I am Leaving and not Looking Back: The Life of Benner C. Turner

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This dissertation titled
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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the life of Benner Creswill Turner, who was president of South Carolina State College (State College) from 1950 to 1967. On February 8, 1968 there were shootings by police at South Carolina State College, called the Orangeburg Massacre. The prevalent opinion is that the indirect cause of the shootings was due to the poor leadership of the administration at the college, particularly of President Turner. Thus history up to this point has viewed him in a negative manner. However, a new thread of literature has re-examined the lives and administrations of Turner’s contemporaries, placing them and their legacies in a different perspective. Thus this study examined Turner’s legacy and his life outside of the presidency of State College.

This study adopted qualitative research traditions of biography (life history) and case study. I collected and analyzed data through historical primary documents from 12 repositories as well as interviewed 11 information rich participants.

The study revealed significant findings with regards to the life, presidential administration, and legacy of Turner. The data revealed that Turner’s father was influential in shaping Turner’s educational philosophy and approach to administering South Carolina State College. Moreover, the findings show that through institutional
racism, Turner’s career ambition of establishing a law practice in Georgia was stalled, which redirected him into the field of education.

Furthermore, the data uncovers that as president of South Carolina State College, Turner’s perceived conservative attitude towards Civil Rights and segregation was misunderstood. Turner sought the material gain for State College and African Americans in the state of South Carolina by working within the system to obtain more money from the state legislature to improve the conditions of South Carolina State College. Additionally, the findings show that Turner’s leadership style was not one dimensional, but was multidimensional operating on a leadership spectrum as a transactional, transformational, academic and African American leader. Finally, the data has resurrected his legacy in which he is seen as a man who had a vested interest in South Carolina State College, African American students, and racial uplift.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction of the Study

In the novel *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison (1953) portrayed Dr. Bledsoe as a strict, authoritarian college president of a fictional African American college in the South during the early 20th century. During the course of the story, Dr. Bledsoe expels the protagonist (the Invisible Man) because of the Invisible Man’s interaction with one of the school’s white trustees at a local bar (an interaction that would have caused embarrassment and scandal for the institution). Bledsoe’s actions derived out of self-interest but he also acted in the interest of his institution. The portrayal of Bledsoe as a strict, authoritarian administrator has been remembered as the norm—how African American college presidents at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) behaved at that time (Gasman, 2007). This perception has been echoed in other works, such as Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944) as well as in E. Franklin Frazier’s *Black Bourgeoisie* (1962).

In contrast, recent emerging scholarship suggests that this perception is not fully true. New examination has deepened our knowledge of the lives of African American college presidents at HBCUs in the historical context of the time in which they administered (Gasman, 2007; Smith, 1994). Nevertheless, there are many African American college presidents of HBCUs during the mid-twentieth century whose legacies are still mischaracterized and relatively unknown. Benner Creswill Turner, the fourth president of South Carolina State College in Orangeburg is still remembered as being like Dr. Bledsoe. (From this point forward, South Carolina State College will be known as
State College.) Figure 1 shows a visual portrait of the man, but it does not tell who he was; that knowledge we can gain only by investigation and study.

![President Benner Creswill Turner's presidential portrait.](image)

*Source: Orangeburg, 1968: A Place and Time Remembered, p. 38.*

**Figure 1.** President Benner Creswill Turner’s presidential portrait.

During his tenure (1950–1967), Turner’s school (in comparison to white schools) faced continuous episodes of student unrest, faculty dissent, and limited funding. The all-white Board of Trustees wanted to maintain order. Each year Turner had to lobby a predominately white state legislature for funding (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996). Thus, similar to his fictional counterpart Bledsoe, Turner expelled students and dismissed faculty members who were viewed as threatening to good public relations and to the progress of State College. For an example, Turner rescinded the scholarship of student photographer Cecil Williams. In the wake of the 1956 student boycott, Williams’ photos were published in Jet magazine. These photos showed Turner hanging in effigy and accompanied an article claiming that Turner provided poor leadership to State College (Williams, 1995; see Appendices B, C, & D).
Surely Turner is one of the most controversial presidents of State College. Although Turner made significant improvements to the institution during his seventeen-year tenure, upon his retirement, he was considered the most contentious of the presidents of HBCUs at the time (Fairclough, 2007; Smith, 1994). This study examines his life, leadership, and legacy.

Background of the Study

On August 2, 1950, Turner was selected, by an all-white Board of Trustees, to serve as the president of State College. Turner, who previously served (since 1947) as the first dean of the institution’s newly created law school, was ideal because the Board knew him and perceived him as someone who would not challenge the racial status quo of the school (Grose, 2006; Hine 1996; Hine 1992). State College’s Board of Trustees Vice Chairman C. F. Brooks described the newly appointed president as “an outstanding and highly qualified man …. We want nothing less than a man of ability, character, and with a correct understanding of the American way of life–especially here in South Carolina” (Burke & Hine, 2003, p. 46). In addition, it was reported that State College’s Board of Trustees Chairman Adam Moss, as a local attorney, strongly endorsed Turner because of Turner’s law credentials and held the view that “attorneys could do anything” (Hine, 1992, p. 42).

In contrast, the selection of Turner as president of State College was a complete shock to the university and to Orangeburg. They viewed Turner as an unlikely candidate because he was relatively unknown among names in the candidate pool. After the 1949 heart attack and death of President Miller Whittaker (Turner’s predecessor), three
academic deans were considered likely for the presidency of State College: Frank DeCosta (of the Graduate School); K. W. Green (of the School of Arts and Sciences); Harold W. Crawford (of the School of Industrial Education); the “Negro Schools” Superintendent of Orangeburg, James Parler; and Charleston’s Avery Institute’s principal, John Potts. During the selection process, all candidates were deemed acceptable except for Harold Crawford; the Board of Trustees had reservations because of his liberal stance on segregation in education. Turner was ultimately selected out of the group (Hine, 1992). Turner was fair skinned (closely resembling a white man), as well as a graduate of Harvard Law School. The reason that the public later came to see him like the fictional President Bledsoe is because Turner’s iron-fist rule had the support of the Board, the pro-segregationist governors, and the state legislature (Grose, 2006; Smith, 1994; Potts, 1978). While Turner improved the academic programs, physical plant, and faculty quality during his tenure, the socio-political issues of the times overshadowed these accomplishments. In 1956, 1960, 1963, and 1967, Turner suppressed a series of incidents of student unrest (which included a boycott of the college’s cafeteria, class boycotts, and many protests in downtown Orangeburg).

The city of Orangeburg was “a fountainhead of white ultraconservatism” (Nelson & Bass, 1970, p. 10). According to Nelson and Bass (1970), Orangeburg was also the state headquarters of conservative organizations such as the John Birch Society, TACT (Truth About Civil Turmoil), and the South Carolina Association of Independent Schools (an organization of private schools that subscribed to White supremacy and separation of the races). Moreover, Orangeburg was also the home of Southern Methodist College, which
espoused a philosophy of segregation based on the Scripture (Nelson & Bass, 1970). But in addition to the white, ultraconservative presence in Orangeburg, there was a growing black middle class and two HBCUs (Claflin University and State College). Those students were frustrated with the racial status quo (Grose, 2006).

This social division set the tone for defining Turner’s legacy. He first came to State College in 1947 as the dean of its newly created law school. The state of South Carolina had just been forced to either desegregate the all-white University of South Carolina School of Law (in Columbia) or create a separate law school for blacks. After his tenure as the law school’s dean, Turner then served as president of State College. All over the country in the 1950s and 1960s, it was a time of social protest: many African Americans were pushing for equality and integration, and many whites were pressing to maintain the status quo, segregation (Anderson, 2003; Daniel, 2000; Lewis, 2005).

The origin of the law school at State College, where Turner was the first dean, goes back to the Wrighten case decision. John Wrighten, a World War II veteran, had been denied admission to the University of South Carolina Law School. Recall that the Brown decision of 1954, desegregating schools, had not yet occurred. When the veteran sued, a federal judge deemed in 1946 that the state could offer Wrighten an equal education elsewhere, and the state thus opened the law school in 1947 at State College (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Potts, 1978). The state spent considerable money to open the State College facility just to have the races separated while attending law school and graduate school, since there was already a perfectly good law school at the University of South Carolina. But Wrighten didn’t see that option as being equal, didn’t want to attend
State College’s law school, and he continued to press his case, but he was dismissed. Many states created separate graduate and professional programs for African Americans as a result of the *Wrighten* decision. These separate programs were attractive to African Americans at a time when most institutions in the United States, especially in the South, barred them admission. Despite these separated opportunities for African American South Carolinians to obtain graduate and professional degrees, many were not satisfied with the Jim Crow system (Burke & Hine, 2003). As Wrighten saw it, the new State College law school had only a dean, three teachers, and four students. He had wanted to attend USC’s law school, with 342 students. Eventually in 1949 he did enroll at State College’s law school, and he became a civil rights attorney who fought in the early 1960s for his clients’ right to spaces at lunch counters and other public facilities.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 led many African Americans in Orangeburg, as well as students on both campuses, to believe that public school desegregation was on the verge of becoming a reality (Hine, 1996). A year later, Chief Justice Earl Warren issued the Supreme Court’s decision mandating that all states desegregate “with all deliberate speed” [*Brown v. Board of Education*, 39 U.S. 294 (1955)]. Fifty-seven African American citizens of Orangeburg presented a petition to the school board for the immediate desegregation of its public schools (Grose, 2006). The white residents of Orangeburg reacted to the petition with strong resistance. Historically, whites in Orangeburg County perceived African Americans as perfectly content with segregation. According to Hine (1996), the newspaper *Times and Democrat* immediately issued several headlines thereafter to preserve the race relations between blacks and
whites by suggesting there was genuine camaraderie between the races. As more African American residents in Orangeburg signed the petition, whites quickly organized a Citizen’s Council to resist integration and punish those African American citizens who signed and supported the petition (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996).

Many white businesses and suppliers terminated their contracts with their black patrons. For example, Mayor Robert H. Jennings, who was the owner of Palmetto Bakery, Orangeburg Fuel and Ice, Paradise Ice Cream, and the local Coca-Cola franchise cut off all deliveries to African American businesses, including grocery stores, barber shops, gas stations, and restaurants. In addition, black sharecroppers were evicted, white insurance companies refused service or did not renew insurance to African American customers, and African American city employees were fired. As a result of these events, over half of the petitioners withdrew their names from the petition (Baker, 2006; Lau, 2006). For their part, the African Americans, along with students from State College and Claflin University, promoted a selective-buying campaign. Black residents supported businesses that were customer-friendly to blacks, regardless of whether the business was white-owned or black-owned. The students boycotted the Coca-Cola and Sunbeam Bread companies, as well as the Palmetto Bakery and Coble Dairy, which did business with South Carolina State’s cafeteria (Grose, 2006; Lau, 2006; Hine, 1996).

Mayor Jennings’s companies supplied bread and milk to the college’s cafeteria. In the cafeteria in March of 1956, students destroyed, in protest, the bread (by pouring water on it) and refused to drink the milk. Turner pleaded for their moderation, but instead the youths conducted a six-day class strike beginning April 2, 1956. Moreover, as mentioned
previously, students hanged Turner in effigy, as well as South Carolina governor Timmerman (Hine, 1996). Following the strike, the South Carolina State College Board of Trustees, with the support of Turner, expelled Fred H. Moore, the Student Government Association President, along with fourteen other students. The Board also terminated the contracts of six faculty members for violating “unspecifed rules” (Hine, 1996, p. 315).

Turner’s legacy would continue to be remembered only through his handling of the student unrest on- and off-campus. Throughout the 1960s, despite the Supreme Court ruling to desegregate, Orangeburg County continued to uphold segregation in its public schools and facilities. Students at State College and Claflin University pushed for desegregation of public facilities in Orangeburg. Like their colleagues in Greensboro, North Carolina and Nashville, Tennessee, black college students in Orangeburg staged sit-ins, popularly known as the Orangeburg Movement. After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed outlawing segregation in public schools and places, the segregated local bowling alley became the symbol of segregation in Orangeburg. Harry Floyd, the owner of All-Star Lanes Bowling, did not comply with the 1964 Act. Instead of removing the “Whites Only” signs and serving all customers, he privatized his establishment and served only white customers (Nelson & Bass, 1970). For many years, students from State College and Claflin University tried to desegregate the bowling lanes. Some students even tried to persuade Floyd to let blacks to bowl one day out the week. Floyd refused (Gore, 1984).

The city of Orangeburg became a location for mass student protest during the 1960s. Students at State College and Claflin University conducted sit-ins and held
demonstrations to desegregate and to have equal services in downtown Orangeburg. Local and state law enforcement was constantly on the alert for student disturbances downtown and at the bowling alley. Events at State College took a turn for the worst beginning in 1967 when three popular young white professors, two of whom were also Woodrow Wilson Fellows, were dismissed after allegations of inciting student protest. They were frustrated with the segregated system of education that the students received at the institution. Dr. Thomas Wirth, one of the teaching fellows, concluded that the segregated and inferior educational system at the college would prepare students mentally to accept segregation and inferiority in their lives after college (Nelson & Bass, 1970). The students staged a mass sit-in, known as The Cause, in front of the President’s home, demanding the reinstatement of the three professors. Consequently, President Turner suspended three students (Joseph Hammond, John Stroman, and Benjamin Bryant) for three years for organizing the protest. Students reacted by staging a four-day class boycott that turned into a two-week event. Over 80 percent of the student body supported the boycott, demanding the reinstatement of Hammond, Stroman, Bryant, the three professors, and asking for a higher quality of education for the institution (Hine, 1996).

The four class presidents met secretly with South Carolina Governor Robert E. McNair in a meeting set up by Isaac McGraw, a State Department employee and vice chairman of the South Carolina State College Alumni Association. A settlement was reached the following day when the three suspended students were readmitted. In addition, Governor McNair listened to over 100 student complaints and grievances against the college and Orangeburg community. Subsequently, campus chapters of the
NAACP and BACC (Black Awareness Coordinating Committee) were established prior to Turner’s retirement at the end of the year (Gross, 2006; Hine, 1996).

Upon retiring, Turner left an impressive record concerning the academic standing and reputation of State College. He had entered his administration with the goal of achieving full accreditation of the university. With an emphasis on faculty upgrade (that is, the creation of a tenure system and improvement in student scholastic performance), Turner was able to guide the university to full membership in 1960 in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (Potts, 1978). Grose (2006) writes this about Turner’s seventeen-year tenure as president of State College:

> Turner had brought about some notable improvements. Additions to the campus included three new dormitories, housing for faculty, a new student union, a small football stadium, a new classroom building, and a new agricultural and home-economics facility. In addition, faculty salaries had improved, and the number of faculty with doctorates increased from two in 1950 to twenty-seven by 1967 (p. 189). Indeed, State College became the first HBCU in South Carolina to acquire this membership. The institution was also able to achieve its accreditation goals while offering the best education for blacks in South Carolina. Remember, these bright youths had previously not had the opportunity to pursue their education at other institutions in the state (Potts, 1978). While these were remarkable accomplishments by Turner, the college experienced the downside of the “separate but equal” philosophy. Many people believed that separate facilities (even if physically identical, which they were not) are inherently unequal, and that such schools could never be socially equal. Part of an education is the interaction among different kinds of students, to learn from each other. People saw separate as second-class citizenship, confining one race to subservience and
condemning another to perpetual prejudice. At Turner’s school, segregated education (with comparatively inadequate programs and disproportional funding, in relation to its white counterparts—the University of South Carolina and Clemson College) triggered the participation of students in civil rights activities. As great at State College was becoming because of Turner’s efforts, his administration still felt the sting of this mass protest, which would continue on tragically after his retirement to his successor, Dr. Maceo Nance (Hine, 1996; Potts, 1978).

Immediately following Turner’s retirement, Dr. Nance, then business manager of the college, was named acting president. Many students at the college were still rankled at All-Star Bowling Lanes for not letting blacks bowl. The lanes continued as a symbol of segregation at the beginning of the 1967–1968 academic year. John Stroman, one of the students who had been suspended by Turner the previous semester, led a small group of students to the bowling alley. This act resulted in a progression of confrontations with the local and state police (Hine, 1996). Early in February 1968, president Nance and president H. V. Manning of Claflin University urged the students to boycott merchants and businesses that supported All-Star Bowling Lanes instead of taking further direct action against the lanes. Both presidents feared impending danger. However the presidents’ boycott did not appeal many students. Some continued to stage protests at the bowling alley. On the evening of February 8, 1968, a heated confrontation erupted between the law enforcement officers and students (they started a fire and hurled a banister at police putting out the fire). The night turned deadly after highway patrolmen opened fire on the students (Sellers, 1990; Gore, 1984). Police killed three students.
(including an all-state local high school basketball player) and twenty-seven others were injured. The victims were, for the most part, shot in the back, implying that they were fleeing. One of the students Turner had earlier suspended, Samuel Hammond, was among the dead. Although nine police were tried for use of excessive force, they were acquitted. One activist, Cleveland Sellers, was jailed seven months for inciting a riot. Sellers later earned a doctorate in history and became president of South Carolina’s Voorhees College (Nelson & Bass, 1970; Sellers, 1990).

The student unrest in Orangeburg during Turner’s administration defined his legacy. Although he was no longer in office when the Orangeburg Massacre occurred, many placed the blame on Turner because he had remained silent regarding social issues and the racial status quo (Hine, 1996; Nelson & Bass, 1970; Potts, 1978). But little is known about the factors that influenced him to administer the way he did. We have not understood much about his early life, his philosophy of education, and his position on social issues.

Statement of the Problem

When Turner was selected to become the fourth president of State College, he was described by trustee C. F. Brooks “as a man of ability and character” (Burke & Hine, 2003, p. 46). What happened to make this “man of ability and character” become marginalized by history, unlike some of his contemporaries? Early studies of African American college presidents at HBCUs during the early and mid-twentieth century have presented them, also, as “authoritarian collaborators” (Gasman, 2007). However, a more multidimensional paradigm of the image of African American college presidents began in
the late 1960s, due to Jencks and Reisman’s (1967) controversial article that depicted HBCUs as academic disasters and its leaders as mere collaborators. That article drew response, and since that time there has been an emergence of scholarship (including biographies, autobiographies, scholarly articles, theses, and dissertations) that has not only debunked the old paradigm of African American college presidents, but also has created a new thread of literature on the history of the African American experience in leadership and higher education (Williamson, 2008; Curl, 2007; Gasman, 2007, Rhodes, 2007; Lefever, 2005; Gilpin & Gasman, 2003; Hanson, 2003; Davis, 1998; Robbins, 1996; Smith, 1994; Urban, 1992; Patterson, 1991; Mays, 1987). These studies fully examine the lives and presidencies of each respective figure within the historical context of time as well as within the context of their positions as presidents of HBCUs.

Nevertheless, Turner continues to be remembered in this old paradigm, for three major reasons:

1. There is no literature that has fully examined his life (especially his early life) to shed some light on the factors that shaped who he was.
2. There is a failure to apply leadership theories, other than authoritarian, to the style of Turner.
3. While Turner’s administration has been examined within the socio-political context of student unrest, the literature fails to examine his philosophy of education. We have not even known his position on the 1954 Brown decision.

There are many studies of African American college presidents that examine not only their administrations, but also their early lives. Researchers have shown that many
of these men grew up under the laws and brutality of segregation. This experience shaped who they became later in life as adults as well as how they administered their respective institutions. A thorough study of Turner’s early life and the influences that shaped who he became is absent from today’s literature. Turner’s contemporaries, however (such as Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College, Rufus Atwood of Kentucky College, and Charles Johnson of Fisk University) are presented by researchers in such a way that a reader will fully understand their administrations. One is now able to access their life histories and especially to discover the early influences that shaped them.

Early literature on African American HBCU presidents (those working during the early and mid-twentieth century) was often presented in a one-dimensional paradigm. The men were viewed as authoritarian collaborators who aimed to please their white Board of Trustees. They harshly punished any student or faculty member who tried to challenge the racial status quo of the day (Ellison, 1953; Gasman, 2007; Williamson, 2008). The episodes of student unrest during Turner’s administration, the Orangeburg Massacre, and his autocratic leadership style overshadow his legacy of being a very effective and productive president. Current biographies, autobiographies, and institutional histories of presidents at HBCUs do not examine their leadership style or provide an alternative theoretical framework for evaluating their presidents’ legacies. Although one should contextualize the administration of a college president or any historical leader, the use of leadership theories allows one to re-evaluate Turner’s legacy.

Finally, although Turner’s administration coincides with the national issues of the Civil Rights era, there has been a failure to critically examine Turner’s position on the
issue of school desegregation. This issue was a very hot topic among African American college presidents prior to the 1954 decision (Wilson-Mbajekwe, 2006 b). While it has been proven that the men expressed their optimism, concerns, and strategies of how the HBCU would operate in a post-Brown society, we have not known Turner’s judgment about this issue (Baker, 2006; Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze Turner’s legacy within the framework of a multidimensional paradigm, such as the paradigm now used to examine his contemporaries. This study, which is a life history, was broadened to include events in his life prior to taking the office of the presidency of State College as well as his life after he retired in 1967. Thus this study does not solely examine his administration within the period during which he was president of State College. This study further seeks to accomplish these goals:

1. Examine his leadership style.

2. Investigate his strategic goals for State College in the wake of the Supreme Court’s rulings outlawing segregation in education.

3. Analyze the influences that have affected the characterization of his legacy.

Research Questions

The overarching question for this study was the following: What factors should contribute to a re-evaluation of the legacy of Benner C. Turner’s accomplishments? Specifically, the following questions were considered:

1. What were some early influences that shaped his personal development?
2. What was his career path?

3. In the wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling barring segregation in education, what was his strategic goal?

4. What leadership theories explain his leadership style?

5. How has Turner’s legacy been shaped by ideological and scholarly paradigms?

Delimitations of Study

This study was a life history of President Benner C. Turner. Therefore, this study was conducted within the parameters of the time and place in which he lived. This study was conducted within the following parameters:

1. Turner’s early life in Columbus, Georgia, at Phillips Academy and at Harvard University (1905–1930)

2. Tuner’s career path to the presidency of South Carolina State College (1930–1950)


Significance of the Study

This study is beneficial to members of the academic community. For scholars who specialize in the historical study of college presidents, especially those of HBCUs, this study will provide a framework for how one can re-evaluate the legacies of college presidents. Biographical and autobiographical depictions, as well as institutional histories of African American college presidents at HBCUs, have often had to deal with this topic: the ongoing struggle and accommodations they had to make with the white power
structure and their black constituencies (Fairclough, 2001; Mays, 1987; Potts, 1978; Ronnick, 2005; Smith, 1994; Urban, 1992). However, there is a need for a broader study of the background of African American college presidents, institutional histories, as well as the presidents’ educational philosophy and personal politics. This study will allow scholars to re-evaluate their subject as well as begin to introduce new historical figures who have been left outside of the margins of institutional histories and scholarship like Turner.

This study will also benefit college administrators, historians, alumni of State College and members of the Orangeburg, South Carolina, community, many of whom still think of Turner as a conservative, ineffective leader of the institution. Turner’s legacy of taking the institution to new heights has been overshadowed by his perceived autocratic leadership style. It is my hope that this study will challenge people to think beyond the conventional view of Turner and encourage them to think more critically about his leadership and legacy among his counterparts (as well as among previous presidents of the State College), given the context in which he led.

Definition of Terms

In this study, terms are as follows:

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs):** In this study, the acronym HBCUs will be used in lieu of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

**South Carolina State College (South Carolina State University since 1992):** In this study, the researcher will refer to this institution as State College, as it was commonly referred to during Turner’s administration.
Organization of Study

This study consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the topic purpose and significance of the study. Chapter 2 is a literature review focused on the following:

1. History of African American education
2. HBCU presidents, 1900–1970
3. Concepts of leadership
4. Theoretical framework: Critical Race Theory

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and procedures used in this study. The findings were discussed using the research questions. Each research question was examined within a chapter. Chapters 4–8 have the findings based on primary document analysis and semi-structured interviews from the field. The chapters have been arranged in such a way as to provide a sequential order of the life, presidency, and legacy of Benner C. Turner. Chapter 4 looks at the early influences on his life that shaped him. Chapter 5 examines his career path from his work as a young attorney at the Raymond Pace Alexander law firm in Philadelphia in 1930 to his presidency of South Carolina State College in 1950. Chapter 6 examines his strategic goal for the institution in wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling baring segregation. Chapter 7 explores the leadership theories that reflect his leadership style. Chapter 8 observes how his legacy has been shaped by ideological and scholarly paradigms. Finally, chapter 9 provides a summary, a conclusion, and suggestions for further study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As Glesne (2006) points out, “Knowledge of the literature will help you to judge whether your research plans go beyond existing findings and may thereby contribute to your field of study” (p. 24). Hence, a literature review is significant for this study because it reveals what has been published on the leadership of college presidents at HBCUs during the era of de jure segregation. A review identifies concepts of leadership that best reflect the administration of Turner, and it narrows and focuses the topic to “inform [my] research design and interview questions” (Glesne, 2006, p. 25). This study explores the following themes in the literature review:

1. History of African American higher education (HBCUs)
2. HBCU presidents
3. Concepts of leadership
4. Theoretical framework: Critical Race Theory

History of African American Education (HBCUs)

This section of the literature review will examine the history of African American higher education, particularly the history of HBCUs in the United States. This section will first examine the relevant literature concerned with the value that African Americans have historically placed on education.
Importance of Education for African Americans

Scholars universally agree that African Americans have placed a high value on education (Fairclough; 2007; Hoffschwelle, 2006; Franklin, 1990; Perkins, 1990; Anderson, 1988; Bullock; 1967; DuBois, 1962; Thompson, 1927). In *The Education of Blacks in the South*, James Anderson (1988) contends that historically, education represented freedom to enslaved African Americans (and later emancipated African Americans) in the South. Education not only represented the transformation from physical enslavement to physical freedom, but it also meant a transformation from mental enslavement to a new level of social conscience. In *A Class of their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South*, Fairclough (2007) indicates that “(African American) teachers shared a belief that education would liberate the black masses from ignorance, degradation, and poverty….A people (historically) impoverished by slavery and benighted by enforced ignorance urgently required lessons in freedom” (p. 7). This philosophy is clearly understandable because the year before the American Civil War began (1860), 92% of African Americans in the United States were concentrated in the American South. Moreover, among the African American population in the American South during that time, over 90% of adults were illiterate (Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

The importance of education to African Americans can be historically traced back to the colonial era in South Carolina in which “early parochial schools taught Negro slaves to read and write” (Thompson, 1927, pg. 2). Thompson (1927) further suggests that the White power structure in colonial South Carolina ultimately made it illegal to educate slaves as a result of several slave insurrections. The education of free Blacks and
Black slaves during the colonial and antebellum era served as an early indicator to Whites that education of Blacks was a threat to Whites’ place in American social order. Moreover, this attitude from many Whites continued during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era. Citing an article in the *New Orleans Picayune* regarding the dangers of educating African Americans, Anderson (1988) indicates, “just as soon as all the Negroes in the State shall be able to read and write, they will become qualified to vote, and it is not to be doubted that they will demand their rights in the primaries with the 14th Amendment to back them up” (p. 95). Many African Americans (slaves and freedmen), however, recognized the importance of education and made attempts to learn how to read and write throughout the period of legal enslavement in the United States.

Furthermore, there is a significant amount of evidence that historically, African Americans have valued the importance of education. African Americans before the Civil War and after during the era of Reconstruction pushed to acquire some form of formal education at tremendous circumstances. Booker T. Washington (educator, leader of the industrial educational movement in the early twentieth century, and former slave) went through extreme measures to get an education that would lift him out of poverty, as he points out in his 1901 autobiography *Up From Slavery* (Washington, 1995). Moreover, according to Jacqueline Moore (2003), Washington, throughout his youth, worked several odd jobs and managed to gain a formal education through night school. She further describes his extremely harsh journey from Malden, West Virginia to Hampton, Virginia in order to enroll in Hampton Institute in 1872. Born into a state of slavery in 1858 in Franklin County, Virginia, Washington’s account of his humble beginnings and
his eagerness to get an education is a reflection of the importance and value that African Americans have historically placed on education (Moore, 2003).

Moreover, in *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880*, W. E. B. Du Bois (1962) contends, “The first great mass movement for public education at the expense of the state, in the South, came from Negroes” (p. 638). Historically, the social order of the Southern economy relied solely on laborers; therefore, it is not surprising that Whites were not the originators of the public schools forming in the South. Du Bois (1962) states that White landowners did not want their tax money to contribute to educating those who they were exploiting (both White and Black). They feared that education of Blacks would make White exploitation of the laboring class more difficult. Poor Whites set aside their class differences with their wealthy counterparts and bought into the notion of White supremacy. Therefore, the White laboring class did not push for any education for African Americans, because White laborers were perfectly content with being subordinate to the White landowners (on the condition that African Americans were not economically superior to White laborers). The White laboring class aspired to be landowners themselves and saw this aspiration as more realistic and aligned with the social order of the South (Du Bois, 1962).

When the provisional state governments in the South after the American Civil War approved public schools, Whites (especially the laboring class) resisted the ideal of educating African Americans and pushed to establish their own educational institutions. Du Bois (1962) contends that many poor Whites resisted the notion of public schools for African American students by harassing and terrorizing its advocates. In *Stand and
Prosper: Private Black Colleges and Their Students, Drewry and Doermann (2001) report,

Widespread unease among whites over changing racial relations produced frequent upsurges of education-related violence. Black schools were burned; teachers and students harassed or attacked; and black parents fired from jobs if their children were known to be attending school. At no other time in American history has there been so much anti-school violence or such widespread and sustained expression of hostility to education (p. 43).

This situation is a clear indication that the issue of race is the ultimate social problem in the United States. Poor Whites were willing to set aside their class differences with aristocratic Whites and to attack the ideal of public schools and education for African Americans, because they thought that educated African Americans would threatened the place of poor laborers in the social hierarchy.

Despite the slow process of establishing public schools in the South, statistics clearly indicate that African Americans saw the importance of education and used public schools more than Whites. The number of African American students in public schools increased throughout the 1870s. For example in the state of South Carolina, the number of African American students increased from 8,163 to 15,894 within a year, as opposed to their White counterparts in which 8,255 students increased to 11,122 within that same school year (Du Bois, 1862). In the History of Higher Education in South Carolina, C. Meriwether indicates that between 1871 to 1888, black student enrollment increased from 8,163 in 1870 to 103,334 in 1888 (p. 124). The numbers consistently increased during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era as the enrollment of African American
students in public schools increased. These quantitative statistics solely indicate that African Americans had a vested interest in education.

Another important fact that indicates that African Americans have historically valued education is their willingness to accept double taxation in order to improve the conditions of their schools. When conservative White southerners regained their political power at the end of the Reconstruction era, African American disenfranchisment began. According to Anderson (1988) and Bullock (1967), public schools in the South, which were a system of racial inclusion, were restructured to benefit the Whites. Blacks were subjugated to double taxation in which they paid for the public education of Whites as well as their own children. Anderson (1988) and Walker (1996) both point out many instances in which African American parents and community members wholeheartedly supported their schools with their personal finances, labor, and resources, while their income taxes supported the development of separate, local White schools. Their willingness to accept such double taxation shows their value of higher education.

African Americans not only wanted to acquire a primary and/or secondary education, they also wanted to acquire a collegiate-level education. While there is a significant amount of literature that has covered the history of African American education at the primary and secondary level (Hoffschwelle, 2006; Anderson, 1988), there is a thread of literature that specifically examines the history and significance of HBCUs.
Although there were grim statistics with regards to the literacy rate among African Americans before the American Civil War, it must be emphasized that there were African Americans who were able to obtain not only a primary and secondary education, but also a college education. Roebuck and Murty (1993) note that prior to the American Civil War, Berea College in Kentucky and Oberlin College in Ohio admitted African Americans. Moreover, John Newton Templeton graduated from Ohio University in 1828. Templeton was the first African American to graduate from that institution (as well as the first person from the Northwest Territory) (Perdreau, 1988). It also must be further noted that Edward Bouchet was the first African American to earn a Ph.D in the United States; he earned a degree in physics in 1876 from Yale University (Mickens, 2002).

Although many of these African Americans were trained at institutions that are known today as Predominately White Institutions (PWIs), there were three educational institutions for African Americans (that ultimately emerged into HBCUs) that were founded before the American Civil War. They were Cheyney State University in Pennsylvania in 1837, Lincoln University in Chester, Pennsylvania in 1854, and Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio in 1856 (Williams & Ashley, 2004). The origins of HBCUs are particularly emphasized in the literature after the American Civil War in the American South (Williams & Ashley, 2004; Drewry & Doermann 2001; Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

Between 1865 and 1890, over 200 private HBCUs were established by the Freedmen’s Bureau, northern missionary groups such as the AMA (American Missionary
Association), as well as many church denominations. Although these facilities were deemed colleges, they were actually primarily secondary schools where African Americans who previously were in bondage were given opportunities to learn how to read. Private HBCUs during this era were de facto teacher’s colleges, where many African Americans were able to earn their credentials to teach. It is significant that blacks could get a teaching degree at such schools. There were the limited career opportunities (outside of teaching) for African American college graduates after the Reconstruction era (Franklin, 1990). As the years progressed, private HBCUs enlarged in scope. They offered a liberal arts curriculum; they were able to recruit a more racially diverse faculty (although it was majority African Americans); and their facilities became centers of acceptance and interracial tolerance in hostile communities where racial segregation was the law (Gilpen & Gasman, 2003).

There were 200 private HBCUs that emerged during the mid and latter part of the nineteenth century. A few private HBCUs did survive, such as Fisk University (1866) in Nashville, TN, as well as Morehouse College (1867) in Atlanta, Georgia, and Spelman College (1881) in Atlanta, Georgia. It is significant that several leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were educated at these historic colleges, notably Martin Luther King, Jr., who graduated from Morehouse (Carson, 1997).

In addition to private HBCUs, public HBCUs were established after the American Civil War. Sixteen that are still in existence were founded before 1890. Notably, Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia, Howard University in Washington, DC, and Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama are the most recognizable HBCUs
in the present. These three have comfortable endowments (in comparison among other public HBCUs), as well as graduate and professional schools. Hampton University, in particular, was the first HBCU to recruit Native Americans during the later part of the nineteenth century (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). In addition to these three public HBCUs, there are seventeen other public HBCUs that are still in existence that were established after 1890 due to policies to push for legal segregation. On August 30, 1890, Congress passed the 2nd Morrill Land Grant of 1890, which essentially forced (Southern) states to either desegregate their public colleges or create separate public colleges for African Americans. According Roebuck and Murty (1993), state governments’ compliance with the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 was out of self-interest, as they would be guaranteed the following three things: “millions of dollars in federal funds for the development of white land-grant universities, (limited) black education to vocational training, and (prevented) blacks from attending White land grant colleges” (p 27).

Out of this Act, South Carolina State College was founded. In 1896, the South Carolina legislature severed Claflin University’s mechanical department and created the Colored Normal, Industrial, Agricultural, and Mechanical College of South Carolina (Grose, 2006; Potts, 1978). Ironically, South Carolina State College was founded the same year the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which indicated that segregation was constitutional [*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)]. This decision would not be overturned until the 1954 *Brown* decision. However, during the fifty-eight years under sanctioned Jim Crow, State College (as well as many of its black school counterparts) was severely underfunded in comparison to its White
counterpart institutions (Potts, 1978). Moreover, not only did the White power structure in the Southern states underfund the public HBCUs, it can be argued that Whites used its facilities to hide their personal baggage. In *Dear Senator: A Memoir by the Daughter of Strom Thurmond*, Essie Mae Washington-Williams, Strom Thurmond’s African American daughter, specifically chronicled her relationship with her father during her undergraduate student years at State College during the 1940s. During her student years in Orangeburg, she recalled her secret meetings with her father via the president’s office during which the president (Whittaker Miller) left them alone and probably knew of their relationship. Thurmond, who was the leading political advocate for racial segregation, met with her discreetly because of the implications this relationship would have on his political career. Nevertheless, this use of the president’s office to hide a secret was an example of how politicians abused public black colleges (Washington-Williams, 2005).

The socio-political issues of the time (particularly issues with regards to the desegregation of schools) did present challenges to these institutions.

*Challenges of the Brown v. Board of Education Decision to HBCUs*

To understand why there was a need for desegregation in higher education and the impact that it has had on HBCUs during the Civil Rights era all the way to the present, one must examine the history and origins of HBCUs (especially public institutions). While private HBCUs were founded in generally hostile environments and lacked public support since the opening of Cheney School (later Cheney State University) in Cheney, Pennsylvania in 1837, these institutions of higher education were able to survive because of two specific reasons. Primarily, these institutions were well funded by philanthropic
organizations that had an interest in the liberation and education of African Americans. One such group was the Freedmen’s Bureau, an organization that had a great impact on the development of private HBCUs following the American Civil War. Other groups included the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Southern Education Board, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the Phelps-Stoke Fund, and the Carnegie Foundation. From 1866 to 1918, these groups were responsible for establishing private higher educational institutions for African Americans as well as public and private primary and secondary educational institutions (Hoffschwelle, 2006; Anderson, 1988; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Moreover, although financed generally by wealthy White philanthropists and organizations, the survival of private black colleges during the Reconstruction era to the present has been the result of a pedagogy of racial uplift (and of being controlled by African Americans) (Thompson, 1973). This notion of African Americans controlling their own institutions is quite evident, specifically with the establishment of the United Negro College Fund. Organized in 1943 by Tuskegee Institute’s president Frederick Patterson, the United Negro College Fund aimed to raise funds for a consortium of private HBCUs to ensure their survival in the wake of a World War, the desegregation process, and a decline in philanthropic support (Gasman, 2004; Tucker, 2002). The latter is important to understanding why private African American institutions’ rhetoric and mission was slightly different from public black institutions.

As previously mentioned, public HBCUs were established as a result of the enactment of the second Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890. The first Morrill Act (of 1862) created PWI public institutions in the United States, in which state governments in the
North and South “did not divide funds on racial lines…the funds were used to develop white colleges from which black people were excluded” (Humphries, 1992, p. 4). The second Morrill Act of 1890 was one of the first laws to force states to desegregate their PWIs or create separate but equal institutions for black students. Many Southern state governments (in response to the second Morrill Act of 1890) decided to have public HBCUs instead; thus, they perpetuated segregation in higher education (Roebuck & Komanduri, 1993; Humphries, 1992). As Fred Humphries (1992) points out, the federal government “had given open approval” to the philosophy of Jim Crow six years before the Supreme Court rendered that “separate but equal” policies were constitutional.

