A Phenomenological Case Study: Southeastern Ohio Rural White Teachers' Understanding of Whiteness

A dissertation presented to

the faculty of

The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education and Human Services

of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Nancy L. Russell-Fry

June 2011

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This dissertation titled

A Phenomenological Case Study: Southeastern Ohio Rural White Teachers Understanding of Whiteness

by

NANCY L. RUSSELL-FRY

has been approved for

the Department of Teacher Education

and The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education and Human Services by

________________________________________

Adah Ward Randolph

Professor of Educational Studies

________________________________________

Renée A. Middleton

Dean, The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education and Human Services
Abstract

RUSSELL-FRY, NANCY L., Ph.D., June 2011, Curriculum and Instruction, Cultural Studies

A Phenomenological Case Study: Southeastern Ohio Rural White Teachers Understanding of Whiteness

Director of Dissertation: Adah Ward Randolph

Whiteness is a topic left out of diversity or cultural studies discussions. Catherine Kroll (2009, p. 32), states that “Despite the fact that race has been shown to be a significant factor in the financial, education, and employment spheres, public discussion of this reality remains taboo.” Further, if teachers are White in America, they can exist without ever having to denote their racial difference. “They are the norm against which everyone else is other” (Gollnick and Chinn, 1998, p. 88). This research will contribute to teacher education, curriculum, multicultural education and Whiteness studies through an exploration of Whiteness from the prospective of White rural southeastern Ohio educators.

Additional significance lies in the fact that most teachers in the United States are White, according to the Digest of Educational Statistics 2002, “eighty-four percent of our teachers in public and private schools (excluding pre-kindergarten teachers) were White-non Hispanic in the year 2000” (p. 40). In addition, “U.S. society is becoming increasingly diverse and that diversity is reflected in its classrooms,” says Weinstein (November 2003, p. 266), former classroom teacher and Professor of Education at
Rutgers Graduate School of Education. With a rapidly expanding diverse population of students taught by predominately-White teachers, it is important to explore the positionality of teachers on the topic of Whiteness within the realm of multicultural education, particularly in rural areas. Equally important and possibly of greater concern currently, is that White teachers are responsible for teaching predominately White student populations about race and diversity. Are the teachers equipped for the task? Teachers will need to be prepared to teach all their students effectively, and they should be aware of their race in order to be conscious of how it affects their teaching.

This research is a phenomenological qualitative case study of how White teachers from rural counties in a Midwestern state understand their Whiteness. “For White educators, in particular, this invisibility to one’s own racial being has implications in one’s teaching practice – which includes such things as the choice of curriculum, materials, student expectations, grading procedures and assessment techniques --- just to name a few” (McIntyre, 1997, pp. 14-15).

This research consisted of a review of existing literature, historical perspective of Whiteness, an element of exploration into the ethnic background of White people and new advances on the study of Whiteness were derived from interviews with teachers from rural southeastern Ohio. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations and documents were analyzed. The goal was to ascertain how these educators perceive and understand their Whiteness. Due to the continued isolation of rural communities, it is even more important that White educators be aware of their
Whiteness. They should be concerned with how it impacts not only their own understanding but also their students’ understanding of race.

Approved: ________________________________

Adah Ward Randolph
Professor of Educational Studies
Acknowledgments

Every experience I have had has brought me to become the person I am today. I would like to acknowledge those who lead me to new opportunities and encouraged me to explore my interests. They have aided in providing avenues that have allowed me to attain this plateau in my academic pursuits.

- My dedicated parents; my mother; Mary E. and late father; Earnest L. Russell, whose love has empowered me, taught me the value of creativity, hard work, determination, kindness and generosity. Throughout my life, they have granted me every opportunity to learn and explore all my interests with endless support and encouragement. For them, I am Dr. Nancy L. Russell-Fry.

- My late aunt Harriet A. Darling Wood whose artistic talents, dedication to education and strength to persevere affected who I am today.

- I wish to express my gratitude to my entire doctoral committee for their unique perspectives and contributions to my work: My Chairperson: Dr. Adah Ward Randolph (Research Design, History and Cultural Studies) and Committee Members: Dr. Mariana Dantas (History), Dr. John Hitchcock (Educational Psychology and Research) and Dr. Greg Miller (Fine Arts and Teacher Education).

- I would like to recognize my dear mentors from the University of Rio Grande: Edward Roark for challenging me, encouraging my growth as a performing and
visual artist and above all showing me how a teacher/mentor can truly touch the life and heart of a student, which I attempt to carry on in his honor. I must thank Linda Bauer for providing her angelic gentle inspiration, beautiful personality, enthusiasm for education and continual support over the years. Finally, I want to express my appreciation to Dr. Greg Miller for modeling his zest for and achievements in academic and creative pursuits. As an advocate for higher education and fine arts, he has enriched the lives of masses in the beautiful Appalachian Ohio setting in which we live.

- From Ohio University: I owe my deepest debt of gratitude to my mentor, advisor and friend; Dr. Adah Ward Randolph, professor, researcher, author and amazing woman whose academic and personal accomplishments, along with her ability to teach with passion are inspirational. She has trained me as a qualitative researcher and stretched me as a scholar.

- Dr. Jacqueline Quay, innovative educator, administrator and art advocate.

- My colleagues and friends that have provided me the strength of a mighty Oak, thank you.

- I have a thankful heart for my husband, Douglas Fry, and his family. Doug’s fervor for his musical and business pursuits is undying. This provides motivation, understanding and support to my personal obsession for academics, education, cultural studies and the arts. After all, through him, I have been able to recognize
that with the assets listed in these acknowledgements, I am undoubtedly showing a profit.

- I will give thanks forever to God for the newest addition to my cast of muses, Harold Cassius Fry, my son. Harry has brought untold blessings into my life and renewed my vigor to make an impact upon education systems within the United States. His kind heart, curiosity, eagerness to learn and his very existence will drive me to continue to build bridges between people, cultures and nations of the global society in which he will live.

    God Bless you all for the gifts you have given me. Although I will never be able to repay the debt I owe to you, I will humbly attempt to pass on the traits that I admire so much in each of you.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction of Research

For centuries, people in different parts of the world have been trying to get along with one another, not always with success. A significant portion of the struggle stems from a lack of understanding other races and cultures. Educators, whether they teach elementary, middle, high school or college students, should be aware of the diversity within classrooms. “One of the current concerns plaguing the nation’s schools is how to find teachers who are capable of teaching successfully in diverse classrooms,” says Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001, p. 12). Educators need to take affirmative steps to ensure that racial and cultural diversity and exceptionality are reflected in the curriculum of their classroom. They should facilitate the development of attitudes and values conducive to the preservation and promotion of ethnic and cultural diversity as a positive quality of society (Gay, 2003; Nieto, 2010).

According to Harold Hodgkinson (2001), author of an article entitled, “Educational Demographics: What Teachers Should Know,” within the next twenty years our demographics will change. He contends that about 65% of America’s population will be minority, especially Hispanic and Asian immigrants.

In fact, the 65% increase in diverse populations will be absorbed by only about 230 of our 3,068 counties; California, Texas and Florida will get about three fifths of the increase. Remember that more than half our entire population lives in only nine states – those three, plus New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan...
and New Jersey- yet only California, Texas and Florida are growing so quickly.

(p. 9)

It has been ten years since this publication. Have we altered the practices of educating teachers to meet this demographic challenge, particularly in rural areas? Although Hodgkinson does not seem to think there will be a flood to rural and small town areas, many rural communities are experiencing rapid population increases and rapid ethnic diversification. In 1990, over 30% of students in public schools, some 12 million were from minority groups (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990 as cited in Gollnick and Chinn, 1991). Schools where most students have traditionally spoken English, looked very similar and had similar beliefs, are being introduced to residents with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and even some students who have limited English proficiency. “U.S. society is becoming increasingly diverse and that diversity is reflected in its classrooms,” says Gay (2006, p. 266). Recent increases in immigration, particularly from Latin America and Asia, have led to classes where children come from a wide range of racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In just the ten years between 1990 and 2000, the population of K-12 students learning English as a second language increased significantly. “In 2000, 4.4 million households encompassing 11.9 million people were linguistically isolated. These numbers were significantly higher than in 1990, when 2.9 million households and 7.7 million people lived in those households (U.S. Bureau of the Census, October 2003).
In this research, Ohio was examined, and southeastern Ohio in particular, which has the third largest population of rural students in the nation at nearly 435,000. The percentage of rural students who are minorities in Ohio is 3.9% (Johnson and Strange, 2005). These rural areas have been isolated. However, population and demographic figures from the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census report showed that the state, like much of the nation, has become more racially diverse but remains predominantly White. Ohio’s population consisted of 15% minorities. The diversity within Ohio and even its rural areas will more than likely continue to increase.

As our recent presidential election indicates, things are changing. Based on a review of exit polling and preliminary administrative data by Project Vote, votes cast by Americans of color in 2008 increased by 21% from 2004. Votes cast by Whites in 2008 declined slightly compared to 2004. This was consistent in Ohio as well. However, the total ballots cast actually increased for African American and Hispanic voters. African Americans, in Ohio, cast about 66,000 more votes in 2008 than 2004, an increase of 13%. Ohio Latino voters cast nearly 40,000 more ballots in 2008 than in 2004, an increase of 23%. Although this is one example of a preliminary study, it is clear that non-White Americans cast significantly more ballots in this election than in 2004 (Herman and Minnite, 2008). Educators should be aware of these facts. Voter registration and participation is not a direct correlation to population as they are not required in the United States, unlike some other nations. However, it does indicate the diverse populations that
are active and interested in government policy, which includes education. This could be another sign of a more diverse landscape in our classrooms.

With the potential for increasingly diverse classes and the need to prepare populations of homogeneously White students for integration in a larger and more varied society, teachers will need to be prepared to teach all their students effectively. This begins with understanding their own racial identity. They must be aware of their race in order to be conscious of how it affects their teaching. Without knowledge of their possessive investment in Whiteness in society, policy and curriculum, they will not be able to discern how their daily classroom choices are lacking in properly preparing our students for a diverse society. McIntyre concurs,

For White educators, in particular, this invisibility to one’s own racial being has implications in one’s teaching practice – which includes such things as the choice of curriculum, materials, student expectations, grading procedures and assessment techniques --- just to name a few (1997, pp. 14-15).

Teachers who are not equipped with awareness of institutionalized Whiteness in the United States may feel complacent in the current education setting regarding the content they present. They may feel that the occasional token discussion of Black leaders or mention of diverse holidays and traditions provides a multicultural education. However, this does little to make daily education truly diverse. In addition, although textbooks have been reformed over the years to more culturally inclusive, Christine Sleeter (1993) explains,
Textbooks today may appear to be multicultural, but they are still White and male-dominant and treat other groups in a very fragmented fashion. Often teachers attempt well-meaning lessons and units about other groups, but without realizing it, they replicate distortions or inaccuracies. This happens when we have not studied another group in much depth, nor talked much with members of that group regarding the group's history or experiences. (p.53)

In a study that examined curricular materials in the United Kingdom and the United States, they too contest that materials such as textbooks continue today to not only express the dominant group’s principles, but also help to develop ways of thinking to support their social position (Paraskeva, 2008).

In addition to curriculum and educational materials, a teacher’s behavior and pedagogy are leading contributors in helping students excel regardless of their race, religion, language, gender or other unique characteristics (Wright, Horn and Sanders, 1997). However, the heart of the educational process is in the interaction between teacher and student. “The way the teacher interacts with the student is a major determinant of the quality of education the child receives” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1973, p. 3). Further, according to William L. Sanders, Ph.D. (2004), in “Summary of Conclusions Drawn from Longitudinal Analyses of Student Achievement Data over the Past 22 Years”, differences in teacher effectiveness are the dominant factor affecting student academic progress of students. The teacher’s role is more vital than materials, class size, student demographics or any other factor. If this is true of all
academic areas it is reasonable to presume that in the topic of race, then the teachers’ race is a factor, as is the race of the student, the community and the implicit messages of race embedded in the curriculum? We must look to the teachers to gauge their racial awareness and understanding. This is essential in building a society, which is proficient in developing citizens of a global society.

Most certainly, teacher preparation programs should strive to instill in their students a desire to learn about, appreciate and understand those different from themselves. However, we would not study socioeconomic levels and omit the middle class or examine gender issues and ignore women. Then, we cannot ignore Whiteness as an issue of race in education. Additionally, to become aware of their own tendencies to perpetuate the construction of Whiteness in schools, teachers must develop an understanding of their White racial identity. “Unless one becomes comfortable with confronting one’s own race, as well as that of others, it will be difficult to be effective teachers in communities and schools where members are from racial groups unlike one’s own” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p. 89). Consequently, multicultural education or diversity studies, that include Whiteness studies, are essential in the preparation of teachers for the future, particularly rural teachers..

Universities have incorporated classes in multicultural education or diversity into their education programs based on the diversity standard set in place by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (N.C. A. T. E, 2010). However, the requirements they set forth for diversity courses are minimal. Many teachers may need
additional preparation for the realities of a diverse population of students from various cultures, ethnic groups and races simultaneously interacting in their classroom. The teachers involved in my study not only teach in rural southeastern Ohio but were also prepared to teach at universities within the region. Their degree should prepare them to teach in any school, with any student population. It is essential to examine this preparation. Even if rural southeastern Ohio teachers are not currently faced with diverse classrooms, are they prepared for the growing diversity in our society? Are they prepared, if they move outside this geographic region? Are they preparing their own students for a diverse world? Carol Weinstein (2003) contends that although her student had taken coursework on individual and cultural diversity, she was still somewhat in shock when faced with a classroom composed of Latino, African American, Asian American, European American, Russian and Indian students. As with many rural teachers, this student teacher was a White, middle class, monolingual woman. She had grown-up in a predominantly White area, where her schools K-12 were rather homogeneous. Even in college, her teaching cohort was White. “Not surprisingly, she worried about how she would meet the needs of what she dubbed her mini United Nations” (Weinstein, p. 266). This student teacher’s experience and concerns are far from unique.

One study states, “Understanding of race and how we have been advantaged or disadvantaged because of our race is important in working with both White students and students of color” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p. 88). Further, those who are White and
plan to teach must explore the meaning of Whiteness, particularly in rural areas where the community tends to be even more homogenous. According to Katz and Ivey in *White Awareness: The Frontier of Racism Awareness Training* (1977), “Being unaware of one’s racial identity and being unable to conceptualize the larger system of Whiteness provides a barrier that encases White people so that they are unable to experience themselves and their culture as it really is” (as cited in McIntyre, 1997, p. 15).

Whether teaching in a large urban public school system, a small rural schoolhouse or an affluent private academy in the suburbs, all teachers today face students who are more diverse than ever before in terms of race, culture and ethnicity, language background, social class, and other differences. Our schools are becoming more diverse every day, diversity evident in the faces we see and the languages we hear in school hallways and playgrounds. Demographic changes in the United States are making it evident that our society is enormously different from what it was just a generation ago. This situation has serious implications for teaching and learning and for the way that teachers are prepared to meet the challenges of diversity (Nieto and Bode, 2008).

Teachers need to be prepared to teach all their students effectively. They must be prepared for an increasingly diverse student population. They must be aware of their race in order to be conscious of how it affects their teaching and instructional choices. And they must be able to critique the curriculum to ensure the development of critical thinking skills amongst their students, particularly as it applies to issues of diversity (Apple, 1979; Freire, 1972).
Alsup (2006) discusses the experiences of a new teacher, who was not quite prepared for facing a diverse student population,

For the first time in her life, Karen was interacting with people different from herself, different from those in her hometown. And she didn't quite know how to deal with them. She had to remove several students from the basketball team because of disciplinary problems, and when those students were also the African American students on the team, dissension resulted. In response, she defended her own actions and her commitment to fair and equal treatment. She appeared to be trying in good faith to enact a multicultural pedagogy, but the theories she had learned at the university didn't provide her with the tools to enact them in the real world. She had little idea about how to translate a multicultural philosophy into pedagogical action. Unfortunately, Karen had no mentor while she was coaching who could assist her with this phase of her identity development. One course in "multiculturalism" and frequent admonitions to respect diversity were not enough to help her embody an effective and well-rounded teacher identity. Her unexamined Whiteness, well as its connections with class and ideology, inhibited her transition from student to teacher. (p.99)

White teachers should be aware of how their Whiteness influences their attitudes and how others may perceive them due to their Whiteness. In *White Teacher* (2000), Vivian Paley reflects upon her experiences as a White, Jewish woman relating to her diverse kindergarten class. She recognizes that one of her Jewish students created a
unique bond with her and felt safe exploring her uniqueness in the classroom. Yet, she wondered if her African American students might have benefited from the familiarity and trust of having a Black teacher. To what degree does identifying with the teacher racially or ethnically affect learning? Paley (2000) poses the question: if the teacher accepts students as they are, will that be enough? It may be enough, if teachers are truly informed and well prepared to meet the needs of their students.

However, studies like that of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation found many discontinuities in the instructional style of White teachers and Native American students (Foster, 1994). Their cultural differences were creating learning barriers for the students. The teachers’ roles are to overcome these barriers and reach their students in a way that fosters learning. Geneva Gay (2004) in “Educational Equality for Students of Color” suggests, “When the cultures of students and teachers are not congruent, someone loses out. Invariably, who loses out are the students and also the effectiveness of their learning, especially if they are members of racially visible groups, such as African, Native, Latino and Asian Americans” (p.220). These references speak to the idea that teachers must overcome the challenge of communicating with diverse audiences by understanding themselves, recognizing the needs of their students, developing responsive pedagogy and realizing that even though they may focus on learning about diverse cultures, it is just part of the learning process.

Even though diversity has not come in large waves to rural areas, White teachers in rural areas still need to be aware of Whiteness. Teachers in rural southeastern Ohio
teach the majority with little diversity. In a quick overview of student demographics in southeastern Ohio, the researcher examined the percentage of White non-Hispanic students in twenty-two school districts from seven southeastern Ohio counties. Counties examined included Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs and Vinton. The average White population made up 92% of all students (ODE, 2010). This would have been higher had there not been two districts in the area where the White population was in the eighties, lowering the average. Teachers need to understand Whiteness and how Whiteness impacts their predominately White classroom. This is essential in order to prepare their racially isolated students for a more diverse society in our diverse world.

Many teachers focus upon learning about races and cultures that are very different from their own. However, this approach tends to neglect discussing White identity. White students are often unaware of their own race, historical culture or heritage. Awareness of White identity has further significance in the classroom. This research may assist in determining if our teacher preparation programs are providing teachers with the coursework they need to be prepared to teach in diverse settings and to prepare their students who reside in a predominately-homogenous community for a global community.

If teachers explore their racial identity, they can become more self-aware. A self-aware teacher can be a better educator. “A teacher’s own self-awareness regarding matters of culture, ethnicity, educational purpose and societal injustice are all part of the socio-cultural context knowledge that should be included in the knowledge base of teaching,” according to Joyce E. King (1994, p. 41). King specializes in socio-cultural
foundations of education and interpersonal/cross-cultural communication and is the Benjamin E. Mays Chair of Urban Teaching, Learning, and Leadership in the College of Education at Georgia State University. “What is necessary for White teachers is an opportunity to problematize race in such a way that it breaks open the dialogue about White privilege, White advantage and the White ways of thinking and knowing that dominate education in the United States” (McIntyre, 1997, pp. 14-15). White teachers in predominately-White rural areas need to be aware of how Whiteness might be institutionalized in their classroom. In order to adequately prepare their students for our global society, they may require change in their curricular choices. In addition, adjustments may be required in classroom instruction to effectively teach diverse populations. However, the teachers must be self aware to recognize the need for change.

According to Gollnick and Chinn (1998) in *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*,

Multicultural education is an educational strategy in which students’ cultural backgrounds are used to develop effective classroom instruction and school environments. It is designed to support and extend the concepts of culture, differences, equality and democracy in the formal school setting. (p. 3)

Teacher preparation programs are beginning to address the need for diversity education. However, they seem to focus upon learning about the “other.” Joyce King (1994), author of “The Purpose of Schooling for African American Children: Including Cultural Knowledge”, argues that lessons on diversity are lacking key components: “Merely
presenting factual information about societal inequity (and human diversity) does not necessarily enable pre-service teachers to examine the beliefs and assumptions that may influence the way they interpret these facts” (p. 142).

In addition to the increasing diversification of student populations, it is equally important to realize that most teachers in the United States are White. According to the Digest of Educational Statistics 2002 (Table 70), in 1996, 90.7% of public school teachers were White. In the year 2000, we had approximately 3,002,258 elementary and secondary public and private schoolteachers. There was some growth in the number of teachers that represent the diverse population of the United States. There were 227,505 Black non-Hispanic teachers, 169,025 Hispanic teachers, 48,281 Asian/Pacific Islander, 25,869 American Indian/Alaska Native teachers and 2,531,578 White/non-Hispanic teachers. This translates into 84% of our teachers in public and private schools (excluding pre-kindergarten teachers) remained White-non Hispanic in the year 2000 (, Digest of Education Statistics, 2002). More recently, in 2009, the Digest of Educational Statistics released information on the demographics of public school teachers of grades 9 through 12 from 2008. This data showed that 83.5% of the teachers are still White-non Hispanic. The statistics demonstrate that a predominantly White teaching force will be responsible for the education of an increasingly diverse population of students. Consequently, it is important that they understand their position as White educators and the cultural meaning embedded in their curricular practices, particularly in rural areas.
It is also worth noting that prospective teachers are likely to be in programs filled with White, middle-class students. Further, teacher preparation is likely to be directed by White, middle-class professors and instructors. There are over 700 hundred thousand full-time, regular, instructional faculty in the nation's colleges and universities. The majority are White. In 1994, 88% of the full-time education faculty was White (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1994). There was an increase in diversity by 2003, 80% were White. In 2005, there was a slight change with the percentage of White college faculty being 78%, followed by 77% in 2007 (U.S. Department of Education, Table 250, 2009). Statistics show there is more diversity among college faculty. However, the numbers are overwhelming White. Further, according to Ladson-Billings (2001) “while the K-12 student population is becoming increasingly diverse, the prospective teaching population is becoming increasingly monocultural, that is, White, middle class and monolingual English” (p.4). In 2003, there were 18,000 faculty and instructional staff in Teacher Education programs at degree granting institutions. Out of those, 85.5% were White (US Department of Education, Table 256, 2009).

Haberman (1995) argues that the traditional approach to teacher education is counterproductive for teachers in high-poverty, diverse classrooms because it “leads them to perceive a substantial number—even a majority of ‘abnormal’ children in every classroom” (p. 4). Therefore, teacher preparation programs must do more than examine “the others,” it must engage pre-service teachers in a study of themselves and their race.
Teachers should be required to spend some time looking at their own attitudes and behaviors as to determine how they are contributing to or combating racism in their classroom. Their exploration of Whiteness will open up avenues to explore racial attitudes and behaviors in a more realistic manner. Peggy McIntosh (2010), author of many notable works on education and multicultural education, states, “One thing about multicultural teaching is that it is plural: it involves deeper understanding of oneself and others” (para. six). When teachers are able to recognize the subtle and unintentional biases in their behavior, positive changes can be made in the classroom (Sadker and Sadker, 1978).

**Purpose of the Study**

This research examined the possibility that current multicultural education coursework for teachers could be mis-educating people by not educating people about Whiteness, particularly for White rural schoolteachers. Specifically, this research is a phenomenological case study of how White teachers from rural counties in a Midwestern state understand their Whiteness. With a rapidly expanding diverse population of students taught by predominately-White teachers, it is important to explore the positionality of teachers on the topic of Whiteness within the realm of multicultural education in a rural setting. The research endeavored to uncover how White southeastern Ohio teachers recognized Whiteness in the United States, through curriculum and within themselves. This included what sounds, shapes, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage they felt composed White identity. Further, it investigated how multiculturalism
is addressed within a rather homogeneous region with little diversity in ideas, thoughts and curricular input. Finally, it examined their perceptions of White images. It is hoped that an examination of how Whiteness is understood in this community will shed light on how we can better prepare educators for such a community where there is little diversity within the teacher or student population. Within this primarily homogeneous context, teachers need to be even more aware of how their Whiteness impacts their ideology and how their curricular choices and practices teach about issues of cultural and racial diversity. This research may suggest a need for in-service training for southeastern Ohio teachers and curriculum changes for pre-service education programs to incorporate the additional studies of Whiteness. In essence, this inquiry into the meaning of Whiteness seeks to understand how southeastern Ohio White teachers understand themselves, their culture, race and pedagogical and curricular practices.

**Research Questions**

The primary research question was “How do White southeastern Ohio teachers perceive and understand their Whiteness?” While seeking to understand how these educators define their Whiteness, the researcher addressed the following sub questions:

1. Were these teachers innately equipped with knowledge of their Whiteness? Do White teachers have a definite, clear and comprehensive understanding of Whiteness from experience or training?

2. What is their sense of cultural identity? How are they aware of their racial identity?
3. What images of Whiteness does their mind’s eye see?

4. How do they perceive White culture to be?

5. What is their understanding of what shapes or forms Whiteness has taken in the United States?

6. What sounds, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage compose White identity from the perspective of White rural southeastern Ohio educators?

Race is an issue of concern in American education (Litwack, 1996; Vaught and Castagno, July 2008). However, how is it an issue in schools in this rural area? This research sought to address its impact by examining the perspectives or understandings of White rural southeastern Ohio teachers. This research explored these questions. In addition, this research investigated the manner in which the concept of Whiteness is garnered in the classroom. It is believed that this qualitative study will further our understanding of Whiteness in rural areas and how it is manifested in teachers self-awareness, pedagogy and curricular practices.

Significance of Study

Whiteness is a topic left out of diversity or cultural studies discussions (Howard, 2006). “To be White in America is not to have to think about it. Except for the hard-core racial supremacists, the meaning of being White is having the choice of attending to or ignoring one’s own Whiteness” (Terry, 1981, pp. 119-120). “Many White people see themselves as raceless. They are the norm against which everyone else is other” (Gollnick and Chinn, 1998, p. 88). If teachers are White in America, then they are
considered to be among that norm. Therefore, they can exist without ever having to
denote their racial difference or critique how it impacts their lives and the lives of their
students. Additional significance lies in the fact that most teachers in the United States
are White and the student population is becoming increasingly diverse. This area
deserves further attention and research particularly within rural communities that have
remained primarily homogenously White until now. The topic of Whiteness has not been
addressed with this particular population. Thus, this research will add to the current
literature by providing a better understanding of how rural southeastern Ohio teachers
understand Whiteness. Further, it will provide a glimpse into how teachers'
understanding of Whiteness was developed through their classroom experiences,
particularly their teacher education experiences and how race is addressed in their
classrooms today.

This research is significant for several reasons. This research is designed to give
some definition, shape and image to White culture by discovering how White American
educators perceive their White identity. It will add to the meaning of Whiteness in the
United States by defining Whiteness through the eyes of White rural southeastern Ohio
teachers. Is Whiteness different for these teachers because of context or does it link to
the overall norm in the United States? It will examine how White teachers in a
predominately-White rural area of southeastern Ohio define their race. This will
contribute to diversity and multicultural education research.
This research is significant in the fact that it will examine teachers’ level of their own racial awareness and understanding of Whiteness. The greatest significance of this study lies in the fact that the majority of the literature addressing Whiteness and teacher education focuses on teachers in urban or suburban districts. Vivian Paley’s work in *White Teacher* (2000) examined urban schools. The article, “I don’t Think I’m a Racist: Critical Race theory, Teacher Attitudes and Structural Racism” by Vaught and Castagno (2008) sought data on Whiteness in major urban schools. Perry (2002) in *Shades of White: White Kids and Racial Identities in High School* looks at one suburban and one urban school and in *Facing the Consequences: An Examination of Racial Discrimination in U.S. Public Schools* (Gordon, Della and Keleher, 2000) a study where 12 varying school districts were examined there is not one mention of rural schools. This was just a sampling of Whiteness literature that focused on the educational setting. However, very few, if any of the existing research examines the role that Whiteness plays in a rural context, and how teacher education programs can begin to disrupt the hegemony of Whiteness in such areas. This research hopes to add to this literature particularly for rural contexts.

