman*, one of the education commentators said that 25 years ago there was no proof that something else worked.³⁷ However, now we know what works and we know further that it is a lie that disadvantaged children can't learn. There was a disconcerted feeling that ran through my mind that began with his first assertion.

³⁶ Stephen Sawchuk, "More Districts Sending Teachers into Students' Homes," *Education Week* 31 (2011). http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/12/14/14visit_ep.h31.html?qs=More+Districts+Sending+Teachers+into+Students+Homes (assessed December 13, 2011).

³⁷ *Waiting for Superman*, David Guggenheim and Lesley Chilcott. 2010 Documentary.

Twenty-five years and earlier there was proof of a type of education that worked to improve the academic achievement of black and poor students. These methods were found in the all-black segregated school in the South. The methods that are being used now are in fact not new methods; instead they can be said to be reincarnations of past methods. Further there has never been a question in the black community whether disadvantaged students could learn. The majority of the black population in the segregated South could have been considered disadvantaged and every day that they came to school they were being taught by teachers who knew that they had the capacity to learn. Hence, this commentator was speaking directly from a post-segregation dominant point of view that did not take into account the educational history of black Americans. But why didn't he know this? Is this the fault of historians or America's dysconscious racism to acknowledge that anything good came out of an all-black setting?

Part of this can be answered by taking into account the grand narrative that has dictated the way we see the all-black schools. Marcus Thomas properly assessed this understanding saying,

One of the problems...is that when integration, desegregation was being advocated and fought for we made the assumption, we as a nation and particularly as a people, that the all-black school was in fact inferior to the all-white schools. Did they receive the same funding, no, did they have equal equipment in the science class, no, did the football team have newer uniforms, no. If you look at funding levels, all of that would be accurate but lack of funding doesn't necessarily mean lack of quality, lack of commitment, lack of involvement. So that's where you get this dichotomy and maybe even some confusion because integration does not necessarily mean that all the kids who go to integrated schools will be successful either. So you have to look at the corollary to that. And you look at it in the 40 years since, 1970-71, when the schools were desegregated. You can obviously say that integration has not been a panacea of course neither was segregation. But the point was you can't say that because schools are segregated then therefore those kids received inferior education. In advocating for desegregation the conclusion was if it was segregated then

it was bad or it was inferior and in some ways yes but in other ways, especially not at all.³⁸

When Thomas' explanation is considered it is no wonder why the commentator believed that no one knew what worked twenty-five years ago. The history of the all-black school with its successful models has not been properly researched because of the conflicting thoughts that surround these schools. Whites and some blacks were under the impression that nothing good could have come from an all-black setting so a dichotomy of good and bad formed into a commensurate dichotomy of white and black. Consequently the history of the black schools was suppressed as the move to desegregation became the primary focus. Therefore, the history has been hidden from both white and black Americans alike.

This history is not one of assumed consensus nor is it a narrative that is to be settled on soon. As my dissertation further complicates the history of the all-black schools, so too will other future studies. There will need to be future investigations that will focus on the training of the black teachers by looking at the widely attended summer institutes as well as the master's degree classes that many black educators enrolled in within the white northern universities. Additionally, it will remain important that a true account of the displacement of African American educators is captured so as to properly assess its impact. The history of the all-black school is in no way an achieved story and will remain as such until all stories have been told and properly included. In the meantime, it remains incumbent upon historians to research and present this historical information to not only fellow historians but also the public at large. This is too important to fail.

³⁸ Thomas, interview.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWEES

Webster Anderson, Allendale, South Carolina: Allen was born in 1930 and attended the Allendale County Training High School from grades 1st – 11th. He attended Claflin University in South Carolina where he majored in music education receiving his teaching certificate. Less than two weeks after graduating he was drafted into the U.S. Army as a rifleman in the infantry. He remained in Korea and the military for 18 months. Upon leaving the military he was recruited to teach band in Athens, GA at AHIS in 1953. He spent the rest of his career in the Clarke County school system as the band director at AHIS and a local middle school, the first black assistant principal at the all-white high school, and later an assistant principal at the new high school in Athens where he retired. Mr. Anderson is noted in Athens as being one of the few black educators who were outspoken against the injustices black students faced within the educational system.