With separate but equal policies being the law of the land, black land grant colleges were established and operated by the White power structure of the each respective state government. This method of operation meant that public HBCUs were extremely under-funded and offered limited academic departments (Brown, 1999; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Under the original first Morrill Act of 1862, land grant institutions were sanctioned to offer agricultural and mechanical training. So while land grant PWIs offered lucrative agricultural and mechanical training to its students, land grant HBCUs, on the other hand, offered inferior training that only allowed its graduates to work in subservient roles (Humphries, 1992; Peer, 1982; Williams & Ashley, 2004). Moreover, land grant PWIs had the means and resources to develop solid graduate and professional schools when the educational pedagogy moved away from industrial and agricultural education. In contrast, land grant HBCUs struggled to maintain quality academic programs. More specifically, even as late as the late 1950s, several land grant
HBCUs solely emphasized teacher training and trained over 90% of its graduates to enter the field of education (Peer, 1982). Other than a small percentage of private HBCUs offering graduate and professional school programs, African American college graduates who wanted to pursue post-baccalaureate or professional degrees were limited to attending graduate school schools such as Howard University or PWIs in the North that admitted blacks. Southern public PWIs were certainly out of the question because of the separate but equal doctrine that Southern state governments practiced. Moreover, public HBCUs did not offer graduate or professional school programs. Thus those students who sought admission into graduate and professional school programs were subsequently funded by their respective state to attend a graduate school in another state—either a HBCU that offered graduate programs, or a PWI that admitted African Americans.

The initial push to desegregate higher educational institutions began in the 1935 when Donald Gaines Murray was denied admission to the University of Maryland’s Law School, but was instead offered out-of-state tuition grants to attend a law school outside the state of Maryland. In the *University of Maryland v. Murray* (1936), the NAACP Legal Defense Fund attacked the separate but equal doctrine. The NAACP also attacked the policy to offer out-of-state tuition grants to African American residents who desired to pursue graduate and professional degrees in their respective states. The Supreme Court ruled on behalf of Murray. The Court ordered the University of Maryland to admit Murray; the court also ordered the state to discontinue their policy of offering African American applicants out-of-state tuition grants in lieu of being admitted into their state-supported schools that offered graduate and professional programs (Roebuck & Murty,
1993). The Murray decision forced Southern state governments to either desegregate their public institutions, or to maintain the racial status quo and establish separate graduate and professional schools for African Americans (which many states then eventually did). The Murray decision gave the NAACP leverage to pressure the federal government, as well as state governments, to dismantle the separate but equal doctrines. NAACP also now had the leverage to improve the quality of the public HBCUs. From 1938 to 1950, the NAACP worked on four major Supreme Court cases to further dismantle the separate but equal polices. These four cases were the following: Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada (1938), Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma (1948), Sweatt v. Painter (1950), and McLauren v. Oklahoma Regents (1950). The NAACP Legal Defense Fund was successful in these four critical Supreme Court decisions (Blaustein & Ferguson, 1962; Brown, 1999).

Plaintiffs Lloyd Gaines (1938) and Ada Lois Sipuel (1948) won their suits and were allowed entry in the University of Missouri Law and University of Oklahoma Law Schools, respectively. In response to the Gaines and Sipuel decisions, many southern states [such as Texas, Florida (Florida A&M University), and South Carolina (South Carolina State College)] set up separate law schools, other graduate programs, or continued to provide financial assistance for blacks to study in another state in order to maintain the racial status quo. In Texas, for an example, the state legislature established the Texas Law School for Negroes, an institution that proved to be ill-planned in regards to faculty, resources, and alumni connections (all of which is the essence of any law program). Herman Sweatt sued and was ultimately admitted into the all-White
University of Texas law school in 1950. Also in 1950, G. W. McLaurin, a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, won his suit; McLaurin had been systematically segregated from his classmates in an “integrated” setting (Burke & Hines, 2003; Humphries, 1992; Hytche, 1992; Peer, 1932; Williams & Ashley, 2004). The Murray decision of 1935 (and the subsequent four cases that addressed desegregation in higher education) paved the way for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to ultimately strike down all aspects of segregation in American society. The Brown decision occurred in 1954 and a year later there was Brown II, in which a timetable was mentioned: “with a deliberate speed” [Brown v. Board of Education, 349 U.S. 294 (1955)].

During the critical years when the Supreme Court ruled on the graduate/professional cases, the faculty, students, and administration at both private and public HBCUs planned for the inevitable Brown decision. They discussed the roles and dilemmas of black colleges in a desegregated society. It was a very difficult time for all presidents and administrators at HBCUs (especially at land grant institutions) during the era in which segregation was being challenged, because they had to appease their constituency as well as the White power structure. As Mbajekewe (2006b) indicates, to understand the social thought regarding desegregation in higher education, one must study the experiences of HBCU presidents during the era of de jure segregation.

While the notion of desegregation in higher education was universally embraced by administrators, faculty, and students at HBCUs; arguably, administrators at the HBCU land grant institutions were very nervous regarding the future of HBCU public institutions as a result of the Brown decision. President Rufus Atwood (summer, 1952)
of Kentucky State College feared that his institution (as well as other public HBCUs in the South) would outlive its purpose and ultimately close, thus leaving African American students and faculty members systematically disenfranchised in the state of Kentucky (as a direct result of desegregation in higher education). Morgan State University president Dr. Martin D. Jenkins concurred with this argument. He feared that “systematic integration would most likely find HBCUs participating in a public education system organized to offer services to the majority…services designated for African American students would be phased out and existing patterns of discrimination would continue under the guise of equality” (Williams & Ashley, 2004, p. 272). President Atwood at Kentucky State further contended that the desegregation would not be an overnight process, justifying the need he saw for the continuance of black colleges. Therefore, it was absolutely imperative that black land grant institutions not only remained open for its black students, but also that these schools would be able to compete academically with peer White institutions. Presidents in black land grant institutions were placed in a delicate situation prior to and immediately after the Brown decision. Instead of directly addressing the social issues of the day, many such schools indirectly attacked the inequalities of the Jim Crow system by providing a quality education to their students, securing funds, and uplifting the status of their respective institutions. Hence, the institutional advancement of the HBCU land grant college was the natural goal (rather than the goal of achieving black social equality) for its presidents in wake of desegregation in higher education (Hytche, 1992; Smith, 1994).
Presidents and administrators at private HBCUs were, however, more confident in the quality of their institutions as opposed to their counterparts of land grant institutions. Hence, many embraced desegregation. Gasman (2004) indicates that M. Lafayette Harris of Philander Smith College (Arkansas) and Dr. J. S. Scott of Wiley College (Texas) were extremely confident and optimistic that the quality of the academic programs at their respective universities would make their schools attractive to any prospective student (regardless of race). Their confidence was partially due to their affiliation with the United Negro College Fund and their respective institutional histories/administrations, which were inclusive of African Americans. In similar respects, private HBCUs were ready to function in an integrated society. Fisk University president Dr. Charles S. Johnson, a sociologist, created an intellectual and socially conscious environment. For example, Fisk was the only HBCU at the time with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Johnson successfully drew White students and faculty members to Fisk (Gasman, 2004; Gilpin & Gasman, 2003; Robbins, 1996). Although the leadership and administration of private HBCUs were confident to function in a post-Brown society, Gasman (2004) suggests that the United Negro College Fund’s rhetoric shifted in order to maintain their donors. However, private HBCUs were not in any danger of closing or merging (as opposed to their public counterparts). Gasman (2004) states,

Unlike the early UNCF publicity, which focused on the type of individual produced at a black college, the post-Brown fundraising rhetoric emphasized the economic limitations of the black community had, how they hampered college choice. Thus, the UNCF pointed to the continued need for these institutions in an era of legal integration and indirectly expressed its concern that black colleges would be closed because of Brown. (p. 10).
Nevertheless, private HBCU presidents supported the moral aspects of desegregation. Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College stood in the forefront of private HBCUs (as well as the United Negro College Fund), advocating the historical significance of HBCUs and the moral support for desegregation. His rationale was that Whites in America must study and learn from black colleges in order to achieve desegregation because HBCUs, according to Mays, have always practiced democracy and inclusion (Mays, 1949; Mays, 1960).

Although HBCUs were founded as a result of segregation, private and public HBCUs were established under different circumstances. On one hand, private HBCUs were founded and funded by religious organizations and generous philanthropists; these schools were given the freedom to practice self-determination. On the other hand, public HBCUs were established as a result of Congressional legislation. This legislation forced the White-controlled South to either desegregate its institutions or create a separate public institution for African Americans. Not surprisingly, the Whites in power chose the latter method of creating separate facilities for blacks. Owned and controlled by the state, public HBCUs experienced inferior funding and limited degree programs.

When desegregation was about to become a reality, why did public HBCUs react differently, as opposed to their White counterpart schools? The remainder of this essay will examine two case studies of two college presidents, one from a private institution and the other from a public one. The cases will walk through how each
college president led his respective institution through the era of de jure segregation, as well as through the post-\textit{Brown} society.

Prior to the \textit{Brown} decision (and following it), President Mays published several papers that addressed the evils of segregation. In essence, Mays (1956) maintained that segregation is immoral and evil because it empowers the dominant group to define and systematically oppress the subordinate group(s) in order for the dominant group to remain in power. In a 1949 article in the \textit{Phylon}, Mays (1949, fourth quarter) contended that desegregation should first begin at the institutions of higher education because “colleges and universities are the centers of light (truth)” (p. 401). Mays (1949) further suggested that “Segregation in education restricts and circumscribes the mind. It puts a limit of free inquiry and investigation. And I believe that the human mind can never develop to its maximum unless it’s free of all crippling circumstances” (p. 401).

Frederick Patterson (1952, summer), president of Tuskegee Institute, was also one of the founders of the United Negro College Fund. Patterson concurred with Mays (1952, summer), suggesting that racially segregated colleges had a damaging effect on all students. He also concluded that private HBCUs would be needed long after desegregation of higher education to be on an equal playing field with White peer institutions. Philosophically, strong institutions would continue to prosper while “weaker institutions will find it necessary to increase substantially their resources or quit” (Patterson, 1952, summer, p. 363). However, many scholars, such as Jencks and Riseman (1968), suggest that HBCUs had little or no chance of successfully integrating their institutions. Because HBCUs had smaller endowments, were located in poor
locations, and so forth, these scholars concluded that middle-class White students, who had the resources to travel, would opt to go to predominately White colleges that would likely have better resources than HBCUs. Hence, HBCUs would not be able to successfully integrate (Jencks & Riseman, 1968). Mays (as well as many scholars and advocates for HBCUs) have since easily debunked Jencks and Riesman’s theory that HBCUs could not integrate. Although most HBCUs operated on inferior endowments compared to White institutions, black colleges became extremely diverse in study body and faculty. In defense of black colleges, Mays (1960, summer), indicated:

> It will be in the Negroes’ college where you will find Negroes and whites, Japanese and Chinese, Indians and Egyptians, and scholars of all races and complexions….Negro colleges have no history or tradition of exclusion and no practice of discrimination….For more than three-quarters of a century the Negro private- and church-related college has been virtually the only place where Negro and white people could meet together on the basis of equality without fear and trembling (pp. 246-247).

Mays (1960, Summer) further contended that racial discrimination had never been part of the founding of HBCUs; therefore, he felt that HBCUs would remain in place long after desegregation as models of democracy in education. Mays did not suggest that HBCUs should remain all African American. Rather, that the democratic principles of HBCUs should remain in place.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 was the most significant Supreme Court decision during the twentieth century in that it overturned the previous 1894 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. [Recall that *Plessy* had upheld racial segregation in all aspects of life, as well as denied African Americans equal protection under the 14th
amendment of the Constitution (Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Samuels, 2004).] Moreover, *Brown v. Board of Education* stands out as “a monumental victory in the struggle to incorporate black Americans into the mainstream of American life” (Samuels, 2004, p. 60). Samuels (2004) maintains that the decision represented “a hope of redemption” for African Americans who endured over 300 years of slavery and segregation. Although the implications of the *Brown* decision attacked the separate but equal doctrine in regards to access of public primary and secondary education, African American access to predominately White higher educational institutions (particularly graduate and professional schools) was the initial priority for activists Charles H. Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and the NACCP Legal Defense Fund—which predated the 1954 *Brown* decision (Williams & Ashley, 2004).

Many administrators, faculty, and students at HBCUs supported the NACCP Legal Defense Fund, although they worried about the future of HBCUs. Prior to the *Brown* decision, several HBCU presidents (such as Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College, Rufus Atwood of Kentucky State College, and Frederick D. Patterson of Tuskegee University) studied and addressed, in a special summer edition of *The Journal of Negro Education* in 1952, the role that HBCUs should serve in a racially integrated society. Although the presidents had differing points of views in their arguments (they administered under different circumstances), they all agreed that their respective institutions and the HBCU system as a whole were needed after school desegregation (Atwood, 1952; Mays, 1952; Patterson, 1952).
The Impact of Brown to HBCUs in Recent History

The 1954 *Brown* decision was morally and constitutionally correct for African Americans. However, the interpretation and implementation of desegregation was complex. The decision challenged HBCUs to redefine their purpose and existence. As Samuels (2004) points out:

…*Brown* failed to answer many critical questions. For example, if segregated schools were unconstitutional, then what kinds of schools were? Was the evil segregation itself, or the fact that states legally required it? Did *Brown* mean that black colleges and universities were unconstitutional remnants of Jim Crow systems of higher education that must now be eliminated? (p. 60).

In *The Quest to Define Collegiate Desegregation* (1999), M. Christopher Brown II concurs with Samuels’s argument. Brown indicates that “there has been a lack of consensus on the policy, legislation, and judicial remedy necessary to overcome the continuing effects of historical segregation in higher education institutions” (p. xvii). The complexities of what a desegregated society would “look like” presented dilemmas for students and university officials years after the *Brown* decision. In the present-day American higher educational system, both HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and PWIs (Predominately White Institutions) have suffered either setbacks or severe backlash in regards to the healing process. They have suffered setbacks in the acceptance of diversity and tolerance as a result of the *Brown* decision and other policies that have ordered desegregation in institutions of higher education (overturning past discriminatory practices against African Americans). After these orders to desegregate, challenges were brought. Some challenges sought to reverse desegregation, or to point out reverse discrimination. Challenges were brought by predominately White institutions,

Take the Bakke case as an example. In 1978, Alan Bakke, a White, prospective medical student, wanted to study at the University of California. He ended up suing the University of California at Davis Medical School for discrimination against White applicants, because the admissions committee reserved several slots (or quotas) for underrepresented minorities. In a 5 to 4 vote, Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell affirmed that the use of quotas was unconstitutional and Alan Bakke was subsequently admitted. It is true also that the court did affirm the use of a points system as a means of admitting underrepresented minority students. Nevertheless, the Bakke decision, according to Donahoo and Green (2005), chipped away at what the Brown decision hoped to achieve. The Bakke decision allowed PWIs to move away from actively recruiting and admitting underrepresented minorities. Twenty-five years later, this decision would stand in cases against the University of Michigan. The plaintiffs were Barbara Grutter (a White, prospective law student who had applied to the University of Michigan’s Law School) and Jennifer Gratz and Patrick Hamacher (two White Michigan residents who applied to the University of Michigan’s College of Literature, Science, and
the Arts). The students filed law suits against the University of Michigan after being rejected from admission into the university. The plaintiffs accused the University of Michigan of racial discrimination. The undergraduate university employed a point system to ensure racial diversity; thus, consequently, rejecting Gratz and Hamacher for admission into the university based on this point system. Grutter, on the other hand, had tried unsuccessfully to enter the law school, which did not use points but rather a system that considered race but that examined all applicants. In a 6-3 decision, Chief Justice Rehnquist affirmed that the undergraduate admission’s system for achieving racial diversity in the *Gratz* decision was unconstitutional. However, in the *Grutter* decision, the high court affirmed (in a 5-4 vote) that the practice of achieving racial diversity was constitutional at University of Michigan’s Law School because the school examined all applications (unlike its undergraduate school that employed a point system). The Supreme Court decisions for *Bakke* and later *Gratz* and *Grutter* allowed for further clarification of how the Court (as well as institutions of higher education) employed methods to achieve racial diversity. These cases were extremely detrimental to underrepresented minority applicants, because the decisions chipped away at the progress that the Supreme Court decision of 1954 had made to rectify past discriminatory practices in regards to access to education for African Americans. In all, the decisions in the challenge cases essentially allowed PWIs to abandon the use of race-conscious polices in regards to admissions and go back to the old situation in which the presence of underrepresented minorities (particularly African Americans) was limited or nonexistent. [Donahoo & Green, 2005; *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 315 (2003); *Grutter v.*]
So the complexities of the Brown decision created an opportunity for PWIs to turn back the clocks on achieving racial balance at its institutions. HBCUs continue to suffer as a result of the interpretation and implementation of the desegregation process. Contemporary scholars such as Samuels (2004) and Brown (1999) question the legality of these decisions and discuss the impact that desegregation and counter-desegregation decisions have had on HBCUs. Over his career, the journalist and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois prophesizes and warns his readers that African American educational institutions, educators, students, and African-centered pedagogy will become null and void if desegregation comes to fruition. The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques 1906–1960 is an edited collection of Du Bois articles complied by Aptheker (1973). In these essays, Du Bois paints a picture of the impact of desegregation to African American education. He states:

Take for instance the current problem of the education of our children. By the law of the land today they should be admitted to the public schools. If and when they are admitted to these schools certain things will inevitably follow. Negro teachers will become rarer and in many cases will disappear. Negro teachers will become rarer and in many cases will disappear. Negro children will be instructed in the public schools and taught under unpleasant if not discouraging circumstances. Even more largely than today they will fall out of school, cease to enter high school, and fewer and fewer will go to college. Theoretically Negro universities will disappear. Negro history will be taught less or not at all and as in so many cases in the past Negroes will remember their white or Indian ancestors and quite forget their Negro forbearers (Aptheker, 1973, p. 151).
In all cases, Du Bois’ predictions have been fulfilled. Since 1950, over 90 percent of African American college students attended and graduated from HBCUs. According to Al-Hadid (2005), that percentage significantly decreased to only 18 percent of African Americans in 2004. A backlash is seen: the loss of “brain” and talent at HBCUs, as both students and faculty members go to PWIs that likely have more resources, higher salaries, a lower teaching load, and opportunities to publish. Moreover, another aspect of the decreased enrollment at HBCUs was the change in demographics. There was a mass exodus of black people in areas that formerly had a predominately black population. In West Virginia, for example, Bluefield State College and West Virginia State University lost African American faculty and students (particularly students) as a result of West Virginia’s poor economy. Today, the student body at West Virginia State University is overwhelmingly White (88 percent), with only 11.5 percent African American and 0.5 percent Asian, Hispanic, and others (Al-Hadid, 2005).

The Brown decision has been a beacon of hope to achieve equal opportunities for all people. But the decision has threatened the existence of HBCUs. One part of the difficulty is the complicated interpretation of segregation. The very nature of HBCUs makes them constantly under a microscope in a way that White schools are not. As Donahoo & Green (2005) point out, HBCU’s (as opposed to their White counterparts) “remain targets of judicial review, political scrutiny, and interference because campuses still find it difficult to enroll non-African American students” (p. 109).

Two specific court decisions (Geier v. Dunn and United States v. Fordice) have put HBCUs (particularly public institutions) in a delicate situation to achieve racial
balance at their respective institutions. If the schools do not achieve racial balance, they will lose federal funding or ultimately close.

Let us look first at Geier v. Dunn. The states of Tennessee and Mississippi continued to operate on a dual higher educational system, despite the passage of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Recall that this 1964 Act essentially prohibited any federally funded programs or institutions to practice discrimination. In the Geier v. Dunn (1977) decision, the middle district of Tennessee ordered the state of Tennessee to devise a plan to merge Tennessee State University and University of Tennessee’s extension campus in Nashville. This order aimed to make all institutions included in the desegregation plan. While this plan ultimately folded, subsequent decisions by the middle district of Tennessee ordered each state university to have a specific enrollment goal to achieve racial balance. This enrollment goal was problematic because the state of Tennessee held the predominately African American Tennessee State University more accountable. The state expected its non-African American enrollment to increase to 50 percent (while PWIs such as UT-Knoxville and the University of Memphis were only required to increase their non-White enrollment up to 6 percent and 12 percent, respectively). Consequently, Tennessee State University was unable to meet their student enrollment goal. Even its White counterparts had trouble meeting their goals (goals that had lower expectations). Although Tennessee State did not meet its goal, it did raise substantially the number of White students attending (comparably to institutions such as Bluefield State and West Virginia State). Although Tennessee State was thus not in real danger of losing federal funding, their existence as HBCUs continues to be at stake.
Now let us look at the outcome of *United States v. Fordice (1992)*. The decision in this case has threatened the existence of HBCUs in the state of Mississippi (Al-Hadid, 2005; Brown, 1999; Donahoo & Green, 2005). Despite the impact of the *Brown* decision and the policies that followed it, the state of Mississippi continued to operate under a dual educational system in which its three public HBCUs (Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, and Mississippi Valley State University) remained segregated from its White counterparts and received unequal funding. After seventeen years of stagnation (*Ayers v. Fordice* of 1975), the Supreme Court ruled in 1992 that state of Mississippi still operated a dual school system and ordered the state to adopt a universal higher educational system. Moreover, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi ordered the state to provide financial resources to the three public HBCUs in Mississippi for the improvement of the overall quality at each respective institution. However, the settlement in the decision included a provision that the three public black institutions had to recruit and maintain a 10% non-black population in order to receive its share of the funding. So here is yet another instance in which the HBCUs had to achieve a higher percentage of non-black students, as opposed their White counterparts (who were held at a much lower standard to achieve racial balance). Moreover, it became the question of who had to “integrate” with whom (Al-Hadid, 2005; Brown, 1999; Donahoo & Green, 2005).

In spite of the backlash that HBCUs have experienced in recent times as a result of the *Brown* decision, most college presidents and administrators during the era of de jure segregation felt that the desegregation of public institutions was both morally and
ethically correct for blacks, in order for African Americans to have access to all public accommodations. Moreover, HBCU college presidents viewed this decision as an opportunity to grow and become centers of learning in the American educational system and no longer in the margins; hence reaffirming a new mission for HBCUs during the implementation of desegregation in higher education (Wilson-Mbajewkew, 2006a; Gasman, 2004; Tucker, 2002).

The Relevancy of HBCUs in the 21st Century

Despite the backlash of Brown, HBCUs in the 21st century are still relevant. There is various literature that addresses the relevancy of HBCUs in the 21st century (Hale 2006; Williams & Ashley, 2004). According to Williams and Ashley (2004), HBCUs, while only making up 4 percent of the institutions of higher education in the United States, produced 28 percent of all college graduates. Moreover, HBCUs graduate 75 percent of African American Ph.D.s, 46 percent of African American business executives, 80 percent of African American federal judges, and 85 percent of African American medical doctors. HBCUs provided positive educational experiences and helped improved the self-esteem of many African Americans; these students may not have had that kind of affirming experience in their primary and secondary schools. In his dissertation A Case Study on Perceptions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities’ Impact on African American Education, Wallace’s (2004) findings show that many professional educators who attended HBCUs overwhelmingly attributed their self-confidence to their experiences at HBCUs. While scholars and former students have been the main voice in the literature with regards to the relevancy of HBCUs in the 21st

In *The Future of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Ten Presidents Speak Out*, Wilson-Mbajekwe (2006a) presents interviews with ten HBCU presidents from both public and private institutions. The presidents talk about the histories of their respective institutions, the impact of desegregation on HBCUs, as well the challenges and accomplishments of HBCUs in the 21st century. Overall, the presidents agreed that major challenge for the HBCUs in the 21st century is fundraising in an integrated society. Of course fundraising was also a challenge to HBCU presidents during the era of segregation (Gasman, 2007). Wilson-Mbajekwe’s (2006a) work reveals that today’s presidents of HBCUs have more freedom of voice, to say why they administer the way do (without being misunderstood). However, their predecessors, especially those who administered prior to the 1970s, were certainly hampered to talk freely, and thus their actions may have been misunderstood. The next section will examine the literature that shows the complexities, challenges, and misperceptions of historical presidents of HBCUs.
HBCU Presidents in the Literature

*Historical Perceptions*

In her work *Reading against the Literature: Black College Presidents’ Perception of Self, 1950–1975*, Gasman (2007) argues that African American college presidents have historically been labeled as “accomodationist, autocratic, Uncle Tom [s]” in scholarship, fiction, and in the media” (p. 1) which I will designate as the Dr. Bledsoe paradigm. This opinion has been supported in fiction and in scholarship. As previously discussed, in Ralph Ellison’s (1952) *The Invisible Man*, the fictional Dr. Bledsoe was the president of a fictional African American college. Bledsoe was depicted as a dictator, which translated easily into the minds of the public as the true image of an African American college president. Lewis K. McMillan, a history professor at South Carolina State College during the 1940s and 1950s, complained that “the president is usually an ignorant autocrat” who “stands a surer change of keeping his job to the extent that he is hostile to the best interest of his own people” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 12).

Moreover, this historic depiction of African American college presidents at HBCUs can be found in other classical works, such as Myrdal’s (1944) *An American Dilemma*. Myrdal is critical of HBCUs and their African American presidents. He describes the presidents’ relationships with students as “dictatorially and more arbitrarily” (p. 733). In *The Academic Revolution*, Jencks and Riesman (1968) describe HBCUs as primarily academic disaster areas, where presidents were dictators.

In contrast, Gasman (2007) argues that scholars must look beyond the one-dimensional paradigm when examining black college presidents. Because the presidents
were the least likely individuals in history to be the major players in the Civil Rights movement, black college presidents were not the obvious heroic figures when studying leadership during this era. Regardless of the presidents’ politics and positions on social issues, their legacies during the Civil Rights era need to be reexamined because their administrations add a new dimension to studying the Civil Rights era (Gasman, 2007).

The negative image of the African American college presidents at HBCUs has historically been personified by Booker T. Washington. Washington, the founder and first president of Tuskegee Institute, advocated for an industrial education (as opposed to a liberal arts education) for African American during the early twentieth century. Washington, with his support for the industrial education model for blacks and his tone of racial cooperation, was just the first one of many future black presidents who have also had to negotiate with the White supremacist state governments of the South (Washington, 1995).

In his autobiography *Up from Slavery*, Washington (1995) contends that an industrial education was the best solution for the economic development of the African American community. A graduate of the Hampton Institute, which stressed industrial and vocational training, Washington felt that an industrial education would help African Americans establish an economic foundation through the acquisition of serviceable skills (Dunn, 1993). When Washington established Tuskegee, he was aware that African Americans were being pushed away from lucrative professions, as well as excluded from apprenticeships. Through his educational indoctrination in industrial education as a student at Hampton Institute, Washington advocated for this form of education for
African Americans. Washington anticipated that African Americans would be able to gain the technical skills needed to secure their place in the industrial order of the South. Furthermore, because of the social conditioning caused by racism and discrimination, Washington (1995) believed that an industrial education for African Americans would appease White-controlled Southern society.

Washington’s philosophy would come to fruition when he addressed a predominately White audience at the Atlanta Exposition in 1895. In his address, popularly known as the Atlanta Compromise, Washington urged African Americans to “cast down your bucket where you are…cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in professions” (Washington, 1972, pp. 45–46). Washington implied that agricultural, mechanical, and labor-intensive work was the wave of the future for Southern blacks. He suspected that a liberal arts education would be useless for them in a society in which African American professionals were rare and discouraged. Through a social hierarchy in which African Americans would be assigned to the labor class, Washington’s goal was to make it possible for African Americans to coexist with Southern Whites without coming into conflict in economic or societal matters (Washington, 1995). Because of Washington’s conservative educational philosophy, he has been viewed in a negative paradigm. However, from a practical perspective, Washington was looking to find any niche for African Americans at a time where they were denied careers in certain professions.

Like Washington, Tuskegee president Robert Moton conformed to the Jim Crow policies in order to protect the legacy and existence of the institute (Fairclough, 2001).
Once his wife was ejected from a White-only Pullman railway car; he had remained silent. The snub to his wife made national news. He had felt that he had to be silent because any criticism by him of the racial status quo could alienate his White supports. Still, he drew ire from the blacks for his silence (Fairclough, 2001). In Robert R. Moton and the Travail of the Black College President, Fairclough (2001) examines the political and social constraints of Jim Crow that black college presidents had to endure while protecting their respective institutions. Although he suggests that there were a few conservative presidents, overall, he writes the vast majority of African American presidents of HBCUs during the early and mid-twentieth century were moderates, similar to Moton. For example, Moton privately advocated for the advancement of black people and even “prepared to defend Booker T. Washington’s legacy with shotguns when Tuskegee was menaced by the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s” (Tyson, 1998, p 545). Moton represents the moderate position that black college presidents decided to take during the era of desegregation. But whereas people seem to understand the limits of Washington and Moton, there is paradigm shift when examining college presidents who followed Washington and Moton.

Paradigm Shift

Washington and Moton have been seen as administering with the best intentions for their institution. The presidents that followed them also administered with the best intentions for their institution. However, people do not view these later presidents with as much understanding. The campuses of HBCUs by the 1960s were seedbeds of Civil Rights activities, so the administrations and the presidents of these times were marred in
their image by the sociopolitical context of the times. For an example, many HBCU presidents expelled some activist students and dismissed some activist faculty. The national issues of the Civil Rights and the Cold War impacted all college campuses, but particularly at HBCUs (given that there were not that many black schools) (Fariello, 1995; Lewis, 1993; Lewis, 1988).

In Charles S. Johnson: Leadership Beyond the Veil in the Age of Jim Crow, Gasman and Gilpin (2003) detail the tenure of Fisk University’s Charles Johnson. Johnson dismissed one of his top faculty members, Lee Lorch, who ironically had successfully won a federally funded grant to Fisk University. Because Lorch was an outspoken critic of the racial status quo during the 1950s, he was investigated by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HCUA). HCUA labeled Lorch as a communist. Although Lorch brought prestige to Fisk’s mathematics department and had secured a federally funded grant, Johnson complied with Fisk’s Board of Trustees and dismissed Lorch from the university. Nevertheless, Johnson is still remembered as an effective college president who organized a Race Relations Institute at Fisk as well as privately supported the civil rights movement (Robbins, 1996).

With regards to the literature on the complexities of HBCU presidents like Johnson, there is a growing thread of literature that has examined the lives and administrations of presidents during the 1950s and 1960s (Williamson, 2008; Curl, 2007; Rhoades; 2007; Zakki, 2007; Lefever, 2005). Regardless if the presidents were perceived as collaborative authoritarians of the status quo or openly supported the Civil Rights
movement, the literature has revealed that all HBCUs administered to provide the best for their respective institutions.

In *Black Colleges and Civil Rights: Organizing and Mobilizing in Jackson, Mississippi*, Williamson (2008) compares and contrasts the actions during the 1960s of President Jacob L. Reddix of Jackson State College and President Adam Beittel (a White man) of nearby Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi. Both presidents believed in universal equality and believed that student participation in the Civil Rights movement was the right thing; however, they were in different situations. Reddix was at a state-supported institution; he had to comply with a White Board who ordered him to maintain law and order on campus. According the Williamson, Reddix “ruled with an iron fist.” The implications for the state-supported school could have been dire if Reddix did not respond in the way he did (Williamson, 2008).

At nearby Tougaloo College, President Beittel had more flexibility to openly criticize the racial status quo. Tougaloo was a private institution, which did not rely on state funding. Beittel was the son of Quaker parents. He devoted his academic career at HBCUs, supporting his students and African Americans. Williamson indicates that prior to accepting the presidency of Tougaloo College, Beittel served as the president of Talladega College (a private HBCU) in Alabama. At Talladega, Beittel hosted an “interracial conference on desegregation and voting rights, (wrote) articles equating segregation with a violation of Christian principles and democratic ideals, and (sent) letters to the governor expressing his opposition to Alabama laws and customs” (p. 119). Beittel continued these actions while president at Tougaloo; he provided housing for the
Freedom Riders, participated in protest marches in Jackson, and refused to expel his students who participated in the various civil rights activities. Clearly there are differences between presidents Reddix and Beittel. Williamson’s book addresses the paradigm shift from the old way of thinking about HBCU presidents, to a full examination of the complexities encountered by presidents of HBCUs during the mid 20th century. The book is one of many works that shows how people can re-evaluate the legacies of HBCU presidents.

Alonzo Moron, who served as president of Hampton Institute, is an HBCU president who has been overlooked in history. He is another good example of a president facing the complexities of the era. In Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute, Zaki (2007) describes Moron as an “activist college president” (p. 3). Moron had leadership characteristics similar to Morehouse College’s legendary president Dr. Benjamin E. Mays. Moron was an outspoken critic of racial segregation. According to Zaki (2007), Moron viewed it to be his mission as president of Hampton to move the institution forward and to promote to civil rights. A native of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Moron used his platform as president of Hampton to the address the social issues on the international stage. He was fully committed to racial equality in the United States. Moreover, like many presidents of HBCUs at the time, Moron was labeled a communist. During the era of the Cold War, this was usually the first label hurled by White conservatives to discredit African Americans (Anderson, 2003; Daniel, 2000; Horne, 1986). Moron denied the accusations and condemned communism. This type of defense mechanism—simple denial of accusations—was attempted many HBCU presidents. In
his autobiography *Born to Rebel* (1987), Mays indicates that during his tenure as
president of Morehouse College, critics and staunch segregationists accused him of being
a communist because of his criticism of segregation. While it was a serious accusation to
be labeled a communist, there was no evidence to prove that they were communists or
communist sympathizers.

Moron and Mays were outspoken critics of the racial status. Both Morehouse
College and Hampton Institute were private institutions, a situation which gave these two
presidents more freedom to address social issues.

In contrast, presidents of public institutions (such as Rufus Atwood of Kentucky
State College and Frederick Patterson of Tuskegee Institute) had to work with the pro-
segregationist state legislatures and officials in order to make progress for their respective
institutions. In *A Black Educator in the Segregated South: Kentucky’s Rufus B. Atwood*,
Smith (1984) describes President Atwood as more of a politician than a college president.
Atwood used the issues of desegregation to pressure the Kentucky state legislature to
appropriate more to his institution. However, Atwood, like other presidents of public
HBCUs, was forced by the trustees and politicians to expel students and dismiss faculty
in 1960 when students staged sit-ins at local lunch counters in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Atwood had served in World War I. He believed in the ideals of the civil rights
movement, but he was in a position where he did not have much of a choice. From a
historical perspective, Atwood would have been deemed an Uncle Tom or a collaborator;
however, Smith’s (1994) broad perspective of the complexities that Atwood faced allows
the reader to understand why Atwood administered in the manner that he did.
Former Tuskegee Institute president Dr. Frederick Patterson had similar dilemmas. In his autobiography, *Chronicles of Faith: The Autobiography of Frederick Patterson* (1990), he talked about walking in the shoes of Booker T. Washington and Robert Moton:

I had to read carefully. Some people had called both Booker Washington and Dr. Moton Uncle Toms. To some extent, I found that I too needed to bow the exigencies of race relations. When I saw things that made me angry, I didn’t react as strongly as I felt. I didn’t want to tarnish the image of Tuskegee Institute, and so I couldn’t be a spitfire. If being a spitfire was what I had wanted to do, I would have left Tuskegee rather than blemish the record of an institution to which many people had contributed and which was important to its students. I didn’t feel that I truly could be a spitfire; perhaps some people did call me an Uncle Tom. (p. 49).

Patterson supported the civil rights movement. In fact, he encouraged his students and faculty to vote and participate in civil rights activities. However, he asked the students and faculty not to use the name of the institution (school letterhead, and so forth) if they participated in the movement, to protect the image of Tuskegee. Patterson is most remembered as having established the United Negro College Fund. During World War II, many philanthropists were not contributing money as much as they did years earlier (because of the war). Patterson, along with Benjamin Mays, organized the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) in 1944. UNCF created a consortium of private HBCUs to share resources, to ensure each other’s survival (Patterson, 1990).

To now examine HBCU presidents within the sociopolitical context of the time has resulted in a paradigm shift. It can be seen that presidents of HBCUs prior to the 1970s had to deal with various sociopolitical issues that impacted their respective institutions. These issues included the Civil Rights movement, the Cold War, and other domestic problems. College presidents had to work within the system to ensure that their
respective institutions would survive. One can now study the presidents’ accomplishments in the light of the constraints of their era, but doing so does result in a paradigm shift from past assessments that were not as broad in context. This shift I will call “Post Dr. Bledsoe paradigm.”

**Turner in the Literature**

So some scholars have now re-examined the accomplishments of presidents of HBCUs in the broader context of their era. But Turner, however, continues to be (unintentionally) presented in the old paradigm. There is a growing thread of literature on Turner and his administration at State College: Hine’s (1996) *South Carolina State College Students Protest, 1955–1968*; Baker’s (2006) *Paradoxes of Desegregation, African American Struggles for Educational Equity in Charleston*; Grose’s (2006) *South Carolina at the Brink: Robert McNair and the Politics of Civil Rights*; and Lau’s (2006) *Democracy Rising: South Carolina and the Fight for Black Equality Since 1865*. While there is more interest in the literature about the administration of Turner, each book tends to emphasize solely the sociopolitical context of his tenure. Few concentrate on Turner’s administration at State College. Turner’s administration is essentially overshadowed by the student unrest and off-campus Civil Rights activities in downtown Orangeburg. This focus distracts the reader from fully understanding Turner’s life and accomplishments for the university. Moreover, in Fairclough’s (2007) *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachings in the Segregated South* and Smith’s (1994) *A Black Educator in the Segregated South: Kentucky’s Rufus Atwood*, Turner is only briefly mentioned, and at that, as a dictator. So no matter that many presidents of the time are now being
considered in a broader context—Turner is still vilified, giving a reader the impression that Turner must have been so harsh that his administration remains true to the old paradigm.

The Concepts of Leadership

This section of the literature review will examine specific concepts of leadership as those concepts relate to this study: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, African American leadership, and academic leadership. First, there is a discussion about the term leadership.

