

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS:
VOICES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED BLACK
SEGREGATED SCHOOLS BEFORE INTEGRATION**

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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December 2012

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the experiences of African American students who attended Black segregated schools in a Houston community during the years 1935-1965. The purpose of this study was to give voice to the participants who were educated in a Black segregated school before integration. This research sought to understand students' experiences with segregated schooling through recollections from former students who were products of the school system in the community of Acres Homes in Houston. Furthermore, this research sought to give voice to these students in an effort to understand the role that these schools played in students' lives and the African American community as a whole. A purposive sample of five African American former students was interviewed. The data was analyzed using methods of narrative analysis.

Findings generated using thematic analysis revealed three major themes present within and across the larger narratives that represented the experiences of segregated schooling: happiness, heritage, and hardship. Each major theme that emerged encompassed pertinent sub-themes. Twelve sub-themes in total emerged from the combined narratives. Within the Happiness theme emerged 1) enjoyable atmosphere, 2) personal success, 3) closeness, and 4) activities. Within the Heritage theme emerged 5) strong foundation, 6) good teachers, 7) respect for authority, and 8) self-reliance and ownership. Within the Hardship theme emerged 9) rural to urban living, 10) lack of resources, 11) segregation as a way of life, and 12) unfairness/colorism. In contrast to much of the extant literature, these participants' segregated schooling experiences proved to be fulfilling and served as basis for future advancements.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my entire family: Beatrice and David Jokines, Elton and Verna McEwen, and Shelly Washington for their continued prayers and support throughout this entire process. I would also like to thank my close friends who continued to encourage me during my moments of uncertainty.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel very blessed to have a whole host of wonderful people in my life who have stood by, supported me, and assisted me in the process of creating this dissertation. First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the five participants of the study. They opened up their homes, gave of their time, and trusted me with their stories, providing me with the primary data upon which this work is based. Not only did I learn pertinent information about my research topic but I also learned about the power of unity, perseverance, and diligence and principles that will continue to impact me both professionally and personally.

I was fortunate to have an excellent ensemble of scholars on my dissertation committee. Dr. Norvella Carter, who has been my mentor since I pursued my master's degree, has been a constant source of support for me. Throughout the years she has encouraged, guided, and empowered me to accomplish things that I only dreamt of. She met with me in her home and gave of her personal time, just to help guide me along my dissertation journey. She never ceased to encourage me and let me know that I was capable of doing way more than I believed I could.

Dr. Patricia Larke helped me to create a foundation and planted the seed of desire to pursue a doctoral degree during my days as a master's student in her class. Her depth of knowledge helped to give me a vision for myself and my career. As one of my committee members she helped me to frame my research to make sure that I was exploring all of the necessary components. Because of her familiarity with my research

area, she was able to suggest other research avenues for me to consider. Dr. Terah Venzant-Chambers provided such a wealth of research knowledge for my study. Having the opportunity to take her Segregation/Desegregation class helped to provide me with an extensive literature review that guided the scope of my research and deepened my knowledge. Dr. Jack Helfeldt joined the committee during the latter part of my dissertation journey and was a great help in making sure that I covered all of the necessary bases. His expertise and knowledge helped to keep me on track and remain scholarly in my efforts.

Special thanks go out to my friends and fellow colleagues in the Urban Education Department of Texas A&M University who provided scholarly feedback, listened to preliminary research questions and gave pertinent direction during those “bumps” in the road and long commutes back from College Station. I’d also like to acknowledge all of my professors during my doctoral studies who provided me with foundational knowledge and direction.

Finally, special thanks go out to everyone who provided me with participant names who helped to frame the beginnings of this research. They allowed me to get the ball rolling and begin my journey of research and helped to make this moment possible.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1896 the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of separate but equal facilities for African Americans and Whites in the landmark case of *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896). This decision provided the gateway for a racially divided nation where African Americans and Whites existed as two separate entities sharing one space. This decision would also prove to be the beginning of legal separatism and inequality for African Americans in the United States for many years to come, having devastating effects on the financial, social, and educational condition of African Americans throughout the nation. Out of this forced separatism an unintended outcome was birthed: the “agency” of the African American community (Morris, 2004). African Americans banded together to create communities and opportunities for themselves, for if they were to forge ahead it would have to be from the work of their own hands.

It is from this action of “upward mobility” that Black segregated schools emerged. African Americans formed cohesive units; raising money, erecting edifices, and providing teachers and resources all to educate their own. They accepted the reality that “if African American children were to be taught, it would have to be by African American teachers (Siddle Walker, 2000)”, as there was no widespread campaign from the government to *adequately* prepare and educate African American children. Though organizations such as the Freedman’s Bureau and American Missionary Association (AMA) worked to open schools for African American students following the Civil War

and staff them with White northern missionary educators, the curriculum mostly provided training for industrial occupations, leading to menial jobs and ideologies of African American subordination (Anderson, 1988). In an effort to escape the oppressive clutches of White mainstream education, African Americans continued to strive towards educating their own (Siddle Walker, 1996).

The theoretical lenses that guide this research are tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Social Capital Theory. According to Ladson-Billings (1998) Critical Race Theory “begins with the notion that racism is normal in American society.” In the case of schooling for African Americans, the playing field was never level. There was no intent to fully educate African Americans before and directly following the Civil War. In the situations where education was attempted harsh penalties and even death were the outcomes for striving to cultivate the minds of African Americans. Even when a curriculum was introduced and public education was extended to African Americans, its purposed was to subjugate and keep them in a subordinate state. Critical Race Theory deems this behavior as normal in the American society and sheds light on the covert workings of a racist society.

It is evident that racism is pervasive in American society, and schools are not excluded from this pervasiveness. There is no way to discuss the African American schooling experience and not address the pervasiveness of racist ideals that have impacted those experiences. There are many “tenets” by which Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be defined. In this study, the tenet of “Counter Storytelling” was used to allow the experiences of African American former students of Black segregated schools

to share their experiences (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Since the mainstream literature indicates that those who attended Black segregated schools were deprived culturally and academically, and their experiences were rife with negative factors such as deprivation, low standards, and misery, it was necessary to “counter” those stories with the narratives of former students whose experiences did not mirror such negativity. Counter-story telling aims to “cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths...held by the majority” (Dekgado & Stephancic, 2001). In this study, the accepted notion that is “casted down” is that of segregated schooling experiences being negative and depraved. Another tenet used is “Whiteness as Property”. Whiteness as property posits that there are certain inclusions and privileges are immediately attributed to being White and there are certain exclusions that come with not being White (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The fact that the community members of Acres Homes did not have access to all residential areas because of segregation shows Whiteness as a form of property having access to areas that African Americans did not have access to. The placement of Acres Homes in a strictly rural and uninhabited location, excluded from the main hub of the city of Houston, was also examined with Whiteness as property. The main goal was to keep a majority of African Americans secluded from the city.

Woolcock & Narayan (2000) define social capital as “the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively”. Even in a racially divided society with legal mandates and attempts to oppress African American people, an unexpected unity emerged. Out of this forced separatism in the African American community African American education materialized. This collective unity emerged by way of community

members donating money, time, and talents in order to educate their own. During slavery this collectivism appeared in the form of slave schools, which were oftentimes held in secret (Williams, 2005). Immediately following the Civil War this collectivism was shown in the form of native schools, those schools which were started, owned and operated by African Americans (Anderson, 1988). In the Jim Crow South, this collectivism was shown in the form of Black segregated schools where African Americans were forced to remain in their own society and communities (Siddle Walker, 1996). Through these circumstances, the African American community banded together to create their own opportunities.

Personal Story

Having received an education from a Historically Black University (HBU), I have a special affinity for the Black educational experience. For it was there, at Prairie View A&M University that I found my voice and place in society and pride for being an educated woman—and more specifically, an educated *Black* woman. During my years of college, I was enlightened and introduced to parts of my heritage that I had never known. I was awakened and led into a discovery that has completely changed who I am.

I come from a military family. With this privilege came the opportunity to travel to many places and interact with many people at a young age. I always recall being one of the few *Black* faces in many of my classrooms. As a young girl, I remember waking up in my first floor apartment in Germany to three German youngsters peering into my window, trying to get a glimpse of the new *brown girls* who moved in on the first floor. I remember being coddled and petted by strange German hands, hands which curiously

fingering my sister's and my freshly corn-rolled hair, amazed at the handiwork my mother had done.

These fond memories are accompanied by the not so fond memories of the embarrassment that came with hearing my history teacher announce that we would be starting the unit on the Civil War: *Slavery*. All eyes would turn and inquisitively look at me, as I was yet again, one of the few *Black* faces in the class, and I would now learn how *my people* struggled through oppression. I have the not so fond memory of being surrounded by laughter as my classmate joked about me switching from using Crisco to Wesson in my hair, noting the reason for my hairstyle looking so nice—an insane notion that I would use “cooking oil” in my hair because it is a known fact that as an African American, I use hair “grease.” These memories and my experience of being one of the few *Black* faces in many of my childhood settings sent me on a personal pilgrimage to find my own place in the world.

Growing up in a military town, I had the privilege of being overlooked often for the more “European” looking girls—the ones with wavy hair, lighter skin, and green eyes. I got used to not being desired or being chosen second, or third. It became my normal. Then I discovered Prairie View A & M University. I stepped foot on the campus of Prairie View A&M and was in my own little wonderland, my Mecca. I saw *Black* faces...all shades of Black...all shades and all beautiful. I saw beautiful men and women alike, who all believed they were beautiful, and thought I was beautiful too. They were tall, short, light, dark, long-haired, short-haired—a motley crew of *Black* faces. And suddenly, I had a place. They were not only beautiful, but they were intelligent. They

were future engineers, architects, teachers, nurses...and I, too, had a place. It was here, at this Black institution that I answered the call to be great.

Having gone to a predominately Black college, I was able to experience education at a level that I never knew was possible. It was nurturing, empowering, and challenging all in the same. Even though my experience was a positive one, the extant literature that I have encountered depicts Black schools in a negative light, especially those during legalized segregation. Though I did not personally attend school during legalized segregation, I am familiar with the Black school experience, and I wanted to be able to capture this experience from the viewpoints of those who experienced it firsthand. Because I did not personally experience legalized segregation, I am far removed from that part of my heritage. As an African American woman, knowing all aspects of the African American experience is essential to who I am. Akin to my lack of knowledge, many other African Americans are far removed from the African American educational experience as well and would greatly benefit from hearing the stories of those who are able to share them.

Statement of the Problem

The exploration of the experiences of students in Black segregated schools before integration is a worthy topic because it gives voice to a group that has since been silenced. Though a growing body of research has emerged concerning successful Black schools (Cecelski, 1994; Morris, 2004; Siddle Walker, 1996) and African American teachers (Foster, 1997; Lynn, Johnson, & Hassan, 1999; Morris & Morris, 2002; Siddle Walker, 2000) during legalized segregation, there is still room to capture the experiences

of students who were educated within these segregated school systems from the students' perspectives. Allowing former students to share their recollections as a reflective adult creates an opportunity for discourse that can provide monumental strides for research today. As adults, we typically reflect on our childhood occurrences and discover meaning and purpose in experiences that we once overlooked. Therefore additional studies are warranted.

Purpose of the Study

The African American educational experience has been an uphill battle. Since the beginning of their presence in the United States, African Americans have had to fight for the right to be educated (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005). During their struggle for education, they created communities of learning (Foster, 1997; Siddle Walker, 1996). Where learning was forbidden, they learned in secret (Anderson, 1988; Cornelius, 1983; Freedman, 1999; Williams, 2005). Where there were no schools, they built schools themselves (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005). When they were not allowed to attend White schools, they created their own (Anderson, 1988; Cecelski, 1994; Siddle Walker, 1997; Tyack & Lowe, 1986). It was through these turbulent conditions that African American education developed.

The system of schooling created for African Americans was created by African Americans, with their needs in mind. Though limited by certain restrictions of the times, they were able to create a viable system of educating their own (Morris, 2004; Williams, 2005). It is this system that is the focus of the present study. Though African Americans created, staffed, and funded many of their own schools (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker,

1997; Williams, 2005) in much of the literature, their education is depicted as being substandard and inferior (Caliver, 1935). In an effort to counter this depiction, what is needed is more literature that captures students' own descriptions of the Black segregated school experience.

The purpose of this study was to give voice to the participants' who were educated in a Black segregated school before integration. This research seeks to understand students' experiences with segregated schooling through recollections from former students who were products of the school system in the community of Acres Homes in Houston. Furthermore, this research seeks to give voice to these students in an effort to understand the role that these schools played in students' lives and the African American community as a whole.

Significance

In his study on oral history, Jack Dougherty (1999) states that "the decline of civil rights activism, the rise of interest in local black history, and the resurgence of political conservatism in national policy making on race and education have shaped...how we represent the past in both academic and popular culture" (p. 717). Some of the representations of African American schooling have been negative and not reflective of former students' recollections. In providing former students the venue to reflect on their childhood schooling experiences in a Black segregated school, we will have the benefit of providing much needed insight to educators about African American schooling. Sharing in the experience of the child with the perspective of the adult adds depth and richness to a perspective that needs to be widely explored. With increasing

numbers of schools becoming racially concentrated, the Black school experience is no longer a phenomenon of the past.

Though many urban schools today are nearly as segregated as they were in the early 1900s (Morris, 2004), their current state does not mirror the historic portrait of those that were successful. Many urban schools are underfunded, are mostly likely to receive the most unqualified teachers, and continuously yield dismal statistics (Lewis & Moore, 2008) that reflect high suspension, dropout rates (NCES, 2006) and an overrepresentation in special education (NCES, 2005). Alarming numbers of teachers admit to being unwilling and unprepared to teach African American children (Carter, 2003) leaving African American schools the least desirable place of employment. With urban schools of today facing similar issues as Black schools of the segregated South, there is much to be learned from the function of Black segregated schools and the experiences of students who were products of its system. African American schools today do not understand what they have or what they can do.

Research Questions

As time continues the opportunities to collect the stories of individuals from this era are rapidly diminishing. With participants aging, there will be fewer opportunities to record the narratives of those who experienced segregated schooling first hand. I have chosen to focus on former students who were educated in the Acres Homes community in Houston during 1935 to 1965 with an emphasis on the high school experience. This period represents individuals who were old enough to understand and conceptualize the impact of segregation and those who are able to recall and share their experience. The

Acres Homes community was chosen because it was considered to be one of the largest African American communities in the South, and is still a cohesive African American community today.

The guiding research questions regarding former students in Black segregated schools in the community of Acres Homes in Houston, Texas from 1935-1965 were developed to address the following topics:

1. How do African American former students describe their experiences of being educated in Black segregated schools?
2. How do African American former students describe the role their Black segregated schools played in the community?
3. How do African American former students describe their relationship with the teachers and administrators of their Black segregated schools?
4. How do African American former students describe the context in which they were raised?
5. How do African American former students describe the impact that their Black segregated school had on their life?

Definitions of Terms

For the sake of clarity it is necessary to define my use of terms. In this study the following definitions apply:

Agency—the concerted efforts of African American people to provide quality schooling for African American children (Morris, 2004).

African American – United States citizens who are non-Hispanic and classified as “**Black**” by the **Bureau of the Census**. African Americans include individuals descending from any of the Black racial groups of Africa. (Nettles & Perna, 1997).

Voice—the shared unique individual experience of a person or persons in their own words from their perspective.

Black segregated schools—legally segregated schools erected during and after the Jim Crow era with the sole purpose of educating African American students in a separate setting from White students.

Desegregation—the dismantling of legalized segregation through the Supreme Court mandate of *Brown v the Board of Education* (1954).

Integration—the process of merging the education of African American and White students through placing them within the same schools to be educated together in fulfillment of the legal mandate brought forth by the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v the Board of Education* (1954).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation was organized into eight chapters. Chapter I provides the introduction with an overview of the essence of the research topics and offers specific research questions addressed in this study. A personal story is shared to help situate the research within the scope of the study. To further focus the study, a definition of selected terms is provided. Chapter II provides an extensive review of literature relevant to the study. Topics include A Historical Context of African American Schooling, African American Schooling in Texas, A Struggle for Literacy: Education as a Vehicle for Liberation, Segregated Schooling: Education as a Vehicle to Resist Oppression, and Impacts of Segregation and Integration: Unintended and Unexpected Consequences. Chapter III focuses on the methodological component of the research in detailing the background information of the study, research design, participant identifications, interview procedures, pilot study, positionality, the methods of data analysis, which is narrative analysis, and gives a summary of the chapter. Chapter IV gives an extensive overview of the participants' backgrounds and the context of the interview atmosphere, followed by a chapter summary. Chapters V and VI give the findings of the study wherein selected themes that emerged from the narratives are discussed. Chapter VII concludes the study with conclusions wherein how meaning was derived from the narratives is discussed and recommendations for further research are given.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Overview of African American Schooling

In 1619 when African captives were brought to the English colony of Virginia, there was no intention for them to learn. Their sole purpose was to labor under the direction of English slave masters. Thus the beginnings of African education in America were meager and widely unsupported by the English. Slave schools were formed by African Americans to cultivate their own minds. Some “native” schools can be dated back to as early as 1695 (Anderson, 2007, p 3).

Anti-literacy laws surfaced throughout the South out of fear of the rebellion and revolt that literacy could and did incite in enslaved Blacks (Williams, 2005). The fear was that these revolts would cause a disruption to the entire institution of slavery. Despite what seemed like overwhelming opposition to their educational campaigns, the masses of African-Americans persisted in becoming literate. Their 95% illiteracy rate in 1860 had dropped to 70% in 1880 and would drop even lower to 30% by 1910 (Anderson, 1988, 31; Bond, 1939).

Anderson (1988) notes “at the dawn of the twentieth century, the infrastructure necessary for a viable Black public school system did not exist” (p. 111). Therefore, Black schools, created out of this forced separatism, emerged with the primary goal of educating African Americans. Though affixed in a system which was broken and jaded, this aim remained constant and fervent. In the early 1900’s nearly two-thirds of school age Black children in the South were not enrolled in school primarily because there were

not enough school buildings, seating capacity, or African American teachers (Anderson, 1988, p. 111).

Of the African American teachers who did staff the existing schools, there was a notable difference in their preparation and that of the teachers of the White schools. A report on African American education states:

Education of Negro Teachers, the bench-mark study on this topic, found that although the modal length of training for most elementary teachers of both races fell within the broad range of six weeks to two years of college (approximately 55.7 percent of the black teachers and 66.7percent of the white teachers met this standard), 22.5 percent of the African American elementary teachers, as compared to 5.7 percent of the white elementary teachers, had not gone beyond high school (Fultz, 1995, p. 406).

Inadequate facilities for accelerated instructional training, public high school shortages, and underfunded Black land grant colleges were contributing factors in the deficient preparation for African American teachers (Fultz, 1995, p. 404). Even with the inadequate preparation and paucity of resources, African American teachers still continued to thrive. In his report on “Negro teachers”, Caliver (1933) shares the contributions that African American teachers made to the education of their pupils:

They have helped to increase the number of literate Negroes from about 10 per cent of the Negro population in 1865 to nearly 85 percent at the present time. They have helped make possible an increase in the Negro population of school age enrolled in school from 2 percent in 1865 to nearly 80 percent at present.

They have been one of the important instrumentalities in making possible an increase in Negro public high schools during the past 18 years, from less than 100 to approximately 1200, and of increasing the secondary school enrollment nearly 600 percent during the past decade. (p. 438)

A Struggle for Literacy: Education as a Vehicle for Liberation

Anderson posits that “a central theme in the history of the education of Black Americans is the persistent struggle to fashion a system of formal education that prefigured their liberation from peasantry” (1988, p. 2). For the enslaved, learning to read and write provided a gateway into a whole new world of freedom. With the means to read and write, enslaved African Americans could “write passes to freedom, read about abolitionists’ activities, and read the Bible” (Williams, 2005, p. 7). Thus, literacy was not only an intellectual acumen; it was a means for liberation.

Former slaves’ egress from slavery brought with it the eminent desire to read, write, and be in command of their own education. For them, literacy was life—a sign of freedom and liberation—something from which they had been deprived (Morris & Morris, 2002). Stories of the enslaved’s struggle for literacy have been chronicled in slave narratives and documents throughout history. These are valuable resources that speak of the importance of literacy to the enslaved both during slavery and after emancipation.

Slave owners fought fervently to prohibit the enslaved from learning. These efforts of anti-literacy were essential to keeping the system of slavery intact. Fear of massive slave uprising and rebellion fueled slave owners efforts in keeping the enslaved

as illiterate as possible. One such uprising in 1739, the Stono Rebellion, resulted in slaves killing more than twenty Whites in an effort to escape from South Carolina to Florida (Williams, 2005, p. 13). This rebellion initiated the wide spread enactment of anti-literacy laws which imposed harsh penalties upon slaves who were caught reading or writing and imposed penalties on anyone who was guilty of teaching them. Anti-literacy laws prohibiting the instruction of slaves or freed people were enacted as early as 1740 until as late as 1849 in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia (Williams, 2005). One Virginia law read as follows:

Any white person who shall assemble with slaves, free negroes or mulattoes for the purpose of instructing them to read or write, or shall associate with slaves, free negroes and mulattoes in an unlawful assembly thereof, shall be punished by confinement in the jail not exceeding six months, and by fine not exceeding one hundred dollars...(Finkleman, 1989)

Because of the laws forbidding literacy of slaves, many slaves organized clandestine schools and gatherings to learn to read and write. Through creativity and craftiness, their struggle for literacy continued to forge ahead.

Though African Americans were not allowed to be educated in schools formed primarily to educate Whites, there was a small population of White students who attended African American “freedpeople’s” schools in thirteen states. In January of 1867, though there was a notable 78,000 African American students attending these

schools, there were 470 White pupils who were in attendance (Williams, 2005, p. 185). Thus the doors of freedpeople's schools were open to all.

Segregated Schooling: Education as a Vehicle to Resist Oppression

In approximately 1876, nearly eleven years following the emancipation of African Americans, Jim Crow laws emerged, another attempt at subjugating African Americans as a whole. These laws brought with them the power to marginalize African Americans and forbid them from fully possessing rights and access to the fundamental benefits of being a citizen (Siddle Walker, 1996). These laws were the continuation of a dichotomy—a separate society for African Americans and Whites where African Americans were considered the lesser of the races.

If African American children were to be taught, it would have to be by African American teachers. White southern educators refused to teach African American children, while the supply of White northern missionary educators was insufficient to meet the demands of the African American student population (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 2001; Williams, 2005). Therefore, the supply of African American teachers depended almost entirely upon the private normal schools, secondary schools, and colleges (Fultz, 1995).

The Reconstruction period following the Civil War opened new doors of opportunity. Ex-slaves saw education as a means of liberation (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 57; Williams, 2005). African American schools strived to become intellectual institutions, despite the expectation of European Americans that any learning beyond menial employment was unnecessary (Bond, 1939; Siddle Walker, 2000, p.

254). While inspecting the Freedman's Bureau schools of the South, inspector John Alvord noted that "self-reliance" became the pride of the African American in attainment of an education with or without the aid of philanthropists (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005, p. 89).

Between 1866-1930 African Americans founded new schools, provided financial and other support to existing schools, organized institutions and used existing institutions to support education, petitioned governmental agencies, held conventions, participated in demonstrations and school boycotts, and used law suits to achieve educational equity (Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 257-258). By 1932, African American parents had already contributed 17% of the funds to build more than 5000 Negro schools in 15 states spurred by the monies made available through the Rosenwald Fund (Franklin, 1974; Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 258). This contribution was 2% more than the Foundation contributed.

African American teachers have historically been skilled in preparing students educationally and socially. They have been influential in helping their students to rise to their full potential and resist racism and oppression as well as being skilled in bridging the gap between the school and the community (Foster, 1997, pp. xi-xii). Research is evident that "a confluence of factors, set in motion by state-sanctioned racism and discrimination, worked in concert to undermine the delivery of educational services to African American children and their families" (Fultz, 1995, p. 406). Because of the condition of the times for African Americans before the Civil War, teachers' duties

extended far beyond the classroom. They were activists who were constantly aware of the societal influences affecting their students and themselves (Fultz, 1995, p. 406).