William Billows, Oconee County, GA: Billows was born October 6, 1943 and attended the Ed Stroud School from 1st – 9th grades in Oconee County until his parents moved to Athens where he attended and graduated from AHIS in 1961. His father taught at AHIS as a social studies teacher while his mother served as the Jeanes Supervising teacher for both Oconee and Clarke County schools. He enrolled in Albany State College soon after graduation but by his sophomore year realized he was tired of school. He returned to Athens and began a career in store management.

Varner Dawes, Athens, GA: Dawes was born on May 18, 1947 and attended AHIS/BHHS graduating in 1965. He attended South Carolina State earning a degree in education. Upon his return to Georgia he taught math at a local school in rural Oglethorpe County, GA from 1969-75. He and his wife were two of eight black teachers who were not displaced upon desegregation in Oglethorpe County. Mr. Dawes and his wife eventually obtained jobs at local schools in Athens, GA. His career includes an assistant principalship at both of the local high schools and an eventual principalship at his alma mater Burney-Harris although by this time it had been converted into a middle school. He was the last principal at the historic AHIS/BHHS building where the middle school was housed and 30 years to the date that he graduated from BHHS he closed the building. His time at the building spanned from being a student to a principal. He and his wife have retired from the school system and remain advocates within the community.

Howard Edwards, Thompson, GA: Edwards was born in 1942 but early in his life moved, with his family, to Athens, GA where his father became the principal of AHIS/BHHS. He completed his elementary, middle, and high school years in the Clarke County school system graduating from AHIS in 1960. Upon his graduation he attended Morehouse College majoring in business administration with a minor in economics. Instead of going directly into the business world, he returned to Athens and to teach business classes in shorthand and typing at his alma mater. While teaching at

AHIS/BHHS for three years he also taught remedial reading while earning his teaching certificate at the University of Georgia. He spent the majority of his career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, becoming the first black county office director in Tuskegee Alabama. He remained in this post for 10 years and was then transferred to the Washington D.C. office where he remained for five years. After his post in D.C. he returned to Athens, GA where he eventually retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Norris Fault, Moore County, North Carolina: Fault was born on November 19, 1951 with his family relocating to Athens, GA in 1967. Upon his arrival to BHHS he was asked to go to the white middle school as a part of the district's integration effort. He attended the white schools of Athens eventually graduating from Athens High in 1970 under much supervision from the white county and school administrators. Fault was not allowed to complete the remainder of his spring semester at the high school nor was he allowed to attend his high school graduation as he was identified as being one of the student leaders in the desegregation protests. He went on to attend UGA after joining the Air Force in 1971 and suffering from a debilitating accident in 1974 that caused him to be paralyzed from the neck down. He earned his BA in 1980 and his Ph.D. in 1993, becoming an advocate for persons with disabilities.

Paula Hill, Athens, GA: Hill was born on August 31, 1953 spending her entire elementary and secondary years in the Clarke County school system. Hill spent one year of middle school, 7th grade, at the white school during the initial days of integration; however she quickly returned to her all-black middle school in the 8th grade. She entered Burney-Harris High School in the 9th grade and remained there until full integration in 1970 when she was a part of the first graduating class from the newly integrated high school Clarke Central. Hill considers herself to be a graduate of not only Clarke Central but also BHHS as she serves as the president to the Clarke Central/Burney-Harris High School class of 1971. She currently works in the school system as an administrative assistant at one of the local high schools.