What is Leadership?

Over time, people have developed and redeveloped what leadership is. Such changes make it more difficult to discuss the concept. For example, we can say that people seek a leader to come rescue them, a parent coming to the aid of his or her children. However, in another sense of the word leadership, people may seek to find someone who can inspire them, so that they can help themselves (Gardner, 1995).

According to Bass (1995) in What is Leadership, the words leader and leadership are very complex. These words are broad; leaders and the act of leading can be interpreted in multiple ways. Think of how these words might be seen differently in different organizational structures, cultures, and situations in which one takes the role of being the leader. As Bass explains it, “the meaning of (leader) leadership may depend on the kind of institution in which it is found” (1995, p. 38). Thus there is no right or wrong way to interpret leadership. In Leadership, Burns (1978) points out that there are over 130 definitions of leadership! Numerous definitions of the term complicate the notion and
interpretation of the concept of leadership. It is interesting that all of the following books share the same perspective on leadership, although they were written in different years: Burns’s (1978) *Leadership*; Lassey and Sashkin’s (1983) *Dimensions of Leadership*; Tucker’s (1995) *Politics as Leadership*; and Newell’s (2009) *The Soul of a Leader: Character, Conviction, and Ten Lessons in Political Greatness*. There are many definitions of leadership, but these four books show how leadership is viewed over time, which is crucial to how leadership is viewed in this study. In *Leadership*, Burns (1978) defines leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers” (p. 19). However, he (1978) suggests that the notion of leadership can be “an aspect of power, but it is also a separate and vital process in itself” (p. 18). So Burns is saying that leadership can have both a power aspect as well as a relationship aspect. He thinks that a successful leadership is one in which the goals of the leaders and their constituencies are met.

Lassey and Sashkin (1983) define leadership as “a role that leads toward goal achievement, involves interaction and influence, and usually results in some form of changed structure of behavior of groups, organizations, or communities” (pp. 11–12). Their essay examines the practical points of view in regards to leadership. They say that regardless of one’s role in an organization, whoever takes on certain leadership variables are considered leaders (Lassey & Sashkin, 1983).

Tucker (1995) defines leadership as

a fact of social life in all spheres, not in politics only and wherever found it appears under the aspect of a relationship
between leaders and those whom they lead. Leadership is a process of human interaction in which some individuals exert, or attempt to exert, a determining influence upon others (p. 11).

Tucker’s book Politics as Leadership seeks to examine how leaders (state officials) function. Tucker argues that the notion of leadership comes from politics. According to Tucker (1995), if the constituted leadership (formal officials) are not responding to the will of the masses, nonconstituted leaders (people who are not in positions of authority) step up (in sociopolitical movements) as the leaders of the masses to address the social conditions of the people. According to Tucker, this situation may result in a nonconstituted leader assuming the role of the constituted leader. Tucker suggests that the essence of leadership is primarily based on human interactions and some type of relational approach. If the current political leadership is not listening to the masses, nonconstituted leaders emerge as the leaders of the people.

Newell (2009), in The Soul of a Leader: Character, Conviction, and Ten Lessons in Political Greatness, suggests that the ideals of leadership change within the context of times: a generational change. He says that although people are drawn to leaders with qualities such as “personality, character, conviction, and vision,” it is really the historical context of the time that determines what characteristics people want in their leaders. The challenges and issues that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s are not necessarily issues that are pertinent for leaders in the 21st century. In essence, Newell (2009) says that leadership is all about timing. He offers ten aspects of leadership; three out of the ten reflect well in this study. These three are the following:

1. A leader embodies the times.
2. A leader must have two or three main goals, and he or she must not try to do too much.

3. History will choose its leaders.

Although there are many definitions of leadership, the four just discussed provide an idea of how leadership is viewed universally, as well as over time. Within these terminologies a researcher identifies differences in the forms of leadership. Burns’s groundbreaking work, in particular, examines two forms of leadership that have been debated: transformational leadership and transactional leadership.

*Transformational & Transactional Leadership*

According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership “seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). In his further studies of transformational leadership, Burns (2004) in *Transforming Leadership* contends that transformational leadership is equivalent to empowerment. As opposed to “exercising power over people, transforming leaders champion and inspire people” (p. 26). Other scholars have evolved Burns’ idea of transformational leadership. In *Improving Organizational Effectiveness through Transformational Leadership*, Bass and Avolio (1994) suggest that transformational leadership is contingent based on the shift of a constituency’s (or follower’s) beliefs. The purpose of transformational leadership goal is to encourage, motivate, and inspire the follower to “do more than they originally intended
and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performance” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 3).

Transactional leadership embraces the ideology of ruling from the top down. Transactional leaders are power-oriented and rely (by making transactions/deals) on a close constituency to maintain power. In direct relation to Burn’s (1978) notion of transactional leadership, Tucker’s constituted political leaders reflect the essence of transactional leadership. According to Tucker (1995) a constituted political leader “seeks power by whatever are the prescribed or permitted means and procedures, and once having become a constituted leader often seeks to enhance his power position” (p. 7).

Moreover, other scholars (Bass, 1990; Howell, 1988) emphasize that the ideals of transactional leadership are entrenched in the act of bargaining. This concept means that the use of contingent rewards is the foundation of the relationship between the leader and the follower. Rewards are more external than internal and followers work for security rather than achievement and self-actualization (Bass, 1990; Howell, 1988; Burns, 1978).

The philosophical foundations of transformational leadership and transactional leadership are very different. In *Concepts of Leadership: The Beginnings*, Bass (1985) contends that the philosophical foundation of leadership from Eastern societies relies on transformation leadership, while Western societies rely on transactional leadership. For an example, he quotes from Homer’s *The Odyssey*. Homer advised leaders to maintain a social distance from their followers. According to Burns (1978), this sort of social distance represents a characteristic of a transactional leader, whose leadership is based on social hierarchy and isolation. Those who maintain leadership positions are segregated
from the masses. Bass (1985) further identifies ancient Greek societal leadership as transformational; Greek leaders were viewed as charismatic and heroic, thus allowing the masses to depend on their leadership. Bass (1985) also provides a short analysis of transformational leadership from the Chinese; Confucianism and Taoism encourage a global spirituality. Bass indicates that Taoism has encouraged leaders to provide empowerment to its followers. The Asian empowerment form of leadership is just the opposite of the ancient Greeks and other Western societies. Despite the differences, Bass does not condemn either leadership style, but rather Bass suggests that every society creates a system (either transformational or transactional) that ultimately becomes their system of dominance.

Under transformational leadership, Burns (1978) lists the following types:

1. Intellectual
2. Reform
3. Revolutionary
4. Heroic
5. Ideological

Under transactional leadership, Burns lists the following types:

1. Opinion
2. Group
3. Party
4. Legislative
5. Executive
Although transactional leadership is useful and necessary in many organizational structures, transformational leadership has proven to be the ideal form of leadership, as it seeks to uplift both the leader and the follower. Along with Burns’s (1978) types of transformational leadership, Bass highlights the tenets of transformational leadership. In reference to Stewart’s (2006) *Transformational Leadership: An Evolving Concept Examined through the Works of Burns, Bass, and Leithwood*, Bass highlights the tents of transformational leadership, which are the following:

1. Charismatic leadership or idealized influence
2. Inspirational motivation
3. Intellectual stimulation
4. Individualized consideration

The tenets of transformational leadership, according to Bass, reflect the essence of Burns’ definition of transformational leadership (in which leaders inspire and uplift his or her constituency).

While Burns’ (1978) *Leadership* is primarily based on the dichotomy of transformational and transactional leadership, his tone throughout the book appears to favor transformational leadership over transactional. Burns focuses primarily on political leadership more than educational leadership. This focus could present itself as a contradiction of literature in reference to this research in educational leadership. Within the context of the forms of leadership as presented by Burns and Bass, the notion of leadership (particularly transformational and transactional) has expanded to different spectrums other than political and social movements.
In *Advancing Democracy: A Critical Interpretation of Leadership*, Tierney (1989) argues that critical interpretations of leadership have not been examined in leadership studies. Using Burns’ transformational leadership theory, Tierney (1989) claims that transformational leadership is possible in any organizational structure (including those that are transactional) if leaders “… exhibit a central concern for the advancement of democracy in their organization” (p. 166). Transformational leadership studies have only been interpreted to show how leaders and organizational structures work to promote change in social and political movements. However, transformational leadership styles are applicable to studying leadership holistically (including educational leadership).

Social and political movements may require transformational leaders. But in educational institutions, such as higher education, transformational leaders are not necessarily needed to promote essential social change. In reference to Birnbaum’s *How College Works: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership*, Tierney suggests that leaders in academe need to be cybernetic leaders, as opposed to visionary leaders. Certainly a visionary leader is deemed heroic among his or her constituencies; but that is not what is needed, he says. Birnbaum describes cybernetic leaders as modest leaders who identify with the following axioms: “If it’s working, keep doing it. If it’s not working, stop doing it. If you don’t know what to do, don’t do anything” (Tierney, 1989, p. 161).

Although that axiom for cybernetic leadership appears to be transactional, Tierney’s (1989) case study of academic vice presidential leadership (which operated under cybernetic leadership) at Cutting Edge College reflects the notion of transformational leadership. The administrator in his case study complied with the culture
of the campus in which administrators were more colleagues than managers and the academic programs were extremely liberal, in which the students were the center of the learning. Since the founding of Cutting Edge College, this culture has been the norm. Seeing that the institution operated effectively and had no need for change, the administrator saw fit to continue this model and operate as a colleague as opposed to an “administrator.” The end result was a prosperous institution where administrators and faculty were not divided, providing opportunities for students and faculty to grow intellectually (Tierney, 1989). Thus Tierney’s interpretation of leadership is one that should not be viewed as a top-down approach in a transactional model. In a similar vein, Guild’s (1987) *How Leaders’ Minds Work* highlights the importance of a leader shying away from the top-down approach and instead, using his or her constituents.

Guild (1987) notes that leadership is not the same from one leader to the next. In Guild’s view, leaders develop; and in order to lead, they rely on their own cognitive style (the style determining the message that is received from a situation). He subscribes to previous studies of successful educational institutions crediting strong leadership; however, he does not believe that those qualities and characteristics of leadership are set in a specific order. According to Guild (1987), there is no single formula for strong educational leadership. Guild’s analyses of cognitive style leadership possess tones of transformational leadership (however, there are elements of transactional leadership). Using Carl Jung’s model of psychological types for leaders (Perception: Sensation; and Intuition and Judgment: Thinking and Feeling), Guild subscribes to Intuition and Feeling (both elements of transformational leadership) in the context of constructing educational
leadership. One of his first concepts of cognitive style leadership is an educational leader’s pursuit of professional growth and for professional growth of those around him or her. Moreover, an effective educational leader uses the strengths of his or her constituents in order to administer effectively. Instead of managing from the top down, Guild’s leaders would rely on the strengths from his or her subordinates. Mitchell and Tucker (Leadership as a Way of Thinking) share these ideas with Guild. They believe that leadership (either transformational or transactional) comes in different forms.

Transformational and transactional leadership work based on the structure of the respective organization. Although leaders have different cognitive styles, Guild concludes that effective leaders are able to efficiently communicate and lead based on their environment and their specialized skills. Conclusively, Guild’s premise is that leaders must consider their cognitive-style characteristics when developing their leadership style. Unlike Guild’s analysis in which educational leaderships are responsible for transforming the institution, Giroux (1993) argues that it is the educators that are in the forefront of transforming the educational institution. It was Burns (1978), after all, who implied that transformational leaders “shape, alter, or evaluate the values and goals of followers through the vital teacher role” (p. 425).

In Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals, Giroux (1993) claims that educators are not included when it comes to educational reform, and that educators do not have the freedom to be intellectually expressive in the classroom. Unlike Burns, who exclusively examines political leadership, Giroux is solely a critic of the current educational leadership (as well as an avid supporter of critical and free thinking). He is totally
dissatisfied with the current role of educators in which they have to abide by a transactional administration that further suppresses them. According to Giroux, educators are taught only methodologies that would ultimately discourage critical thinking. These methodologies create a system that does not accommodate all students (or all educators). This non-accommodating system creates bias in cultural sensitivity and in learning systems different from Western thought. In the same respect, Giroux (1993) says that educators must be given the freedom to be transformative intellectuals. Without this freedom for educators, the system that we live under will never accommodate all students. According to Giroux (1993), a teacher who is a transformative intellectual can empower his or her students to be critical and active citizens. It is his hope that educators’ scholarly work and practice will allow them to raise their conscience, as well raise the conscience of their students and the community (the essence of a transformative leader). Giroux’s scholarly work carries a similar tone to Counts (Dare the School Build a New Social Order). Counts promotes the ideal for educators to fashion their own curriculum in order to stimulate free thinking in an educational setting.

The notion of transformational leadership has been expanded and critically analyzed by scholars since Burns conceptualized the term in 1978. For instance, Stewart (2006) published an article that examines the evolution of transformational leadership from the perspective of scholars such as Burns and Bass. Burns (2003) recent scholarship on transformational leadership suggests that transactional leaders (or leaders who operate in a transactional structure) can still emerge as transformational leaders. As an example, Harvard University President Charles William Eliot transformed the climate on the
campus to a more intellectually stimulating environment where students were free to choose their courses; Eliot also supported racial inclusion on the campus during the later part of the nineteenth century. Burns (2003) does use examples of heroic or great people as transformational leaders; he offers that transformational leadership reflects the “collective achievement” of the people. Transformational leadership has stood as the alternative form of leadership for those people who have been historically oppressed or on the margins of society. For African Americans, in particular, transformative leaders have emerged in history to counter the racist, oppressive, transactional leadership that either openly or subtly disenfranchised people of African descent in the United States.

*African American Leadership*

African American leadership has been historically based on the question of accommodation versus protest. This question, whether to accommodate or protest, is reflected in the literature about African American leaders in a country that has historically disenfranchised African Americans (Bunche, 2006; Walters & Smith, 1999; Gaines, 1996; White, 1990). In *A Brief and Tentative Analysis of Negro Leadership*, Bunche (2006) argues that being an African American leader “meant that one was freighted with the weight of group expectations” (p. 9). When a leader comes from a group that has been historically oppressed, that leader has to adopt either a working style of accommodation or of protest, based on the company that they keep. Walters and Smith (1999) note this situation as they examine the dual roles that African American leaders have to undertake.
African American leadership, by design, has been influenced by the White power structure. In their works, White (1990) and Highman (1978) suggest that the designation of black leaders has historically been influenced by a patriarchal White majority. Black leaders were deemed safe if they were not perceived as questioning the social, economic, and political status quo. For example, in the late 19th and early 20th century, Booker T. Washington showed black subordination to the White majority; he was designated by the White power structure as a leader of African Americans.

Within the context of the broad and complex definitions of leadership as expressed by Burns (1978), the notion of black leadership in the United States has also taken on an expansive meaning. Tierney (1989) insists that a critical interpretation of leadership is needed; similarly, black leadership needs to be studied in the same light. Black leadership has been placed in the following two categories: elitist and nationalist. In *Black Leadership in American: From Booker T. Washington to Jesse Jackson* and *Ethnic Leadership in America*, White (1990) and Highman (1978) indicate that definitions of black leadership in the United States were influenced by the patriarchal, White majority. Blacks who were designated as the leaders of the race “had to be acceptable in polite society, not threatening to decorum and order. He was to illustrate to Whites that blacks could be respected and successful citizens and set an example to blacks of propriety, decency, and achievement” (Highman, 1978, p. 98).

As Highman (1978) further points out, “Caste is the principal determinant of any discussions of historical Afro-American leadership” (p.96). Coined as “the talented tenth” by W. E. B. DuBois (1995), elite African Americans (the Black bourgeoisie) usually
came from a White bloodline. Historically, their ancestors achieved privileged status in the slave system by working close to Whites, as opposed to their counterparts who worked (in segregation) in the “fields.” As a result of working close to Whites, the group that became the talented tenth often adopted the traditions, educational aspirations, and mannerisms from their White masters. After Emancipation, unlike their poor black counterparts, they were able to successfully assimilate into a world that was dominated by a Eurocentric and White power structure. The system of slavery, and later Jim Crow laws, had a profound effect on the black bourgeoisie. Instead of working and cooperating with their poor black counterparts, many in the black bourgeoisie developed an inferiority complex (because they not wholly accepted in White society) and looked on poor blacks with contempt (Frazier, 1962). In *Black Bourgeoisie*, Frazier (1962) cautioned that this small group of black elitists did not represent black leadership in the United States because they were socialized to assimilate and adopt the customs and mannerisms of Whites, which kept them “out of touch” with the masses. This type of out-of-touch behavior is evident in Graham’s (2000) personal account of growing up in a black elitist family during the 1960s. His grandmother not only chastised him about playing outside in the sun too long (out of fear that his skin would darken), but she also frequently referred to the masses of blacks who participated in the Civil Rights Movement as *niggers*. However, during the early 20th century, many elite blacks were not “out of touch.” In the book *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880–1920*, Gatewood (1990) illustrated that when segregation intensified, many blacks who comprised the second generation of power and privilege fought with their working-class counterparts.
Although black elitism was primarily associated with adopting the mannerisms of White Americans, there is a direct connection between elitism and achievement, a connection that equated to black leadership (Gatewood, 1990). Frazier (1962) and Highman (1978) argue that elitism should not be confused with wealth. African Americans, during the century after Emancipation, were not the major players in the United States accumulating a substantial amount of wealth. Elitism within the context of black leadership often referred to someone who achieved some type of success, such as assuming positions identified with the middle class, which would appear to have been impossible for the masses of blacks to achieve. As mentioned earlier, Booker T. Washington is just such an example from the early 20th century. Washington’s autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, represents the epitome of the self-made man/ bootstrap theory of achieving and advancing in the United States: through good character, one can overcome the odds and overcome one’s social condition or background. For most rural, Southern blacks during the later part of the 19th century; however, this “rise” was an impossible feat. Highman (1978) states that those who were inspired and tried to emulate Washington, but still remained in same state, may have viewed themselves as socially and intellectually inadequate. However, black leaders and elitists had assistance from the White majority. For instance, if it had not been for General Samuel Armstrong’s assistance, perhaps there would have not been a famous Booker T. Washington or a Tuskegee Institute. As Nelson (2003) points out,

Unlike white leaders of prominence, blacks never derived leadership from personal wealth or from affirmation gained from a national political election. Instead, a nationally known black would be more inclined to acquire recognition
by being selected for prominence by a white benefactor or influential members of a white oligarchy (p. xii).

Black elitists who were deemed as the leaders for African Americans are problematic because they were limited in their power and, in many cases, they were unable to undertake and achieve the notion of uplift for the betterment of all African Americans. Highman (1978) confirms this contention. He contends that black elitist leaders

…were to “lead,” to be agents of change. But in reality their influence was quite limited and their efforts for the race frustrated, resulting in the appearance of empty pretensions. Thus black people might applaud them as leaders of the race at one moment and dismiss them as “dicty” at the next (p. 94).

Highman’s (1978) assessment can used to examine why Turner’s leadership and legacy has been viewed unfavorably in history. While Turner may have had the credentials and prestige to serve as a model of excellence for the blacks, the literature has shown that Turner was conservative when it came to issues of civil rights and limited in becoming an agent of change during an era in which African Americans were pushing for change. However, black leadership cannot be viewed from a monolithic perspective in which leaders have to act and administer one way in order to achieve racial uplift. Rather, it is imperative to look at black leadership from a nationalist perspective—even those leaders who were deemed as elitist. At the same time, traditional black leaders such as Washington or Turner should not be easily condemned without an assessment of the sociopolitical context of their times.

Black leadership has also been examined from a nationalist or Pan-Africanist approach. Esedebe (1994) defines the approach Pan-Africanism as
…a political and cultural phenomenon which regards Africa, Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit. It aims at the regeneration and unification of Africa and the promotion of a feeling of solidarity among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values (p. 14).

In general, Pan-Africanism is any form of resistance to the oppression and injustices of people of African descent for the sole purpose of racial uplift. Within the framework of Pan-Africanism, the history of black leadership in the United States means those leaders who exercised and exhibited some form of Pan-Africanism. Referring to the notion of transformational leadership, Walters and Smith (1999) contend that the fundamental premise of black leadership has come from the black community, and that “…individuals who present themselves for leadership have their origin in that community and its culture and that they should reflect the needs and aspirations of that community” (p. 249). This contention supports the idea that Pan-Africanism (Black leadership) and transformational leadership are synonymous in many respects. Although notable 20th-century leaders emerged from communities that pushed for economic self-sufficiency and racial uplift, the ideas and strategies of these leaders may have differed. White (1985) highlights leaders such as Washington, Du Bois, Garvey, King, Malcolm X, and Jackson, who emerged to be the voices of their communities as well as the conscience of African Americans. However, the essence of Pan-Africanism not only includes the heroic figures of the 20th century but also includes any person in American history who challenges or resists the status quo of the American social order to promote racial uplift. This style of leadership tends to not include those African American leaders who are viewed as elitists, but rather those who were agents of change in their own way. To examine the heroic
aspect, and not the process, of African American leadership is to limit the historical study of African American history leadership studies. This fact is why African American leaders (especially college presidents) need to be examined critically—because they worked in context in which they were both highly praised for their achievements and criticized for their silence on sociopolitical issues.

*Academic Leadership*

Although traditional studies of African American college presidents during the era of de jure segregation have focused on the sociopolitical context of the time, examining just the dilemmas of African American college presidents is not sufficient. *Academic* leadership of these college presidents needs to be considered. However, theorists who have studied academic leadership provide only “how to” instructions for being an effective leader in the academy, as opposed to a broader historical analysis of academic leadership. There is a need to examine African American college presidents through the lens of academic leadership.

According to Diamond (2002) academic leadership is a spectrum of leadership strategies by which the ultimate goal for that leader is to enact change for the greater good of the institution faculty, staff, students and the community. This includes making decisions in a staggering array of areas, from budget and facilities to programs and personnel issues…(serving as an) buffer between opposing viewpoints, between (one’s) institution and the surrounding community and between students, faculty, alumni, and donors (Diamond, 2002, xxvii).
While there is much scholarship that examines academic leadership, they all tend to agree that most successful academic leaders are those who to be effective administrators (Birnbaum, 1988; Fisher, Tack & Wheeler, 1988; Fisher, 1991).

According to Fisher, Tack, and Wheeler (1988), strong and effective leaders are absolutely imperative for the future of institutions of higher education. Given that colleges and universities are ideally designed to make significant contributions to society as a whole, the role of the president of the institution is very important because he or she must carry out an agenda that will impact the future of his or her institution and society (Fisher, Tack, & Wheeler, 1988; Fisher, 1984). The legacies of college presidents are measured by the success of the institution; however, it is the opinion(s) of their constituents (the academic community) that ultimately decides if the presidents are effective leaders—regardless of their successes or failures during their tenure (Fisher, Tack & Wheeler, 1988). This peer judgment is where studying the legacies of college presidents becomes problematic. The fundamental question a researcher should ask is, “What factors contribute to perceiving a college president as effective?”

According to Fisher’s *The Board and the President (1991)*, effective leaders possess the characteristics of legitimacy, expertise, and charisma. Legitimacy means that the constituents support the leader’s platform; expertise means that one is knowledgeable, or perceived as such; and charisma means that a leader is able to gain the trust and confidence of his or her constituents. Fisher, Tack, and Wheeler (1988, p. viii), argue that effective college presidents exhibit the following characteristics:

- less collegial and more distant
more inclined to reply on respect than affiliation
more inclined to take risks
more committed to an ideal or vision than to the institution
more strongly [believe] in the concept of merit pay
more thoughtful than spontaneous
work longer hours
more supportive of organizational flexibility than rigidity (p. viii)

In the same light, Fisher’s *Power of the Presidency* (1984) indicates that strong and effective college presidents have to be risk-takers. He states that “there are even those whose view of leadership assumes that, unless a president takes risks, he or she is unworthy of the faith and support of those who granted the unique power and responsibility of the presidency” (p. 17). In addition, Fisher, Tack, and Wheeler (1988) indicate that, although many of the effective college presidents held Ph.D.’s, that many of them possessed terminal degrees in fields other than educational administration, such as business or law.

A debatable characteristic of an effective leader (with regards to leadership and legacy) is charisma. As Fisher indicates (1991), charismatic leadership within the context of an organizational structure only works when a leader earns the trust or confidence of his or her constituencies. Fisher further indicates that charismatic leadership can be self-defined and can be attributed to one considered an “outsider” to be elected or appointed to office.
There are many characteristics that make up an effective and strong college president. However, there are other characteristics that can make a president appear weak and ineffective. In Fisher and Koch’s *Presidential Leadership* (1996), the authors contend that strong and effective college presidents should be accessible to all students, especially during times of crisis. In one subsection entitled “Student Unrest,” Fisher and Koch suggest that college presidents should make themselves available to the entire student body (as opposed to seeing only a small group of students or not be available at all). An available college president builds trust and confidence among the members of the student body. Yet, the literature on effective leadership is subjective (Birnbaum, 1988).

Another theory of academic leadership (a theory that has been the least studied) is the notion of cybernetic leadership. Coined by Birnbaum (1988), cybernetic leadership is a form of leadership in which administrators work based on previous trends and feedback. It is a pragmatic working style; as mentioned previously, the administrator governs by the following principles: “If it’s working, keep doing it. If it’s not working, stop doing it. If you don’t know what to do, don’t do anything” (Tierney, 1989, p. 161).

Academic leadership theories are lacking in the contextual analysis of college presidents of HBCUs during the era of de jure segregation. The literature on academic leadership outlined in this section indicates that there is a gap in the literature with regards to applying academic leadership theories to college presidents at HBCUs. Turner’s legacy may be viewed negatively, but one can conjecture that many of the theories of academic leadership may help in the reassessment of his legacy. Because the
concepts of leadership are critical for re-examining the leadership and legacy of Turner, the theoretical framework of critical race theory will place these leadership concepts in proper perspective. The next section will present a theoretical framework for this study.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

The final section of this literature review will introduce this study’s theoretical framework: critical race theory.

Introduction: What Is Critical Race Theory?

The framework used for this study is critical race theory. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), critical race theory is the idea that the issue of race is central to what happens in everyday life. In other words, racism is so pervasive in the United States that it occurs everywhere, from daily human interactions to the passage of government laws or policies. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) further highlight the basic tenets of critical race theory: ordinary daily overt or covert racism, social construction, essentialism, and white privilege. Although many scholars have different approaches to critiquing critical race theory, critical race theorists are drawn together by two ideas. The first idea is that there is an ongoing history and maintenance of white supremacy in the United States. However, this history and maintenance of white supremacy contradicts the principles of the U.S. moral and social structure, i.e., equal protection under the law. The second common idea shared by scholars of critical race theorists is that they seek to change laws and racial power as opposed to simply understanding it (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995).
Proponents of Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory emerged during the 1970s as a result of the failure of the implementation of Supreme Court rulings, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, and federal laws during the 1950s and 1960s that promised all citizens, especially African Americans, to equal protection and equal opportunities. During the 1970s, legal scholars and activists saw that the progress of the Civil Rights movement “had stalled and, in many respects, were being rolled back” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3). Bell, Freeman, and Delgado are a few of the early proponents of critical race theory who began to critique and criticize the hypocrisy of the federal government’s civil rights policies as they related to the continued disenfranchisement of people of color during the 1970s and afterwards (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Freeman, 1995). Although there are other proponents of critical race theory, Bell emerged as the leading principal scholar (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Bell’s work primarily focuses on racial realism and material determinism. While he has published a plethora of articles and books on critical race theory, he is best known for critiquing the social and legal impact that the *Brown* decision has had both on White and black America. He argues that the *Brown* decision of 1954 and the civil rights laws that were passed during the 1950s and 1960s benefited White elites as opposed to blacks. Because the United States was in the middle of an international conflict with the Soviet Union during this time, its government softened domestic policies regarding civil rights activism so as to project a positive image on the world stage (Bell, 1995; Bell, 1989). Yet while the United States presented a positive image to the rest of the world, and while
White Americans could claim that racism did not exist because of the passage of the Supreme Court decisions and civil rights laws, blacks and other disenfranchised groups continued to suffer (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

**Application of Critical Race Theory**

The application of critical race theory to this study was taken from the works of Bell. As a result of the failures of school desegregation and the negative impact on black America, Bell (1992) suggests that black should no longer focus on the legal, symbolic reality aspect of achieving equality and instead should concentrate on independence and material reality from a system that continues to disenfranchise blacks.

In *And We Are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*, Bell (1989) examines a group of concerned black parents in 1987 who petitioned the Wisconsin state legislature to create an independent, majority black school system within the black community of Milwaukee. They justified this school as a way to protect their children by gaining “control over the schools their children attend and [called for the installation of] administrators and teachers who are both accountable to the community and dedicated to improving the quality of their schools and the academic performance of their children” (Bell, 1989, p. 262). While the state legislature rejected the plan, this case highlights the failure of the federal government’s promises to promote equality. Their efforts point out that it is up to the disenfranchised to rethink what really matters: a mere symbolic policy, or a material reality.

Bell (1992) continues to pose this scenario to his readers in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. In this book, Bell proposes a racial preference-
licensing Act. In essence, the U.S. government would pass an Act that allowed businesses, employers, and realtors to legally exclude black patrons on the grounds that they would have to pay a hefty license fee. The money from the license fees would be put in an equality fund to assist blacks with such things as buying homes with “no-interest” mortgage loans, establishing businesses, and providing college and vocational scholarships. In effect, both blacks and Whites would benefit from this Act, Bell said. Those White realtors, businesses, or realtors who had in the past discriminated against blacks could now openly discriminate—but would have to pay a heavy price. At the same time, blacks would have the opportunity (with help from the fees) to establish a strong, viable economic base independent from Whites (Bell, 1992).

Fundamentally, Bell (1992) is suggesting that black economic independence should be the priority for black Americans because of the failure of the Brown decision and civil rights laws. Because blacks are not getting anywhere with the present symbolic-only laws, material reality or economic independence must be the new priority for black Americans.

Within the context of applying critical race theory to this study, African American college presidents during the era of de jure segregation were faced with a similar dilemma. Was the dismantlement of segregation a more important part of their job than the preservation and improvement (materially and academically) of their institutions? In regards to Turner, one has to wonder what was important to his administration, the symbolic or the material reality?
Summary

The theoretical framework of critical race theory is an important component of reexamining the legacy of Turner. As this section has posed, racism in the United States is so pervasive that it occurs often without comment in everyday life. The United States has made almost obsolete those laws that were supposed to protect the disenfranchised. Bell’s solution to combating racism in the United States is for the disenfranchised to begin pushing for economic independence, as opposed to relying on federal laws. Although critical race theory emerged during the 1970s, what if the consensus of black Americans opted for economic independence as opposed to relying on federal laws? For college presidents at HBCUs, what were the goals and agenda for their institutions? Thus it is important to discuss the notion of symbolic reality versus material reality when reevaluating Turner’s legacy.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the study’s research methodology (qualitative research in the tradition of a biographical case study). Topics in Chapter 3 include research design and methodological approaches, the rationale for methods of study, the nature of the collected data, the selection of research participants, and data analysis and interpretation.

The Research Design

Once a researcher has a “general understanding of the intent and rationale for conducting qualitative research,” the researcher must create a research design (Creswell, 1998, p. 18). Designing research is very important for a qualitative study, because there are many problems that emerge in qualitative research, such as “how much literature should be included in the front of the story, how much theory should guide the study, and whether one needs to verify or report on the accuracy of his or her account” (Creswell, 1998, p. 18). Another problem is the emergence of new issues in the fieldwork. In essence, the research design upholds the purpose of the research and its methodology. A qualitative research approach, according to Glesne (2006), seeks interpretation, conceptualization, or understanding. The use of qualitative research for this study allowed me as the researcher to “delve in depth into complexities and process” and to examine relevant issues that needed to be identified (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 57). Patton (2002) describes qualitative data as “observations that yield detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth; interviews that capture direct quotations about people’s personal perspectives and experience; case studies; careful document review” (p. 4).
Biographical Study

This study uses a qualitative research design of a biographical study (life history). According to Creswell (1998), a life history is “an approach…where a researcher reports on an individual life and how it reflects cultural themes of the society, personal themes, institutional themes, and social histories” (p. 49). The study process consisted of an analysis of historical documents and semi-structured interviews. This approach was deemed appropriate because this study is based on an “individual lived experienced” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 61). The analysis specifically targeted aspects of Turner’s life such as his “formative experiences,” career path, presidential administration, retirement, and death (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 8). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), an historical analysis is helpful in gaining information in areas that have not been examined or in areas that need to be re-examined. Because Turner’s early life and life after he retired was unknown, and because his legacy as president of State College has been vilified historically, the use of historical analysis as part of the research design was helpful in filling-in the gaps in the literature of his early life and life after retirement, as well as helpful in re-evaluating his legacy.

Of course historical analysis as a method has had its setbacks, such as falsified data and situations in which researchers have misinterpret data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Yet, systematic historical analysis “enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of a study” because many research studies rely on historical analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 119). More specifically, the historical study aspect to this research design falls under the qualitative tradition of a biographical study, one that seeks to study
the life of an individual using primary documents and interviews (Creswell, 1998). Hence, this study uses primary documents such as these: Board of Trustee Minutes, speeches, photographs, previous oral history interviews, academic transcripts, various letters and correspondence, and newspaper articles; semi-structured interviews with members of Turner’s family, alumni of State College, community members, a college president, and two sitting members of the Board of Trustees at State College.

Case Study

In addition to the project being a biographical (life history) study, because this study is based on a bounded system, its method also best reflects the qualitative research tradition of a case study (Creswell, 1998). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), a case study is a study of a “specific organization, program, or process” (p. 164). Moreover, case studies tend to depend on data collection methods such as historical and document collections and interviews, which are techniques relevant for this study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This research is a case study in part because it was the intention of the research to examine an “instance of some social phenomenon” (Babbie, 2004, p. 293). In this study, the “social phenomenon” is Turner, who was an African American college president at a HBCU during the 1950s and 1960s. Using the qualitative historical case study research design, this study explored Turner’s early life, his administration at State College, and his life after retirement through the lens of critical race theory. The exploration uses an analytical method to develop an in-depth look at an African American college president’s experience within the historical context of the period and analyze his leadership.
The Research Site

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), the ideal research site is where there is high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, people, programs, interactions and/or structures that may be a part of the research question will be present, where the researcher can maintain presence as long as necessary (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

As the place of research, I chose the South Carolina State University Historical Collection (see Figure 2) and the city of Orangeburg, South Carolina, primarily because Turner presided over the institution and was remembered among many people in the Orangeburg community. This city allowed me to have the opportunity to gain access to primary historical documents and to obtain interviews from local residents who knew him or could talk about him in great depth and breadth with regards to the historical context of the time.

Source: Photo taken by researcher while in the field July 20, 2008

*Figure 2.* Miller F. Whittaker Library on the campus of South Carolina State University.
South Carolina State University’s Historical Collection, located on the third floor of the Miller F. Whittaker Library, has a collection of various primary historical documents pertaining to Turner and his administration at State College. These items proved essential to this study. At the time, the archives had recently acquired the original copy of the Board of Trustee minutes from Turner’s administration (1950–1967) dating back to the early twentieth century. These documents were discovered only a few months prior to my visit by construction workers who were renovating Lowman Hall, an old building on campus (see Figure 3). Hence, I was (luckily) the first dissertation scholar to have full access to these documents. Reading and analyzing these documents was a tedious process, taking numerous weeks. Because these documents were bound (which made them impossible to copy on a Xerox machine), the archivist granted me permission to copy with a hand-held scanner any documents important to this study. The archivist also uncovered several boxes of primary documents with regards to Turner. These items were mostly correspondence and letters. These documents have not been used in any prior studies. The discoveries made this study significant because of the uncovering of new primary sources. The acquisition of new facts from these papers underscores the importance of conducting historical research.
Over time, I developed a close rapport with the staff at the archives. Ashley Till, the archivist, and Barbara Keitt, the technical assistant, provided me with a work space, extended time outside the operating hours for me to continue to examine primary documents, and provided a space for me to conduct interviews with my participants. The
staff at the archives provided me with leads to find resources at the archives, and they referred me to potential participants for interviews.

Orangeburg, SC

Many people who currently live in the Orangeburg, South Carolina area have resided there since the time that Turner was the president of State College. In all, the majority are now retired educators from South Carolina State University, Claflin University, Wilkinson High School (before Orangeburg desegregated its schools), Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School (after Orangeburg desegregated its schools), or had some type of connection with South Carolina State University. While conducting research in the field, I was able to interview several people as a result of snowball sampling. In this type of sampling, an interviewee or key source refers the researcher to another person who might provide depth to the researcher’s study (Patton, 2002). Most notably, snowball sampling led to an interview with Mrs. Geraldine Piercee Zimmerman, a 97-year-old Orangeburg native and retired faculty member of State College. Her mother, Mrs. James Piercee, was a friend of Turner’s from the time of his tenure as dean of State College’s law school in 1947. In fact, as Mrs. Zimmerman’s interview revealed, her current home, where she has lived all of her life, served as temporary housing for Turner when he first came to Orangeburg as the newly appointed dean of State College’s law school in 1947 (see Figure 4).
Figure 4. Pierce/Zimmerman Residence. This home served as temporary housing for Turner when he first came to State College in 1947 to serve as its first dean of its law school.

Mrs. Zimmerman’s mother opened the home to Turner because at that time the local hotels did not accommodate African Americans. Mrs. Zimmerman’s mother and Turner remained friends throughout their lives.

Gaining Entrée

In order for a researcher to gain access to knowledge and to key sources that are not available to outsiders, it is important for the researcher to negotiate with a “gatekeeper” to gain entrée to these sources (Glesne, 2006). In this study, I sought to accomplish such a task. After Turner retired in 1967, his name was not heard again by
the majority of residents, students, and faculty members until after he died in 1988. To be sure, I could glean some of Turner’s personal voice from primary documents at the archives. I could “hear” Turner in his various day-to-day correspondences. But I still needed another source that better reflected his life, that revealed why he administered the way he did.