**Qualitative Methodology**

Qualitative research methodology was chosen for conducting this research. Qualitative research allows for a discovery approach to searching for an answer to the research questions, particularly when the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. The purpose of this research was to understand how White teachers in southeastern Ohio perceived their Whiteness. This research consisted
of different strategies to obtain quality data as evidence to generate conclusions from the 12 participants in the study. This researcher utilized three data sources: documents, interviews and observations.

**Design of Study**

This research was a phenomenological case study of Whiteness. This type of research is designed to understand social phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. One looks at the topic through the experiences and senses of the participants. Their conscious thoughts and orientation to the topic needed to be discovered. Their sensory experiences were evoked, articulated, described, explained, recorded and interpreted. The goal was to gain an in depth understanding of the subject under study.

**Data Collection: Documents, Interviews and Observations.**

Document reviews can include exploring records, diaries, journals, archives, legal documents; memoranda; correspondence; official publications and reports open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys, newspaper articles, poetry, and other forms of evidence used as data in research. “Documents” can also be found in visual form: photographs, artwork, artifacts, costumes, masks, architecture, self-decoration, various examples of material culture and more. This researcher incorporated such creative forms of data such as photographs that assisted in understanding the topic that underwent study.

Interviews were a vital portion of the research. Interviews are a viable source of potential evidence in research (Fredericks and Miller, 1994). Guided by the researcher’s
questions, the interviews were an active discussion on the subject and a valuable source of data in this research. “The raw data of interviews are the actual quotations spoken by interviewees. Nothing can substitute for these data: the actual things said by real people. That’s the prize sought by the qualitative inquirer”, as explained by Patton (2002, p. 380). Therefore, to understand the view of others and phenomenon of Whiteness in America, the qualitative research method of interviewing was used to gather essential data.

In addition, observations of teachers’ behaviors and their classroom environments were incorporated in the research.

**Data Presentation and Analysis.**

“Data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom built, revised and ‘choreographed’ (Huberman and Miles, 1994 as cited by Creswell, 1998, p. 142). Therefore, the design or framework for qualitative analysis is not rigidly defined. There are, however, some basic components that were followed in the analysis process. The following describes the manner in which this researcher analyzed the data collected. First, an instant post- interview debriefing while the interview was fresh in the researcher’s mind was completed. Next, the recorded interviews of the subjects were transcribed. Then, the data was carefully interpreted. In phenomenological analysis, the experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed and compared to identify the real meaning of the phenomenon under study and find the answers being sought. This process was followed in this research.
Findings are offered in the form of narratives, charts, drawings and photographs with contrasts and comparisons of the collected data presented. The data composes a description encompassing the depth and breadth of Whiteness as perceived by the participants. Through presenting the findings in the research, this document will provide added meaning to “Whiteness” as seen by White educators in southeastern Ohio of the United States today.

Limitations of Research

All research has limitations; this research was limited in that it does not represent how “others” (non-White persons) perceive Whiteness. This would require an additional and separate study. Further, it is also not inclusive of all the opinions and definitions of Whiteness that exist among Caucasian teachers. Nor does this study closely examine classroom materials, textbooks or daily pedagogy.

Definition of Terms

This section is meant to explain how the researcher employed the following common terms. To avoid ambiguity of meaning for particular terms that may be defined differently by the reader, clarification of the terminology used throughout this document follows:

- Culture –The traditions, beliefs, customs, laws, art and ways of living that a group of people shares can define it. According to the Institute for Cultural Partnerships (2009), culture is “any patterned set of behaviors, knowledge, values, beliefs, experiences and traditions shared by a particular group of people.”
Ethnic group or ethnicity – “of particular origin or culture: relating to a person or to a large group of people who share a national, racial, linguistic, or religious heritage, whether or not they reside in their countries of origin” (Encarta World Dictionary, 2009) and defined as “An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, on the basis of a real or a presumed common genealogy or ancestry” (Diffen, 2010). In the Journal of Counseling Psychology, ethnicity is defined as, “a characterization of a group of people who see themselves and are seen by others as having a common ancestry, shared history, shared traditions and shared cultural traits such as language, beliefs, values, music, dress and food” (Cokley, 2007, p. 225).

Whiteness – is a broad term used to describe people of ethnic European descent, especially those with fair skin. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Whiteness as “the quality or state of being White, as a.) White color, b.) paleness or c.) freedom from stain; cleanness” (2011). The term Caucasian is sometimes used with much the same meaning in the United States of America although people elsewhere would more likely understand the use of the word Caucasian to refer to people from the Caucasus. According to Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionaries Online, Caucasian means “belonging to the races of people who have skin that is of a pale colour” (2011). Encarta World English Dictionary provides a similar simple definition for White, “pale-skinned: relating to or belonging to a people with naturally pale skin, especially one of European ancestry” (2009).
Additionally, White is defined as “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "White" or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish” by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000).

- Race - The Census Bureau defines terms as follows: race is defined as “self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. These categories are sociopolitical constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature. Furthermore, the race categories include both racial and national-origin groups” (2000). Also defined as, “Any group into which humans can be divided according to their shared physical characteristics, such as skin color or hair color and type, or their common genetic characteristics” (Cambridge Dictionaries On-line, 2011). However, according to Jones (2000), “the variable ‘race’ is not a biological construct that reflects innate differences, but a social construct that precisely captures the impacts of racism.” Both constructs will be considered in this research.

These are the terms utilized in this study that best inform the purpose of the study and support the answering of the research questions.

**Dissertation Overview**

This research was a phenomenological case study of how White rural teachers in southeastern Ohio understand their race. The research explored to what extent these teachers have examined Whiteness as a piece of multicultural education in preparation for
the classroom. With a growing diverse population in rural areas that were once mostly homogeneously White communities, it is essential that teachers understand themselves and how their race may have an effect on the educational environment of their students. Further, the fact that this non-diverse population of teachers, is preparing a non-diverse student population to be successful in a multicultural world makes their understanding of Whiteness and race important.

This research attempted to convey the depth and breathe of their definition of Whiteness. Therefore, it will contribute to multicultural education and Whiteness studies through an exploration of Whiteness from the prospective of White rural southeastern Ohio educators. Chapter Two will provide an overview of existing literature on Whiteness, multiculturalism, teacher education, rural education and curriculum. Chapter Three will explicate the research design and methods more closely. Chapter Four conveys the historic details of the development of the White race in our country. In Chapter Five, the presentation of the data analysis begins with examinations of the place and space of the study, including participant demographics. Next, Chapter Six reveals the phenomenological perspective of White southeastern Ohio teachers on Whiteness. Chapter Seven concludes the data analysis by examining participating teachers’ placements on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum. It also, looks at teachers’ preparation and what they did not learn in their training. Finally, in Chapter Eight conclusions, implications and recommendations based on the research are discussed, including a suggested course of instruction for pre-service and in-service teachers.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

To understand what it means to be a White American, one must first examine our history as a race. We must investigate our background, our foundation as a race. A study of historical literature will help us determine, what comprises the race White? What have we been noted for? What have been our substantial contributions or influences to the condition of our society? One area that White Americans have had a distinct role in is racism. This chapter seeks to answer these questions by addressing literature in the fields of Whiteness, history, teacher education, multicultural education, rural education and curriculum.

Developing Understanding of Whiteness by Investigating History

Connecting the Past, Present and Future.

Examining the historical development of Whiteness is fundamental in understanding the multiple meanings of White in the United States. Paul A. Cimbala and Robert F. Himmelberg; editors of Historians and Race (1996), have a collection of autobiographies on historians who have specialized in race issues. The scholars share their inspiration, tribulations, investigations and discoveries. They are connected by their use of history and literature to contribute to and make a difference in the moral compass of America. They bring justice to racial issues through information. Historians are not simply repeating old news. Historians prepare narratives of events. They explore evidence for explanation of those events. With carefully chosen words, they present facts
and stories from our past. These records of past events and their analysis help us to shape the future. They have considerable influence on the actions we take in the present. The authors thoughtfully include striking information about their mission of racial justice.

Leon Litwack explains his passion,

I wanted my work as a historian and a teacher to make a difference. History was more than the dead past; the way in which it was written and taught had consequences, and Black Americans, in particular, had seen how it might be used both to explain and sustain their repression. (as cited in Cimbala and Himmelberg, 1996, pp. 20-21)

The authors challenge us to examine history with our minds and our hearts. They speak to us of important facts that collectively place our complex society in the state it is in today. The essays awaken the reader to the connection between the past and the present. Another contributor to the book, Jacqueline Jones, commented about her choice of purpose and history, "I will continue to write about the issues that intrigue me the most -- that is, the issues that connect American past to the present and to the future” (as cited in Cimbala and Himmelberg, 1996, p. 129). This literature has contributed to the researcher’s motivation to better understand White identity throughout history. It attests to the importance of Chapter 4: “Historic Examination of Whiteness in the United States” and other historic perspectives of race to educate pre-service and in-service teachers about White identity.
White: Anti-Racism and Racism in U.S. History

_Anti-Racism in U.S. History: The First Two Hundred Years_ (Aptheker, 1993) provides unique insight into the anti-racist dimension of White identity in history. It provides us with evidence that White anti-racism has actively existed in the United States since its’ founding and recognizes contributions of Whites toward abolishing racism that is directed toward Blacks. This issue has extreme opposing interpretations. One side says that all Whites were evil, racist, and Black people were alone in their fight for freedom ---- on the opposite end of the spectrum, lore contends that the benevolent, kind, wise White man lifted the Blacks up from their savage ways into civilized living. The author, Aptheker, provides clarity and perspective to this issue. He demonstrates that although racism has clearly existed in America, it co-existed with anti-racism. This text points to tangible actions by White people against racism. He provides specific examples of people, places and sacrifices made by Whites to benefit the condition of life of Blacks in our country. His text provides perspective by demonstrating the battle of Whites against Whites on the issue of racism. These battles were through political actions, literature, forming relationships, friendships, marriages and children, to battles that resulted in the loss of life by White people to protect or defend the human rights of Black people. Yet, Aptheker is careful not to exaggerate the contributions of White people and not to down play the efforts of Black people to liberate themselves from the bondage of racism. Aptheker presents his interpretation of the issue of anti-racism, concerning Blacks and Whites, in a fair and realistic manner.
It is true that racism has historically existed in America. Racism is described as the "belief in the inherent, immutable, and significant inferiority of an entire physically characterized people, particularly in mental capacity, but also in emotional and ethical features" (Aptheker, 1993, p. xiv). These beliefs have been directed at different groups in the history of America. Blacks, Native Americans and Japanese are among the various groups that have been subject to racism in America. Joe Feagin (2000) in Racist America: Roots, current realities, and future reparations provides blazing condemnation of the systematic racism intertwined in everyday life in the United States but provides hope that these practices can be changed. Racism has always faced challenge and opposition in America, even by White people. Not all White people have been active or passive racist in U.S. history. Many believe that anti-racism among Whites was rare prior to the Civil War. This is a false assumption.

Beginning in colonial times, there were White people who made significant contributions to the endeavors to resist, discourage, end and prevent racism. White Political figures, poets, preachers, teachers, entrepreneurs, soldiers, common people and women were among those dedicated to anti-racism. Whites that have contributed to change in racist policy have done so through modeling of anti-racists behaviors, leadership and influence of others in speech, literature, ministry, legislation, relationships with Black people and even war. Yes, White men fought and died to defend the rights of all men.
This recognition of White anti-racist endeavors has been in no way meant to discredit the contributions of Black people for their fight against racism. It is simply designed to examine the many dimensions of White Americans. Further, it is meant to encourage the continued efforts of anti-racism and readdress the need for anti-racist efforts in the United States today, particularly in our schools. Anti-racist efforts are still required in the 21st Century. There are pieces of literature that call anti-racists to action and even provide some guidance for those White people who are open to taking action against racism. Paul Kivel (2002) in *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* and Judith Katz (2003) in *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training* provide tools for White people to pursue anti-racist behaviors in our modern society. *Disrupting White supremacy from Within: White People on What We Need to Do* (Harvey, Case and Gorsline, 2004) gathered the views of White theologians, ethicists, teachers, ministers, and activists in a book that looks at race, racism, Whiteness and anti-racism. It encourages White people to confront and understand the impact of prejudice on minorities and on their own souls. It encourages Whites to take an active rather than passive view on racism. These resources may be applied to many audiences of White people. However, they do not focus on educators nor do they address racism in rural areas that are predominately White, such as rural southeastern Ohio.

Throughout American history, "many White people suffered from profound ignorance" (Aptheker, 1993, p. 95). The real fight has been a battle against misinformation, false propaganda and twisted interpretation of scriptures and doctrines
used to justify racism. "Racism justified slavery; slavery was an abomination. End slavery and the racism that rationalized it would disappear" (Aptheker, 1993, p. 95) was the theory by which many anti-racists proceeded in the early years of our nation.

Racists had spread negative propaganda about Black people and these ideas formed policy. The manner in which our governmental documents were twisted to support slavery was absurd. They evaded applying the human rights and freedoms, laid out in our Declaration of Independence and the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, to the Black man. Anti-racism supporters had to inspire others to believe and fulfill the very doctrines that established our country. These doctrines clearly were designed to establish rights for all men, not men of a particular hue. Nowhere was the word "White" included in the list of human rights. It was the duty of those who fought racism to bring these seemingly obvious facts into the scope and understanding of all men.

Roediger (2002), who wrote *The Wages of Whiteness*, investigated of the development of "White" identity among European American workers in the North during the pre-Civil War era. He found that racists portrayed the continent of Africa as savage and uncivilized. The propaganda being spread about the savage, monkey-like, alleged inferior Blacks had to be fought with positive propaganda and evidence that told the truth that all men are created equal (Roediger, 2002). Racists ignored that the first civilizations that ever existed were in Egypt. They would not admit that Egypt was part of Africa (Garvey, 1975; Bay, 2000). With the energy being spent to perpetuate racism, equal and more aggressive energies needed to be dedicated to reeducate our nation. According to
Aptheker, “Levi Hart in Pennsylvania in 1775 cried out that it was high time for this colony to wake up and put an effectual stop to the cruel business of stealing and selling our fellow men” (Aptheker, p. 88).

To have understanding of Whiteness, we must examine how Whites defined others. Racists twisted the words of the bible and used it to support slavery. Those opposing slavery had to challenge the misinterpretation of religious doctrines. Some racists tried to fabricate a Christian excuse for slavery through the scriptures that discussed a curse placed on Canaan, the son of Ham (dark skinned) by Noah. "And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he be unto his brethren, and he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant" is the curse as read from the King James Version of the Holy Bible (The Holy Bible, p. 13). "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers" is one interpretation of the original scripture (Oxford NIV, Scofield Study Bible, p. 14). Interpreting this curse into a justification for enslaving Black people was considered blasphemy by many anti-racists. This researcher struggled, while considering, how could any Christian truly think that God would condone any man being taken from his home and family, sold into oppression, beaten and even killed for the color of his skin?

Methodist founder, John Wesley argued against slavery through various means. He used scripture to awaken the minds of those who supposedly believed in the ways of
God. Racists ignored the Golden Rule. He among many others reminded supposedly
good Christian folks, that the golden rule that directs us to do unto every human creature,
as we would wish to be done unto, gives no exceptions to Blacks. It distinctly states
"every human creature.” The discipline regarding membership into Methodist church
reads,

The United Methodist Church, a fellowship of believers, is a part of the Church
Universal. Therefore, all persons without regard to race, color, national origin or
economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, to participate
in its programs, and when they take appropriate vows, to be admitted into its
membership in any local church in the connection” (*The book of discipline of the
United Methodist Church*, Patterson, 1980, p. 112).

It is very clear as to not leave room for misinterpretation or contortion of the words into
any other meaning. This philosophy has been an integral part of the philosophy of this
church since its founding and its’ Wesleyan traditions have remained. The battle within
religion between racists and anti-racists adds meaning to the many complex facets of
Whiteness.

Among other arguments racists used to support their behaviors was the myth that
Black people were mentally inferior. Beliefs like these led to the institutionalization of
racism and White superiority in various realms of influence. John Wesley attacked
falsehoods such as these:
Allowing them to be stupid as you say, to whom is that stupidity owing? Without question, it lays altogether at the door of their inhuman masters, who give them no means, no opportunity of improving their understanding… The inhabitants of Africa where they have equal motives and equal means of improvement are not inferior to the inhabitants of Europe… Their stupidity therefore in our plantations is not natural; otherwise than it is the natural effect of their condition.

Consequently, it is not their fault, but yours; you must answer for it, before God and man. (Aptheker, p. 21)

Wesley and others like him had to battle misinformation about the mental and emotional capabilities of Blacks. Research has discovered that anti-racists were generally in the lower end of socio-economic status; they were more often women than men and they were generally persons who had significant experiences with Black people (Aptheker, 1993). These anti-racists have been fighting the battle with knowledge, reality, facts, emotions, and when it became necessary with their lives. Many valuable texts have been written on the topic of racism. Yet, few have given anti-racism its due attention. Just as negative propaganda poisoned the minds of Whites against Blacks, if one only reads about the evil White people, a similar tragic cycle of misinformation may incur. White people committed horrendous atrocities toward Blacks and other minorities. However, the omission of information about good White people and their efforts would do us all a disservice by creating an area of ignorance. We do not need to perpetuate mental models that all Whites or all Blacks have particular sets of morals, backgrounds and behaviors.
Yet, is valuable information to understand how people perceive themselves and how others view them? If what they intend to be is not what others experience or see, then perhaps change and more education are necessary.

Most active racists and anti-racist behaviors can be easily recognized when brought to one’s attention. However, some passive racist practices are not obvious to all White Americans. They blindly participate in what is called the “possessive investment in Whiteness.” George Lipsitz has written a book, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (2006) that is an examination of the practice of White privilege in the structure of American society. The text allows the reader to examine a form of prejudice that has saturated the political, social and economic structures of our country. This type of prejudice is often ignored. Prejudice is not only adverse opinions formed about people. Prejudice can take the form of acts of detriment upon people that are inspired by irrational hatred of a particular group, race or religion. Further, prejudice does not only occur when it causes direct injury to people but it occurs by granting advantages to some and withholding them from other groups. White people have historically been the beneficiaries of countless privileges that have been withheld from others.

According to Lipsitz (2006), the term "possessive investment in Whiteness" (p.vii) is symbolic of the forms of ownership that have sustained and actively encouraged White investment in White supremacy. This investment in Whiteness occurs not only occur in the way minorities are mistreated but in how White people are treated to privileges. It points to the idea that was expressed by the author Richard Wright, "There
isn’t any Negro problem; there is only a White problem” (as cited in Lipsitz, 1998, p. 1). The continuation of investment in Whiteness occurs with and without White people’s conscious commitment to prejudice and racist beliefs. This is a part of what it means to be White. White people must awaken their anti-racist sensibilities. White people must resist and cease their participation in racist social and political practices. There must be change in the prejudice-infected structures in the United States, particularly for those in our nations’ schools. This change will only occur when White Americans have a true understanding of who they are and what it means to be White.

*The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* demonstrates how White people, in general, are the beneficiaries of historical racism. They have received financial, social and political gains by denying minority groups (African Americans, Asians, Latinos and others) opportunities for asset accumulation and upward mobility. Their collective possessions as a race have been at the expense of minority groups. Further, this racism did not end when slaves were emancipated or when African Americans became citizens or when their need for education was addressed. To this day, there has not been a single event or concession that has delivered the citizens of our nation to true equality. It is important to understand this, to truly understand and develop a realistic definition of Whiteness. To date, racism has not vanished, it is just cleverly disguised. "Whiteness is everywhere in U.S. culture, but it very hard to see" (Lipsitz, p.1). If you examine housing policy, real estate practices, banking and finance, education, tax codes and subsidies, the records of court rulings, U.S. foreign policy, media coverage of minority
criminals, and other areas of social and political policy subtle means of discrimination will be revealed. This has created what is called "institutionalized racism." It is part of our daily life. The Possessive Investment in Whiteness, with its endless revelations of structural racism in our society, leads the reader to feel that one can hardly identify an area of American politics, society or culture where evidence of race is not present. Martinot (2010) in The Machinery of Whiteness: Studies in the Structure of Racialization examines how race and racism have been manufactured in social, cultural and political institutions of the United States. His works show that racial segregation and racial deprivation have secured a society of White privilege. Proof of White people’s failure to end these practices demonstrates their possessive investment in the privileges they receive for being White (Lipsitz, 1998; Martinot, 2010).

Privilege has been granted to those who belong to the dominant group. We can see evidence of possessive investment in Whiteness by the lack of enforcing laws regulating wages, working conditions, discrimination in housing, hiring and education, not to mention the battle over "official languages." Consider the intentions our countries’ military actions, including actions like the seizure of the property of Japanese Americans, during World War II. People with power decided the Japanese did not belong among our communities. Bell Hooks, author and social activist, focuses upon the connections between race, class and gender. In Belonging: A Culture of Place (2008), she considers what makes a place our home. She questions how access is gained to a community. How does one obtain the sense of belonging? Prejudice attempts to prohibit others from
obtaining a place to belong; real estate, non-fair housing policies and geography of who
belongs where in the United States. The realms of which possessive investment in
Whiteness exist seem unlimited. Exploring the idea of possessive investments in
Whiteness is a valid contribution to the history and identity of White in America. It also
speaks to the state of racism in our present society (Hooks, 2008; Lipsitz, 1998; Martinot,
2010).

According to Paulo Freire, conscientization, history, praxis and dialogue are
central to a struggle for freedom and rights. His term conscientization is the "ability to
analyze, problematize (pose questions), and affect the sociopolitical, economic, and
cultural realities that shape our lives" (as cited in Freire and Macedo, 1995, p. 199).
Creating awareness of the practice of possessive investment in Whiteness contributes to a
better understanding of the meaning of “White” in America. This system of White
privilege is a "poisonous system of privilege that pits people against each other and
prevents the creation of common ground" (Lipsitz, p. xix). Active or passive
participation in this system makes a hypocritical statement regarding our nation’s
supposed desire and commitment to equal rights for all Americans. The reality of the
state of racism in the United States can be seen in the actions or non-actions
demonstrated against privilege. These contradictions are rarely understood or questioned.
The dominant culture is actively invested in Whiteness. Therefore, White people have an
important role to play in anti-racist work (Lipsitz, p. 157). The teachers in southeastern
Ohio can inform us of how Whiteness in rural America shapes their understanding of race
and their curricular and pedagogical practices. Examination of history, literature, our present society and views of others about what it means to be White may awaken those who are unaware of their passive participation in racism.

The research aims to look at how White educators understand the meaning of Whiteness. *The White Image in the Black Mind: African American Ideas about White People* (Bay, 2000) is an insightful piece of literature into how another group views Whiteness. The text provides insight into the image of White people according to African Americans. Mia Bay, the author, focuses her explorations into this concept on the period from 1830 through 1925. This period encompasses times of mass introduction of Blacks to Whites and Whites to Blacks, slavery, abolitionism, civil war, freedom, citizenship, reconstruction, suffrage, the question of emigration or colonization and the urban movement of African Americans. This text allows us to learn what the Black mind thought about White people throughout these events. It is unique in its’ approach. Many books have been written about what Whites think about African Americans. Books have been written about the events that have taken place throughout America’s struggle with racial issues (McIntyre, 1997; Roediger, 2002). Yet, few sources tell us what Blacks thought about Whites. During times of slavery, little was written about the feelings of slaves regarding their "masters," for obvious reasons. Many Black scholars have chosen to dedicate their energies elsewhere, on matters they felt were more constructive. They had many other pressing issues to address. Yet, this approach left a void for needed doses of reality and perspective. *The White Image in the Black Mind: African American*
Ideas about White People 1830-1925 (2000) by Mia Bay along with The White Image in the Black Mind: A Study of African American Literature (2001) by Jane Davis, both fulfill the necessity for this information. They both reverse the title of a historical study by George Fredrickson (1971) called The Black Image in the White Mind: A Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny. They turn the viewing glass around and use the lens to examine the examiners. In Davis’ book, she focuses on analyzing "images" of Whiteness in Black-authored texts (Davis, 2001). In Bay’s book, she shares research of Black cultural and intellectual history. Through examination of Black ethnology, slave narratives, interviews, and various others forms of resources, she presents a very thorough and insightful volume of information.

This literature is particularly important because it clarifies what Black people have historically thought about White people. White people need to learn about the reality of how other races view us. As a White person, this researcher has heard a wide range of perceptions on this topic. Some White people see themselves in a role of idealized influence upon Black people. They believe that they are role models to African Americans. They have the delusion that all Black people want to be like White people. Some White people ignore and refuse to acknowledge the bloodied bodies, broken limbs, families ripped apart, burned churches, bombed homes, assassinated leaders, murdered followers and wounded hope of the African Americans caused by White people. Others are keenly aware of White racist history and think that African Americans consider all White people evil. Charles Gallagher’s (1994) research shows that many Whites feel that
Blacks automatically view them as racists based on their skin color. He concludes that these perceptions are not based on social interactions but on racist fantasies. Gallagher (1994) argues that many White people walk around with their guard up. Their defensiveness does not allow them to see reality or even consider what Black people think of White people or if they think about them at all. They are insecure with themselves and their White heritage. They may have considered how they feel about Black people but have they thought to consider how African Americans have viewed them? The varying thoughts or absence of thought on the subject is extreme. Their commonality is that most are formulated due to the lack of pertinent information.

Therefore, let us continue to examine existing literature on the topic. It should assist White people in realizing the representation that our history has created of the White race. It is not a pretty picture. Most Blacks have experienced racism. It is the only relationship some have known with White people and it began long ago. Let us study some of the historical "images" included in Bay’s book (2000).

Many African’s from the interior lands of the continent had never seen a White man until he stole the Black men from their land and families. What could one think or imagine about people who would buy and sell their fellow man? They thought these ugly captors must be cannibals because Africans taken by these White men were usually never seen again. An exslave James W. C. Pennington gave a concise view of the actions of the White man, "proud and selfish Anglo-Saxon seized upon the Negro to be used merely as a beast" (Bay, 2000, p. 6).
Another snapshot into the images in Bay’s book: We have been taught that the distinguished and enlighten Thomas Jefferson opposed the concept of slavery. However, his comments, made in *Notes on Virginia* that Blacks "are inferior to the Whites in the endowments both of body and mind," are often omitted from textbooks (Bay, 2000, p. 15). Without literature like this, many do not understand how people see the White race. If you see the slave quarters on Mulberry Row at Jefferson’s across from the mansion that Jefferson lived in with his gardens and ponds, you will experience a glimpse of an image of White people from the perspective of a slave (Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Monticello visit, 2008). John Maddox, an ex-slave, once said that he loved White folks "like a dog loves a hickory stick." He continued by saying, "I can say these things now. I’d say them anywhere --- in the courthouse --- before the judges, before God. ‘Cause they done all to me that they can do" (Bay, p. 153).

Black ethnology is a combination of scriptural interpretations and scientific speculation to study it own race. Their conclusions are not the same as historically White concepts. Many White people have not considered this area. Black ethnology carried the concept that Blacks were the redeemer race and that come judgment day they would be placed at the forefront of the human race. The author points out that if Blacks were a gentle, spiritual, almost feminine, redeemer race; Whites might well be their irredeemable opposite (Bay, 2000). This concept is probably shocking to many White people. That is why is important to look at race through another person’s eyes, as presented in the existing literature. Reality shines a bright light on a shadowy subject. Still, the purpose
of this study is to examine how Whites understand themselves, particularly southeastern Ohio White teachers.