Impact of Segregation and Integration

In support of the end of segregated schooling, officials made the assumption that segregated schooling was detrimental to African American children. The proposed argument was that attending of racially segregated schools caused psychological harm to African American children, perpetuating feelings of inferiority to African Americans while this same segregated setting was said to have had no adverse affect on the mental or emotional state of White children (Green, 2004, p. 275). Whites were perceived to be “socially, psychologically, and emotionally healthy” while the mental state of African Americans was deemed as “impoverish[ed] and deprav[ed]” (Green, 2004, p. 273). It is no secret that African American schools did not have nearly the amount of resources as White schools, nor did African American teachers receive training equal to that of Whites.

Even in the face of overt opposition, African American education did develop. In Alabama, Bond (1939) reports, African American illiteracy decreased from 69.1 % in 1900 to 26.2% in 1930. Alabama school attendance showed a significant increase as well with 734 high school students enrolled in 1912 increasing to 6, 365 students by 1920 (p. 259). In the 1930s, African American school attendance equaled that of Whites (Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 259).

Even with this great development, there were still many obstacles, both internal and external, that sought to threaten the progress of Africa American education. In 1933

within 200 counties of African American populations, 12.5 % or more still had no schools (Bond, 1939; Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 259). African Americans also faced the struggle against receiving the northern philanthropists' mandated industrial education for the county training schools, focusing instead on the classical training that would provide access to liberation (Anderson, 1988). In 1918, 65.1 % of African American school buildings were privately owned by the African American community as compared to 22.2 % of the White schools (Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 259).

The *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools that had been separate for fifty-eight years did not come without protest from both the White and Black communities (Cecelski, 1994; Siddle Walker, 1996; Siddle Walker, 2000; Morris & Morris, 2002). In order to meet the demand of desegregation without the responsibility of implementation, many school districts opted for "freedom of choice" plans where both African American and White children could choose to attend whichever school they wanted (Dougherty, 1999, p. 713). Contrary to mainstream beliefs, many African American communities were fond of their segregated schools, and though they did not have the resources that the White schools had, they wanted to maintain the community ties to "their" own schools. The beliefs of many African American families echo the sentiments of one woman 'we got what we fought for, but lost what we had' (Bell, 2004, p. 125). Schools in North Carolina (Cecelski, 1994; Siddle Walker, 1996) and Alabama (Morris & Morris, 2002) are two states where African Americans showed resistance to desegregating their Black schools.

Trenholm High School in Tuscumbia, Alabama is one such school where parents valued their Black segregated school. Tuscumbia City schools waited until 11 years after the Brown decision to desegregate their city schools (Morris & Morris, 2002). Though the desegregation process was considered a smooth one, African American students experienced hostility once they arrived at their new predominantly White schools. The desegregation process of Tuscumbia City schools was a one-way street. All of the African American students in grades 7-12 enrolled in the new “Freedom of Choice” school located in the White community while none of the White students enrolled in the local school of the African American community (Morris & Morris, 2002, p. 12).

Like many of the White communities, the North Carolina community of Caswell County Training School (CCTS) did not confront desegregation demands without protest. Though the mandate to desegregate was issued in 1954 with *Brown I* and the demand to desegregate with “All deliberate speed” with *Brown II* was issued one year later, it was not until 1967 that a small minority of Caswell County pupils, 57 African American students, had transferred to the White schools. On the other hand, no White students had transferred to the Black schools (Siddle Walker, 1996, p. 191).

Although it must be noted that the *Brown v Board of Education (1954)* decision transcended schooling and dismantled a system of legalized racism in the United States (Morris, 2008, p. 716), its implementation disrupted a “symbiotic relationship” that once existed between the African American community, Black schools, and African American educators (Cecelski, 1994; Foster, 1997; Morris, 2004; Siddle Walker, 2000). These scholars chronicle the massive spread of school closures within the African

American communities immediately following the *Brown* decision, the widespread firing and demotion of African American educators, and the disproportionate busing of African American children into all-White schools. Other scholars (Bell, 1980; Horsford & McKenzie, 2008; Morris, 2008) suggest that the current problems of low achievement rate, high expulsion, and disproportionate special education identification that African American learners face can be directly linked to the poorly implemented integration efforts spurred by the *Brown* decision.

A growing body of literature has challenged mainstream perspectives on the African American educational experience (Siddle Walker, 1996; Foster, 1996; Morris, 2008) and captured how African Americans collectively created institutions that served the needs of their students and community within an oppressive culture (Morris, 2004, p. 72). These proactive measures have occurred in African American communities during legalized segregation (Siddle Walker, 1996; Foster, 1996) and continue to thrive in current predominantly African American schools (Morris, 2004). Morris (2004) specifically highlights the agency that exists in Black schools (past and present) and notes strengths such as an interconnection between African American families and communities, significant presence of African American teachers, and African American principals as academic leaders.

Contextual Information: African American Schooling in Texas

One of the issues that African-Americans faced during the pre-Civil War period and beyond was finding enough teachers to educate them. Because there were not many schools in Texas at all during the 1850s and 1860s, there were not many schools from which to exclude free African Americans. Even with these limitations, 60 to 70 percent of free African Americans in Texas achieved literacy during the 1850s and 1860s. This was achieved although Barr (1976) reports that only twenty African American students in 1850 and eleven in 1860 could find teachers willing to educate them. Though Texas had no written law against educating slaves, as did most southern states, overt White opposition towards such education was enough to produce an illiteracy rate of over 95 percent for enslaved African Americans near the end of the Civil War (Barr, 1976; Jones, 1969).

Immediately following the Civil War, equality in education came to the forefront as one of the many fights for African American citizens. With newly found freedom, African Americans in Texas found themselves in the running for various governmental positions. With the Republican Party having a platform that addressed issues that were of concern for African Americans, they became the political party the African Americans supported. In 1867, the Republican Party was instrumental in creating a series of acts that sought to, among other things, enfranchise African American men and create new state constitutions that accepted the Fourteenth Amendment protection of equal civil rights (Anderson, 1988; Barr, 1976). Though the new Texas constitution did not address

all of the issues that African Americans favored, it did “reject legal discrimination and ensure free public schools for all students” (Barr, 1976, p. 47).

After emancipation, Black schools spread with the combined efforts of African American community members and the Freedman’s Bureau. In Texas, the first Freedman’s Bureau school was established in Galveston in September, 1865. Houston, like many other African American communities, had a Black school in an African Methodist church by October 1865. Barr (1976) makes the following report about the progress of Black schools in Texas:

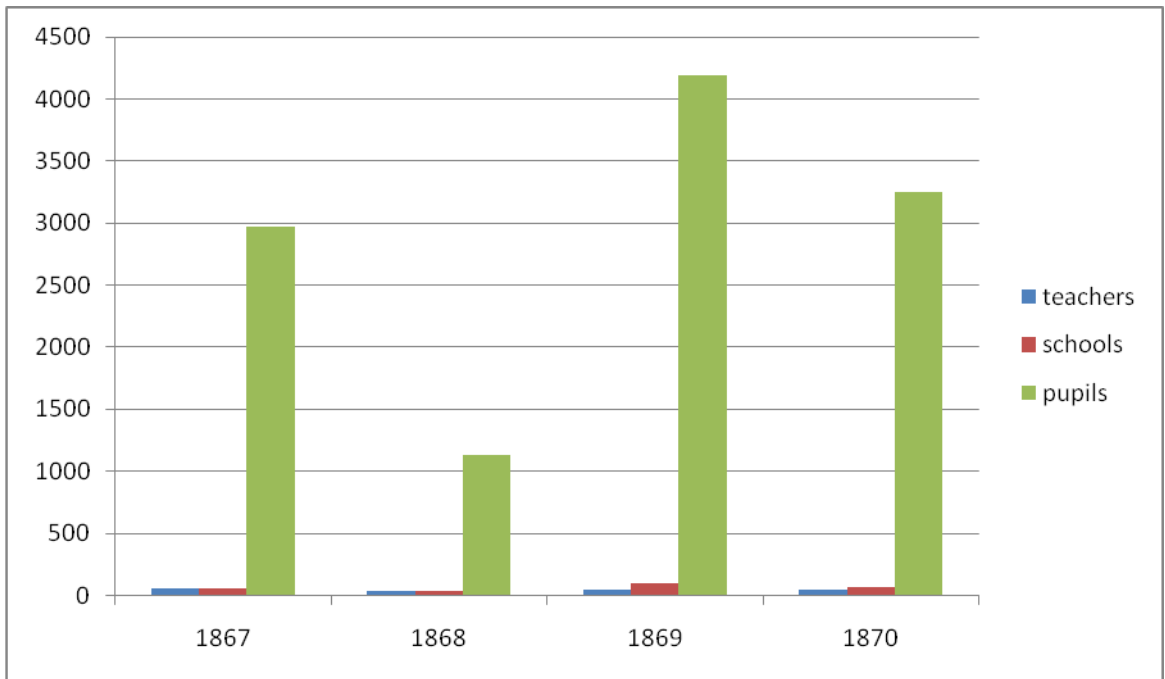
By January 1866, the bureau had created in Texas ten day and six night schools with twenty teachers and 1, 041 pupils including many adults. The program continued to expand that spring and reached an early peak in May and June of 100 schools, including Sunday schools, taught by sixty-five instructors and attended by 4, 769 students. Almost all existed in towns where they had military protection. Negroes had exhibited a strong desire for education by seeking out or helping to establish bureau schools which they supported with \$.25 to \$.50 tuitions at different times despite the limitations on their movement and economic conditions (p. 61).

In 1866, the Texas constitution allowed and affirmed separate schools for African Americans although it did little to make provisions for the maintenance of such schools. According to the Texas constitution, these schools were to be paid for from the property taxes of the African American citizens who in turn had little property and extremely low wages that could not entirely provide the type of support that these schools needed

(Jones, 1969). This combination provided for only a few Black schools in the urban areas. Though a majority of white southerners were opposed to African Americans being educated, the Texas Teachers' Convention urged White southerners to "educate the black man so he would 'understand his duties and his privileges as a freeman'" (Barr, 1976, p. 61). This type of subjugation became thematic in the expansion of education for African Americans. The goal, therefore, was not to educate for liberation but to educate for subjugation and oppression.

Because of their broad belief in limited African American intellectual capacity, many white Texans would not teach African Americans or associate with or rent rooms to white northern teachers or bureau officers. Many intimidation tactics were used, including burning some of the bureau schools. In some situations, teachers who taught African American children were insulted, tarred and feathered, beat, and even killed. Though these efforts may have slowed down the process, they did not completely stop it. Partnerships between African American community members, the Freedman's Bureau, and the American Missionary Society helped to provide teachers to sustain and create the spread of Black schools. In 1867, attendance in Galveston and Houston grew 400 percent by abolishing the tuition requirement. Within the coming years, changes within the bureau administration and pandemic diseases created a turbulent future for Black schools (Barr, 1976). Figure 1 shows the pattern of change that occurred within schools and school attendance:

Figure1: Patterns of Change within Schools and School Attendance



School attendance in 1867 was growing at an increasing rate until General J.J. Reynolds, military commander in Texas, ended the bureau's payment of teachers' salaries in the fall. This forced a tuition hike ranging between \$.67 to \$1.00 depending on the number of children in the family. School participation had reached its low of thirty-four schools, thirty-two teachers, and 1, 133 students by January 1868. New leadership of the bureau aided to increase school participation in 1869 with ninety-five day and night schools and 4, 188 students. A winter decline produced sixty-six schools and 3,248 students in July 1870. The construction of these schools ranged from frame buildings to tents, churches, and even a few brick structures. The basic curriculum was reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and needlework, along with using Bible stories to teach grammar (Anderson, 1988; Barr, 1976).

In 1868, public education was still developing and had not yet become compulsory. Lieutenant E.M. Wheelock, former superintendent of the Freedman's Bureau schools became state superintendent of public instruction. One of Wheelock's major tasks was to establish free and public education for all children, including African American children. He proposed to the Texas Teachers' Convention that there be a board of education and a state superintendent to oversee a system of common schools for which there would be compulsory attendance for ages five to eighteen, unless enrolled in a private school, and the term would span at least four months a year. The convention accepted the proposal allotted that the funds from the sale of public land, up to one-fourth of state tax revenues, a \$1.00 poll tax, and local taxes be used for its support. The Republican majority ensured that these changes be included into the constitution. The laws allowed local school boards to mandate integrated or segregated school attendance; consequently, segregation became the normal mode of operation (Jones, 1969). Though African American education progressed, many southern whites, especially planters were opposed to African American children being educated. The Freedman's Bureau school superintendent for Louisiana and northern Texas reported in 1869 that, "many of the planters will not allow colored children on their places to go to school at all, even when we have started those which are convenient" (Anderson, 1988, p. 42). Having African American children educated was a direct threat to the institutional oppression that these planters wanted to perpetuate.

Segregating the schools did not satisfy the Democratic Party and its supporters. They believed that the education process as a whole was too costly, and most

importantly, feared that educating the African American population would make them more difficult to control. Under the Republican majority, overall school attendance grew tremendously. A total of 129, 542 school age children were attending Texas schools during the 1872-1873 school-year, which amounted to 56 percent of the school age population. African American children accounted for about one-fourth of that population. When the Democratic Party became the majority and took control of the legislature in 1873-1874, the school attendance fell to 38 percent, which was approximately 102, 688 students (Barr, 1976).

Even through these impending obstacles, African American education continued to develop at a hindered yet continuous rate. Churches were instrumental in the development of many African American educational institutions. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church founded Paul Quinn College in 1872 (Anderson, 1988). It first began as an elementary and secondary school and later moved to Waco. Wiley College, the first college level institution for African Americans west of the Mississippi was established in Marshall, Texas in 1873. This institution was founded by the black Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As a result of the combined efforts of Freedman Bureau Schools and African American community members, illiteracy among the African American freedmen in Texas over ten years of age fell drastically. It went from over 95 percent in 1865 to 89 percent in 1870 and 75 percent in 1880 (Barr, 1976).

In the early 1900s expansion of Black schools extended to increasing the number of Black high schools that existed throughout the state. Before the 1900s African

American education mainly existed at an elementary school level. Those who desired to further education beyond the elementary level, in some cases, had to travel outside of the state in order to achieve that education. African Americans also continued to experience expansion in the way of higher education. Of the colleges that were created for African Americans, many offered secondary education courses in order to meet all the needs of their attending population. The debate of industrial versus classic education for African Americans reigned. In order to gain white support, some African American institutions favored an industrial education. Though this expansion of industrial education attempted to spawn a single focus on subjugated education for African Americans, many urbanized southern cities managed to still maintain a classical education for their African American students. Classical educations included a focus on foreign or dead languages and other subjects that were seen as being more intellectual based rather than for preparation to do menial work. Texas had more than thirty Black high schools which was three times as many as any other southern state. In the time span of 1880-1920, many of Texas' public high schools for African Americans in its larger cities of San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Dallas, and Beaumont and those in the smaller towns of Temple, Dennison, and Palestine offered the classical liberal curriculum. This was made possible by the combined efforts of African American leaders and the small class of moderate whites who wholly believed in the education of African children (Anderson, 1988; Jones, 1969).

Among the gains in African American schooling in Texas in 1900 were having the lowest illiteracy rate in the South of 38 percent. Texas also led in the number of high

schools, with nineteen. By 1925, the number of high schools grew to 150. There were vast differences between Black schools and White schools, yet African Americans still received a stellar education. African American teacher salaries averaged \$46 per month compared to White teacher salaries of \$62 per month in 1909-1910. Some children were forced to leave school at a certain age or seasonally to work, which interfered with school attendance. A notable time lag existed between improvements of white institutions versus Black ones. A White Texas City school opened in 1904, yet the Black school was not opened until 1915. On average, less money was spent on Black institutions, so the slack had to be taken up by private funds. Texas school districts spent twice as much on White schools as they did on Black schools. It is reported that in 1910 the school districts spent an average of over \$10 on each White student and only \$5.74 on each African American student. Some schools had difficulty receiving accreditation because they did not offer a full four-year curriculum.

Combined public and private funds from both inside and outside the state aided in improvements to African American education. Federal aid came by way of the Morrill Act and later the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (Alperovitz, Dubb & Howard, 2009). In Texas, four African American schools and twenty-eight White high schools were created through these provisions. The Julius Rosenwald Fund helped to create over three hundred new rural schools by 1924. The John F. Slater Fund helped to create county training schools, which were created to train African Americans to be teachers. The curriculum consisted of seven years of elementary school courses and three years of high school courses. The last year focused on teacher training (Anderson, 1988). Having the

idea of “industrializing” African American education, philanthropists sought to embrace this idea of county training schools and sought government support and participation. The state superintendents in Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia agreed to participate. One such school was the Wharton Negro Training School of Wharton, Texas. The General Education Board used funds from philanthropist John D. Rockefeller to help supplement teacher salaries (Barr, 1976). Black Baptist academies in six East Texas counties offered the equivalent of a high school education. By 1917, the Catholic Church built six schools for African American students in Galveston, San Antonio, and Ames. African American and white leaders in Walker County joined local, state, national, and private funds to create Sam Houston Industrial Training School in 1903. African American educators formed the Interscholastic League of Negro Schools in 1920 in order to foster athletic and oratorical competition.

The 1930s brought more advancement for African American education in Texas. Illiteracy among African Americans continued to fall to 13 percent; however, it varied in some counties with populations over 1,000 from 25 percent in Liberty and Rockwell to 3 percent in Potter (Barr, 1976). School attendance had risen to 87 percent by African American children ages six to fourteen, which was sixth in the South. Per pupil expenditure for African American children had increased from 55 percent of the amount spent for white children to 85 percent by the 1929-1930 school years. There were some counties, however, that were told that there were no public funds available to build a school for their African American population. In these cases, many community members banded together offering their own time, labor, and resources to personally erect school

buildings. In Jones County, Texas, after holding a mass community meeting, “they finally agreed to donate three hundred days work, either on the building itself during the time of its erection or to hire out wherever work could be found, the wage would be turned in to the Board to apply on the building”(Anderson, 1988, p. 171). In the end, they had a schoolhouse that was valued at ten thousand dollars. In Wood County, Texas, workers donated a patch of cotton to the mission of building a school. It was titled the “Rosenwald Patch.” With funds from the Rosenwald Fund and proceeds from the cotton grown, they were able to erect their community school building (Anderson, 1988). Though strides continued to be made in African American schooling, differences still remained in property value, class sizes, and teacher salaries. Some African American colleges focused on non-college courses as well. Such schools were Houston Baptist College, Conroe Normal and Industrial College, Christian Theological and Industrial College, Brenham Normal and Industrial College. Conroe Normal and Industrial College was founded by Baptists in 1903 while Brenham Normal and Industrial College was established in 1905. As of 1914, only 129 students enrolled in college credit courses at all of the Black colleges in the state; however, this number increase to 600 by 1921 (Barr, 1976).

Efforts to achieve equality continued in the 1940s. Organizations such as the Colored Teachers State Association established coalitions in order to equalize teacher salaries and overall educational opportunities. The Association created the Texas Commission on Democracy in Education which published *Democracy's Debt of Honor* in 1942, outlining the inequities in Texas education and the economic problems that

resulted. A new Commission for the Improvement of Educational Opportunities for Negroes in Texas was formed after meetings with the presidents of the University of Texas and Texas A&M led to a conference in Austin of African American and white educational leaders. The new Commission took up some of the goals of the Colored Teachers State Association. In that same year, the state board of education eradicated its separate standards of accreditation (Barr, 1976). In November 1942, the Texas Commission on Democracy in Education and the Texas Council of Negro Organizations joined to support a case that had been before the Dallas school board since May 1941 seeking equalization of teacher salaries. The board refused to act which prompted the Negro Teachers' Alliance of Dallas to sue for equal pay. In February 1943, the board agreed, but had outlined a plan that would take three and a half years for completion. Other school boards in major cities, including Houston, followed the actions of the Dallas school board and implemented similar plans.

There remained a continued resistance to change in Texas schools. As late as 1947, approximately twenty school boards continued to resist equalization. In efforts to afford equalization, Texarkana attempted to drop all Black schools from the accreditation list. As a mode of intimidation, some superintendents fired better trained African American teachers to avoid equalizing salaries. Others threatened non-renewal of contracts for teachers who joined the NAACP or voted in the Democratic primary, or those who showed any signs of discontent. In 1948, a combined effort of African American and Mexican American citizens proved to be successful in electing G. J. Sutton, an African American businessman, as trustee of San Antonio's junior college

system. Even with such victories, there were impending obstacles in the 1940s and 1950s. Black schools still faced such issues as teacher shortage, shorter school days, and disparity among resources. During the 1944-1945 school years, 81 percent of Black schools still had only one or two teachers compared to 68 percent of white schools. Black schools averaged 147 days while white schools averaged 172. In Black schools, there were fewer funds for counselors, vocational and science classrooms, health facilities, libraries, cafeterias, gyms, stadiums, and in rural areas, buses (Barr, 1976).

It was these disparities and other issues of inequity that prompted the Supreme Court's landmark decision during the *Brown* case. Despite Supreme Court mandate to desegregate schools and implement a viable integration plan, Texas schools remained largely segregated nearly ten years following the Supreme Court's decision. School boards resisted implementing the court's mandate through tactics such as token desegregation where they would allow a miniscule number of African American students to attend an all-white school. In 1961, after being the focus of a lawsuit, the Houston school board complied by allowing only eleven African American students to enter former white schools. A federal judge later dismissed the board's restrictions and demanded a more expeditious integration process. By 1961, 128 of the state's 722 bi-racial districts had begun some semblance of integration.

The rate and probability for which the schools desegregated and then integrated varied according to the locale and racial concentration of the areas. School districts also employed various tactics in order to avoid having to integrate their schools. In some cases, zoning was used in order to match residential segregation. Some schools

implemented certain transfer processes that allowed affluent whites to be able to use transportation to attend other schools that were further away. These tactics combined served to help maintain segregated settings in a legally integrated society. The whites were not the only ones opposed to integration. Some African American families feared social and educational problems with white parents, students, and teachers. In other cases, schools that had the “semblance” of integration continued to segregate by classrooms. Like many other southern states, Texas experienced the dismissal of its well qualified African American teachers and administrators and even experienced having Black schools closed. For many, it seemed that the African American community bore the brunt of desegregation and integration.