To truly understand a man like Turner, one must interview people who were close to him. I sought to interview a member of Turner’s immediate family who could provide a much deeper perspective on his life. Mrs. Zimmerman, who personally knew Turner’s children and Mr. Cecil Williams, referred me to first Mr. Cecil Williams for an interview. Mr. Williams informed me that Turner’s son recently visited him in Orangeburg, so I was provided with the contact information of Turner’s son: Mr. Benner C. Turner, II. Thus Mr. Williams served as my “gatekeeper” and contacted Mr. Benner Turner on my behalf. I heard from Mr. Turner via email. Mr. Turner, who is a Harvard Law graduate and attorney in Caracas, Venezuela, agreed to an interview. Mr. Turner also put me in contact with his sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Turner Klimas, a retired educator residing in the United Kingdom. Throughout the next few months, I remained in constant communication with Turner’s children through semi-structured informal interviews via the phone and email. Their interviews were rich in depth, allowing me to refocus the scope of my intended topic from just examining Turner’s presidential administration at State College to studying his entire life. Finally I could discern factors from his early life that influenced him later as president of State College, that affected his philosophy of education, and that influenced his whereabouts after he retired in 1967.
As a result of continued communication with Turner’s children, I was able to establish a rapport. They reflected on their personal lives with me as they shared their family history. For example, I learned that not only was their father a college president, but also their maternal grandfather, President Benjamin F. Allen had been president of Lincoln University, a HBCU, in Jefferson City, Missouri during the early twentieth century. This remarkable discovery led me to collect data from Lincoln University’s archives, where I collected over one hundred pages of primary documents. It was at Lincoln that I found photos of their mother, Julia Allen “Turner” (when she was a student at Lincoln), as well as an official presidential photo of their maternal grandfather, Benjamin F. Allen.

I have been able to share copies of key primary documents with Turner’s children that I acquired from the field, which they were pleased to have. In return, Turner’s son provided me with written consent to access his father’s academic transcript from Harvard Law School.

In the field of qualitative research, gaining entrée is very important in acquiring data that are vital to the research (Glesne, 2006). With regards to this study, gaining access to Turner’s children completely refocused this research. Their commentary fills-in the gaps in the current body of literature with regards to Turner, offering a different perspective of his life and legacy.
Methods of Data Collections

As previously mentioned, the data that were collected for this study came from historical documents and oral history interviews. The following section details those sources.

Historical Document Collection

Patton (2002) defines a document as

Written materials and other documents from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries, letters, artistic works, photographs, and memorabilia; and written responses to open-ended surveys. Data consists of excerpts from documents captured in a way that records and preserves context (p. 3).

In essence, documents that are used in research, especially qualitative research, are not just the typical published works that are located in libraries or archives. Rather, qualitative research requires a wide range of materials meant to be analyzed in their proper historical context. In a similar respect, Hartsook (1998) insists that archival repositories can take any form (even an attic or garage) as long as the places (in which the documents reside) are such that a researcher can “create or recreate” a period from the items in those locations (p. 123).

Glesne (2006) and Hartsook (1998) further affirm that the use of documents is a fundamental part of research. They discuss how researchers use such elements as newspapers, journals, and diaries in order to create a clear and honest picture of their topic of interest. By reviewing and analyzing documents, a researcher is able to become immersed in the historical context of the topic. However, a researcher must be a critical thinker of the documentation and must be able to discover historical patterns from
findings that may at first appear to be unconnected (Glesne, 2006). Educational historian Joel Spring (1998) states that

…historical research is a personal quest filled with a level of uncertainty about what the researchers will find and where they will find it. The basic stuff of research is letters, personal testimony, government documents, books, and whatever material is useful. Similar to any other gold miners, researchers develop a sense of where they might strike gold. And, once it is found, they must extract it in a form that is meaningful (p. 7).

Spring (1998) suggests that historical documentation can have its limitations, and it is up to the researcher to develop a higher form of consciousness and critical analysis when analyzing primary and secondary source documents. In this line of thought, because Turner’s leadership and legacy are currently seen negatively, it was important for me to interpret the documents more critically, as opposed to taking them at face value.

With the aim of interpreting critically, I collected and examined various primary historical documents from the following archives, libraries, and repositories. I chose to analyze these materials through the theoretical framework of critical race theory in order to provide a narrative account of Turner’s life. The locations included the following:

- Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library System – Columbus (GA) Public Library
- Harvard University Library – Harvard University Archives
- Harvard Law School – Registrar’s Office
- Lincoln University (Jefferson City, MO) – Inman E. Page Library
- Moorland Spingarn Research Center – Howard University (Washington, DC)
- North Carolina Central University – Shepard Library
- Phillips Academy Archives (Andover, MA)
- South Carolina State University Historical Collections
- The State of New Hampshire – The Department of Health and Human Services
• University of Pennsylvania – The University Archives and Records Center

At these locations I was able to acquire many important primary documents that helped me to discern themes in my findings, to add to the existing body of literature, and to chronicle the life of Turner. These items included the following:

Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library System – Columbus (GA) Public Library
• Host of 1928—Dr. Edwin J. Turner (picture and bio)
• Homes of Professional Men Outstanding in Beauty—Dr. Edwin J. Turner (Home and Office)

Harvard University Library – Harvard University Archives
• Undergraduate transcript (1923–1927)
• Phillips Academy transcript (1919–1923)
• Application for admission
• Letters of recommendation
• Letters from the dean to Dr. E. J. Turner
• Scholarship applications
• Harvard class album (1927)

Harvard Law School – Registrar’s Office
• Law school transcript (1930)

Lincoln University (Columbia, MO) – Inman E. Page Library
• President Benjamin E. Allen files

Moorland Spingarn Research Center – Howard University (Washington, DC)
• Correspondence with President Benjamin E. Mays (1956–1968)

North Carolina Central University – Shepard Library
• North Carolina Central College catalogue (1944–1945)
• Faculty record card (Benner C. Turner)

Orangeburg (SC) County Public Library
• The *Times* and *Democrat* newspaper articles (1950–1967)

Phillips Academy Archives (Andover, MA)
• Benner C. Turner photo (1918)
• Columbus (GA) Public Schools—Benner Turner’s grades (1918 and 1919)
• Dr. Edwin J. Turner—letter (1920)
• Mr. Alfred E. Stearns—letter (1919)
• Mr. Alfred E. Stearns—letter (1922)
In addition to collecting hardcopy data through archives and libraries, today’s researcher can access important electronically primary documents via the internet. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), the internet has changed the methodologies of social science research. Scholars are now “using software to manage citations and some aspects of data analysis, interviewing by means of e-mail or in dedicated chat rooms, and using dialogues and interactions online as sites for study” (p. 130). Internet research has emerged over the years from the use of simple software for data collecting, to the use of online communities where ideas can be discussed. Of course internet research has a drawback with regards to credibility of sources (McDowell, 2004). Nonetheless, the internet can be a useful tool for a researcher, especially if he or she can collect archived electronic copies of primary documents from home as opposed to traveling (perhaps a great distance) to sites to acquire the same information (Marshall &
Rossman, 2006). For example for this study, I wanted to find primary documents, particularly newspaper articles that chronicled the life of Turner’s father (a prominent physician in Georgia during the early twentieth century). Unfortunately, the Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library system in Columbus, Georgia does not have newspapers (in hardcopy or on microfilm) published before 1950. Therefore, I accessed GenealogyBank.com, an online source that archives newspapers. I was able to acquire over twenty newspaper articles. These papers added depth to my study of Turner’s father, Dr. E. J. Turner:

- *Columbus Ledger Enquirer* (1900–1930)
- *Columbus Daily Enquirer* (1900–1930)
- *Savannah Tribune* (1900–1930)

I was also able to find a small news article that noted that Turner finished primary school in June of 1919 and that he started school at Phillips Academy that fall.

**Interviews**

*Semi Structured Interview*

Semi-structured interviews were an important approach used for data collection in this study. According to Patton (2002), semi-structured or informal conversational interviewing is an “open-ended approach to interviewing” that offers “maximum flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate, depending on what emerges from observing a particular setting” (p. 342). In semi-structured interviews, there is a two-way conversation. The interviewer can introduce new questions based on the interview, and the participant can share experiences or points
of view in greater detail. Although semi-structured interviews may take longer than formally structured interviews, I believed that my chosen method would provide richer information (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Patton, 2002). This prediction held true for my study’s results. The semi-structured interviews (particularly with Turner’s children and Mrs. Zimmerman) allowed me not only to discern new themes in my findings, but also to discover other sources of primary documents (sources that I would have not have considered prior to the interviews). In this regard, the semi-structure interview style was advantageous to this study.

Both Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Patton (2002) suggest that a drawback to semi-structured interviews is that the data collected from these interviews may present a challenge for the researcher to organize and analyze. Clearly staying organized is a challenge in a semi-structured interview, because that method solicits many questions that are not devised by the researcher ahead-of-time. One must then accurately record and analyze the responses from the participants. Fortunately, I was able to follow up with the participants to clarify their responses and to ask new questions. Although the interviews took longer to analyze than if I had conducted formally structured discussions, with the less formal method I was able to draw new themes into my findings that will make this study a valuable contribution to the literature.

*Interview Instrument*

It is perhaps obvious that the interviewer must value the participants’ perspectives. Only by listening with an open mind can one gain a new and different perspective. Thus, the focus of the interview should be to allow the interviewee’s story to
be told (Patton, 2002). As Seidman (1998) points out, a successful interview is a respectful understanding of people and their experiences through thoughtful questioning and conversation. In order to conduct a good interview and gain that understanding, a purposeful line of questioning must be developed. I used an interview guide with semi-structured questions. I was in the field for over two months: July 5 to September 8. Part of that time I recruited participants for interviews, and part of the time I collected data. I interviewed eleven participants at a time and place convenient to them. Locations of interviews varied: the residences of participants, a restaurant, a photography studio, and a participant’s office. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 3 hours. Out of the eleven participants, I audiotaped seven either face-to-face or by phone (due to the long distance). Participants can be grouped into four types of people: college presidents at HBCUs, alumni of South Carolina State University, community members of Orangeburg, South Carolina, and relatives of Turner.

My semi-structured interview guide consisted of a basic format to administer the interviews. The guide was organized to conform to the four types of participants. The interview guide for college presidents (see Appendix E) consisted of 12 questions, which included a background and information component. The college presidents were asked what it means to be a college president, what constitutes effective leadership within the context of higher education, and their opinions on the leadership of Turner.

The interview guide for South Carolina State University Alumni consisted of 14 questions (see Appendix F). These questions aimed to provide the study with background
information and sought to help alumni reflect on their student years at State College and on their personal opinions of Turner’s administration.

The interview guide for the community members and family members of Turner (see Appendix G) consisted of 10 questions. These questions aimed to provide more background and sought to help them reflect on the sociopolitical climate of Orangeburg, South Carolina during Turner’s administration.

Appendix H shows the set of interview questions designed for the relatives of Turner. The interview guide consisted of 7 questions, again including a background component. The questions were tailored to allow them to recount their thoughts and memories of Turner both as an administrator and as a relative.

Selection of Participants

There were two forms of sampling used to select participants: purposeful sampling and snowball sampling.

Purposeful Sampling

These participants were selected through purposeful sampling:

- Cecil Williams
- Dr. Henry N. Tisdale
- Mrs. Liz Zimmerman Keitt
- Dr. John H. Corbitt

According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling selects participants who offer rich information, to provide a deep understanding of the issue under investigation. The
participants for this study were selected because of their intimate knowledge of the schools through their experiences as students at State College and Claflin University during the 1950s and 1960s. These participants, over forty years later, continue to serve the Orangeburg community and their respective institutions in some form.

Snowball Sampling

This group of participants was selected through snowball sampling:

- Benner C. Turner, II
- Elizabeth Turner Klimas
- Mrs. Geraldine Zimmerman
- Mrs. Garcia Dawson
- Fred Moore
- Reverend Marc Rideout
- Dr. James Boykin

According to Patton (2002), snowball sampling is the process in which the researcher asks “well situated people” (p. 237) to refer him or her to “information-rich key informants or critical cases” (p. 237). Snowball sampling worked out well for this study. I was able to interview Turner’s children as a result of being referred by Cecil Williams. Also snowball sampling connected me to Garcia Dawson, who in turn referred me to Geraldine Zimmerman. Moreover, South Carolina State University’s archivist Ashley Till referred me to Fred Moore and Dr. James Boykin. Finally, Richard Reid, an independent scholar, referred me to Reverend Marc Rideout Marc who was Turner’s pastor when Turner retired to New Hampshire. Table 1 below lists
biographical information and the date of interviews for the participants involved in this study.

Table 1 (continued on following page)

Biographical Information of Interviewees and Date of Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Brief Biography</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Interview Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. James Boykin</td>
<td>Dr. Boykin is presently a Trustee Emeritus at South Carolina State University. He was the first African American appointed to the Board in 1966.</td>
<td>Lancaster, SC</td>
<td>07/21/09</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. John H. Corbitt</td>
<td>Dr. Corbitt is the pastor of Springfield Baptist Church in Greenville, SC. A 1962 graduate of South Carolina State University, Dr. Corbitt is presently a member of the Board of Trustees.</td>
<td>Greenville, SC</td>
<td>07/05/09</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Garcia W. Dawson</td>
<td>Retired Librarian of South Carolina State University. 93 years old. Widow of famous South Carolina State University Football Coach Oliver C. Dawson.</td>
<td>Orangeburg, SC</td>
<td>07/07/09</td>
<td>2 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Liz Zimmerman Keitt</td>
<td>Claflin University Alumnus Class of 1970. Founder and executive director of Orangeburg-based Project Life: Positeen.</td>
<td>Orangeburg, SC</td>
<td>07/07/09</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Elizabeth Turner Klimas</td>
<td>Benner Turner’s first child and daughter. Retired educator and grandmother.</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>08/11/08</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Fred Moore</td>
<td>Retired Attorney. Former South Carolina State College Student Government.</td>
<td>Charleston, SC</td>
<td>07/16/08</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Brief Biography</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Date of Interview</td>
<td>Interview Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Association President 1955-56 and Expelled by Turner in 1956 in the aftermath of the student boycott | Reverend Marc Rideout  
Pastor of First Parish United Church of Christ in Somersworth, NH  
Served as Turner's pastor from 1985-1988 | Somersworth, NH  
07/22/08  
30 minutes | Dr. Henry N. Tisdale  
President of Claflin University since 1994  
Claflin University Alumnus Class of 1965  
Earned Ph.D from Dartmouth College in mathematics | Orangeburg, SC  
08/01/08  
1 hour | Mr. Benner C. Turner, II.  
Second child and son of President Benner C. Turner  
Graduated from Phillips Academy, Harvard University and Harvard Law School (just like his father)  
Attorney in Venezuela | Caracas, Venezuela  
09/08/08  
2 hours | Mr. Cecil Williams  
Professional Photographer  
Attended State College in 1955-56 on a scholarship to take photos for the school. Scholarship was rescinded by Turner after one of his photos from the student boycott in 1956 was published in Jet Magazine. | Orangeburg, SC  
07/17/08  
2 hours | Mrs. Geraldine Zimmerman  
Retired faculty member of South Carolina State College  
97 years old  
Mother was close friends with Turner | Orangeburg, SC  
07/10/08  
3 hours |
My interviews, conducted between July 5 and September 8, 2008, lasted from 30 minutes to 3 hours, for a total of 18 hours. Additionally, there were several hours of follow-up questions with my participants, either by phone or in person. My interviews with Turner’s children continued until November, by phone and email. Everyone consented to be interviewed (although one person did not return a signed consent form). I was permitted to use all of their names in this study. In lieu of wishing interview transcripts, several of my participants expressed an interest in acquiring a copy of my final paper.

I used a digital recorder for my interviews. I transferred the interview files to my personal laptop computer, as well as to a flash drive. For safety, I stored the flash drive in a lock box. Transcription can be demanding. To expedite the process, I used a transcriptionist service (escriptionist.com) to transcribe my audio recorded interviews. Once I acquired my interview transcriptions, I listened to each interview while reading the transcription to make sure the commentary was accurate.

Limitations of Study

Every researcher has some limitation while in the field acquiring data (Glesne, 2002). This study’s limitation was funding. I could not travel to various archives such as Lincoln University’s Inman E. Page Library (in Jefferson City, Missouri), Harvard University’s Archives, the University of Pennsylvania’s Archives and Records Center, Howard University’s Moorland Spingarn Research Center (in Washington, DC), and the Phillips Academy Archives (in Andover, Massachusetts). To circumvent the need to travel, I established rapport with archivists from each respective archive during the early
stages of my research. In this way, over four months (July 1, 2008 to November 30, 2008) I received various primary documents that enhanced this study.

Another limitation to this study was the unavailability of Turner’s personal papers, which would had given him a voice on why he took the positions that he did (because he is deceased). Although I was able to find miscellaneous correspondence from South Carolina State College’s Historical Collection as well from Howard University’s Moorland Spingarn Research Center, few of these papers reflect why he administered the way he did.

Research and Researcher

I had been an undergraduate at Claflin University from 1998 to 2002. I remembered that South Carolina State University held an annual commemorative of the Orangeburg Massacre (which had occurred on February 8, 1968). Popular opinion has been that the indirect cause of the shootings by police was due to the poor leadership of the administration at the college, particularly President Benner C. Turner. I wondered all those years what this man did that long after his tenure as president ended that he could be the cause of the Orangeburg Massacre. During my masters program in history, I selected to write a seminar paper entitled “DuBois and Washington’s College: The Educational Philosophy of South Carolina State University.” I was stunned by what I found out about the man who was purported to have caused the massacre in 1968. Why was he fairly consistently depicted in the literature in a negative light? Why the apparent silence over his 17-year achievements at South Carolina State College? These were some of the questions that lingered on in my mind as I completed my seminar paper. Thus
when I began my Ph.D. program in cultural studies in education, I continued to explore these questions. The more familiar I became with the literature with regards to African American college presidents at HBCUs, the more I felt that dismissing this man in history was not fair; hence my quest to fully understand the legacy of Benner C. Turner in this dissertation.

As previously mentioned, I am a graduate of Claflin University. I am also a former adjunct instructor at South Carolina State University (in the summers of 2006 and 2007). My area of research interest has always been the history of African American education. It has aided my research in this field that I have been through the HBCU experience and that I have connections with alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators at South Carolina State University. My summer experiences of teaching at South Carolina State University allowed me to connect with faculty members, staff (particularly people from the Alumni Office and the archives), and the members of the Orangeburg community who attended school during the administration of Turner. As I began my project, I believed that these sources and connections would help me to easily gain entrée to privileged information and rich data. Yet, I was mindful of my “insider/outsider” status. Keeping this dual role in the back of my mind, I was careful and conscious that my familiarity with the people and places did not intrude in ways that would compromise the data. While collecting data, I took the time to comment on my past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations might shape my interpretations and my approach to the study (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, I kept a field journal on my laptop computer to bracket my thoughts and experiences throughout
the process. This exercise of journaling helped to deter me from biases that could compromise my findings.

Data Analyses

Marshall and Rossman (1999) point out that “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (p. 150). There are several approaches to analyzing data when conducting qualitative research. Patton (2006) suggests that there is no ultimate recipe for how to transform one’s data into findings. Getting from one’s data to the destination of one’s findings is left up to the researcher. I followed seven analytical procedures that are outlined by Marshall and Rossman (2006) to analyze my data. I felt that their procedures were best because my research was to be a biographical case study using primary documents and interviews. The seven steps I used were as follows: (1) organizing the data; (2) immersion in the data; (3) generating categories and themes; (4) coding the data; (5) offering interpretations through analytic memos; (6) searching for alternative understandings; and (7) writing the report for presenting the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 156).

As previously mentioned, the purpose of my study was to re-evaluate the life of Turner within the theoretical framework of critical race theory. Therefore it was important for me to keep an organized file of the origins of my data. During the data collection process, I logged the types of data based on “dates, names, times, and places where, when, and with whom they were gathered” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 157). While in the field collecting documents and conducting interviews, I continued to immerse myself in the data so that I could begin generating categories and themes using
my theoretical framework of CRT. Once I generated categories and themes, I coded my data (my interviews and oral histories from the archives) based on the respective research question that were answered by those data. According to both Patton (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2006), coding takes many forms. I employed a rudimentary coding scheme using colored labels and highlighters. This method took stock of interviews that best answered a respective research question. In that regard, each research question was designated with the following colors:

- Research Question 1 = Blue
- Research Question 2 = Pink
- Research Question 3 = Green
- Research Question 4 = Orange
- Research Question 5 = Yellow

From the start, I was aware that new themes, and even research questions beyond these five questions, could emerge that would change my coding scheme (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). If this situation were to occur, I was prepared to impose a new color scheme. Once my themes and research questions were finalized, I organized my data (primary documents) within five three-ring binders (each binder represented one research question for this study). Within each three-ring binder, the sections were divided by themes. This binder method kept my findings organized and I was able to apply my primary documents to each research theme.
While collecting data in the field, I continuously wrote notes and reflective memos. Keeping a field journal helped me to process my thoughts and interpretation of the data, as well as to uncover new themes. Journaling was critical to applying my theoretical framework of CRT. Throughout this process, I kept in mind how the respective questions or themes reflected the principle of CRT. My theoretical framework allowed me to re-evaluate Turner’s life, offering new interpretations and alternative understandings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Ethical Issues

At all times, researchers in qualitative research must uphold ethical principles. Ethical issues that concern qualitative research relate to Ohio University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Historically, the IRB ensures that the research participants are not harmed, exploited, or abused during the study (Patton, 2002; Babbie, 2004; Glesne, 2006). Thus, before going out into the field to collect data and conduct interviews, I submitted a project outline to Ohio University’s IRB for approval. Once approved, I began to recruit participants—first contacting them by phone and subsequently submitting an official letter outlining the purpose of my topic along with the IRB consent form. For those participants who were recruited through snowball sampling, I also provided a copy of the IRB consent form in advance. Throughout the interview process, I asked interviewees for consent to use their names in the study to ensure that they were comfortable with the interviewing process. As mentioned previously, all participants provided consent for me to use their names in the study. In lieu of obtaining the actual interview transcription, several of my participants wanted a copy of the final study. Once
this study is officially processed through Ohio University’s Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD), I will submit copies of this study to those participants who requested a copy.

Summary

This study adopted a qualitative biographical case study research design to assist in re-evaluating the legacy of Turner. My methods of data collection included historical documents collection and semi-structure interviews. Through purposeful and snowballing sampling, I was able to interview eleven participants, including the children of Turner. Their commentary was very rich. I was able to seek out and find primary documents and expand my original topic from examining Turner only within the context of his presidency of State College, to look at his entire life story. Using critical race theory as my theoretical framework, I analyzed my research findings and placed these data under the research questions that the data best reflected.

I analyzed and organized my data in a way that would address my research questions. The next five chapters of this report (Chapters 4 through 8) will answer my research questions. Chapter 4 looks at the early influences on Turner’s life that shaped his personality. Chapter 5 examines his career path to the presidency of South Carolina State College. Chapter 6 discusses the major contemporary issues that he faced during his tenure as president at South Carolina State College. Chapter 7 reviews his strategic goal for the institution in wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling barring segregation. Chapter 8 explores which leadership theories reflect his leadership style. Chapter 8
illustrates how his legacy influenced ideological and scholarly paradigms. Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes this study.
CHAPTER FOUR: EARLY YEARS AND INFLUENCES

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research data relating to research question one, which asks, “What were some early influences that shaped who Benner Creswell Turner became?” The findings in this chapter present themes as they pertain to the influences that shaped Turner during his childhood and early adulthood. The themes that emerged from this chapter are the following: Like Father Like Son, Living in Privilege and Inferiority, Academic Work Ethic, and School Ties. Each theme will be discussed separately as they chronicle Turner’s early life from childhood in Columbus, Georgia, to his youth at Harvard Law School. This chapter provides more context for understanding Turner’s early life than the existing literature, which provides no more than a vague account of the man's early life (Hine 1996; Hine; 1992; Potts, 1978).

Like Father Like Son

Turner’s earliest and strongest influence was his father, Dr. Edwin J. (E. J.) Turner (see Appendices I & J). A prominent doctor, Dr. E. J. Turner rose from poverty in rural Mississippi to become one of the unsung African American leaders of early twentieth-century Georgia. The findings reveal that it was Turner’s father’s work ethic, commitment to the African American community, and push for the material gain that shaped the son’s approach to administering South Carolina State College.

Benner Creswill Turner was born on October, 30 1905, in Columbus, Georgia, to Dr. E. J. Turner and Leila Mae Benner Turner (Reid, 2008). Turner's first name is taken from his mother’s maiden name; his middle name came from his father’s good friend,
lodge brother, and fellow plaintiff (Charles Creswill) from the 1912 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Creswill v. Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias of Georgia* (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Dr. E. J. Turner and Charles Creswill were members of an African American chapter of the Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias in Columbus, Georgia. The Knights of Pythias was a secret fraternal order organized in Washington, DC in 1864. The group’s founding principles were “Friendship, Charity and Benevolence” (Liazos & Ganz, 2004, p. 486). However, membership was restricted to only white men. Despite the racial restrictions, African Americans in Mississippi, and later in other states, organized an African American counterpart called the Knights of Pythias of North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia during the later part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Liazos & Ganz, 2004). African Americans in Columbus, Georgia organized a chapter in 1905. The White faction of the Knights of Pythias in Georgia took legal action against its African American counterparts when the latter sought to attain a charter under the Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias. In 1909, a jury found the African American Knights of Pythias guilty of name and trademark infringement. The Georgia Supreme Court upheld the decision a year later. Following the ruling, the African American Knights of Pythias' Supreme Attorney, S.A.T. Watkins, and Charles Creswill traveled to Washington, DC and filed a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, which was subsequently heard in 1912. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the Georgia Supreme Court’s ruling, citing that the White faction of the Knights of Pythias had waited too long to bring up legal action against its African American
counterpart considering the fact that the African American Knights was organized in 1880. This decision was based upon the equity doctrine of latches (Liazos & Ganz, 2004; Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). According to Liazos and Ganz (2004), “Laches meant that if a newer organization infringed upon the rights of an older organization by copying its name or other prominent features, the older organization had to sue within a short period of time or lose the exclusive right to the name or feature” (p. 502).

The decision allowed Creswill, E. J. Turner, and their fellow African American Pythian brethren in Columbus, Georgia to receive a charter and be recognized under the Grand Lodge of the Knights of Pythias in Georgia. The Creswill v. Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias of Georgia decision would serve as precedence for future lawsuits against African American Pythians; thus ending attacks and legal action against them in the United States. While the notion of race or equal protection of the 14th Amendment was not argued in this case, African American Pythians privately celebrated and acknowledged this decision as a step towards universal equality for African Americans in the United States (Liazos & Ganz, 2004). In 1913, Supreme Attorney Watkins stated, “This is the first case that I know of where a question affecting the race was presented to the Federal Supreme Court since its existence, where the question was determined in favor of the race” (Liazos & Ganz, 2004, p. 503).

While the Creswill v. Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias of Georgia decision was symbolic, the victory also meant that they would be able to continue to exist; which meant that they could continue to provide benefits to their members and their families.
The purpose of African American lodges during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not to emulate their white counterparts, but to provide a network to ensure that its members and their families received life and burial insurance as well as other financial assistance during times of economic hardship (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). This need in effect reflects the notion of critical race theory (in which material gain outweighed symbolic gain during the time of legal segregation). Although legal segregation was the law of the land during Turner’s childhood, he grew up in a proud household and was introduced to a network of his parents’ friends and community that emphasized assertiveness and self-help. With all these influences that stimulated his personal development, it was still his father who was most influential in the young man's development (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

Dr. Turner’s early life appears to be unrecorded. According to Turner’s children Elizabeth and Benner, E. J. Turner was born in poverty in later part of the nineteenth century in Mississippi, his mother either a slave or her parents slaves. E. J. Turner never knew who his father was and his mother never told him. During his childhood, his mother worked in a pharmacy for a pharmacist who was white. E. J. Turner always suspected that the white pharmacist was his father; however, the assumption was never proven (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). This perspective conflicts with a documented source of an E. J. Turner who had similar a background to the
background that was described of E. J. Turner by his grandchildren. According to *The Black Side* (1894), which documented the who’s who of prominent and up-and-coming black professionals in the Atlanta during the later part of the nineteenth century, (Edward) J. Turner, who was listed as a pharmacist, was born and raised in Enterprise, Mississippi. E. J. Turner’s parents were financially comfortable, his father being a popular barber. However, hardship hit the family when E. J. Turner’s father passed away when E. J. was only six months old. Throughout his youth, he lived in abject poverty while his mother worked to support him until he was old enough to work (E. R. Carter, 1894). Both commentaries (interviews with E. J. Turner’s grandchildren and *The Black Side*) are consistent with regards to the background of E. J. Turner. He was a resident of Mississippi, a licensed pharmacist in Atlanta, Georgia by 1894, and he had limited financial means as youth; however, the identity of E. J. Turner’s father remained unknown to his grandchildren while Carter’s (1894) *The Black Side* reports that E. J. Turner’s father died when he was an infant. Moreover, Benner C. Turner’s application to Harvard University lists his father’s birthplace as Enterprise, Mississippi; hence the biography might have mistakenly misspelled his father’s name as *Edward* instead of *Edwin* (Harvard College Application for Admission, 1922).

Regardless of whom his father was, E. J. Turner grew up in abject poverty, living with his mother in a small shack in rural Mississippi. He was, however, very industrious. He worked as railroad fireman during his youth. To earn additional money, he helped passengers at the train stations with their bags (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). One day he met a group of doctors, on the way to a
convention, men who instantly became fond of him. They jokingly said, “We’re gonna take you back to the city with us” (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). E. J., who took their comments literally, met with them after the convention where he had a clean, pressed shirt in one hand and a watermelon in the other. Amazed, the doctors told E. J. that they were only joking. Upset, E. J. took the matter to his mother and the doctors agreed to take E. J. with them (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

During his youth, E. J. Turner worked for these doctors cleaning their offices and performing other odd jobs while attending school. E. J. Turner’s grandson and Turner’s son Benner C. Turner II indicated that their grandfather was so poor that he used his classmates’ books to study while they slept. Nevertheless, he was a brilliant student and was able to gain entrance and finish medical school (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). He first served as a pharmacist in Atlanta and later in Columbus, Georgia, where he would settle and become a physician and surgeon; he served in that capacity until his death in 1932 (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, October 29, 2008). E. J. Turner emerged as one of the most prominent and respected African Americans doctors in the state of Georgia during the early 20th century (Benner C. Turner, II, personal correspondence, August 11, 2008.) In the July 6, 1909, issue of the Savannah Tribune, E. J. Turner was endorsed for re-election as Grand Medical Register of the Pythians and commended by one of his fellow Pythian brothers Dr. John Cooper:
Dear Esteemed Editor of the Savannah Tribune. Allow me a little space to add a word or two, knowing that it will soon be time for our great Pythian host to meet again in Grand Lodge session at Thomasville, for the purpose of legislating and electing officers for the next ensuing year. We have a grand corps of officers now filling the offices, men who are giving good service to the order and in that number we have that grand and noble man, E J Turner, our Grand Medical Register who is filling the office with honor and dignity. Turner, our Grand Medical Register, is a member of our lodge and we love and esteem him.

Knowing him as we do as a true Pythian, we thank the members of the Grand Lodge for having bestowed upon him the honor of being the Grand Medical Register, first, because we knew of his ability, we knew that he would give satisfaction and he has proved that he is the man of the position and we are satisfied that if he is reelected he will continue to give it; that is all any man can do and all any true Pythian can demand. Dr. E J Turner has given satisfaction in the past and we are satisfied he will continue to give it in the future. Since that is true let the Pythian host of Georgia rally to his support and elect him for the next year. Then his many friends in Columbus and the State of Georgia will feel that he honors have been placed upon the right man.

Another endorsement and commendation in the same paper by a fellow lodge brother, W. E. Clark, commended Turner’s professional excellence as physician and outstanding character:

The Past Chancellors of Columbus and Muscogee County held their meeting last Sunday at the YMCA Building. Quite a number of the offices and members of the K of P lodges were out. Dr. Edwin J. Turner was unanimously endorsed by them for re-election as Grand Medical Register. The doctor is very popular in Columbus and richly deserves the honor. The administration of all the present Grand Lodge officers was also endorsed and the Columbus Pythians intend to stand as a unit to Creswell, Warren, Cohen and Turner. At the recent meeting of the State Medical Association of colored physicians, dentists and pharmacists, which was held in Augusta on the 4th of last month, the doctor delivered the response to the welcome address, receiving hearty applause and many compliments, but such is not surprising to his Columbus friends who know of the doctor’s oratorical ability. He was also elected as one of the delegates to represent the Georgia State Medical Association, which convenes at Boston, Mass., next August. The doctor’s high standing in his particular profession and association is sufficient guarantee that the Pythians have a safe diligent medical officer at the head of their medical department. It was the general comment among the Augusta’s physicians of Dr. Turner’s gentlemanly manners and the ease and dignity with which he conducted himself while presiding over the meetings of the
State Medical Association as vice president and that he was of great help to the president, Dr. G. N. Stone in carrying out the program.

Along with E. J. Turner’s affiliation with the Knights of Pythias (as the Grand Medical Register of the Pythians), he also helped revive and served as a chairman of the Muscogee County Republican Party, served as an alternate delegate to the Republican presidential national convention in 1920 (and as a delegate in 1928), was a co-founder and president of the Columbus Medical Association of Colored Physicians and Surgeons, a member of the Order of Twelve of Knights and Daughters Tabor (an African American fraternal organization that emphasized education and self-help), and a member of the Odd Fellows, another fraternal order that had both white and African American counterparts (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). As an African American physician and pharmacist in segregated Georgia during the early twentieth century, E. J. Turner provided a comfortable, middle-class life for his wife and son. (Figure 5 shows the family home.) Within the scope of his work, he sought to dismantle the impact of structural or institutionalized racism on his community and family.
He enjoyed a close network of influential African Americans, with whom young Benner Turner would have the opportunity to network during his adult years. One friend in particular was President Robert Moton of Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, Alabama). Moton had succeeded Booker T. Washington as president of the institution in 1915. When President Moton and officials from the institution planned to visit Columbus in 1922, it was E. J. Turner who chaired the local finance committee to secure funds to receive and entertain the guest from Alabama (Dr. Moton and Party Will Come on 27th:}
Principal of Tuskegee Institute with Educators, Farmers, Business Men and Physicians

Coming; 1922, November 6, Columbus Daily Enquirer).

Dr. E. J. Turner had an impeccable record of medical and civic excellence. While he was a highly respected member of the African American community in Columbus, Georgia, the nature of segregation and racism pigeonholed him to perform certain medical services that were considered either scandalous or illegal. Whites in the community often sought him to be treated for embarrassing conditions, such as venereal diseases, which they wanted to keep secret from their regular physicians and their community (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). On two occasions, he treated a white minister’s daughter who was bleeding to death as a result of a mishandled abortion. According to a November 6, 2008, personal communication from Elizabeth Turner Klimas, she states, “My grandfather (E. J. Turner) told her brothers that he would not risk his medical license by helping the next time.” These minor incidents in which E. J. Turner was forced to compromise the integrity of his profession do not reflect on his common sense, character, and sense of manhood. His actions can be seen within the context of critical race theory’s “material gain versus symbolic gain.” E. J. Turner was concerned with the material gain of maintaining his medical license, irrespective of the moral dilemma of succumbing to the unethical issues that as an African American doctor, he had to encounter with white patients.

While the nature of segregation forced African Americans in every social class to submit to their white counterparts, E. J. Turner, like many African Americans (especially members of the African American bourgeoisie), picked their battles (Gatewood, 1990).
On one occasion, he physically threw a white patient out of his office after the patient continued to curse and harass other patients (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). This action was justified because the patient was out of order and E. J. was looking to protect himself and his livelihood. He did, after all, have to take care of his family. As Elizabeth Turner Klimas (2008) points out in a personal correspondence of November 6, 2008, “My grandfather also believed as well that African American manhood meant taking care of your family and advancing the race.”

E. J. Turner was committed to providing quality medical services to African Americans in the Columbus, Georgia area. These people, prior to 1915, were not able to use the local hospital facilities. At times he gave free medication from his pharmacy to his African American patients who were unable to afford it (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). He wanted to provide a lesson on the harsh realities of segregation to young Benner Turner and a lesson on the responsibilities that an African American leader must assume for the good of the community. In another November 6, 2008, personal communication from Elizabeth Turner Klimas, she indicates the following:

From an early age, my father (Benner C. Turner) helped his father in medical emergencies. There were no hospital facilities for African Americans in Columbus until 1915 when my grandfather and four other African American doctors founded a ward for African Americans in the white hospital. It meant segregation, but it also was an improvement over having absolutely no access to hospital care for African Americans in Columbus. From the age of around thirteen, my father drove my grandfather on house calls out in the countryside surrounding Columbus, including the area which would later become Fort Benning. These particular experiences moved my father to push for as fully stocked and staffed an infirmary as possible at S. C. State because he knew from
family experience and from helping his father how poorly African Americans were often treated in medical situations, including emergencies. My grandfather’s doctor’s office was next door to the family home and frequently served as an emergency care facility for African Americans with medical emergencies. (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008)

Along with his commitment to equal medical services for African Americans in the Columbus area, he also believed in taking care of fellow African Americans who were passing through the area. Dr. E. J. Turner’s residence was known as the place where friends or acquaintances of the family could stop off and get water or something to eat or use the bathroom if they were in the Columbus area. Relatively short trips were difficult even for middle-class African Americans in Jim Crow Georgia (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). As a young adult, Benner Turner would carry on this tradition of allowing travelers to stay at the home, because the local hotels did not accommodate African Americans.