Benedict James, Clarke County, GA: James was born in October of 1936 attending elementary, middle, and high schools in Athens, GA. He graduated from AHIS in 1954 being the last class to graduate from the original building and the last class to graduate from the 11th grade. The 12th grade was added the next year. He received a music scholarship to attend Morris Brown where he double majored in instrumental music and education and minored in vocal music. After graduating from college with his teaching certificate he began teaching at the local all-black junior high school in 1962 and later moved to Burney-Harris High School serving as its band director from 1966-69. After resigning from his post at BHHS he traveled the South for one year with an integrated band. When he returned from his travels he began teaching guitar at the local recreation center eventually securing a job with the USDA as a biological technician where he remained for 32 years. He now offers free lessons in various instruments to young people at his church.

Fred Jones, Athens, GA: Jones was born on August 12, 1952 attending elementary, middle, and high schools in Athens, GA. His father served as a teacher, middle school principal, and curriculum director for the district. In fact his father was his middle school principal. After graduating from Burney-Harris High school in 1970 he attended Morehouse College and the University of Pittsburg School of Medicine. He soon returned to Athens to practice medicine and continues to serve in this capacity.

Eileen Newsome, Macon, GA: Newsome was born on December 7, 1930 and at five years old moved to Athens with her parents. She attended elementary, middle, and high schools in Athens, graduating from AHIS in the 11th grade in 1947 at age 16. After graduating she attended Clarke College where she majored in French. To gain a teaching certificate in French she attended the NDEA French Language Institute at Hampton Institute. Upon her return to Athens she began teaching one of the local all-black elementary schools. After three years of teaching there she was hired to teach French at AHIS/BHHS. She remained there until integration when she was given double duty teaching at both Clarke Central and BHHS where the 10th grade was housed. After that year she was moved to Cedar Shoals High School where she continued teaching French until her retirement in 1984. After her retirement she remained active within the educational community in Athens in her own right and as the spouse of a Board of Education long-standing member.

Bob Paris, Athens, GA: Paris was born on February 16, 1925 completing elementary, middle, and high schools in Athens. He graduated from AHIS in 1947 in the 11th grade, two years behind his original graduation date due to his recruitment into the armed forces. Because he was an older student he was recruited into the Navy and spent two years on a Destroyer running convoy on an escort ship to Naples, Italy and on air rescue duty in the Pacific. After returning to AHIS and graduating he attended Morehouse College majoring in business administration and psychology. While in college he got certified in social studies because he knew there was limited opportunity for him in his field. Upon his entry into the educational field he taught in surrounding Athens counties for four years until he secured a position at the Athens Housing Authority where he remained for four years. He left that post and was placed at the all-black elementary school teaching fifth grade. Upon the initial integration of the faculty in Clarke County he was transferred to a formerly all-white elementary school for one year until he was placed at the formerly all-white middle school. He remained there for 18 years retiring in 1987.

Esther Seaborn, Athens, GA: Seaborn was born on December 10, 1950 completing elementary, middle, and high schools in Athens. She graduated from BHHS in 1967. She currently works at the newly renovated BHHS building which has been renamed the H.T. Edwards Building. In this new building is housed an academy that mainly teaches career classes such as health science, computer applications and science, economics, video broadcasting, and law and justice. The location of the Boys and Girls Club has likewise been moved to this building. Seaborn began working in the school system soon after she graduated from high school serving as Varner Dawes' administrative secretary at Clarke Central High School. She plans on continuing to work in the school system until her upcoming retirement.

Marcus Thomas, Athens, GA: Thomas was born on January 5, 1953 completing elementary, middle, and high schools in Athens. He spent his 9th – 11th grades at BHHS until forced integration where he completed his 12th grade year at Clarke Central High School. He was a part of the first graduating class from the newly integrated high school in 1971. After graduation he attended Payne College and eventually the University of South Carolina School of Law where he earned his J.D. Prior to his graduation from law school he published the first definitive history of education for blacks in Athens in 1978. He also published a newspaper in Athens that catered to the black community with its first publication in 1975. In 1986 he became the first African American to represent Athens-Clarke County since Reconstruction in the Georgia General Assembly. In 1998 he accomplished another first by becoming the first African American to serve as Georgia's Labor Commissioner where he served in this post until 2010. He ran an unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. Senate and now practices law in Atlanta, GA.