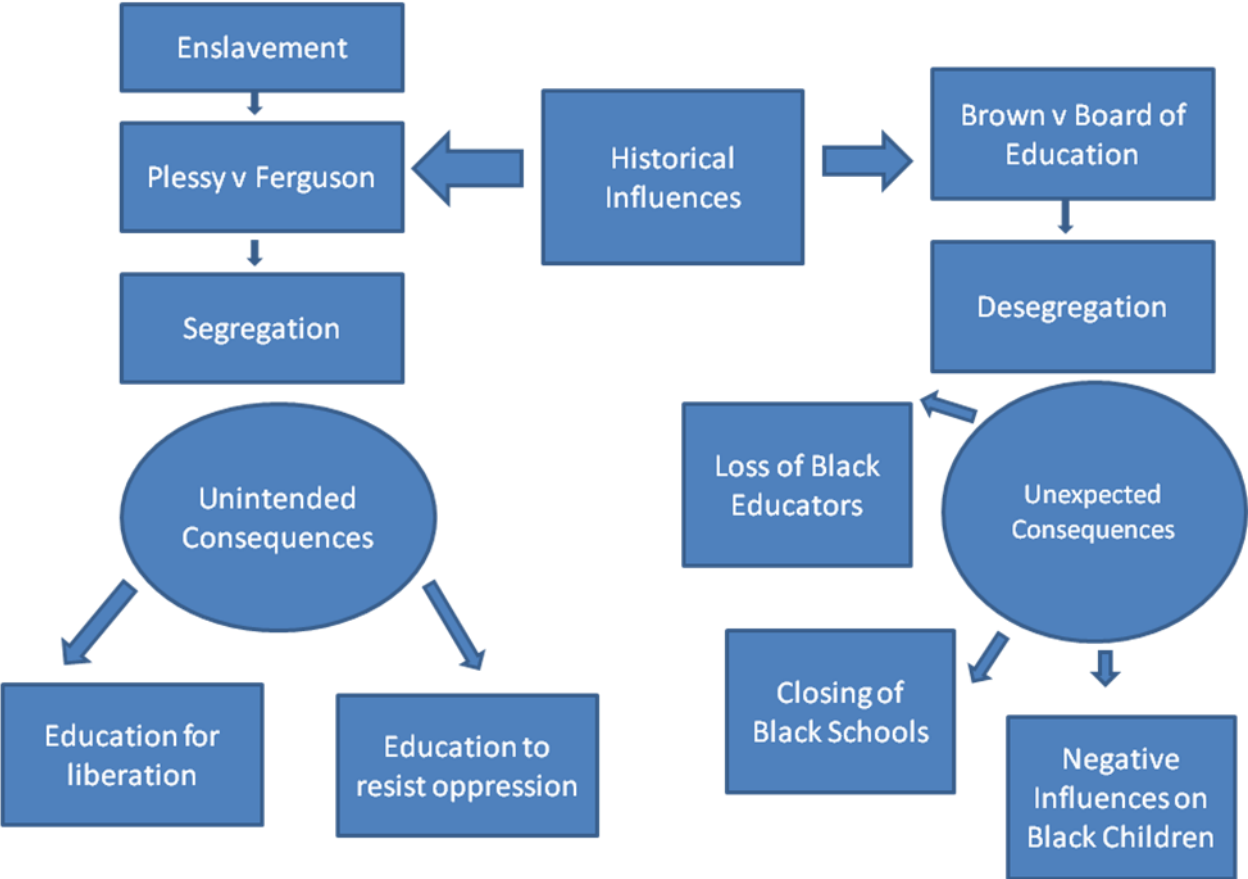
By 1964, 373 Texas school districts had integrated. Only 5 percent of the students in Texas attended integrated schools, only 18,000 of 325, 000 African American students. Though this number seems low, Texas was in the lead among ex-confederate states in integration (Barr, 1976). The national government continued to warn districts about their non-compliance of the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown*. The government threatened to withdraw federal funding from any district that was not integrated. The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 allowed federal government to withdraw those funds from segregated districts. This new venture helped to speed up the integration process. By 1965, all except for sixty-six districts had a desegregation plan filed with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Barr, 1976).

There is a systematic development that occurred within the African American educational experience from its inception until its present state. These influences and

outcomes present a comprehensive view of both the historical and current influences that have impacted African American education and have contributed to its current state.

Figure 2 below represents a Conceptual Framework that depicts African American education and its influencing factors.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework. Unintended Consequences of Segregation and Unexpected Consequences of Desegregation



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the experiences of former students who attended a Black segregated school in a Houston community. The primary data was gathered through interviews with former students who attended schools in the Acres Homes Houston community during the years of 1935 to 1965. These former students attended school during a time period of significant instability and transformation. The documenting of their experience will add a much needed perspective to educational research and history.

This section outlines the entire research process of this study. In the sections that follow, I describe the setting of the study which includes the background. I then discuss the research design which gives the rationale for choosing a qualitative research design and more specifically narrative analysis. Next I give a description of the participants that were selected for this study followed by the procedures of the research process. I later discuss my positionality which discusses the lenses through which I view my research. I then describe the data collection process which discusses how I gathered data. The chapter concludes with my method of analysis which explains the narrative method of thematic analysis that was used to analyze the data.

Background

Located in a wooded area in northwest Houston, Acres Homes is one of the oldest African American communities in the Houston area. It spans approximately 9 square miles, and located north of the 610 loop. It is approximately bound by Pinemont Drive to the South, North Shepherd Drive to the East, Gulf Bank to the North, and Antoine to the West. It sits between highway 290 and the 45 Freeway on the northwest side of Houston. [See appendix D for an area map.]

The land allotted for this community exists as a product from World War I land grants (Handbook of Texas Online). The name Acres Homes comes from the description of how land was originally disseminated and sold—by the acreage—thus the name, Acres Homes was coined (Cloud, 2009). The land area initially appealed to settlers because of its space for farming, affordability, and lax building standards. Acres were sold to African American families where they could raise animals, farm and grow a garden (Acres Homes Community Development Corporation, 2010). This is one of the few communities in Houston that has been able to withstand gentrification through a strong community coalition

The Acres Homes community in Houston, Texas is one such community that succeeded in educating its own while maintaining strong cultural ties and a sense of cohesiveness between the home, the school, and the community. These Black segregated schools in Acres Homes would prove to yield some of the most riveting results in academic advancement (Pollard-Durodola, 2003). In the midst of racial division and inequality the schools in Acres Homes still thrived. Another important fixture within the

Acres Homes Community that was discussed within this research is Saint Monica's Catholic Church. Saint Monica's Catholic Church is one of the oldest African American Catholic churches in the Houston area. Having held its first mass in 1960, it has been a prominent fixture in the community every since. Saint Monica's Catholic Church is one of the institutions that has been responsible for not only feeding the community spiritually, but also tending to the physical needs of the community as well.

Research Design

Research design is understood to be “the entire process of research, from conceptualizing a problem to writing the narrative, simply the methods such as data collection, analysis, and report writing” (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Creswell, 2007). It includes a “flexible set of guidelines” that provides a clear focus of the research question, the purpose of the study as well as the appropriate strategies for answering the research question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 25; Lecompte & Preissle, 1993).

A qualitative design was selected for this study because it was best suited for addressing the guiding research question: What can African American former students share about their experience in attending a segregated school in a Houston community during the years 1935-1965? Qualitative research allows for “individuals to construct reality in interaction with their social worlds” wherein the general aim is to “understand how people make sense of their lives” (Merriam, 2009, p. 20). It allows for researchers to understand how individuals make meaning of their experiences (Reismann, 2008). It allows for the research to occur in a natural setting because the setting or context of the research is important. In this case, interviews were held at the locations specified by

participants. The participant profiles section of Chapter V details the circumstances under which each of the interviews was conducted.

For this study, narrative analysis was chosen to allow the participants to share their own stories. Through narrative analysis, this research sought to hear the voices and understand the stories of former students of the Black segregated schools in Acres Homes Houston during a selected time period. Narrative analysis uses stories people tell, analyzing them in various ways, to understand the meaning of the experiences as revealed in the stories (Resimann, 2008). An extensive literature review was conducted for this study. Although the literature provided great insight and was used as a source for crystallization, the primary source of data was from interviews conducted with the participants. This research is a narrative analysis of the lives of individuals who attended a specific type of school during a certain era, thus it was necessary to collect their accounts of their experiences and recollections. Narrative analysis was used “as a means of accessing human action and experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 34).

Identification of the Participants

The voices, experiences, and memories from former students of Black segregated schools are missing and altogether overlooked in the cache of educational research (Morris, 2001) and the understandings of segregated and desegregated schooling in the United States (Hosford & McKenzie, 2008). As students who once attended segregated schools and in some cases went on to attend desegregated schools who then emerged as contributing members of society, former students of Black segregated schools offer

much needed insight to the system of segregated schooling and African American educational history.

Since I was interested in the views and experiences of African American former students who attended a Black segregated school during the years of 1935 to 1965 in the Acres Homes Houston area, a first order of business was to identify such individuals who would be willing to participate in the research. They had to have attended school in the Acres Homes Houston community area at some point during the time period under study, have recollections of their experiences during that time period in order to provide detailed information, and express both a willingness to accurately relate their recollections and to reflect upon their personal opinions.

Participants sought after for this study were those who attended a Black segregated school in Acres Homes Houston area between the years 1935-1965. The specific time frame is chosen to capture the stories of individuals who experienced attending a Black segregated school and are able to recall that experience. The common experience will be that of having attended a Black segregated school in the Acres Homes Houston area.

Chase (2005) shares that “when someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality” (p. 657). Moreover, when stories are told, individuals’ experiences, thoughts, and memories become real. These particular participants were selected to allow their stories to be told since they have not yet been recorded. Allowing them to have a venue to share their stories will validate their experiences and give voice to a group that has been silenced.

Procedures

One of my committee members recommended that I speak with a professor at the college who grew up in the Acres Homes area to seek possible participants. After speaking with the professor, I received a contact name of a prominent member in the Acres Homes community who grew up in the community during the time of this study and still works in the community currently. Getting in contact with this suggested person was very difficult because of his work schedule and prominence. After not making any progress with this lead, I pursued many other avenues. A friend of mine who attends church in the Acres Homes area had knowledge of my research topic and suggested that I speak with one of the members of her church, Ruby Mosely who has been fondly named “The mother of Acres Homes.” Mrs. Mosely gave permission for me to contact her, but because of her busy schedule, we did not make contact right away. Later, Mrs. Mosely’s daughter passed away and her husband was placed in intensive care, so that further delayed our progress. Wanting to allow Mrs. Mosely to have her privacy, I opted to pursue other avenues. I contacted a former participant of one of my pilot studies who grew up in the community and whose husband currently pastors a church in the community, and she provided me with 14 names. She agreed to make the initial contact to seek permission to give me their information. While she was contacting individuals she knew, I contacted another friend of mine whose family has lived in the community since the 1940s and still reside there. I sat down with him at his office, explained the research study, and he provided me with two names and numbers. Later, I contacted Mrs. Mosely again, just to express my concern for her and her family and to offer my

assistance for anything that she might need. At that time, she apologized for not being able to participate, but offered the names of four people that she believed would be good participants for the study. I considered the initial contacts made to be excellent community nominators (Foster, 1997). They were respected members of their community who had a wealth of knowledge of individuals who would meet the criteria of the study. The selection process began February 2011 and was completed April 2012.

For this study, participants were selected using the “snowball effect” (Merriam, 2009) where I received an initial suggestion from an individual or participant who met the criteria or had knowledge of the criteria, and that participant or individual suggested other prospective participants who met the criteria of the study. This ensured that I received referrals from participants who knew what cases were “information rich” (Creswell, 2007, p. 127). Information rich cases are identified as those from which the researcher can learn a wealth of information that is integral to the “purpose of the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). This is the most common form of “purposive sampling” (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). The process continued until I received enough participants to choose from to begin to collect data. Participants were invited using verbal reference from other participants. I provided them with the criteria and gave a contact number for interested participants who indicated their willingness to share their stories. Once I made initial contact with the possible participants, I read the phone transcript (see Appendix A). This transcript served as an introduction to the researcher and my research interests, and as a request for participation. I made sure to include the name of the community

nominator both to indicate to the potential participants how I had learned of their residence in the Acres Homes community and to establish credibility.

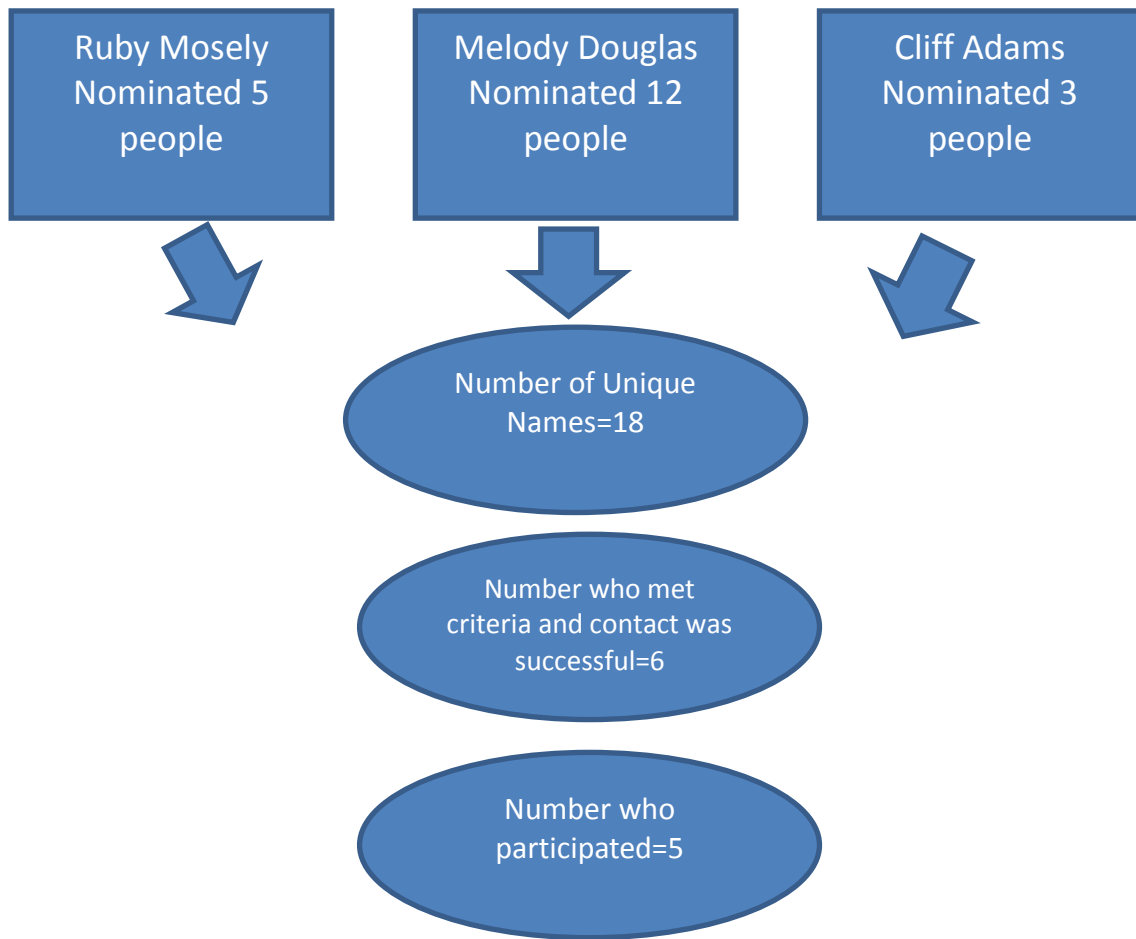
All of the individuals who eventually became a part of the population sample still live in the Acres Homes community and are very active participants in community events. Two of the participants attend the same church, Saint Monica's, which is the oldest African American Catholic Church in the Houston area. I elected to use the telephone system as the mode of communication because it seemed to be the most efficient way to contact the participants and for them to contact me. In the interview, the participants were asked to volunteer approximately one hour of their time for an interview at a mutually agreed upon location, with the possibility of an additional interview at a later date in order to address any topics needing clarification and to check my understandings of what they shared with me. I discovered that some of the participants could not be reached or did not have accurate contact information. Often several attempts were made to gain appropriate contact information or make initial contact with the possible participants, up to the point at which I felt I might be overextending my limits by appearing to be overly aggressive in my request for participation. In the end, five participants who met the criteria were gained from the three community nominators.

Figure 3 shows the participant nomination process. Note the number of potential participants associated with each community nominator indicates the total number of names that the nominator provided. However, since some of the nominators' candidates overlapped (each provided the names of some individuals, and one nominator suggested

one of the other nominators). In all, 21 individual African American former students were referred by the three nominators.

In many educational studies, for example those conducted typically with a quantitative design, a large, random sample would be desired. However, this study used purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009), in that participants were deliberately selected based on their meeting the research criteria and their likelihood of shedding light on the topic. The total number of potential participants who were healthy and met the criteria was 18, and from the 18, five individuals agreed to participate and were interviewed. Of these five, two were interviewed at the local community college in the area, one was interviewed at St. Monica's Catholic Church, and two were interviewed in their own homes. Each of these locations was the preference of the participant.

Figure 3: The Nomination Process



There were several factors which made securing participation difficult. First, many of the recommended participants did not have accurate contact numbers, so it was next to impossible locating them to request their participation. Some of them were eventually reached, and all but one agreed to participate. The one individual who declined participation had a wealth of information and would have been a perfect candidate; however, she did not believe that her memory was keen enough to be able to recall specific incidents or experiences. Another individual who had been recommended by

two of the nominators could not be reached. I did manage to speak with his wife, but she was very skeptical of my intentions and interest in her husband's story and in the community. I worked to establish myself as a credible researcher and to immerse myself in the community, but I was not able to gain her trust. Sadly, the population of African Americans who attended school during the time period of interest is dwindling. There were others who were considered, but they had passed away prior to my undertaking this project. Unlike other cases of African American residence after desegregation, the participants in this study all remained in their communities instead of moving away to more integrated areas. This seemed to be a consistent occurrence of those who grew up in the Acres Homes area during the earlier to mid part of the twentieth century.

Other individuals did not participate for various reasons. Of those who did participate, I found out that the only reason why they agreed is because I mentioned the people who suggested their names. I discovered that the Acres Homes community is very protective of their community and its members. Because I am not from the area, I was viewed as an outsider, even though I am an African American; that was still not sufficient enough to gain trust of some who opted not to participate. John Smith and Larry Davis both mentioned that they only agreed to be interviewed because Cliff Adams had suggested them. They both spoke very highly of him and gave me their trust because he was a friend of mine. In particular, as noted in the participant profiles, Larry Davis was extremely busy because our interview took place during tax season and he is a tax preparer. Also, John Smith does a lot of work in the community and with his church and at the moment of our interview, he was in the process of preparing for Acres Homes

100 year anniversary celebration. Whatever the reasons for denial, people had the right to deny participation. It is unfortunate that some of those who met the criteria were not willing, but I had to respect their feelings. I was very grateful to the five participants who agreed for allowing me to have a moment of their time.

Three of the participants were female and two were male. I was pleased to have a diverse perspective and be able to record experiences of both females and males. The greater number of women than men in my research population might be connected to those who nominated. I had two female nominators and one male. The male participants who agreed to participate in the study were suggested by a male. It might also be contributed to differing social conventions of communication styles (Tannen, 1990; 1994) that indicate women were more inclined to participate in the lengthy interview connected with the study.

Table 1: Schools Attended by Participants

Elementary Schools	Middle School and Junior High Schools	High Schools
A. B. Anderson	*Harper	*Booker T. Washington
Mabel B. Wesley		George Washington Carver
		M.C. Williams

Note: All of the schools attended were Black segregated schools. The schools with an asterisk* were outside of Acres Homes area but meet the confines of the study because the context was the same.

The participant population had a wealth of knowledge to share from their schooling experiences. Table 1 above indicates the schools at which the participants attended and

how many participants attended each school. The Acres Homes community serves three different school districts, Houston Independent School District (HISD), Aldine Independent School District (AISD), and Klein Independent School District (KISD). Participants in this study attended schools in two of the three districts, HISD and AISD. Two participants attended school at Booker T. Washington, which is not in the community; however, some students had the opportunity to attend the school, as it was a designated Black segregated school. One participant had the opportunity to attend a school in the community, but opted to attend the Black segregated school outside of the community, which was Booker T. Washington. Another participant attended Booker T. Washington because there was no high school in the community for African Americans when it was time for her to attend high school. Harper Junior High School was a Black segregated school outside of the community. Two of the participants attended that junior high school because the school in the community burned down, and they were transported to Harper Junior High School.

Table 2 below illustrates the various occupations the participants held and how many entered those occupations. The tables are provided in order to give a comprehensive picture of the participants' school experiences and actions following schools. Each participant had a broad range of experiences, and when the participant population is considered as a whole, it is evident that together they had a wealth of knowledge stemming from their school and community experiences.

Table 2: Occupations and Community Ties

Occupations	Community Ties
Education (3)	Community Service (5) Living in the Community (5) Attending Church in the Community (5)
Government (1)	
Tax Preparation (1)	
Independent Business (2)	

Note: Some of the participants held various occupations and had their own businesses along with another occupation.

Another way to describe the participant population is by considering each participant individually. Brief biographical sketches for each of the participants are provided in Chapter V in an effort to allow the reader to develop a sense of each participant on a personal level. I felt that this was a necessary step in setting the scope, prior to launching into the findings related in Chapters V and VI. For this reason, Table 3 below illustrates the participants' backgrounds and activities on an individual basis. It should be noted that participants are identified in the table and in subsequent discussions by aliases, but the names of the schools have not been changed. Individuals are listed according to the order in which they were interviewed.

Table 3: Background, Occupations, and Activities

Name	Schools Attended	Occupations	Activities	Age
Eva Anderson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.B. Anderson Elementary • Carver Washington Carver High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator 	Community Service	71
John Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybel B. Wesley • Harper Junior High School • Booker T. Washington High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Worker • Entrepreneur 	Community Service	71
Larry Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybel B. Wesley Elementary • Harper Junior High School • M.C. Williams High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountant • Entrepreneur 	Community Service	64
Lillian Miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booker T. Washington High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator 	Community Service	90
Mary Johnson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.B. Anderson Elementary • George Washington Carver High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator 	Community Service	70

Table 3 illustrates that the participants have had extensive experiences. They vary in ages, so their perspectives of what happened in their lives differ. The table underscores that the participants all went on to pursue various avenues after attending school. All 5 of the participants retired from their jobs. Two participants went on to open up their own businesses after they retired. They all felt fulfilled in the things that they accomplished in their lives after high school. All five of the participants also live in and do some type of community service in the community whether through organizations they are involved in or through their churches.

Pilot Study

In order to check the likelihood of finding participants who had knowledge about the research topic and to test the validity of the interview instrument, an initial pilot study was conducted between October, 2010 and December, 2010. One person was interviewed during the pilot study phase of the project. The participant was interviewed at her home. The interview lasted approximately one hour. She signed and was given a preliminary copy of an informed consent form, which outlined the conditions of participation. She also agreed to be audio-taped.

At this early stage, I provided an abbreviated list of questions that I would like to discuss for the participant, just so she could reflect on her experiences. In doing this, I did find that some of the responses were somewhat scripted, so I had to ask additional questions in order to get more intuitive responses. I decided to keep my list of questions and ask them as I saw fit without providing a scripted copy for the participants. I also learned that I needed to have a prepared script that described the purpose of the research and my overall intentions. In response to that, I prepared a phone transcript to read to any other potential participants, so everyone would receive the same introduction.

During the interview process, I discovered that one of my interview questions was ambiguous and difficult to understand. When I asked “What role did the school play in the community?” her response was, “I don’t know how to answer that.” Although this is one of the research questions, and it exists to gather relevant information, I realized that I had to amend the interview protocol (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996) to make the question more specific relating to what types of ways the school was a part of the

community outside of academics. In summary, conducting a pilot study enlightened me to the fact that by necessity my sample would be a small but purposeful one. It allowed me to fine tune the interview questions so that they more clearly elicited responses related to the information being sought, and to test and refresh my proficiency in interview techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). After our initial interview, I had some questions about the information that was shared which I discovered by reading through the transcripts. I called the participant and we agreed upon a time and date to meet. The second meeting also took place in the participant's home. We did not meet for very long on this date, approximately 30 minutes, because her mother was in the hospital and she had to go and pick her up. Although this participant did clarify some information during the second interview, no new information was provided. Many of the stories that were given in the second interview were repeated stories that had been shared during the first interview. This participant was not included in the larger study conducted because I did not feel as though there was any new information that could be included.

Positionality

The theoretical lenses through which the research is viewed are Critical Race and Social Capital Theory. The belief illustrated here is that Black segregated schools operated within a cohesive, collective unit because of the forced separatism brought on by the legal mandate of that time period. I position myself here as a college educated African American female who holds two degrees and is working on a third. My noted bias here comes not from attending a Black segregated school, as that was not part of my

era, but it comes in my endearment to Black institutions and my belief in their quality and worth.

Data Collection

Though new forms of data continue to surface, the types of data can be grouped into four major categories: “observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials” (Creswell, 2007, p. 129). Merriam (2009) explains that qualitative data is that which is “conveyed through words,” and the collection is about “asking, watching, and reviewing” (p. 85). In qualitative research the method of data collection can vary according to the research approach (Creswell, 2007, p. 130). Interviews will be the main source of data for this study.

The five additional participants in the study were interviewed after the pilot study, at which point the research project had been reviewed and approved by Texas A&M University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Each of the participants was identified and contacted via the procedures outlined above. After speaking with the participants to agree upon a date, time, and location for the interview, the interview process proceeded. Two participants chose to meet at the local community college, one participant chose to meet at the local Catholic Church, and two participants chose to meet inside their own homes. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. None of the interviews went over an hour. Mostly all of the participants worked to fit me into their schedule and had other prior engagements, so our interviews were not long in length; however, the information was rich and enlightening. I worked to keep them within the one hour time frame because I valued their time.