E. J. did not believe in shielding his son from the realities of the segregated South. He felt that African Americans who shielded their children showed “dangerously neglectful parenting” (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). When Turner was in his early teens, E. J., along with a group of friends, took young Benner to attempt to rescue an African American youth from being lynched as a result of accidentally killing a white youth in a hunting accident (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Turner’s daughter stated the following:

My father told us that what had happened was that two boys, one white, one African American and—both around twelve years old—had been playing together near where some fool had left a gun and the two children took the gun and went into a wooded area to hunt small animals. The gun went off, killing the white child. The white men, slashing the African American child on the trolley, were relatives of the white child…My grandfather and, I believe, my father as well,
were with a group of men when they saw a trolley car pass by. On the trolley car was a young African American boy who was being slashed at by white men with knives. The boy was calling out for his mother while this was happening. My grandfather’s group got a car and went searching for the boy, hoping to somehow stop the men but they found the boy too late. He had been lynched. (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008)

Segregation and all that it brought was the way of life for E. J. His early life forced him to be tough and strong-willed. This adversity helped elevate him to become very successful professionally, politically, and socially. Turner’s standing in the African American community is a reflection of Booker T. Washington’s life and philosophy of black self-help (Washington, 1995). E. J. grew up in abject poverty, worked various jobs as youths and overcame various obstacles to obtain his education. E. J. Turner, as well as many African Americans in the South, had to embrace this attitude of self-help because of the sociopolitical context of the times. The Reconstruction era was over. White conservatives and ex-Confederates had regained control of the political, social, economic institutions of the South that systematically disenfranchised African Americans, a situation that was sanctioned by the Supreme Court in 1896 with the Plessy decision (Anderson, 1988). E. J. Turner fully understood the reality of being an African American at a time when the U.S. Supreme Court endorsed segregation. As a product of self-help, he worked to instill this philosophy in his son Benner. Although he was very successful with regards to social status within the African American community, he wanted his son to carry on his life’s work of working for the greater good of that race.

Living in Privilege and Inferiority

The documents and interviews in this research show that during Benner’s childhood, he witnessed a lynching of an African American youth who was close to his
age. The horrific event stood out in his mind forever. Turner’s son states, “It (lynchings) always scared him. It always – always worried him that could happen again in Orangeburg and other places.” That event likely shaped his decision making later as president of State College. Like many African Americans of privilege during the era of segregation, Turner essentially lived in two worlds: he was a member of the elite within in one community, but still considered inferior in another (Gatewood, 1990).

His father’s political connections and social standing afforded Benner the opportunity to belong to a strong influential network that included Charles Hamilton Houston (Thurgood Marshall’s mentor), William Hastie (the first African American judge), General B. O. Davis, Harlem Renaissance poet Sterling Brown, Dr. Charles Drew (the first African American cabinet secretary), and Robert Weaver (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). However, he was reminded daily of his inferior status by having to attend a segregated school in Columbus, Georgia as well as the possibility of getting lynched (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Segregation and the brutality that that came with it always worried him and contributed to his pessimism. Living under segregation forced him to view life very cautiously. In that regard, Turner would work quietly, but diligently, as a student in Columbus, at Andover, and at Cambridge (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). The brutality of segregation shaped Turner’s formative years and its harshness impacted his decision making when he later became president of South Carolina State College.
Despite living in a segregated society, Turner and many of his contemporaries were somewhat protected. Segregated schools were staffed by African Americans who had a vested interest in the educational development and well being of its students (Fairclough 2007). It is likely that he did well in school because his family and his teachers were supportive. He excelled in the Columbus public schools and in later years at Phillips Academy and Harvard University. Turner stood out as an outstanding student while attending school as a youth in Columbus. His academic excellence is reflected in two of his report cards as an eighth grader in 1918 and ninth grader in 1919 (see Figure 6).
Turner excelled in all of his courses, scoring a 90% or better in each. It is noteworthy to mention that his report card also reflects that he was neither absent nor tardy. This punctuality was not only a reflection of Turner’s family’s social status, which allowed him to attend school daily and not delay school to help provide for the family (i.e., sharecropping). That he did not miss a day reflects E. J. Turner’s commitment to making sure his son was successful. E. J. wanted to his son to carry on his legacy as a leader in
the community by becoming a lawyer or going into politics (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). However, public school education ended for African Americans in Columbus at the 9th grade (Closing Exercises for Negro Schools, Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, 6 June, 1919). E. J. Turner wanted his son to attend Harvard University to ultimately earn a law degree. However, in order to be admitted into Harvard, one had to have either connections or be enrolled in a preparatory school that provided a pipeline. With his father’s high hopes for him and his principal’s endorsement, Turner was admitted to Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. In a letter of recommendation from his principal on July 6, 1919, Turner is commended for his high moral character and ability to master his school work. His principal further projected that he would “bear the same record there as he bears here.” Turner’s principal’s recommendation strongly represented the academic excellence, high moral character, and good reputation that Turner would exhibit the next four years at Phillips Academy.

Academic Work Ethic

Turner always displayed a record of academic achievement. His academic success was a reflection of his father’s push for him to become an attorney, as well as his ambition to do well in school. While in school he developed his philosophy of “academic work ethic,” which is the notion that one strives for academic achievement as well as for life skills that are essential (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Turner would use his own school experiences to provide better opportunities for his students when he was president of State College. He likely was focused on the
material gain his students would reap in their careers if they excelled at school. This betterment of their lives, through education, remained his focus as president. He likely felt that this goal was more worthwhile for students than risky civil rights protests for merely symbolic laws.

Turner entered Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1919. Phillips had been founded as “an endowed academy” on April 21, 1778 (Phillips Academy Catalogue, 1923, p. 11). From its inception to the time that Turner was admitted, the Academy had grown from a student body of thirteen (who were instructed in a remodeled carpenter’s shop) to one of the nation’s most elite preparatory schools that prepared young men “for the community life of college” (p. 17). Phillips Academy not only prepared its graduates for college but also served as a pipeline to the nation’s most prestigious institutions of higher education. The majority of Turner’s classmates in 1923 were, after graduation, admitted into either Harvard or Yale (Phillips Academy Catalogue, 1923). There is literature that examines the African American experience at prestigious institutions of higher education (i.e., Harvard, Yale, and the University of Chicago). However, the literature is limited with regards to African Americans who had attended prestigious preparatory schools during the early twentieth century. Turner was the first of just a few African Americans to attend Phillips Academy in those years; however, because of his physical appearance, the officials were surprised that Turner was an African American when he first arrived on campus in 1919 (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Dr. E.A. Stearns correspondence to Dean Greenough, April 3, 1923; see Figure 7).
Figure 7. Benner Turner portrait. This figure is likely the photo he submitted to the institution when he applied.

Despite being the only African American on campus, Turner was socially accepted by his classmates and the faculty at Phillips Academy. There was, however, an instance when he encountered elements of racism from one of his classmates. A student from Louisiana complained that “as a southern gentleman, he took offense living in the same dorm” with an African American (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). In defense of Turner, the other students invited the Louisiana Southern gentleman to move out.
Turner was popular for his athletic and academic prowess. He wrestled on the varsity wrestling team where he was noted for wrestling “remarkably well” (*Pot Purri*, 1923). In Reid’s (2008) biography of Turner in Orangeburg’s newspaper, *The Times and Democrat*, Turner is noted for winning the New England wrestling championship as a member of the varsity wrestling team at Phillips Academy (Figure 8).

![Wrestling Team](image)

*Source: Phillips Academy’s *Pot Pouri*, 1923.*

**Figure 8.** Benner Turner and the wrestling team (he is seated on the far left).

A skillful athlete, Turner took his school work seriously. As noted previously, his socialization as an African American forced him to be very cautious and pessimistic. “He was striving to overcome some adversary or adversarial position, real or imagined” (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). He had the daily complexity of being an African American at a predominately white boarding school.
Although his father was a physician, he was unable to send young Turner home during breaks and holidays; hence, Turner would often be the only student left on campus. Maceo Nance, Turner’s good friend and successor at South Carolina State College, indicates that despite being the lone student on campus, Turner would take the opportunity to indulge himself in literature, which provided intellectual stimulation. Nance states in an oral history interview that “A good vacation for Turner [was to] close the blinds and doors and read some good books” (Nance, personal communication, March 14, 1989). On other occasions, both as a student at Phillips Academy and at Harvard, Turner would travel and spend the holidays with friends of the family in the Washington, DC area. This was the time during his late teens to early adulthood years when he had the opportunity to meet General B. O. Davis, Charles Hamilton Houston, and William Hastie (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Although he could not often travel home, being on his own allowed him to grow intellectually and socially.

One year Turner was voted the “class grind” (the hardest worker) by his classmates. Turner won the Henry Van Duzen Scholarship during his junior year. This scholarship was awarded to the one student at Phillips Academy who had the highest grade average, who planned to enter Harvard University (Benner C. Turner II, personal correspondence, August 11, 2008). Turner graduated from the Classical Department at Phillips Academy with honors in the spring of 1923 (Figure 9). At commencement, Turner was one of eighteen inductees into the Honorary Scholarship Society, cum laude. In addition, Turner was recognized for being the top graduating member excelling in Latin
composition (*Order of Exercises at Exhibition Phillips Academy*, June 15, 1923; see Appendix K). He maintained an *A* average in Greek lessons during the two academic years in which he was enrolled in the course (*Phillips Academy Academic Transcript*, January 3, 1923).

![Figure 9. Benner Turner’s senior year class photo.](image)

Turner left Andover for Cambridge with a solid education and excellent reputation. Dr. E. A. Stearns, the principal of Phillips Academy would note in correspondence to Dr. E. J. Turner (as well as to Dean C.H. Greenough of Harvard University) of Turner’s academic excellence, high moral behavior, and the respect he earned from his classmates and faculty (Dr. E.A. Stearns correspondence to E. J. Turner, December 27, 1922; Dr. E.A. Stearns correspondence to Dean C. H. Greenough, April 3, 1923). However, it was the language in Dr. Stearn’s letter to Dean C. H. Greenough that provides some insight into of the impact of Turner’s socialization as an African American during the early twentieth century. Turner’s mild mannerisms contrast with his legacy as the president of South Carolina State College. The letter stated:

Benner C. Turner entered Phillips Academy in September, 1919, and is due to secure his diploma this June. Turner, as you perhaps know, is a negro, or rather a
very small part of him is that, which means, of course, that he must bear that classification through life. He is the only representative of the race we have had here in recent years, but he is a dandy. Turner is primarily a student, who minds his own business and goes to his work with all the vigor he can command. He has been a very consistent performer, having ranked on our scholarship honor list pretty steadily during his four years course. At times his grades have carried him up among the first six or eight or ten best scholars, and he has never been far below that average. He is a quiet, unoffensive little fellow, very well liked by all his mates, very much of a gentleman. Recently he has gained some distinction as a wrestler, though he is not naturally built for a star performer in athletics. On the basis of his Andover record I know of no boy who has more fully deserved scholarship aid. Certainly we have had no one here to whom we granted it more willingly or with a cleaner conscience (Dr. E.A. Stearns correspondence to Dean Greenough, April 3, 1923).

Although Turner was a good student and respected, this assessment of his personality followed him to Harvard as well as his race.

School Ties

Turner continued to strive for academic excellence as an undergraduate and law student at Harvard; however, his perceived introverted personality had been brought to his attention and to his father’s attention. Nevertheless, despite this deficiency, Turner found and maintained ties among people who would emerge as some of the most prominent African American leaders at that time.

Turner entered Harvard University in the fall of 1923. Weeks after his arrival, Dr. C. N. Greenough sent an August, 1923, correspondence to Turner’s father that provided him with an assessment of Benner’s strengths and weaknesses. It read,

Two weaknesses which I feel will prove detrimental to him in his future life; first he is too reluctant to push forward in public endeavors; he is bashful and afraid to make demands for those things which are his; rather slow in making friends and too sensitive.

Splendid scholar; his habits are good and we have every reason to predict a bright future for him if improvement is made upon the above lines.
E. J. Turner, who had always been supportive of his son’s endeavors, replied, saying that he was aware of his son’s introvert personality. He sought for the cooperation of his son’s advisors at Harvard to bring him out of his comfort zone (E. J. Turner correspondence to Dean Greenough, September, 1923). Greenough’s assessment of Turner’s personality reflects the literature, oral histories, and interviews of Turner’s perceived personality when he served as the president of South Carolina State College (Gross, 2006; Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

It is unclear if Greenough or any of Turner’s advisors at Harvard University reached out to Turner in this regard. Perhaps Turner may have been uncomfortable being one of the few African Americans at an elite white college during the early twentieth century. However, Turner did have a very active social life during his undergraduate and law school years at Harvard University, among his fellow African American students there, in the greater Boston area, and among his father’s friends and their children in Washington, DC. Turner attended socials and parties in Boston and met Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes at a rent party in Harlem. He and a friend went on double dates (his friend was Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the future U.S. air force general and commander of the Tuskegee Airmen). Turner had intellectual discussions with future Noble Prize winner and U.S. diplomat Ralph Bunche at late-night college bull sessions at Harvard. Bunche, at the time, was pursuing a Ph.D. in political science (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). In one of these late-night bull sessions, Bunche argued that “class would supplant race in the future in America and that
without sufficient education, large numbers of African Americans would be left behind in the poorest class” (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Turner agreed with this prediction, one which shaped his beliefs about what he should do years later as president of South Carolina State College (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

During his undergraduate study at Harvard, Turner continued to participate in athletics. He wrestled on Harvard’s freshman wrestling team in 1925 and 1926. He performed remarkably well in his academic studies; particularly in his field of study, which was economics (Harvard University Academic Transcript, 1927). Similar to his situation at Phillips Academy, Turner attended Harvard at some financial sacrifice. He was awarded the Harvard-Andover Scholarship and the Price Greenleaf Aid through Harvard University his freshman year, but he was unable to keep Price Greenleaf Aid because of his grades in courses outside of his field of study. The Price Greenleaf Aid was awarded annually to students at Harvard who maintained an overall B average (Correspondence from Robert E. Bacon, August 15, 1924 and September 1, 1925).

Turner’s father was concerned and lobbied officials at Harvard as well as Phillips Academy to get funding for his son (Correspondence from E. J. Turner, July 6, 1924). It is unknown how Turner was able to pay for tuition at Harvard, but it is likely that funds were raised either by his father or through his father’s lodges or political connections. Nevertheless, Turner was able to finish Harvard University in four years. In the spring of 1927, he earned an A.B. in economics at the age of 21 and was admitted into Harvard Law School.
Turner was one of a few African Americans who graduated from Harvard Law during the early twentieth century. These few who did graduate from Harvard Law at this time emerged to serve as the first wave of African American attorneys and legal scholars who helped to dismantle segregation. Some of the most notable African American law graduates during this time included Charles Hamilton Houston (1923), who trained Thurgood Marshall. Marshall went on to argue the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* before the U.S. Supreme Court. Another notable graduate was William Hastie (1932), the first African American governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the first African American judge on a U.S. Federal Appeals Court. There was Raymond Pace Alexander (1923), who established one of the most successful African American law firms in Philadelphia (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Ironically, out of the few African Americans who graduated from Harvard Law School during the early twentieth century, only Turner attempted to return to the South to practice law.

Turner finished Harvard Law School at the age of 24 in 1930 with the LL.B degree. This degree would later be changed to a J.D. in 1969 when many law schools in the United States eliminated the LL.B degree from its law programs and subsequently began to award a J.D. as its equivalent (Harvard Law School Transcript). Turner worked hard in his academic studies, finishing 267 out of 411 in his law school class (Harvard Law School Transcript). Armed with a Harvard law degree, Turner was now in a position to carry on his father’s ambition to be a “fighter for the race” by becoming an attorney (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Before
returning to Georgia, Turner began his law practice in Philadelphia with fellow Harvard Law graduate Raymond Pace Alexander.

Summary

This chapter chronicled Turner’s childhood and early adulthood by examining how the influences in his early life shaped how he administered. He likely viewed the material gain of access to education to be more important than any symbolic victory of fighting for social justice, an end that was beyond the control of the African American community. The findings show that Turner’s influences during his early life were his father, living in a privileged but segregated world, developing a strong academic work ethic, and maintaining ties with Harvard classmates (who later emerged as some of the most prominent African Americans leaders in the United States during the early mid-twentieth century). This chapter fills-in some of the gaps in the literature on Benner Creswill Turner's life (Hine 1996; Hine; 1992; Potts, 1978).
CHAPTER FIVE: “I THOUGHT I WAS THROUGH WITH SCHOOLS FOREVER”

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research data relating to research question two, which asks, “What was Benner Creswill Turner's career path?” The findings in this chapter present themes as they pertain to his career path, from living his father’s dream as an attorney, to his presidency of South Carolina State College. The themes that emerged from this chapter are the following: Completing His Father’s Work, A Dream Deferred, Redefining His Father’s Work.

Completing His Father’s Work

Dr. E. J. Turner’s ambition was on track for his son to complete a law degree and become an attorney to fight on behalf of the race. After finishing Harvard Law School in 1930, Turner served as an associate for the Raymond Pace Alexander firm in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Alexander, a 1923 graduate of Harvard Law School, established one of only a few African American law firms in the city of Philadelphia at the time (Elizabeth Ann Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). His wife, the former Sadie Tanner Nossell, was the first African American woman in the United States to receive a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1922. Nossell would later earn a law degree and work at the firm with her husband. Alexander, who initially began his law career as a criminal lawyer and “one of the NAACP’s most productive trial counsels” (“A Dedicated Fighter Dies,” Philadelphia Daily News, Nov. 25, 1974), emerged as one of the most prominent figures in the country in the legal profession. As a man who also came from humble origins and, like Turner,
grew up during the early era of segregation, Alexander used his legal profession to fight for civil and equal rights for African Americans. A November, 26, 1926, an issue of The Legal Intelligence (which was the oldest law journal in the United States) reports that Alexander successfully won a discrimination suit in which he was forbidden to enter a movie theater to see The Ten Commandments in 1924. Notably, in 1956, along with Thurgood Marshall, The Communist Party, and the NAACP Legal defense fund, he successfully launched a litigation to overturn capital murder convictions of six African American men (The Trenton Six) who were falsely accused of murdering an elderly white man (“A Dedicated Fighter Dies,” Philadelphia Daily News, November 25, 1974). During his fifty-two years of service in the legal profession, Alexander served as one of the early presidents of the National Bar Association (a separate black Bar Association, equivalent to the American Bar Association), was elected to the Philadelphia City Council in 1951, and became the first African American Common Pleas judge in Pennsylvania. Alexander was remembered for being a strong advocate for civil rights and his Victorian mannerisms; but at the same time, he was known for staying in touch with the African American working-class community (“Judge Alexander Recalled as Warm, Caring Person,” The Evening Bulletin, November 25, 1974).

During his three years with the Alexander law firm, Turner’s first legal experience was under a man whom Turner’s father would have recognized as a fighter for the race, someone for Turner to emulate. Turner’s early legal career at Raymond Pace Alexander was primarily labor-related civil rights cases and criminal cases associated with a civil rights issue. While working with these issues helped to shape Turner’s
philosophical views regarding civil rights later as the president of State College, Turner’s daughter suggests that “Law practice in a place like Philadelphia was not without its grittiness. I remember my father saying that on his first case, the presiding judge shocked Dad by calling him into his chambers and asking Dad how he wanted the case decided” (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Despite the grittiness, Turner enjoyed his time with the Alexander law firm. He wrote that it “afforded (him) a valuable experience” (Harvard College Class Reports, 1952, p. 1011). Moreover, he also indicated he was rather fortunate to work with such a firm during the era that the country was in the Great Depression (Harvard College Class Reports, 1952).

Outside of the law office, Turner reconnected with his childhood friend William Trent, Jr., who was a graduate student at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and the son of William Trent, Sr., president of the historically black Livingstone College in North Carolina. Trent would later become the first executive director of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) (Gasman, 2007; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Turner’s daughter states that “he and Dad lived near each other and socialized together. Dad and Bill Trent always had many stories of the ‘when we were young, poor bachelors’ variety whenever he would visit us at State College. I believe these were mostly personal visits when he was travelling in the area since State College was a state-supported school” (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Turner’s relationship with Trent debunks the mischaracterization that Turner did not have close friends or did not socialize during his presidency at State College. In effect, his early life and his father’s
social standing in the community placed him in a network of friends who emerged as prominent figures in the African American community during the early and mid-twentieth century.

It was always the plan for Turner to obey his father’s wishes by returning to Columbus, Georgia to establish a law practice. However, E. J. Turner’s terminal illness of heart disease and his death in 1932 unexpectedly brought Turner back to the Columbus area earlier than he anticipated. With the Great Depression in full force, Turner returned to Georgia in an attempt to establish his law practice, take care of his mother, and carry on the legacy that his father had left for him (Harvard College Class Reports, 1952; Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

A Dream Deferred

Turner, in an attempt to establish his law practice, took the Georgia Bar exam, which he was told he was unable to pass. He would later find out that the all-White members who administered the exam routinely threw away his exam as well as any other African American who attempted the exam in the state of Georgia (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Turner’s daughter explains:

My father began trying to pass the bar examination in Georgia and continued to try for years. He was never able to. According to a book by Thurgood Marshall, no African Americans were able to pass the Georgia bar examination in the years between the exam’s inception in 1933 and 1941. Whites with law degrees from little known extension schools were able to pass this exam but, my father with his Harvard Law degree and Philadelphia practice experience was unable to. No one was ever able to locate the so-called “failed exams” my father and other African Americans took and it was later determined that they had been routinely thrown away. At the root of all this was the Herndon case. An African American Harvard Law graduate (class of 1928), Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., had also returned to
Georgia in 1932. He became involved in defending an African American Communist activist named Angelo Herndon and ultimately lost the case with his client, Herndon, receiving 20 years in prison and Davis becoming a Communist. The court’s treatment of Davis and Herndon was harsh and racist, with the “n” word being used about both defendant and attorneys in open court. In the end, Davis lost the case, stopped practicing law and moved to New York City. There Davis started publishing *The Daily Worker* newspaper and became elected to the New York City Council. In 1933 after the Herndon case, Georgia passed a law saying that a law degree was not enough, that an examination must be passed, with the pass/fail status to be determined by members of Georgia’s all-White bar association. (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008)

In a similar attempt in South Carolina in 1948, the South Carolina Bar association introduced the bar exam to its law graduates in an attempt to systematically discourage and disqualify African Americans from practicing law in the state. The exam was introduced in the wake of the John Wrighten decision, an African American WWII veteran who successfully won a suit to desegregate the University of South Carolina’s law school in federal district court, which forced the state of South Carolina to create a separate law school for African Americans (of which Turner was the first dean) (Burke & Hine, 2004). This issue is emphasized in Baker’s (2006) *Paradoxes of Desegregation: African American Struggles for Educational Equity in Charleston, South Carolina, 1926-1972*, in which Baker argued that prior to 1947, many southern states such as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and West Virginia honored diploma privilege as the requirement for a law graduate to be admitted to its state’s bar—at a time when the American Bar Association launched a campaign to keep out “socially undesirable elements” by replacing the diploma privilege with a written examination (p.84). However, it was South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida who eliminated the diploma privilege and introduced a written exam in “direct response to African
American demands for access to state-supported legal training and admission to the bar” (Baker, 2006, p. 84). Ironically Turner would be directly affected by these unfortunate situations twice: as a young lawyer trying to establish a law practice in Georgia, and sixteen years later as the dean of State College’s Law School. At that school he trained future lawyers, many of whom were unable to pass the exam.

While attempting to pass the bar examination, Turner worked in real estate and tax service for the next ten years (1932-1942), fields in which he was relatively successful. During these years in Columbus, Georgia, Turner married close family acquaintance Julia Allen. She was the daughter of Lincoln University’s (an HBCU in Jefferson City, Missouri) former president Benjamin Franklyn Allen (1902-1918). Figure 10 shows Julia and her father.

![Images of Julia Allen and Benjamin Allen](source.png)

*Figure 10. Photos of Julia Allen “Turner” as a student at Lincoln University and her father, the grandfather to Elizabeth Klimas and Benner Turner II.*
Allen, a Savannah, Georgia, native, was known “for his oratorical ability, his keen educational insights and his positive encouragement of students” (Hudson, 1976, p. 12). More specifically President Allen was known for his chapel talks. These talks predate Benjamin E. Mays’s legendary chapel talks at Morehouse College during the 1950s and 1960s (Mays, 1987).

Although Turner was not practicing law as his father would have wanted, he, his wife, and mother were comfortable and enjoyed socializing in their network of friends. The Turners had a very active social life. Turner maintained a close relationship with Raymond Pace Alexander and William Trent, with whom he had associated with while working in Philadelphia. He also kept in touch with his old Harvard friends William Hastie and Robert Weaver. Dr. Robert Weaver would emerge as one of the most prominent members of President Franklin Roosevelt’s black cabinet (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Also, Turner belonged to what his daughter suggests was the “first tennis club for African Americans in America” as well as the “Columbus’s Social Civic Club, a service organization founded by one of his father’s Columbus Colored Medical Association colleagues, Dr. Thomas Brewer” (E. A. “Turner” Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). The Turners owned a piano, which they would later take with them to State College, on which legendary jazz musician W.C. Handy once “had either in part or in fully composed ‘Yellow Dog Blues’” (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Julia Turner was an accomplished pianist and faculty member at nearby Fort Valley State University.
(an HBCU) and once accompanied singer and actress Lena Horne. Turner’s daughter explains:

When my parents went to Washington, DC, to christen their godchild, some of FDR’s black cabinet members came. Frank Horne, my mother’s old boss from her time of teaching at Fort Valley State was there (Frank Horne was singer Lena Horne’s uncle, head of Fort Valley State, a lesser known Harlem Renaissance poet, “black cabinet” member - and an optometrist.) Momma knew Lena Horne when as a twelve year old, Lena Horne was sent to live with her uncle, Frank, at Fort Valley. Momma taught at Fort Valley. (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008)

Turner continued the tradition of opening the home to African American travelers who were denied access to hotels in the segregated South. Members of Roosevelt’s “black cabinet” were frequent visitors to the home when they traveled on business. A lawyer and one of the earliest African American boxing promoters Truman Gibson, and the first African American psychiatrists Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller, were also among the prominent people who stayed with the Turners (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Although, the Turners appeared to have been comfortable with their network of friends, the couple wanted to start a family. Elizabeth Ann was born in 1942, followed by Benner (“Butch”) in 1946. Turner, who grew increasingly frustrated with his failed bar exam results, gave up on his father’s dream of establishing a law practice in Columbus, when a friend at North Carolina Central College of Law offered him a position as a law professor in 1942 (Harvard College Class Report, 1927; Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). He gave up on law because of the racism that existed in a system that did not allow him to succeed. Theoretically, Turner’s failure to not pass the bar exam (because the exams were
routinely thrown out) reflects the definition of critical race theory, in which racism occurs in all forms in everyday life (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Despite this setback, Turner’s move to the field of education reflects the notion of material gain, when he re-strategized how to continue his father’s work of improving the conditions of African Americans.

Redefining His Father’s Work

One would think that after Turner left law, that Turner’s ambition of completing his father’s life work was over; but strangely enough, Turner would move into the field of education in 1942 as a law professor, which put him on track to become a dean and a college president eight years later. The findings in this section show that although Turner was not practicing the law as his father wanted him to, Turner saw education as an opportunity to redefine his mission of achieving equity material gain for African Americans.

Turner began his new career in the field of education teaching law at North Carolina Central College Law. This school is a public HBCU located in Durham, North Carolina. Established in 1909, North Carolina Central College was the first-state supported liberal arts HBCU in the United States. There had been a ruling in Gaines v. Canada (1938) in which the United States Supreme Court said that in-state legal education for whites and African Americans must be equal (either through integration or a creation of separate but equal law school for African Americans). Thus the North Carolina General Assembly authorized the college to establish a law program for African Americans in 1939. The law school officially opened in 1940 (Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, 305 U.S. 337 (1938); Williams & Ashley, 2004).
Turner viewed his new career as an opportunity to carry out his father’s wishes by training African American law students to become lawyers who would fight on behalf of the race (E. A. “Turner” Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). However, his career as a professional educator represented those limitations that African American college graduates and professionals faced in the Jim Crow South. While there were African American professionals in the traditional white-collar fields (business, law, medicine) held by whites in the South, African Americans were disproportionately represented in the field of education (Fairclough, 2007; Anderson, 1988). Since the Reconstruction era, white Southerners envied and feared their African American counterparts because they were entitled to the right to vote; but this fear magnified now that blacks had access to primary, secondary, and higher education. This access to education meant that blacks might become able to compete economically with their white counterparts. When the Reconstruction era was over and whites regained the political and economic sectors in the South, African Americans not only lost their right to vote, but also lost their career aspirations (for college graduates), which were limited primarily to only the ministry or professional education (Fairclough; 2007). In effect, it was preachers and teachers who emerged as primarily the leaders of the African American community during the first half of the twentieth century.  Turner’s careers first as an attorney in the Philadelphia then as a law professor in Durham reflect the limitations with regard to career choices that African Americans had in the South. African American college graduates were shut out of high-profiled, white-collared position; therefore
teaching became one of the likely positions that they went into (Fairclough, 2007). Despite this limitation, Turner made the best out of his situation.

During his tenure at North Carolina Central, Turner taught business law, torts, and agency, as well as equity and real estate (North Carolina Central Faculty Card, 1945). Moreover, Turner served as the law librarian, in which capacity he had the opportunity to work with Aurelia Franklin, the wife of renowned African American historian Dr. John Hope Franklin. It is reported that the Turners and Franklins maintained a lasting friendship with them, with Dr. Franklin and his wife visiting Turner during the time he was president of State College (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Although they now had two new members in the family, Benner and Julia Turner continued to have an active social life and maintained relationships with their friends in Columbus, Georgia. On one occasion, Turner and his wife visited General B. O. Davis, a friend he had known since he was at Phillips Academy. They met at Tuskegee, where Davis was training the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. After five years of serving as a faculty member at North Carolina Central College of law, where he had the opportunity to train future African American lawyers, an opportunity to continue his father’s life work presented itself. Turner was offered a position as the dean of the newly created law school at South Carolina State College (Harvard College Class Reports, 1952). While the system of segregation was wrong and suppressed the majority of uneducated African Americans, this system did provide opportunities for educated African Americans like Turner. He was able to rise to the rank of a dean of a law school in a matter of five years (1942-47).
The South Carolina General Assembly, like North Carolina’s assembly years before, created a separate law school for African Americans on the campus of South Carolina State College in 1947. Under the same premise used in North Carolina, which was to prevent the desegregation of its white law schools, the white power structure in South Carolina opted to create a separate law school for African Americans instead (Burke & Hine, 2004). In 1947, U.S. district court Judge J. Waties of South Carolina ruled in favor of John Wrighten, an African American who applied to the University of South Carolina’s School of Law but was denied admission because of his race. Waties ruled that the University of South Carolina either had to desegregate its law school or create a separate but equal law school for African Americans. The state of South Carolina chose to create a separate law school for African Americans (which Wrighten’s lawyer Thurgood Marshall advised his client not to attend). Previous court decisions set a precedent that provided Marshall an opportunity to desegregate the University of South Carolina’s School of Law [Murray v. Pearson (1935); Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, 305 U.S. 337 (1938)]. However, financially strapped, Wrighten opted to finally attend the law school at South Carolina State College. Two weeks later, Turner was hired as dean (Burke & Hine, 2004).

On July 18, 1947, a dean selection committee meeting selected Turner. The committee was composed of State College Board of Trustees Colonel A. H. Moss, W. C. Bethea, and State College president Dr. M. F. Whittaker. According to the minutes, Turner was slated as the best prospect “from many confidential sources” to lead the law school. All members of Board of Trustees were notified, including the recently elected
Governor J. Strom Thurmond (South Carolina State College Board of Trustee Minutes, July 18, 1947).

Whittaker and Turner hired several law professors, including Cassandra Maxwell, who was the first African American woman in the state of South Carolina to practice law. The initial law school was a one-room operation located in the school’s library. Necessary materials such as law books were quickly acquired and the first class of students included Matthew Perry, who went on to sue Turner, South Carolina State College, and the State of South Carolina in wake of a student uprising in 1967 (and who was later appointed a federal district judge by President Jimmy Carter). Other students included Ernest A. Finney (who became the first African American chief justice of South Carolina’s Supreme Court) and Julius Washington, Essie Mae Washington’s (Strom Thurmond’s African American child) first husband (Burke & Hine, 2004; Washington-Williams, 2005).

Turner headed the law school during a time when it was experiencing growing pains. The law school finally found a permanent home, Moss Hall, erected in 1949 at the cost of $200,000. Named after Colonel Adam Moss, State College’s trustee and local attorney, the facility “contained six classrooms, two seminar rooms, two reading rooms, a moot courtroom, a library, stacks for 50,000 volumes and office space for faculty and the dean” (Burke & Hine, 2004, p. 35). While the law school in Orangeburg produced successful graduates, many of whom went on to challenge the racial status quo in South Carolina, it was never able to grow to its full potential in comparison to its well-established, well-attended white counterpart in Columbia (which had been in existence
since 1867). With low student enrollment and the desegregation of the University of South Carolina’s Law School during the 1960s, the law school subsequently closed at the end of the 1965-1966 academic year (Burke & Hine, 2004). Although the law school failed to continue to exist, the law school produced some most competent legal professionals. Matthew Perry, who later become a federal district judge, praised Turner as well as the other law faculty at State College who provided him with a quality legal education (Matthew Perry, William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, June 19, 1995). Turner thought he was continuing his father’s dream by giving up his law practice ambition and going into instructing law students; but another opportunity to continue his father’s work presented itself.

South Carolina State College’s third president Miller C. Whittaker passed away on November 14, 1949. Whittaker, who had served as State College’s president since 1932, grew up on State College’s campus, where his father Johnson Whittaker was one of the early faculty members. He obtained B. A. and M. A. degrees from Kansas State University, studied at Harvard University and the Army School at Langres, France, and earned a LL.D from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina. A lifelong bachelor, Whittaker began his career as a professor of physics at State College in 1913. In 1923, he was promoted to head the mechanical arts department before becoming the president in 1932. Whittaker, a registered architect in South Carolina and Georgia, was State College’s architect and superintendent of all buildings that were erected before he became president (“Dr. Whittaker, State College, Dies,” The Times and Democrat, November 15, 1949).
Whittaker was held in high regard by both the white and black communities. In constraints similar to those of his colleagues at other HBCUs (and later the same constraints of Turner’s), Whittaker walked a tight rope, having to please both the white board of trustees, state officials, and African Americans. Essie Mae Washington-Williams (2005), the unacknowledged daughter of Senator Strom Thurmond, recalled President Whittaker allowing the then-Governor Thurmond to use his office on several occasions to privately visit her; this secret meeting was in the age when such an association would have ended Thurmond’s political career. While Whittaker may have been trusted with this secret, he was tested when he was asked to testify by Thurgood Marshall in June of 1947 during John Wrighten’s suit to desegregate the University of South Carolina’s law school. Maceo Nance, Turner’s successor as president of State College and who was a student at the time, states that Whittaker “was in a very uncomfortable and untenable position” (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, March 14, 1989). While he had an obligation to comply with the racial status quo of South Carolina to support a separate black law school, Whittaker testified that a law school with no library, no classroom, and no faculty would not be feasible to begin operation that September. His testimony helped Thurgood Marshall to successfully win the suit that forced the state of South Carolina to create a separate but equal law school for African Americans, desegregate the University of South Carolina’s law school, or abolish legal education in the state of South Carolina (Burke & Hine, 2004). This decision turned out to be a win-win situation with regards to the public perception of his presidency at State College. He was praised by both the white power structure of South
Carolina (who had pushed to create a separate African American law school as the alternative to the suit) as well as by Thurgood Marshall (who wanted to pursue another lawsuit to desegregate the University of South Carolina’s law school, based on the precedence of the Wrigthen case, as well as a previous Supreme Court decision victory in 1938) (*Gaines v. Canada*). These events, however, impacted Whittaker’s health (Burke & Hine, 2004).

In March of 1949, Whittaker suffered a heart attack, after which he took a three-month leave of absence. The board of trustees appointed Frank A. DeCosta, then dean of the graduate school, as the acting president of State College (Memo to Deans, Heads of Departments and Other Administrative Officers, April 19, 1949). Whittaker suffered another heart attack on November 13, 1949, and he passed away the next day. After the funeral, which was two days later, the board met and selected a faculty committee to “carry out the duties of President Whittaker and to serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees” (State College Board of Trustees Minutes, November 16, 1949). K. W. Green was named chairman of the faculty committee. The faculty members included J. I. Washington, F. A. DeCosta, F. N. Staley, and H. W. Crawford (State College Board of Trustees Minutes, November 16, 1949). Interestingly enough, all of these men (except for Washington) to some degree had aspirations of becoming the next president. This situation would later lead to some infighting among the faculty and staff, as well as animosity towards Turner when he was ultimately selected (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History Project, March 14, 1989). It was the consensus, however, of the board
to select an acting president for the moment, before carrying out a search to replace President Whittaker (William C. Bethea’s Letter to the Board, November 15, 1949).

On April 25, 1950, the Board of Trustees interviewed Turner along with Dr. E. W. Brice, Dean H. W. Crawford, Dean F. A. DeCosta, Dean K. W. Green, Professor J. C. Parler, Professor J. F. Potts, Dr. J. J. Seabrook, Dean F. M. Staley, Professor J. I. Washington, and Professor Paul R. Webber for the position of the president of South Carolina State College (State College Board of Trustee Minutes, April 25, 1950). Out of the pool of candidates, Turner along with Crawford Parler and Dr. Thomas P. Fraser were the finalists who were interviewed at the office of Governor Strom Thurmond and the six man, all-white Board of Trustees on August 1, 1950 (State College Board of Trustee Minutes, August 1, 1950). It has been cited in Dr. Lewis McMillan’s controversial book *Negro Higher Education in the State of South Carolina* that the Board of Trustees simply asked the candidates two questions:

1) Do you believe in and will you support the Southern philosophy of race and education in administering the affairs of this institution?
2) Are you a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People? (as cited in *The Harvard Crimson*, “Negro Historian Fired for Attack on South Carolina College System,” September 29, 1954)

While there is no evidence to suggest that these questions were actually given to the candidates, it can be argued that Turner was selected because the trustees were confident of the vice chairman’s praise for Turner years earlier: “We want nothing less than a man of ability, character and with a correct understanding of the American way of life, especially here in the South” (Hine & Burke, 2004, p. 46). This perception has been reflected in other literature that examines Turner (Gross, 2006; Hine, 1992). However,
Maceo Nance’s commentary debunks the perception of how Turner was selected. He suggests that Turner was selected because he was unknown among State College’s community and did involve himself in the politics of administration. There was a lot political infighting among the deans, upper-level administrators, and faculty concerning who was to be the next president (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, March 14, 1989). Nance stated,

The infighting that took place was a major factor in Turner’s selection. The Board has been turned off by it. This was the easiest route for them to take without becoming involved, without taking sides with anyone and resolving the situation and identifying someone they thought was very strong and could do it. (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History Project, March 14, 1989)

Nance further indicates that Turner would later relate a story to him, that he had known that he had been selected as the next president while waiting outside of Strom Thurmond’s office (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History Interview, March 14, 1989). Nevertheless, Turner was elected the fourth president of South Carolina State College and was now in a position to complete his father’s work by seeking to improve the only state-supported African American college in the State of South Carolina.