*The White Image in the Black Mind* examines how the White man has historically denied the "civilized" and intellectual heritage of the Blacks. "The black race had once led the world in learning and civilization," states Bay (p. 34). Egypt, the world’s earliest civilization, developed in Africa. However, this fact would have removed the White American claims, that the Black race was permanently inferior. Therefore, Whites would not acknowledge that Egyptians had any resemblance to Africans, although Egypt is in Africa. Imagine the frustrated thoughts that must have occurred among Whites when they considered this concept. The created images of White people as superior were completely challenged.

Consider, if you are a Christian and you believe we are created in God’s image, what color is God? Why do Whites assume then that God is White? We must seem egocentric to the other races. This book challenges the reader to consider many things, including that others may assume God is Black, just as White people assume God is White (Bay, 2000).

With these few examples, excerpted from the text, teachers can better understand the image of White people in the minds of Black people. Teachers can consider why they might ask, "What shall we do with the White people?" as Black writer, Ethiop sarcastically did in 1860 (as cited in Bay, p.107).
White Americans should look into the mirror and closely examine their reflection. They may see something in that White image that may not have been visible before. This researcher does not intend to blame the collective evils of White racists on all White people. We are aware and have discussed that many Whites were anti-racist. One’s White ancestors may have very well given their lives for the rights of Black men and women. Yet, there is no denying that the racist acts imposed on Blacks and other minorities were perpetuated by Whites. After a comprehensive study of the literature on Whiteness, a White person can look at their reflection of their White heritage with new insight. They do not need to see an ugly monster. However, they do need to clearly see the fine lines and gray hairs that they once overlooked. These gray hairs need not be interpreted as symbols of evil. They may allude to a transformation in progress. Through valuable information collected in the course of my research, it may be possible to remedy one’s blurred vision of the issue of the White image. With this new ability to see clearly, the imperfections in the reflection of Whites may allude to the development of a wiser human being.

Multicultural Education

How does multicultural education inform Teacher Education students about diversity, race and specifically Whiteness? To be prepared for professional work in a multicultural society, future educators need training in multicultural education and general human relation skills. “I think of multicultural education as teaching, promoting, and developing a plural sense of reality in students. The world of biology is diverse, the
world of nations and cultures is diverse, and also inside ourselves, we are plural as well. We have had many kinds of experience that touch us deeply, and they constitute identity in us” (McIntosh, 2010, para. nine). Multicultural education is defined as an ongoing process that requires long-term investments of time and effort as well as carefully planned and monitored actions (Banks and Banks, 2004). Multicultural education is concerned with how individuals and groups interact with each other, and the ways that future teachers understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination in society and schools. Multicultural education is “comprehensive school reform that challenges all forms of discrimination permeates instruction and interpersonal relations in the classroom and advances the democratic principles of social justice” (Nieto, 2010, p. 44).

Christine Sleeter, California State University professor and current president of President of the National Association for Multicultural Education and Carl Grant, professor of education, University of Wisconsin-Madison contend that multicultural education must be both multicultural and reformationist based in approach. They extend the idea multicultural education to encompass many “others.” Differences exist in not only race, class and gender but also in ability levels, culture, language and sexual orientation. They suggest that every classroom should celebrate and represent all types of diversity. Further, the classroom should host an ongoing project of social change (Sleeter and Grant, 2003). Donna Gollnick and Philip Chinn (1998) authors of undergraduate and graduate multicultural education textbooks cover a sprinkling of many possible diversities, such as: culture, class, ethnicity and race, exceptionality, religion, language
and age to provide students with an introduction to each type of diversity. They stress that teaching must be multicultural and inclusive. The unique needs of every student should be at the center of the teaching and learning process, which will result in increased academic gains for all.

Geneva Gay (1994) specialist in multicultural education and curriculum theory believes that multicultural education should become a “regular part of education in the United States for three major reasons: the social realities of U.S. society, the influence of culture and ethnicity on human growth and development, and the conditions of effective teaching and learning” (para. 12). The literature is very helpful for a basic multicultural education or an introduction to the many unique qualities of people in our society.

Christine Sleeter reviewed multiple studies on training of pre-service teachers for schools with diverse populations. She found that many pre-service teachers initially appeared to be superficially willing to learn more about multi-cultural education. The various programs were not consistent in the training provided to pre-service teachers. The instruction varied from class to class and was based on professors’ interests or preference. After graduation, those who began teaching in diverse settings reported they were ill prepared in multicultural pedagogy. The majority of those in predominately-White schools faced settings where multiculturalism lacked the importance or urgency of other curriculum matters. Thus, they conceded to the curriculum priorities of their schools and cooperating teachers (Sleeter, 2001).
With research showing wide variances in curriculum of multicultural education class, it is unclear how well Whiteness is being covered in teacher preparation programs, also. In *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society* there are chapters on many types of diversity; including one on race and ethnicity. Within that chapter, there are a few quality paragraphs about Whiteness and privilege and the importance of further Whiteness studies (Gollnick and Chinn, 1998). Why does the literature about multicultural education not address the understanding of one’s own race rather than focusing on the “others”? This is significant, if teacher preparation programs stop their multicultural curriculum at this level of education; a simple overview. Further, the existing literature does not seem to address diversity concerns in rural, predominantly White areas. It is centered on preparing White teachers to teach diverse classrooms and connect with “other” types of children (Banks and Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1995). The literature does not represent concerns about conveying the need to teach all students about diversity, beyond basic introductions, especially to White students in homogeneously White schools. *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education* does take a step beyond the norm as it provides examples of how to transform school curriculum to be truly multicultural and not merely dabbling in the effort (Lee, Menkart and Okazawa-Rey, Eds., 2006).

**Teacher Education and Whiteness**

How does research on teacher education address Whiteness studies either as pre-service or in-service educators? Multicultural education tends to familiarize White
teachers with all the others. However, some believe the key to teacher success with these very distinct differences among racial groups, is to be very aware of and understand racial identity. This awareness can allow them to be successful in communicating with and educating all of their students. How can White teachers begin a journey to discover their complex racial identity? Alice McIntyre, who has studied White teachers and their teaching practices in urban settings, suggests three steps toward White racial identity:

Through a commitment to:

1. Investigating Whiteness
2. Educating themselves about the relationship between their racial identities and the existence of racism within U.S. society, and
3. Taking constructive action in the naming of racism and the renaming of what they can do about it within the context of multicultural antiracist education. (McIntyre, 1997, p. 18)

McIntyre outlines one strategy for teachers to create their racial identity. Whatever the path a person chooses to follow to pursue this endeavor, most specialists in White education agree, they must begin by investigating race, Whiteness and one’s self (Howard, 2006; Jensen, 2005; Katz, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; McIntyre, 1997, 2002).

Dalton Conley a White man, who grew up in a Black and Hispanic neighborhood, reveals how he learned the meaning of race. In his book, Honky, Conley (2000) says,

By the time I left the Mini School, I had learned what the concept of race meant. I now knew that, based on the color of my skin, I would be treated a certain way,
whether that entailed not getting rapped across the knuckles, not having a name like everybody else, or not having the same kind of hair as my best friend. Some kids got unique treatment for being taller or heavier than everyone else, but being Whiter than everyone else was a different matter altogether. Teachers usually did a good job of ignoring the fact that one kid was shorter than another was or another was fatter, but it was they, not the other students, who made my skin color an issue. The kids had only picked up on the adult cues and then reinterpreted them. Moreover, height, weight, and other physical characteristics were relative states. But being White was constructed as a matter of kind, not degree. Either you were black or you weren’t. (pp. 51-52)

White teachers must explore the meaning of Whiteness. They must look at their own race critically. According to Katz and Ivey in *White Awareness: The Frontier of Racism Awareness Training*, “Being unaware of one’s racial identity and being unable to conceptualize the larger system of Whiteness provides a barrier that encases White people so that they are unable to experience themselves and their culture as it really is” (as cited in McIntyre, 1997, p. 15).

For White educators, in particular, this invisibility to one’s own racial being has implications in one’s teaching practice – which includes such things as the choice of curriculum materials, student expectations, grading procedures and assessment techniques --- just to name a few. What is necessary for White teachers is an opportunity to problematize race in such a way that it breaks open the dialogue
about White privilege, White advantage and the White ways of thinking and knowing that dominate education in the United States. (McIntyre, 1997, pp. 14-15)

Whiteness is an important area for teachers to examine closely. Peggy McIntosh (1988) in an essay entitled, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See” wrote that she did not even see herself as a racist initially. She had been taught that prejudice or racism took the form of acts of aggression by White people not that it also meant benefitting from her race while others were disadvantaged. She shares real life examples of White privilege that are invisible to many White people, such as; easily finding a doll with White skin color or the ability to turn on the television or open the paper and see her White people. White teachers must be educated about the subtle ways racism exists in our society so they can identify it in their teaching, their classroom and their schools. “What is missing in the belief that individual merit and hard work will bring you ‘success’ is the fact that institutional, educational, and societal structures keep people of color ‘so far behind the starting line (in so many areas of U.S. society) that most of the outcomes will be racially foreordained’ (Hackner, 1995, p. 34)” (as cited in McIntyre, 2002, p. 40).

As teachers or future teachers begin to question and explore racial identity, it is important to realize they may become defensive as they begin to understand White privilege and their possessive investment in such a system. They may begin to close up when discussion turns to White racists. Their emotions may tend to range from guilt,
shame, frustration, anger, despair, confusion, and denial to some other realm of emotion (Helms and Carter, 1993; McIntyre, 1997 in Lee et al., 2006).

Paul Roberts (2000) had another related concern in his article entitled, "Colleges Reeducate Students About ‘Evil’ White Culture." It is an examination and awareness piece on the negative effects of White culture. The author contests that discussion of racism must be accompanied with facts about anti-racist Whites. Roberts warns us that propaganda used to teach Whites to think the best about "people of color" is manipulating Whites to think the worst of themselves as a whole. Roberts expresses the idea that a focus on the negative actions of White people not only can affect White people and their self-image but it also reinforces a poor image of all Whites to the rest of America. Minorities are certainly familiar with information about White racists. However, they may be missing information about anti-racism in America. This would suggest that curriculum on Whiteness must be approached carefully as to provide a clear perception of White in which both positive and negative can be revealed and considered.

The existing literature addresses the need for Whiteness studies for teachers with diverse student populations. In We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools, Howard, (2006) identifies the qualities of culturally responsive and effective teachers in classrooms with diverse populations. This multicultural approach focuses upon learning about and understanding their diverse student population to provide affective instruction and pedagogy. Whiteness is not of central concern in this approach.
There are various studies of Whiteness in urban and suburban schools. Gloria Ladson Billings, who has done considerable work on White teachers in urban settings and has examined its effect on African American students, calls for teacher education reform regarding Whiteness. “We do what we do because it is the way we’ve always done it” (2001, p. 7). However, this is most likely true for teachers in rural areas, too. Yet, the current literature fails to address this concern.

The essential element required to better serve a diverse classroom is a teacher’s understanding of their own racial identity (McIntyre, 1997). Once teachers have become aware of their White racial identity, they can critically examine their materials and curriculum. Dr. James Loewen (2007), author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, believes that in order for race relations to truly improve in the United States, something needs to be done about what is being taught, and what goes into textbooks. Presently, teachers are not heading into the classroom equipped with the knowledge of the institutionalized Whiteness in schools to enact need reform (Gay, 2003; McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 2002; Sleeter, 2003).

The literature lends us valuable insight into the importance of understanding others, demands for Whiteness studies for teachers of multicultural classrooms and related studies on Whiteness and multiculturalism in diverse urban and suburban settings. The existing literature leaves a gap in critical race studies and education theory. It does not address race in rural areas. It does not express concern for White teachers’ ability to prepare their White students in a rural White community for life in a larger diverse
society. Nor does the existing literature answer, what is the meaning of Whiteness among rural educators who teach in predominantly and even homogeneous White schools? Are the teachers aware of their White racial identity? Are they equipped to teach diversity to their White students?

**Rural Education**

Geneva Gay (1992), in “The state of multicultural education in the United States” (Moodley, pp. 41-65), writes that multiculturalists are in agreement that the specific meaning and application of multicultural education may vary based upon the setting. Therefore, let us examine the literature surrounding the rural context in which this study was conducted.

The term "rural" was initiated by U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1874. It was defined as indicating the population of a county exclusive of any cities or towns with 8,000 or more inhabitants (Whitaker, 1982). Presently, a specific definition of rural has been eliminated. Currently, much like Whiteness, it is defined by defining the others. Since 1990, the urban population is now defined as all persons living in urbanized areas and places of 2,500 or more located outside urbanized areas; all population not classified as urban constitutes the rural population (Gibson and Lennon, 2008, Table 18; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). The remainder of the population is then designated as rural.

The United States Department of Agriculture states that rural America comprises 2,052 counties, contains 75 percent of the nation's land, and is home to 17 percent (49 million) of the U.S. population (Economic Research Service, USDA, 2003). According
to official U.S. Census Bureau definitions, rural areas comprise open country and settlements with fewer than 2,500 residents. It consists of all territory, population and housing units located outside urbanized areas and urban clusters. Urban areas comprise larger places and densely settled areas around them. Urban areas do not necessarily follow municipal boundaries. They are essentially densely settled territories, as it might appear from the air. Most counties, whether metropolitan or non-metropolitan, contain a combination of urban and rural populations (US Census Bureau, 2002).

The tendency ten to twenty years ago was to move away from rural America into more urban or metropolitan areas. However, that has changed. Rural America has experienced a significant rural population rebound, which totally reversed the rural out migration of the 1980's. Between 1990 and 1999, 2.2 million more Americans moved from the city to the country than vice-versa. In fact, in this period, 70% of our nation’s rural counties grew in population; 61% of rural counties experienced net in-migration in this period; and seven-eighths of the growing counties derived some or all of their increase from in-migration of metropolitan residents (U.S. House of Representatives, Rural Congressional Caucus, 2000)

Rural demographics can be surprising. Some of our most urban places are also our most rural states. More Pennsylvanians live in rural areas than Kansans. Only one in ten New Jersey residents live in a rural place, but New Jersey has more rural people than Maine, where over half the population lives in rural places. More Americans that are rural live in New York State than Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming combined. The West, usually viewed as our most rural area, is in fact our most urban. Twice as many people live in places under 2,500 east of the Mississippi than west of it (U.S. House of Representatives, 2000).

**Rural Ohio.**

Numbers and locations, however, miss the heart of what it means to be rural, and seldom satisfy those of us upon the receiving end of the definition. However, there are some key facts that provide insight into rural Ohio education (see Figure 1). It is difficult to attach a rigid definition to the term rural. Rural people know that life in rural Ohio is not like rural Texas or exactly like life in the rural frontiers of Alaska.
### Key facts about rural Ohio education.

- Ohio has plenty of rural people (more than 2.5 million).
- Rural teacher pay is decidedly lower than salaries of other Ohio teachers.
- Spending on rural school administration is relatively high.
- Rural Ohio schools are fairly large and their classes larger than average class size nationwide.
- Teacher perceptions of parental support are low.
- 21.0% percent of rural Ohio students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- 22.6 percent of Ohio’s population is rural.


The following are images of rural Ohio (see Figure 2). They aide in answering: what is rural Ohio?
Rural areas are paradise to many. People from various fields of interest, socioeconomic levels and ethnic origins must work together for the communities to survive. There are
economic challenges, yet the benefits of community connections are a blessing. This creates a unique life that many in metropolitan areas do not experience or benefit from.

Some researchers have attempted to find qualitative descriptors of rural. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools states that,

According to Blakely (1984), major features previously used to define rural--simple life, agriculture, smallness, homogeneity, and dullness--fail to describe much of rural America. Instead, rural is increasingly defined by examining numerous broad categories of information. Deavers and Brown (1985) have developed seven categories of rural areas based on social, demographic, and economic information. Economic categories include agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and government; social dimensions include persistent poverty and growth of retirement population; proportion of land in federal ownership comprises the final category. Horn (1985) looks at values, socioeconomic factors, political structure, locus of control, and priorities for schools to add meaning to rural. Others take a similar ecological approach comprised of cultural values, number of people and ambiance to work toward a definition of rural. (Rios, 1998, para. six)

**Rural Demographics and Education.**

Now that we have some general idea of what rural America is, why is it a significant area for educational studies? “Nearly one in three of America’s school-age children attend public school in rural areas or small towns of fewer than 25,000, and more than one in six go to school in the very smallest communities, those with
populations under 2,500. These children, their schools and their communities matter, and they deserve more consideration than they get in the national debate over education policy” (Beeson and Strange, 2003, p.1). This is a significant number of our American students. One-third of all American students live in small towns or rural areas. This population deserves our attention. We must explore their educational needs and the related issues.

Let us examine one rural area more closely: rural Ohio. Twenty-two point six percent of Ohio’s population is rural. That is 2,570,811 rural people in the state, which is a significant number. Thirty percent of the public schools in Ohio are in rural areas. These schools educate 25 percent of the students in Ohio. Out of that student population, only 2.5 percent are minorities. The rural Ohio population is predominantly homogeneous White. That is the population the teachers are prepared to educate and are experienced in educating.

Teacher preparation programs strive to prepare their teachers with various teaching methods, strategies, skills, knowledge, curriculum and cultural awareness. Yet, there is an area of teacher preparation for work in rural schools that deserves more attention. This deficiency is in the mastery of white racial identity and diversity education. It is something that has not been an issue in some rural communities, until recently. However, times do change. According to Harold Hodgkinson author of an article entitled, “Educational Demographics: What Teachers Should Know,” within the next twenty years our demographics will change. He says that about sixty-five percent of
America’s population with be minority, especially Hispanic and Asian immigrants. “In fact, the 65 percent increase in diverse populations will be absorbed by only about 230 of our 3,068 counties; further California, Texas and Florida will get about three fifths of the increase. Remember that more than half our entire population lives in only nine states – those three, plus New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and New Jersey- yet only California, Texas and Florida are growing so quickly” (Hodgkinson, 2001, p.9).

Although Hodgkinson does not seem to think there will be a flood to rural and small town areas, many rural communities are experiencing rapid population increases and rapid ethnic diversification. “Many communities are witnessing large numbers of new residents often with very diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. This has put new stresses on rural schools as they must accommodate both the challenges of rapid population growth and educating students with limited English proficiency for the first time” (Jimerson, 2002, para. nine).

**Education Systems of Rural Schools.**

Rural one-room schools were valued when our nation was formed. It was a means to educate people on our American ideals. Alan DeYoung refers to this in *Leadership for Rural Schools,* "as bastions of democracy and civic purpose" (Chalker, p. xiii). Throughout the years, however, they were no longer the favored son among school models (DeYoung, 1987, 1991; Howley and Eckman, 1997; Nachtigal, 1982; Sher, 1977). In fact, by the 21st century their model schools and their local ideals were being demolished to be reconstructed or consolidated in the image of standardized urban
versions of schools. Their former school structure has been pushed to the brink of extinction. Rural schools now are larger consolidated buildings or campus to which students must be transported, sometimes great distances. Many have lost that small school feeling (DeYoung and Howley, 1995; Mulcahy, 1996, 1999).

**Understanding White Racial Identity in Rural Appalachian America.**

In the Rural Appalachian region of America, White people are connected with images of Appalachian culture. However, it has been revealed through research that, Appalachian teachers generally do not openly connect themselves with the rural, Appalachian mountain region and its culture. They attempt to distance themselves from the negative “hillbilly” images and stigmas of low academic achievement that some connect to mountain cultures (Eller-Powell, 1994).

Too often, however, the implementation of a culturally relevant curriculum has been confined to learning about local handicrafts and folklore. While such experiences are useful and certainly help to promote group pride, they represent only one small segment of Appalachia’s unique heritage. In order to prepare students to face regional and national problems, it is critical that both students and teachers have an understanding of the region’s history, and that they be allowed to compare their own experiences with those of others, both within the United States and throughout the world. (Eller-Powell, p. 72)

It is important for Appalachian students to explore “culturally relevant” material. They need to explore their Appalachian background and go beyond it, too. The United
States is comprised of over two hundred seventy six ethnic groups. There are one hundred seventy Native American groups but together their population is still less than one percent of our national population. The White population has the dominant numbers. That means that the majority of our population has immigrated to the country within the last five hundred years (Gollnick and Chinn, 1998). Those who settled in the Appalachian Mountains and other rural areas arrived there after a long journey. They were immigrants from other nations. They have come from Poland, Ireland, Wales, Britain, Sweden, Germany and many other nations. The teachers of Appalachian students need to connect their students with the world. This journey can begin by understanding themselves first.

Exploring an Image of Whiteness with Rural Teachers.

It is important to explore one’s identity. In this case, we are exploring the identity of White people, through the eyes and educational background of teachers. What do they know about their Whiteness? Whiteness can mean many things. There is no one type of White person. White Americans emigrated from numerous countries and faced varying conditions. Some faced prejudice while others were privileged. Within the White race, there are various White ethnic groups and cultural groups that differ from one another (e.g., Irish, Polish, Welsh, etc.). Yet, race identity theorists generally agree that a group can be identified by a common thread of historical experiences, regardless of how distinct the individuals in the group are. Therefore, those with light colored skin, generally from European descent are grouped into the White race.
Is race a concern with White teachers dealing with White students? Not that is detectable through the sum of current literature. Helms (1990), author of “Counseling Attitudinal and Behavioral Predispositions: The Black/White Interaction Model” says there have been no studies on the effect of racial attitudes of Whites toward other Whites on the counseling process. Alternatively, according to Webster, Sedlacek and Miyares in their article, “A Comparison of Problems Perceived by Minority and White University Students,” surveys of college students show that racial issues are less likely to be reported as a problem by White students than by minority students (as cited in Helms, 1990). There may be some tension or differences when White people are at different stages of their racial awareness, some may experience guilt, frustration, denial, anger or anxiety. Yet, with these differences in racial identity awareness among White people, race does not appear to be a critical issue between them. Therefore, our attention can focus upon the relationship between White teachers and their students of diverse racial identities.

Leon F. Litwack, professor of American History at the University of California Berkeley notes,

Teaching remains for me a critical challenge: to force students to see and feel the past in ways that may be genuinely disturbing, to reexamine their assumptions, to test, sometimes to understand old dogmas and values; to enable them to overcome racial stereotypes and cultural parochialism, to understand the deep historical roots of racism and to appreciate the formidable barriers this nation erected against black advancement. And it is that rare opportunity to raise to the surface
of history the men and women, the known and unknown, many of them losers in their own time, outlaws, rebel who – individually or collectively ---- tried to flesh out, to give meaning to abstract notions of liberty, equality and freedom, who demonstrated marched, agitated, went to prison, sometimes gave their lives to question the assumptions and wisdom of those who held power. (Cimbala and Himmelberg, 1996, pp. 30-31)

Litwack points out the importance of understanding the struggles that created our free nation and those groups of known and unknown people who were integral in causing change or challenges. To truly understand their history, one needs to examine the whole picture and ask questions. This process may not be pleasant but it is necessary.

According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), in “What We Can Learn from Multicultural Education Research,” most teachers in the United States are White. She also says that the next largest group, African American teachers, only comprises five percent of all public school teachers in America. Ladson-Billings says, “If current demographic trends hold, our student population will become more diverse, while the teaching population remains predominantly White. The implication is that if teachers are to be effective, they will need to be prepared to teach children who are not White” (p. 26). She urges teachers to understand themselves, their culture, the cultures of others and this will make them more successful with their students. Since most teachers are White, it is a factor in education and it makes sense that they explore and understand their race.
Conclusion

The way to defeat racism and other social issues is to conquer ignorance. This study may potentially assist in eliminating lack of knowledge on the topic of White identity. White Americans have historically been influenced by partial information, omission of details, and ignorance (Cimbala and Himmelberg, 1996). Let us take steps to examine Whiteness and remedy that ignorance. More specifically, let us garner a new perspective on Whiteness in the educational realm. The existing literature on Whiteness and Education lacks an investigation into White, rural educators preparedly to teach diversity and their understanding of Whiteness. Therefore, this study examined the understanding of Whiteness among teachers in a predominantly White, rural, southeastern Ohio.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

Introduction

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this research. It was the method best suited to discover the answers to the research questions of this project. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to pursue an open-minded exploration of information in order to understand others’ perspectives on the topic, in this case White teachers in southeastern Ohio (Glesne, 2010; Patton, 2002; others). Qualitative researchers want to completely understand their research topic, using quality data as evidence to generate conclusions (Glesne, 1999; Maanen, 1983; Patton, 2002).

Moreover, this qualitative research utilized a phenomenological perspective. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological studies seek to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the individual. It seeks to uncover the essence of meaning prescribed to an experience by those who experience it in their own words. Consequently, this research is a phenomenological study of the meaning of Whiteness from the perspective of White southeastern Ohio educators.

A combination of multiple qualitative research strategies were used to triangulate the search for understanding. Triangulation involves using multiple data sources like: literature, documents, interviews and observations. Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glesne, 2010; Patton, 2002). This multifaceted approach generated quality data rather than quantity (Creswell, 1998). According to Patton (2002), "The first decision to be made in analyzing interviews is whether to begin with case analysis or
cross-case analysis” (p. 376). This research used a cross-case analysis of the interviews, using the constant comparison method "to group answers . . . to common questions [and] analyze different perspectives on central issues." In sum, the qualitative methods and the quality of the data attained through these processes were the most important reasons qualitative methodology was chosen. This chapter details the methodology framework utilized to answer the research questions, conduct the research and ensure the credibility of this qualitative study.

**Research Questions**

The primary research question was “How do White southeastern Ohio teachers perceive and understand their Whiteness?” While seeking to understand how these educators define their Whiteness, the researcher addressed the following sub questions:

1. What are the images and meaning of Whiteness as they interpret it?
2. Were these teachers innately equipped (born) with knowledge of their Whiteness? Do White teachers have a definite, clear and comprehensive understanding of Whiteness from experience or training?
3. What is their sense of cultural identity? How are they aware of their racial identity?
4. What images of Whiteness does their mind’s eye see?
5. How do they perceive White culture to be?
6. What is their understanding of what shapes or forms Whiteness has taken in the United States?
7. What sounds, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage compose White identity from the perspective of White rural southeastern Ohio educators?

Race is an issue of concern in American education (Litwack, 1996; Vaught and Castagno, July 2008). How is it an issue in schools in this rural area? This research sought to address its impact by examining the perspectives or understandings of White rural southeastern Ohio teachers. This research explored these questions. In addition, this research investigated the manner in which the concept of Whiteness is garnered in the classroom. It is believed that this qualitative study will further our understanding of Whiteness in rural areas and how it is manifested in teachers self-awareness, pedagogy and curricular practices.

In addition and more significant to education, my research investigated whether or not White teachers could define “Whiteness.” Are they prepared to teach White students about a diverse world or teach a diverse population of students effectively?

**Qualitative Methodology**

The term “qualitative methods” has been used to cover approaches that are claimed to be soft and non-rigorous compared with the hard, objective, rigorous approaches that are referred to as quantitative methods (Burgess, 1985). Unlike quantitative research, all the methods associated with qualitative research are characterized by their flexibility. No predetermined hypothesis is presented for testing; rather, it is a production of an exhibit of what is natural. Qualitative researchers are able
to formulate and reformulate their studies because of a flexible research design. This element of flexibility occurs throughout the collection and analysis of data (Patton, 2002). Additionally, qualitative research is also defined as, “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17).

Qualitative methodology consists of different research strategies that can be used. The researchers can use a combination of these multiple research strategies to triangulate their search for understanding. Triangulation is the practice of relying on multiple methods of data collection to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. This multifaceted approach generates quality data rather than quantity. (Glesne, 2010; Patton, 2002)

Qualitative research, with its precise and ‘thick’ descriptions, does not simply depict reality, nor does it practice exoticism for its own sake. It rather makes use of the unusual or the deviant and unexpected as a source of insight and a mirror whose reflection makes the unknown perceptible in the known, and the known perceptible in the unknown, thereby opening up further possibilities for “self”-recognition. (Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke, 2004, p. 3)

Qualitative research strives to obtain the depth and detail of an issue (Patton, 2002). The purpose is to “get a better understanding” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 4) of the topic being studied. This research aimed to produce a clearer understanding of Whiteness from the perspective of rural southeastern Ohio teachers. It incorporated
many views and images of Whiteness. Denzin and Lincoln attest that qualitative methodology provides the means to “[assemble] images into montages” (2005, p. 4). Merriam (2002) agrees: The world or reality, is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be …instead, there are multiple contracts and interpretations of reality that are in flux and change over time (p. 4). Qualitative Methodology is the means to research and present these multiple interpretations.