In all cases participants were asked to sign and were provided with a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix B). In addition, participants who agreed to be tape-recorded gave their consent on the consent form, and those who did not wish to be recorded could also indicate so on the consent form (Appendix B). The interview that took place was a semi-structured interview with questions that were prepared by me. This semi-structured method allowed me to ask specific questions, but provided flexibility to ask probing questions as well (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). An interview protocol sheet is included in Appendix C. The interview questions had three purposes 1) find out background information about the participants 2) find out about the participants' experiences in attending a Black segregated school 3) find out about any other relevant experiences the participants wanted to share. They were also asked if they knew of other individuals who might be willing to be interviewed (McMillan, 1996). In summary, the interview questions were designed to begin the interview with general information and move on to more specific questions as the interview progressed.

Information that was more specific to the contextual content was deliberately embedded into the later part of the interview questions (Bernard, 1988). First, it seemed prudent to begin with basic questions to establish a context for the participants. It also allowed them to become more comfortable in speaking with me. It allowed me to establish a rapport with the participants and for us to just begin to engage in a natural conversation. As the interview progressed and they shared their information, while I shared some of my personal and background information as well, I could visibly see each participant becoming more relaxed and comfortable. I did find this topic, however,

to be one of warmth and pleasantries for the participants in which they freely shared information.

The goal was to gain information from participants regarding the research questions while at the same time allowing them to add to the potential topics under consideration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Likewise, it was important to not only listen to what was stated, but to how it was said (Briggs, 1986; Vygotsky, 1962). For example, if a participant repeatedly uses descriptive words such as “very” that can indicate that a person has strong feelings, especially if these words are accompanied by voice inflection (Labov, 1972). Also important are examples of qualifiers. Examples of such are “I remember a time when” or “there was this one teacher” or “I remember this one time.” I specifically marked these statements in the transcripts so that I could go back to them and pay special attention to the information that followed.

Each time an interview was completed, I tried to jot down in my notes any occurrences and a description of the interview atmosphere as soon as possible so the information could be fresh in my memory. After each interview, I would sit in my car briefly and quickly jot any significant information down that I could not write down while I was inside. When I transcribed the audiotapes of the interviews, hearing the participants’ voices along with any significant pauses or instances of laughter, I was able to relive the interview session once again. At times, I remembered specific occurrences from the interview sessions.

For the sake of facilitating analysis and in order to be able to offer direct quotations in this dissertation, line numbers were incorporated into the transcriptions.

When transcriptions had been completed, each participant was mailed or delivered a copy of their transcript to keep. In addition, a cover letter thanked them again for their participation and their time. I also mailed thank you cards promptly after meeting with each participant. As a member check, I asked the participants to review their interview transcript for any errors on my part. They were asked to contact me if they had any concerns or wished to clarify or add to their comments. They were also told that they could request that any portion of the manuscript be deleted. In most cases, clarification was needed on the spelling of names and exact dates for which certain events occurred.

To allow for the collection of more data, I invited participants to bring any items or memorabilia that they would like to share or show. Documents have come to include “public records, personal papers, popular culture documents, visual documents, and physical material and artifacts” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 162-163; Creswell, 2007). One of the participants brought an account of all of her accomplishments and activities throughout the years. I found that to be very impressive. Participants were invited to bring items from their past segregated schooling experiences that are significant to them. These items may include, but are not limited to, photographs, old yearbooks, memorable artifacts such as a piece of jewelry or articles of clothing. Reismann (2008) expresses, “with images, forgotten moments in history can come back into view...” (p. 181). “Visual culture” encompasses “conventions and codes of representation” that hold great value and allow for rich stories to be told (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005, p. 825). Therefore, crystallizing by introducing various data and looking at the data from several angles allow for credibility, dependability, and “thick description” (Creswell, 2007, p.

204; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). None of the participants elected to share any personal items. Many of the participants shared that their items had been misplaced or destroyed; others who did not meet in their homes, simply forgot to bring any items.

As a researcher, it is pertinent to be fully cognizant of the interpretations one is making while conducting analysis and reporting findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Because I believe that the participants are the authorities over their own live experiences and realities, I wanted to make sure that I completely understood them correctly. After delivering transcriptions, I shared my developing interpretations of the interview data with those participants that granted me the opportunity. Member checks such as these are an important means of obtaining validity in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). It must be noted, however, that not all of the participants wanted to have an extensive discussion about the transcriptions or re-visit their interviews. Many, after having read their transcriptions, stated that my recordings of their words in the transcriptions were accurate and they were satisfied with the direction and production of the research.

During our interviews, I asked the participants if there was anything else they wanted to share that they felt was relevant to the research. When they opened up and began to speak freely, I sat and listened. Many shared experiences that occurred after high school or those that occurred once they entered the work place. Others shared their feelings about the state of education today. Even information that did not seem to fit the scope of this research appeared relevant to me. It was relevant because it was reflective of the participant's thoughts and overall experiences, and they saw it as important. I felt honored that these individuals were not only willing but wanted to share their time and

stories with me. The interviews also permitted me to explain my specific interpretations of their comments, so that I could check the validity of my understanding in a one-on-one setting.

In qualitative research the method of data collection can vary according to the research approach (Creswell, 2007, p. 130). In this case, data was collected until “saturation,” which is until the same information is heard “over and over again” and no new information is being introduced (Merriam, 2009). Data is being stored in my committee chair’s office in a locked and secured file. The recorded interviews are being stored in my committee chair’s office in a locked file, and will be kept for a total of three years, after which, the recordings will be erased.

Methods of Narrative Analysis

Narrative inquiry is a method of qualitative research in which stories are the primary source of data (Ganesh, 2005). Narrative inquiry pays attention to signs and symbols in spoken language, and values narrators’ constructions of meaning. Narrative analysis is a systematic study of personal experience and meaning. It allows for the study of the multi-faceted intricacies of human thought, and the power that stories have in the creation of identity (Reisman, 2008). How individuals express themselves provides a glimpse into how they make sense of their experiences (Chase, 2005). Narrative researchers in the field of education recognize that stories provide insight into how individuals interact with and make sense of their worlds, and that in attending to peoples’ words we can gain a humanistic understanding of educational issues. This study employed a method of narrative analysis described by Reismann (2008).

The use of narrative analysis has been increasingly applied to educational research in the last several decades (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003). It is a method of qualitative research used to obtain thick description (Geertz, 1973, 1988), or detailed micro-level information. Narrative researchers recognize that each person and each story is unique (Ganesh, 2005), and they see the story itself as being of primary importance (Ben-Perez, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1995). This method of inquiry is therefore well-suited to this study because it provides a chance to listen to and learn from individuals whose experiences have not yet been documented. Scholars working in this vein honor a participants' word, intuitions, and subjective stances and they attempt to understand—on a deep level—what they are being told.

Instead of approaching a study with preconceived ideas and expectations regarding what will be found or what participants might share, narrative researchers allow those stories to just emerge and let the participants inform *them*. Interpretations are formed only after narratives are told, not before. Understandings emerge from the stories themselves using ground theory (Creswell, 2007). Typically a small sample is used; however, a large amount of information is generated. Organizing the data can therefore be complicated and confusing (Reismann, 2008). One of the benefits of narrative analysis is that it allows us to recognize commonalities among diverse stories, thus providing insight into socially shared experiences (Wertz, 2011).

In this study, the goal was for data analysis to be “done in conjunction with data collection” (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). As data was collected, notes were made in order to mark particularly interesting or striking information that was gathered. This information

was reviewed in more depth once all the data had been collected. These field notes were used as a reminder of significant information recognized during the data collection process. Narrative analysis can take on several forms, but each is concerned with constructing understandings of speakers' or participants' views of the world (Chase, 2005). Some researchers focus on the structure of how individuals choose to tell their stories, paying attention to details such as sequencing of events and moments of transition. The various methods that fall under the broad umbrella of narrative analysis hold great promise and importance for illuminating the "human" aspects of educational issues or those related to other fields. In light of these methods, little research had been done that focuses specifically on the experiences of African Americans who attended Black segregated schools.

Two methods of narrative analysis were used to analyze the data. The first method was categorical-content analysis. This content method examines how participants explain who, what and what type of questions (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). In the categorical-content method, narratives are dissected into bits of meaning and then a search for patterns across the body is conducted. In this study, the groups of meaning are called "categories". Each bits of meaning are analyzed in reference to how participants' responses correlated to research questions.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. While reviewing and transcribing the interview recordings, I made notes of relevant information. After the interviews had been transcribed, I used the process of "coding" by making notations beside information that stood out as relevant to the research (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). Next I employed

Reismann's (2008) method of thematic analysis as another method of analyzing the data. This method of analysis involves perusing the data collected and allowing the data to speak for itself. Reismann (2008) expresses that for thematic analysis, "content is the exclusive focus" (p. 53). This process allowed me to see what general themes existed within the selected narratives as well as those that exist across the narratives. Chase (2005) shares that although there will be emergent themes that arise across the narratives, it is important to remember, however, that not all narrative analysis presents themes across narratives, the focus is to allow each individual narrator's voice to be heard through his or her own narrative.

To begin the process, I used open coding. This included identifying information that stood out to me from the transcripts (Creswell, 2007). The notations made in the margins were actual words that were mentioned or repeated, or ideas that were expressed. The process of open coding allowed for an initial process of emergent themes by looking at concepts or words that seemed to be important. This was done for all data that was collected.

The next process was axial coding. Axial coding involves reflection and interpretation (Merriam, 2009). This process involved looking at the initial codes made during open coding and creating a general or core categories that had emerged (Creswell, 2007). This step allowed for the emergent themes to be more specifically defined and allowed for information to be grouped by association and similarity.

The final step in this process was selective coding. In this process, selective coding was used in order to capture the main emergent themes that were relevant to the

research process. The process is called “selective” because only the dominant statements which coincide with the created categories or core themes are included (Merriam, 2009). This process allows for only the themes and key statements that are relevant to the research to emerge as the general findings for the study (Reismann, 2008).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I detailed the methodology used in this study. I began with giving a specific introduction, followed by a background of the area of focus in this study. Next, the research design is discussed, wherein the method of qualitative study and narrative analysis are discussed. I then identify the participants by giving a description of the criteria for this study and discuss the interview procedures. Next, I discuss the pilot study that was conducted and discuss my positionality as the researcher. Lastly, I discuss the data collection and the specific methods of narrative analysis—categorical-content analysis and thematic analysis—that were used in this study.

CHAPTER IV

PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

In this chapter, I presented a synopsis of participants' lives during and after attending school in the Acres Homes community for each member of the study. I commented on how I met the participants, the location at which interviews were conducted, and the general atmosphere that prevailed during each interview. In part, my purpose in providing this material was to describe the context in which that data was collected. I also wanted to portray each individual in sufficient detail so as to allow the reader to develop a sense of familiarity with who each participant is as an individual in order to understand each schooling experience before making comparisons among the narratives in subsequent chapters.

Participants were asked whether they would prefer to use a pseudonym for the written result of the study or for the transcriptions. Although no one opted to do so, aliases were adopted in the dissertation to allow anonymity. Where quotes are given, citations use the initials of the interviewee's alias and the line numbers from the interview transcriptions.

Meet the Participants

Eva Anderson (EA)

Eva Anderson was the very first participant that I interviewed. She was extremely excited and eager to participate. She arrived at the meeting spot right on time. When we spoke on the phone and discussed possible meeting places, we both agreed that it would be a good idea to meet at the local community college. Once I had received

permission to meet there, I called Eva back and finalized the plans. It was a little difficult to get in touch with Eva in the beginning. I had been given her number by a mutual personal who knew the criteria of the research and believed that Eva would be a good participant for this study. Eva gave permission for me to contact her and the plans continued from there. Because we both have busy schedules, we kept missing each other in the beginning. After trying to speak with her for about five days, we finally made contact with one another.

Eva is 71 years old. She has three sisters, one son who is married, a grandson, and is a new great grandmother. At the time of the interview, she was expecting her first great grandchild to be born within the next week. She was very excited about the new addition to her family. She moved to the Acres Homes area in 1946. She was six years old at the time. She and her family had moved from an area in Houston called Third Ward. She began school in the first grade at A.B. Anderson Elementary School. She openly shared a great deal of rich history about the Acres Homes area and described many experiences that she encountered while growing up in the community.

Eva explained Acres Homes as being a much more rural area than her previous community in Third Ward. She explained the vast differences between Third Ward and Acres Homes: “You had indoor facilities like your bath and lights and stuff...when we moved to the Acres Homes area, here we had this outhouse, here we had these kerosene lamps, and its pitch black, and I cried for a whole week. I thought my daddy had lost his mind...it was totally different from the Third Ward to the midnight Acres Homes” (E.A. lines 35-40). She went on to describe the dirt streets that existed and the problems that

persisted because of the heavy trucks some of the community members had to drive for their occupations. After recounting some of the difficulties of rural living, she fondly expressed, “but that’s what we had” (E.A, line 46). She proudly shared the independent area that Acres Homes grew to be. Being an all African American community, she saw their achieved independence as being quite an accomplishment. By the 1950s and 1960s, Acres Homes had its own post office, bus company, drug store, and fire department. All of these entities were owned and operated by African Americans.

Eva attended Carver High School. She described the overcrowding in the classrooms and shared how teachers would separate classes with a portable blackboard in order to accommodate the large class sizes. She fondly recalled her experiences in the community and attending school. After high school, she attended nursing school. An incident with one of the patients that she was attending to during her training turned her off from the idea of being a nurse. So, instead of entering the field of nursing, she worked and retired as a school official. She worked many years as counselor for the elementary school, a substitute teacher, a clerk at one of the local cemeteries, and a manager at Garden City Apartments.

John Smith (JS)

John Smith is 71 and has been a resident of Acres Homes for 58 years. He is married and has three children. He is proud of many things in his life, among them being the success of his children, his relationship with his wife, his personal achievements and the work that he has done in the community through his church. Out of his three children, his son is an electrical engineer who has done major work in the area of fiber

optics. One of his daughters owns an airfreight service in Chicago. His other daughter works in the finance industry. Both he and his wife are retired. His wife worked for Southwestern Bell for many years; however, when she had a quadruple bypass, they both decided that it was best for her to retire.

Mr. Smith, however, has an extensive work history as well. He worked for 51 years without ever taking a break. During that time span, he worked for four different companies. He was an international representative with the Machinist Union. He worked for the state of Texas as the Secretary of Labor for the Texas Governor, Mark White. He worked for the city of Houston's former Mayors, Lee Brown and Bill White. He has also had the chance to work with several congressional people such as Mickey Leeland, Craig Washington, and Sheila Jackson Lee. He spent many hours with them during their terms and assisted in various areas. After high school, he attended Texas Southern University but joined the military shortly after enrollment. He also has taken several short courses in order to sharpen his skills at various colleges and universities throughout the state. At the time of this interview, Mr. Smith was in his fourth year of retirement, but keeping very busy in the community through volunteering and service. His sentiments on volunteering in the community are "that's what I think God has led me here to do...the more you do, the more you see that you need to do because of the total number of people that are out there exposed everyday...that life has not been as good..." (JS, lines 40-44)

John began his educational career in Acres Homes at Mabel B. Wesley Elementary School. He then attended Harper Junior High School. His Acres Homes

schooling experience ended with his attendance at Booker T. High School which, like Harper Junior High School, was located outside of Acres Homes in the Fourth Ward community. Mr. Smith enjoyed his schooling experiences and shared that he did not face any real discrimination until he left the community to go downtown, perhaps for some entertainment. He shared the experience of attending a movie theater that was specified for Whites only. After being discovered, he and his lady friend, who could pass for white, were asked to leave. Though he did not experience much discrimination growing up, he was an activist and did participate in sit-in's at Woolworth's once he reached high school, so he was involved in what was going on in the community. He made the profound statement concerning his experiences with segregation, "I guess when you don't have you can't miss..." (JS, line 90).

As a youth, John was focused on doing what was expected in order to maintain the respect of his elders and the others around him. He believes that pride and respect are two pertinent components of every human being. As our interview progressed, he expressed his discontent with things that he has witnessed in the youth of today. He believes that a sense of respect for oneself has been lost. In his opinion, this is the fault not of the schools or the teachers, but of the parents: "The difference is not the kids, 'cause I think we were mischievous coming up too, and we would probably do whatever we thought our parents would let us do. So it's not the kids today...it's the parents...I think if the parents being a little more aggressive, and not accepting everything...is where we gotta go..." (JS, lines 379-38 & 402-403). He also recounted an instance that occurred with him and his mother when he accidentally used profanity in his mother's

presence: “Man, I’ll never forget. I view it as S H I T, and don’t ask me how I did this...I looked around and I’m not lying to you, there was a frozen chicken coming after me out of my mother’s hand. That thing hit the wall and just bounced. I said, ‘Why’d you do that?’” She said, ‘You know you can’t do that to me...you know you can’t!’ “coming after me” (JS, lines382-387). He shared an expression that his father told him and his brothers, “you do not have to have money to have pride” (JS, lines 395-396). Those are sentiments that he has used to guide himself through life and to raise his own children and ones that he admonishes others in our society to live by as well.

Larry Davis (LD)

Larry Davis was born and raised in Acres Homes. He was born in Houston in 1947, after his family relocated from Huntsville, Texas. He is 64 years old, and comes from a long line of entrepreneurs, in which he also followed in those footsteps. The long line of entrepreneurs begins with his father who owned his own plumbing company, his brother who owns a Federal Express contract company, his other brother who owns his own company, Mr. Davis who owns his own business, his nephew who owns his own business, and Mr. Davis’s two sons, who are also entrepreneurs. Mr. Davis believes that you should not “go to school to get a good job” but you should “go to school to learn how to make money” (LD, line 115). He believes that when you know how to make money, there are no limitations. If you only know how to do a job, you will always be at someone else’s mercy. His beliefs are shown in how he chooses to live his life. He has created a family legacy on the basis of self-expansion and efficiency.

At the time of the interview, he had been married for forty-six years and he has two sons who have both graduated from college and own their own businesses. Mr. Davis attended college on a full-ride track & field scholarship in Victoria, Texas, which was the heart of the Ku Klux Klan at the time. His experiences dealing with racism and discrimination led him to pursue a job in the police field. However, the obstacles and discrimination he faced while on the police force led to his resignation. He then went to work for Exxon Mobil Company and later opened his own tax consultant business. Our interview took place during a very busy time in Mr. Davis's life, and he graciously fit me in his schedule between appointments. He is a very active member of St. Monica's Catholic Church, so we met at the church for our interview. He arrived right on time, and we promptly began our interview. Though our time was limited and we did not speak for very long, his interview was rich with stories that had depth and substance. Mr. Davis did not hesitate to open up and begin sharing his vast experiences.

Like two of the other participants, John Smith and Eva Anderson, Mr. Davis expressed some discontent in events he sees occurring in schools and with the youth of today. He compared today's occurrences with those of his days of schooling, and discussed how some philosophies have changed and how those changes have affected today's generation of young people. He had a myriad of experiences growing up both inside of and outside of Acres Homes that helped to mold him into the man that he came to be. He spoke of his experiences with racism faced while away at school in Victoria, Texas, Ku Klux Klan territory, of an encounter in Conroe, Texas with a high school classmate, and of issues with his Houston Police Department partner in 1972 who had

vast differences in points of view. He was able to rise above each of these situations because of the grounding that he received in Acres Homes.

He attended Mabel B. Wesley Elementary school. After which, he attended Harper Junior High, and then he went on to graduate from M.C. Williams High School. All schools, except for Harper Junior High, were located in Acres Homes. He had to attend Harper Junior High School, which was located in the Fourth Ward community, because the middle school in Acres Homes had burned down. Larry spoke very fondly of his experiences in the Acres Homes community. He attributes a lot of his growth and development to his foundation received in Acres Homes. He is very soft spoken and emits a kind of “quite strength”. I found myself simply in awe of his wisdom and humility. It was truly an honor to sit and speak with him at length about his experiences.

Lillian Miles (LM)

Lillian Miles is the eldest of the participants. She is a sweet, soft-spoken, yet assertive and extremely active 90-year old. Her family moved to the Acres Homes area in 1935. She relocated from a small town in central Texas, Giddings. Moving from Giddings to Houston was a change because the Giddings school system was not as advanced as the school system in Houston. When she moved, she was in the 9th grade, going to the 10th grade, but she had to go back one semester because she had not taken civics or government. When Mrs. Miles attended school, high school consisted of grades 9-11, so Mrs. Miles graduated from high school in 1938 after her 11th grade year.

Although Mrs. Miles lived in the Acres Homes community, she had to attend Booker T. Washington High School, which was outside of the community, because there

were no high schools in Acres Homes until the 1943. Before 1943, Booker T. Washington was the designated high school for African Americans to attend. It was located in downtown Houston, which was quite a distance from the community. Students who lived in the community began attending White Oak Elementary School which extended to the 7th grade, after which, they left the community to continue on with their education. Later, White Oak Elementary School became G.W. Carver High School where Mrs. Miles became a music teacher, “So in my early career I started in Acres Homes, then it was G.W. Carver High School that grew out of one small school here in Acres Homes name White Oak, mostly elementary and it was through 7th grade...” (L.M. lines 20-22).

After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School, Mrs. Miles studied for three years at Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas, which is a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, and then she returned to Houston to finish her studies. She attended Houston College for Negroes which later became Texas Southern University. She furthered her studies at Prairie View A&M University and Texas Southern to receive her counseling certification. She followed in the footsteps of her mother who was also an educator who taught at White Oak Elementary School.

When I first spoke with Mrs. Miles about participating in the study, it was over the phone. She had been recommended by a mutual friend who thought that she would be a good candidate to participate in the study, and she agreed to speak with me to receive further information. When we spoke, she informed me that she was older, and did not move as quickly as she used to, and asked that I bear with her. We had to

reschedule once because of an unexpected obligation that she had to take care of. When she called to reschedule, she asked that I check back with her in a couple of days. When I spoke with her in the next few days, she was not feeling well, so we agreed to check again in a few more days. When we finally did meet up, she expressed that she would like to have the interview done in her home because she is not very mobile. I agreed, and we conducted the interview in her home.

Mary Johnson (MJ)

Mary Johnson was recommended to me by a friend who participated in a previous study that I had done and knew the criteria of this study. She first contacted Mrs. Johnson and told her about the criteria, and then asked for permission for me to contact Mrs. Johnson and speak with her further. Once we made contact, our first meeting progressed rather quickly. After initially contacting Mrs. Johnson, we met within the next two days.

She suggested that we meet in her home which was only a few miles from the home of Lillian Miles. Lillian Miles and Mary Johnson's mothers were best friends. As soon as I pulled up and walked to the front door, Mary Johnson greeted me with an infectious and inviting smile. She invited me inside, and we decided to sit at the table in the den. Her home was cozy and beautifully decorated with golden and beige hues. The light from the afternoon sky shone brightly inside, illuminating our sitting area. As we began to discuss, we were interrupted by a phone call, for which Mary was extremely apologetic; however, that was the only interruption we had. The interview went on uninterrupted for the next hour.

Although Mary Johnson moved around quite a bit during her childhood, she spent a significant amount of time in the Acres Homes area. She started attending school in Acres Homes in the 1st grade and stayed until the 4th grade. She then went away to a boarding school in Dallas and returned to Acres Homes in the 8th grade. She stayed for one year in which she attended Carver, returned to Dallas for boarding school, and then returned to Carver High School for her junior year. She then remained at Carver High School for her 11th and 12th grade years.

Her parents were business owners, which required them to travel a great deal. Mary Johnson expressed the care and concern her parents had for her well-being, “I was doing this because at the time my parents were in business and they were very much involved with my growing up and making sure that I had good care. In as much as my mother was working full-time, they had these businesses that were open from morning until night and they wanted to make sure that I had good supervision...good care, and they chose this school which had an excellent reputation at the time, St. Peter’s Academy, and that’s why I went.” (M. J. lines 46-52).