Summary

This chapter has provided a narrative account of Benner Creswill Turner's career path to the presidency of South Carolina State College. The major findings in this chapter show that although he had given up on his law career because of forces that were beyond his control, he constantly redefined his father’s goals for him by abandoning a
career in law for a career in education. This redefinition led him all the way to the college presidency within only eight years.

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research data relating to research question three, which asks, “In the wake of the Supreme Court ruling barring segregation in education, what was Benner Creswill Turner's strategic goal?” The findings in this chapter present themes as they pertain to Turner’s strategic goals for the college in the wake the Supreme Court decision of the 1954. The themes that emerged from this chapter are the following: Integration Was a Moving Target, Turner’s Philosophy of Education, and Seeking Material Gain. This chapter concludes that although Turner believed in the symbolic decision of the U.S. Supreme Court of 1954 that deemed segregation as unconstitutional, he likely felt that segregation would continue to exist. For that reason, Turner believed it was best to push for the material gain to improve the quality of South Carolina State College.

Integration was a Moving Target

The findings show that Turner believed in equality for African Americans but did not believe that the desegregation of schools in the United States would necessarily improve the social standings of African Americans (B. C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). There has been a misperception among Turner’s critics; he has been historically viewed as a collaborator who supported segregation (Fairclough, 2006). Fred Moore, former State College student government president who
was expelled by Turner in 1956, indicated that Turner believed, “There was not a white person in America who believed in integration” (Fred Moore, personal communication, July 16, 2008). On the contrary, Turner believed in the principles of equality but viewed integration as a moving target (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2009). The literature on African American college presidents of HBCUs during the mid-twentieth century examines this dilemma. The presidents universally agreed that segregation was evil and unfair to African Americans, but they feared the consequences of what would happen to their respective institutions (Wilson-Mbajekewe, 2006b; Smith, 1994). While the literature does not examine Turner’s position on desegregation (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Potts, 1978), one can make an assumption about him.

Both of Turner’s children indicated that their father viewed integration as a moving target or receding goal (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008; B. C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). His philosophy was in line with his fellow presidents from public institutions (where they were at the mercy of their pro-segregationist boards of trustees and state legislatures) (B. C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008; Henry Tisdale, personal communication, August 1, 2008). Turner felt that the desegregation of schools in the United States would trigger the state legislature in South Carolina to close down the State College. If this closure were to occur, it would be the African American students in the state who would suffer. There might then possibly be no other state-supported institution of higher
education in that state that would be available to them. In an inaugural address in 1951, South Carolina Governor James Byrnes stated that he would rather close the public school system and support a private white school system in South Carolina than desegregate the public schools; this move would have had an immediate impact not only on African American secondary schools, but also on the existence of South Carolina State College (Grose, 2006). In this regard, Turner felt that integration was a moving target, that any closures would have a grave impact on African Americans in South Carolina (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Turner was not alone in his concern with regards to desegregation in education. There was a national conversation among college presidents of HBCUs as well as other influential members of the African American community (Wilson-Mbajekewe, 2006b). In the fall of 1951, these influential leaders and scholars convened on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC to discuss the implications that desegregation in education would have on American society and the HBCU (Wilson-Mbajekewe, 2006b). Many presidents of state-supported HBCUs viewed the Brown decision as an opportunity for the white state legislatures to close their respective institutions (Wilson-Mbajekewe, 2006b; Smith, 1994). While presidents of private HBCUs (such as Benjamin Mays and Frederick Patterson) shared similar views with their contemporaries, their respective institutions were more likely to survive because their endowments came primarily from private donors. In contrast, public institutions relied on state funding to stay afloat (Wilson-Mbajekewe, 2006b).
Presidents of private institutions, such as Benjamin Mays of Morehouse College, believed that the desegregation of schools was inevitable and that both HBCUs and predominately white colleges would have to adopt the philosophy of cultural pluralism (Wilson-Mbashukwe, 2006b). Cultural pluralism meant that HBCUs would have to accommodate both African American and white students in a post-Brown society. Benjamin Mays (1987) further affirmed that HBCUs could survive in a post-Brown society if each institution could survive based on their merit. However, presidents from private institutions, such as Morehouse, did not receive funding from their respective state legislature; therefore, they were a little more at ease with regards to the inevitable Supreme Court decision of 1954. Turner held a very conservative, apprehensive view on issues regarding segregation in education; however, he believed in equality. He sought an alternative approach to the Brown decision: improving segregated institutions. The next theme will examine his philosophy of education, which sheds light on his strategic goal for the college.

Philosophy of Education

Turner’s philosophy of education was based on “an academic work ethic” (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008, Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). This ethic, according to Turner, was the combination of academic excellence and the accumulation of life skills that would benefit a student after college. He modeled this philosophy on both the state of the poor quality of African American primary and secondary education in South Carolina, as well
as his own educational experience (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

From his childhood as a student in the Columbus City Schools to his time at Harvard Law School, Turner excelled in his courses. He also wrestled at Phillips Academy and at Harvard and was an avid reader. As noted in chapter 4, there were times when his father was unable to send him home during the breaks during his student years at Phillips Academy. Turner, alone on campus, closed his door, pulled down the shades and indulged himself in Greek and Latin classical literature (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, March 14, 1989). Reading became a life-long interest (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Theoretically, this academic drive reflected the drive for material gain that Turner wanted for his students.

Many students who entered South Carolina State College during Turner’s tenure were neither prepared to do college-level work nor had the necessary life skills that would help them in their respective careers (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). This issue of student preparation is also noted in the literature; it is said that Turner was particularly concerned with students who were not prepared for college-level work, but who wanted to pursue careers as army officers and medical doctors (Potts, 1978). Turner wanted to provide the best education possible for his students. As a result, Turner created a “communications center,” which simply was a remedial center that helped students to acquire basic skills they should have learned in primary and secondary school. His son said,
He lamented that a lot of the students came from the South Carolina system, students he said were permanently handicapped. You know, smart kids who were permanently handicapped by an inferior educational system. Well, one of the things you might see that he set up was something called the communications center…. It’s to improve the reading, writing, speech skills, and so basically remedial work. Just closing that gap so the students can do college level. (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008)

This communications center was very effective. According to Potts (1978), the academic achievements among the students improved significantly. Turner reported to the Board of Trustees in 1961 that several students were admitted and earned graduate assistantships at The Pennsylvania State University, University of Kansas, and Fordham University. One student earned a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship in 1963. Turner’s compliancy with segregation placed in a position which he was able to improve the conditions of State College, which allowed many students to have access to a better education; thus providing a gateway or a material gain to top graduate programs in the country.

Pushing his philosophy of academic work ethic, Turner also was concerned about students’ appearance, their social skills, and their exposure to cultural activities. While South Carolina State College (as well as most HBCUs) provided some form of lecture series, lyceums for its students prior to Turner’s tenure (Williams & Ashley, 2005), it was under the Turner administration that weekly chapel service or vespers were required for all students. They were assigned seats and they had to be dressed professionally: coats and ties for men and dresses for women (Franklin Roosevelt Jackson, William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, July 20, 1990; Bass & Nelson, 1972; South Carolina State College Board of Trustees Minutes, January 31, 1957). Ironically, the student dress code
and mandatory attendance at vespers were among the issues that students filed as grievances against Turner in the 1966-1967 academic year (Issac “Ike” Williams, William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, June 21, 1995). Reflecting on these minor issues, Turner’s son remembered his father telling him that

I always want these kids to know how to dress up. A young man should go out and know how to tie a tie, make a good impression. And when they went downtown on these marches, one of the things my father was proud about was how well they’re dressed. Can you imagine that? He was very proud that they went down dressed well. (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008)

So although Turner did not approve of students participating in civil rights marches in downtown Orangeburg, he was proud that the students knew how to dress, as it reflected well on the South Carolina State College. Moreover, he felt that knowing how to dress would prepare them for their careers (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). So once again we see evidence that Turner was focused more on getting his students ahead materially, than on encouraging them to be activists. He opposed the student participation in Civil Rights marches and other activities that were not only dangerous, but also would not guarantee changes in laws in favor of African Americans during the 1950s-1960s.

Another aspect that must be emphasized with regards to Turner’s philosophy of education was his belief in the mission of the black college (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Turner believed that HBCUs like South Carolina State College were of a major significance in the African American community. Although Turner did not have the average African American educational experience, graduating from a prestigious New England preparatory school as well as Harvard
College and Law School, he was realistic with regards to race relations. If there were no other schools in the United States that would be available to African Americans, the HBCU would be there for them. It was Turner’s goal to improve the quality of South Carolina State College so that African American students could have a quality state-supported institution of higher education in the event that the desegregation of higher education never came (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

Seeking the Material Gain

Turner was more concerned with the material improvement of South Carolina State College in a post-

_Brown_ society than the symbolic decision that the Supreme Court made in 1954. His ideology reflects this study’s theoretical framework, critical race theory (material gain versus symbolic gain). In that regard, Turner theorized that a strong state-supported institution of higher education for African Americans outweighed a Supreme Court decision that was unenforceable (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Therefore, Turner sought to make South Carolina State College into the premier state-supported institution of higher education for African Americans in South Carolina. Turner’s daughter stated that her father always emphasized that “No one can take away a high-quality education from you” when reflecting on his strategic position for South Carolina State College in the wake of the _Brown_ decision (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

South Carolina State College has historically received small appropriations annually in comparison to white institutions in the state of South Carolina. This included
the state’s flagship, the University of South Carolina in Columbia, Clemson College, The Citadel (a military college), and Winthrop College (a women’s school) (Potts, 1978). According to the literature, Governor Byrnes implemented a building tax that went to improving all African American elementary and secondary schools in South Carolina. In this regard, it was the intention that African Americans in the state would not push for the desegregation of schools because their facilities would be even better than their white counterparts. Turner took advantage of this tax and was able to secure funding for State College's building projects and for improving the overall quality of the institution (Grose, 2006; Potts, 1978). South Carolina State University trustee Dr. John Corbitt recalled Turner taking advantage of the state legislature appropriating money for African American education. Corbitt stated,

> Turner used the segregation issue to advance South Carolina State. So the school got good funding in those days. Now they appropriated good money because they wanted the school to stay black. The governor came to South Carolina State on a visit when school was out after June and saw the campus and put a bunch of money in sidewalks and beautified the campus…And that was during the era in the late 1950s when Governor Byrnes made his famous State of the State Address and raised taxes to build black schools. So my home town in Wagener, where I’m from, they built a modern school that was a lot more modern school than the white school was. So they put more money in state colleges then than they are doing now. (John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008).

As a result of increased appropriations from the South Carolina legislature, Turner was able to build twenty-three new buildings (including a new football stadium in 1955) as well as to either renovate or replace older buildings on campus (Potts, 1978). Moreover, a new academic building was completed in 1956 to honor Turner (Figure 11).
Figure 11. Turner reviews construction plans for Turner Hall (background).

To make the college more viable, Turner pushed to hire more faculty members with terminal degrees. In 1958, State College had been placed on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Board of Trustees felt one of the factors necessary to gain accreditation was to recruit more faculty members with terminal degrees (and at higher salaries) (South Carolina State College Board of Trustees Minutes,
May 22, 1958). Turner was able to secure funds to raise faculty members' salaries as well as to recruit qualified persons with terminal degrees to South Carolina State College (John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008; Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008). State College received its full accreditation in 1960 (Potts, 1978).

Although Turner was able to hire people with terminal degrees, he had trouble retaining them because many left for other schools. Some left because he did fire a number of them (discussed further in the next chapter). However, many faculty members left seeking better salaries. Compensation was still relatively low. Turner’s son indicated that his father was frustrated which he encouraged and helped faculty members to obtain their doctoral degrees after which they would leave for other opportunities (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Because there was a limited pool of African Americans with terminal degrees at the time, Turner sought to change the law. The pro-segregationist state legislature in South Carolina allowed only African Americans or Negros to teach at its only African American state-supported school. Turner tried to push the state legislature to change the wording in the law from Negro to Colored so that State College could recruit from a larger pool of qualified applicants who were not white but who were not of African descent. Dr. Corbitt indicated that Turner:

…appealed to the legislature to change a law from Negro to Colored so they could have Filipino or Chinese professors. I don’t know whether they changed that, but remember the newspaper article in the State paper saying President Turner appeared at the legislature at South Carolina to change the law from Negro to Colored so they could have Filipino or Chinese or Japanese professors at South Carolina University, because at that time they only could have Negro professors. (John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008).
The literature as well as research findings indicate that this endeavor was a success. But it is clear that Turner’s ambitions reflected this study’s theoretical framework of critical race theory (he was seeking material gain). By the end of his career, there were white faculty members at State College. Turner was able to bring in two Woodrow Wilson Fellows during the 1966-1967 academic school year (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Nelson & Bass, 1972). The addition of the Woodrow Wilson Fellows to the faculty and staff at State College reflected well on the institution. However, it was ironic that the addition of these faculty members would lead to Turner’s retirement; when he terminated their contracts with the college, it caused student uproar. Despite this uproar, Turner was pushing to bring in the best faculty members.

Summary

The findings in this chapter have revealed that Benner Creswill Turner personified the predicament of material gain versus symbolic gain within the context of critical race theory. He sought to maintain and improve the South Carolina State College in aftermath of the Brown decision. Moreover, the findings also show that there is a gap in the literature with regards to Turner’s position on school desegregation and his philosophy of education. In this regard, Turner was more of a pragmatist than a collaborating, authoritarian leader as he has been portrayed in history. Finally, the findings reveal that Turner’s position on the Brown decision and his strategic position were not unique. His story adds a new dimension to the literature that examines African American college presidents of HBCUs in the wake of the Brown decision.
CHAPTER SEVEN: “THE BUCK STOPS HERE”: TURNER’S LEADERSHIP STYLES

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research data relating to research question four, which asks, “What leadership theories explain Benner Creswill Turner’s leadership style?” According to the literature, Turner’s leadership is historically remembered as that of a transactional, authoritarian leader (Fairclough, 2007; Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Hine, 1992). The findings suggest, however, that Turner not only exhibited the qualities of a transactional leader, but he also had qualities of an African American leader, academic leader, and a transformational leader. Figure 12 illustrates his styles of leadership.

Figure 12. Leadership styles exhibited by President Turner.
According to Birnbaum (1992), leadership is not only defined by the actions of the leader, but also by how his or her followers “think about leadership, interpret a leader’s behavior, and come over time to develop shared explanations for the causes and outcomes of ambiguous events” (p. 3). Using interviews, oral histories, primary documents, and the literature, this chapter is an examination of the leadership theories that describe Turner’s leadership style. The following themes that emerged from the data were used in this chapter: transactional leadership, African American leadership, academic leadership, and transformational leadership. This chapter concludes that, above all, Turner was an authoritarian, transactional leader. However, because he was able to operate as both as an African American leader and academic leader during the Civil Rights era, he was able to exhibit qualities of a transformational leader as well.

Transaction Leadership

Turner exhibited the qualities of a transactional leader who exercised his leadership in an authoritarian style. At its core, transactional leadership is a form of leadership in which leaders and their constituency work together in the “exchange of valued things” (Burns, 1978, p. 19). This style is evident in the fields of business and government, for example, where leaders expect their subordinates to carry out a particular agenda and in return, subordinates are rewarded with money, special favors, and promotions (Birnbaum, 2000). Transactional leadership can be identified as more authoritarian or dictatorial when leadership is exercised from a top-down approach and when the leader maintains total power and makes the final decision (irrespective of what his or her subordinates say) (Burns, 1978). This style is how Turner operated.
Several interviewees in this study made it clear that Turner’s leadership style was authoritarian (Gracie Dawson, personal communication, July 5, 2008; Liz Zimmerman Keitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008; Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008). When asked to describe his leadership style, Liz Zimmerman Keitt, a Claflin University student during the 1960s, described Turner as a “dictator,” while Mrs. Garcia Dawson, widow of legendary South Carolina State College football coach Oliver C. Dawson, indicated that “Turner was our Adolf Hitler” (Gracie Dawson, personal communication, July 5, 2008; Liz Zimmerman Keitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008). Geraldine Zimmerman, a former faculty member at State College, remembered that “Whatever Turner, said, was the law!” (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008). This comment was in reference to Turner giving her an ultimatum to either go back to school to earn a doctoral degree or find another job (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008).

While the literature on Turner reflects this leadership style as transactional, authoritarian leadership, it does not specifically connect the historical factors explaining why college presidents administered in this manner (Grose, 2006; Hine 1996; Hine 1992). According to Fisher and Koch (1996), the social movements of the 1960s (i.e., the Civil Rights movement) ushered in a new paradigm of leadership in American higher education. College presidents in a post-Civil Rights era created more transparency in administration with faculty members and students working with the governing boards in policy and budgetary matters (Fisher & Koch, 1996). Prior to the 1960s (the civil rights era), administrators at colleges and universities were primarily authoritarian. African
American college presidents, particularly, have a history of being authoritarian leaders as a result of the circumstances of the time (Fairclough, 2007).

The findings show that three people who were close to Turner described his leadership style as authoritarian. Maceo Nance, who later succeeded Turner as president of State College in 1967, stated the following:

In that period of time, once the Board of Trustees made a decision that was it. The Presidency at that time was a sort of (a dictatorial) kind of thing. No one challenged it. Unlike today. The Presidency was a dictatorial position and the Board of Trustees even more. So once it was done, there was no recourse other than to pout. That kind of atmosphere prevailed through Turner’s term. (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History, March 14, 1989).

In addition, both of Turner’s children also indicated that their father was an authoritarian (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, August 11, 2008). However, they indicated that that was the ideal leadership style for many African American administrators at HBCUs at the time. Turner’s daughter specifically indicated that her father modeled his leadership style after Howard University’s president Mordecai Johnson (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, August 11, 2008). Turner’s son stated,

My father was an authoritarian by all measures. But remember, he grew up in an age when good leadership was authoritarian. And on the other hand, he thought that the responsibility was his. You know? He was a Harry Truman type of…the buck stops here. And he, you know, remember Harry Truman had that sign on his desk and my father quoted that the buck stops here. He’d say exactly that. “If I take responsibility for it then it’s gonna be my decision and vice versa. It’s my decision; I take responsibility for it.” (Benner C. Turner, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

This commentary illustrates how Turner operated. During his tenure as president at State College, aside from the Board of Trustees, Turner had the final say on issues, no
matter how minor they were. If Turner left the decision to his subordinates, he would be the one to communicate the final decision to the respective party or would at least receive a courtesy copy from his subordinate (President B. C. Turner, personal communication, 1956; see Appendix L). There are countless primary resources that identify Turner making final decisions that could have been handled by his subordinates. For an example, he approved a student to file for graduation, although the youth missed the deadline. Another example is that he personally communicated with a student and her family after that student withdrew from State College as a result of health problems (President B. C. Turner, personal communication, February 7, 1966). Turner also received direct correspondence from students and parents about minor issues that could have been handled by his subordinates. Despite the authoritative position that Turner had on such minor issues, it is also worth mentioning that Turner responded to his correspondence promptly and in a very pleasant and professional manner (President B. C. Turner File).

However, others disagree about how pleasant he was. Prior to the 1955-1956 academic year, Turner refused to name Rudolph Pyatt as the next editor of the school’s newspaper, *The Collegian*, because he was deemed a troublemaker (Rudolph A. Pyatt, Jr., William C. Hine Oral History Interviews, August 25, 1994). Franklin Roosevelt Jackson, a 1953 graduate of State College and former student council president, indicated that Turner displayed a very dismissive attitude towards students and faculty members who sought to advise him on certain matters. Jackson remembers Turner displaying an arrogant, authoritarian attitude towards him after Jackson wrote a letter to advise him
about a certain matter (Dr. Franklin Roosevelt Jackson, William C. Hine Oral History, July 20, 1990). He further stated,

He (Turner) was grossly offended. This was just obscene for a student to advise him. Turner was a lawyer. Advice may have meant something else to him. He may have interpreted it in a legal sense (Dr. Franklin Roosevelt Jackson, William C. Hine Oral History, July 20, 1990).

Another former student of Turner's, a retired federal district Judge of South Carolina, Matthew Perry, recalled Turner’s dismissive, authoritarian attitude. Perry, a 1951 graduate of State College’s law school, represented three students who were dismissed by Turner in 1967. Out of respect for his former mentor, Perry opted to meet with Turner to make a deal to reinstate the students without taking legal action. Turner refused to reinstate the students and told him “well…you’re going around suing everybody, I suppose …go ahead and sue if that’s what you feeling you’ve got to do” (Matthew Perry, William C. Hine Oral History, June 19, 1995).

Although Turner’s authoritative leadership approach to administering the institution was viewed as an acceptable and a common form of leadership for the time, Turner came under fire from the students and faculty during episodes of student unrest. In the wake of the 1956 student economic boycott of downtown Orangeburg and of the college cafeteria, Turner strongly exhibited his authoritarian leadership style. He had the final authority over the student newspaper staff and faculty advisor decisions of what content was printed in the student newspaper. During this time of crisis, Turner exercised his authority by censoring any controversial topics that could embarrass the institution (“Factors Related to Student Unrest,” April 19, 1956). Moreover, Turner also ignored the faculty committee’s recommendation to not expel student government president Fred
Moore, by going straight to the Governor and the Board of Trustees, who subsequently expelled him (Fred Moore, personal communication, July, 16, 2008). In a July, 2008, interview, Moore explained that Turner pleaded with him to convince the student body to cease the selective-buying campaign and boycott. He threatened Moore with expulsion, stating,

Fred we don’t have any obligation, we don’t owe anything to those people out there. My job is to look out for the well being and the welfare of 1,200 faculty, staff, and students, and you are the president of the student body, but if you think you’re going to take over my job, I won’t hesitate to send you home, and I’m not going to be no damn hero (Fred Moore, personal communication, July, 16, 2008).

Angered over this particular decision, several faculty members resigned in protest (Fred Moore, personal communication, July, 16, 2008). Throughout Turner’s administration, students were not the only victims of his authoritarian leadership style. He constantly clashed with faculty members and when necessary, disciplined them through dismissal. The literature has consistently referred to the Woodrow Wilson Fellows, Thomas Wirth and Anthony Fanning, as examples of faculty members who were dismissed by Turner in 1967 (Grose, 2006; Hine 1996; Nelson & Bass, 1970). However, there were many who either voluntarily resigned or were fired by Turner. History professor Lewis McMillian, for an example, published a controversial book that criticized the state of black colleges in South Carolina, especially State College, and criticized the leadership of South Carolina State College for being authoritarian. Nance indicated that although McMillan’s book was factual, “It isn’t what you say; it’s how you say it” (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History, March 14, 1989). McMillan, at the time, was one of a few faculty
members who held a Ph.D. Nevertheless, and without approval from the Board of
Trustees, Turner fired him.

Within the context of the time, transactional, authoritarian leadership was
endorsed by the governing board. In the aftermath of the 1956 student boycott, the Board
of Trustees praised Turner for his “sane” leadership during this crisis (South Carolina
State College Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, April 25, 1956). The Board, further,
unanimously adopted a resolution that students and faculty members who engaged in
insurrection would be dismissed immediately. It read,

Any student who engages in any future student insurrection or other form(s) of
defiance of authority shall be expelled from the College for the remainder of the
school term with the loss of all credits. Any member of the faculty who
encourages or instigates any future student insurrection or other form(s) of
defiance against authority shall be immediately dismissed. All disciplinary
action(s) shall be made a permanent part of the public records of the College
pertaining to the person and against whom the action is taken. (South Carolina
State College Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, April 25, 1956).

Theoretically, this warning reflected threat of Turner’s ambition of acquiring the material
gain for the greater good of the college (Bell, 1995). Turner was willing (and the Board
of Trustees gave him the power) to summarily expel any student, faculty, or staff member
at State College who openly challenged the racial status quo that would cause
embarrassment to the college and could have hurt the school’s chances of obtaining more
appropriation from the state legislature.

Four years later, the Board of Trustees passed a similar resolution in the aftermath
of recent student protests in downtown Orangeburg (in the aftermath of the Greensboro
sit-ins by four North Carolina A&T State University students in February of that year).
The resolution gave Turner the power to “summarily expel” any student who participates
in off-campus protest (South Carolina State College Board of Trustees Minutes, March 17, 1960). Five months later, the Board of Trustees rescinded this resolution because they felt that it “had served its purpose and that President Turner had ample authority to deal with any situation under the General Rules and Regulations as shown in the college catalogue” (South Carolina State College Board of Trustees Minutes, August 4, 1960). In comparison to his contemporaries at public HBCUs, Turner’s authoritarian leadership style was not new. Many African American college presidents at public HBCUs were historically viewed as authoritarian (Fairclough, 2007). Mississippi’s Jackson State College’s president, Jacob Reddix, for example, administered as an authoritarian (Williamson, 2008). According to Williamson (2008),

Reddix ruled the student body with an iron hand to ensure that students remained aloof from the societal issues of the time and warned that a violation of campus policies would result in suspension or expulsion. Reddix similarly ruled the faculty, all of whom were African American, as segregation laws required. Tenure did not exist at Jackson State, and the president could fire members of the faculty without due process. Those who criticized the Mississippi way of life or the campus incurred the wrath of life Reddix and the board of trustees (p.119).

Turner’s legacy as a transactional, authoritarian is partial. While he and many of his contemporaries operated on this model, no one has fully placed Turner’s leadership in its proper historical context. Turner’s leadership style was confined only to transactional dimensions. There are characteristics (such as protesting versus accommodation) which can be explained using concepts of African American leadership. The next section will examine Turner’s leadership style as an African American leader.
African American Leadership

Turner also administered and exhibited the qualities of an African American leader. There has been a failure to fully examine Turner within this context. This section will specifically examine Turner within the context of African American leadership in American higher education under two sub-themes: The Talented Tenth and Accommodation v. Protest.

The Talented Tenth

Turner personified the ideology of the Talented Tenth. Coined by W. E. B. DuBois in 1903 in the Souls of Black Folks, the Talented Tenth was the idea that “the negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men” (DuBois, 1995, p. 78). Du Bois’ essay also sought to debunk the educational philosophy of industrial education, which society had reserved exclusively for African Americans. Du Bois (1995) insisted that leaders of the African American community will be those who make it up to the college-educated class and who have a liberal education background.

In that regard, the research shows that Turner was groomed for leadership by his father—groomed to be a fighter for the race. Throughout his childhood, Turner saw the inequalities with regards to health care among African Americans, as he accompanied his father occasionally on medical emergencies. His father instilled in him the importance of education and had high hopes for him to become a lawyer. At no small sacrifice, Turner’s father sent him to a prep school in New England and later to Harvard College and the Harvard Law School (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). As a
member of the African American upper-crust and armed with a Harvard law degree, Turner had the opportunity to truly personify this notion of the talented tenth by fighting on behalf of the race within the field of the law. However, this idea came with a bit of disappointment as he returned to Columbus, Georgia, to practice law in 1932 (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

As previously mentioned in chapter 4, Turner was “unable” to pass the bar exam in Georgia; his exam papers were secretly discarded because he was an African American (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Although a member of the African American elite and possessing impressive educational credentials, Turner was not exempted from institutional racism. Turner’s position in life is reflected in the literature with regards to the African American elite (Benjamin, 2005; Graham, 1999; Gatewood, 1990). Despite their educational background and social class, members of the elite faced discrimination just like their working-class counterparts. These men and women were known for fighting for social justice, especially those among them who were financially self-sufficient (Gatewood, 1990). When Turner began to work in the field of education, the parameters of working for a public institution limited his ability, as much as any African American educator’s, to openly critique the racial status quo (Fairclough, 2007). Due to his circumstance, Turner sought other options to fight on behalf of his race. For an example, Turner’s son indicated that he pushed the state legislature to appropriate more funding to establish a campus police because he was very apprehensive about how the
all-white city police would treat the students in the event of an emergency. In that same regard, Turner obtained funding to build a campus infirmary because he did not want his students to be mistreated or neglected at the local hospital if there were a medical emergency (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Thus, Turner sought other ways to erase the structured impediments contained within racism rather than directly confront the status quo.

Accommodation v. Protest

The literature on African American leadership has historically been based on the notion of accommodation versus protest (Bunche, 2005; James, 1997; Walters & Smith, 1999; White, 1990). For African American college presidents during the early and mid-twentieth century, there was no other choice but to accommodate. In *Private Black Colleges at the Crossroads*, Thompson (1973) explains,

> The historical stance of black colleges made this identity crisis inevitable. Throughout their history, black colleges – which are mostly located in rigidly segregated communities – have played a dual role: on the one hand, they have endeavored to prepare black leadership to serve as a catalyst of racial protest and change. But on the other, they have worked out patterns of accommodation within the segregated communities in which they are located. The most common pattern of accommodation has been withdrawal (p. 15).

As president of South Carolina State College, Turner personified the accommodation approach of African American leadership. The findings support the literature's viewpoint indicating that he withdrew from the community and its problems. Matthew Perry, a South Carolina State law graduate, indicated that Turner

> …had no input at all into civil rights concerns. He was a man completely removed (from) race. He and his family, of course, lived a very guarded existence. On campus, he utilized the campus police to form a security cordon around him and around the presidential home. Reportedly, when he would get in his automobile
to drive to the president’s office …and when (he) would get ready to go from the president’s office down to his residence for lunch, he required a police escort. (Matthew Perry, William C. Hine Oral History, June 19, 1995).

The findings show that Turner believed in equality, but he chose to withdraw from the black community and work within the system because he did not want South Carolina State College to close, or its students to be shut out (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). During the episodes of student unrest in his tenure, the discourse among the Board of Trustees was to either maintain law and order or simply close the institution (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Turner’s son indicated that his father viewed the threat to close the school as a mortal blow. A lot of his students came from poor families who made a sacrifice to send their sons to college. If the school was closed, many would not come back. (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, August 29, 2009).

Similar to Turner’s father, who sent him to Phillips Academy and Harvard at some financial sacrifice, many African American families of State College students sent their children to school at some financial sacrifice. Turner’s educational indoctrination was that education was the key to material gain or racial uplift. The closure of State College during this time would be devastating because many students would not have much other higher educational opportunities in the state of South Carolina. Hence, Turner chose to be an accommodationist to appease the Board of Trustees.

Although he was viewed as a strict authoritarian leader, there was reason behind his stereotypical leadership style. He wanted to preserve and improve the existing conditions of the institution. Turner had the best interest of his students and faculty in
mind, but at the same time he would not tolerate any opposing views that would put him or the institution in a position to fail (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Gasman (2006) emphasizes the idea that African American college presidents at HBCUs during the civil rights era agreed with the notion of universal human rights, but that they were unable or not in a position to challenge it. President Reddix of Jackson State College in Jackson, Mississippi and Rufus Atwood of Kentucky State College were in positions where they could not challenge the racial status quo. While they believed in civil rights, the nature of their position forced them to expel students and dismiss faculty members for the greater good of the institution (Williamson, 2008; Smith, 1994). This situation was also evident with many African American leaders within the domestic context of the Cold War, when the white power structure labeled them (those who chose to address the racial status quo) as being communist or outside agitators, which forced them to be compliant with the racial status quo (Anderson, 2000). Turner needs to be examined within the context of Gasman’s (2006) perception of African American college presidents. Any African American college president in Turner’s situation would have administered as an accommodative leader during that time. The following quotations affirm this view.

When asked how South Carolina State College would have been different if Turner were not the president, South Carolina State College alumnus and now trustee Dr. John H. Corbitt said the following:

…it’s hard to have imagined somebody with a different mentality other than Turner being president during that era. Whoever was president had to answer to a white trustee board, a racist legislature, and a racist governor. (John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008).
Photographer Cecil Williams, when asked the same question, said:

And if he had been replaced by someone, then that replacement, in order to become employed, would have the same decisions facing him. If he supported, say, an overthrow of segregation, and they defied local, state, at the local government and law enforcement and so forth, then he would probably…would have been fired. (Cecil Williams, personal communication, July 17, 2008).

Claflin University’s president Dr. Henry N. Tisdale said the following when asked the same question:

I believe what he did was in the best interest of South Carolina State University…that he did what he thought kept the institution moving forward and strong. And I believe that if you would have asked him, he would say, “I did it because I thought it was the right thing to do.”…Whatever position he took, he probably did it because “I thought it was the right thing to do for South Carolina State University at that time.” Yes, people can criticize and have other opinions, but you have to be standing in the man’s shoes and you have to believe, as I believe, that he did what he thought was in the best interest of that institution. (Henry Tisdale, personal communication, August 1, 2008).

These commentaries from a current university trustee member, former student, and current college president reflect Turner’s dilemmas of choosing between the material gain versus the symbolic gain. They all conclude that because of the context of time, the material gain for Turner was more important than the symbolic gain. Moreover, it also reflects the dilemmas that not only Turner had to go through, but also his contemporaries who were presidents of public institutions.

In contrast to HBCU presidents at public schools who were accommodative, their counterparts at private institutions had more room to critique the racial status quo or protest (Williamson, 2008; Gasman & Gilpin, 2003; Carson, 1997; Manley, 1995; Mays, 1987). Henry Tisdale placed this situation in proper context when he compared Claflin University’s president, H. V. Manning, to Turner:
They were in different places. Okay? Even though geographically the two institutions were right next to each other, they were in different places in terms of their philosophies, the environment, the history of the two institutions. A difference would be this: President Manning could stand on the history, the philosophy, the church…although President Manning could not get out on the street and demonstrate, no he could not do that, he could not march, he couldn’t do those things. Those things would have been going over the top. Okay. But he could certainly give his blessings to his students to go out and demonstrate. (Henry Tisdale, personal communication, August 1, 2008).

Turner, however, was limited in what he could do. While Claflin relied on private donors, State College’s funding was primarily from the state legislature. Therefore, Turner had to remain silent on social issues. Tisdale compared Turner to Delaware State University’s Luna I. Mishoe, who privately supported the students with regards to civil rights, but who was smart enough to distance himself so that he was able to lobby successfully for more funding for his institution (Henry Tisdale, personal communication, August 1, 2008). While this aspect of Gasman’s perception is acknowledged, this aspect is not strongly emphasized in the literature with regards to Turner (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1997).

The concepts of African American leadership are just as complex as leadership in general. The findings in this section are absent in the literature. Turner was socialized to display a protest attitude as a member of the African American elite, but was in a position, as president of State College, to play a more accommodative role. Turner, although appearing to be an accommodative leader, truly believed in equality for African Americans but chose to work within the system to bring positive change and new opportunities to South Carolina State College. As briefly indicated in chapter 4, Turner as a child was influenced by the work of his father, with whom he had helped establish an
African American ward at the all-White hospital in Columbus, Georgia. Turner would later follow suit and established a fully stocked infirmary at State College because he knew how his students would be treated at the local hospital. Moreover, Turner also established an all-black campus police force because, again, growing up in the segregated South and aware that local law enforcement would not treat African American justly, Turner sought to protect his students and faculty (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September, 8, 2008). Although both of these issues meant continued segregation, it was a material gain (from which students and faculty benefited and were protected). Moreover, it meant gainful employment for those who worked in these positions. African American leadership style is one way to understand Turner’s leadership; however, there are other theories that must be examined. The next theme pertaining to Turner’s leadership style is academic leadership.

Academic Leadership

Turner’s leadership style reflects the qualities of an academic leader. Aside from being an African American college president at a state-supported institution in the South during the civil rights era, Turner was a college president whose role was not structural or civil change. He had to answer to and please multiple power structures: The Board of Trustees, the Governor of South Carolina (specifically J. Strom Thurmond, 1947-1951; James F. Byrnes, 1951-1955; and George Bell Timmerman, 1955-1959) who served ex officio on the Board of Trustees, and a pro-segregationist South Carolina state legislature, which appropriated funding annually to South Carolina State College. Figure 13 illustrates the organizational power structure.
While Turner’s administration is most remembered for a series of student unrest incidents, the findings present a different picture. In all, it was business as usual at South Carolina State College for Turner and the Board of Trustees.

**Business as Usual**

Turner’s administration at State College has to be placed in proper perspective. The literature and popular opinion have defined his legacy based on his dealings with student unrest (Fairclough, 2007; Hine, 1996). However, South Carolina State College’s Board of Trustee minutes offer a different perspective. During his seventeen-year tenure, the majority of the content recorded on these minutes reflected the business at hand for the school. This record consisted primarily of budgetary issues: bids from construction companies to build new buildings for the campus, and the constant improvement of the
curriculum (South Carolina State College Board of Trustee Minutes, 1950-1967). Appendix M shows an example.

The literature concentrates primarily on social history rather than on the performance of a gifted fiscal administrator (Grose, 2006; Baker, 2006; Lau, 2006; Hine, 1996). Instead, the current thread is more of a social history, which examines how the presidents led in the historical context of the time. The findings prove that the examination of documents such as the governing boards is essential to understanding Turner and his leadership style from a much broader perspective.

More Thoughtful than Spontaneous

According Fisher, Tack, and Wheeler (1988), a quality that makes college presidents effective is for him or her to be more thoughtful than spontaneous. Throughout his tenure at as president, Turner sought to leave the college in a better shape than he found it. Turner’s children recall the physical plant being in a state of disrepair and rats in several dormitories (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Turner’s son specifically recalls the condition of the physical plant when they first moved to Orangeburg in 1947:

It was just poor. I remember the house we lived in. You know, it’s just an old – it’s right next to the president’s residence basically, just around the corner, but it was an old ramshackle. You know, it had a coal bin in the yard, a coal stove where we got our heat and cooking, that kind of thing. The dormitories had rats and things like that…We didn’t have indoor plumbing in the school…Some places on the campus had latrines… For example… the football field stadium, what they had was a latrine. It was wooden with seats, holes cut in the seats and then under that just a hole, reeking of course. (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).
Turner made it a priority to improve the conditions on the campus. In spring of 1959, for example, he presented to the faculty a report on the physical needs of the college. He began with presenting the history of the physical plant up to the present and laid the ground work of what he hoped to accomplish for the greater good of the college in the future (Faculty Study Commission, April 6, 1959). Turner wanted his faculty and staff on board and wanted them to support a complete upgrade of the campus to accommodate a growing student population (as well as to make South Carolina State College a premier institution of higher education for African Americans in South Carolina). By the end of his tenure, the value of the physical plant had increased from $2,710,000 to $16,000,000 (Potts, 1978). According to Fisher, Tack, and Wheeler (1988), the legacies of college presidents are measured based on what they accomplished while they were in office. Given these issues, Turner’s legacy as an effective president and academic leader must be taken into consideration.