Corrine Glesne (1999, p. 8) in Becoming Qualitative Researchers, accurately describes qualitative inquiry as “an umbrella term for various orientations to interpretivist research.” Qualitative researchers label their work in different ways. They call it action research, auto-ethnography, case study, critical ethnology, educational criticism, ethnography, feminist theory, hermeneutics, heuristic inquiry, phenomenology, symbolic interaction, system theory and others. Making meaning or sense is the main goal of this research.

Glesne (1999, p. 3) best summarizes the process of learning about qualitative research as; “Learning to do qualitative research is like learning to paint. Study the masters, learn techniques and methods, practice them faithfully, and then adapt them to your own persuasions when you know enough to describe the work of those who have influenced you and the ways in which you are contributing new perspectives.” Through this process, this researcher chose to approach this investigation as a phenomenological case study.
Qualitative research was the method best suited to answer the research questions for this inquiry. Qualitative research allows for a discovery approach to searching for an answer to the research questions, particularly when the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. The purpose of this research was to understand how White teachers in southeastern Ohio perceived their Whiteness. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to pursue an open-minded exploration of information in order to understand others’ perspectives on the topic (Glesne, 2010; Patton, 2002; others), in this case White teachers in southeastern Ohio.

**Theoretical Perspective: Phenomenology**

This research was a phenomenological case study of Whiteness. This type of research is designed to understand social phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. The foundational question of phenomenology is “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?” (Patton 2002, p.104). The important reality of the subject is what the participants perceive it to be.

This type of study describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon (topic or concept) for several individuals. Such inquiry sets out to unpack the uniqueness of each phenomenon under study by staying away from generalizations. To achieve this end, Patton (1985) views it as:

An effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to
understand the nature of that setting—what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting. The analysis strives for depth of understanding. (p. 1)

Therefore, to understand the phenomenon of Whiteness in America, the qualitative research method of interviewing was used to gather essential data (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

This qualitative research had an ontological assumption. The basic beliefs that this research adhered to were that reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study. The meaning found incorporates all realities. The research results use quotes and themes of ideas found in interviews to provide evidence of different perspectives (Creswell, 1998, p. 74-75) of the phenomenon explored. Because the phenomenon studied was within a bounded system, bounded by place and space, a case study design was chosen as the research design. Thus, a phenomenological case study of rural southeastern Ohio teachers was created.

**Research Design: Case Study**

Patton (2002) states that:

Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time [and]…allows you to
investigate phenomenon, population, or general conditions. (p. 13, as cited in Stake, 2000b, p. 437)

Patton (1990) informs us about many different kinds of case study. They were: explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, multiple-case studies, intrinsic, instrumental and collective. On the other hand, Creswell (2007) defines case study as

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

Finally, according to Robert Stake (1995), case studies can be uses three terms to describe case studies; intrinsic, instrumental, and collective.

A case study is expected to catch the complexities of a single case. The single leaf, even a single toothpick, has unique complexities— but rarely will we care enough to submit it to case study. We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its context. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake, 1995, p. xi).

Because of the research questions, and the requisite methodological choice of qualitative methodology, the research contends that a phenomenological case study was the best research design for this study. In essence, it combined the theoretical
underpinnings of phenomenology, which seeks to understand the essence of an experience had by participants from their perspective, and the context of southeast and its White teachers, which bound this study. The strengths of case study permit a researcher produce much more detailed information than what is available through a statistical analysis. Case studies can incorporate creativity, innovation, and context.

A well-done case study has “a high degree of completeness, depth of analysis, and readability” (Duff, 2008). Further, it is gaining importance in the field of social science inquiry (Yin, 2003). While it has its limitations, no case study or any research design is perfect. Thus, a phenomenological case study was believed to be the best research strategy to fully explore the research questions and the phenomena embedded within them.

**Site Selection**

Interviewing White rural teachers about Whiteness was important to this research. The teaching force in the United States is still dominated by White educators. Our schools are becoming increasingly diverse throughout the nation. Yet, there are regions of the United States, which until recently were or remain quite homogenous in race. Therefore, issues of race; including Whiteness may have not been a topic of concern in these regions. With these factors in mind, a series of interviews with White teachers in the predominately-White rural southeastern Ohio was conducted. In this location, the students and teachers are somewhat isolated from the “melting pot” or “salad bowl” that comprises much of the United States. The research sought to understand how these
teachers perceive their Whiteness and its’ potential impact on their teaching in an increasingly diverse society.

This population was chosen for this study because these teachers are among those in our nation who have not encountered large degrees of diversity within their classrooms. However, according to statistics, they will be faced with largely diverse classrooms in the future. The existing literature supports the concept that teachers who are aware of their racial identity will be prepared educators. In addition, even when classrooms are not multicultural and primarily White, issues of race are still existent and should be examined in the implicit and explicit curriculum. In fact, within these contexts, issues of race and culture maybe even more critical (Weinstein, November 2003; Gay, December 2003/January 2004). Therefore, this research sought to determine if White rural southeastern Ohio teachers are racially aware. It also sought to understand how these educators define the Whiteness and its impact on their pedagogical and curricular practices.

Why is this region a significant area for educational studies? “Nearly one in three of America’s school-age children attend public school in rural areas or small towns of fewer than 25,000, and more than one in six go to school in the very smallest communities, those with populations under 2,500. These children, their schools and their communities matter, and they deserve more consideration than they get in the national debate over education policy” (Beeson and Strange, 2003, p.1). This is a significant number of our American students. Consequently, this population warrants our attention.
Twenty-three percent of Ohio’s population is rural, that is 2,570,811 rural people in the state, which is a significant number. Thirty percent of the public schools in Ohio are in rural areas. These schools educate 25% of the students in Ohio. Out of that student population, only two point five percent are minorities. The rural Ohio population is predominantly homogeneous White (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

The study was conducted in rural southeastern Ohio. Demographics of this region show little diversity. According to the 2000 Census statistics, Gallia County’s population consisted of 29,595 White, 839 African Americans and 191 Hispanic citizens. Jackson county population was 31,953 White, 193 African Americans, and 196 Hispanic. Lawrence County had 60,169 Whites, 1,302 African Americans and 355 Hispanics. Pike County was comprised of 26,785 Whites, 246 African Americans and 155 Hispanics. Vinton County’s residents included 12,560 White, 45 African Americans and 60 Hispanic people. The other counties in the region are somewhat similar.

Data Collection Methods: Documents, Interviews and Observations in Qualitative Methodology

According to Creswell (1998), “data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions” (p. 110). Qualitative research concerns data gathering using numerous methods (Glesne, 2006). Creswell (1998) explains that case study "involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case" (p. 123). Stake (1995) adds that methodological triangulation incorporates usage of different data collection
techniques such as documents, observations, or interviews to find answers. While, Patton feels that “Qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents” (2002, p. 4).

Through the study of literature, theory, practical uses, examples, trials in using the qualitative strategies and thoughtful consideration, the researcher arrived at the decision to use the following sources of data. The three primary data sources used in qualitative methodology are documents, interviews and observations. All three of these were used in this research.

Observation.

In addition to interviews, and the use of documents, observations of teachers’ behaviors and their classroom environments were incorporated in the research. Observation is the process of being in or around a social setting, program or event for the purpose of describing, understanding, discovering information and acquiring insight. During the interview process, the researcher generated field notes to the reactions and behaviors of the participants and recorded observations of classroom settings when applicable. Further, the overarching objective is to generate a qualitative analysis of the setting under study. According to Patton (2002), “direct observation is the chance to learn things that people would be unwilling to talk about in an interview.”

Shuamit Reinharz’s (2011) book on Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research is a guide to exposing how characteristics of the researcher can contribute to the experience of the phenomenon under study. Reflexivity or reactivity in
field research is discussed. The circular interaction between researcher and participants affect the process. This researcher was careful not to react positively or negatively to participant responses. The researcher did not agree or disagree or give them approval or judgment for their views. However, the researcher was able to garner from observations that my racial identity was certainly a factor in gaining entrée. In addition, the researcher sensed that participants recognized our similarities and felt that they were in accepting company where they could divulge their thoughts on race. Their nods, looks and hand expressions conveyed they felt the researcher understood them and knew what they were trying to say throughout the interviews.

**Documents.**

According to Patton (2002), documents are “excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open ended written responses and surveys” (Patton, 2002, p. 4). Documents reviewed in this study included exploring records, diaries, journals, archives, legal documents; memorandum; correspondence; official publications and reports open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys, newspaper articles, poetry, and other forms of evidence used as data in research.

“Documents” can also be found in visual form: photographs, artwork, artifacts, costumes, masks, architecture, self-decoration, various examples of material culture and more. This researcher incorporated such creative forms of data that assisted in
understanding the topic that underwent study. Photographs, drawings, paintings, videos and museum exhibits were the documents examined.

In this inquiry, the researcher was especially interested in using visual data as a form of document evidence. Symbols are pictures are powerful. From the researcher’s experiences in the fine arts, she was aware of the power of visual images and how they can sometimes supersede the real information. However, the researcher wondered how visual data could be perceived in the research world. Many significant anthropological ethnographies and ethnographically inclined sociologists have used visual artifacts as evidence from the 1920s to the present (Hodder, 1994; Prior, 2004).

Photographs are another form of document (Patton, 2002). Photographs can transport viewers to a time and place. They can inspire thought and often provide more information than words. They can show physical characteristics that mere words cannot describe. Photographs can record visual data as evidence. The image does not change or evolve as one's perceptions might. Alone or with a combination of other documents and data forms, when used correctly, photographs are a valuable resource of information (Patton, 1990; others).

A collection of photographs and other images related to Whiteness were used during the interview to evoke additional responses from participants such as images of children holding signs on behalf of White supremists to protect their endangered race, poor tattered hillbillies and images of the illustrious, White, protestant founders of the United States government and others. All photographs used in the study can be found in
Appendix E. The participants in this study were also asked to create documents. They were asked to represent on paper or mold from clay an image of Whiteness.

**Historical and Document Analysis.**

A historical research analysis was conducted and is the focus of Chapter Four. This particular portion of the study attempts to understand how Whiteness has been shaped and can be identified in the United States through various mediums. The foundation of this research is a thorough study of the existing literature on the historical, social and cultural identity of White Americans. In addition, this research includes a compilation of research findings from documents and field research at historical sites. According to Wolcott, this approach is sound when seeking meaning for a topic under study. “The researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the culture-sharing group. This interpretation may be informed by the literature, personal experiences or theoretical perspectives” (Wolcott, 1994b).

Patton (2002) emphasizes that documents, as part of the material culture in anthropology, constitute a “particular rich” source of information (p. 293). In addition to documents, qualitative interviewing was used as well.

**Interviews.**

Interviews were a vital portion of the research. Interviews are a viable source of potential evidence in research (Fredericks and Miller, 1994). Guided by the researcher’s open-ended questions (see Appendix D), the interviews were an active discussion on the subject and a valuable source of data in this research. “The raw data of interviews are the
actual quotations spoken by interviewees. Nothing can substitute for these data: the actual things said by real people. That’s the prize sought by the qualitative inquirer,” as explained by Patton (2002, p. 380). Therefore, to understand the view of others and phenomenon of Whiteness in America, the qualitative research method of interviewing was used to gather essential data.

Participants completed a preliminary participant demographics questionnaire. This was used to solicit participants. It can be found in Appendix A. This questionnaire was used to support the selection of participants for this study. Based on completed of the questionnaire and meeting the selection criteria an interview was then arranged.

This portion of the research focused upon interview strategies of collecting data. Much of the interviewing process was based on a series of interview questions (see Appendix D) presented to participants in an interview format. The participants’ verbal responses were recorded and transcribed. In addition, observations of their surroundings and behavior were made. The interviews were conducted at various locations throughout southeastern Ohio. Sometimes, interviews were in participants’ classrooms, which gave the researcher access to material evidence such as classroom wall displays and bulletin boards. Some preferred to meet at other locations to respond to my questions. “You listen and you look, aware that feedback can be both nonverbal and verbal” (Glesne, 1999, p. 81).

There were questions about race and Whiteness that sometimes people were not able to answer. At times, they had nothing verbal to add to certain aspects of the
research. This could be interpreted as a weakness in the study by some. However, their inability to speak to the meaning of Whiteness tells the researcher a great deal about their deficiency in preparedness for diversity issues in the schools and their White racial identity, which speaks to secondary questions of this research. This researcher was able to obtain revealing responses at times from various participants. The researcher owes this to the fact that they felt a sense of commonality, as we discussed race. Being a White educator also, they may have presumed the researcher saw race much like they did and would not place judgments like “others” might. Data was collected through a semi-structured set of questions; nevertheless, much was learned through other means.

Nevertheless, much was learned through other means. Creative approaches can enable the researcher to gain a better understanding of the research topic. Projection techniques are methods used to have participants “react to something other than a question – an ink blot, picture, drawing, photo, abstract painting, film, story, cartoon or whatever is relevant” (Patton, 2002, pp. 394-395). For the purpose of this research project, the researcher was especially interested in using visual data as a form of document evidence. Symbols and pictures are powerful. With my experiences in the fine arts, the researcher was aware of the power of visual images sometimes supersedes the real information. However, the question at hand for this study was how visual data would be perceived in the research world. Many significant anthropological ethnographies and ethnographically inclined sociologists have used visual as evidence from the 1920s to the present (Henley, 2000).
Photographs can transport viewers to a time and place. They can inspire thought and often provide more information than words. They can show physical characteristics that mere words cannot describe. Photographs can record visual data as evidence. The image does not change or evolve as one's perceptions might. Alone or with combination of other documents and data forms, when used correctly, photographs are a valuable resource of information (Collier, 1986).

Consequently, this researcher employed a creative approach to inducing a response from the participants. After their initial input on Whiteness was exhausted, participants were introduced to a selection of images that may represent Whiteness. The participants were shown a slideshow of photographs, drawings, paintings and other images related to Whiteness. Visual images of Whiteness based on document research were used to evoke a reaction from the participants. Their responses to the images were recorded to aid in adding meaning to Whiteness.

Further, the participants’ responses need not always be verbal responses. Patton (2002) suggests that writing can be a part of the interview. The interviewer must concentrate on his or her goal of understanding others’ views on the topic being studied. Therefore, to further enhance this study, participant generated visual images of Whiteness were collected from willing parties. Not all participants could produce an image to represent their meaning. Some were simply uncomfortable with the artistic abilities while others were genuinely at a loss when attempting to generate a mental image of Whiteness to convey to the paper.
Purpose of Interviews.

With the expected increase in minority population in our American classrooms, rural areas will also be experiencing classrooms that are more diverse. This will be new territory for some rural teachers. “Unless one becomes comfortable with confronting one’s own race, as well as that of others, it will be difficult to be effective teachers in communities and schools where members are from racial groups unlike one’s own” (Gollnick and Chinn, 1998, p. 89). Therefore, these interviews were designed to determine how a specific group of White educators understands their racial identity.

Gaining Entrée.

Schools were contacted, using a directory of Ohio School Districts from the South Central Ohio Computer Association and databases of school from the state department of education. Fliers were hung in teacher areas at southeastern Ohio schools. Letters and e-mails seeking volunteers were sent to principals of these schools. Next, the researcher was contacted by a teacher or given a name of volunteer from a principal. Then, a meeting with the person occurred to provide the professionals and potential participants with introductory literature, a lay summary of the research that is found in Appendix B and contact information. In addition, research ethics, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality were discussed. Once potential participants were fully informed and officially consent to participation in the study, potential participants then completed a Participant Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix A). At this point, if they completed
the initial paperwork and met the study criteria, the researcher scheduled a time to interview the participant.

**Procedure.**

First, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about themselves and Whiteness (Appendix D). In addition, a projection technique using various visual images of Whiteness as the stimuli was utilized to evoke a reaction from the participants. The participants were shown a PowerPoint of White images. The hope was that the images would cause the participants to dig deeper in their thoughts about the topic and consider other aspects that previous questions may have not called to mind. The participants were asked to share their reaction to the images.

These images were collected based on examples from the literature study on Whiteness and from investigating the most popular media programming in previous decades. The images ranged from representations from familiar popular cultural images of White people to racist portrayals of Whiteness. The series of White popular cultural images included images from a variety of decades, this was intended to ensure that participants of different ages would recognize or relate to some images. The series of popular culture images was also representative of the dominance of Whiteness in popular programming. More importantly, they were representative of the whiteface of Hollywood. “Class and ethnicity are homogenized, sterilized and largely erased in motion pictures. In other words….I regard whiteface as a space where representation that demands class-passing, class othering, giving up ethnic identity to become white and
insists that the human race, especially in America, is white.” (Foster, 2003, p. 51). The images selected did attempt to show a variety of images of Whiteness that have been acceptable in our society: the cowboy, the wholesome family, the hillbilly, the rebel and the wealthy. The extreme images of White racists were intended to present the manner in which others have experienced or may currently perceive White people. The presentation of a range images of Whiteness was intended to instill the concept that Whiteness is not monolithic, neither is any label placed upon a racial, ethnic or cultural group. The images were intended to provoke thought and evoke additional comments on the topic, to add to the meaning of Whiteness.

Lastly, the interviews incorporated an opportunity for the participants to respond through artwork or the written word. After the interview questions were completed, then the participants were asked to create an image of Whiteness, using various art supplies that were provided. We discussed their visual representations of Whiteness and allowed the participants to define “Whiteness” in their words. These sessions were audio recorded as well. The participant generated visual images were collected and records of the participants’ verbal responses were made. The interviews were transcribed immediately following the interviews. The documents produced by the participants were analyzed for content. Field notes were taken during the entire process as well. Finally, narrative summaries of each interview were created. The themes that emerged from the interviews, writings of the participants and drawings are presented in Chapters Five and Six.
Participants’ confidentially will be respected (real names will not be used in the research dissemination nor will any personal details be revealed that could compromise the identity of participants). Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the analysis, publications and academic presentations of this research. Participants will be identified by a number. No information will be released or printed that would disclose any personal identity. All tapes and documents associated with this study were kept in a locked file cabinet and the researcher had the only key. The tapes will be kept for 5 years after the dissertation is complete. Then, they will be destroyed.

Participant Selection.

This study was a purposeful sampling of White educators from and in rural southeastern region of the state of Ohio in the United States. Twelve educators, who serve in various instructional roles, were selected for data collection. They were chosen based on their ability to answer questions that will add to the depth and breathe of understanding Whiteness. Persons who could provide a variety of perspectives on the research topic were sought. Information rich participants were sought. The researcher requested that the participants complete a pre-interview questionnaire to ensure that the participants meet the requirements of the research. This was especially relevant to this research. The pre-interview participant demographics questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

The final selection of participants was determined by responses to the pre-interview demographics questionnaire, their willingness to participate in the study and the
sampling criterion that follows. The participants were required to meet the following criteria: It was mandatory to be a “White,” Caucasian educator who teaches in southeastern Ohio and was willing to provide their insight or unique perspectives into the meaning of Whiteness (Appendix A, B and C).

**Data Analysis**

“Data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom built, revised and ‘choreographed’ (Huberman and Miles, 1994 as cited by Creswell, 1998, p. 142). Therefore, the design or framework for qualitative analysis is not rigidly defined. Other factors are also pertinent to qualitative inquiry. In qualitative research, data collection and data analysis often occur simultaneously (Patton, 2002; Glesne 2010). A qualitative research project is not part of a linear process but the segments of research occur in conjunction with each other. Qualitative data is not usually collected to support or to refute a hypothesis. Conversely, qualitative data is collected to discover answers, and concepts are developed during the process. It is emergent. There are, however, some basic components of the analysis process. The following describes the manner in which this researcher analyzed the data collected.

First, the researcher had to determine their own personal bias, involvement or positionality in regard to the research topic. This phase of research analysis is known as ephoche. “Epoche is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way or perceiving things.” With this awareness, the researcher can approach analysis of the data with open eyes and an open mind.
After each interview, an instant post-interview response with reactions and additional observations were completed while the interview was still fresh. Then, the recorded interviews of the subjects were transcribed. As the transcripts were being typed, this researcher generated notes, labeled topics and themes that emerged and recorded reactions or free-associative unstructured writing known as “theoretical memos” (Glesne, 2010). As the researcher listened, transcribed, journaled and made theoretical memos, she continually analyzed the data to answer the central research question: How do southeastern Ohio teachers understand Whiteness? You are “moving toward a sense of what it’s all about.” This process of transcribing the data, coding, sorting and writing, continued until analysis and interpretation of the data was complete. “Strauss (1987) underlines the need to consider the work of transcribing as running along the ground in order to jump into the air, or pushing a car along the ground to get the engine started,” as cited in Wengraff, (p. 209).

The interview questions were designed to obtain answers to theory questions. How do you determine answers to your research question? In phenomenological analysis, the experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed and compared to identify the real meaning of the phenomenon under study and find the answers you are seeking.

Next, the interview material was examined. The researcher first read all descriptions in their entirety. Meanings were constructed from the significant statements from all transcripts. The author then extracted significant statements from each
description and the statements were then coded according to themes. Text was bracketed, coded and labeled into segments of text that spoke to the theory questions. The phenomenon was scrutinized. The data was inspected. The researcher found key phrases or statements that spoke directly to the subject under study. Themes and patterns began to emerge. The data are then organized into meaningful clusters. “Douglass has described this as ‘moving around the statue’ to see the same object from differing views” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 486.). This portion of the analysis is sometimes known as imaginative variation.

The researcher collected evidence from the interview materials and literature that spoke to each theory question. This added shape and definition to the study. As the researcher worked through the data, the researcher continued to write theoretical memos and free-association notes for myself. The process then moved into creating a textual representation of the data for each theme within the research. The text is illustrative of the phenomenon under study. Answers to the theory questions were developed.

According to Moustakas, (1994, p. 144) this final phase is “an integration of the composite textual and composite structural descriptions, providing a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experiences” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 486). In basic terms, all the material the researcher had that addressed each theory question is summed. Then, answers to each of theory question were generated and grouped. These answers lead to the answer of the central research question. What materialized is an illustration of the phenomenon. Then, the process of communicating the research findings in a creative
and meaningful manner began. Patton explains that creative synthesis is the combining of the pieces that have emerged into a total experience, showing patterns and relationships. To review this phenomenological method of analysis, Moustakas outlines it in four basic steps: epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and synthesis of texture and structure (Patton, 2002).

Case study data analysis is based on description and finding patterns (Creswell, 1998). The materials were sorted into categories and patterns and themes were noted. Meanings were formulated by reviewing and reflecting upon the data collected. The meanings were clustered into themes to be presented and the researcher integrated these themes into a narrative description. The relative literature was referenced. The qualitative researcher moved through these processes of analysis in investigative circles rather than using a predetermined step-by-step or systematic approach (Marshall and Rossman, 2010). In addition, “phenomenological analysis requires the researcher to state his or her assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation and then bracket or suspend these preconceptions in order to fully understand the experience of the subject and not impose an a priori hypothesis on the experience,” states Creswell (1998, p. 277). This process was completed.

The findings are displayed in tables, charts, photographs, diagrams and figures and make contrasts and comparisons in the data collected. The data composed a description encompassing the depth and breathe of Whiteness. The findings in the research presented
will provide added meaning to “Whiteness” as seen in history and by White educators in the United States today, specifically in rural, southeastern Ohio.

**Ethics, Credibility and Trustworthiness**

While it is my belief that you must understand yourself before you can appreciate and understand others; the researcher utilized bracketing to ensure the beliefs of the participants in this study wear clearly portrayed. The researcher’s goal was to learn their understanding of the phenomenon and not to reify my own agenda, regardless of its social justice underpinning. In all, the researcher believes that the methodology used in this inquiry highlighted the perspectives of the participants and placed their understandings and voices about Whiteness at the center of this study.

Before entering the field, the researcher completed a course on ethics and applied for research approval through the Ohio University Institutional Review Board (I. R. B.). The researcher’s proposal and description of field work were evaluated and approved. This application included a brief summary of this study and procedure together with a description of how ethical integrity of the study would be adhered. The description provided guidance for obtaining permission of the participants in the study.

Participation in the study was completely voluntary. The researcher will ensure confidentiality for those who participated in this study in any written or published materials of this work. The participants were compensated with a 10 dollar gift card for payment of their time. Following the interviews, the researcher provided the participants
with a note of thanks either through e-mail or letter. Transcripts were available to participants.

To promote credibility and trustworthiness of the study, this research used multiple data sources such as interviews, observations, and documents to collect data. This approach to credibility is called triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). The interview process was a purposeful sampling which according to Patton (2002) enhances research credibility. It permits researchers choose participants that will provide essential perspectives and relevant data on the phenomenon studied. Information received from well-selected representatives was rich. Through thick description of rural and rural southeastern Ohio area of the research, the researcher contextualized the study (Memam, 2002) with further ensures credibility of the research. In addition, I maintained reflexivity throughout the analysis process. The researcher continually positioned myself within my study and looked closely at my biases as an educator, researcher, White person and resident of rural southeastern Ohio.

**Self as Researcher**

I am a White, Caucasian American. What does that mean? Through my fine arts and cultural studies, I have explored the uniqueness of other ethnic and cultural groups within American heritages: African, Asian, Hispanic and others. Yet, I realize that one should have a full understanding of who they are. Many White Americans have little understanding of what it means to be White. Many have never paused to consider how they would define their White identity. This is a process that White teachers should
undertake. Many White Americans do, however, have assumptions about how they think others perceive them. These assumptions are varied. However, generally these perceptions are tied to the issue of racism. Many believe that all minorities see racists when they see White. They react with either defensiveness or historical guilt (Gallagher, 1994). I personally have experienced feelings of guilt. I have found myself attempting to make an exerted effort to reach out to minorities. I am aware that racist people are very aggressive and their opinions are known. However, I feel that good people are often quiet about their thoughts and actions. I try to constantly make small gestures and aim to contribute in large means to anti-racism. My studies of other cultures and efforts to instill respect and the desire to learn about others in my students are a portion of this endeavor. This research is another significant contribution to this effort.

Some White people believe that all minorities aspire to be like them. Any view of how others perceive White would be served by an examination of racist and anti-racist White behaviors in America. White citizens need to become educated not only on the negative aspects of their heritage but also the positive.

The researcher is among the demographic of participants in this phenomenological case study of how rural southeastern Ohio teachers perceive their Whiteness. It is important to note that the case researcher plays an important role in the case study design. According to Stake (1995), the case researcher can assume various “teacher, participant observer, interviewer, reader, storyteller, advocate, artist, counselor, evaluator, consultant, and others” (p. 91). The nature of the role that a researcher
assumes impacts the research design, process and analysis. I would categorize my role as interviewer and observer with a hint of educator mixed in. I did not actively attempt to change teachers views, however the interview process itself may have influenced thought or even action in considering Whiteness.

As a White woman who is a teacher from the region, it is important to continually question my own positionality as the research instrument. The experiences and characteristics of the researcher were examined. Additionally, the researcher’s attitudes in regard to the research topic and personal bias were inspected in order to identify factors that could influence data collection or analysis.

I am from a small town that is predominantly White. There was only one African American in my school and he was my good friend. As a young person, I studied dance. My African American friend also took dance lessons and upon occasion we preformed as partners. I knew he was a good, talented and intelligent person…I knew his skin color was different than mine but it was not until people began to harass me for dancing with him did I realize there was a racial problem in our society. It made me nervous to become aware of these attitudes. Yet, I remained steadfast and true to myself and my friend. My experiences with race as a young person were limited. However, my parents tried to give me opportunities to learn and discover different areas of study and people. I spent summers attending youth science and arts programs at universities, which allow me to become acquainted with varieties of people. I am a collegiate and public school educator. I am “White” or Caucasian. I am part of the ethnic, racial and cultural group
that underwent the study. I am a student of visual and performing arts, culture, education and people. Thriving on opportunities to learn about those in the world around me, I have created and taken opportunities to study in other countries and other regions of our country.