Mary Johnson is a retired high school counselor. After graduating from high school, she went to college at Hampton University and Texas Southern University. She worked in the Houston school district for 31 years. At the time of this interview, she had been retired for 17 years. She expressed that she was just trying to be productive and joked that participating in this interview might be one of her avenues to productivity. She is 70 years old and a widow. When we conducted the interview, her husband had just passed away one month prior. Her husband was a retired school administrator in the

North Forest School District in Houston. His last position was Assistant Superintendent. He had been retired 20 years before his passing. Even though not much time had lapsed since her husband's passing, she was in very good spirits and willing to share any information she could.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV presented a comprehensive view of the context of the interview atmosphere and a specific look at the individual participant's life. It provided an individual depiction of each of the participants and their backgrounds. It allows the readers to have a more holistic and individualistic view of the participants and allows for a deeper meaning to be gained about each of the participants and their individual experiences.

In Chapter V the narrators' individual experiences and the experiences that occurred across the groups were looked at and analyzed. The importance of the discovery of this information lies in the fact that these revelations not only capture the overall essence of the participants' experiences, but they provide a way to compare this study to research conducted in other regions.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS PART ONE: CATEGORICAL-CONTENT ANALYSIS

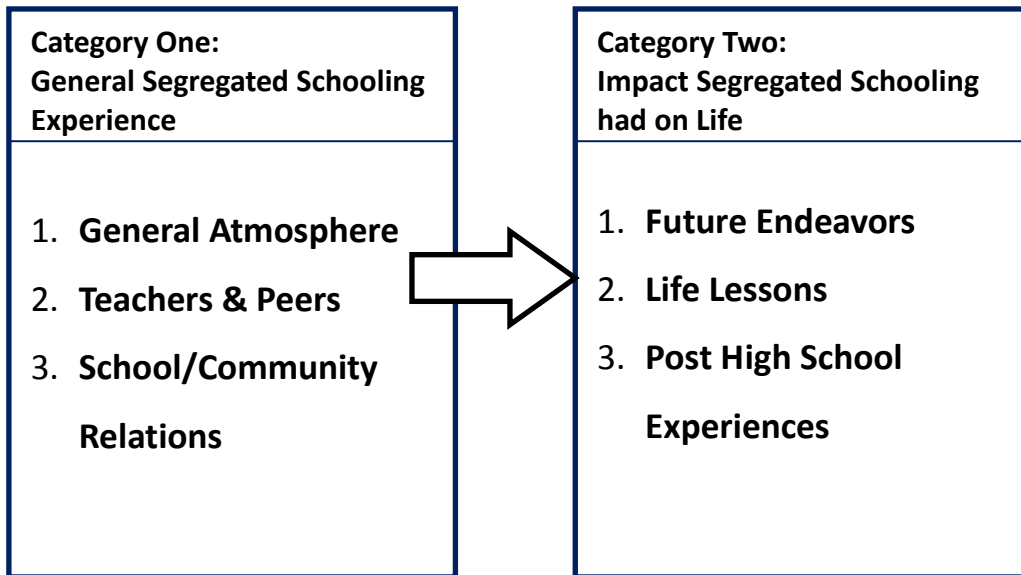
Findings in this chapter are presented in terms of two major categories derived from and related to the research questions: African American former students' experiences in their Black segregated schools and the context in which they were raised, their relationships with teachers and administrators, the role their Black segregated schools played in the community, and the impact their school had on their life. The discussion centers on what was revealed from the interviews in relation to each research question.

Categories and Sub-Categories

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as they are related to the specific research questions. After using categorical-content analysis, the findings were generated from the data using the thematic analysis method. This method of analysis involves perusing the data collected and allowing the data to speak for itself. Reismann (2008) expresses that for thematic analysis, "content is the exclusive focus" (p. 53). The process allowed me to see what general themes existed within the individual narratives as well as see what themes existed across all of the narratives. The focus was to allow the narrators' voices to be heard throughout their narratives (Chase, 2005). Before themes were derived, I categorized the narrator's responses in reference to how they applied and related to the research questions that were asked. This categorization is demonstrated in figure 4 below. It shows two categories of the narrators' responses: general segregated

schooling experiences and impact segregated schooling had on life. Each category has sub-categories within it. With category one, general segregated school experience, the sub-categories are (general atmosphere, teachers & peers, and school/community relations). With category two, impact segregated schooling had on life; the sub-categories are (life lessons, post high school experiences, and future endeavors). These categories are discussed as they relate to each one of the participants.

Figure 4: Categories and Sub-Categories



After reading each interview transcript multiple times, I dissected the data into perceived components. The six sub-categories discussed above were the derivatives of that decision. Next, I wrote the brief biographical sketches contained in Chapter V. Doing this forced me to summarize the overall gist of what each individual discussed with me. I then re-read intact copies of the transcripts to determine larger frames of meaning across

the five transcriptions. The next step in the analysis involved re-arranging the sub-categories, collapsing them into similarity groupings so that they could be described in a comprehensible fashion. This was done so that I could have an overview of the information that was shared according to the research questions that were asked. These groupings are called “categories” and are presented as the findings of the study in this chapter as part one.

Findings

Category One: General Segregated Schooling Experience

As analysis was ongoing, it became clear that the categories should be described in terms of their overall reflection of the research questions and the progression of the participants’ lives since the purpose was to look at experiences during schooling and the impact that those experiences had once the participants matriculated on to other ventures. Therefore, Category One looks at the experiences during segregated schooling and Category Two looks at the impact those experiences had on the participants after their segregated schooling experience. Each category contains at least three sub-categories. For the ease of the reader Figure 4 displayed above, itemizes the Categories and Sub-Categories related to the findings of the study in this chapter.

My initial research question was, “How do African American former students describe their experiences of being educated in a Black segregated school?” Category one addresses the response to this research question. Research question number four asks, “How do African American former students describe the context in which they were raised?” The participants’ responses to these questions varied. The participants’

experiences in schooling ranged from as early as 1935 to as late as 1961. Lillian Miles began high school 1935 and finished in 1938. At the beginning of her high school career, a high school for African Americans had not yet been created in her community; therefore, she had to leave Acres Homes to attend high school. Larry Davis, the youngest of the participants, was still attending high school when the desegregation processes had begun across the state of Texas, post *Brown v Board of Education*, although the schools presented in this study had not begun their desegregation process until nearly two decades after the *Brown* ruling. Another differing factor of this question is that the participants were raised in various phases of Acres Homes' development. At some points, the area was more rural than others, in which the general development was different.

General Atmosphere

The General Atmosphere sub-category captures participants' feelings about attending a Black segregated school and some of the experiences that they had there. It focuses on the facilities and the participants' general feelings about being in that environment. Facilities include the school as a whole, classrooms, supplies, extra-curricular activity facilities, and books. This is particularly included because of comments relating to Black segregated schools as having sub-par or sub-standard facilities and supplies being the over-arching theme of the Black segregated schooling experience. The goal was to understand participants' experiences in this avenue and capture their feelings about these experiences.

Concerning the general atmosphere of the schools, all of the participants said that they enjoyed their schooling experience. Their overall feeling related to their schooling experience was a pleasant one. They mentioned some of the resources that they did not have, but they did not see the lack of resources as being a hindrance to their education in any way. Specifically for Eva Anderson, attending school in Acres Homes was a bit of a culture shock because she came from a more metropolitan area to the rural area of “Midnight Acres Homes” as she so fondly called it. For Eva Anderson, adjusting to the more rural nature of Acres Homes took a great effort:

Third Ward was metropolitan compared to the Acres Homes area because you had indoor facilities like your bath and lights and stuff. So when we moved to the Acres Homes area, here we had this outhouse...here we had these kerosene lamps...and it's pitch black...and I cried for a whole week. I thought my daddy had lost his mind. I mean it was just so different for the Third Ward to the midnight Acres Homes. (EA, lines 34-40)

Eva's experience differed from that of Lillian Miles's because Lillian's family relocated from an area that was even more rural than the Acres Homes area:

...we came from a small town in central Texas, Giddings, Texas, and the school system there was not as advanced as they were in Houston and when we moved I was in the 9th grade going to the 10th grade, and of course they sent me back a half a semester because I had not had Civics and Government. (LM. lines 8-11)

John Smith discussed the nature of his school facilities and their conditions, though he does not feel as though the condition of the facilities had any negative impact on the

schooling. He relates: “I’ve never known a dirty school, whether it was Harper or Booker T., you know Booker T. looked like it was about to fall down...I thought it was relatively clean inside...the same thing with Wesley”(JS, lines 205-208).

Eva shared her sentiments about the Acres Homes area before it was fully developed, “...I mean it was awful, but that’s what we had, you know, so we had to live with that. But as the years went on, Acres Homes did grow...and began to expand (EA, lines47-53). She spoke proudly about the area’s development in the following years and described how the Acres Homes area became its own operational community with its own post office, drug store, fire department, and bus company: “...it was owned...everything was owned by blacks, I mean blacks owned all of this I’m naming!” (EA, lines 57-58). All of the participants spoke of the poverty that existed with their community and the schools; however, they also spoke of the pride they had for their community and how they enjoyed their school. John Smith shared a sentiment that his father expressed to him and his brothers, “You do not have to have money to have pride” (lines 395-396).

Teachers and Peers

The third research question asks, “How do African American former students describe their relationship with the teachers and administrators of their Black segregated schools?” The purpose of the question is to determine the nature of the relationship between the teachers and administrators and the participants. Many comments regarding teachers and administrators of Black segregated schools regard them as being under-prepared and under-educated; therefore, the goal of this question was to understand the

individual experiences that took place between the participants and their teachers and/or administrators.

All of the participants praised their teachers and their administrators and applauded their efforts to bring the participants the best education and schooling experience they could and to take them far beyond their school wall in terms of experience and preparation. They each expressed how both teachers and administrators went beyond the scope of their duties to provide a stellar educational experience for the participants. Only one participant recalled a negative experience that she had with one of the teachers. However, even though she shared a negative experience, she expressed that as being one situation among many.

Mary Johnson shared how her teachers compensated for not having all of the resources necessary for a lesson: “I took chemistry and we didn’t have a chemistry lab, so we had a strong teacher who explained a lot to us, and he might have done experiments at his desk, those that were simple, that he could perform without having all the equipment...his name was Mr. Wilman Easter” (lines 169-181). She also recalled the playful nature of some of the administrators. She shared how her principal used a humorous analogy to help them memorize how to use vocabulary terms: “He was Mr. Archibald Anderson. The school is A.B. Anderson but his name was Archibald. And he told us a little anecdote in school...he wanted us to use certain words in a sentence and we made up all kinds of sentences. The words were ‘defense’ and ‘deduct’ and ‘defeat’ and we just made up long sentences trying to use those words and he said, ‘Oh, it’s so simple. All you have to do is say, ‘deduct jumped over defense the head before defeat’

(laughing loudly) so that's something that I will always remember, how to use those words in a sentence.”

Larry Davis described how his coach intervened when Mr. Davis was thinking about quitting school to help provide for his family. He shared how his coach went and explained that Larry was a stellar athlete and student, and had a great chance of advancing and becoming a role model for the community. This decision, along with that of his employer, helped Larry to finish school and go on to receive a full scholarship to college. John Smith shared how one of his elementary teachers went beyond the scope of her duties to make sure all students had money to eat lunch every day, he fondly shared “...you could always depend on [Miss Countee] to be there to get you through the day” (JS, lines 74-75).

When I asked what she remembered about her school experience, without hesitation, Lillian Miles said, “the unfairness”. After saying it, she backtracked and explained that the majority of the teachers were good and fair, but her encounter with unfairness did place a stain on her schooling experience, so much so, that when asked about the entire experience, that was the first remark that came to her mind. Lillian, though attending a segregated school with an African American teacher, felt that she was a recipient of unfair treatment because she was of a darker complexion than some of the other students. She shares:

Well this was an English teacher. I didn't experience that till I got to Houston. All the others through elementary and junior high...I don't think I experienced that. But when I got to Houston, this was one of the primary English teachers,

and it was the main teacher used for graduating classes in English and Literature, and she was very, very prejudiced against the dark skinned students...I can't remember no verbal...actions. She surrounded herself with the light complexioned students all the time, and no matter what the class would need to know or questions to ask or what have, we [the dark complexioned students] were primarily ignored.” (LM, lines 167-178)

This experience was not shared by any of the other participants, and remained to be a major theme in Lillian's narrative. Although it was one situation, it had a major impact on her schooling experience.

School/Community Relations

Research question number two asks, “How do African American former students describe the role their Black segregated school played in the community?” The responses related to this research question varied greatly. John Smith expressed witnessing very little involvement between the school and the community outside of the annual Mayflower activities while Larry Davis, Eva Anderson, and Lillian Miles all recalled extensive involvement between the school and the community. Eva Anderson recounted how many of the business owners in the community were teachers, so they patronized the businesses and the teachers had on-going connections with students both in and out of school. In her opinion the school and the community was a continuous loop:

“...the same people that taught us was the people that really started the first businesses in the Acres Homes area...so that's why we really pulled together like

that. No outside person did not come in and start a business...and the teachers were the prominent people then, so they were the ones that did the businesses.”

(EA, lines 331-335)

Larry Davis and Lillian Miles both discussed how the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) were prominent fixtures in the school and the community. Within these organizations, they bridged the gaps between the schools and the community helping to raise money for certain needs that students had who were in extra-curricular activities. Larry Davis recounts:

“During those times the big thing in the community was the PTA...we were small then so we really didn’t pay a whole bunch of attention. We knew that the PTA was holding fundraisers to buy something...the PTA was having fundraisers to buy football jerseys. The PTA was having a fundraiser to help offset the cost of a bus trip if we play out of town...because we didn’t have a lot of money...” (LD, lines 211-216)

Lillian Miles discussed how the principal would encourage parent participation in school activities and events, “...and then the community, the principals would always insist that the parents would be involved in the teaching sessions or whatever, interactions with their students” (LM, lines 248-250).

Category Two: Impact Segregated Schooling had on Life

The final research question asks, “How do African American former students describe the impact that their Black segregated school had on their life?” All of the participants believed that their experience in attending their Black segregated schools

contributed positively to their lives. They believed that many of the successes and achievements both during and after high school could be attributed to their Black segregated school. Mary Johnson and Lillian Miles only attended the schools of focus in this study for limited periods of time. The other participants went to school from elementary school through high school, in the Acres Homes area.

Future Endeavors

Mary Johnson's parents were business owners who traveled frequently, so Mary switched back and forth between a boarding academy and Black segregated schools in the Acres Homes area. Although she alternated between schools, she still attributes much of her growth to her attendance in the segregated schools in Acres Homes:

When I graduated from high school I was 15. Well school was out rather early in May, maybe the 16th of May, and I was 16 on the 20th of May, so I was 15 during my senior year. And when I left high school at 16, I went away to Hampton Institute...it's Hampton University now, but it's in Virginia. And at that time I was about the youngest freshman and campus, but I was able to do well my freshman year without too many problems. I had a very—one teacher I forgot to mention and I should never forget her, and she was Miss Adith Pearl Barrett. She's Garrett now, but when I went to Hampton we were given tests as most freshmen are and I was able to move on to the next level of English. So I thought that was good preparation. We learned English Literature and the characters in English Literature which is important when you go away to college because certain authors and poets you get a chance to read about them and to me

I was somewhat familiar them...I think the teachers there then were very in tuned in to what we would need for later in life.” (MJ, lines 102-119)

Lillian Miles moved into the area during her 9th grade year and at that time Booker T. Washington High School graduated its students after the 11th grade. Thus, Lillian only spent three years in high school at Booker T. Washington. Mrs. Miles saw her experience as a whole as being the component that helped her. There were no specific situations that were helpful. She saw her entire learning experience as a help:

...school we called it, that’s how you learn...to move from one step to the other. And if you have—and everybody should if they could—goals in mind, well then you take steps in reaching your goals. You take those steps, and you can’t go from step one to step ten all of a sudden, so that’s what school is: it gives you each step at a time. As you grown in age, grow in development, so does your learning. So that’s how it helped me. And that’s how it helps people—you go through steps, and phases, and periods, and seasons. (LM, lines 222-229)

Life Lesson

Lillian Miles also used her negative experience with her English teacher as an opportunity to learn an important life lesson. She took her experience and vowed that she would do things differently when her time to be in leadership came. Mrs. Miles always wanted to be a teacher, so she knew that one day she would be in the same position as her high school English teacher:

Let me hasten to say, overall we had good teachers. Overall, teachers were concerned about the advancement of the students, and most teachers were

familiar with the community and with the parents, and usually they had a good rapport with the parents. Usually teachers were respected as teachers. The parents respected them and the students respected them as teachers, and of course that was a good thing. On the other hand, the human element came in to that, and favoritism was prevalent, and so I experienced some of that, and vowed that that would not be my forte in dealing with students. (LM, lines 147-155)

Mrs. Miles went on to be an elementary school teacher, then a high school teacher, and a counselor, and she carried the precepts that she learned from this encounter with her during her career as an educator.

While in school, Larry Davis learned a life lesson so great that he named his son after the person that helped him learn the lesson so he would not forget it. After his coach intervened with Larry's employer and informed the employer that Larry intended to quit school and work at his store full time, the employer gave Larry an ultimatum, "You can work here as long as you stay in school." That was enough for Larry, he still intended to quit school and work full time; from that moment on, the lesson began to unfold:

'Ain't you supposed to be at a track meet?' I said, 'well, I decided I wasn't feeling good'. So he said, 'You can't work today.' He told me I couldn't work that day so he said to go home because I was sick. I went home and I thought about how [that] was not working out the way I wanted. I'm more interested in getting this little \$40 than I was of going to school. And if it had not been for that incident then I probably would have quit school and no telling what would

happen so in order to not ever forget that story...when my second son was born I named him after Papa Asap [my employer]...I want to believe that was one of the biggest turning points specially during that time in my life...I'll never be able to forget that.” (LD, lines 187-208)

Post High School Experiences

Some of the participants went on to college after high school and others went straight into the work force; however, they each related how their experiences aided them in their efforts after high school. Eva Anderson had a vast experience and many different arenas following her high school setting, and she attributes knowledge gained to her experiences all throughout her schooling career:

That was the only thing that prepared me for life because school makes you prepare for life because you're interacting with so many different people, and so many different tempos, and you have to recognize when to talk and when to stop, you know, who's short tempered and who's not, and it just keeps you focused on people in general. So I really learned to cope; learned to, you know, prepare myself for life because the same attitude and spirit I had while I was in school, I still have today. So school had to be the foundation of the person that I became, or that I was at the time. So school was the main thing that made me who I am today, and Carver was one of the best schools though it was underfunded.” (EA, lines 288-297)

Larry Davis discussed how his math teacher would invite a group of students to his house on the weekends and teach them how to prepare taxes. The teacher would, as

Larry put it, “lure us with hot dogs and polly-pop” and then teach them tax preparation skills. Later on, Larry used those skills learned during those weekend sessions to make extra money during college. Afterwards, he further extended that knowledge, and today, he operates his own tax preparation company. That math teacher was sowing seeds of financial independence and entrepreneurship into those students during those sessions, all at the expense of just a pot of hot dogs and tray of polly-pops.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the participants’ individual responses were analyzed and separated into components according the specifications of the research questions. The responses were organized into two major categories and six sub-categories. Excerpts of the participants’ actual narratives were included for further analysis.

Chapter VI describes the findings that were further discovered during an extensive employment of thematic analysis. This discussion centers on the over-arching themes that emerged when the transcriptions were analyzed as a group. The themes discovered within this method of analysis capture the overall essence of the participants’ experiences and also provide a way of comparison in other avenues of research.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS PART TWO: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Chapter VI reports on the findings of the study based on an extensive method of narrative analysis. Whereas the findings detailed in Chapter V were presented in terms of categories and sub-categories connected to the specific responses to the research questions, the findings described in this chapter return to the guiding research questions in order to summarize and categorize what was learned in the study, thematically. Chase (1995) explains that though scholars have differed on the specific definition and place of narrative within certain disciplines, they agree that it has the shared goal of “making sense of experience, the interest in constructing and communicating meaning.” (p. 8) Narrative is the term used for methods of study that focus specifically on the story told by individuals (Creswell, 2007, p. 54; Polkinghorne, 1995). It is the methodical study of personal accounts and experiences (Reismann, 2008) which allows for identity to be shaped through the sharing of meaningful stories. Therefore, thematic analysis, the method of narrative analysis used in this study, allowed for themes within the narrative to emerge to help focus on and conceptualize meaning within the story that was told. Through this method, stories were “preserved and grouped” keeping them intact to allow the meaning that individuals made of them to be understood (Reismann, 2008, p. 62).

Explanation of Themes

In employing Reismann’s method of thematic analysis as my primary method of analyzing the data, I allowed the data to speak for itself. This process allowed me to see what general themes existed within and across the selected narratives. In analyzing five

verbatim transcripts, three major themes emerged among the five narratives: Happiness, Heritage, and Hardship. Figure 5 is a representation of the three major themes and twelve sub-themes that emerged from the narratives. Figure 6 shows the sub-themes that existed with the happiness theme. Figure 7 shows the sub-themes that existed within the heritage theme. Figure 8 shows the sub-themes that existed within the hardship theme. Twelve sub-themes emerged in total: 1) enjoyable atmosphere 2) personal success 3) closeness 4) activities 5) strong foundation 6) good teachers 7) respect for authority 8) self-reliance & ownership 9) rural living 10) lack of resources 11) segregation as a way of life 12) unfairness/colorism.

Figure 5: Thematic Design

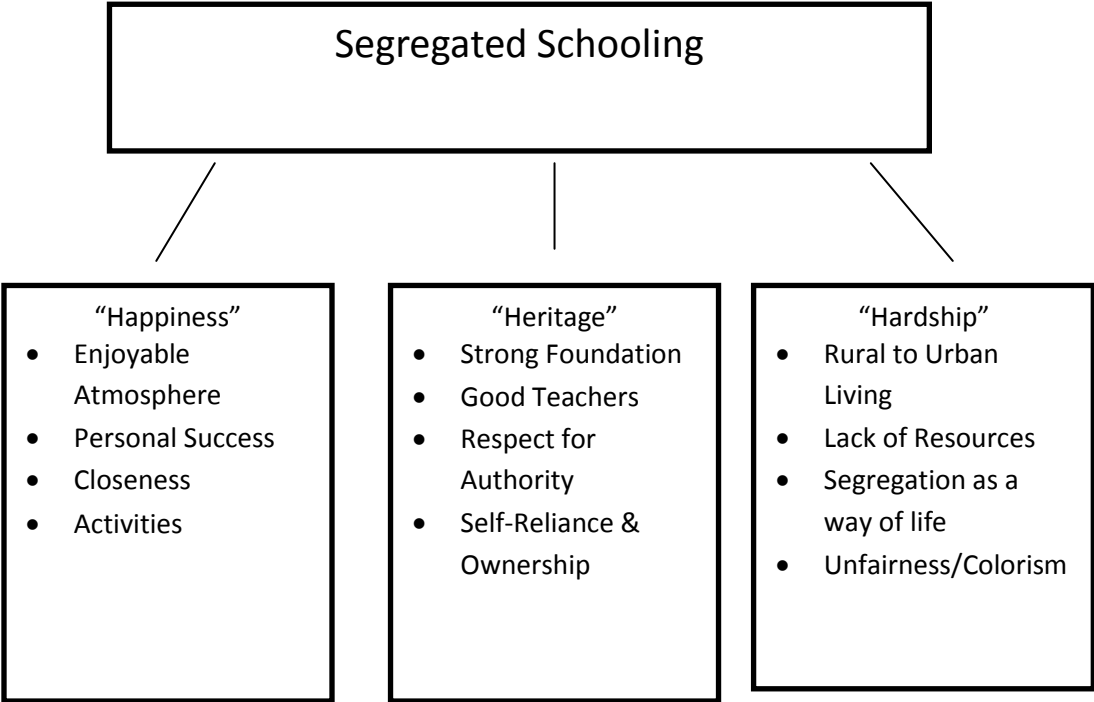
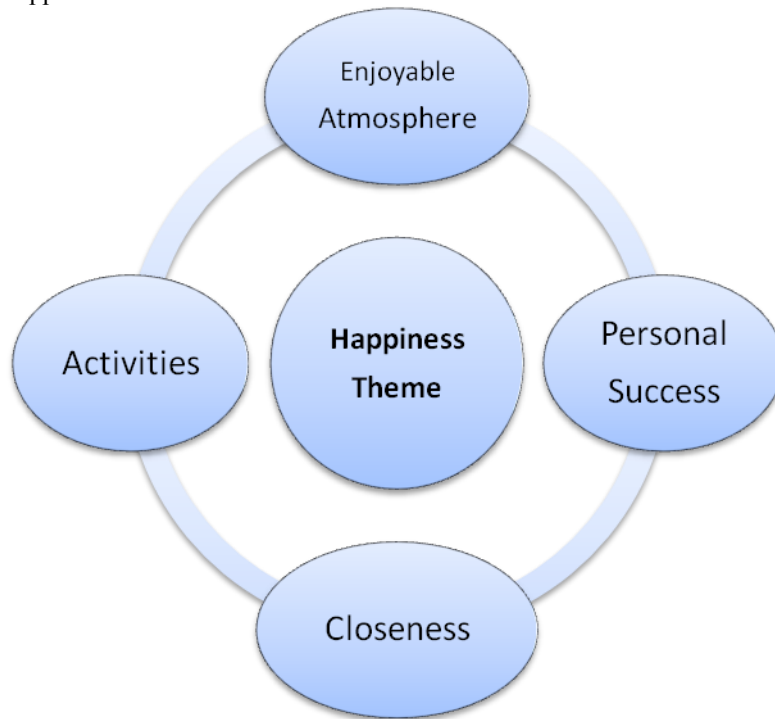


Figure 6: Happiness Theme



Discussion of Findings

Theme 1: A Story of Happiness

Enjoyable Atmosphere: “It was my gateway to freedom”

When Eva Anderson spoke about her schooling experiences, she promptly boasted, “It was my gateway to freedom...and it was family. It was such a bond there (EA, lines 476-477). She thoroughly enjoyed her schooling experience. Although she did have to make adjustments to the rural living conditions, which will be discussed with the hardship narrative, she grew to love her experiences in “midnight Acres Homes.” She continued on in her description:

Oh school, school was the happiest experience, happy, happy, happy, happy, Ah!