APPENDIX B

ORAL HISTORY QUESTIONS

Questions for Displaced African American Teachers

1. When were you born, and where?
2. What schools did you attend?
3. Were they segregated?
4. When did you decide to become a teacher, and why?
5. When did you earn your teaching certificate, and where?
 - a. Was it a bachelor's degree? If not, what kind of certificate was it?
6. Where was your first schoolteaching experience?
 - a. Was it a segregated school?
 - b. Do you think it was a good school? If yes, why, and if no, why not?
 - c. Did you teach at other schools? Were they segregated? Were they good schools (if yes, why, and if no, why not)?
7. How long had you been teaching when your school district began desegregation?
8. Did you keep your position? Were you sent to another school? Were you given a different position?
9. What is your recollection of what happened to other teachers?
10. What happened at the school where you taught after desegregation?
 - a. Did African American and White teachers interact? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)
 - b. Did African American and White administrators interact? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)

- c. Did African American and White students interact? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)
 - d. Did African American and White parents interact? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)
11. Do you know what happened to other African American educators during desegregation?
(If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Probe for names of schools. Ask if newspaper reports exist. Ask if there were effects at the schools.)
12. What was the impact on the African American community during desegregation? Do you recall discussions at home, at church, or elsewhere?

Questions for Participants in the Displaced African American Educators Project
(Parents and Students)

1. When were you born, and where?
2. What schools did you or your child[ren] attend?
3. Were they segregated?
4. Do you think they were good schools? If yes, why, and if no, why not?
5. How would you characterize the teachers you encountered at the school?
6. How would you characterize the principal at the school?
7. Describe your academic curriculum at the school.
8. Was there parent and community participation within and support for the school?

[Questions 9 through 10 are for participants who were students]

9. Did your school experience desegregation while you were in school?
10. If you did experience desegregation describe the experience.
 - a. Was it voluntary?
 - b. What grade were you in when desegregation began at your school?
 - c. What was the ratio of African American and White students in the integrated school/classrooms?
 - d. Did your African-American teachers and/or administrators come to the integrated school? If not, what is your recollection of what happened to these teachers and/or administrators
 - e. Were the black school's mascots, song, traditions, etc. welcomed at the integrated school?
 - f. Were you involved in extracurricular activities at the black school, if so did you continue those extracurricular activities at the integrated school?
 - g. Was there resistance by you or other classmates from to integration?

[Questions 11 through 14 are for participants who were parents]

11. Did your child[ren] participate in the voluntary transfer integration program, school choice? Why or why not?
12. Upon compulsory desegregation did you have children of school age? If so describe the experience of desegregation from a parent's point of view.
 - a. Did you feel your children would be safe at the integrated school? Why or why not?
 - b. Did you feel you would be safe at the integrated school? Why or why not?
 - c. Were there feelings of resentment, hope, fear of the unknown concerning the integrated school? Why or why not?
 - d. Did you know the teachers and administrators at the integrated school? Did you know the teachers and administrators at the segregated all-black school? Why or Why not?
13. Were you involved at the segregated school? If so how, if not why not?
14. If your child[ren] went to the integrated school, did you become involved there? If so why and how, if not why not?

[Questions 15 through 20 are for all participants]

15. Did African American and White students interact at the integrated high school? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)
16. Did African American and White teachers interact at the integrated high school? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)
17. Did African American and White parents interact? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)
18. Did African American and White administrators interact? If so, what were the interactions? (If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Ask if newspaper reports exist.)

19. What was the impact on the African American community during desegregation?
Do you recall discussions at home, at church, or elsewhere?

20. Do you know what happened to other African American educators during desegregation?
(If the interview participant remembers names of individuals, provide contact information so that those individuals can contact the principal investigator if they want to participate. Probe for names of schools. Ask if newspaper reports exist. Ask if there were effects at the schools.)