My experience in Japan was a crystallizing one. It was part of the inspiration for this study. Never before had I been a minority. On a busy street in Tokyo, I stood as the only White person I could see in a sea of hundreds of Japanese pedestrians. This was a new feeling. It made me look at myself differently. I was not the norm, model citizen. I was treated as a dignitary in most settings, however there were those who did not want or welcome White Americans. This, too, was significantly different experience for a White, middle class woman who is generally treated with respect. Also, during this experience, I was able to see the rich, history and culture that Japanese people possess and treasure. They can trace their origins back thousands of years. They are a very modern society that has had foresight to protect and cherish their heritage. This led me to consider my history, my heritage, and my identity.

If asked, there are several cultures that I could provide images, music, dance, and a general understanding of the customs, traditions, beliefs and ways of living that the group had in common. Yet, when I graduated from college, it would have been almost impossible for me to do this for my own cultural group or race. Personally, I have developed a sense of my own White racial identity and continue to pursue a better understanding.
As a classroom teacher, I have heard many young people make racist comments and parrot hate speech that they undoubtedly heard at home. It sickened me to think that White children, who had probably never met a person of color, could already have so many negative attitudes toward other human beings based on skin color. Students have even spouted out racial stereotypes, when a different minority group has been brought up in studies. This greatly concerns me for the future and our ability to peacefully coexist in a diverse world. As a technology integration coach utilizing video conferencing and establishing e-mails for students research and communication skills, it is evident their attitudes can be instantly conveyed to a mass audience. What is it we want students in the United States to be saying to and about people who may have different characteristics than ourselves. I wondered if other teachers were equipped to combat the racial ignorance that I have witnessed. I wondered what other teachers knew about race. I wondered if they knew how White we were. I wonder how they would define our race. I wanted answers and wanted to draw attention to the idea that twenty-first century teachers must be responsible for preparing students for success in global society that it diverse. I strongly believe that in order to truly appreciate other cultures or racial/ethnic groups, one must first understand themselves.

I feel the possible implications for this lack of understanding of Whiteness in our nation’s education system could be a concern. I believe topics of White identity development, privilege and guilt must be addressed by those who are to teach diverse populations as well as those who teach homogeneously White student populations. This
was the motivation for the research. With these factors acknowledged and in constant consideration throughout the research process, quality research was conducted.

**Limitations of Research**

This research was limited in that it does develop a meaning of Whiteness from the perspective of “others” (non-White persons). It is a sampling of the multiple perspectives of White teachers that exist in a specific region. Further, it is also not inclusive of all the opinions and definitions of Whiteness that exist among Caucasian teachers. It is intended to provide some basic form and shape of Whiteness according to the specific participants of this study. They were selected to represent teachers from the rural southeastern Ohio context of the research. Furthermore, the research, focused on rural teachers, therefore, may not be used to generalize the views of all teachers throughout the nation.

Case studies are difficult to generalize because of inherent subjectivity and because they are based on qualitative subjective data. Case studies can only be generalized to a particular context. However, as a case study, the findings may be transferrable to similar contexts (Creswell, 1998). It is representative of those who have taught predominately-White populations. In addition, the researcher sees potential for a closer examination of classroom curriculum, practices and teaching methods regarding Whiteness. This aspect, however, because of limited time and access, was not fully addressed in this research.
Chapter 4: Historical Examination of Whiteness in the United States

Introduction

To be an affective educator, this researcher asserts that you must know where you come from and the historical manner in which others perceive you and your culture. Over eighty percent of all teachers in the United States identified themselves as White non-Hispanic in 2000 (p. 40, Digest of Education Statistics, 2002). Their racial identity may have an impact on the manner in which students are educated. As a Caucasian teacher in the United States, the researcher has attempted to understand the impact of Whiteness in our society and education system. This particular portion of my study attempts to understand how Whiteness has been shaped and can be identified in the United States through various mediums and cultural artifacts. The foundation of this research is a thorough study of the existing literature on the historical, social and cultural identity of White Americans. This chapter is a response to the question, “Who or what defines Whiteness in the United States?”

Who We Are in the United States

We are a nation of immigrants. The term immigrant is synonymous with foreigner, newcomer, settler, nonnative, outlander, naturalized citizen, adoptive citizen, resident alien and hyphenated American (Webster’s, 2009). There are many reasons for this immigration to occur. According to Webster’s Law Dictionary (2006), “immigration is the act of entering a country with the intention of remaining there permanently.” Most immigrants in early America were seeking sanctuary from hard times in their homeland.
They were searching for a better life for themselves and their children: religious and political freedoms. Some left their homelands because of natural disasters. Many new immigrants left home because their countries were overly populated and competition for economic fortitude drove them to seek work elsewhere. For many new immigrants, improving their economic life or hope of “economic betterment” was at the centerpiece of their decision to migrate to America (Daniels, 2002; Smith and Edmonston, 1997).

This process of immigration occurred in waves throughout American history. The waves have added people from different parts of the old countries to the new land. Over the years, the great melting pot bubbled with new unique blends of citizens, according to some multiculturalists. This description implies all citizens and their ethnic, cultural or racial variances are blended together to create a unified recipe for Americans. Others recognize that the mixture of citizens have created more of a salad bowl. The salad bowl represents a mixture of citizens in our multicultural society retaining their unique characteristics or properties yet integrated with a variety of others like lettuce, tomatoes, onions and croutons in a mixed salad. Getting along with new kinds of people, adapting to them and they adapting to those who had already been here was integral to the development of the United State’s culture. Diverse immigrants became Americans and America became diverse. Yet, schools have proceeded with the idea of the melting pot, with citizens blending into a model American designed by public schools. This may be a factor why schools seem to disregard issues of race and ethnicity. Further, White culture remains the dominant culture or the norm in society and schools (Spring, 2007).
Millions of immigrants have come to North America over the past 500 years. However, this land was inhabited for thousands of years before they arrived. The first Americans were Native Americans. They came to North America across the Bering Land Bridge from Siberia in Eastern Asia during the last Ice Age; 12,000 to 35,000 years ago (Downs, 1969). Groups such as the Anasazi the “Ancient Ones” and Mississipians developed very complex civilizations before Europeans arrived (Sharp, 2002). Knowing that the first inhabitants of North America, specifically what is now the United States, were Native Americans, then, who are the White people, which became the dominant and privileged race in American society?
There had been a “White invasion” by early Vikings (see Figure 3), which abandoned America after facing the Native Americans in battle (Kendrick, 1968). Then, the European exploration of the Americas began in the late 1400s. As we know European pilgrims, colonists or settlers were the next wave of European immigrants to America. Initially, they were primarily English speaking people from Britain (Kemp, 2008). The British settled along the Atlantic coast and Spaniards settled in Florida. As the European population grew, competition for land grew more intense. “Europeans often took land from Native Americans without paying for it” (Bednarz, Miyares, Schug...
and White, 2003, p. 89), this led to distrust and war. This period changed the population from a primarily Native American nation to a land dominated by the developing “White” man (Lesiak and Jones, 1991).

**Killing a Nation, Enslaving Others and Establishing Whiteness: 1607 to 1880**

How was the idea of Whiteness shaped in the United States from about 1607 to 1880, colonial times through the antebellum period, while slavery was practiced? This is a complex question and there is not a black and White answer. Whiteness became defined often by what it is not; thus, there are many shades of gray. The leaders in our nation focused energies on defining all the “others.” The English did this by developing their own distinction between “civilization” and “savagery” (Takaki, 1992). They identified characteristics that were unacceptable or undesirable, this included darker skin tones. Skin tone bias exists in many cultures throughout the world and it became a clear definer for privilege in early American society (Hraba, 1994). “Indians seemed to lack everything the English identified as civilized Christianity, cities, clothing and sword” (Takaki, 1993, p. 31). While defining what was not desirable, they were simultaneously defining the preferred characteristics of citizens in the United States. Therefore, it is appropriate to examine the “other” in attempting to define how Whiteness was shaped. One can find these discourses promoted in religious, educational and political settings of the period.
Colonial Migration and White Men Becoming Masters; 1607 to 1783.

During the colonial period in American History, from 1607 to the adoption of the Constitution in 1776, there were not that many people in the land that would become the United States of America. “Most settlers who came to America in the 17th century were English, but there were also Dutch, Swedes and Germans in the middle region, a few French Huguenots in South Carolina and elsewhere, slaves from Africa, primarily in the South, and a scattering of Spaniards, Italians and Portuguese throughout the colonies,” according to a report prepared for the US Embassies to other countries (US Embassy, 2009, para. one). Although various cultural groups were represented, they still did not create as large of an American population as one might imagine. According to Roger Daniels (2002), in Coming to America, “fewer than a million came --- some six hundred thousand Europeans and perhaps three hundred thousand Africans” (p. 30). Even though the Native people were culturally and ethnically different from the many Europeans that came to the shores of the continent, after wars, genocide and enslavement of millions of Africans, Whites became the dominant cultural and racial group (Bay, 2000). With this background in mind, let us examine how Whiteness was shaped through literature, religious materials, theater, consumer culture and other forms of media that influenced society. Within this discourse, the researcher included some discussion of the role of schools, church and state as forums for distributing propaganda and literature regarding race.
Beginning in 1619, enslaved Africans were forced to immigrate to America. Although all people of African descent did not arrive by choice, they helped build America and influence monumental changes in American culture (Bay, 2000; Bennett, 1993; Fredrickson, 1971). Servitude or slavery provided free labor that contributed to the growth of the colonies. According to an Oregon Public Broadcasting (2003-2009), “In 1619, the first black Africans came to Virginia. With no slave laws in place, they were initially treated as indentured servants.” This originally gave the opportunity for future freedoms. However, this quickly changed as slave laws were enacted and freedoms granted or promised were taken away. In addition to the African slave population, in the early years of settlement in America, there was a large contingency of White indentured servants (Ellis Island, 2004).

At Ellis Island on a research expedition, the researcher found an image that would surprise many people. It compares the number of White slave immigrants (left- blue representation) and Black slave immigrants (right- red immigrants) in America. As you can see there were many more White indentured servants brought to America at this time than Black slaves. The White indentured servants outnumbered the African American slaves between 1619 and 1649 (Ellis Island, 2004).
There was a demand or desire for White labor. Passenger lists of ships arriving from England were mainly comprised of White servants with a much smaller percentage of upper class. The White servant filled many roles to meet labor demands and provide defense. The path into servitude was varied. Some were convicts that were removed from England. Others of various nationalities that were poor Protestants from Europe agreed to servitude in order to leave Europe because of economic oppression and other reasons. Evidence of European indentured servants can be found through advertisements for runaway or fugitive English indentured servants that were posted in...
the Pennsylvania Gazette beginning in 1729-1760. Advertisements for masters seeking their runaway English servants included 686 Irish, 296 English, 106 Dutch and a sprinkling of French, Italian German and Spanish representatives (Daniels, 2002).

During the colonial period, indentured servants comprised the largest part of the immigrant population. It is important to note that since about half the Europeans and all the Africans were, to one degree or another were unfree, the free immigrant was the minority during this time frame (Ellis Island, 2004).

The wealthy wielded the power. Pessen (1973) in Riches, class, and power before the Civil War provides a nauseating portrayal of the self-important and self-segregated rich who spent their time controlling civic association, city governments, managing family businesses and partaking of idle entertainment. In time, the wealthy and servant class European groups began to be identified by the color of their skin rather than their class status (Pessen, 1973). These groups melted into each other. However, the dominant cultural progenitors became the English or British Protestants.

Regardless whether they were free or indentured servants, the majority of immigrants at this time were British. In A Piece of the Pie (1980) Stanley Lieberson explained that, “The European heritage in the United States is enormous. One need only list the impact of British legal traditions, the English language, religious institutions, technology and various forms of social organization to recognize this linkage,” (Lieberson, 1980, p. 39).
British European male leaders influenced formal education in the colonies. Protestants from northern Europe established strategies for educating their youth. From 1607 until 1750, the Puritans felt it was not only their responsibility to establish a model Christian community for themselves, but to also set an example for the Old World. They believed that religious and moral education was one and the same. The mother and father equally involved in moral education of their children. Parents were held socially and legally responsible for their children's behavior (Stephenson, 1978). They felt the family was responsible for the education of their children. This strict “at home” training of reading, writing, religion and ethics was supplemented through apprenticeships, churches, schools and community. Regional variations occurred in this Puritan approach (Foster, 1991).

With the hardships that they faced, it became difficult for colonists to carry out the task of educating their children. During this trying time, they maintained that the moral education of their children was of utmost importance. Yet, many colonists taught their children and other’s lessons about race through their actions. They were participants in the marginalizing and mistreatment of the indigenous Native Americans. Further, as time passed, the colonial elite landowners viewed African slaves as a more profitable and renewable source of labor. The workforce of the colonies shifted from indentured servants to African slaves who unlike European indentured servants were easier to identify and return to their masters (Powell, 1995). This distinction of “the other” as uncivilized or unworthy of their own land and the business of buying and
selling Africans as slaves implemented a new society. American society became dominated by phenotypic differences as a means to secure economic, social and political wealth and “Whiteness” or the appearance of pale skin became the indicator of such opportunities (Bay, 2000; Fredrickson, 1971; Takaki, 1992, 1993).

Beginning around 1750, people became comfortable with their surroundings and their ability to cope with change, without losing their moral character. The colonies were becoming “civilized.” There were variations among denominations; however, the overall colonial tone was Christian. Because of the strong trust for their community, schools spread in towns and rural parents began to hire tutors to finish moral and academic education leaving religious education completely in the hands of the church. Therefore, Sunday schools became more popular and schools were built in large numbers (McClellan, 1999).

With the popularity of attending church and Sunday school growing, so did the number of people who could be influenced by the church. Sermons were a means to convey messages to the masses. In addition, religious ideas were disseminated in schools. The Bible was the most widely read book in colonial America and people used interpretations of it to support their ideas of slavery. The Bible was often used as textbook, in the early stages of public education. The Bible had many interpretations depending on the teacher or preacher. Among some of the religions discourse were interpretations of the Bible that assured “good people” that slavery was appropriate (Bradley, 1998).
The White, English man played the role of the suppressor to people of color, women and the poor. English men were the only “masters” in our country. Africans were slaves. Women were not allowed to vote, were considered to have inferior mental capabilities to that of the English man and were segregated from the men in church and town meetings. White, European, wealthy, male dominance had become the structure for the new land (Daniels, 2002).

Surprisingly, even William Penn, known for his vision for liberty, played the role of “master” and had a blind spot regarding slavery. A portrayal of Penn meeting with the colonists is shown in Figure 5. “He owned some slaves in America, as did many other Quakers. Antislavery didn't become a widely shared Quaker position until 1758, 40 years after Penn's death,” (Powell, 1995, para. four). Yet, Quakers were ahead of most Americans in their forward thinking about freedoms for all men.
The colonies' attention turned toward independence from Great Britain. The American Revolutionary War began in 1775. In 1776, the colonies officially declared their independence. However, the war continued through 1783, at which time the new nation went about its business of establishing order and documenting the new government (Steel and Morris, 1958).

**Creating American Whiteness; 1783 to 1880.**

Legislation was passed and implemented that helped define the White man’s position in American society. The Constitution was adopted on September 17, 1787, by
the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was then ratified by conventions in each U.S. state. In June of 1788, after the ninth state ratified the constitution, leaders felt the majority had accepted and action could begin (USConstitution.net, 2010). The controversial issue of slavery had not been resolved during the constitutional convention. As a result, in 1789 when the new government went into effect, the contents of United States Constitution contributed to shaping Whiteness.

Children, I talks to God and God talks to me. I goes out and talks to God in de fields and de woods. Dis morning I was walking out, and I got over de fence. I saw de wheat a holding up its head, looking very big. I goes up and takes holt ob it. You b'lieve it, dere was no wheat dare? I says, God, what is de matter wid dis wheat? and he says to me, "Sojourner, dere is a little weasel in it." Now I hears talkin' about de Constitution and de rights of man. I comes up and I takes hold of dis Constitution. It looks mighty big, and I feels for my rights, but der aint any dare. Den, I says, God, what ails dis Constitution? He says to me, "Sojourner, dere is a little weasel in it.” (Truth as cited in Bennet, 1993).

Sojourner Truth, African American slave; preacher and advocate of various social reforms, made an insightful analogy between the Constitution and to a weavel (weasel) that she observed had subversously destroyed the wheat crop in Ohio from the inside of the plant (Cone, 1987).
The original Constitution contained four provisions tacitly allowing slavery to continue for the next 20 years. Section 9 of Article I allowed the continued "importation" of such persons, Section 2 of Article IV prohibited the provision of assistance to escaping persons and required their return if successful. Article 1, section 2, paragraph 3 stated that, “Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons” (U.S. Constitution; Taylor, 2000).

According to Fallbrook (1995), in the constitution, “All other persons meant black slaves. All qualified historians accept this designation” (p. A-6). Consequently, White became the designation for European men in these now United States.

Article V prohibited any amendments or legislation changing the provision regarding slave importation until 1808, thus giving the States 20 years to resolve this issue. The failure to do so was a contributing factor to the Civil War (South Carolina Declaration of Causes in Secession, December 24, 1860).

Other governmental documents were twisted to support slavery, also. They evaded applying the human rights and freedoms laid out in our Declaration of Independence and the preamble in the U.S. Constitution to people of African descent. Through the use of legislation, racism was indoctrinated into our society and the message spread throughout our growing nation.
Religion’s Role in Whiteness

Religion was used to support leader’s decisions. The King James Version of Ephesians 6:5 states, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.” Those who wished it saw scriptures like these as religion’s approval of slavery. Others interpreted scriptures to support that slaves were meant to be the dark skinned people of Africa according to the “curse on Canaan” (Goldenberg, 2003). The curse is described in Genesis,

The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he
planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant‖ (King James Bible, Genesis 9:18-29).

Interpretations came out in discussions, lessons and sermons somewhat differently. A few used the curse of Canaan to justify slavery, and later the discrimination against people of African descent. They argued that Ham, who was believed to be the father of the “Black race”, was the one who actually committed the sin. He was cast off and settled in what is now Ethiopia and all of his descendants (not just those of his son Canaan) were cursed into slavery and should serve others. “The belief that the skin color of black people is a result of a curse on Ham and his descendants is taught nowhere in the Bible. Furthermore, it was not Ham who was cursed; it was his son, Canaan (Gen. 9:18, 25; 10:6), and Canaan’s descendants were probably brown-skinned (Gen. 10:15–19)” as explained by Wieland and Batten in “Chapter 6: Are black people the result of a curse on Ham?” in One Blood: The Biblical Answer to Racism (2001). With this definition of the “other’s” as cursed, it adds to the shape of Whiteness.
By not saying anything about White people and by saying much about their view of “others,” it establishes a great deal about Whiteness. Thus, biblical and legal sanctions were used to legitimate the continued enslavement of people of African descent. Races became White and other including Blacks, Native people and any person who did not look “White.” The United States became a land whereby White men and women were the ordained shareholders of all of the bounty of the land.

**Cultural and Common School Connections to the Construction of Whiteness**

As society in America changed, so did trends in education. After the Revolution, many felt that education was in the public interest. The means of educating students in academics became diverse: private schools that taught what the parents paid to have taught. Academies and colleges were available for those who could afford it. Beadie explains that many pieces of literature consider venture schools, dame schools and academies to be interchangeable in terms of educational formats. Venture schools were supported entirely by tuition and focused upon one or two subjects. Dame schools were a specific type of venture school that taught basic literacy, simple math and sewing. Academies were a venture schools that were likely named “academies” to add prestige to their institution (Beadie, 2002). Some charity schools for those who could not afford education were sometimes created by churches or other organizations. Local, district schools were funded by local or state tax money and ran by locally elected trustees. Many thought education was a worthwhile cause and endeavor but there was not a
consensus on who should control the educational system, what should be taught or who should pay for it (McClellan, 1999; Tyack and Hansot, 1982).

Some statesmen attempted to address the new independence and Westward movement with a national approach to education. Their concept eventually evolved into the common school. The Common School adapted some of the ideas and processes from the American Sunday School Union to promote their own goals (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). They felt that a common public school system could promote civil peace, moral actions of our citizens and prosperity. Thomas Jefferson, Noah Webster and Benjamin Rush were among those who became involved in campaigning for state systems of public's schools (Stone Lantern Films, 2001). Thomas Jefferson was without a doubt an education advocate but not an advocate for all. His ideas would be far from politically correct today. His education plan was not for all people. He proposed a three level system of education in 1779 that was never adopted. It advocated for the following: three years of primary education for all girls and boys; advanced studies for a select number of boys; a state scholarship to the College of William and Mary for one bright boy from each district every two years (Jefferson, 1784). Male students were favored over females and there was no mention of education for slaves. Slow progress was made toward public education and educational access differed based on region (Appleby and Schlesinger, 2003; Watras, 2008). Further, the purpose of schools was anything but universal (Pulliam and Patten, 1999).
The United States took the first modern census in 1790. It became a constitutional mandate. The results found 3,929,214 persons of which 3.1 million were considered White and 750,000 Black. The Native American population was not counted. These numbers would suggest that the “White” population had grown five times larger and the “Black” population had doubled. The researcher used quotes to surround White and Black because this is one of the first official records of grouping all light-skinned people together as well as all dark skinned people together regardless of their assorted national origins. The census information also tells us that just over three-fifths of the White population was calculated to be of English stock and more than two-fifths of the rest came from the British Isles (Gibson, 2005).

In 1798, during Federalist President John Adam’s term, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Alien Act gave the president the power to imprison or exile immigrants who posed a concern to the government. The Naturalization Act demanded that an immigrant must live in the United States for 14 years before citizenship could be granted (Schultz and Vile, 2005). This official act could be interpreted as developing prejudice to the new immigrants that were not of the original wave of immigrants. One group of immigrants was able to place judgment on new groups of immigrants.

Education in the United States continued to evolve. In northeastern United States, the Common schooling movement was lead by Horace Mann. He wanted to consolidate our diffused means of education into one system where school was free, financed by local and state government, controlled by local boards of education, mixing all social groups
under one roof and offering an education of such quality that no parent would want to take their child elsewhere (Messerli, 1972). “Educate the rising generation mentally, morally, physically, just as it should be done and this nation and this world would reach the millennium within one hundred years," said Senator Henry Blair (as cited in Tyack and Hansot, 1982, p. 15). Across America, lessons about Christianity or generalized Protestant beliefs were widely accepted as part of the daily curriculum. Tyack and Hansot (1982) point out that the educational leaders of the 1800’s tried to establish common education for all Americans. They argued, “School promoters were typically British American in origin, Protestant in religion and entrepreneurial in economic outlook. Although they tried to speak for all Americans, they wore blinders of their class, religion, and ethnic background” (p. 21), when establishing an education system that would require others to conform to their values. Leaders like Horace Mann and William McGuffey felt their worldview was shared by all right thinking people. They had good intentions. They saw their role as only reinforcing their common values and teaching those values to the youth of America. However, this group of reformers created a system that required reform.

The White male leaders of our nation were striving to teach Republican values, encourage loyalty to a new nation, develop patriotism, educate students on virtues and teach academics of reading and writing. They hoped to create citizens that could be positive contributors in our society. They wished to help immigrants learn English and the values of the majority of America. Finally, they aimed to instill values like
punctuality, hard work, respect for authority and academic success in the youth of our nation (Tyack and Hansot, 1982).

As part of the development of the Common schools, textbooks were written to portray a nation of immigrants that were welcome as long as they adapted to the “Puritan” outlook. The founders of our education system seemed to believe that foreign-born Americans should assimilate themselves to preexisting Anglo-Saxon traditions, democracy, religion, language and culture (McClellan, 1999). By encouraging this, through education, the newcomers’ cultural differences would almost evaporate.

According to American history, Christopher Columbus (see Figure 7) discovered this land (Redway and Hinman, 1915). Native Americans were lazy (Steele and Steele, 1900). Chinese were capable railroad workers and African Americans were content serving the needs of their White masters. These are just a few examples of how textbooks created an image of Whiteness, perpetuated ignorance and promoted propaganda about the “inferior” or “undesirable” races (McMaster, 1901).
During the colonial period and beyond, the qualities of a good teacher included descriptions like earnest, Christian character, pure and a true scholar. Yet, the latter of those seemed less important. Teachers were thought of as having a calling in the profession. Women were preferred (Tappan, 1883). They were young, poorly paid and rarely educated beyond elementary subjects (McClellan, 1999). They were certainly not educated on issues of racism and diversity. There was little training beyond "normal"
classes (Fraser, 2007). This system underwent many alterations in approach and the curriculum that was taught. Education reformers mixed religion, politics and economics into their vision of common values. They created a Protestant Republican ideological belief system for schools (Tyack and Hansot, 1982).

Between 1830 and 1860, “Americans began to construct a vast new system of public schools that would quickly become the most important educational institutions of the nineteenth century” (McClellan, 1999, p. 22). There was now an educational system in place that had a uniform purpose. It possessed some structured and basic curriculum. Yet, there were many variations at a local level. The census of 1850 reported approximately 80,000 public's schools. 80% of Americans lived in places that were called rural (U.S. Census Bureau, 1850). These and other facts show us the majority of our schools were rural one-room buildings. These schools, however, were not open to slaves or many poor Whites. The doors to education swung open more often for White, males with wealth providing them further advantages in society (Spring, 2007; Watras, 2008).

### Cultural Evidence of the Development of Whiteness

Around the same time, there was a new cultural forum for shaping ideas on race in the United States; the minstrel show. In the 1830s, working class White men dressed up as slaves, wore outlandish costumes, painted their faces black and created spoofs on the lives of African slaves. This form of entertainment became quite popular (Mahar, 1998).
“The ability to assign primitiveness to other people affirmed the sense of belonging and entitlement that American national membership promised. And enjoying the ability to do this as an audience member was a popular form of entertainment in the nineteenth century.” as Linda Frost in *Never one Nation* explains (2005, p. 4). In a minstrel show (see Figure 8), the performers imitated African American music and dance forms in a variety style show. African Americans were not the sole targets of the jokes but the “yellow skinned” Mexicans were included in the negative discourse that occurred between the performers and the audience about the savage, dirty and ignorant “others.”

*Figure 8.* Unknown artist. (c 1899). *A new first part, composed of the best end men, the most brilliant vocalists and expert musicians in America.* [Poster print]. Published by Cincinnati; New York: Strobridge Litho. Company. Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-21475A, b and w film copy neg. of whole poster). Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA.
By the Civil War, the minstrel show was considered respectable. While in “blackface,” it was acceptable for the actors to participate in vulgar and disorderly behavior into their supposedly comic performances (Roediger, 2002).

Roediger, in *The Wages of Whiteness* (2002), explained that this format of entertainment served multiple purposes. It defined African Americans and at the same time gave definition to Whiteness. It gave poor, working class Whites a feeling of connection to the middle and upper class Whites and a sense of privilege (Henretta, 1977). It provided Whites a distinction from the African slave population by laughing at the plight of the poor, ignorant, darkies in the skits. As a witness to performances of minstrel shows, the researcher saw people joyfully participate in the mockery of African Americans and crowds of people delighted by the caricature of Black life. Somehow, by putting others down, they felt lifted up. While dramatizing and creating satire about the “others”, the shapers of this cultural icon were providing criteria for Whiteness. Thus, they defined their Whiteness in the theater as the opposite of Black culture.

In the middle of the 1800’s, while people were defining their racial identity in their social lives, common school activists were struggling to form its identity for public education. The chief goal of common school activists was to attract citizens to support and send their children to public schools. The common school reformers including Mann and others across the nation made various compromises to avoid completely alienating groups of people. The reformers tried to find a middle ground for values and interests. The mainstream common school reformers sought to assimilate “foreigners “to their own
version of Americanism (Tyack and Hansot, 1982) and it was defined by “Whiteness,” particularly based on the Anglo-Saxon Protestants traditions and cultural ways of being.