I can’t think of any sad time, cause I was always a high spirited person and I

really enjoyed school. I wasn't an 'A' student, but I didn't flunk either, you know, I coulda did better if I woulda just really applied myself, but I enjoyed school...it was freedom time, you know. I really, really enjoyed it all .(EA, lines 261-266)

This was a period of growth for Eva because when she first moved into the community she was vehemently opposed to living in this rural area.

Though Mary Johnson moved frequently, she still enjoyed her experience. She related her experience with the current reports of issues and bullying that are prevalent in schools today. She and many of the other participants remarked that they remain close with many of their classmates until this day. This is not just specific to high school graduating classes; many of those who went to middle and elementary school together remain close as well:

Basically my high school experience was good...I didn't have problems getting along. I was telling my daughter that I don't remember what we are now saying in the nation that's bullying. It could have been because we all knew each other; the school was so small, but I never had that problem and if others had their problems I wasn't smart enough to know what was going on...my high school years were basically, I think, good. I feel like I was ready to graduate when I graduated, and it was a small class and...those of us who are still living, I am still friendly with. (MJ, lines 209-217)

Lillian Miles, like Mary Johnson was eager when it came to going to school. She loved school from the start. She was a lover of knowledge and appreciated everything she

obtained while going to school. Since her aspiration was to be a teacher, she soaked up every moment she could to prepare herself for her future career:

Oh, I loved school from the beginning. Well, I thought nothing else existed.

What else did you do but go to school? So it was a joy to me, yeah, it was always a joy to me to go to school. Now I'm not saying everything was right in my eyesight, everything was properly done in my eyesight. I didn't have any problems, not that many at all. So I had the problems of, I guess, most students, other than that I was not dismayed of anything. I never thought about not being in school, so learning, it was just an adventure. It was an adventure, and I always had goals in life and I wanted to be a teacher and so I needed it to get where I wanted to go—school. (LM, lines 68-76)

Along with just the sheer fascination of acquiring new knowledge, Lillian also appreciated the opportunity to gain life-long friendships while in school:

Learning was a happy memory—things you did not know. And I loved history because it gave you an imagination of travelling and seeing what you don't ordinarily see around you. So that always had a fascination for me. So that was happy about the learning situation—it's coming into knowledge of what you didn't know and how much I want to learn, and it's still that way. So every day is a learning situation, and of course you make good friendships and some of the friendships I made, down through the years we stayed friends, and at this age I have one primarily that's living and she's 93, 92. We took a class together in 6th grade and we've been friends ever since, and she lives in California, but anyway

we have telephone conversations often. And there are others but every school that I attended I bonded with at least one, or two, or maybe more but really bonded with a few of them and that gave us a sense of wellbeing, a connection, a bonding, and we kept that all down through the years. (LM, lines 79-92)

Even though the schools were underfunded, they still maintained an atmosphere that students could enjoy. John Smith remembers, “It was just all good. I’ve never known a dirty school, whether it was Harper or Booker T., you know, Booker T. looked like it was about to fall down, I thought it was relatively clean inside. The same thing with Wesley (JS, lines 205-208). The school’s maintained a certain philosophy shared by John Smith, “You do not have to have money to have pride.” As we continued to discuss, John began to reminisce about some of the enjoyable experiences in school, “...during those years, we, I enjoyed them...they were good years thinking back, just talking to you now. They were some very good years (JS, lines 57-59). He recalls, a particularly fond moment with a smile, “in fact, that’s where I met my wife...” (line 58).

Eva Anderson shared the sentiments of Lillian Miles and Mary Johnson in maintaining life-long friendships and appeared to find it difficult to think of any overtly bad experiences:

“...we had a lotta communication, good times with the other kids and stuff, and I just can’t think of anything, as I said I just had some good times, and I still have those friends today. I mean we are just—and after 51 years now 51, 52, yeah, and we still have...that good communication and everything...and we were just a good class. (EA , lines 272-277)

The participants' recollection of good times is consistent with what Shircliffe (2001) recounts as "nostalgia" in revealing that former students "got the best of that world" referring to their segregated schools. She posits, "Despite the social inequities imposed by segregation, these former students and teachers often had positive experiences growing up and going to school, testifying to the strengths of the black community" (Shircliffe, 2001, p. 65).

Personal Success: "I mean we had stars!"

Early in my interview with Eva Anderson, she mentioned:

"We learned real well out of those used books, textbooks and stuff; we did very well. We did very well in...track and field, football, and all that good stuff. I mean we had stars! Texas Southern and medicine, Pharmacy, a lot of people come out of my class and stuff. (EA, lines 160-164)

There were many conversations of personal success while speaking with the participants. They and others they knew went on to accomplish great things, some holding meaning for them personally and others holding meaning on much broader scales. Larry Davis recounts:

I was classified when I graduated as the one of wittiest kids on the block but I always had this thing on wanting to lead instead of just to follow. As a matter fact, I had a chance when I was in high school to go in business with some entrepreneurs but I wasn't really prepared mentally basically but now my daddy owned his own business...I own my business...my two sons graduated; they own their own business...we got a grandson now we working on him. But it gave us the foresight to

understand that, instead of going to school to get a good job, go to school to learn how to make money. That helped us a lot. (LD, lines 110-116)

The fact that Mr. Davis's father, he, his sons, and in the future, his grandson are all business owners is a great feat. He talks about how that foundation was laid later in the heritage theme section. In this case, a legacy was created and he sees this as a great accomplishment, one that merits classification of success.

Other participants discussed their own ideas of personal success. I used the word success here subjectively in the sense that I did not define it, but instead allowed the participants to attribute their own meanings and definitions of success. The meanings were derived in the sense that the participants were able to accomplish certain things that they were proud of. John Smith's instances of success centered on his ability to remain employed for a sustained period of time and having the opportunity to interact and work with various political pundits as well as having the opportunity to give back to the very community that reared him. Concerning his work history he stated:

I have worked for 51 years without ever having taken a break. I worked for four different companies in that time span. I was an international representative with the machinist union throughout the United States and I worked for the state of Texas as the Secretary of Labor for the State of Texas for Governor Mark White, and I worked for Lee Brown, who was the Mayor for the City of Houston. I got a chance to work for [Mayor Bill] White. I had a chance to work with several congress people—Mickey Leeland, Craig Washington, Shelia Jackson Lee—spent a lot of

time with them in terms of what they did and what I was supposed to do for them.

(JS, lines 24-32)

Mr. Smith had been retired going on four years at the beginning of this interview process. Though retired, he does not rest on his laurels. His retirement has allowed him to pursue another passion, which is volunteering. He discussed his act of volunteering as something that he believed God has led him to do:

...that's what I think God has led me here to do, and we do a lot of work besides that... and the more you do the more you see that you need to do because of the total number of people that are out there exposed every day. That life has not been as good, and for several reasons... I think. (JS, lines 40-44)

Volunteering has allowed him to accomplish some extremely impactful things in the community. He shared one particular act of service that he and another participant were able to accomplish through their church:

I'm in my fourth year I do a lot of volunteering in the community, and we raised, [a church member] came up with a kidney problem, and we couldn't get the dialysis to pay for it. I and Larry Davis raised about a hundred and thirty thousand dollars with some people to pay for his kidney, and got a hundred thousand dollars [for the church] in the bank today, and that's been 9 or 10 years ago. (JS, lines 340-343)

All of the participants displayed that same spirit of service, wherein, they volunteered in the community through their prospective churches or other service connected organizations. All of the volunteering has been done right there within the community of Acres Homes. Eva Anderson shared two situations which she was proud of concerning

her work history. She began working after high school, working as a clerk and salesperson in a cemetery. After being married for a while, she stopped working, because her husband did not want her to work, but the financial responsibility of her child led her to return to work. After she and her husband divorced, she returned to the cemetery as a sales person. Upon returning, she was able to literally make history:

When I went back to [the cemetery] in sales, my husband and I divorced, so when I went back to [the cemetery] I didn't go inside, I was an outside salesperson, and the year that I went to sell I was the only female salesperson at the time and that first year I went back I made history at the cemetery because I didn't miss a week selling. That first year I would say it had never been done for a female to not miss a week, I sold every, every week, so I had a big write up in the paper back then, I was proud of that. (EA, lines 206-212)

Eva seemed to excel in whatever she set her mind to do. While working at Paradise Cemetery, she took on a second job with the school district. She soon excelled in that position as well. She was proud of how she was able to handle the various responsibilities that she was faced with while working with the Aldine school district:

I started working for Paradise and subbing in the school district, Aldine. So, I subbed about ten years then one day my, ah, principal came to me and said "Miss Anderson, you know, I really like your work, I want you to stop working, I'm a put somebody in your class," cause I was opening up school, I was opening school and closing school, can you believe that? So, she said, "I want you to go to central office and sign up because we're going to make A.B. Anderson

Academy and I want you to be part of my staff.” So I signed on when A.B.

Anderson became academy, and I worked there until ‘08 and I retired. So what I did, I purchased my sub years to add to my regular years and I had too many years, total. (EA, lines 213-222)

Each participant had their own story of success that was just as important and special as the others that were shared. I was much honored to be able to share in their individual experiences. Siddle Walker (2000, 1996) and Morris (2004) speak of Black segregated schools that are noted by community members, teachers, and parents as having been successful in educating their students. The basis of the success came from how students fared once they left the segregated school setting. Students are noted as having achieved high IQ scores, gaining entrance into Ivy League schools, and receiving positions into prominent professional industries (Siddle Walker, 2000).

Closeness: “They were like parents...”

Eva Anderson began with two humorous stories about teachers that literally wanted to adopt her in elementary school and actually went to her mother and pleaded for her mother to give her to them. Her mother endearingly called her “black gal” because she had the darkest complexion in her family, and when the teachers would ask for Eva, her mother would say, “No, I can’t let you have my black gal”. Her narrative was included here as one example of how closely knit the school and the community was:

I had two teachers that wanted to adopt me, Miss Timpson, of the church over here in Acres Home... I can't think of the name, Rev Stewart's church [his] wife was a teacher. And she begged my mom for me and my mom said, "no, I can't let you have my black gal," but she wanted me so bad. And then I had another teacher Mrs. Gammon, Mrs. Timpson was my third grade teacher, and Miss Gammon was my second grade teacher, and she wanted me so bad! I was the darkest one in my family, right, and my mom would always call me "black gal" so any time the teachers would approach her about, "oh please let me have her, I just love her so much" [She would say] "You can't have my black gal." (EA, lines 149-159)

Another aspect that created closeness was proximity in many cases. Teachers lived in the community and owned businesses that were also patronized within the community as well. When Eva Anderson was in elementary school, her principal lived right there next to the school property, "Rufus Conely was the principal at the elementary school and he also lived across the street from the school, and in later years they moved the house to another part of Acres Homes...but he was right there at the school" (EA, lines 29-32). Teachers also lived in close proximity to the school. Mary Johnson spoke of interacting with her teachers outside the school on a regular basis. Eva Anderson discussed how the patronage would bridge the gap between students and teachers as well:

It was good cause a lotta the teachers and things, they lived in the community. So a lot of the businesses was ex-teachers or teachers that was still teaching in the

community when the business was being made because like I said the post office, the drugstore... there was Miss Elmore, she was a teacher; Miss Lewis was not a teacher, but there was Mr. Harrison, Harrison was a teacher, so the same faculty that taught us was the people that really started the first businesses in the Acreage Home area, so that's why we really pull together Like that. No outside person did not come in and start a business... the teachers were the prominent people then, you know, so they were the ones that did the businesses. (EA, lines 326-335)

Another component that fostered closeness was the nature of interaction between teachers and their students. The teachers extended their role beyond the classroom in many cases into a parental roll. Larry Davis discussed the parental nature of the student-teacher relationships:

They were like parents. They were really like parents; we respected them; they got on our "tooty-tooty" when we messed up. They patted us on the back when we done wrong. Whatever they had on they mind they didn't take it from personal perspective. They stayed, they stuck with the issues. If they saw a weakness in us, they pushed us hard. We really didn't understand it at the time, but we were scared not to extend it to the fullest extent of our ability you know during that time. (LD, lines 119-124)

John Smith also shared how he felt comfortable discussing things with his teachers and coaches that he might not have even discussed with his parents. He described the teachers and coaches as being "supportive":

The thing that sticks in my mind as I said earlier was just having some folks you felt comfortable with going to talk to and I guess you call that support. I mean I could go talk to, I would go talk to Mr. Humphries about things that I wouldn't talk to my mother about, or my dad about how I felt...he was going to put you or thump you in your head, or he'll do something to you if you walk by him, and so you had—and that was with all the fellahs—we had that kind of relationship.

That's what I remember about school. (JS, lines 274-281)

Larry Davis also shared recollections of his coaches being like “daddies” to them. They were caring and involved in every aspect of the students' lives. Athletics has always carried a certain parental weight in the area of coaches, but Larry Davis describes his coaches as going above and beyond their call and taking a special interest in the students:

Coaches would check in with teachers. We have to check in [and] we have to turn our grades in to the coach before at every progress report. They would get with the teachers and find out what we had to do and they were like daddies to us. We didn't really appreciate it until after we had graduated and gone. (LD, lines 83-86)

Larry's coach's intervention helped him to stay in school and later go on to receive a full scholarship to college. In hind sight, Larry was able to see how much that decision changed the course of his life. Two other aspects created “closeness” for the schools and their students and the community: PTAs and stability in the community. The PTAs

helped to bridge a gap by bringing the community members “in the know” about the happenings of the school. Lillian Miles shared her recollections:

...well the community would foster certain programs and it would fall under the heading of the PTA, The Parent Teachers Association...I’m talking about the community now, or the band maybe would have community members like the band club for parents. They would interact with the community students, and ah, perhaps I’m thinking about community wise, maybe the fine arts department had organizations that reached out, and of course the sports, of course the sports. And, ah, that’s how we brought in the community. So that’s how the community was brought in. And then the community, the principals would always insist that, ah, the parents would be involved in the teaching sessions or whatever, interactions with their students. (LM, lines 238-250)

Eva Anderson explained how she believed the community was able to remain close, and discussed how the community grew together without much attrition and how students moved up together throughout the grades to create cohesiveness from familiarity, a familiarity that remained intact to this day:

Everybody was pretty much a solid foundation. If you left in 9th grade with x amount of kids, those same kids you’re gonna see them in the 10th grade. It wasn’t no family moving around, relocating during the summer months, it wasn’t any of that. If I started the school—and I think it was a good thing you asked me that—if I started in school with certain amount of family, people, and two, three of them were in my first grade class, I would graduate with those same kids that I

started with. So we had a bond there, and I think that's what made Carver so special because it was home owners purchasing homes, adding on to the home, building the home while the children was being raised and being educated at the same time. It's not that they moved into an already built community. They built their homes, and as the family expanded they expanded their structure as well, so it wasn't a whole lotta moving around. Who we started, the families we started with, we graduated with the same family. So that gave us a whole lotta time to either really gel together, or we just don't like you period, and we pretty much gelled together because we're still close today. Because even now my class, if somebody pass or something, you gonna see about 12 of us that will appear, you know, we just get our phone call, "hey, I'm sorry but blah, blah, blah happened" ...so we still have that same spirit for one another so I think it's the standards that the families laid, that foundation, you know, this is where we will be for x amount of years, so, you know, we just accepted that and learned to live with that, and we learned to get along, not only with our segment of people but community as well. (EA, lines 300-322)

Activities: "...all the sports...I mean we excelled in a lot of stuff"

The extra-curricular activities are a large part of any school unit and were particularly important in the schools that participants attended. Activities—whether sports, choir, or speech and debate—provided another avenue of excellence for the students to achieve. Having a non-academic influence was just as important as an academic one. Mary Johnson recalled participating in events:

They tried to involve me in things that were going on at the school, extra-curricular activities. I was never an athlete, but I did get involved in public speaking programs that they had, spelling bees, things of that type. I had a very good relationship with [my teachers]. (MJ, lines 123-125)

Eva Anderson's face lit up when she spoke of the extra-curricular activities at her school. She was a cheerleader and admitted that during cheerleading season, nothing else mattered. In the heritage theme, she even shared a situation when she was chastised for memorizing cheers but not her homework:

...And we had some good football teams and basketball and all the sports we excelled. I mean, you know Yolanda Adams, her dad, he was in my class, and, ah, he was on the track team at Texas Southern along with two more of the guys that were in my class. I mean, we excelled in a lot of stuff, you know. (EA, lines 92-96)

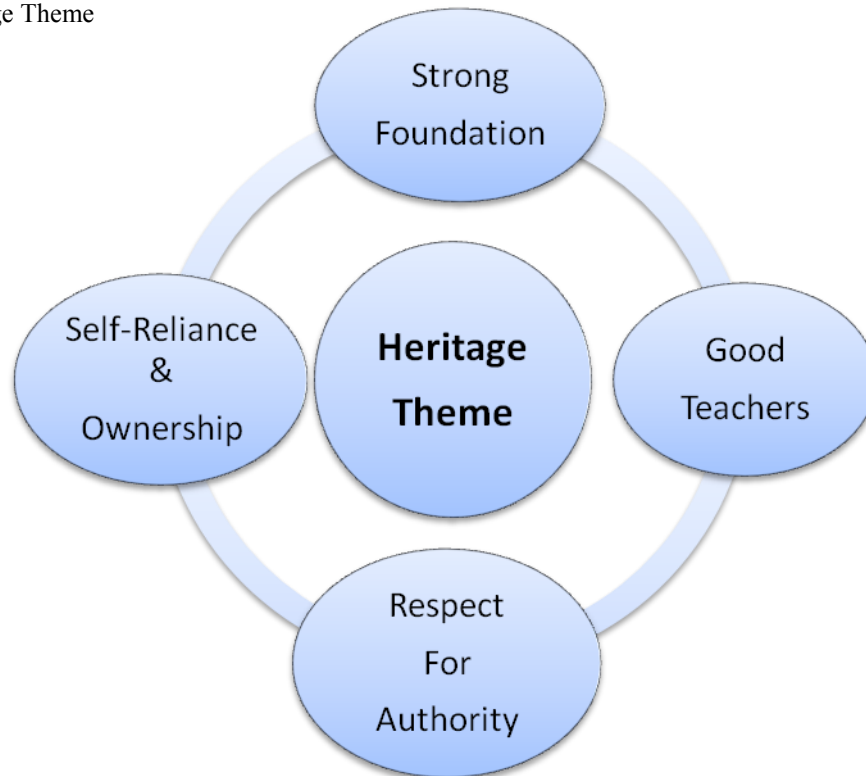
Extracurricular activities were also important because they represented an avenue where students could establish a sense of accomplishment. They were a means of achievement. Larry Davis, an accomplished track star during his high school years, discussed how his high school career centered around athletics:

The teachers had seemed to be concerned and we always were in sports. I mean every...we all played all sports so where everybody knew each other. The happy...so I guess if you just talking about happy times, it would be the school and after school activities which were the athletic part of it because we were all athletes. So that would be the happy, I mean the most memorable. I know I guess

it should be something else but no it was the camaraderie we had going with ourselves. (LD, lines 61-66)

Figure 7 depicts the sub-themes that were present within the heritage theme that emerged within the larger narratives.

Figure 7: Heritage Theme



Theme 2: A Story of Heritage

Strong Foundation: "...it had to be the foundation that was laid"

Eva Anderson expressed that she believed that starter families in Acres Homes "laid a foundation" that would carry on throughout generations. The initial foundation was made with the mindset of building a home, and later a community and that stayed with the people. She shared:

...it had to have been the foundation that was laid. These families came in and they built what they could for a starter, and as they increased in family they added to what they started. And the houses are still there today! (EA, lines 477-480)

Acres Homes appealed to many African American residents because the land was affordable and there were no deed restrictions. It was easy to be able to build.

Larry Davis discussed another way that a foundation was laid in the community, and that was by the coaches teaching the athletes to give back by serving in the community. They did community service regularly within their own community in order to foster a sense of responsibility and pride for their own and appreciation for what they could offer:

Putting back in the community that's another thing because they would always have us out here, I mean the coaches had us be out here at somebody church on the weekend if we didn't do nothing but pick up some paper and that type of stuff, put together car washes then they would give us donations and stuff. Not like they do now, standing on the street corner, we would actually go to the church well some of the churches do that stuff now, but they would take the little money because they knew we needed funds so they would take it and divide it so we would have money in our pockets, so we wouldn't be looking like little rascals I guess. It was those types of relations, more like a parent-child relationship, that's the way we felt. That's the way they made us feel. (LD, lines 148-157)

Coaches also laid a foundation by establishing a legacy whereby those who were successful could come back and be examples and role models for the ones who were still striving to achieve their goals. Larry shared his experience of coming close to quitting school and shared how his coach stepped in, to help him make the right decision. This intervention led to Larry losing his job, but he recounts it as being the one of the single most important events in his life, a truly life-altering decision:

...we were poor kids out here right? And I was a fairly descent athlete. I made the wall of fame. I made the hall of fame in high school. So, my family had got into a rough time and I was working for a service station I knew I was a good worker because the guy kept giving me little bitty raises. I was a junior in high school, and I was making like bout 40 dollars a week and that was a fortune during those particular times back in '64, '65, so I was gonna quit high school and go work full time and the coach found out and actually went over to the... the guy's name was Asap, he was Syrian, Jessie Asap. We called him pop, went over to Papa Asap and told him I had the potential to go forward and I need to give myself a chance, and they were working on me for doing things to come back and show other kids that we can be delivered. (LD, lines 160-169)

Once Larry's boss got word of his decision to quit school, he gave him an ultimatum. When Larry did not choose correctly, his boss made the decision for him. Larry stated that this decision altered his course permanently to an extent that he will never fully realize:

I'm more interested in getting this little 40 dollars than I was of going to school. And if had not been for that incident then I probably would have quit school and no telling what would happen so in order to not ever forget that story and talking about this was back in '65 ah after my first son was born...of course when my first son was born of course we always want to name them after us. I'm the second son he's the third, but when my second son was born 4 years later I named him after Papa Asap. After Asap was born I say, "you know what if this man would have told me, 'ok shortstop I'm a go head and hire you' I probably be out there on the street no telling where my life would have been but because he did not hire me, he was really doing me a favor rather than hurt and I really didn't understand; later on I did". So I named my baby boy after Papa Asap...that was my most significant turning point in my life because if he would have said, 'C'mon in, you're hired,' I probably would have dropped out of school eventually, so since didn't I wound up getting a full ride. Both my children wound up getting a full ride. So that was like a that was well I want to believe that one of the biggest turning points specially during that time in my life well I want to believe that was the most memorable. I'll never be able to forget that. (LD, lines 169-175, 187-208)

Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) and Henry Bullock (1967) describe the closeness that emerged in segregated schooling experiences as "unintended consequences" of segregation, "which promoted a group identity and solidarity that fueled the civil rights movement, ultimately dismantling the system of de jure segregation."(p. 17) Foster

(1997) and Siddle Walker (1996) also discuss the connection between the segregated schools and the Black community where teachers often visited students' churches or their homes in order to foster and strengthen the bond between the school and the home.