Transformational Leadership

Turner exhibited qualities of a transformational leader. He exhibits characteristics of multiple leadership styles overlapping into the characteristics of a transformational leader. Burns (1978) describes transformational leadership as the driving force of leadership in which “one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). However, Burns’ (1978) notion of transformational leadership fits within the context of social movements, as opposed to corporate or government models. Burns (2003) later applied the notion of transformational leadership within the context of transactional
leadership structures. Hence, it possible for leaders who are in transactional settings to exhibit qualities of a transformational leader. This aspect also reflects the concept of the spectrum of leadership styles which a leader considers all multiple forms of leadership styles to be successful in his or her position as opposed to one (Lippitt, 2002). Turner’s daughter provided an example of her father exhibiting characteristics of a transformational leader: Turner sought to raise the motivation and morality of his study workers. She stated,

In the early days of his presidency, the school switchboard was in Dad’s office and my father found a student worker being curt and rather rude to parents who had called the school. My father called her into his office and gave her what must have been for her a very unpleasant talking to. Later, wanting my brother and me to also understand the need for courtesy in business and life, he told us about this. I can remember telling him he should not have talked to the student in the way he told us about. He replied that he did not want S. C. State to be a frightening place for students’ parents, many of whom, he said, were the least powerful people anyone at State would probably ever encounter. This particular student kept on working on the switchboard and ended up not only doing a great job, but after she graduated, she went on to do very well, working for a business in a northern city. There was no need for my defense of her. She was a lot wiser than I was because she took my Dad’s criticism and made smart use of it. On a visit back to South Carolina as an alumnus, she came to see my father and thanked him for helping her learn about conducting herself in a business-like manner. (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008).

Turner was aware of the power structure of South Carolina and how African Americans were the least to benefit in this structure. In the case of the young lady who worked for the switchboard, Turner saw it would be detrimental for her to develop a habit of speaking to people in such a curt manner. Therefore, he used education (in this case a lesson on business etiquette) as a wedge to break open the door to opportunity. In this case, this student would later benefit or obtain a material gain (she was subsequently
successful in her career endeavors once she graduated from South Carolina State College).

Transformational leadership not only influenced the morale of the organization, but also the structure. According to Hickman (1998), “Transformational leadership is expected to contribute to an organization’s effort to improve its operations and the best use of its human resources” (p. 138). This definition reflects the notion of Turner’s transformational leadership exercised at State College.

It is clear that South Carolina State College had improved significantly when Turner retired in 1967 (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Potts, 1978). However, theoretically, he is still remembered as a transactional, authoritarian leader. Turner’s ability to function as an African American leader and an academic leader allowed him to exhibit qualities of a transformational leader. In the previous chapter, this study has shown that as president of a HBCU, he used the Brown decision to lobby the State of South Carolina for more money. Turner purposely did this as he was angered that the state of South Carolina made no provisions to desegregate its schools. The state legislature appropriated State College more money in return for Turner’s silence. However, Turner used this collaboration as a strategy to get more money for his respective institution (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Turner’s son recalls that his father provided an analogy for the situation in which he saw himself as the vampire and the state legislature as the victims (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). In essence, Turner used to current socio-political structure of segregation to seek equality for the students and faculty at State College.
While Turner may not have intended to be a hero, he wanted the best for his students. John H. Corbitt indicated that although Turner has been long remembered as a tyrant, Corbitt felt that Turner “had the school at heart and that he was good for the school. In that context he was good for the school” (John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008).

As an academic leader, the findings show that Turner was a long-term planner who was able to produce positive results (Board of Trustee Minutes, 1950-1967). His plan included new buildings, more faculty members with terminal degrees, and full accreditation (2-23) with the Southern Association for Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1960 (Potts, 1978; Turner correspondence to Mays, August 29, 1967). Moreover, the findings indicate that his transformational leadership styles were a result of him wanting to complete his father’s work. Like his father, Turner believed in Black self-help, a situation in which the community works together for the greater good (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Summary

Above all, Turner was a transactional leader who administered with a top-down approach. However, Turner was more than a transactional leader. He exhibited multidimensional leadership qualities of an African American, academic, and transformational leader. The literature of leadership suggests that the topic is so broad that it can difficult to define and that categories of leadership are not mutually exclusive; rather leadership is a spectrum (Burns, 1978; Burns, 2003; Lippitt, 2002). In effect, leadership theories are not clear cut, but they can also interrelate so that one’s leadership
style can be described from a multidimensional paradigm. The findings also show that Turner’s presidency can be understood outside the literature of the travails of African American college presidents.
CHAPTER EIGHT: TURNER’S LIFE AFTER SOUTH CAROLINA STATE COLLEGE AND HIS LEGACY

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research data relating to research question five, which asks, “How has Benner Creswell Turner’s legacy been shaped by ideological and scholarly paradigms?” Turner’s legacy has been heavily influenced by the ideological and scholarly paradigms of how African American college presidents at HBCUs have been perceived. The following themes emerged from the data were used in this chapter: *I Am On My Way Out and Not Looking Back, Worst Fears Have Come True, A New Beginning, Death in Obscurity,* and *Resurrecting Turner’s Legacy.* This chapter will answer this research question by chronicling his life after his retirement as president of State College since 1967.

“I am On My Way Out and Not Looking Back”

The findings in this section discuss Turner’s whereabouts since his retirement from State College in 1967. Although he was bitter, the findings show he wanted nothing but the best for the institution. Moreover, he also wanted to set the record straight. He confided in his friend and fellow colleague President Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College and shared his frustrations (Turner correspondence to Mays, August 29, 1967). The 1966-1967 academic year was Turner’s last. Unfortunately, the circumstances that led to his retirement were not pleasant: he was forced to retire by Governor Robert McNair because of continued student unrest and a two-week class boycott, which was popularly known as The Cause (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Nelson & Bass, 1970). Similar
to the situation of the student unrest incidents in 1955-1956, 1960, and 1963, Turner was met with a hostile student body during the 1966-1967 academic year as a result of the dismissal of three popular white faculty members, two of whom were Woodrow Wilson Fellows (notably included Dr. Thomas Wirth) and three students (Joseph Hammond, John Stroman, and Benjamin Bryant). Dr. Wirth was disturbed by student body’s lack of awareness of issues with regards to issues of civil rights as well as the administration’s forbiddance of organization a chapter of the NACCP. In fact, Wirth and a group of like-minded students drove to Atlanta, Georgia on a weekend to visit the national office of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), which at that time had abandoned its agenda of integration and adopted the philosophy of Black Power (Nelson & Bass, 1970). Turner subsequently reprimanded Wirth as well as the two other white faculty members by not renewing their contracts. Students organized a protest in front of Turner’s home. As a result, the ringleaders, Hammond, Stroman, and Bryant, were suspended by Turner for three years (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996). As a result, students staged a class boycott that lasted for ten days. While the boycott was a result of the dismissal of the faculty and students, students connected the oppressive segregation system outside of campus to college rules and guidelines set by the administration. Ike Williams explains:

I think the triggering thing was there were some concerns being raised by students about some of the restrictions the administration put on the students, and you saw these in the Guidelines. They included a list of concerns raised by the students. They were basically things like dormitory hours, vespers, representation, cafeteria concerns – basic, routine things that most students on the campus had time - you had to be in the dormitory at a certain time. There were certain mandatory requirements for class attendance. It was rigid—mandatory vespers and lyceum features for freshmen and sophomore students. And we were a
generation of young people who felt like were a little freer to make our own decisions (Ike Williams, William C. Hine Oral History Interview, June 21, 1995, p. 1).

Consequently, this student unrest was a public relations nightmare for Turner. Because this class boycott could have lead a riot in the Orangeburg community, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) were sent to State College’s campus to maintain order (Grose, 2006). Turner thought that the reputation of the college would suffer as a result of these incidents. In a March, 8 1967, article in The Times and Democrat, Turner indicated that “the reputation and academic work of the college would suffer as a result of the ‘student resistance to administration authority’” (College President Feels Reputation Will Suffer, The Times and Democrat, March 8, 1967). Turner pleaded with students to cease the boycott and return to class. He was given the authority to suspend the operation of the college if necessary. However, the majority of the student body continued with their boycott and even proposed to stage a mass protest at the South Carolina Statehouse in Columbia (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996).

As the literature indicates, Governor McNair met with senior class president Ike Williams and the presidents from each respective class, listened to their complaints, assured amnesty for the dismissed students, and promised them a change in the administration at State College (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996). Concessions were granted to the majority of the student body who boycotted class. These included no midterm exams administered that semester and class attendance not required for sophomores, juniors, and seniors who held a minimum grade point average that would be determined by a faculty
committee and the class presidents. Moreover, the offer to readmit the three students was withdrawn by the Board of Trustees, because the three filed a suit in U.S. District Court in Columbia, South Carolina (“Concessions Are Granted To Students,” *The Times and Democrat*, March 11, 1967). Relieved that the college was returning to a state of normalcy, Turner released a statement to *The Times and Democrat*: “It is my belief that a fair and equitable settlement has been reached….It is now our hope to quickly resume the usual routine of our college and also to resume our academic progress” (“Concessions Are Granted To Students,” *The Times and Democrat*, March 11, 1967). Despite the end of the boycott, Turner was met with continued hostility that pushed him to submit a request for early retirement. It did not help that a federal judge in Columbia overturned the dismissals of the three students a week after the boycott ended—but also, students, faculty, and members of the community were demanding his resignation. At a special Board of Trustees meeting on March 22, 1967, the minutes stated,

…some efforts were being made by various groups and/or individuals to bring about the termination of this employment as the President of the college. In particular, he cited and submitted a copy of a speech to be made on a Columbia radio station by a Columbia citizen. Dr. Turner stated that he was prepared to submit his request for retirement as October 31, 1967. By unanimous action, the Board refused to consider a request for retirement by Dr. Turner. (Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina State College, March 22, 1967).

While the Board of Trustees did not accept his resignation at that meeting, Governor McNair and Turner privately negotiated a deal for Turner to retire at the end of the academic year (Gorse, 2006).

On May 10, 1967, Turner’s resignation as president of South Carolina State College was accepted by the Board of Trustees at their quarterly meeting effective
November 1 (Board of Trustees Minutes, May 10, 1967). According to The Times and Democrat, Turner stated his reasons for retiring as the following:

My reasons for requesting retirement, in addition to the fact that I am entitled to it, lie in the fact that the influence of non-campus organizations and individuals and their effect on the work of the college, have become so pervasive and continuous that the situation has become difficult for the faculty, administration and student body to carry on the normal routine of the institution. I wish the institution and all of its people a progressive and happy future. (“Dr. Turner Retires From State College,” The Times and Democrat, May 11, 1967)

To add insult to injury, Ike Williams was received with thunderous applause as he crossed the stage to receive his college degree and shake Turner’s hand. Williams explained,

And so the day I graduated was the last day that Benner C. Turner officially presided as President of State College. In fact, when I walked over the stage to get my diploma, there was a loud applause from the crowd, and I had to shake Turner’s hand. It was just ironic that we were leaving at the same time. And it was like a reason d’être. I had already completed whatever mission (there was)…it was like liberation had come to the faculty and staff at State College. (Ike Williams, William C. Hine Oral History, June 21, 1995)

After seventeen years as president of South Carolina State College, Turner ended his tenure as president. He originally wanted to retire in Orangeburg, but he elected to move away as a result of the continuing problems on campus. The night that Turner and his wife left Orangeburg, he visited Geraldine Zimmerman’s mother, Mrs. James Pierce, and indicated that “I’m on my way out, and I’m not going to look back. I’m shaking the dust off of my feet” (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal correspondence, July 10, 2008). Turner, who loved to read and stayed engaged in Latin and Greek classics, wanted to retire to a college town or a small town. Turner and his wife moved to his wife’s family home in Jefferson City, Missouri, temporarily before ultimately moving to Somersworth,
New Hampshire, which became their permanent home (Benner C. Turner, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

Turner and his wife Julia made 710 Lafayette Street, Jefferson City, Missouri, their temporary home after leaving Orangeburg in 1967. During his stay, he remained in communication with three individuals with whom he was close during his presidency. These included the newly appointed acting president of State College and friend Maceo Nance, Mrs. Zimmerman, and Morehouse College’s president Benjamin E. Mays (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008; Benjamin E. Mays Papers; B. C. “Butch” Turner, personal communication, September 8, 2008; E. A. “Turner” Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Disappointed with the matters that led to his retirement and viewing it as a failure to carry on his father’s legacy, Turner confided in Benjamin Mays and showed his frustrations as president and his intentions of wanting the college and its faculty and students to succeed irrespective of how he had been portrayed.

The statement or implication that I had no interest in quality education is really ironical. As a matter of fact there are seventeen closely typed pages of changes made and things done that were all designed to afford the students constantly better educational opportunities. In addition to putting up 50 new buildings, there were such things as producing graduates who became doctorates, increasing faculty doctorates from 2 to 28, increasing the annual state appropriation from $650, on to nearly 3 million, inaugurating entrance examinations – and on and on…But a more disturbing situation is that South Carolina State College is now a political football. The students enjoyed the disturbances they were able to create, but as we both know, they will be the losers in the long run. Quality education requires quality effort from quality students. Only the opportunity can be offered the rest is up to them. (Turner correspondence to Mays, August 29, 1967).
In a series of confidential letters, Mays shared with Turner that he was invited to discuss the future of South Carolina State College with the chairman of the state’s advisory committee on higher education in September of 1967 (Mays Correspondence to Turner, September 7, 1967). At the meeting, Mays urged Governor McNair and chairman of the advisory committee, John Cauthen, to do several things: to make State College’s appropriation from the state legislature comparable to other colleges in the state, to not phase out the institution in the wake of a slow desegregation process in the state, to select an African American as president for the institution, and to continue to strengthen the academic programs without the interference of faculty from the University of South Carolina and Clemson University (Mays correspondence to Turner, October 16, 1967). Fundamentally, the unequal treatment of State college in comparison to its white counterparts was one of the major issues that Turner had to deal with throughout his tenure as president at State College. Rebellious students and faculty compared this issue to the overall treatment of African Americans in the United States, thereby making Turner’s time while president difficult. In essence, there was a lack of an understanding between Turner and his constituency.

Worst Fears Have Come True

The student unrest on the campus got progressively worse during the 1967-1968 academic year. Students pushed to end the now de facto segregation practices of white businesses in downtown Orangeburg. Particularly, the students pushed for the desegregation of the All-Star Bowling Lanes near the campus (Grose, 2006, Sellers, 1973). The series of student protests to desegregate the bowling alley led to the
Orangeburg Massacre. On the night of February 8, 1968, several officers from the South Carolina Highway patrol opened fire on a crowd of students, killing Samuel Hammond, Delano Middleton, and Henry Smith as well as injuring twenty-seven others. Acting President Maceo Nance immediately called Turner to share the news. They both cried over phone (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Turner’s fears of students getting hurt or killed were realized. As previously indicated in chapter 4, Turner, as a child, had witnessed the lynching of an African American youth. He remembered witnessing the youth being brutally slashed while he cried for his mother. He recalled that there was nothing that his father or anyone in the African American community in Columbus, Georgia could do without sharing the same fate as that youth. This incident left a lasting fear with Turner that one of his students could be lynched; Emmitt Till had been lynched in 1955, which served as stirring reminder that African Americans were not safe from the mob.

Although Turner has been remembered as an authoritarian leader who pleaded for moderation from his students during times of unrest, no one has truly understood why. The literature had not revealed Turner’s early childhood and his witnessing a lynching, an event that shaped his administration as president of State College. Within the context of critical race theory, he understood the damaging power of racism and the violence that could come out of it. Consequently, Turner sought to protect his students, and keep them focused on their education, even in though he might be perceived as authoritarian or a “Dr. Bledsoe.”
A New Beginning

In the aftermath of the Orangeburg Massacre, Turner wanted to get away from the college town. Although he and his wife had already intended to move to the New England area, the Orangeburg Massacre quickly hastened their plans. Wanting to be in the New England area close to their children (Elizabeth was living in New Hampshire and Benner, II was attending Harvard), Turner and his wife Julia bought a home in Framingham, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1968. However, they would not stay there for long because of the high property taxes and expenses. Despite having served as president of State College for seventeen years, Turner and his wife did not have much money. It was later determined that Turner not only had a lower salary in comparison to his counterparts at Clemson and the University of South Carolina, but he was also shortchanged by not receiving the presidential privileges such as an expense account and an automobile (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). His son Benner, II explains,

My father did not have that much money. Didn’t have that much saved. He was – I don’t know if my sister told you, but my father as president was supposed to receive I think the same as all the other state college presidents. He did not...there were expense accounts. He was supposed to get a free car, things like that and, you know, it was Maceo Nance who found out during the last years that my father was being shortchanged. (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008)

They immediately sold the home and moved across the state line and purchased a small home in Somersworth, New Hampshire. Turner and his wife lived a very quiet and private life; they rarely traveled but continued to stay in touch with their friends through the years. Geraldine Zimmerman remembers the Turners sending cards and gifts during
the holidays to her mother with no return address (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008).

They joined the First Parish United Church of Christ in 1976. Reverend Marc Rideout, the pastor of the church since 1985, remembered the Turners as “very gracious and hospitable people” (Marc Rideout, personal communication, July 22, 2008). Rideout also recalled Turner as being very personal and possessing depth on social and political issues in the world (Marc Rideout, personal communication, July 22, 2008). A lifelong lover of Greek and Latin classical literature, Turner spent most of this time reading as he had done since his days at Phillips Academy (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). While in retirement, Turner achieved a small victory as a former president of State College when President Nance mailed to him the first published history of South Carolina State College. Within the book was a small note from Nance that read: “We were finally able to complete a project that you initiated” (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Death in Obscurity

Turner died essentially in obscurity, both in reality as well as in history. Because so few of his Orangeburg friends knew of his death, the literature continued to perceive him as an introvert (Baker, 2006; Gorse, 2006; Hine, 1996).

Prior to retiring, Turner was diagnosed with angina, a heart condition that progressively had gotten worse (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). According to his death certificate, he was diagnosed with coronary heart disease ten years before he died (1988) and congested heart failure two years before
his death (Benner C. Turner, The State of New Hampshire Certificate of Death, Department of Health and Human Services). Other than the angina, Turner was relatively healthy and had no other illnesses. His son recalled that he (his son) constantly worried about his condition and thought that he was going to die at any moment. He could only walk short distances before getting tired. He therefore remained a homebody for the rest of his life and he kept to his books. He did, however, go out on leisure drives with his wife on occasions and still drove the same automobile as when he left Orangeburg (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

On January 29, 1988, Turner died at the age of 82 as a result of heart failure at the Wentworth Douglass Hospital in nearby Dover, New Hampshire. While waiting for his wife to get ready for their occasional drive, Turner fell over (likely from a heart attack). Turner’s son explains: “He was sitting there waiting to go out, sort of teasing her about how long she took to get ready and then they were gonna go out…and suddenly, he just fell over” (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Turner’s funeral was held three days later at the Roberge Funeral Home in Somersworth. Reverend Rideout presided over the funeral and remembers that the turnout was very small. He stated that only “immediate family, friends from the church, and neighbors attended the funeral” (Marc Rideout, personal communication, July 22, 2008). No officials or anyone affiliated with South Carolina State attended. Interestingly, Reverend Rideout indicated that he did not know that Turner was a former college president until some time after his death (Marc Rideout, personal communication, July 22, 2008). Turner rarely talked about South Carolina and his obituary stated that he was
“affiliated with the State of South Carolina Department of Education, where he served in an administrative position until his retirement in 1967” (Benner C. Turner obituary, Fosters Daily Democrat, January 30, 1988). Furthermore, his death certificate has him officially recorded as a white man (Benner C. Turner, The State of New Hampshire Certificate of Death, Department of Health and Human Services; see Appendix N).

Geraldine Zimmerman theorized that the coroner who handled Turner’s remains may have assumed that Turner was white given his skin complexion and the demographics of the area (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal communication, July 10, 2008). Turner’s son offered another theory; he thinks that because his mother was so shaken up over her husband’s death, she may not have noticed that her husband was identified as a white man. Her husband’s death, after all, caused her to cite several errors with regards to her husband’s obituary:

And there were two things. She didn’t mention anything with his life really, including about the South Carolina Educational system. She didn’t mention South Carolina State or North Carolina, Georgia or anything and she said that Andover Academy was a truck driving school. (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

When Turner passed away, the South Carolina State College and community was unaware of this death. Turner’s obscurity since his retirement reflects the popular perception and feelings of him throughout his tenure as president of South Carolina State College. In general, many students, faculty, and community members may have thought that he was not the best fit for the institution; that he administered the school more as an authoritarian leader on behalf of the segregationist of South Carolina. Thus, many people wanted him to just disappear. However, the findings for this study have re-evaluated the
ideological and scholarly paradigms that have defined Turner’s legacy and helped to put that legacy in proper perspective. The next section of this chapter will examine his legacy.

Resurrecting Turner’s Legacy

Gasman’s (2007) work *Reading Against the Literature: Black College Presidents’ Perception of Self, 1950-1975* is one of the latest works that sought to debunk the traditional perceptions of African American college president during the civil rights era and post-civil rights era. Her contention is that scholars and historians must resist that notion of examining African American college presidents from a one-dimensional perspective, but instead that they must examine the presidents more thoroughly to understand the complexities of their leadership styles, presidential leadership, personalities, and legacies (Gasman, 2007). While there are studies that have been done on Turner’s tenure as president of South Carolina State College, they do not fully examine his life, his personality, and the complexities of being a president of a state-supported HBCU during the 1950s and 1960s (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; Hine 1992).

History has been extremely critical of Turner; he has been perceived as not having sympathy for the Civil Rights Movement, supporting the racial status quo of the American South, and being an introvert (Fairclough, 2006; Smith, 1994). While one can argue the validity of these accusations, the findings for this study have uncovered different perspectives to counter the ideological and scholarly paradigms that have defined the legacy of Turner. The findings in this section are divided into subthemes:
Hated the Philosophy of Segregation, No Trust in Politicians, Ties to the Community, Turner a White Man? and Turner in Perspective.

*Hated the Philosophy of Segregation*

Despite the perception that Turner supported the racial status quo, expelled students and dismissed faculty members who attempted to organize protests or speak out against the system, he actually hated the philosophy of segregation. It must be re-emphasized that Turner grew up in the segregated South during the early 20th century, witnessed the lynching of an African American youth when he was a child, and was systemically blocked from being admitted to the Georgia Bar when he returned home to Columbus from Philadelphia in 1932. Turner, in effect, had no respect or endearment for his oppressors. His son recalled that his father cringed when walking past the Confederate soldier memorial that was located in downtown Orangeburg. In fact, Turner owned a roll of toilet paper that had the Confederate flag printed on it as a symbol of how he felt about the segregated South (Benner C. Turner, II, personal correspondence, August 29, 2008). Turner not only hated the philosophy of segregation and its symbols, but also privately practiced economic boycotts.

Before the student boycott of 1955 during which State College students refused to eat Sunbeam bread and drink Coca-Cola at the cafeteria, Turner privately practiced an economic boycott of these two products because of his disdain for the distributer, Mayor Jennings, who openly supported segregation. Turner’s son remembered growing up at home only drinking Pepsi, never Coca-Cola (Benner C. Turner, II, personal correspondence, August 29, 2008). His son explained, “We did not think of it as a
boycott. It was just that my father did not believe he had to subject himself to any racial slight… he would not give his business to anyone who did not treat him with respect” (Benner C. Turner, II, personal correspondence, August 29, 2008). Moreover, Turner stayed away from downtown Orangeburg as much as possible, buying only as few items as possible.

No one close to Turner, except his family, knew of his personal economic boycott and personal feelings. Any hint that Turner privately practiced an economic boycott or that he was verbally critical of the racial status quo would suggest that he might also have wished he had endorsed a mass student boycott. But endorsing a boycott would have given the Board of Trustees a reason to fire him. As president of South Carolina State, he had to remain a closet activist and comply with policies set forth by the Board of Trustees, whether he liked the policies or not. The economic boycott of Sunbeam and Coca Cola products, which were served at the South Carolina State College cafeteria, was the first of many battles between Turner and the students. Similar to other college presidents at public HBCUs who sought to gain more funding for the school by remaining silent on social issues, Turner’s behavior was nothing out of the ordinary (Smith, 1994). Similar to his contemporaries, Turner picked his battles, keeping the best interests of the institution as his top priority (Gasman, 2007; Williamson, 2008).

No Trust in Politicians

Turner did not trust politicians, whether African American or White. Although he did vote, he did not want anything to do with politicians during his tenure as president at State College (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008;
Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). This viewpoint is reflected in his report in the Harvard College 25th anniversary class:

Politically, I am not willing to carry any party label. I do believe the country’s population is grouping into camps of conservatives and liberals cutting across present party lines eventually to emerge with an entirely new alignment. My sympathies are with the liberals. (Harvard College Class Report, 1952, p. 1012).

He felt that African American radical groups that advocated mass demonstrations were simply using students as unnecessary martyrs. He believed that South Carolina State College should not be transformed into a political circus—an end that he feared would result in terrible implications for the students and the future of the institution. He believed in the Civil Rights Movement, but he felt that each respective community should fight its own battles. It was the mission for students, he believed, to take advantage of the educational opportunities at State College, to “improve the long-term lot of blacks in South Carolina and beyond” (Benner C. Turner, II, personal correspondence, August 29, 2008).

On the other hand, he did not trust the Board of Trustees, members of the South Carolina State legislature, or the Governor (particularly Strom Thurmond). At the height of the student boycott during the 1955-1956 academic year, the Board of Trustees threatened to close State College for the rest of the year. Disturbed and angered, Turner offered twice to resign as president of State College. After meeting with Turner, Thurmond stormed out of his office, shouting “you goddamn nigger!” (Benner C. Turner II, personal correspondence, September 8, 2008). This attitude of Thurmond’s towards Turner confirmed Turner’s anger towards Thurmond and the White politicians in South
Carolina. Along with his mistrust towards the White politicians and officials, Turner also did not trust the police. He thought it would be a conflict of interest (and even dangerous) for White police officers to come to campus in an event of a campus emergency. Instead, Turner lobbied the state legislature and was able to create a campus police force that employed African American officers. In addition, he also lobbied for funding and was able to create an on-campus medical clinic. In effect, he wanted his students and the campus to be left alone (Benner C. Turner, II, personal correspondence, September 8, 2008).

_Ties to the Community_

The literature, also confirmed by oral histories and some interviews in this study, reflects the perception that Turner was a loner and did not socialize with anyone and did not have friends (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1996; William C. Hine Oral History). However, interviews with Turner’s children show that although Turner was a bit of an introvert, he had a small group of friends (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). During his tenure as president of State College, Turner was particularly close with Mrs. James Pierce, the mother of Geraldine Zimmerman, Maceo Nance, and Benjamin E. Mays.

Mrs. Pierce was one of the first people that Turner had the opportunity to make acquaintance with when he first took the job as the dean of the law school in 1947. When he was selected dean, the Board of Trustees offered him a salary as well as a home on the campus. However, the home was in the process of being renovated and would not be completed for a couple of months. James Pierce was a faculty member at State College
and one of the first students to enroll at the institution in 1896. The Pierces opened their home to Turner while his own home on campus was being renovated (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal correspondence, July 10, 2008; State College Board of Trustees Minutes, July 18, 1947).

Turner and Mrs. Pierce remained good friends through the years. When his mother, who had Alzheimer’s disease, came to live with her son in Orangeburg, Mrs. Pierce often looked after her when Turner and his wife were out of town or occupied with official college events. Moreover Mrs. Pierce’s grandchildren, Geraldine Zimmerman’s sons, were playmates with Turner’s children. Mrs. Zimmerman indicated that she often tutored Turner’s daughter in math (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal correspondence, July 10, 2008). Turner had a close friend in Mrs. Pierce, to whom he entrusted his mother and his children on many occasions. As previously mentioned, when Turner retired and moved to Missouri before moving to New Hampshire, he continued to remain in contact with Mrs. Pierce and sent gifts and cards during the holidays (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal correspondence, July 10, 2008).

Another close friend that Turner had while he was president of State College was colleague and president of Morehouse College, Benjamin E. Mays. Mays, a highly respected figure in higher education, is remembered for serving as the spiritual mentor of Martin Luther King, Jr. An outspoken critic of segregation, Mays was also a State College alumnus, where he earned his high school degree in 1917. Mays was a donor and constant visitor to State College, where he delivered the annual Easter Day keynote address during Turner’s presidency (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication,
September 8, 2008; Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

Although Turner and Mays came from two different worlds, they formed a friendship based on sincere, mutual respect. Turner’s son, who grew to admire Mays, provided a description of Mays as well related a typical conversation that Mays and Turner would have while relaxing at the president’s residence in Orangeburg:

Benny Mayes was a tall, very handsome guy. With this deep voice…but a very fine speaking voice…With grey hair and it just made him look so dignified and he would come to our house and that’s when he would relax…Benny Mays was a very, very close friend to my father. And he and my father would sit back and tell anecdotes and stories to each other… they were teasing each other about how hard each other’s jobs were. (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Mays proved to be a good friend to Turner and was able to provide him with advice and assistance. In 1954, it became very difficult for Turner and his family to take care of his mother while he was working as president of the institution. His wife was busy assisting him with college events, and the children were still fairly young. Turner made the decision to place his mother in a retirement home. He sought Mays out for advice in this letter:

The time has come when it will be necessary for me to place my mother in a home where she can be properly cared for, as her condition is getting worse. I recall hearing Mrs. May speak of a home maintained for the aged there in Atlanta. Since there are not many places available for our people, I am beginning to make inquiries. It has occurred to me that either you or Mrs. Mays might be able to give me the name and addresses of possible places, since you might have information because of your knowledge of the work being done at the home there in Atlanta. I shall deeply appreciate any advice you may be able to give me. (Benner C. Turner correspondence to Benjamin E. Mays, May 26, 1954).
Mays made several recommendations, among which Turner found a suitable place for his mother to stay. In addition, Mays also served as a reference for Turner’s daughter when she applied to a boarding school in New England (Benner C. Turner correspondence to Benjamin E. Mays, March 23, 1956). Benjamin Mays’s friendship with Turner and his family is an important aspect of redefining Turner’s legacy. The literature is silent on his firm friendship with Mays. Their friendship suggests that they shared a common bond, as they each presided over an HBCU during a time of student unrest and social change. While they had appeared to have had philosophical differences, they both, as college presidents, wanted their students to succeed and wished to improve their respective institutions within the socio-political context of the time (Mays, 1987; Benner C. Turner II, personal correspondence, September 8, 2008).

Maceo Nance was another individual with whom Turner was close. Nance, a 1949 graduate of State College, rose fast in the ranks at State College, ultimately serving as the business manager at the institution before succeeding Turner as president in 1967. While Turner was a little bitter that he was forced into retirement, his son indicates that he was thrilled to know that Nance would be his successor (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September, 8, 2008). “He was very, very happy that Maceo Nance took over because my father loved Maceo like another son” (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September, 8, 2008).

When Turner came to campus in 1947 as the dean of the law school and later was selected as president of the college in 1950, he recognized and praised Nance for his
work ethic, which reflects Turner’s philosophy of education (which was academic work ethic):

Maceo Nance when he was a freshman was doing some jobs…lifting boxes and moving some boxes with a bunch of other students and my father saw him… He was by far the more energetic, by far the harder working, more industrious, most industrious of them all. And from that point on, my father had singled out Maceo Nance for every type of promotion he could give him. (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication, September, 8, 2008).

Nance rose through the ranks, serving in smaller capacities at State College before ultimately serving as business manager in the Turner administration. According to Nance, Turner entrusted him with presenting the school’s budget as well helping him lobby the state legislature for funding. Because of this endeavor, Nance was able to network with state legislators and gain experience in fundraising. These tools would serve him well when he later became a college president.

Turner held Nance in high regard and completely trusted him. As mentioned in chapter 5, Turner confided in Nance, telling him how he was selected to be president of State College in 1950 (Maceo Nance, William C. Hine Oral History, March 14, 1989). Their relationship would continue after Turner left Orangeburg in 1967. In the aftermath of the Orangeburg Massacre, it was Nance who immediately contacted Turner to share the tragic news (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008). Moreover, Nance made sure that Turner’s initiative for a published history of the institution was completed (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

The notion that Turner was a bit of introvert can be validated. However, the notion that he did not have any friends is untrue. While he maintained his network of
friends during his childhood and early adulthood, he had cherished friendships that he had made after arriving in Orangeburg, information that debunks the notion that he was friendless. However, Turner’s fair skin and the perception that he wanted to pass for white remains an issue when examining his legacy.

*Turner a White Man?*

Despite the evidence that Turner could have passed as a white man, the findings reveal that he identified himself as an African American. Reid (2008) published a small biography in the *Times and Democrat* about Turner, in which Reid had retrieved Turner’s death certificate, which had marked him as white. He leaves the readers on the note that if that were true, Turner would be the first and only white president of South Carolina State University (Reid, 2008). The perception that Turner was white or tried to pass as white continues to reflect in the ideological and scholarly paradigms that have defined his legacy (Hine, 1996). As Dr. Jackson put it,

> Dr. Turner, you wouldn’t have known he was black unless he told you. Dr. Turner was literally white. I guess he had one-sixty fourth blood in him. But Dr. Turner was white. You wouldn’t have known it; no way you could have know it—from speech, from mannerisms, behavior, everything. (Dr. Franklin Roosevelt Jackson, William C. Hine Oral History Interview, July 20, 1990).

Based on Turner’s photos, an excerpt from a letter of recommendation from an official of Phillips Academy to Harvard University, personal accounts, literature, and even his death certificate, he could have passed as white. There are several accounts that have made accusations that Turner tried to pass as white. Based on the findings of this study, along with supporting secondary literature, this accusation is untrue. In *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*, Graham (2000) examines “The Rules of Passing” in
which he offers several tips for light-skinned African Americans who want to pass. Two being the following:

1. Avoid applying for high-profile positions or admission into selective clubs or lineage-obsessed institutions like secret societies or prestigious co-op boards, so that you will not be subjected to probing questions and searches.
2. Avoid sitting with or being photographed with black people, because if they have any vaguely black features, those characteristics will be exaggerated and suddenly make you seem quite similar to real blacks standing near you. The similarities will quickly become obvious to all (Graham, 2008, pp. 381-382).

Considering these two tips, if Turner had actually tried to pass as white, he would have been easily identified as he presided over a predominately African American college where he was frequently photographed with students and faculty members. Also Turner was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity (initiated in 1947 upon arriving in Orangeburg), the first African American college Greek-lettered fraternity in the United States. These affiliations clearly establish his identity. Hence, the notion of Turner trying to pass of as white is unfounded.

Turner’s experiences during his childhood and throughout his adult life confirmed his African American identity, through the good times and bad. Turner grew up in an insulated black community in the segregated South where his father made a commitment to fight for better medical services for African Americans. His father’s prominence in the community allowed him the advantages of interacting with other prominent African American families, officials, and working-class African Americans in the community (B. C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). However, there were implications for Turner as an African American during the early twentieth century. As previously mentioned, Turner witnessed a lynching of an African American youth when
was a child, was insulted by a hostile student from the South in the dormitories at Phillips Academy, was denied the opportunity to gain admission into the Georgia bar because of his race, and was at one time taunted by an official when voting (Benner C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Turner’s experiences in life reflect the life of an African American.

Turner’s daughter remembered White people in Orangeburg staring oddly at her and her family as students and faculty from State College would stop and greet them while they were shopping in downtown Orangeburg. Many whites in Orangeburg mistook the Turners for being at least of southern European descent. On one occasion, the Turner family entered a restaurant and sat in the colored section. The waitress asked Turner if he realized that he and his family were in the colored section. Turner replied that they were colored (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, August 11, 2008).

**Figure 14.** The First Family. Outwardly they appeared White, but they were African American and always identified themselves as African American.
There is no doubt that Turner lived his life as an African American. He grew up and identified himself as an African American, society identified him as an African American, and he chose to return to the community where he intended to carry out his father’s work (B. C. Turner II, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Turner’s situation is interesting, but not unique. There were many high-profile African Americans during the twentieth century who, although they could pass as white, chose to identify themselves as African American. Former Morehouse College president Dr. John Hope, who had a fair complexion, was born to an African American woman and a White man during the latter half of the nineteenth century in Augusta, Georgia. While Hope was afforded the opportunity, like Turner, to attend a prestigious boarding school in New England and later Brown University, he presented himself as an African American (Davis, 1998). Former NAACP executive director Walter White, who also was very fair-skinned, with blonde hair and blue eyes, was able to pass for White. He lived his life, however, as an African American and fought for social justice for African Americans. Interestingly, he was able to navigate into the White world when investigating a race riot in Arkansas in 1919 (White, 1995).

**Turner in Another Perspective**

The findings in this section have placed Turner in another perspective. The literature and conventional wisdom has viewed him negatively (Fairclough, 2007; Grose, 2006, Hine 1996; Hine 1992). However, the fact that Turner was an African American college president at a public HBCU during the era of de jure segregation is not strongly
emphasized or placed in its proper historical context. Turner shared many characteristics with his contemporaries; however, their legacies have been placed in proper perspective while Turner’s has continued to be misunderstood (Williamson, 2008; Gasman, 2006; Smith, 1994). The findings have finally shown that Turner, despite the fact that he was an authoritarian leader, overall was an effective president; several alumnus have revisited his legacy. When asked about Turner, Dr. John H. Corbitt stated,

He was a good administrator. I thought the school ran pretty smooth and the school prospered. They had a good football team, good baseball team, and good academic programs. And so I think if you just leave out the Civil Rights controversy, it was a good school. He was a good administrator. (Dr. John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008).