Conflicts arose on various issues, although there was a consensus for the need to have formal education in moral training of the young. Conflicts centered on the instruction of languages other than English, religion, the use of the Bible, ethnicity and public funding of schools and who would be educated. With only a few exceptions, foreign language was discouraged in schools to the point that children began to look negatively upon their own parents for speaking their native tongue. Public school leaders were not accepting of the Roman Catholic Church and these attitudes forced the Catholics into developing a separate parochial-school system that would meet their needs. Catholics were in strong opposition to the current public school because the King James Bible was used, slurs against their religion or ethnic groups were in the school readers and they were forced to pay taxes for these Pan-Protestant common schools while being denied public funds for their own parochial schools. Therefore, compromise continued. Yet, even when districts banned the use of the bible in public school, Catholic clergy were instructed to insist parents in their congregation to continue sending their children to parochial schools (McClelland, 1999; Tyack and Hansot, 1982; Watras, 2008).

Southern states did not share the belief that education was important for all. A large portion of the population was not receiving any educational opportunities (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005). Only those who could pay received an education. There were laws making it a crime to teach Africans to read and only one/fifth of the
Whites were literate. There was not a common goal or value on public education. “They had a class of non-citizens – the slaves – and large slave holders had doubts about the value of education even for Whites, if they were poor and powerless” (Tyack and Hansot, 1982, p. 85).

The image of Whiteness truly begins to blur when White people opposed other White people. In 1843, the American or Know-Nothing Party was formed to block immigrant assimilation into society. Its members opposed immigration, despised Catholicism and sought to ban Catholic schools. Like the nativist to follow, they envisioned themselves the defenders of traditions held by the native-born (excluding the native born American Indian, of course). This is another example of battles about differences that were not necessarily race related. It was ethnic and culture related. People were separated by nationalities, religions and languages. No one group of immigrants acted in chorus on topics. Some attempted to retain their unique traditions in their mini-nations in neighborhoods while others attempted to fit the mold of the developing dominant culture. Lines of division were truly clouded (Jacobson, 2003).

**Whiteness as Evidenced by Material Culture**

Outside the theater, religion, government and schools, Whiteness was being shaped by material things in the nineteenth century. House wares were a distinction among civilized and uncivilized people in the United States or Whites and non-Whites. White goods, such as ceramics, gravestones, houses and women's clothing, became popular in the late eighteenth century among the elite. Heneghan (2007) in her chapter
entitled, “White Goods and the Construction of Race in Antebellum America” argued that, “The language of tableware belonged exclusively to the White ladies who gather each afternoon for cold drinks, but although the ceramics constitute a “White” language, they carry message for the Black servants of the household also” (p. 3). A White woman’s dinnerware, table linens, clothes, undergarments, house paint, furniture, and other interior decor was a significant means to separate the masses. Slaves used wooden plates and earthenware. The White population used utensils to eat with, rather than hands and particular sets of manners. One either was “White” and had such finery and social grace or did not and was considered Black, regardless of skin color.

Material Whiteness could be seen in other forms as well. After the revolution, architecture became a key symbol of Whiteness in the United States. Gregorian and Gothic style homes became the favored White exterior appearance of a civilized home replacing cabins and Medieval style lodging. In addition, society made the distinction of grave markers a dividing line between races and classes. The poor and slaves had wooden markers that were easily destroyed, while the “White” population displayed monuments to their deceased made from granite and imported marble.

White goods were not only more popular as the nineteenth century progressed, but became more highly valued than non-White items. In favoring White materials, Heneghan (2007) suggests, the White elite was justifying the racial pecking order and making assertions about the worth of White versus Black people and their ways. So, entrenched in society was distinction of Whiteness through White materials it is
substantiated in the literary works of White authors like James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville and others (Heneghan, 2007).

Some literature contributed to the stereotypes of alienated Americans. The literature that was being read by the masses tainted their view of men of a different color. The characters in stories became representative of entire groups of people to the general reading population. Toni Morrison, in *Playing in the Dark* (1992), argues that the autonomy, authority, and absolute power of the dominant White population were shaped and activated by a complex reaction to Africanism or the “others.” Morrison points out that literature characterized the high White ground, generating class lines that caused people to fear being cast out to the category of the “other.”

According to Heneghan, in *White Washing America*, Herman Melville included the concept of Whiteness in the famous 1846 edition of *Moby Dick*. Melville does mention an ancient vision of Whiteness from the Book of Revelations, where “White robes are given to the redeemed, and the four-and-twenty elders stand clothed in White before the great White throne, and the Holy One that sitteth there White like wool” (Melville, 1926, p. 200). Heneghan (2007) explains that,

If Whiteness and White robes represented moral purity, filth was aligned with their opposite, blackness and black things. Spiritual purity became translated into visual terms as physical cleanliness; (White) racial purity was translated into Whiteness of skin; the need to deny either tint or taint merged into an understanding of racial Whiteness that demanded perfectly White skin that was unobstructed by
dirt, freckles, or markings and corroborated by other well-cared-for White things.

(pp. 133-134)

Clearly, Whiteness was being consciously and unconsciously melded into the very fabric of American culture and ways of being. Anything other than “White” culture was not deemed as American.

**Literature and Whiteness**

Another way society constructed Whiteness and deconstructed others was through literature that portrayed the relationships between master and slave as a positive and amenable way of life for all. *Swallow Barn* (1832) was a novel that portrayed the life of a slave as an agreeable way of life for people. Author, John Pendleton Kennedy, through colorful language, conjures up a tale of a pleasant life as a slave. He explains that these good natured, care free and happy slaves enjoyed their simple, picturesque cabins. The description of the cabin was the least of the falsehoods spread by this piece of literature. The manner in which slavery is presented in this book might make the White reader feel benevolent in providing any type of shelter for the half monkey and half boy savage slave that served them (Kennedy, 1832). Another example is a story called "The Gold-Bug" written by Edgar Alan Poe. It was first published in Philadelphia's *The Dollar Newspaper* in June of 1843 as the winner of a literacy contest. It was celebrated as a popular success, selling record issues. People found the tale of Legrand and his ignorant, but loveable black sidekick Jupiter amusing. This story clearly reflects racist sentiment of the time. Jupiter is constantly insulted and is portrayed as incompetent. Even his
name Jupiter, is designed as a joke to the audience of that day. Jupiter was named after the Roman King of the Heavens, yet the story leads the reader to believe that Jupiter could not possibly survive without Legrand. When Jupiter tries to interject in the conversation about the gold bug, he is quickly silenced and directed to complete a menial task (Kennedy and Weisberg, 2001). Further, Jupiter was supposedly not a slave but recognized Legrand as his master, contributing to the solidification of racial roles, as demonstrated in this except,

It was about a month after this (and during the interval I had seen nothing of Legrand) when I received a visit, at Charleston, from his man, Jupiter. I had never seen the good old Negro look so dispirited, and I feared that some serious disaster had befallen my friend.

"Well, Jup," said I, "what is the matter now? -- how is your master?"

"Why, to speak de troof, massa, him not so berry well as mought be." (Poe, 2002, p. 76)

The literature being published addressed race. However, the arguments against slavery and poor treatment of African people were yet to be as well addressed as the pro-slavery and prejudiced voice within those publications. Harriet Beecher Stowe would not publish her own *Uncle Tom's Cabin* until 1852. Literature of Faulkner, Hemingway, Twain and O’Connor, seemed to have an anti-racist sentiment. They expressed alternative views on people of African descent. Some of their writings had characters that were racist. It is possible, however, that the actions of the racist characters made
some realize the absurdity of the behaviors connected to racist ideas. All of these literary works show examples of how popular literature painted a picture of Whites and Blacks.

Our country began to evolve. The first Emancipation Proclamation from Lincoln was issued in 1862, the second was in 1863, and finally slavery ended in the United States in 1865 with the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment (U.S. Constitution, 2011). The people who were once slaves were not treated equitably or justly even after slavery ended. Through this transition, literature continued to play a role in race issues. Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1912) reflects his life experiences, including a shift in thinking about race. Twain was born Samuel Clemens in Florida. Later, his family moved to Missouri, a slave state. In the summers, he spent time at his uncle’s farm. He played in the slave quarters, enjoying African American spirituals and folk tales and gaining experiences that inspired many of his stories.
In the beginning, Huck, the lead character in *Huckleberry Finn*, treats Jim with the same sense of superiority as Legrand addressed Jupiter in “The Gold Bug,” (Poe, June 1843) although he later learns to respect and appreciate Jim as an equal.

Most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine. Huck Finn is drawn from life; Tom Sawyer also, but not from an individual -- he is a combination of the characteristics of three boys whom I knew, and therefore belongs to the composite order of architecture. The odd superstitions touched upon were all prevalent among children and slaves in the West at the
period of this story -- that is to say, thirty or forty years ago. Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in (Twain, 1876, preface).

During this period, language, literature, education, church, cultural practices, material goods and our government defined what was desirable, proper and White.

**Blending Whiteness: 1880 to 1925**

How was the idea of Whiteness shaped in the United States during the Golden Age of Immigration through different media or material culture? Whiteness continued to be shaped during this period through the institutions and policies formed by the White male protestant leaders of the nation. Evidence of the construction of Whiteness can be found in examining the education system, government immigration procedures and politics, news media, literature, theater and cultural materials demonstrating White influence on society. Yet, during this time the color lines blurred and bled. The bleeding came from those who regardless of their skin color, or intelligence in their native tongue were suddenly cast into a not White or not so White category. Whiteness, as throughout time, was very much about class and excluding the “others.” from entrée into their “civilized” circles. Quite often, the rules changed to maintain this exclusion.
New Immigrants

It is an interesting theme throughout different literature that early immigrants were labeled as “colonists,” “explorers,” “pilgrims” or “settlers.” Later immigrants are known as “immigrants” in a manner that almost seems to be derogatory in some literature. Daniels, author of *Coming to America* (2002), agrees with this perspective and points to works by Francis Amasa Walker who was the first president of the American Economic Association. Walker felt that “immigrants caused the fertility of so called ‘Americans’ to decline, few scholars believe such things today” (p. 28).

“During the Gilded Age—defined here as the period from 1871 to 1901—11.7 million persons are recorded as immigrating to the United States” (Daniels, 1997, para. four). This migratory period is coined the New Immigration by scholars because it differed from earlier immigration patterns in several ways. In the old immigration movement, people were looking for a new permanent home. However, the new immigration wave consisted primarily of individuals who had no intention of permanently residing in the United States. They sought to take advantage of the wages and available jobs and then return home with their gains. (United States Immigration Commission, 1991).

Most of these immigrants were young males in their teens or early twenties who left behind families, home, communities – even sometimes their wives and children. They were seeking job opportunities and many would send for their family once they could afford it and they were settled. Someone had to pave the way for his or her new
life. Germans, British, Irish, Scandinavians, Italians, Austro-Hungarian and people from Russian Empire led in the immigration numbers, during the Gilded-Age (Daniels, 1997).

Between 1880 and 1930, there were an estimated 27 million people in this “new wave.” This was the largest infusion of immigration in United States American history (Daniels, 2002; Ellis Island Foundation, 2010). The Industrial Revolution was taking over Europe. Factories were replacing farms and household production. People were moving to cities like London, Hamburg and Amsterdam to survive. Millions moved further. People had to look for new means to survive. Many were immigrating to America where wages were higher, food was more plentiful and land was easier to buy. In Europe: Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Russia the farmers and artisans were displaced. Armenians were escaping massacre in Turkey. In addition, Europe was at war with itself. Many were leaving for religious freedom.

Until the late 1800’s, most immigrants had been of the same kind of Anglo-Saxon stock from Western Europe. Then, the origin of our immigrants changed and the definition of Whiteness was not bound by the color of skin. Out of those who chose America as their new home, the main source of immigration had once been northern and western Europeans. About 80% of the “new immigrants” it seemed were coming from southern and Eastern Europe. Italians, Greeks, Lithuanians, Latvians, Poles and Russians began to add to the texture of American life and culture. In the 1880s, 47.5% of those who came to the United States emigrated from Italy, Poland and Russia. At the same time, French Canada, Mexico and Asian countries like China and Japan added to the
population boom. This created a new blend of population in the United States (Daniels, 2002).

Many workers had to travel from other countries for employment, and while they may have faced economic hardship, they were not usually the most downtrodden from their land. They could at least afford the passage over to America. In many cases, industrial capitalism in the “Gilded Age” pulled them towards jobs overseas. They were pulled to America by hopes for freedom and opportunities. “America was paved with gold” was one of many legends told about America, the land of opportunity. This pull to America resulted in luring the masses of cheap, unskilled laborers to work in the fields and later in the factories. Photos of well-fed and well-dressed families sent to relatives in the homelands created an impression that all were as wealthy as the doctors and other professionals of the old country. These photos served as proof of the opportunities available in America for many. Rags to riches may not have been a common economic path for many immigrants. However, that was the dream. Immigrants did climb America’s economic ladder, with the help of compatriots and kinsmen. It seems many were able to achieve the transformation of rags to respectability in their new country (Daniels, 1997; Daniels, 2002; Wright, 2008).

The hours of work were long and dangerous, and the wages were low, but compared to what many immigrants had left behind, the land of opportunity was a blessing. However, the boom was soon to bring bust. By the mid 1890s, economic depression loomed large. The rapid rise in urban population also brought mass
unemployment and a fall in commodity prices and rural land values. As a result, the American dream for many immigrants turned into an American nightmare. Things were changing and opportunities would be found in new forms in America (Daniels, 2002).

In the 1890s, the United States was transformed from an agrarian to an industrial nation and the Gilded Age and period of “new immigration” had momentum. As we industrialized, most of the new Americans moved to major cities (Kirkland, 1961). This period marks the birth of modern America when America becomes the largest economy in the world and the most modern urban nation. The 1890 Industrial Revolution was centered in the United States and Germany and featured a wealth of inventions in the production of metals, machinery, agricultural products and chemicals (Daniels, 1997).

By this time, the United States was exporting more manufacturing goods than it was importing and for this reason, primarily, by 1900 most immigrants found cities economically attractive. The 1900 U.S. census shows that by 1900, one-third of the population lived in cities, and three of ten city-dwellers lived in just five cities (US Census Bureau, 1995). This new industrial boom required a new force of workers. The “new wave” of immigration, during this time, met that need. Immigrants fueled the industrial boom. In fact, they provided the labor that helped make the US the leading economic power. However, this new wave of immigration was of people from parts of the world that had not come before.

It has been said that not every foreigner was a worker, but every worker was a foreigner. Immigrants had bigger families and almost all the family members worked.
The country was becoming over saturated with willing workers and there was competition for the jobs (Goloboy, 2008). This increased tension among cultural and racial groups, particularly given that African Americans, Chinese and Japanese and other people of color were competing for jobs in cities as well (Ignatiev, 1992 and 1995; Takaki, 1993). The researcher did not say racial groups, as many would presume. To say racial groups, one would automatically place all “White” Americans together. This was far from the case. Mine and factory bosses hired people according to stereotypes about different racial and ethnic groups. Italians were considered strong but lazy and not compatible with organized society. Irish were thought to be clever but corrupt. The Polish were described as honest but dull and higher strung than their European neighbors. They were pitted against each other to prevent unions. Companies systemized the workforce. They would hire from one nationality one week and another next. They would keep them from becoming organized or unified workers. They intentionally divided workers along ethnic and racial lines. Industrialists used competition to split people. American-born workers grew increasingly alarmed at the intense competition for jobs that drove down wages and made successful strikes unattainable (Daniels, 1997; Ignatiev, 1992, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Takaki, 1993).

For those planting their roots in America or those who were here for the short term, life was not easy for the immigrants. The journey here, the immigration process, looking for work and an accepting home were not simple propositions. Roger Daniels (2002) explains this well, in Coming to America,
Whether as a sojourner or a settler, was in many cases to partake in an adventure, a drama, even a dream. For many the adventure became a disaster, the drama a tragedy, the dream a nightmare. Not all individual stories have happy conclusions, and many who journeyed to America, Argentina or Australia, would have been better off had they never left home. Too often in writing about immigrants, we forget that there were immigrant losers as well as winners, and that sometimes ‘winning’ took generations. (p. 28)

Never before in United States migration history had so many people traveled so far, so swiftly and so inexpensively. Modern inventions such as the railroad and the steamship helped people move across vast territory and ocean (Ellis Island Foundation, 2010). The telegraph enabled them to communicate with relatives and friends abroad, and convinced them to take the passage to America (Bensel, 2000). Photography capabilities developed that provided motivation and evidence of opportunities in America. Photography told many stories in newspapers and posters (Marien, 2006). Within the country, they promoted those who fit a certain mold and many negative stories were printed with pictures to identify the unacceptable “others.” However, in some cases, photography was used to enlighten people about misconception of others. It was definitely a new period in immigration history (Guimond, 1991).
Figure 10. Unknown artist. (1906). They sang of America..., Summary: “Jewish Immigrant Children waving tiny U.S. flags while repeating oath of allegiance; at the central school of the Educational Alliance, East Broadway, New York City.” Harper's Weekly. Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-44050, b and w film copy neg.). Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA.

For immigrants in the early 20th century, the route between homelands in Europe and Asia and new homes in the United States was not always direct. In the early, 1900’s there was a tidal wave of Europeans heading to America. In Europe, these people had to be corralled and processed in order to leave the “mother land.” They were required to have exit papers and the price of passage. People were taken by train to port cities. Outside the city, in an enclosure, they were bathed, fed and their clothes were fumigated.
With all their most prized possessions, that they could carry, these hopeful masses were ready to embark on their passage to their new life (Conway, 2006).

Material culture was in a unique form during this period. The primary status symbol during travel was the container in which these immigrants carried their belongings (see Figure 11). If one carried their things in a suitcase, no matter how tattered, they were thought to have been from cities and of higher stature in society. In addition, a basket was a slight connotation of some elevated status. The majority of the immigrants carried their belongings in bundle made from their sheet or blanket. This visual information told people they were poor. No peasant could afford a basket or a suitcase (Heneghan, 2007).

What would you choose to take, if you could only bring what you could carry on a crowded ship? If you were to look inside these bundles of belongings, you would find items that collectively presented an image of items that were most important and defining to the immigrant. The items often included a pillow, a cooking pot, a sampling of their favorite snacks, a relic of their faith; a prayer book or a cross and usually at least an heirloom; a candle stick, an elaborate cross or another treasured relic. A young woman may have a special petticoat and a corset for her dowry. These items could have told us volumes about the people carrying them and their unique values.
With their baggage, they were ferried to their ships. The ships were temporary floating communities for the immigrants. One reason that their passage was so regulated and people were lumped together is that the United States government required newcomers to pass through immigration stations before they were permitted to enter this country. For many, the process of becoming American began with the stops at one of the two major immigration stations: the Port of Entry on Ellis or Angel Island. The two major stations were located near the places where most immigrants arrived in this country--New York City on the Atlantic coast and San Francisco on the Pacific. The Ellis Island station in Upper New York Bay opened in 1892. An immigration station on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay opened in 1910 (Angel Island Association, 2010).

**Immigration Process: Establishing Whiteness.**

During the first 25 years of the 1900’s, federal immigration officials at Ellis Island handled more than twelve million immigrants. Most of these immigrants came from Southern and Eastern Europe. The Angel Island station served mostly Chinese, Japanese and Filipino immigrants. This research focused upon the identity of White immigrants; therefore, it examined the immigration process and indoctrination of Whiteness into public policy at Ellis Island more closely. The immigration procedure, the markings put on people, language as criteria and more were factors in the description of Whiteness and of all the “others.”
During the period between 1890 and 1924, the immigrants had to pass through Ellis Island before gaining entry to America (see Figure 12 above). Many came to know the island as the Isle of Hope, Island of Tears. People entered the process on the island, with great hopes for new life in America. However, for some this process was very trying and some saw all their hopes and dreams vanish before them upon rejection to the new land (Cannato, 2009; Daniels, 2002).

Once arriving at Ellis Island the people were numbered. According to their numbers, they were herded in groups of thirty up the stairs to the great hall. The admission process was a confusing and maddening procedure. Images from these scenes look something like a cultural costume party. The variety of people dressed in their tradition clothing provides diverse images of European immigrants.

The next part of the procedure was for the immigrants to be examined by a doctor and receive an instant diagnosis of their health condition based on a few questions and a brief examination of their hands, eyes (see Figure 13), overall appearance and health.
related behaviors (coughing, limping, sweating, etc) (Ellis Island Immigration Museum, 2004).

The doctor would label the immigrants with a chalk mark; an “L” for limp, “F” facial rash, “H” for heart disease and so on. Those who were suspected of having contagious diseases like yellow fever, leprosy and tuberculosis were identified for deportation (Ellis Island Immigration Museum, 2004). The Ordeal of Assimilation adds another level of understanding about these examinations,

The fear and ‘intimidation’ of these examinations caused ‘emotional, noisy and boisterous’ behavior. Consequently, this loss of self-control became the reason for detention and deportation. For others, the traumatic effect of this experience became a lasting problem in their process of adjusting to the new society is an accurate description of the experiences as shared in *The ordeal of assimilation: A documentary history of the White working class 1830’s to the 1970’s* (Feldstein and Costello, 1974).
The next phase of the immigrant experience was an interrogation with an inspector who questioned people about their criminal record and their reading and writing skills. He also checked their names against those in the ship manifest. Finally, they were given a new official identity and granted landing papers. The process of becoming American is illustrated in an urban legend that replaced humor for what must have been a
sad and confusing day. As the story goes, a Russian Jew immigrant, upon arriving in the U.S. became both perplexed and frustrated at the constant prodding and questioning, and replied in Yiddish to the question, “What is your name?” from an immigration officer with, “Shoyn fargesn” which means- I forget already. By saying, “I forget already” the individual was attempting to express that they did not understand, they had forgotten the English words already and did not know what was being asked of him. However, upon hearing the reply, the inspector then welcomed “Sean Ferguson” to America! (Feldstein and Costello, 1974). The White Anglo-Saxon cultural perspectives even affected the names of our immigrants.

![Image of Immigrants](image.png)

*Figure 14. Young Immigrants.* F. P. G. International, LLC. *Encarta Encyclopedia.*

They had bravely moved to a new country not knowing exactly what to expect. It is difficult to imagine the range of emotional experiences these immigrants must have endured. People were not as welcome as they expected. Some were eventually found to
be unfit and forced to return home (Dillingham, 1911). In some cases, families were separated with one or more family member being rejected. In addition, they must have felt some loss or frustration in losing their name and part of their unique identity (Jacobson, 1998). However, they would eventually gain other cultural capital as “White” citizens in the United States.

Figure 15. Russell-Fry, N. (2004). *Statue of Liberty: Symbol of Hope for All.*


“Give me your tired, your poor,” read the inscription on the Statue of Liberty. America offered hope and opportunity (see Figure 15). They still faced poverty and
prejudice. The critics said that they were too wretched too foreign to become real Americans. If they were permitted to move forward to America, the immigrants eagerly looked for the door marked “push” that was the exit to New York. New York became home to many. New York was known as the capital city of exile. It was the major port of entry for immigrants. The weary masses were ferried to Manhattan, deposited throughout New York and then spread across the country. Unfortunately the drama of this portion of their journey continued. Besides losing their names in this immigration process, the immigrants often lost their destinations. An immigrant arriving at Ellis Island may only have a small slip of paper with a name on it – a name that was often misspelled in English. “Nugers” may mean, New Jersey, for example (Ellis Island Immigration Museum, 2004).

This made it difficult if not impossible to reach their preferred destination. Those who settled in New York felt that they had traded the fear they had fled for a new battle for survival in America. These experiences caused many immigrants to gravitate toward finding in a community with people of similar backgrounds. Many tried to find cities, towns or neighborhoods that had people who spoke same language, shared their religious beliefs, culture and customs. It provided some sense of connectivity and identity in this strange new land. These neighborhoods became part of the migration chain, that is, they were ethnic neighborhoods or communes – sanctuary in a too often unfamiliar chaotic world (Booth, Feb. 22, 1998).

In America, one could find communities of Italians, Polish, Irish, German, French, African, Scandinavian, Jewish, Russian, Chinese and others. In this new, strange place, these new Americans were forced to move to new neighborhoods and learn new skills. Family and community were vital. Immigrants depended on each other to survive. They often had three or four generations living together, sharing salaries and expenses. Their ethnic or cultural community was the next greatest form of support in America (Riis, 1997).
This bonding also occurred in ways that were more formal such as the formation of associations. They preserved traditions, protested about prejudice and worked together to survive and even succeed in the new country. Ethnic newspapers provided ties to the old countries. Ethnic grocery stores brought tastes of the new world. Another avenue pursued by some ethnic groups, to elevate and connect their cultural community with this new country, was to seek political election for a member of their immigrant groups. This would allow for opportunities for their people by providing jobs and services (Lissak, 1989).

This created opportunities for politicians. In exchange for votes, the politician would help struggling people get a job, get a family member out of trouble, press
landlords for improvements, bring a doctor for childbirth, push marriage brokers to make an arrangement for the not so attractive daughter and more. They did small things for small people. In the process, they made themselves powerful and more wealthy (Daniels, 2002).

George Washington Plunkitt (1842-1924) was an example of this type of politician. “Poor are the most grateful people in the world and they have more friends in their neighborhood than the rich have in theirs” was a quote of his (Roidon, 1963, [audio transcript], Chapter 7, para. nine). This translated into more votes for a politician of the time. He would help in an emergency, like a fire, for this very reason. These separate and unique groups found safety, comfort and support among those of their original nation. Yet, they had to be connected to the people, society and big world around them. The new immigrants were becoming American while America was becoming something new. There was a passion to become part of America. However, they transformed the nation helped forge a new urban culture.

Out of those who were attempting to achieve their dreams in America were immigrants from many countries (Cannato, 2009). While attempting to assimilate to the dominant culture, many unique cultural traits of these groups of people have been cast aside. Thousands of Germans settled in southeast Pennsylvania and became known as “Pennsylvania Dutch” by their neighbors. Deutsche was a word used by Germans to denote Germans that lived near the mouth of the Rhine River, when others heard this they translated it into Dutch and called many Germans “Dutch.” The three major religions
that comprise “Germans” are Protestants, Catholics and Jewish (Daniels, 2002). Another one of the largest groups to participate in this wave of new immigration was the Italians and many were child laborers. They faced a revolution. The Pope had declared war with Austria (Daniels, 2002).

In addition, the flow of Irish immigrants that was initially spurred in part due to the failure of potato crops in their homeland in 1845 continued with 2.6 million Irish in the post-famine migration through 1930 (Daniels, 2002). Although the Irish have played an essential role in providing a flexible 'unskilled' workforce, also, they have also experienced job discrimination. They were victimized by racist stereotypes and shared some experiences with African Americans (Ignatiev, 1995). Yet, they worked to separate themselves from them. Riots broke out among rival labor teams from different parts of Ireland, and between Irish and "native" American work teams competing for construction jobs (Prince, 1985). Some recent research shows that there is an ongoing pattern of low achievement for even the second and third generation immigrant Irish men (Williams, Dunne and Mac an Ghaill, 1996).

The Jewish writer, Israel Zangwill who lived from 1864 to 1926, described America as a “melting pot” in which nationalities and ethnic groups would fuse into one (Daniels, 2002, p. 17). This may have been true of “White” culture or people who were of European or Caucasian descent. Many of the unique cultural distinctions blended away by force, necessity or other reasons. Most do not see differences between Irish, Dutch, Polish, German, Swiss, Welsh, Scots or other light-skinned immigrants.
However, they were very different and many still appreciate their cultural unique heritages, while others are unaware of their unique and diverse cultural heritage. The “melting” simply did not occur throughout our nation. We are more appropriately dubbed a “mosaic,” “patchwork quilt” or “salad bowl.” In these images, groups of people retain some unique characteristics yet at the same time are parts of a larger picture. The Jews fled the sound of the midnight knock on the door and the secret police. They were living in fear. Most were forced to worship in stealth to avoid persecution. In some cities, they were permitted to worship in limited locations (McKale, 2002). In America, they would have religious freedom.