Good Teachers: "If I tell you they gave their all, they gave their all..."

Eva Anderson boldly praised the teachers and heralded their efforts. She spoke of how they worked in conditions beyond their control and still managed to provide a stellar education. In the midst of underfunded, overcrowded schools they made win-win situations. In this account, Eva discusses how her high school classes dealt with overcrowded rooms:

And our teachers were some of the best teachers. If I tell you they gave their all, they gave their all, because the conditions that they had to work in, you think about it now, you know, then it was just something to do for teenagers and kids in school but when you think about how they had to share the classroom and when I say it was a lot of kids and I don't know the number for our classroom but every classroom was full. And then it was just only the blackboard and it didn't go up to the ceiling, you know how those old blackboards was made, you know, and the teachers would have to use their side of the blackboard to give us lessons and the other teachers did the same thing. (E.A, lines 109-118)

Lillian Miles shared her sentiments concerning the teachers. Even though she did not agree with everything that she encountered, she still saw her teachers as being thorough and overall good teachers:

I feel like we had a good education. I think the teachers were very thorough, and here again everybody's not the same and I'm not saying that everybody was perfect; not saying that at all, but for the most part teachers really felt like they were teachers and they felt like the students were there to be students and advance...from one year to the other...that's how we felt. (LM, lines 272-277)

Larry Davis made a comparison between the teachers in his era, 60's and the era today, 2011: "Basically, the teachers were poignant. Now it seems that they were just more interested in us trying to obtain as much as we could rather than getting...preparing for a TAKS test is what they [are] doing today" (LD, lines 30-32).

Two participants, Mary Johnson and Eva Anderson spoke about their experiences with their government teacher, Mrs. Lola May Carter. They both shared sentiments of Mrs. Carter's demanding, high expectations and ability to command attention in her classroom. Eva Anderson quoted: "Honey, we learned everything Mrs. Carter wanted us to learn..." She recounted how Mrs. Carter chastised her for knowing her cheers but not memorizing the preamble of the Constitution:

Mrs. Carter...there was a school named after her...she was my History teacher, and she was the one, ah, that was very stern, very, very stern. And I was a cheerleader at the time and I didn't believe in getting my lesson, just wanted to run the field and stuff. So one day I came in class and I was supposed to learn the first, ah, paragraph in the Constitution, I think, the Preamble, yeah. I didn't know it. She said, "Go bump your head on that wall!" So I bumped my head on the wall. She said "Let me tell you something Jackson...I ain't going to call your

momma now” that was my maiden name, “but you going run up and down that field with that history book under your arm until you learn it. Do you hear me young lady?” Honey we learned everything that Mrs. Carter wanted us to learn. She was very good. I really enjoyed her and that was my high school teacher.

(EA, lines 134-144)

Mary Johnson recounts her experiences with Mrs. Carter, who also taught her government, her music teacher, and Mrs. Reece, her homemaking teacher—all teachers that she believed made a positive impact on her during her schooling career:

One of my teachers who was my government economics teacher—and there was a school in Aldine which was named for her, The Lola May Carter Elementary School—Mrs. Carter was my government teacher and she actually taught me the proper way to write a check, and I’ve seen checks that are written in all descriptions and I can immediately detect one which is not written properly, because she taught me how to do that...Another was my music teacher who did more than, ah—she got involved with our family life but she actually taught me the classics in music, and many other things in music that were considered theory and history of certain musicians that I know children today don’t get that. I can think of some of the composers that she taught us about and it was so common to me then, I could recognize their music, their names, and kids now don’t do that unless they are majoring in music. Another is my homemaking teacher which there’s another school in Aldine that is named for her and that’s the Burser Reece Academy, and Mrs. Reece taught me things about home life

that I employ right now, and those things I can appreciate and I consider those pleasant memories and that has lasted with me all this time. (MJ, lines 71-87)

Lillian Miles fondly remembered the genteel nature of her teacher, Mrs. Anita Stewart. She remembered her pleasant disposition. As I noticed Mrs. Miles calm and pleasant disposition, I could see that Mrs. Stewart was someone that she patterned herself after:

Anita Stewart...that's who I thought about all the time. Ahm, she was just a lovely person, never raised her voice, pleasant personality, ahm, you felt very comfortable in her presence, you knew she was interested in you as a person to grow up and help somebody else to do well—that's the main thing. You don't do well just for yourself; you do well to help somebody else, and so that's what she instilled in me. (LM, lines 206-212)

Larry Davis remembered how his English teacher, Mrs. Smith worked to prepare them all for college life. He realized when he received his first paper back that she was right all along:

The few of us that went to college really understood that that first semester when you go to English 131 you find out what she was really trying to teach us. I wrote a paper in blue ink but when I got it back it looked like it was wrote in red ink and corrected in blue ink. Definitely, so that's when it hit us that they were really trying to get us ready to leave outside of Acres Homes. Basically I think the teachers had a real genuine concern about us after high school (LD, lines 86-91).

Larry also recounted that Mrs. Smith would help any student who needed it, and she held the students to a higher standard. She expected them to excel and go beyond the ordinary into the realm of excellence:

...she taught us English and she try all her best to try make us well she didn't try to make us she made us learn English the correct way. Well as correctly as she could make us do it and she gave us all failing marks one time just to show us that it is more to life other than being athletes. We had to put something between the ears. And she had she had a genuine interest in us as individuals rather than just a group that would stay after school because I don't think they actually had what they call tutoring...official tutoring classes during that time everybody that needed help she would make sure we had help. (LD, lines 74-83)

Larry spoke of his teachers going above and beyond their call of duty to make sure that their students succeeded. He made distinctions between his teachers and some of the teachers that he has encountered in this era. He stated that the teachers expected and made the students excel; they did not take “no” for an answer. Failure was not an option:

They forced us...if we had a choice we probably would have been doing something else...but they forced us to participate in debate and speech classes. They forced us to go to study hall—I'm talking about the teachers themselves—they would call home. Not like they do today. They would call home and check with the parents, “did he tell you what his assignment was or did he go over his assignment with you? He has to do such and such things.” And being athletes, we always had extracurricular work, not cuz we were flunking all the time, but

sometimes we would be traveling and we had to do the work to keep the grades up in order to maintain UIL scholastic regulations. But they really they really... they got on us verbally and physically...we got our spanking but we didn't go home crying about it, you know, we just got caught a lot of times. I really feel actually preparing us right now they put something in us that they're not, that a lot of parents are not doing today, and so by them putting it into us a lot of us putting in our kids basically and it made a difference. (LD, lines 97-109)

Larry Davis also discussed how teachers instilled qualities and skills that extended beyond the classroom. For example, his math teacher, Mr. Mack, not only taught math, but he taught students how to do taxes, be their own boss, and secure a financial future. All of this was done on a Sunday afternoon over wieners and kool-aid. Lessons like these were priceless, especially for Davis who went on to employ these methods in his own business.

In her interview with a former student of a Black segregated school, Shircliffe (2001) records that the collaboration between parents and teachers made it difficult for students to “get away with anything” an observation that is consistent with the narratives shared in this study.

Respect for Authority: “We just didn't play around with authority”

All of the participants made distinctions between the youth in their era and the youth of this current generation, which most adults do. For this theme, I have selected excerpts from three of the five narratives. From all three selected excerpts, the narrators discuss the general respect they as students had for those who were in leadership within

their schools. The reasons for the respect varied, but the general theme of respect is the same.

Eva Anderson discussed how she appreciated the context in which she was raised because she believes that it gave her and her classmates a sense of respect. Although there were obvious cases of rebellion, she recounted the fact that there was an overall atmosphere of respect for authority:

I guess I really appreciate the way that I came up because a lot of us kids in my year, a lot of them didn't go to jail and all that crazy stuff that's going on today, you know, we were very sound; we respected leadership; if the teacher say I'm a tell your mommy you might as well say "Please beat me now because my mom going kill me!" I mean that's the respect we had for leadership, you know. We just didn't play around with authority. When we had them in place we knew we had to obey, and that was the golden rule, you know. My mom would tell my teachers that I was the wild one in my family, you know. 'You have her eight hours a day and I expect for you [discipline] her. Eight hours, and you don't have to ask my permission for nothing. If she act up you are to whip her.' So I got a lot of whippings because I acted up. (EA, lines 122-132).

John Smith discussed a situation where he decided to skip school and was caught by the police and taken to his school. His encounter was so poignant that he says he never had that situation again. He only needed to make that mistake once; he did not make it again. The main reason why he did not repeat his mistake was simply because he

did not want to disappoint his elders. His lapse in judgment was a solitary situation, not to be repeated:

Huckabee was the principal at Booker T., but Mr. Humphrey was at Booker T., he was a coach. And Mr. Peevy was there with him, also a coach, and I remember one time I played hooky and got caught, and the police caught me. I played hooky in the cemetery in Washington Avenue of all places. We liked to go down there and drive those tractors under that bridge on Allen Parkway...and when they were building that, I used to like to go down there and drive those tractors. I was in high school, the police caught me and so they took me down, and they got through booking me and they brought me to the school and I got the darnedest whooping from Huckabee...Oh my God he put it on my butt! I'll never forget it because when he hit me dust just flew everywhere. He probably was actually shocked...I didn't know I was that dirty! He walked out his office, he had to take a break, he said, "Don't go nowhere, I'll be right back." And when he come back in, he put it on me again. Never had a problem because I knew it was going happen when I got home, and never had another problem in my life about that. That broke me up, and I think the whipping as well as being embarrassed because, I don't remember who was all there, but I only remember Humphries when they caught me, and Humphries was one of the people that (especially with the fellows) we had somebody we could go talk to. If we were caught doing something wrong it wasn't a good feeling, you know. (JS, lines 113-134)

When Larry Davis was in high school some of the teachers had come to teach at the school from other communities. Though still African American, some of these teachers were from more affluent neighborhoods. Students looked up to them and considered them to have a certain status, “We had a lot of respect because most of the teachers was ‘immigrants’, they were coming out here from third ward over there off MacGregor in better neighborhoods than what we had, so we looked up to them, like Coach Rochelle” (LD, lines 124-127). Coach Rochelle would work to secure jobs for the students in positions that they would not normally be able to get, just to show them that they could reach for something more. This caused students to look up to him because of the status that he had in the community.

Jack Dougherty (1999) in his study on oral histories recounts characteristics of Black segregated schools where he shares, “members of the formerly all-Black school stressed memories of mutual respect between teachers and parents who together made student discipline a virtue in its own right” (p. 717). These efforts were shown in the way that students responded to teachers and administrators.

Self-Reliance & Ownership: “They were teaching us how to create our own economies”

The Acres Homes community was built on self-reliance and ownership. From its inception, Acres Homes represented ownership. Having land that was affordable and viable for farming and planting created a situation where African Americans could create their own little haven. That is exactly what they did. Eva Anderson discussed the beginning expansion of the Acres Homes area:

Acres Homes began to expand in the fifties and sixties...we were pretty much an independent area because we had everything a little city could really wanna have. We had our own post office; we had our own bus company; we had our drug store; we had our own fire department, it was owned...everything was owned by Blacks, I mean blacks owned all of this that I'm naming. (EA, lines 52-58)

The next two excerpts are from Larry Davis's interview. In the first excerpt, he discusses how Coach Rochelle and other teachers worked to teach Davis and his classmates to be self-sufficient. Coach Rochelle provided opportunities for them to expand themselves and exposed them to other avenues that they did not have regular access to, like certain civil positions. These lessons stuck with Davis and are further extended in the second excerpt from Davis's interview. The first excerpt focuses on self-reliance:

Vince Rochelle got half us jobs at Foley's downtown when Foley's wasn't hiring black folks of course we were janitors and we were cleaning up behind people. We were out there on the docks. It gave us a job of valiant work, and mostly he did a lot of that for the football team then knew because was director of civil service for the City of Houston up under, well along Capt. Carol Lynn during that particular time. It was like several of us that was able to pass the test and get into the police department, I was one of them but I chose not to peruse the law enforcement like some of the other guys did. They told us, had us reaching for stuff that they knew that some of us would never really obtain, but if we fail short we would be better then what we were. They showed us how to economize, and what I mean by that, at that time I believe shoes I think was like 69 or 79

dollars a pair, but John Hoya downtown sold an imitation shoe that look just like John Hoya, and you can go buy 3 pair for 70 dollars and change shoes 3 or 4 times rather than buy that one pair and wear them out, and you didn't have the versatility to change your wardrobe and I'm put it like that. Instead of going to Florsheim buying these expensive hats, we would go to W. T. Grant. It showed us the value of money basically and not trying just because Jones lives next door and he has it and you know where you are, you really can't afford it. But you can still look like you can have it. Other words, don't let people tell you, "He ain't worth it or don't let people tell you that he ain't as good, things like that." They instilled that in to us and matter of fact, I still do some of that stuff today. They put a suit on sell for 300 dollars I see where I can find me two suits for 300 dollars. 'Cause one grey, one black suit, they then change 4 different ways.

Those kinds of things has really stuck with us. (LD, lines 127-148)

Larry goes on to discuss how along with teaching students to be self-sufficient and reliant, they also taught them ownership. This is one of the philosophies that he used to eventually go on and own his own business and groom his children to own their own businesses as well. He believes that 'he who controls the money, controls the man' so to speak. This is not a concept that has been prevalent within the African American community in Davis's opinion:

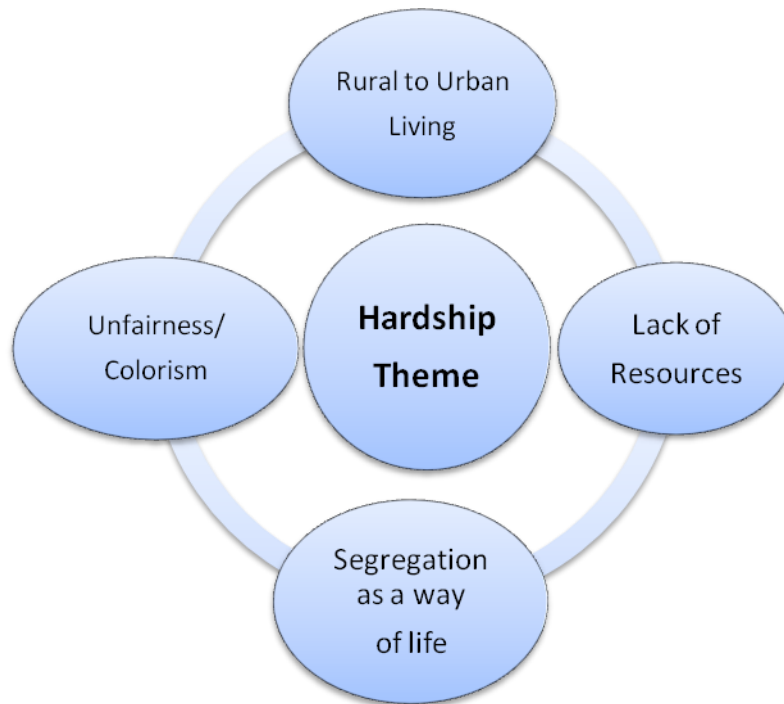
We felt that the other culture was telling their kids you go to school and get a good education so you can make money. There is a difference in getting a job and making money. If you're making money that means you can own the job. If

you get the job, somebody else owns the job and you are just there making the money, but we really didn't understand jobs were laymen jobs basically, and they were not the most desired jobs during that particular time. Even though they were respectful because it was a honest living but they didn't give you the cloth because if you're parent worked for the post office or was a teacher then you were considered "high side". If your parents did anything other than that then it was kind of like, "Can I be part of...?" and those kinds of things. So to keep us from feeling like we were pleading to get accepted they were teaching us how to create our own economics. (LD, lines 278-287)

Ownership has multiple meanings and those meanings are further discussed in the Chapter VII. In this sense, ownership went beyond just owning physical property into attributing a sense of pride for a community and the contents of that community, which included the schools. For the participants, having a sense of pride in the community was immensely powerful because it bred a connectedness that otherwise would not have existed.

Figure 8 depicts the sub-themes that emerged within the hardship theme, wherein the participants discussed some of the struggles they faced during and after their schooling experiences.

Figure 8: Hardship Theme



Theme 3: A Story of Hardship

Rural to Urban Living: “Third Ward was totally different from midnight Acres Homes”

Rural living presented itself as one of the hardships that Eva Anderson faced. Having to deal with and adjust to the vastly different conditions of going from a more metropolitan area to a completely rural one presented its own obstacles and difficulties for Eva Anderson. Though she came to grow completely fond of the Acres Homes area, she still vividly remembered her struggles in “midnight Acres Homes” as she referred to it:

Third Ward was metropolitan compared to the Acreage Homes area because you had indoor facilities like your bath and lights...when we moved to the Acreage Homes area, here we had this outhouse, here we had these kerosene lamps, and

it's pitch black, and I cried for a whole week. I thought my daddy had lost his mind. I mean it was just so totally different from the Third Ward to the midnight Acreage Homes. (EA, lines 35-40)

On top of dealing with the outside facilities and kerosene lamps, they had to work around giant potholes that were made in their dirt roads from the heavy machinery trucks that the neighbors drove up and down on the roads. Mary Johnson recounted how students played basketball outside year round on dirt courts. The sentiments of both were the same, "it was awful, but that's what we had...you know, we had to live with that" (EA, lines 46-47).

Lack of Resources: "We were very poor..."

This issue of a dearth of resources was mentioned in some way by all of the participants, but it was strongest in Eva Anderson's interview. I think the transition from metropolitan to rural made a distinctive mark on her, but she also experienced an unmistakable situation her senior year that etched this memory of a lack of resources in her mind. Her senior graduation was delayed because the Aldine district ran out of money and G.W. Carver was closed down. This was an encounter that Eva did not forget. She vehemently shared this information:

Our books was books that the white school had used and they had used them for x amount of years you could tell because all the place where you sign your name in the text book, they were all filled in, so when we got the book they would have to give us a marker and put a number up there for us to indicate it had been issued by number, you know, I didn't even have space to write my name, and the

books were very, I mean, dilapidated, you know, some of the pages were gone and everything. We didn't get any new books or anything and this is very important too I should let you know this... during the summer of 1958 Aldine went broke, we did not graduate, my class did not graduate until June of 59 because they went broke. Instead of having our, you know, our baccalaureate all that in May, we didn't have ours until June, 'cause they was broke, and although we was paying our taxes and everything. (EA, lines 96-110)

There were other ways in which the schools compensated for overcrowding or not having enough materials. Eva Anderson shares two situations, the first being in elementary school and the second being in high school. Although the schools were small, their student body had outgrown the building, so in elementary school, A. B. Anderson, the school day was split where half of the children went to school from morning to noon, and the other half attended from noon until 3:30:

When we got to the third grade, there were so many students we had to split the schedule—X amount of kids would go from eight until 12, and then X amount of kids would come and go from 12 until 3:30 because we didn't have adequate space for all the children. (E A, lines 14-17)

In high school, the overcrowding issue persisted; however, instead of splitting the school day, classrooms were separated by the use of a portable blackboard. Eva noted issues of noise and heat amid the overcrowding:

When I got to high school, it was the same problem, only they did not split all the time through the day. They would use blackboards to divide the regular

classroom and have a class on one side of the blackboard and a class on the opposite side of the blackboard. (EA, lines 22-26)

The issue of poverty was mentioned in most of the narratives but none of them discussed poverty as an issue that hindered them from going forward or as an excuse for not achieving certain goals. They all saw it as a surmountable obstacle. Eva Anderson discussed that most of the residents were poor, but their families were able to work around the issue. She saw poverty as being an issue for the school district more so than for the individual families:

Being in school...being at Carver and A.B. Anderson, we were very poor and I think everybody was pretty much poor. There were some that were probably elite but they were so far and in between and among us blacks so there was no high class people, even though their daddy might have worked at the waterfront or whatever, we was all pretty much on the same level because it seemed like at that particular time all families had lotta kids, you know, 'cause there was five in my family, five of us, you know, a lot of kids. So it wasn't a problem there but the problem was with the school system. (EA lines 83-91)

John Smith put a humorous spin on his outlook of not having enough books. He said that the students did not mind not having a book to take home. They did not go without; they just had to share with their partner in order to receive the lesson:

Sometimes we would not have enough books, ok, and as a child we kinda took that as an advantage. We did not, ah mean, we had the books but sometimes they didn't have all the books that we needed for every person. We shared books in

some of the classes that I attended, alright. And I will say the biggest part of that is that Wesley School, that they didn't have the books, all of them, we did not go without books, because I could look at yours, and I can remember some of us may have thought that that was a little advantage to not have the books to take home I don't know. (JS, lines 196-204)

Segregation as a way of life: "When you don't have you can't miss..."

For all of the participants in this discussion, segregation simply seemed to be a way of life. John Smith expressed, "I guess when you don't have, you can't miss...and whatever they had then, we did not have, so I didn't get up every morning and miss it or getting up every morning and going to look for it" (JS, lines 92-94). His sentiments mirrored those of the other participants. Although they knew that segregation existed, it was not the topics of their conversations. They lived their lives as they were:

Well the teachers handled it because it seemed to be the way of life, the way it was. And we dealt with it the way it was, even though we would know the difference. We would get second-hand books, and certainly there would be interaction between teachers, you know, and they would be so damaged, the second-hand books. So then the principals began to interact with the school boards and all so that's how they handled it. (MJ, lines 259-264)

Mary Johnson described segregation as being "such an accepted thing." I believe that in most situations they simply made adjustments to be able to survive within society. It simply became the norm:

I think I remember one or two instances but I think because segregation was such an accepted thing, it was not a great issue at that time to us in high school. I remember, ah, on a couple of occasions, and it could be that I heard it from my mom, that we received some equipment of books after they had been used by students in the white school which was Aldine High School. When we would get them they would have other names in them other than the students at Carver.

(MJ, lines 149-155)

Most did not see themselves as “seeing the effects” of segregation until they left their community. They did not view having their “own” community as being segregation because it was their normal mode of living. Whenever they operated outside of the “norm” such as attempting to go to the public theatre, they encountered what they believed to be “segregation.” Though Eva was vehemently bothered by the conditions that caused her graduation to be delayed, she markedly states, “I didn’t really just say feel it until I just got out in the workplace and stuff like that, but then of course I saw a lot of that then, you know, but you just have to deal with it one on one, you know” (EA, lines 430-432). It seems that the covert racism of segregated housing and institutional racism of disparity of resources was looked upon as the norm, not necessarily considered segregation. However, the more overt instances such as denial of entry into a restaurant or theatre, or being physically accosted by a white person was seen as being effects of segregation.