When asked the same question about Turner's leadership, Cecil Williams stated,

Yes. Given the time, and the day, yes. I would say that he did a lot for the school. There were many buildings built…he expanded the educational curriculum a good deal, and he also brought many, many people with a doctorate degree to State College. So yes he did, he did do some good…. (Cecil Williams, personal communication, July 17, 2008).

Furthermore, Dr. Lewis C. Roache, a former biology professor at State College stated,

He was one of the most efficient guys I ever saw. He knew nothing of compassion. He knew nothing of tempering justice with mercy. But everything that crossed his desk he read and he reacted to it. (Dr. Lewis C. Roache, William C. Hine Oral History Interview, August 16, 1990).

Given these commentaries, the leadership and legacy of Turner should be placed in proper context, just as many scholars have revisited the lives and legacies of his contemporaries (Gasman, 2007; Smith, 1994).
Summary

The findings for this section have revealed as outdated those ideological and scholarly paradigms that have shaped Turner’s legacy. The literature on African American college presidents has evolved over time; many presidents were initially viewed only as harsh authoritarian presidents, while a more modern perspective looks at the way in which they administered in a complex system. The findings also examine Turner’s whereabouts after his departure from Orangeburg in 1967. It revealed that although he was bitter over the matter that caused him to retire from State College, that he wanted nothing but the best for the institution. Turner has continued to be viewed in the older paradigm, which likewise validates the literature and the perceptions of him. However, this study has used a new paradigm, which shows Turner in another light. This new paradigm is called the post-“Dr. Bledsoe” paradigm, which suggests that African American college presidents at HBCUs were multidimensional when it came to their decision making. Research now shows that their leadership styles were a spectrum as opposed to just authoritarian (like Dr. Bledsoe), which has long been the erroneous perception.
CHAPTER NINE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter summarizes the study, offers conclusions, and provides suggestions for further research. The first section of this chapter briefly reviews Chapters 1 to 3. Next, there is a summary of the major findings to each research question, followed by the implications of those findings. Finally, there are recommendations for further study, followed by conclusions.

Study Summary

Chapter 1 outlined the topic, purpose, research questions, and significance of this study. The purpose of this study was to examine Benner Turner’s life and legacy as president of State College from 1950 to 1967. The literature on African American college presidents of HBCUs has historically painted them as authoritarian leaders who administered primarily out of self-interest. However, recent literature has placed the lives, administrations, and legacies of African American college presidents at HBCUs in a different perspective (Gasman, 2007). Because Turner had not previously been fully studied in this way, I sought to examine his life, administration, and legacy by answering the following research questions:

1. What were some early influences that shaped him?
2. What was his career path?
3. In the wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling barring segregation in education, what was his strategic goal?
4. What leadership theories explain his leadership style?
5. How has Turner’s legacy been shaped by ideological and scholarly paradigms?

This study’s significance in the field is to provide a new insight to researchers in African American education, particularly those who examine African American college presidents at HBCUs or of African American leadership. Those college presidents have been, historically, placed in the margins. The literature continues—without all the facts—to represent Turner solely as an authoritarian (Fairclough, 2007; Smith, 1994). In addition to this study being an aid to researchers, I hope that this study is of benefit to the Orangeburg and South Carolina State University. Given that Turner is remembered negatively by history, this study will allow people in the area to take another look at his life in full. This study could assist in allowing people to place his life, administration, and legacy into proper perspective and allowing them to see that he was much like his contemporaries.

Chapter 2 reviewed several topics in the literature related to this study. It introduced the theoretical framework. The first section addressed significant literature with regards to the history of African Americans’ higher education. The second section examined the literature related to African American college presidents of HBCUs from the early twentieth century to 1970. The third section reviewed several concepts of leadership: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, African American leadership, and academic leadership. The final section introduced the study’s theoretical framework of critical race theory).

Chapter 3 presented the research methodology and procedures for the study’s data collection. This qualitative research project used the method of biographical (life history)
case study. In this regard, I collected historical documents from various archives and libraries; I conducted semi-structured interviews with eleven participants. After I analyzed the data through the theory of critical race theory, I organized the findings into themes under each respective research question. The next section summarizes, per chapter, the major findings.

Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of this study are summarized under the specific research questions.

Research Question 1

The first thing I wanted to know was, what were some early influences that shaped him? This question yielded the following themes: Like Father Like Son, Living in Privilege and Inferiority, Academic Work Ethic, and School Ties. The major findings to Question 1 are summarized as follows.

Like Father Like Son

Turner’s father, Dr. Edwin J. Turner, was one of the most influential person in his life. His father, a pharmacist and medical doctor, was one of the few African Americans in this line of work in the state of Georgia in the early twentieth century. While the father, Edwin Turner, pushed for social change for African Americans in many arenas, from a critical race theoretical perspective he can be seen as advocating for acquiring material gain; for an example, he was in favor of establishing an emergency medical ward for African Americans (as opposed to having no facilities at all). The son, Benner Turner, would apply this same ideology of material gain as president of State College.
Living in Privilege and Inferiority

Turner grew up in privilege. As his children indicate, he was raised in a social network of other upper-class African Americans. However, as the literature illustrates, African Americans who were from privilege experienced racial discrimination, just like their working-class counterparts. Turner attended segregated schools. Turner’s children relate a horrific story that as a child, Turner witnessed the lynching of an African American youth (who was close in age to Turner). Turner became fearful that violence could happen to him. Later in his career as a school administrator he was fearful that violence could happen to a student. Yes, he did disapprove of students participating in the Civil Rights movement. But his disapproval does not necessarily reflect that he was against the struggle for human rights. Rather, one can conclude that he was afraid that something violent was going to happen to one or many of his students, a fear that materialized in 1968 with police shootings.

Academic Work Ethic

Turner had a philosophy of education called “academic work ethic” (which was examined in Chapter 8). You can see this philosophy emerging from his own excellent academic record throughout his years in school. We know from the research that this work ethic traces back to his student years in Columbus City Schools, Phillips Academy, Harvard College, and Law School. So although there is not much known about his early life, we do know his educational record, which says a lot about his studious nature.

School Ties
Turner’s privileged background allowed him to live in a small network of friends who represented the African American upper crust. The findings show that Turner maintained relationships with people he met at Harvard. One friend in particular was future Nobel Peace Prize winner Ralph Bunche. At the time, Bunche suggested that that class would supplant race in the future in America; and that without sufficient education, large numbers of African Americans would be left behind in the poorest class (Elizabeth Turner Klimas, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Turner agreed with that notion. This ideology influenced Turner later as president of State College; the idea was probably behind his push for material gain (to get as much funding as possible, to make State College into a strong state-supported institution for African Americans).

Research Question 2

Second, I wanted to follow his career path. The findings yielded the following themes: Completing His Father’s Work, A Dream Deferred, and Redefining His Father’s Work. The major findings are summarized as follows.

Completing His Father’s Work

The findings show that E. J. Turner intended for his son to become an attorney and ultimately to establish a law practice in Columbus, Georgia. This section of the study chronicled Turner’s first job after graduating from Harvard Law School. He worked as an associate for Raymond Pace Alexander law firm, one of Philadelphia’s top African American law firms at the time. Handling primarily civil rights labor cases, Turner was living his father’s dream. His father had wanted him to become a fighter for
their race by becoming an attorney. This section is significant because it fills a gap in the literature, which does not much examine this part of Turner’s life.

*A Dream Deferred*

So Turner was supposed to work in Philadelphia for a few years before relocating to Georgia. Tragically, Turner’s father became terminally ill and died in 1932. The findings show that Turner returned to Georgia and took the Georgia bar exam. After taking the test, he was told that he did not pass. So his father Edwin Turner’s dream was deferred because his son Benner Turner was unable to pass the bar exam. Years later it was discovered that it was actually unknown whether Turner had passed the exam or not, because the exam administrator threw away Turner’s exam, knowing that Turner was an African American. Nevertheless, Turner continued to try to take the bar as he worked in the lucrative field of real estate. The findings show that Turner was content and settled down. While he had given up on his father’s dream, new opportunities would soon come his way.

*Redefining His Father’s Work*

One would think that Turner’s ambition of completing his father’s life work was over; but strangely enough, Turner would move on into the field of education in 1942 as a law professor, a move that put him on track to become a dean in 1947, and three years later a college president. This new career move allowed Turner to redefine of his father’s dream: serving the needs of the African American community by offering a strong institution of higher education for them. Prior to my study, there has been no literature that fully examines his career path as a lawyer in Philadelphia in 1930 to a college
president in the segregated South in 1950. My findings were discovered through interviews with the Turner’s children, who related to me that Turner had suffered a severe career setback after he resigned to his position in 1932 to establish a law career in Georgia (after his father’s death). Being told he had not passed the bar, he had to find another career. Hence, one can see how his father’s dream, for the son to fight on behalf of their race, was deferred. Although, it was a setback, the career path reflects this study’s theoretical framework. It was institutional racism that did not allow him to succeed in law, to move into education, which he viewed as a material gain (allowing him to train future lawyers and later future African American college graduates).

Research Question 3

I wanted to be able to answer the following question: In the wake of the Supreme Court’s rulings barring segregation in education, what was his strategic goal? Three themes emerged from this question: Integration was a Moving Target, (Turner’s) Philosophy of Education, and Seeking the Material Gain. The major findings from my research follow.

Integration Was a Moving Target

The current literature on Turner, as well as the perception of him throughout the years, has portrayed him in a negative manner (Fairclough, 2007; Smith, 1994). Because he administered State College with an iron fist, appearing to not care about the social issues of the day, it was assumed that Turner supported segregation. However, the findings show that he did believe in equality for African Americans. Rather, he feared that the Supreme Court decision to segregate schools would pose a great danger to the
future of African American education in South Carolina. Like many of his contemporaries, especially those who were from public institutions, he feared that the push to desegregate schools would give the state legislatures an opportunity to close down their respective schools in retaliation. Turner chose to work quietly within the system to ensure the survival of State College as well as to provide the best education for African Americans in the state of South Carolina. This issue is not new in the study of African American colleges during this era; however, the literature does not examine these issues with regards to Turner. This study has filled a gap in the literature.

Philosophy of Education

Turner’s philosophy of education has not been explored in the literature. His children indicated that he believed in the philosophy of “academic work ethic.” To Turner, this phrase meant the combination of academic excellence and the accumulation of life skills that would be beneficial to a person after college. Turner was concerned about the majority of his school’s students, who came from inferior secondary schools in which they were not prepared for college-level work. In that regard, Turner started a communications center to help students in foundation courses such as reading, math, speech, and writing, so that they would be able to do college-level work. He was equally concerned that many students were not exposed to social and cultural activities that could be of benefit to them later in life. As such, Turner established a weekly chapel service, or vespers, which was equivalent to lyceum programs that are on college campuses today. Attendance was mandatory; students were required to dress professionally—men had to wear a coat and tie, and women, a dress. You can see that Turner not only wanted to
expose his students to cultural and social programs, but also to teach students how to
dress for events. Turner would be equally proud of activist students, although he did not
approve of their activism, who participated in civil rights protests in downtown
Orangeburg: They dressed professionally (Benner C. Turner, II, personal communication,
September 8, 2008).

*Seeking the Material Gain*

What was Turner’s strategic goal for State College in the wake of the Supreme
Court barring segregation in education? Turner’s strategic goal personified this study’s
theoretical framework (of critical race theory): material gain versus symbolic gain. In
essence, Turner saw that a strong, segregated public college for African American
students in South Carolina (a material gain) outweighed the benefits of a Supreme Court
decision that was unenforceable at the time (a symbolic gain). In fact, Clemson
University was the first college in South Carolina to desegregate in 1963 (nine years after
the *Brown* decision). Also primary and secondary schools in South Carolina did not fully
desegregate until the late 1960s to early 1970s (Grose, 2006). By this time, Turner had
already retired. The state of South Carolina, before the *Brown* decision, began a
campaign to upgrade its African American primary and secondary schools in South
Carolina as an alternative to desegregation (Baker, 2006; Grose, 2006). Turner took
advantage of this state stance and pushed the state’s legislature to appropriate more
money to State College. With these funds he was able to completely upgrade the campus,
build new buildings, and attract more qualified faculty—hence, improving the standing of
State College by the time he retired (Grose, 2006). Seeking the material gain, at that time, was the better option.

*Research Question 4*

What leadership theories explain his leadership style? That query was the focus of Question 4. The major themes that emerged were the following: Transactional Leadership, African American Leadership, Academic Leadership, and Transformational Leadership. Below are the summaries of the major findings.

*Transactional Leadership*

The findings show that above all, Turner operated in an organizational structure that was transactional; therefore, of course he exhibited qualities that are characteristic of a transactional leader. Like government and business, higher education functioned as a transactional organization, in which leaders operated from a top-down approach (Birnbaum, 2000). Public HBCUs at the time, in particular, were places where the college presidents had to do the bidding of a pro-segregationist governing board. This factor pushed them to become more authoritarian (Williamson, 2008). Turner had the final say on all issues, no matter how minor they were. Moreover, the Board of Trustees gave him the authority to dismiss students and faculty members who openly challenged the racial status quo. Thus, we can view Turner as a transactional leader. But Turner’s leadership style cannot be confined to only the transactional dimension. The data show that Turner possessed other characteristics that influenced his decisions: he was an African American and an academic.
African American Leadership

Turner was an African American college president during the mid-twentieth century. His style was much like other African American leaders of the time. His privileged background and educational credentials placed him in the *Talented Tenth*: the educated, exceptional African Americans who were supposed to be fighting for their race (DuBois, 1995). Like many members of the talented tenth, Turner encountered racial discrimination despite his social and economic standing. Turner, like others of this elite, believed and fought for social justice. Turner’s father, who was a physician, led by example, dedicating his life to serving his fellow African American brethren. Turner was influenced by his father, who fought for better medical accommodations for African Americans in Columbus, Georgia during the early twentieth century. This act of his father’s would later influence Turner, as president of State College, to push for better facilities; specifically, a college infirmary, as well as uniformed African American campus security. Turner felt that he was protecting his students and faculty with these two basic necessities. Moreover, the essence of African American leadership has historically been based on the notion of “accommodation versus protest.” Turner was president of a public HBCU, a position requiring him to walk a tightrope when making decisions, especially when it came to civil rights issues. Although Turner was more accommodative than radical, he had a conscience and truly believed in equality for African Americans.
Academic Leadership

The findings show that Turner also had a leadership style characteristic of academicians. Like all college presidents, he had to answer to a governing board, as well as answer to the state’s governor and the state legislature, because State College was state supported (Fisher & Koch, 1996; Hine, 1996). We know that student unrest and controversy plague Turner’s legacy. But there is another side to the job; the findings (particularly the Board of Trustee minutes) show Turner in a different light. In these documents, he is just a college president, carrying out the daily operations of a large school. Documents show, for example, that while president, he had thoughtfully carried out a plan that significantly improved the physical plant, the quality of faculty, and the quality of the academic programs. His academic style of leadership, although mentioned in the literature, continues to be the marginalized (Grose, 2006; Hine, 1992).

Transformational Leadership

Finally, Turner exhibited qualities of a transformational leader. There is an overlapping of the leadership theories of transactional leadership, African American leadership, and academic leadership. The data show Turner exhibits characteristics of a transformational leader. Turner’s son recalled one instance in which his father corrected a student worker’s decorum after getting complaints that she was rude to incoming callers. That student subsequently straightened up and performed well at her job. Years later, as an alumnus, she returned and thanked Turner for correcting her actions when she was a student worker. That experience taught her professionalism, a lesson that helped her to do well in her line of work.
Research Question 5

The last thing I planned to research was an answer to this question: How has Turner’s legacy been shaped by ideological and scholarly paradigms? This inquiry yielded the following five themes: I Am on my way Out and not Looking Back, Worst Fears Have Come True, A New Beginning, Death in Obscurity, Resurrecting Turner’s Legacy, and Turner in Perspective.

I am on my Way out and not Looking Back

Turner was very bitter due to the circumstances under which he retired. When he left Orangeburg in 1967, he proclaimed, “I’m on my way out, and I’m not going to look back. I’m shaking the dust off of my feet” (Geraldine Zimmerman, personal correspondence, July 10, 2008). When Turner left, he never returned to Orangeburg, remaining in contact only with a few friends on occasion. Turner and his wife retired to her family home in Jefferson City, Missouri (en route to the New England area) in the spring of 1968. With his legacy tainted, Turner justified why he administered the way he did. I discovered, through a personal letter that Turner sent to his friend Benjamin Mays, that Turner was frustrated with the students, faculty, and the community of Orangeburg, who for years were against him, even though he felt that he had administered with the best intentions for State College.

Worst Fears Have Come True

In February 1968, Turner’s fears of students becoming victims of violence had come to fruition. Recalling that he had witnessed an African American youth close to his age being lynched, Turner feared that violence could someday happen to any of his
students. In the tragic event, in 1968, three students were shot and killed, and twenty-seven others were injured, when the South Carolina Highway Patrol opened fire on the students (Bass & Nelson, 1970). This incident became known as the “Orangeburg Massacre.” While scholars have traced the origins of the Orangeburg Massacre to Turner’s authoritarian administration, the present literature does not capture Turner’s feelings in the aftermath of the shootings (Hine, 1996). This study’s research revealed that Turner was very upset about the violence and cried over the phone with his successor, Maceo Nance, who called to break the news.

A New Beginning

This section fill-in the gaps in the literature of Turner’s whereabouts since his retirement from State College. Turner and his wife Julia wanted to move to New England, close to their children. After the Orangeburg Massacre, they wanted to leave Jefferson City, Missouri because they did not want to live near another university (Lincoln University). Once they settled in Somersworth, New Hampshire, Turner lived out the rest of his days quietly in a small town. He continued to indulge in his passion of reading Greek and Latin classical literature and became active in a local church.

Death in Obscurity

Turner died in 1988, essentially in obscurity. His death was obscured in reality because not even one official from State College attended at the funeral; only a small group attended, which included his immediate family, some of his neighbors in Somersworth, and members of the congregation from his church. As I saw through primary documents and interviews with his children, his death was obscured in history.
By accident, he was listed as Caucasian on his death certificate. This error was due to a misunderstanding by the coroner, who assumed that Turner was Caucasian due to his fair skin and the racial demographics of the area. Moreover, the funeral obituary stated, merely, that he was an employee of the State of South Carolina; and further, that he was a graduate of Phillips Academy “Truck Driving School.” This mistake was due to an error of his wife, Julia, who was shaken up over her husband’s death.

Resurrecting Turner’s Legacy

Although Turner has been dead for since 1988, the findings in this section have resurrected his legacy. The ideological and scholarly paradigms that shaped his legacy have been re-evaluated in this study, which portrays Turner in a different paradigm. First, Turner hated the philosophy of segregation. While he worked within the parameters of the white power structure and appeared to have an Uncle Tom persona, at home he was not seen that way. He privately boycotted products such as Coca-Cola (which the students were boycotting in 1956), even though the mayor of Orangeburg owned the local franchise. Turner owned a roll of toilet paper with the Confederate flag. He cringed at the sight of the Confederate soldier’s memorial in downtown Orangeburg. Second, the findings show that Turner did not trust any politician, no matter what color. He did not like Strom Thurmond, in particular. Data show that Turner threaten to resign if the Board of Trustees closed the school in the wake of the 1955–1956 student boycott (Benner C. Turner, personal communication, September 8, 2008). Thurmond, on hearing Turner’s steadfast opinion, called Turner a “goddamn nigger.” As for African American politicians, Turner feared that outsiders were using his students as “unnecessary martyrs.”
Turner wanted students at State College to do their part in the fight for civil rights by doing well in school, graduating, and contributing leadership to their race.

Third, despite the literature’s perception of him as an introvert, with no friends, the findings show that Turner did have close friends. Based on interviews with his son and daughter, Turner particularly maintained close friendships with Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College, Maceo Nance (his successor), and Mrs. James Pierce. Finally, the idea some have that Turner wanted to pass as white is erroneously false. Turner lived his life as an African American. He encountered racial discrimination throughout his childhood and adult life. In fact, he also at times had to insist to white community in Orangeburg that he was an African American, for example when he and his family, on one occasion, went to take a seat in the “colored section” of a local restaurant.

*Turner in Perspective*

The findings show that Turner’s legacy needs to be placed in another perspective. Based on commentaries from former students and faculty, Turner was effective as president (Cecil Williams, personal communication, July 17, 2008; Dr. John H. Corbitt, personal communication, July 5, 2008; Dr Lewis C. Roache, William C. Hine Oran History Interview, August 16, 1990). He was described by one of the participants as a good administrator if one leaves the civil rights controversy out. In one oral history interview, a former faculty member indicated that Turner was one of the most efficient people he had ever met, although he admits that he did not personally like him. Overall, Turner left Orangeburg and lived the rest of his life in obscurity; however, the findings
have helped to re-evaluate many of the ideological and scholarly paradigms and this study does resurrect his legacy in a post-Dr. Bledsoe paradigm.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings, conclusions, and implications of this research, this study recommends the following as areas of further research:

- This study has shown that Dr. E. J. Turner (Turner’s father) was extremely influential in shaping Turner into a man. While this study has provided a sufficient background of Dr. E. J. Turner, there should be a further study on Turner’s father as prominent African American during the early twentieth century, but unknown in history.

- A study of President Benjamin F. Allen (Turner’s father in law) of Lincoln needs to be added to the thread of literature that examines African American college presidents of HBCUs.

- There should be more research on Turner’s contemporaries, studied within the context of leadership theory.

- There should more studies examining Turner’s contemporaries within the context of critical race theory.

- Some findings in this study are based on interviews with Dr. Boykin and Dr. Corbitt. More studies are needed that capture the voices of members of Board of Trustees. In that regard, there should be a serious examination of the historical members of the Board of Trustees at State College during Turner’s administration.
• A study of Turner’s perception of self, versus others’ perception of Turner.
• An exploration of the friendship between Turner and Benjamin E. Mays.

Implications for Study

The section will examine the implications for this study; namely: Social Implications and Theoretical Implications.

Social Implications

The findings in this study have social implications for the community of Orangeburg. In June of 2008, Richard Reid published a series of short biographies covering all the lives of all presidents of South Carolina State University since its founding in 1896 in Orangeburg’s local newspaper, The Times and Democrat. Turner’s biography was met with criticism and hostility as Reid particularly wrote a fair and balanced biography about him. While Reid’s story is journalistic, his article began a new discourse in a community that has long despised and forgotten him, as well as opened a gap in the literature that has not fully explored his life. In that regard, in the academic arena, the literature on Turner that examines his legacy also has negative undertones in comparison to his contemporaries (Fairclough, 2007; Smith, 1994). Moreover, the literature that attempts to examine Turner’s administration is unable to clearly examine it because it is caught up in examining the socio-political issues of the time that overshadowed Turner’s administration (Grose, 2006; Baker, 2006; Lau, 2006; Hine, 1996). This study sought to broaden the study of Turner by examining specifically his administration as well as chronicle the story of his life, a story that is relatively unknown within the academic community.
Theoretical Implications

This study further has theoretical implications with regards to critical race theory. Since its conceptualization over thirty years ago, no one has applied this theory to the travails of African American college presidents at HBCUs during the era of de jure segregation. However, it is quite obvious, according to the literature that presidents of HBCUs were in a dilemma with regards to the Brown decision. Should they go for the material gain or symbolic gain? Or both? This study has shown the importance of applying theory to the study of historical figures. In contrast to much historical research, which tends to be more narrative, this study applies a theoretical framework (critical race theory). Having done so, we can now see new issues about Turner’s legacy, which are the following:

- His presidency and legacy are heavily influenced by his father’s philosophical approaches to education and life.
- The fact that he was willing to engage the power structure in its cold terms speaks to his ability to see beyond the present to the future for students, through education rather than the law.
- Although he was forced out of State College in 1967, he wanted to best for the institution.

Overall, critical race theory (material gain versus symbolic gain) can be applied to instances throughout Turner’s life. Turner was deeply influenced by his father. His father’s influence can be seen when Benner Turner would later, as president of State College, push for more funding to build more buildings, recruit faculty members with
terminal degrees, and raise the academic standards so that State College could be self-
sufficient and compete with its white counterparts.

Conclusion

Life sometimes plays tricks on us. Some people come into our lives who are not really appreciated until they are gone. Enter, Benner C. Turner. Here was a man who grew up in his father’s shadow, in the early twentieth century, in the age of Jim Crow. His father had emerged as one of the most prominent African American doctors in the state of Georgia, a man who placed the well-being of his community on his priority list. Impressed with his father’s concern for the community, Turner wanted to complete his father’s work by practicing law. Although circumstances beyond his control prevented him from practicing law, he realized that he could complete his father’s work by helping to improve the conditions of a historically African American, state-supported institution in the South during the 1950s. Up to this time, the school had been disenfranchised in comparison to the White schools. Throughout his seventeen years as president of South Carolina State College, Turner significantly improved the state of the college by increasing its annual appropriations from the state legislature, erecting new buildings, raising the academic standards, and increasing the number of faculty with doctoral degrees. Yet, these positives came with such negatives; his legacy has been marred by police shootings and student unrest. Not only were people relieved that he had left, but also they did not remember the good things he accomplished for the school. It was evident that he was so scarred by the violence that he lived the rest of his life in obscurity. However, this study uncovered that although Turner has been dead for over
twenty years, and known only within the context of 1968, that we can resurrect his professional and personal achievements of his legacy the positive things about his legacy by examining his early life and the factors that shaped him, within the context of critical race theory as a basis for a underpinning of a qualitative life history of Benner Creswell Turner.
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### APPENDIX A: LISTING OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUS) IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS TERRITORIES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>State</th>
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<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Norfolk State University</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul’s College</td>
<td>Lawrenceville</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Private (Episcopal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia State University</td>
<td>Petersburg</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Union University</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Virginia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluefield State College</td>
<td>Bluefield</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia State College</td>
<td>Institute</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AMA - American Missionary Association
AME – African Methodist Episcopal
CME- Colored Methodist Episcopal
DOC – Disciples of Christ
NDC- Negro Disciples of Christ
UCC-United Church of Christ
7th Day – Seventh Day Adventist
APPENDIX B: S.C. GOVERNOR’S ‘WITCH HUNT’ BACKFIRES ON NEGRO CAMPUS

APPENDIX C: TURNER IN EFFigy

Source: Freedom and Justice: Four Decades of the Civil Rights Struggle as Seen by a Black Photographer in the Deep South, p. 103.
APPENDIX D: STUDENT PROTESTORS WITH AN EFFIGY OF PRESIDENT TURNER (MARCH 1965)

Source: Freedom and Justice: Four Decades of the Civil Rights Struggle As Seen By a Black Photographer in the Deep South, p. 102.
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

Interview Guide for College Presidents

Background Component

1. What is your name?

2. What is your highest educational level?

3. How many years have you worked in higher education?

4. How many years have you presided at your institution?

Information Component

5. What factors would make an effective leader in an academic institution?

6. What factors would make an ineffective leader in an academic institution?

7. Would you describe President Turner as an effective or ineffective leader?

8. Could you please tell me about your experience as a student South Carolina State
   College/ Claflin University during President Turner’s administration?

9. Describe President Turner’s approach to administering State College?

10. What were the campus and Black community’s feelings towards President Turner?

11. In what ways do you think the state of the college and the Orangeburg community
    would have been different if President Turner was not as president of State
    College?

12. Is there anything that you need to talk about I have not mentioned?
Interview Guide for South Carolina State University Alumni

Background Component

1. What is your name?
2. What year did you graduate from South Carolina State University?
3. What student organizations were you involved in as a student at South Carolina State University?
4. What is your highest educational level? From where?
5. What is your current profession?

Information Component

6. Could you please tell me about your experience as a student South Carolina State College during President Turner’s administration?
7. What were the social issues of the day that was a concern for you and the campus community during President Turner’s administration?
8. Describe President Turner’s approach to administering State College.
9. How would you describe President Turner as an effective or ineffective leader?
10. What reasons will you assign for your characterization (in questions 9)?
11. What were the campus and Black community’s feelings towards President Turner?
12. Has your opinion of President Turner changed many years since your time in undergraduate school?
13. In what ways do you think the state of the college and the Orangeburg community would have been different if President Turner not the president of State College?
14. Is there anything that you need to talk about I have not mentioned?
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF ORANGEBURG, SC

Interview Guide for Community Members of Orangeburg, SC

Background Component

1. What is your name?
2. How many years have you lived in the Orangeburg Community?
3. What is your educational background? From where?
4. What is your current profession?

Information Component

5. What were the social issues of the day that were of concern to you and the Orangeburg community during President Turner’s administration?
6. Describe the campus and Black community’s feelings towards President Turner.
7. Describe President Turner’s approach in administering State College and providing institutional outreach to the Orangeburg community?
8. In what ways do you think the state of the college and the Orangeburg community would have been different had Turner not been the president of State College?
9. After 40 years since President Turner’s retirement, has your opinion of him changed?
10. Is there anything that you need to talk about I have not mentioned?
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF TURNER’S FAMILY

Interview Guide for Members of Turner’s Family

Background Component

1. What is your name?

2. What is your profession?

3. What is your educational level?

4. What is your relationship to Benner C. Turner?

Information Component

1. Describe your relationship with President Turner?

2. Did Turner ever talk to you about the issues that he was grappling with at school?

3. Did Turner ever talk about social issues (i.e. Civil Rights, Desegregation in Education) in the comfort of his home?

4. If so what were his concerns?

5. Has Turner ever expressed to you his feelings with regards to issues pertinent to the campus and the Orangeburg community?

6. If so what were these feelings?

7. Is there anything that you need to tell that I have not mentioned?
APPENDIX I: DR. EDWIN J. TURNER'S NEWSPAPER BIO

The above is the likeness of Dr. Edwin J. Turner, the present efficient Grand Medical Register of the Pythians of Georgia, who stands as a Gibraltar in Georgia Pythianism. By his kindly disposition and faithfulness to his duties the Knights have grown to love him. He has always been in harmony with the administration and has contributed his part to the growth of the order. Not a single Grand Lodge officer opposes Dr. Turner, which speaks volumes for his efficiency and devotion to the work assigned him.

The doctor stands high in the medical profession of the state. The Columbus Representatives and Past Chancellors, without the least protest endorsed him for re-election at Thomasville. He has practiced pharmacy and medicine in Columbus for the past ten years and has conducted himself as a physician and pythian. He was elected a delegate at Augusta last May to represent the Georgia State Association of Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists at the National Medical Association, which convenes at Boston, Mass., in August, 1909, which is an evidence of his standing as a physician and a guarantee to the Pythians of Georgia that they have a safe and conservative medical officer at the head of their medical department.

Source: Savannah Tribune July 3, 1909.
APPENDIX J: DR. EDWIN J. TURNER (1928)

Dr. Edwin J. Turner, senior practicing colored physician in Columbus, has been engaged in active practice here for 35 years. Before entering the medical profession as physician and surgeon, Dr. Turner had already been identified with the profession as a registered pharmacist.

Not only the oldest in the profession in Columbus, Dr. Turner is one of the pioneer Negro physicians of the State, and is reputed to have built up the largest practice of any physician in Southwest Georgia. For eighteen years he was Medical Examiner for the order of the Knights of Pythias of the State of Georgia.

Keeping abreast of the modern achievements of the scientific world, Dr. Turner entered the medical school of Harvard University six years ago and completed a post-graduate course with successful honors.

Dr. Turner is president of the Columbus Medical Association; also president of the local association of Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists.

Source: Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library System – Columbus (GA) Public Library
ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT

EXHIBITION

PHILLIPS ACADEMY

ANDOVER, MASS.

JUNE 15, 1923, AT 10 O'CLOCK A. M.
ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH YEAR

THE ANDOVER PRESS
1923
ORDER OF EXERCISES

Music
PRAYER

Cum Laude
Members from the Class of 1923

Initiation service of the Honorary Scholarship Society, Cum Laude, with an address by Frederick S. Jones, LL.D., Dean of Yale College.

JAIUS HURLBUT Searle Allis
FREDERICK Barton Bradeen, JR.
CHARLES Brewster Conwell
RALPH MERRILL Evans
OWEN Richardson Garfield
BYRON DOUGLAS Harris
MALCOLM Stuart McComb
FRANK WATSON Newman
FRED OTIS Newman
ROBERT MOULTROP Mears
SARGENT Stephen Rowe
STUART Nash Scott
JOHN Howard Speer
WALTER Egan Trevvett
BENNER Creswill Turner
ROBERT Wayland-Smith
GORDON Read Weaver
HAROLD ALBERT William West
ORDER OF EXERCISES

HISTORY, ANCIENT —
Edward LeBreton Gray
Walter Egan Trevett
Robert Wayland-Smith
Gordon Road Weaver

LATIN —
Eugene Brainard Graves
Francis Bullard Richards, 2d
Sargent Stephen Rowe

LATIN COMPOSITION —
Benner Crewill Turner

MATHEMATICS, ADVANCED ALGEBRA —
Owen Richardson Garfield
Stuart Nash Scott
Paul Sanford Seward

MATHEMATICS, SOLID GEOMETRY —
Charles Brewster Corwell
John Howard Speer
Donald Penniman Wylie

MATHEMATICS, TRIGONOMETRY —
Frederick Barton Braden, Jr.
John Howard Speer
Donald Penniman Wylie

PHILOSOPHY —
Robert Moulthrop Mears

PHYSICS —
Ralph Merrel Evans
Eugene Fleming McCarthy
Stuart Nash Scott
Walter Egan Trevett

SPANISH —
Stuart Nash Scott

Source: Phillips Academy Archives
Dr. B. C. Turner, President
South Carolina State College
Orangeburg, South Carolina

Dear President Turner:

Mr. Damon G. Thomas, a senior student in the School of Law, is expected to complete all requirements for graduation in May 1966.

Mr. Thomas failed to file for the May 1966 graduation within the October 1 deadline, as stated in the 1965-66 School of Law Announcements.

In order that he may be awarded the Bachelor of Laws degree this spring, it is respectfully requested that Mr. Thomas be permitted to file for the May 1966 graduation.

Sincerely yours,

Leo L. Kerford
Dean

LLK:aml
TH CAROLINA STATE COLLE
ORANGEBURG, S. C.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Leo L. Kerford, Dean
School of Law
South Carolina State College
Orangeburg, South Carolina

Dear Dean Kerford:

Reference is made to yours of February 7, 1966 requesting that Mr. Damon G. Thomas, a senior student in the School of Law, be permitted to file for the May 1966 graduation.

Please be advised of approval.

Sincerely yours,

B. C. Turner
President

BCT:jat

Source: BC Turner Files – South Carolina State University Historical Collection
APPENDIX M: SAMPLE OF MINUTES FROM A TRUSTEE MEETING

Orangeburg, S.C.,
October 6, 1953.

The regular fall meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at the College at eleven o'clock with the following present:

Col. A.H. Hose
Chas. A. Jones
W. McC. Hodge
W.C. Bethes.

The minutes of a regular meeting held April 30, 1953 and a local board held August 27, 1953 were read and approved.

A special meeting was held in the Governor's office on May 27 with all trustees present. A Resolution, copy of which is attached as part of these minutes, was unanimously adopted in lieu of minutes presented by Secretary.

Dr. Turner submitted his report, written copies having been previously sent to all trustees.

For maintenance for 1954-1955, the Board approved a request of one million six hundred seventy-one thousand six hundred sixty-six dollars and seventy-five cents ($1,671,666.75).

For the purchase of land, a new Athletic Field, Sewage Disposal Plant, Steam lines and other needed improvements, the Board approved a request of one million four hundred thousand dollars ($1,400,000).

Due to the narrow front campus, the Board instructed Dr. Turner to move Athletic Field as the space can be used for new construction.

Dr. Turner was instructed to hire competent Sanitary and Sewer Engineers to prepare plans for sewage disposal and water drainage.

Mr. R.S. Lafaye and Mr. Fair appeared before the Board with drawings and plans for various buildings. The board
Dr. Turner reported that the State Board of Health has inspected the College Infirmary. This building is approximately fifty (50) years old. The board felt that it would be poor economy to attempt renovation of the present Infirmary. They instructed Mr. Lafaye to prepare plans for a new Infirmary at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00), these plans to be approved by Dr. Royal and Mr. Smith.

The Architects discussed with the board cost of construction of new Boys Dormitory to house three hundred ninety-six (396) students. They agreed to submit drawings, etc., to the board at an early date.

The Architects were instructed to let bids on three (3) residences to be constructed near new Agricultural Building. Funds will come from approved loan of one million one hundred thirty-five thousand dollars ($1,135,000.00) from State Sinking Fund Commission.

W.C. Betha reported to the board an enormous increase in the work of the office of the Secretary of the Board. He recommended that a Retainer be paid. Mr. Joe A. Moss, Attorney of the Board, of nine hundred dollars ($900.00) per annum. This recommendation was unanimously adopted.

A letter was received from Florella Fordham, former college nurse, requesting one hundred twenty-five dollars ($125.00) for summer salary not paid. The board authorized payment.

Salary scale for 1954-1955 and proposed additions to the staff were approved.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

[Signature]
Secretary,
Board of Trustees.
## APPENDIX N: TURNER’S DEATH CERTIFICATE

The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type or Place of Birth</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Social Security Number</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>Date of Issue</th>
<th>Certificate Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**DECEDENT**

- **Name:** Benner C. Turner
- **Social Security Number:** 247-62-0965
- **Date of Birth:** January 29, 1988
- **Date of Death:** October 30, 1995

**RESIDENCE**

- **Residence City, State:** Dover, N.H.
- **Residence Street and Number:** 24 Lili-Kor Ave

**INFORMATION**

- **Informant Name:** Dr. Edwin J. Turner
- **Informant Address:** 24 Lili-Kor Ave, Somersworth, NH

**DATE OF DEATH**

- **Date of Death:** October 30, 1995

**CAUSE OF DEATH**

- **Immediate Cause:** Congestive Heart Failure
- **Underlying Cause:** Coronary Artery Disease

**Certificate Information**

- **Certificate Number:** 2005-HC-00114
- **Issuing Authority:** Department of Health and Human Services

**Certificate Information**

- **Issuing Authority:** Department of Health and Human Services
- **Certificate Number:** 2005-HC-00114
- **Issuing Authority:** Department of Health and Human Services

Source: Department of Health and Human Services – The State of New Hampshire
APPENDIX O: TURNER WITH STUDENTS