The Jews were among the Europeans that were often discriminated against due to their ethnicity rather than color. With respect to ethno racial assignment, “are Jews a race? --- a black race if not accepted and White if they are?” (Brodkin, 1998, p. 103). Throughout our American history, they belonged to the “not fully White” category. Eventually, they were “accepted as White, but not securely” (Brodkin, 1998, p. 153). Brodkin (1998) poses interesting questions about this development.

Did Jews and other Euro-ethnics become White because they became middle class? That is, did money Whiten? Or did being incorporated into an expanded version of Whiteness open up the economic doors to middle-class status? Clearly, both tendencies were at work. (p. 36)

The history of immigration in the U.S. speaks to the development of how many different European people became “White” meaning they took on part of British or Anglo-Saxon
cultural ways of being as they became “American” which has become through cultural religious and educational institutions synonymous with White.

Public Education Constructing Whiteness

Newspapers and magazines promoted ideas of the dominant culture. The *Harper’s New Monthly* wrote an article entitled, “Anglo-Saxon Mind and Its Great Thoughts” in which the author claimed that intelligence of Anglo-Saxon blood was behind the most advanced cultural developments. In addition, according to Todd Vogel in *Rewriting White: Race, Class and Cultural Capital in Nineteenth Century America* (2004), “Scholars have thoroughly documented that most White citizens throughout the nineteenth century already had made up their minds about African Americans, just as they had prejudged Chinese Americans and Native Americans” (p. 82). Major Mordecai M. Noah tried to create fear among the public by printing in the New York Newspaper, *The National Advocate* that if free Blacks are educated and given access to culture then they will want full political rights. He suggested, they could out vote the Whites, if given the chance. Governor James Vardaman made the claim in print that “fabulous sums of money to educate (the Negro’s) head” succeeded only in “impairing his usefulness and efficiency as a laborer.” “As a race,” he said, “he is deteriorating morally every day” (as quoted by Vogel, 2004, p. 79). Vardaman is one example of the leaders of the time.

A constant influence on the concept of Whiteness in the United States was that White protestant men were the leaders in education. As with other periods in our nation’s history, they used education to promote their ideals. Ron Miller (1995), author of *What
“Are Schools For?" identifies the worldview of the founder’s of education by five themes: “conservative Protestantism, scientific reductionism, restrained democratic ideals, capitalism and nationalism.” These learning strands were steadfast in early America and still prevail in curriculum today.

Public schools served to teach immigrants many things. The focus of public schools turned to academic and vocational education. Companies wanted their workers to have some basic education. They felt they should have moral training, be taught about responsible citizenship, cultural uniformity, the advancement of economic opportunity and industrialism. They were trying to meet the needs of a more modern society and a productive workplace. There was a greater need for educated specialists. High school enrollment doubled between 1890 and 1940, as educational policy changed and school attendance became mandatory (Watras, 2008). The U.S. had begun a period of rapid industrial expansion, demanding a ready supply of cheap, unskilled and semiskilled labor for factories and mines (Balfanz, 1997).

Students learned the pledge of Allegiance, rights and responsibilities of citizenship, English and other academic skills, how to be a valuable worker, the history of America and without admitting it, schools taught people about race. The history of America was provided through the interpretation of the authors of the textbooks. The textbooks and lessons at school played a major role assimilating immigrants into American society. The way information and history of America were depicted in textbooks and schools contributed to the definition of White in America. After all,
schools were the institution whose mission was to teach people to become an American (Tyack and Hansot, 1982).

Our education system was struggling to meet this task. There was uncertainty in how to address diversity issues in our multicultural American society. Still many unique groups of people lost some of their cultural and ethnic characteristic to become “White” (Spring, 2007). One must consider how people were educated about race, religion, culture and other types of diversity. Educators should examine the history, and how Americans were taught in school. The authors of textbooks were serving as the historians for the masses. Historians are not simply repeating old news. Historians prepare narratives of events. They explore evidence for explanation of those events. With carefully chosen words, they present facts and stories from our past. These records of past events and their analysis help us to shape the future. They have considerable influence on the actions we take in the present (Moreau, 2004).

In attempting to understand school’s role in developing attitudes about race and defining Whiteness, we must examine how race was used in textbooks. Joseph Moreau addresses this issue in *Schoolbook Nation* (2004). He states that race was “a remarkably flexible term” (p. 139) for the authors of textbooks. In some texts, the word race represented the human race. Yet, in others, it denoted biological differences. “As one textbook author explained, all people were either copper colored like Indians, White like Europeans, black like the Africans, or yellow like the Malays and the Chinese” (Moreau,
Other authors separated people by tribe or nations of origin based more on cultural characteristics, calling each designation a separate race.

According to Moreau (2004),

Increasing race consciousness in textbooks published after 1880 was evident in growing praise for early American settlers of northern and western European origin, forerunners of what people at the time called “native stock” or “native American” (Native American denoted those Europeans who were considered the Puritan stock or “English race” that founded America not the designation currently used for American Indians). At its most benign, this form of White nationalism amounted to expression of ancestral pride, either by the author or for communities expected to purchase the books. Textbook committees in towns and cities in the Midwest with large Scandinavian populations, for instance, preferred histories that dealt at least briefly with the “discovery” of America by daring Norse seafarers. Publishers often obliged them with the heroic tale of Leif Erickson. (p. 145)

Some textbooks portrayed America as a unified nation where everyone happily worked toward a common goal of liberty. Some of these stories omitted African American slaves and Chinese railway workers from the glorious tales of exploring the great frontier. By removing key characters like Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans and other minorities in our history books, the picture painted of America was “colored” or actually uncolored. It was painted White, like a blank canvas. This enforced the idea
of the importance of Whiteness and the idea that those of other races were somehow less valuable (Heneghan, 2007). Further, authors tended to ignore issues that they felt revealed negative truths. They wanted to feel good about themselves and their country. Omission of facts does the same damage as inclusion of falsehoods. Both distort the truth. There are controversies yet today about Whitewashing America through textbooks as evidenced by various on-line blogs and discussions over recently adopted textbooks in Texas (Alternet, May 2010).

Moreau (2004) writes, “Textbooks on American history had linked concepts of race and nation since their mass publication began in the 1820’s. But events and trends between 1880 and 1925 focused greater attention on this issue” (p. 138). Immigrants were coming from a more diverse variety of nations, the Native Americans that were left were split up and corralled into reservations, African Americans and women did not have the right to vote, and restrictions were being developed to limit the number of Asian immigrants. Moreau (2004) continues to write, “These social and demographic changes forced all Americans to grapple with the question of what racial boundaries, if any, marked the national community” (p. 138). Moreau (2004) explains that with social and demographic changes in America, people were struggling to understand racial boundaries that once seemed more defined for them. Therefore, the authors of textbooks had to address this issue. They interweaved a more multicultural representation of America. However, non-Whites were not portrayed in the most favorable ways. The Native Americans were always portrayed as the blood thirsty aggressors who threatened the nice
White man who came as a friend. School books presented our invasion of the Native American land in a positive light. “For a long time it was believed that in their wars with the Whites they had become greatly reduced in number. But this is not the case. There are quite as many living in the United States today as then lived in the same territory” (McMaster, 1901, p. 16). Stories like this somehow made “White” people feel victorious rather than like oppressors. Those who may have felt guilt from historic actions, were allowed to feel better. It was easily accepted. In A Brief History of the United States (Steele and Steele, 1900), which was another textbook used during the golden age of immigration, it portrays the nation as being sparsely inhabited by Native Americans or “Indians” as called in the text. It states that Indians were not highly advanced. “His highest art was expended in a simple bow and arrow. He made no advancement, but each son emulated the prowess of his father in the hunt and the fight” (p. 10). It continues to teach the reader about Native Americans by saying,

The Indian had neither cow, nor beast of burden. He regarded all labor as degrading and fit only for women. His squaw, therefore, built his wigwam, cut his wood and carried his burdens when he journeyed. ….In war, the Indian was brave and alert but cruel and revengeful, preferring treachery and cunning to open battle. At home, he was lazy, improvident, and an inveterate gambler. He delighted in finery and trinkets, and decked his unclean person with paint and feathers. (Steele and Steele, 1900, pp. 10-13)
“No young Indian was of any importance till he had killed an enemy and brought home the scalp; and the more scalps he brought home, the greater “brave” he was thought to be” (McMaster, 1901, p. 20). The text continues to detail the scalping process. With such a negative introduction to society, our masses were taught that Native Americans were dirty, lazy and despicable savages (Steele and Steele, 1900).

Within these texts, the British, French and Spanish are discussed. White or British/English leaders were hailed. The War with Mexico is recounted. Eastern Europeans were rarely mentioned in textbooks. When they were, it was in passing. Minorities were generally portrayed as threats or obstructions to the progress in America. However, the researcher could find little to mention of those from other nations. It is as if they do not exist. There is no mention of the African American population that were in America at the time in one text, while the other explains that “Great Britain forced the colonies to allow slavery” (McMaster, 1901, p. 174)

We are all aware of the existence of racism in early textbooks and in education. However, this distortion of reality went beyond perpetuating prejudice about some groups, it elevated the importance of White people. Even with the inclusion of other races in textbooks, the White man from Western Europe remained the hero. They sounded so wise, noble, righteous and ambivalent to the lesser man in the stories that were supposed to represent our history. Africans were portrayed as docile, mentally and physically inferior.
Donaldo Macedo (1993), author of *Literacy for Stupidification: The Pedagogy of Big Lies*, asserts that our educational system works pedagogically to construct forms of conformity, discrimination and socioeconomic inequality. Also, Macedo suggests that Americans suffer from social and historical amnesia. He argues that we do not examine the real history of our nation. We choose to ignore the portions that make us uncomfortable or portray the majority in a negative light. How might children have felt if they were taught about how White men stole human beings from their homelands, sold them and traded them like goods, forced them into labor and beat and abused them to build their picture perfect mansions? How might our society be constructed now had our society been educated with real history?

Macedo (1993) addressed the concept that many Americans and our institutions (like the education system) perpetuate a state of mindless compliance and conformity. He examined the ideas that American are politically manipulated through literature, propaganda and education to accept our “oppressive system of privilege based on gender, skin color, class, sexual orientation” (as reprinted in Leistyna, Woodrum and Sherblom, 1999, p. 31) and many other differences. It is important to note that by focusing on the “oppressive system of privilege,” Macedo (1993) reminds us that discrimination occurs not only when one group is held at a disadvantage but also discrimination exists when some are given an extra advantage (McIntosh, 1988).
Anti-immigrant and Anti-African American Groups Define Whiteness

Discrimination has taken many forms throughout history in the United States. People reacted to the changing landscape of America’s people in various ways. At the close of the Civil War, in 1866, the anti-immigrant and anti-African American Ku Klux Klan (Figure 18) was formed in Tennessee (Simkin, 2010). In addition to terrorizing people of African descent, this group along with others such as the American Protective Association rallied support to limit or block immigration of certain groups of people.

The nineteenth century immigrants faced two common conditions. They were scapegoats for society’s ills while at the same time they faced the worst economic hardships.

Figure 18. (Sept 21, 1923). Ku Klux Klan Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds in Dayton, Ohio. [Photograph]. Courtesy of Richard Bondira, President of the Indiana Historical Research Foundation.
(Desmond, 1912). Those who opposed immigration and feared the growth of cities blamed the Catholics, Jews, “Wops” and “Polacks” for the rise in industrialization and urbanization. The racist term, wop for Italians is said to come from “without papers” and was an expression used to show contempt for this group of Southern Europeans. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the Irish had been targets of stereotypical bias and discrimination. There were “Irish Need Not Apply” signs throughout our nation (Volo and Volo, 2007). Other people of light skin also belonged to the “not fully White” category. Further, the first official act to restrict immigrants based on race was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (General Records of the United States Government, 1882).

This discrimination even occurred among many of the immigrants that were “White.” There were different groups of Europeans, which we now often group all together as if they are alike because of the color of their skin. However, at this time they were very distinct and unique cultural groups and were treated very differently. At the time, they felt that Irish were as different from British as it was perceived Blacks were different from Whites at different points in our history. These differences could easily be seen at the market. Each groups had certain food and drink items that they could not go without. Jewish staples were salmon and bagels. One could see differences among White immigrant groups in neighborhoods, by associations and more. These differences were seen with a negative outlook by some.
The U.S. born Protestants became concerned that their population would be outnumbered by the new wave of immigrants. “By the end of the nineteenth century, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge pressed Congress to cut off immigration to the United States; Theodore Roosevelt raised the alarm of “race suicide” and took Anglo-Saxon women to task for allowing native stock to be out bred by inferior immigrants” (Brodkin, 1998, p. 28). In the 1890s, anti-nativist sentiment turned particularly ugly with direct action being taken against Italians, Polish and others. For example, eleven Italians were hung by a New Orleans mob because they were suspected of murdering the city’s superintendent of police (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2010). Another group that experienced anti-nativism was the Polish who arrived in Pennsylvania coalfields in the 1870s (Bodner, 1982). Organizations such as Ku Klux Klan, the American Party and other groups that supported restrictions on immigration demanded limitations on certain groups of immigrants. This lead into the period from 1880 to 1970 being characterized as the restrictionist era in American immigration policy. These groups promoted their ideas verbally in communities, in printed propaganda, in news media accounts of their activities and through actions to slow the flow of undesirables (Dorn, 2010). All of these forms of promotion of their ideas, created fear, anger and contributed to the construction of Whiteness.

**Immigration Policy: Defining Whiteness**

The nativist sentiment and organizational activity turned to legal action when Congress passed the first major immigration restrictions. Previously, states had
attempted to pass laws restricting immigration, especially Catholic immigration, but these laws were overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Henderson v. Mayor of New York*, 92 U.S. 259, in 1875, when the court ruled that the power to regulate immigration was held solely by the federal government (US Supreme Court Center, July 9, 2010). State restrictions on immigration were struck down as unconstitutional. In 1882, the first general federal immigration law was enacted which included an entry tax of fifty cents per person and denied entry to the United States to “idiots, lunatics, convicts and persons likely to become public charges” stated in the Immigration Act of 1882 by the Forty Seventh Session of Congress. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act reversed the century-old tradition of free and open immigration (Simon, 1985).

Whiteness is never clearly defined in society. Yet, it can be seen in many indirect and indirect ways. The 1890’s Immigration Restriction League, founded by Prescott F. Hall and comprised of Harvard graduates under the leadership of Henry Cabot Lodge, campaigned religiously for an immigration policy marked by ethno cultural discrimination, and literacy tests for immigrants in order to force limitations on immigration. Both Hall and Lodge argued for a country made up of British, German and Scandinavian stock – or free energetic and progressive people – as opposed to the Slav, Latin and Asiatic races who they considered stagnant and downtrodden. Scholarly Massachusetts Congressman Henry Cabot Lodge and his League were forced to settle on the literacy test as the best means to limit immigration but Congress was rebuffed by presidents Grover Cleveland, William Howard Taft, and eventually Woodrow Wilson
who vetoed all proposals up until and including the final bill which was passed in 1917 (over Wilson’s veto) (Immigration Restriction League, 2010).

Lodge and his colleagues were not alone in the desire to limit immigration. Influential people were imposing their views on the masses. Images were a part of this negative attitude toward immigrants. Daniels points out, “Cartoonists hostile to immigration liked to draw bearded, threatening-looking figures to represent immigrants” (Daniels, 2002, p. 27). Frederick Jackson Turner also wrote about the evils of unrestricted immigration and he urged the country to adopt a closed frontier so that growth and opportunity would be limitless for those who inhabited the land.

Key to these efforts was Madison Grant’s influential The Passing of the Great Race, published in 1916. Grant popularized notions developed by William Z. Ripley and Daniel Brinton that there existed three or four major European races, ranging from the superior Nordics of northwestern Europe to the inferior southern and eastern races of the Alpines, Mediterraneans and worst of all, Jews, who seemed to be everywhere in his native New York City. (Brodkin, 1998, p. 28)

In the early twentieth century, Grant, an American lawyer, historian and physical anthropologist and known as a scientific racist, campaigned against race mixing. “For Grant, race and class were interwoven: the upper class was racially pure Nordic, the lower classes came from the lower races” (p. 30). By the 1920’s, scientific racism sanctified the notion that real Americans were White and that the real Whites came from northwest Europe (Brodkin, 1998).
Obviously, most employers desired a continuation of immigration without restriction because these workers represented a supply of labor in their factors of production. The immigrants were unskilled, uneducated and hungry for work. Most importantly to the manufacturers, they were cheap. Even with this industrial cry in support of immigration, the anti-immigration and nativist attitudes were prevalent. Those who felt this way did so with a passion. They felt that the floodgates must be closed. The enemy was the immigrant and they must be stopped. Nativist insisted that they most hold their ground. Josiah Strong, clergyman and author of *Our Country: Its possible future and present crisis* (1891), described the wave of immigration as an “army invasion.”

Others believed that ethnic diversity diluted the culture and power of those who had migrated earlier. Concerned city reformers worried over the blocks of immigrant voters that were exploited by corrupt city bosses who traded services for votes. Anti-immigrant and nativist sentiment led to the passage of the Immigration Restriction Acts of 1921 and 1924. Restrictions placed on immigration were often based on race or nationality. There were also restrictions against the entrance of diseased persons, paupers, and other undesirables, and laws were passed for the deportation of aliens (Our New Nordic Immigration Policy, May 10, 1924). The first permanent quota law was passed in 1924 (Szucs and Luebking, 2006).

Through the common school and the influence of early American leaders, it was clear that being White was preferred. More specifically, British American in origin,
Protestant in religion, entrepreneurial in economic outlook and republican values were connected to status, success, wealth and leadership (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). Books, newspapers, leaders and general society ignored the contributions of many races and praised that of the White British Americans. There was a powerful public relations campaign for the attributes of puritan values. Subsequently, there was an artfully designed slander campaign toward most others. It either ignored them or portrayed them in a negative manner. People wanted to survive and succeed. Therefore, they most certainly they did not want to be associated with any of the supposed “inferior” races. At times in our history, this could prevent employment, block housing and even threaten their health and life (Lipsitz, 1998). After being bombarded by the “Puritan” or nativist view as the right way in schools and society, those with light skin forfeited much of their unique cultures that identified them as different from the dominant White, Protestant Americans. It seems that in order to become accepted, they changed their names, their clothing, their language and more to adapt. Over time, their unique characteristics began to blend with others, either from exposure and choice or by force in order to survive (Jacobson, 1998). The American idea was supposedly not to erase these differences but to graft the cultures together into one united nation. This was a difficult challenge that was not executed well for all immigrants, particularly those who did not possess White skin privilege.

Media content actually leads to public ignorance about race relations and about social conditions. The public is influenced by the media and then in turn public policies
and political decisions are affected. Media content actually leads to public ignorance about race relations and about social conditions. *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Entman and Rojecki, 2000) discusses how media has reinforced White perceptions of others. It examines images of Blacks conveyed by the mass media during the 1990s, focusing movies, network television programming as well as local television and newspapers. The authors closely examine network news programming finding that rarely was a Black person shown discussing important general issues, such as economics, foreign affairs, politics, or as an expert in areas of science/technology, health, weather events or other significant intellectual topics. Instead, Blacks were predominately typecast in sports and entertainment stories or discussed in the context of race issues or crime. Their studies demonstrate how Whiteness is perpetuated through the systems of our society, including media. The mass communication of media mirrors and influences how Whites see others.

**Ohio’s Immigrant Population in Brief**

American Indians were the first to migrate into the rolling hills of Southeastern Ohio. Crossing the Bering land bridge from Asia some 20,000 years ago, American Indian migrant groups began to populate the North American continent, including the area now known as Ohio (Downs, 1969). Shawnee and Adena Culture were among those settling in southeastern Ohio (Ohio Historical Society, 2010). The prevalence of American Indian cultures decreased considerably as the flow of European settlers increased in the 18th and 19th centuries (Ohio Historical Society, 2008).
U.S. Migration to Ohio, 1785 – 1850.

With its unique location and boundaries of the Ohio River to the South and Lake Erie to the North and the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which were transportation corridors for migration Ohio had many immigrants join their population. According to records from the Ohio Historical Society (2008), the majority of migrants during this period came from the Middle Atlantic States like Pennsylvania. These migrants were primarily German, Scotch and Irish in descent. The lineage comprised 43% of all migrants during the first half of the 19th century in Ohio. There was additional flow of Scotch-Irish from military cities in Virginia. Their Presbyterian religious ideas also migrated with them (Ohio Historical Society, 2008). Immigrants to Ohio were mostly from northwestern Europe. They were still primarily of German and Irish descent. “By 1850, nearly one half of Ohio's immigrant population came from various regions of Germany. Irish immigrants also came to Ohio in large numbers, constituting 22% of pre-1850 immigration traffic” (Ohio Historical Society, 2008, p. 2, para. three). The English, Swiss and Canadians were additional groups that made Ohio their home, during this time period. In addition, the French also made settlements in Gallipolis and other areas of southeastern Ohio (Ohio Historical Society, 2008).

Immigration to Ohio, 1850 – 1903.

Immigration to Ohio continued to be led by the Germans and the Irish. The Germans built many communities throughout the state. Cincinnati, in southern Ohio, is an example of the German cultural influence on Ohio. By 1900, 13% of all Ohio
immigrants were Irish. Irish Catholicism and social activities are still alive in Ohio Communities (Ohio Historical Society, 2008). In addition, British immigration was substantial during this period. They navigated to English speaking communities in the states. Further, the Welsh played an important role in the industrial development of Gallia and Jackson counties of Southern Ohio. The Welsh started churches, farmed, grew the iron ore industry and had many other contributions. Ohio's Amish and Mennonite immigrants can still be experienced in Holmes, Geauga, Trumbull and Jackson counties. Amish-Mennonites are a segment of the Swiss-Alsatian-South German Anabaptist-Mennonites and their descendants of Bern, Switzerland (The Mennonite Encyclopedia, 1956). In addition to the European flow to the state, there began a trickling of diverse people to the area. However, their numbers were small (Ohio Historical Society, 2008).

As with many immigrants across our nation, ethnic groups immigrating to Ohio were not always greeted with open arms. The anti-immigrant attitudes of 19th century were strong in many cities experiencing rapid growth of migrant populations. In "Owning, Controlling, and Building upon Black Cultural Capital: The Albany Enterprise Academy and Black Education in Southeast Ohio, 1863-1886," Adah Ward Randolph (2004) provides insight into the racial atmosphere in Ohio. Although Ohio was a northern, “free” state for former slaves and people of African descent, African Americans lived with “Black laws” imposed on them. This affected their ability to gain access to education and consequently freedoms. Racism was institutionalized through policy and practices related to education. In 1803, the Ohio constitution required the formation of
common schools. However, public schools were not established until 1925. The “Black laws” enacted in 1929 excluded all African Americans from attending public schools and limited their participation in social, economic and political institutions in Ohio.

Therefore in the early 1930’s, African Americans established academies for Blacks and sometimes included women. One such school was Albany Manual Labor Academy, which opened in 1950. The academy not only provided a basic education but prepared students for college. Their objective was to demonstrate the capacity of African Americans. They were able to fund this initiative, in part, through manual labor jobs maintained by teachers and students. The academy progress into a university later was sold to a Christian Church and eventually became Franklin College, which ironically did not admit African Americans. Not until after the Civil War did African Americans gain access to public education in Ohio. “In Ohio, racial beliefs, opinions, and attitudes were often divided along geographical lines. Race relations in southeast Ohio, because of its close proximity to slave states Kentucky and Virginia, typified these divisions over the rights of African Americans in Ohio and throughout the United States” (Ward Randolph, 2004, p. 16).

**Conclusion**

This study of “New Wave of Immigration” or “Gilded Age” of immigration is intended to help teachers and future teachers discover a piece of their history. The overview of Ohio immigration provides us with an image of the primarily White population of southeastern Ohio in which this study occurred. The recollection of the
immigrant journey possesses universal elements that touch everyone who desires to understand America’s past. Investigating the hardships, challenges, aspirations and chronology of events provides clarity in the development of American attitudes. This exploration of existing literature on race, immigration, media, material culture and education has provided a more contextualized understanding of the meaning of Whiteness in America. Further, this investigation has confirmed that those who consider themselves Caucasian have a diverse and rich cultural heritage to explore. The ideas and values of American immigrants have helped shape the success of our country. Diverse people have contributed to the customs, art, music, languages, foods and ideas from their homelands to enrich our America. Through time, all people who were perceived to be White became funneled into one group. Influenced by society, many hid their uniqueness to become a part of the privileged group of Whites to not only succeed but to survive in the United States. This historical analysis of the development of Whiteness and White privilege in its many forms and through many institutions underpins the foundation of the examination of White teachers understanding of Whiteness in southeastern Ohio.
Chapter 5: Place and Space: White Teachers in Rural Southeastern Ohio and Their Perspectives

Demographics and Beyond

This research sought to understand how White rural educators in Southeastern Ohio define the term “Whiteness.” The location of this study was southeastern Ohio. All participants described their school setting as “rural.” They consider themselves White or Caucasian and are all educators. Part of understanding their experiences as rural White southeastern Ohio educators is to understand the context in which they teach and live.

The primary research question was “How do White southeastern Ohio teachers perceive their Whiteness?” While seeking to understand how these educators define their Whiteness, the data collected provided a glimpse into the level at which these teachers are innately equipped with knowledge of their Whiteness and if they were aware of their racial identity. Participants describe Whiteness and provide insight into how or what they perceive White culture to be. They provide a reflection of Whiteness from their personal experiences and lessons they learned throughout their lives. The combination of their definitions of Whiteness provides clarity into what sounds, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage compose White identity from the perspective of White rural southeastern Ohio educators. Through their interview, teachers were able to provide meaning to the very essence of this phenomenon of Whiteness. Through examining their perspectives, the research has ascertained the teachers’ subjective and multiple realities of Whiteness. The meaning created through this research encompasses all realities. The
research results use quotes and themes of interpretations found in interviews to provide evidence of collective and varying perspectives.

We know race is an issue of concern in American education. However, how is it an issue in schools in this rural area? This research sought to address its impact by examining the perspectives or understandings of White rural teachers. These questions were the questions that this research explored. In addition and more significant to education, this research investigated the manner in which the concept of Whiteness was garnered in the classroom.

**Teaching and Living in Rural Southeastern Ohio**

“Like such concepts as 'truth,' 'beauty,' or 'justice,' everyone knows the term rural, but no one can define the term very precisely” (Weisheit, Falcone & Wells, 1995, as cited in *The Rural Womyn Zone*, para. one). The United States Department of Agriculture states that rural America comprises 2,052 counties, contains 75% of the nation's land, and is home to 17% (49 million) of the U.S. population (Economic Research Service, USDA, 2003). According to official U.S. Census Bureau definitions, rural areas comprise open country and settlements with fewer than 2,500 residents. It consists of all territory, population and housing units located outside urbanized areas and urban clusters (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

The tendency ten to twenty years ago was to move away from rural America into more urban or metropolitan areas. However, that has changed. Rural America has experienced a significant rural population rebound, which totally reversed the rural out
migration of the 1980's. Between 1990 and 1999, 2.2 million more Americans moved from the city to the country than vice-versa. In fact, in this period, 70% of our nation’s rural counties grew in population; 61% of rural counties experienced net in-migration in this period; and seven-eighths of the growing counties derived some or all of their increase from in-migration of metropolitan residents.

It is difficult to attach a rigid definition to the term rural. Additionally, rural has different meanings in different areas of the United States. Rural southeast Ohio is known for its’ natural beauty, unique cultures and regard for the past. Tours are provided to Native American sites, Civil War sites, locations that were part of the Underground Railroad, murals that portray our history, covered bridges, nature trails and parks with opportunities for outdoor adventures. Showcased are things like baskets, pottery, quilts, doll making, other arts and crafts and country cooking (Governor’s Office of Appalachia, 2008).