John Smith recounts being with a girl who could pass for white and both of them going to the local theater. John Smith is light complexioned as well. They got inside

because she bought the tickets, but once he was discovered, they were both asked to leave:

And when you went downtown you couldn't go to some of those theaters...unless you... went to Lincoln theater, and I did go to one, ah, with a lady out here, a young girl, her name was Mary Paige, and Mary Paige looked white so we went to the Majestic theater, yeah, and she got in and she got two tickets and then I went in. The lady came and asked us to leave. (JS, lines 309-314)

Eva and Larry discussed two different encounters. Eva's encounter occurred right after high school and Larry's encounter occurred during his high school years with the granddaughter of his employer. For Eva, coming face to face with an overt act of racism was enough to make her change career paths. For Larry coming in contact with a situation of prejudice caused him to question some of his decisions:

Eva

So I was at the first stage of the practical, so I was over on North MacGregor, that's in the Third Ward area, and I was doing my training work at this nursing home, at the time we had starched, ah, uniforms, you know, so here I am, little old petite thing in a pretty starched uniform and I'm just feeding very patiently, I'm just feeding this white lady. I'm just feeding her, feeding her, and it dawned on me she wasn't swallowing, she just kept getting the food in her mouth, so I stopped and I was feeding her spinach, right, so I said to her, "you are not swallowing" and she turned round, looked at me and she said (making a spitting

sound) it landed right here (She points to her chest) I held the tray, and I always had a temper, I just stood up and my hand just started shaking, and I, “Do I kill her...or do I get somebody else to kill her?” My hands were shaking! I flew out the room and went to the nurse’s station and I said, “Oh my God, she spit on me, she spit on me!” I was just hysterical. And the supervisor, she said, “I know who did that. She said come on we’re gonna wash your uniform”, she said “come in the laundry room, we’ll take care of you.” I don’t know exactly what they did but they took care of that issue. But after that I finished the course, mind you, but I couldn’t, I just couldn’t do it because my temper wasn’t in check and if somebody else was to have done that to me it would have been jail time for me, and I know that ‘cause...Oh Lord, even now, you know? (EA, lines 173-193)

Eva recognized that she could not deal with the effects of overt segregation and racism, so she changed her career path. As she stated, “my temper wasn’t in check...it would have been jail time for me...” (EA)

Larry

His little granddaughter came in while I was sitting in the car wash and she said, “Larry, Larry, what’s...” I don’t know what you want to call it, “...what flies in the air and goes from city to city?” I say, “What?” I’m like 15 or 16 she said, “An airplane.” I said, “Oh ok.” Then she said, “What’s black and goes from door to door and goes dig doing?” I said, “I don’t know what?” She said, “A black Avon lady.” And the little kid was only like 3 or 4 and people have been saying be aware of this be aware of this and all this type of stuff until it really just hit

you basically. So I'm thinking, here I'm am thinking, I am one of the best workers that they have, I know I do good work though cause they're always praising me and patting on my back and stuff but you know what they're talking about at their kitchen table, so this little kids had to learn this somewhere. (LD, lines 175-185)

This situation with this little toddler telling a racist joke caused Larry to question who was teaching her such things. He had to re-evaluate this family that he had come to see as a surrogate family. Although that situation remained in the back of his mind, he continued to keep in touch with Papa Asap, his employer, and even name his second born son after him. Without realizing it, Larry had participated in hegemony—an instance in which you participate in your own oppression. Instead of Larry's employer's hegemonic practices causing a set-back for Larry, they cause him to go forward, even though he still chose to name his son after the employer.

Unfairness/Colorism: "Favoritism was prevalent..."

This last theme emerged from Lillian Miles's interview. Although she expressed her accolades for the efforts of the majority of the teachers she encountered, she did have an unpleasant experience that she believed shaped her personal philosophy of education. Being of a darker complexion, she felt as though her teacher, an African American woman, showed favoritism towards the lighter complexioned students. Colorism has been a prevalent issue within the African American community and has been traced back to treatment differences during slavery. In Chapter VII an indepth discussion of colorism and its prevalent within the African American community is discussed. Kerr (2005)

discusses the lore of the “brown paper bag test” (if you were darker than the brown paper bag you were shunned and placed in one category; if you were the same complexion as the paper bag, you were placed in another category of acceptance; if you were lighter than the paper bag, you were placed in an even higher category of eliteness and social acceptance), and how it has emerged within the African American community as a notion of inclusion or exclusion. Lillian Milies, though not the only participant of a darker complexion, was the only participant who expressed having this issue during her schooling experience:

Let me say...hasten to say, overall we had good teachers. Overall teachers were concerned about the advancement of the students, and most teachers were familiar with the community and with the parents, and usually they had a good rapport with parents. Usually teachers were respected as teachers. The parents respected them and the students respected them as teachers, and of course that was a good thing. On the other hand the human element came in to that, and favoritism was prevalent, and so I experienced some of that, and vowed that, that would not be my forte in dealing with students. If you were not very, very fair in your complexion you were put to the side even though no matter what your ideas were, what your thoughts were, the favoritism went to the light skinned child. So I experienced that. Ahm, that’s what stands out for me. Well this was an English teacher. I didn’t experience that till I got to Houston. All the others through elementary and junior high, ah, the teachers...I don’t think I experienced that. But when I got to Houston, this was one of the primary English teachers, and it

was the main teacher used for graduating classes in English and Literature, and she was very, very prejudiced against the dark skinned students. no verbal abuse, I don't think, can't remember no verbal, but, ahm, actions...actions...actions. She surrounded herself with the light complexioned students all the time, and no matter what the class would need to know or questions to ask or what have you [the darker complexioned students] were primarily ignored. (LM, lines 147-178)

Although Lillian did have other prevalent positive experiences, this particular experience has created an indelible mark in her memory for over 76 years.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the essential components of thematic analysis, the method of narrative analysis used to analyze the data in order to describe how I discerned overarching themes and sub-themes that emerged across and within the larger narratives. I then commented on the literature related to each of the themes that I found in the narratives: happiness, heritage, and hardship. The findings of the study section of the chapter detailed examples of how these themes and sub-themes were manifested among the participants' narratives, throughout their experiences, and in their post high school endeavors. In the final chapter of this study, I begin with a discussion of the findings, then I address my conclusions regarding the former students' overall experiences while attending school in the Acres Homes area and give implications for further research.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The intent of the project was to give voice to African American former students who attended school in a Houston community by offering thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of their experiences during the years 1935 to 1965. This was accomplished by providing the reader with the verbatim participant comments included in Chapters V and VI. In addition, the findings detailed in those chapters represent my interpretations of the participants' words based on critical reflections on what I was told.

In this final chapter, I give a discussion and provide a conclusion to the study by considering the collective stories of African American former students. I describe my understanding of how they made meaning of their lived experiences. Finally, the chapter concluded with recommendations for future research. Even though this study is case specific, there are numerous possibilities for tying it to other research or for extending the project.

Discussion

In this study, five different persons' experiences in attending a Black segregated school were conceptualized. These noted experiences shed light on what it is like to attend a Black segregated school in the Acres Homes area from 1935-1965. These accounts take place both before and after the dawn of the *Brown v Board Education* (1954) landmark decision. These accounts had three themes that emerged within and from the broader narratives. I derived at the three themes presented in this study from

interpreting the participants' words and attributing specific meaning to those words. When themes emerge within a larger narrative, they serve as general thematic stories that are being told with several other stories that have a similar premise and in many cases represent a dichotomy or oxymoron of sorts. The themes presented here were happiness, heritage, and hardship.

Happiness

Happiness was chosen as a prevailing theme because the stories shared carried a prevailing theme of jubilation and enjoyment. It might seem an insane notion that one could have a "happy" experience in segregated schools, created by a system that has been jaded by pervasive racism and inequality; however, in the case of these students there were pertinent fixtures that led to that happiness. The segregated schooling experience brought about a certain connectedness for students and teachers: belonging, family, love, support. Because of the instability of the times and the racial tension, a haven was created for students; wherein, they could be prepared for and protected from the dangers that they would face in society as a whole.

Several factors were present that brought students joy during this time period and it is important to highlight those moments that show how the participants made sense of their circumstances. Contrary to reports that students in segregated schools were deprived and lacked culture, these participants shared that they enjoyed spending time with their friends and learning new concepts, participated in extra-curricular activities that were enriching and fulfilling and had a closeness with each other that extended beyond the schoolhouse and through the school years into adulthood. Unbreakable bonds

were formed that created a cohesiveness that remained for many years. In addition to these occurrences, they achieved personal goals during and after school that they were proud of, achievements that were the products of lessons and interactions they had during their schooling experiences.

The sub-theme, “Enjoyable Atmosphere” is affirmed by the literature. Even in the midst of societal turmoil and unrest, the participants saw their experiences in the segregated schools as “enjoyable.” Shircliffe (2001) mentions the recollections of “good times” as being a form of “nostalgia” for participants of Black segregated schools. She posits, “Despite the social inequities imposed by segregation, these former students and teachers often had positive experiences growing up and going to school, testifying to the strengths of the black community” (Shircliffe, 2001, p. 65). The participants in this study recalled fun times that they had with their peers as well as their teachers. They did not see the existing restrictions of segregation as a hindrance to their enjoyment; instead, they found joy in their surroundings.

In the landmark case *Brown v Board of Education*, one of the prevailing arguments was the detriment of segregated schooling on African Americans. The belief was that it created a notion of inferiority within the African American child (Green, 2004). What was not readily discussed was the successes that did emerge out of the segregated schooling experience. The sub-theme “Personal Success” is consistent with the literature discussed in this review, whereas, scholars such as Siddle Walker and Morris, address the multitude of successes that were birthed out of the segregated schooling experience. Success in this sense was defined by the participants in

representing accomplishments and endeavors that they were essentially proud of. Siddle Walker (2000, 1996) and Morris (2004) speak of Black segregated schools that are noted by community members, teachers, and parents as having been successful in educating their students. The basis of the success came from how students fared once they left the segregated school setting. These “successes” ranged from achieving high IQ scores, to gaining entry into Ivy League schools, and securing prominent positions into certain professional industries.

The notion of “Closeness” is affirmed in the literature in different ways. The participants spoke of having teachers and adult leaders within their schools who were akin to surrogate parents. Students were able to depend on them just as they could depend on a parent or guardian. Foster (1997) and Siddle Walker (1996) discuss this same close-knit, family-like community that was created within the segregated schooling experience. Bullock (1967) describes this “closeness” as an “unintended consequence” of segregation. It allowed a community to be formed wherein the members within could rely on one another. The sub-theme, Closeness is affirmed by the literature. In essence, the teachers within these schools had to prepare their students to face and overcome many obstacles, so the teachers and administrators took a personal and vested interest in the students that they cared for. They knew that they had a personal responsibility for each student, for the students were an extension of the teachers themselves.

“Activities” emerged as a sub-theme because it was a major part of what made the schooling experience “happy” for the participants. It also proved to be a factor that was consistent with the literature. Students were involved in various activities ranging

from extra-curricular sports to spelling bees, choir, cheerleading, and debate. All of these activities helped to enhance the participants' schooling experiences. Siddle Walker (2000) discusses the importance of infusing activities within the curriculum and the impact it had on students:

As evidenced by the curriculum and extracurricular activities, the segregated school apparently supported the private and classroom messages of teachers and principal, reinforcing the aspirations that students could grow up to "be somebody." By "being somebody," the teachers and principals suggest that students were not to feel bound by the segregated world in which they lived, but were to be made to believe that if they worked hard enough they could "be anything they wanted to be." (267)

The idea of having extra-curricular activities helped to prepare students for the future and gave students an outlet to explore their value, worth, and strengths. It allowed students to feel like they were "somebody".

Heritage

Heritage was chosen as another prevailing theme because of the agency that existed within the Black segregated schooling experience. Segregated schooling birthed the unintended outcome of agency: the collective unification of a group to accomplish a goal. Because there were no others to depend on or create situations, those in the Black segregated schooling community were forced to create situations for themselves. From this manufactured situation emerged the building of strong foundations because there was uncertainty about what would be faced outside of the community to be able to

compete. Good teachers emerged in the way of feeling compelled to prepare their students to deal with the harsh realities they faced and those that were unknown. Teachers gained the respect of the students because they were their lifelines. The students saw that the teachers and administrators cared, so the respect was given and a sense of respect was reiterated by the family because of the reality that, “we are all we have.” There was no other option. They needed each other in order to pave the way and survive. Self-reliance was taught as a skill of survival in knowing that there may not be a way provided; therefore, one has to be created.

The sub-theme, “Strong Foundation” is consistent with the literature in that it discussed the “agency” that was birthed from being in a forced segregated setting. By having a forced separatism, the African American community developed a sense of community and belonging. In essence, the community in this study was able to grow and expand together, thereby creating a legacy and foundation that would transcend generations. When the Acres Homes area was founded, African Americans built their homes in the area because the land was affordable and due to the restrictions of the times, that was one of the few areas designated for African Americans. They built their homes there because they could not go elsewhere. After they began to build their lives in the area, they stayed because of the closeness and the bonds that had been formed, the community that was built and a pride of living in the Acres Homes community. Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) and Henry Bullock (1967) describe the closeness that emerged in segregated school experiences as “unintended consequences” of segregation, “which promoted a group identity and solidarity that fueled the civil rights movement, ultimately

dismantling the system of de jure segregation.” Foster (1997) and Siddle Walker (1996) also discuss the connection between the segregated schools and the Black community where teachers often visited students’ churches or their homes in order to foster and strengthen the bond between the school and the home. The communities formed via segregation created foundations on which generations after them could stand.

“Good Teachers” is a sub-theme that is consistent throughout the literature within the counter narrative. The master narrative of prevalent literature depicts teachers of Black segregated schools being under-prepared and as less skilled; however, in the literature provided in this study and in the findings from the narratives collected, the notion of “Good Teachers” is a constant sub-theme. Teachers in the Black segregated school community had to be “all things for all people.” They were more than just teachers. They were trailblazers, activists, counselors and guardians (Fultz, 1995). Teachers had to prepare students for the unexpected. In her interview with a former student of a Black segregated school, Shircliffe (2001) records that the collaboration between parents and teachers made it difficult for students to “get away with anything” an observation that is consistent with the narrative shared in this study.

The sub-theme, “Respect for Authority” is consistent with the literature presented here. Many of the participants expressed their discontent for the interactions that they have witnessed between the younger generation and the older generation of this era. They believe that there has been a loss of respect. In their recollections, respecting authority was not an option for them during their childhood, but it was an expectation. Jack Dougherty (1999), in his study on oral histories, recounts characteristics of a Black

segregated school where he shares, “members of the formerly all-Black school stressed memories of mutual respect between teachers and parents who together made student discipline a virtue in its own right” (p. 717). By teachers and parents working as a collaborative unit, students saw teachers as an extension of the parents, and they extended the same amount of respect to teachers as they did to their parents.

An emergent sub-theme that was new was the notion of “Ownership & Self-Reliance.” This concept emerged with many implications for the segregated schooling experience. Participants each had an individual perspective of ownership and self-reliance as it relates to their segregated schooling experience. Because the community of Acres Homes was a developing community, students and their families grew with the community. As the families expanded, so did the community. In particular, because the segregated experience was one of “forced separatism,” community members were forced to “create their own.” The entities created within this community gave its members a sense of “ownership” because they were the originators of these entities. Within this community, the members formed their own bus company, drug stores, post office, fire department, and independent businesses. This created a sense of ownership because the community developed these entities for and by themselves. This ownership that was created came with a sense of pride because the schools and the community were “theirs”; they belonged to them. This is a notion of segregated schooling that is commonly overlooked. There is an immense power that comes with the feeling of pride from having something that is your own. In many current urban schooling situations, there is not connectedness. Students do not feel as though the schools that they attend are

“theirs.” Because the students do not have that sense of connectedness, there is no sense of pride. The results in achievement reflect the lack of pride and connectedness.

Self-reliance was thereby instilled into the youth of the community. The participants were taught that if they were to forge ahead, they would have to learn to create their own opportunities and not wait on or expect anyone else to “give” those opportunities to them. This sense of self-reliance strengthened the participants and allowed them to become self-sufficient. They spoke of the differences between their generation and that of the youth of today. There is something to be said for a generation in which many things have been “given” and not “earned.” The participants feel as though growing up in a segregated society caused them to be more self-sufficient and to learn to create their own paths. On the other hand, the current generation has not had to unify to “fight” for certain rights, and therefore, has not built the inner self-reliance to create their own pathway.

Hardship

The Hardship theme emerged based on the obstacles that participants shared in their stories and certain issues they mentioned as having arisen during their schooling experience that were a reflection of the times. Though the hardship narrative exists, participants did not see it as an excuse for not excelling. In fact, it was used as fuel to overcome and surmount the obstacles that were presented. Interestingly, participants saw hardships present with segregated schooling when situations were more overt but did not view the more covert situations, such as the daily operational system of segregation as a

hardship. Their response to the hardship narrative was the other two narratives. In spite of the hardships that were present, a heritage was formed that gave birth to happiness.

Another theme that is discussed in the literature is “Rural to Urban Living”. This sub-theme was an emergent sub-theme within the Hardship theme, specifically because it presented a difficulty for some of the participants. Communities that were rural and developing dealt with certain issues that other more urbanized communities did not face. In particular having access to certain resources such as consistent electricity and plumbing was a factor that made the schooling experience relatively difficult for the participants. In some situations, students would have to play basketball on a dirt court instead of a paved one. These were some of the inhibitors that participants and their families worked around in order to have a quality education. Most rural schools received that brunt of neglect simply because they may have been more difficult to access. Often times, the schools did not have adequate transportation for the students to get to and from school. Barr (1976) discusses some of the difficulties that rural schools in Texas faced.

Also consistent with the literature is “Lack of Resources.” Much of the literature discusses the issue of Black segregated schools not having enough resources for their schools. Though this is seemingly an obvious issue, it was added here as a sub-theme because it emerged as one of the factors in “hardship” for the participants. The differing factor in this study is that though lack of resources existed, this factor did not hinder students from getting an adequate education. They and their teachers were able to compensate for what they did not have. While some of the literature sees the lack of

resources as a deficit and negative stint against segregated schools, in this study it is depicted as a mere factor that lead to a greater sense of resiliency for teachers and students. Siddle Walker (2000) also mentions the lack of resources that were prevalent in many of Black segregated schools; however, she presents this as mere fact of the times and not as a deficit for Black segregated schools.

“Segregation as a Way of Life,” is a sub-theme that negates what exists in extant literature. In this study, participants did not see segregation as a major factor in their endeavors. They were not active participants in dismantling segregation nor did they remember any prevalent instances where they or their counterparts openly fought against segregation (with the exception of one participant who did participate in a sit-in). For the most part, participants saw segregation as the way of the world and they found ways to maneuver through it. They did not seek to openly “buck” the system. This does not mean that they were passive; it simply means that they sought other means to deal with their segregated situations. Scholars such as Siddle Walker (2000), Cecelski (1994) and Morris & Morris (2002) all discuss overt actions that former students took to fight against segregation; however, the participants in this study found ways to simply deal with their forced separatism and excel anyhow.

As the last sub-theme, an issue that emerged was “Unfairness” & “Colorism” which is a new concept that was not addressed in the literature. It is considered new in this study because it is not discussed in the literature relating to segregated schooling experiences. This sub-theme emerged as a part of the hardship experienced by one of the participants who felt she was a victim of unfair treatment by her African American

teacher because the participant was of a darker complexion than some of the other students. The participant recalled that this was the treatment that she and other darker complexioned students received. She believed that this treatment showed unfair favoritism towards the lighter complexioned students while the darker complexioned students were ignored. This is listed here as “Unfairness” and “Colorism” to address the issue and a possible cause for the issue. The “Unfairness” exists in the teacher’s perceived favoritism towards one group of students and denying that same attention to the participant and the other students. The “Colorism” exists in the underlying reason for the favoritism and unfairness, with the lighter complexioned students being favored or the darker complexioned students.

This notion of “Colorism” is discussed by Kerr (2003); whereas, the complexion extends access to certain things within the African American community. The “brown paper bag test” as it is referred to, is a test used to compare the “lightness” or “darkness” of your skin to a brown paper bag: equivalent to or lighter than the paper bag meant certain privileges; whereas, darker than the paper bag meant being excluded. There are many variations of “Colorism” and instances wherein it was exercised. In the case of Lillian Miles, colorism meant not having equal access to the teacher. This is an experience that made an indelible mark on the participant who, after 75 years, still vividly remembers this experience. Although there were many cases of stellar teachers, as the participant pointed out, there were cases of unfairness spurred by colorism.

Conclusions

According to narrative researchers (e.g Briggs, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1900), it is important to not only listen to what people say, but how they say it. When individuals tell their stories they selectively relate information. The more complex or further back the information, the more difficult it is to recall. My job here was not to determine “truth” as it relates to broader perspective, but it was to discover what the participants’ *formulated truth* was. Therefore, I was to determine how the participant made meaning of his or her situation by paying attention to specific cues: repetition, voice inflection, pauses, and non-verbal communication. In conducting this information, I was not asking participants to recall all events specifically as they happened and how they happened; I was not looking to do an in-depth history lesson or chronology of events. Instead, I was looking for what was important to the participant and why.

For instance, when I asked Lillian Miles what she remembered about her teachers, she immediately said, “the unfairness.” After realizing the negative connotation of her response, she began to explain that the majority of the teachers were fair and balanced. However, although it was true that she did encounter many fair and balanced teachers, the narrative that prevails in her mind is that of the unfairness. That is the narrative that I wanted to know more about, if she was willing to share. Willingness or unwillingness to share components of a narrative also sheds light on how meaning was made. In this study, my goal was to help make meaning of those experiences.

So in the case of former students who attended Black segregated schools in the Acres Homes Community, there are many insights. Unlike much of the extant literature

which attempts to depict Black segregated schools, teachers, and students in a negative and inferior light, for the participants in this study, the experience was a positive one.

There was happiness, heritage and hardship. In essence it took the hardship to bring forth the heritage which led to the happiness.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study attempted to relate the experiences of African American former students who attended Black segregated schools in a Houston community during the years 1935-1965. Thus far, although there are strides that have been made, there is still room in the literature to understand the Black segregated schooling experience and its related components. There are numerous ways in which scholars could continue the research initiated in this study. Some possible suggestions are listed below:

- 1) Impact of desegregation on the African American community
- 2) The desegregation process in Houston within Houston Independent School District and outlying independent school districts.
- 3) The impact of desegregation on African American teachers and administrators
- 4) Re-segregation within urban schools
- 5) The impact of class differences on the relationship between African American teachers and students
- 6) Student-teacher dynamics of class and color differences
- 7) Experiences of those who attended both segregated and the first newly integrated schools

- 8) In a similar vein, interested scholars could conduct a similar study of the experiences of African American former students who attended a segregated school in smaller communities elsewhere in the nation to help fill the gap in the literature.

The present study represents one account of African American former students' perspectives regarding their experiences in a Black segregated school. The information provided stems from former students who lived in a chosen geographic area, and is therefore site-specific. Additional in-depth, case studies would help to gain a greater understanding of events during these periods. Former students of Black segregated schools have a wealth of wisdom from which much can be learned, but potential research participants are growing fewer in number with each passing year. Those interested in adding to the literature and extending our knowledge must act on their interests with a vehement sense of urgency.

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APPENDIX A

TELEPHONE TRANSCRIPT

Hello,

My name is Tamia McEwen and I am currently doing research on segregated schooling in the Acres Homes area. I am looking to interview anyone who attended segregated schools in Acres Homes between 1935 and 1965. I was hoping that you could connect me with anyone who lived in Acres Homes or attend schools in Acres Homes during that time period.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Voices of African American students who attended black segregated schools before integration

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the African American schooling experience in segregated schools in Acres Homes Houston between 1935 and 1965. The purpose of this study is to understand former students' experiences. You were selected to be a possible participant because you attended a segregated school in Acres Homes between 1935 and 1965.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer some interview questions and talk about your schooling experience. This study will have one initial interview of approximately one hour and a follow up interview of approximately one hour. Your participation will be audio recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated with this study are minimal and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefits of participation are an opportunity to share your experiences and allow your voice to be heard.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential and a pseudonym will be used in place of your name.

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only I and Dr. Norvella Carter will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only I and Dr. Norvella Carter will have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for 3 years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Tamia A. McEwen at 832-309-5662 or e-mail me at tamiamc@gmail.com.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Signature

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study.

_____ I agree to be audio recorded.
_____ I do not want to be audio recorded.

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

PrintedName:

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself: age, family, occupation.
2. Where did you attend high school?
3. What did you do after high school?
4. During what years did you attend high school?
5. I'd like to ask you to take me back to that school in those days and tell me what it was like to be there.
6. What are some of your happy memories there? What are some of your unhappy memories?
7. How do you think being at this school prepared you for life?
8. How did your community make use of your school?
9. What was the relationship like between you and your teachers?
10. How did your teachers handle the issue or topic of segregation?
11. How do you feel about the education you received in your segregated school?

APPENDIX D

ACRES HOMES AREA MAP