The participants in this study, however, defined rural life as a lived experience. They attend farm and small town festivals with bluegrass, country and rock music, bean dinners, tractor races, log rolling competitions, square dances, parades, livestock competitions, apple pealing contests, art contests and local princesses. People come together to celebrate their lives and heritage in small town, rural, southeastern Ohio.

**Rural Southeast Ohio: Participants Understanding of Rural**

The participants described rural southeastern Ohio as “small town America” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008) or “country setting” with
beautiful hills, lakes and streams (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). “Hilly, agricultural, industry, logging, rivers, lakes, streams…” were among words from Participant 7 (personal communication, July 21, 2008). The region consists of land primarily used for agricultural purposes with other industries focused around mining and logging. They explained rural southeastern Ohio lacks job opportunities, is low income to middle class, and mainly a White population (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007). “Mostly Caucasian” was the description of the region from Participant 6 (Personal communication, July 15, 2008). Another teacher attempts to describe the demographics in the region; “At least 98 percent would be White Caucasian and 2 percent usually encompasses African Americans. I haven’t had any yet but it seems that I will eventually have a few Hispanics because more are moving into the area,” (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008). This teacher adds, “I cannot give you an accurate statistics on this, but I believe a large population receive government aid, which could influence the individual students that I see” (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008). “Working out in a rural community one would note less diversity in ethnic background and bigger differences in socioeconomic status and religious beliefs” was part of the description expressed by another (Participant 2, personal communication, December 13, 2007). Multiple teachers brought up the issue of economics, when describing their geographic region. Economic disparity is the type of diversity most teachers in the area encounter. The varying economics do contribute to the landscape of this area, according to the participants. Also, the landscape, to a large
degree, is defined by whiteness. Now we have a sketch of the region in which this study took place from the participant’s perspective. Next, let us examine the participants in the study.

**Overview of Participants’ Profile**

There were 12 participants in this qualitative research study. The participants ranged from a third year teacher to teachers that have been teaching for up to 25 years. Eleven teachers have master’s degrees with one teacher only having a bachelor’s degree (see Figure 19). Seven participants were male and five were female (see Figure 20).

![Education of White Participants: Participants' Highest Level of Education](image)

*Figure 19.* Education of White Participants (Pre-Interview Questionnaire data).
All teachers in this research identify themselves as “White” or “Caucasian.” These teachers are descendants of ancestors that were African, British, Dutch, German, Irish, Italian, Native American and Welsh. Most of these ethnic groups are synonymous with White but some are usual considered polar opposites (African and Native American). Five participants listed multiple ethnic groups for their lineage such as African American, English, German, Irish, Italian, Native American and Welsh. While one believes she is English in heritage, another is German, two simply listed European and three commented that they were unsure of countries of origin but their ancestors were Caucasian. The inability to distinguish their ethnic heritage maybe due to what Spring (2007) defines as deculturalization. Just as many immigrants came to this area from different places, at some point they too became “White” and lost their ethnic and cultural
identify from their place of origin. The following chart shows the various responses the researcher received from participants when asked about their racial heritage (see Figure 21).

*Figure 21. Heritage of White Participants (Pre-interview Questionnaire data and interview data).*

It is interesting to note that one teacher listed Native American as part of their lineage yet labeled himself White. This speaks to the mixing of races that occurred in the making of America. Additionally, another participant listed African American among
their ancestors’ heritage, but still identified himself as White. As far as phenotypic differences, these participants did not look at all like they had African American or Native American phenotypic characteristics. In essence, African American and Native American was only a small portion of their lineage and the remainder was White European. Consequently, they identified themselves as White. Yet, it brought to mind the idea that some people may have the ability to choose their ethnic label according to preference, family traditions or other reasons that may not be biological, particularly if they appear physically as White. Within the African American community, this concept is known as passing. Many African American authors such as Frances Ellen Harper (1990), Charles Chesnutt (1993) and Jessie Fauset (1924) address this phenomenon of complex racial and social issues in their literature. In addition, one teacher expressed a preference for the term Caucasian to label his race rather than “White.” Another was assertive that, “I consider myself culturally White and biologically Caucasian” (Participant 2, personal communication, December 13, 2007). This participant who was so adamant about their ideas is clearly not familiar with modern concepts of biology and race. Not one characteristic or biological gene distinguishes all the members of one race from the members of another. Race is more a dominant social idea that gives certain people access to opportunities and resources and disadvantages others. “Our government and social institutions have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to White people. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not” (California Newsreel, 2003). In the initial survey, the teachers were adding
insight into the varied views on Whiteness. They were also demonstrating a lack of experience in exploring their understanding of Whiteness. This primarily could be due to their age, the historical context in which they came of age, as well as the context in which they currently live that they identified as “rural” with rural meaning “White.” Consequently, there was no need to define whiteness or consciously self identify as a Whiter person, historically, culturally or biologically because of the whiteness of the context. These understandings and experiences provided a lack of discussion about whiteness in the rural context.

No: We Never Learned About Whiteness

Before attempting to understand their definition of Whiteness, this researcher first sought to know what type of educational experiences they had in discussing race and cultures. Most of the teachers interviewed indicated that they had taken one course in multicultural education and were not offered a course in Whiteness (see Figure 22). Ten teachers had at least taken one course in multicultural education, yet two did not recall taking any courses related to diversity. However, for the majority of the teachers, their classes did not discuss Whiteness. Consequently, the educational realm failed to address this pivotal issue and concern for pre-service teachers, particularly in a predominately-White rural context.
Not one teacher had taken a course that focused upon Whiteness or exploring the “self” as teacher (see Figure 23). Consequently, 100 percent of the teachers had never had the discussion in their teacher education courses about their own positionality as White educators (Banks & Banks, 2004). Out of ten teachers who had a class on diversity or multicultural education, only 20 percent of those multicultural classes did include a discussion on Whiteness.
One teacher explained, “Whiteness was discussed in two lights. One focused on how White people stole this country from Native Americans and oppressed Blacks. The other on how Whites were quickly becoming the minority in the United States” (Participant 2, Personal Communication, December 13, 2007). The participants’ discussion focused on White guilt and White fear of becoming a minority. This was not an in depth look at Whiteness and how it affects our teaching and the subsequent education of our students. However, it was more exposure than most of the other teachers in the study. Both scenarios presented in this teacher’s class experience left in tack the misinformation embedded in the lineage of America while creating possible White guilt. Still, another teacher, had a discussion on Whiteness in her master’s degree level counseling course, “I think it was more for the fact that we don’t know we’re racist, when we don’t know enough about the other races to not be offensive” (Participant 9, personal communication, August 12, 2008). In this case, Whiteness was mentioned in
passing for the purpose of expressing the importance of learning about the “others.” Both scenarios failed to provide an in-depth understanding of not only Whiteness, but structural barriers for those who are not White such as institutional racism and the such (Nieto, 2010). And it appears that the focus in these courses is on being politically correct rather than incorporating a new understanding of the history and development of a multicultural America and the role that all people played in establishing the United States. In turn, in rural areas, this reification of historical myths leaves intact the common taken for granted understandings about whiteness, structural racism, and other important concepts that educators need to be conscious of to educate all children in a multicultural society.

As indicated by Figure 23, most teachers had not been exposed to the idea of Whiteness in their teacher preparation programs. One teacher explained the experience most teachers received,

The class (multicultural education course) basically was designed to bring awareness of other individuals besides White Americans, and because my class was 100 percent White Caucasian. The only problem was that we had no outside perspective because it was 100 percent White student population. The teacher was White Caucasian and everything we discussed was in a textbook. The only other problem with this class that I viewed, we learned about every other race but we did not focus on ourselves, it was like we didn’t matter (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008).
Not only do the teachers walk away with a feeling that they do not matter but they leave with a lack of understanding of themselves historically in the context of cultures and race, and possible an erroneous understanding of the “other” (Fredrickson, 1971; Bay, 2000). The teachers expressed that they were not presented with an image of their race being a part of the multicultural rainbow in the world today. It seems to be us and them (all the “others”). They briefly learn about “the others” and do not discuss themselves (White educators) as a part of the multicultural or racial palette. This lack of discussion leaves them ill equipped then to discuss such matters in a predominately white context such as the one in which they teach where there is little if any racial, ethnic or cultural diversity.

Figure 24. Whiteness discussed in Education Programs. Nine out twelve had not discussed Whiteness in their teacher preparation programs.

When sunlight shines on raindrops in just the right way, the light is bent as it moves through the drops. It spreads out and is reflected back to us as a colorful rainbow
in the sky. To study race and cultures completely teachers must look at the topic from multiple angles. Take the topic, look at all spectrums of it, refract it, and see what you can discover. One teacher explained that the course she took looked outward at others, “it is where we learned about the ‘other groups’ not ourselves. It was more of a cultural appreciation course to develop awareness and appreciation of others” (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008). This has been the dominant motif in multicultural education. It is about the other rather than the self (Banks & Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2010). This presentation of multicultural education provides educators with little ability to alter the status quo. Another teacher added, “It was more specifically geared towards teaching and relating to minorities, Black women, Hispanic, and Asians. It focused on learning about them and not how who we are affects how we communicate with them. ‘We’ were not a part of the discussion” (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007). Consequently, teacher educators leave these courses with the conception that multicultural education is for when there is racial diversity not when the context is all White or predominately white. Studies of whiteness and racial diversity are not just for learning about the other, but also learning about the self, particularly for White people who historically have been led to believe myths and untruths about others who are not White. The data from several of the participants reinforces the contention that this area needs some attention in teacher preparation programs.

Teacher colleges are not really preparing teachers to understand their Whiteness
and how it affects their teaching and the learning of students (McIntosh, 1988). McIntyre found in her research with pre-service teachers that they used various tactics to avoid exploring Whiteness, even when opportunities were provided (McIntyre, 1997 in Lee et al., 2006). With evidence from literature and from research participants, we are aware that teachers understanding of Whiteness it not being formed through critical conversations about their racial identity in teacher preparation programs. Then, this leads one must consider how their understanding of race is being formulated and to what degree?
Table 1. Participant Demographic Overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Ancestry</th>
<th>Level on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum</th>
<th>Created Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>World History</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Caucasian; German, Irish; European</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical Science</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Biologically Caucasian, Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Business Education</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Caucasian, German</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Native American, Irish, Dutch, German and Italian</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>American History</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Unknown, Caucasian</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Unknown, Caucasian</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Intervention Specialist</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Caucasian; Wales, England and Germany</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Unknown, Caucasian</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Caucasian; German and Welsh</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Intervention Specialist</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>English and German</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Scottish, Irish, English, German and African</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Table 1, we gain further insight into the age, gender, level of education, racial and ethnic background of the participants, the subjects taught, whether they created an
image of whiteness, and where each participant was placed on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum (See Chapter 6 for a thorough explanation of the development of the continuum). This data indicates that the people who were the most aware of their white identify and drew an image of it ranged from the ages of 21-50 with the majority of the participants in the age range of 31-40. This speaks to the changes in our society that have occurred since the Civil Rights Movement. These participants while not living in a diverse community must have been able to experience more diversity in the curriculum they encountered in school as well as through media sources. Moreover, the participants who were placed on the emergent level of understanding of whiteness, all of whom did not provide a physical image of whiteness, teach subjects that lend themselves to a discussion of societal structure and practices such as in the subjects of History, Physical Science and English. These subject matter courses require a diverse perspective about contributions and the role of diversity of curriculum content. On the other hand, two participants, one male and one female, both were static in their understanding of whiteness, and neither produced an image representing whiteness. They were both in the age range of 31-40, and they taught classes that could easily lend themselves to an exploration of issues of race and diversity: social studies and science. One has to ponder why these two participants, particularly given their age range and their historical understanding given their age range, lacked an understanding of whiteness and how they addressed issues of diversity in their classes or in the curriculum given their lack of conscious understanding about whiteness.
Who We Teach: A Lack of Racial Diversity Viewed through Colorblindness

Has experience or society prepared these teachers to instruct an increasingly diverse population of students? Have they had years of experience with diverse populations? When asked, one teacher responded that they had a “diverse population” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008) within her district. She commented they had a few Hispanics and few African Americans in their district but were still predominately a White school district. Clearly, the meaning of diversity is different from an urban school when a teacher defines their school as “diverse.” The other teachers’ schools were practically homogeneous White with a small sprinkling of a single to few African American, Asian and Hispanic students.
Clearly, southeast Ohio has little racial diversity as indicated by the graph (see Figure 25). Still, teachers found that even when the percentage of racial diversity was small, they still considered their context to be diverse. One would think that then because of this diversity, even though small, teachers would make an effort to address it in their classroom and in the curriculum. However, when asked if diversity was addressed in their schools, they provided little evidence of a school wide diversity education policy.

Another theme that emerged from the findings was the conception of colorblindness. During the discussions with teachers, this was a reoccurring theme. A
few teachers were proud of the fact that they were “color blind” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008) or that they treat all students equally with no regard to differences (Participant 6, personal communication, July 15, 2008). This in itself is a concern (Nieto, 2010). According to Sleeter (Winter 2000-2001), “If a teacher is insisting on being color blind, then the teacher is putting herself in a position of saying, ‘I don't know about the kid's background, I don't believe that's really important, and I'm not going to learn about it’” (para. 30). For participant 6, this is critical because she taught social studies, an area of curriculum where diversity, particularly racial diversity can be addressed readily though the curriculum. A notably negative consequence of this form of blindness is the incapability of teachers to see the innate effects of racism on others. Being “color blind” results in their inability to see that “others” are not treated with the same privilege they experience (Frankenberg, 1993). “I think there are some White people that don’t think about it at all….not that they’re racist…just that they don’t think about it because they are White” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008). Pretending race does not exist is not the same as providing an equitable environment. Race is more than stereotypes and prejudice. To combat racism, we need to discover and correct institutional practices that benefit some groups at the cost of others in the United States (Lipsitz, 2006). This was found to be so in southeastern Ohio as well.

Still, another kind of diversity was also discussed by the teachers. Some designated their districts as low income or poverty stricken regions. U.S. Census Bureau data shows these counties experience more poverty than the average across the state.
Overall, teachers interviewed described their students as Appalachian, predominantly White and having various socio-economic levels with the majority being financially challenged. The diversity that teachers experience in rural southeastern Ohio is less about race and more about class (see Figure 26).


Thus, because teachers are often middle-class, it lends one to question within the context of predominately White rural schools, how teachers see not only students of different racial hues, but students who are White and of a different class. Moreover, for those students who are both class and racially different from their teacher or their classmates,
how do teachers in a rural context then address both of those factors? While a colorblind approach may limit the sense of belongingness students of color experience in this context, a teaching position based on class and race maybe even worse (Banks & Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2010).

**Experiences with Racial Diversity**

Rural Ohio is predominantly White. The counties in the study: Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs and Vinton are comprised of a 95 percent White population (U.S. Census data, as cited by the *Columbus Dispatch*, March 2011). The students and teachers are somewhat isolated from the “melting pot,” “salad bowl” or “patch work quilt” that comprises much of America. On the other hand, they viewed their context as historically primarily homogeneous in racial composition. Since, their past and present student populations of students are predominantly White; this researcher attempted to investigate if these teachers had obtained experiences with people of other races, ethnic groups or cultures. Had they developed experiences within their college education program? Or did they obtain experiences from outside their college of education classroom? The researcher searched for additional experiences or clues that suggested their preparedness to teach about diversity and to teach more diverse classrooms in the future. Had they lived, worked, traveled outside their region? All 12 participants stated that they had visited larger cities in the United States that had a more diverse population than where they lived and worked. Many have traveled to various states within the U.S. from Florida to California, from sea to shining sea. Yet, two
teachers have not been outside of Ohio.

Among the locations visited by the teachers were medium sized urban cities in Ohio like Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. One teacher, when asked if he had traveled outside of Appalachian Ohio replied, ”Yes, I have been to Columbus and Cincinnati” (Participant 6, personal communication, July 15, 2008). Participant 6, however, was very static in his understanding of Whiteness. Some visited major metropolitan cities like New York, Las Vegas, Washington D.C., Chicago and others. How culturally rich or racially rich were their travels? One teacher reported that, “I have interacted with other races during my stay at that particular city” (referring to a variety of metropolitan cities) explained one teacher of his experiences with diverse populations (Participant 3, personal communication, March 9, 2008). Participant 3 was exploratory in her understanding of whiteness. One teacher admitted that although she visited cities with diverse populations, she had stayed and shopped in “mainly White areas” (Participant 9, personal communication, August 12, 2008). She too was exploratory in her understanding of whiteness. Another participant added she had attended a university in a larger city for a short time that had a diverse population. However, she contended that during that experience she was “shocked at the Black culture…. I just wasn’t used to that sort of thing” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). Participant 10 was static in her understanding of whiteness. Later in the interview, this participant admitted, “I am actually intimidated by other cultures because I’m not familiar with them. I don’t understand their social interaction and they probably perceive
me as being stuck up sometimes or very quiet because I don’t really say much to them” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). One of the teachers commented that the extent of her multicultural experiences was various friendships and relationships with African Americans and a day spent visiting a Native American reservation in Arizona (Participant 4, Personal Communication, May 23, 2008). Participant 4 was exploratory in her understanding of whiteness. These teachers’ interactions with diverse settings outside of their current rural communities indicated that their interaction, understanding and experience with racial diversity within a more diverse context remained limited and corresponded to their placement on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum.

On the other hand, seven of these teachers traveled outside the continental United States to various countries, but their experiences were limited to: the Caribbean Islands, Canada, Mexico, and European nations. Further, their exposure to “native people” of the countries seemed limited. They remained somewhat isolated in their tourist areas away from the locals. A teacher explained, “I visited the Bahamas, but where we docked at, I don’t feel I received a true view of what their daily lifestyle was like” (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008). Others just had little to say about the “native” people. Clearly, in their travels, they remained tourists, but they were willing to engage in understanding the positionality and life experiences of the other.

Have these teachers allowed “the others” to become the teacher and they the students? Two teachers advocated bringing exchange students to rural schools to
enhance students’ awareness of diverse cultures in the world and promote understanding among differences in peoples. One particular teacher felt she had a more in depth experience with international people through this avenue than he had experienced through travel. This points to her unwillingness to do in Rome what the Romans do. The following describes what this teacher considers to be an in depth experience with “the others.” She became familiar with students from Trinidad and Tobago while serving as the resident assistant in the dorms of a local university.

They loved to talk about what home was like and I always would sit down and talk with them because in a way it helped them. I think the more educated someone is the more likely they are to accept a different ethnicity or culture, because they understand not everyone is the same. Fortunately for those two boys … They were well received because they were part of the soccer team. Just coming to the university and not already having something to tie them to the other students might have made it much harder for them (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008).

When you re-read the words of this teacher, as she “helped them” it caused this researcher to wonder, who did she think primarily needed and was doing the learning? Participant 11, who was exploratory in her understanding of whiteness, also was one of the youngest teachers in the study. Given the historical moment of her life time, she was in the 21-30 age group, it is little wonder that she iterated a somewhat paternalistic view of the other, given the conversations about affirmative action and the such that have been
at the forefront of public debate over the past 20 years (Nieto, 2010). Throughout American history, teachers and schools have been teaching others to fit a mold (McClellan, 1999; Miller, 1995). This example potentially speaks to the need for more education for rural White teachers.

Another teacher agreed with parts of the previous teacher’s sentiment, she felt she had received the greatest lessons in diversity from getting to know international exchange students.

I think it is very important to experience people from other cultures, invite them into your home. We had an exchange student from Taiwan. A wonderful young lady, it was a wonderful experience. We were able to learn a lot about her, her family and their traditions. In exchange, she was able to learn what we celebrate and how we live. My children and my students were able to talk to her. It was an excellent experience. (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008)

While participant 8 was one of the most evolved on the understanding of whiteness continuum being placed on it as emergent, her experiences with “exotic” people did contribute to her understanding of others, yet within a paradigm that viewed still privileged their own Whiteness (Frederickson, 1971; Morrison, 1993). The participants who sought different experiences with diverse people were not exploring the more common local diversity of African Americans and Hispanic Americans. When they did have extensive experiences with the “other” it was in a context where they were still the majority. This researcher wonders, should not it be a teacher’s responsibility to
experience being the minority or less powerful among the majority? This may be indicative of their unwillingness to be uncomfortable.

Overall, the teachers’ experiences somewhat varied and most seemed to lack in depth experiences with other cultures, ethnic groups and races, particularly from the United States. This range of experiences does not provide assurance that all teachers have rich expertise with or the ability to work with a diverse population in their classroom. At least, it indicates that the sum of their experiences could be expanded upon.

With limited exposure to minorities and diverse populations and little discussion of Whiteness in their teacher preparation programs, are the teachers capable of defining their race? Can they overcome this gap in their preparation? Will they perpetuate another generation of students lacking familiarity with people different than themselves? Do they address multicultural education in their classroom? Through the art, music, social studies and language arts state mandated curriculum, students are exposed to other cultures. The degree of this exposure varies from classroom to classroom or more specifically from teacher to teacher. It was a general consensus that there are few to no minorities in their schools. Therefore, they do not tend to formally address the cultural traditions or holidays of minorities in their schools, this is a major finding in that four of the participants taught courses in areas where it would be easy to remedy a change in the curriculum such as in Art, History, Social Studies, World History, American History and English. In other words, six of the twelve participants should have been able to readily
address diversity in their curriculum content. This is evidence of a misconception on the part of the teachers understanding that diversity or multiculturalism is for the other’s benefit but in reality it benefits all. One teacher, who does have a few minorities in her school comments,

We, sadly, do very little (when referring to multi-cultural activities). We do Black History Month. I had a student teacher that shared traditions; she shared food with my students. There are stories that I do in class that just gives me the opportunity to talk about other cultures but as a whole school, no we do not address minority cultural interests. (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008)

Again, this contention indicates that teacher education programs need to address the significance of learning about multiculturalism for “Whites only.” However, participant 8, who taught English was emergent in her understanding of whiteness and sought to alter the curriculum in her classroom even though the school in general did “not address minority cultural interests” (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008).

One teacher explains that they do not have “minorities” in their district. However, “The White children in their schools may be different than White children somewhere else. They’re Appalachian” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008). So, they do some traditional Appalachian arts and crafts type things. This action addresses the diversity amongst Whites as related to culture and class and adds some meaning to Whiteness. Additionally, this states that teachers do not see the need to
address issues of diversity with their predominantly White student population. In turn, these attitudes prohibit their students from developing fundamental understanding of diverse populations and preparation for inclusion in the larger American society outside of rural southeastern Ohio. Moreover, this perspective prohibits learning about themselves as part of the White race and culture, and explicitly being able to identify social, political, educational and cultural indicators of Whiteness that people of color understand (Bay, 2000). Thus, while people of color understand what it means to be White, White people receive the benefits of White privilege, but fail to understand why others have no access it.

Conclusion

Chapter 5: Place and Space: White Teachers in Rural Southeastern Ohio and Their Perspectives endeavored to convey how White rural educators in Southeastern Ohio define the term “Whiteness” in relation to the geographic context of southeastern Ohio. Participants described their school setting as “rural” which they primarily understood as synonymous with White. They consider themselves White or Caucasian and are all educators. Part of understanding their experiences as rural White southeastern Ohio educators is to understand the context in which they teach and live. Rural is a term that does not have one clear definition, it has multiple meanings dependant on their very specific setting and experiences.

Clearly, their social, political, cultural, historical and economical experiences were bound by the place that is southeastern Ohio, and its historical and contemporary
lack of racial diversity. Because the context provided a lack of diversity, the participants never had to address racial diversity unless they had a racialized body in their presence. In turn, their teaching and even their own learning experiences in pre-service teacher education failed to address not only racial diversity, but the meaning of whiteness or White people as a cultural, social, political and historical group. Thus, their context taught them about whiteness unconsciously. On the other hand, some of the participants, all of whom were placed on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum, were at different points of their development about their whiteness. Based on their understanding, they sought to remain oblivious, explore or become emerged in experiences to alter and develop their understanding of this important educational construct. It was clear that where the teacher was located on the continuum was informed by their historical moment and their lived and learned educational experiences. Even in southeastern Ohio, there is racial diversity. The major change could be to provide teachers with a deeper understanding of how their whiteness informs their teaching and pedagogical practices as White educators in a predominately-White context.
Chapter 6: What White Means to Me: White Southeastern Ohio Teachers and their Perspectives

Are teachers able to identify their Whiteness? If they are, then they may be better equipped to understand and appreciate other races. They may be aware of how their Whiteness affects their teaching and communication. The participants struggled with defining Whiteness or providing me with their personal mental image of “Whiteness.” However, each was able to describe some aspect of Whiteness and their input contributes to generating a compiled image of Whiteness, according to rural White teachers.

Most of the participating teachers agreed that there is not one definition of Whiteness for all Caucasian people. However, as members of the Caucasian race and educators, they were willing to attempt to share their thoughts on the Whiteness and build a resource that provides a range of impressions of “Whiteness.” This is all in an effort to increase understanding of the topic. The information that follows represents the depth and breadth of the meaning of Whiteness according to the White teachers of rural southeastern Ohio. During this endeavor to add meaning to “Whiteness,” certain themes in the dialogues with educators arose.

Rural White Teachers Struggled to Define Whiteness

What is their sense of cultural identity? What images of Whiteness does their mind’s eye see? How do they perceive White culture to be? From their perspective, what shapes or forms has it taken in the United States? What sounds, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage compose White identity from the perspective of
White rural southeastern Ohio educators? Their understanding of Whiteness can be grouped into the following seven themes: heritage and appearance, education in the United States, power and status, regional cultures, American, blank culture, and racism.

Table 2. Participants’ Descriptive Themes of Whiteness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptors from Data</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage and Appearance</td>
<td>English, different hues of pale skin, suits and bibs, typical, male leaders</td>
<td>They place the origin of White outside our nation into England. Skin color was a major descriptor among the participants. Whether in suits as leaders or bibs as hard working people, many credited Whites with founding and building our nation. Further, they contributed to the ideas of White male dominance by rarely referring to the White women in describing an image of White.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education in the United States</td>
<td>White, middle class, male education; schools do nothing to incorporate lessons of diversity</td>
<td>These comments indicate teachers' awareness that school curriculum was designed to teach to White, middle class, male values and perspectives. Yet, they admit little is done to incorporate lessons of diversity in the 21st century unless there is an occurrence of racial integration occurs race is not a concern in their schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and Status</td>
<td>White, male, advantage, power, privilege, class, competition, dominance, force, leadership and the role of founders</td>
<td>The characteristics of White male leadership and power tend to be conveyed as attributes to founding our country. Dominance of White values is recognized yet the coexistences of oppressive behaviors are not simultaneously acknowledged. The participants seem to compartmentalize our racist history as not part of the founding of the nation. Additionally, this theme provided evidence that not all Whiteness is the same in regard to class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued).

| Regional Cultures | Multiple meanings of White based on locality, Appalachian or hillbilly | This data indicate that Whiteness is not only diverse in economic status but in regional culture types. The culture the region understudy is Appalachian. It is an example of diversity of within Whiteness based on context. Some people are proud of this heritage and others seem to avoid being attached this label. This reluctance to embrace the regional culture is some ways replicates the process of reeducating immigrants in early schools to remove ethnic and cultural differences of the immigrants to create a new mainstream breed of White American. |
| American | Patriot, proud, American synonymous with White | If some people and especially teachers think of America as a White country, then there is little reason for them to integrate diversity on a daily basis. They may not feel that the country or school was designed for the minorities, therefore they can conform to our White education. |
| Blank Culture | Indescript, no culture, no specific images other than pale skin | These type of descriptors from teachers indicates that they have not considered White racial identity or possibly not evaluated their positionality on the topic of race. |
| Racism | Slavery, K.K.K., Nazis, segregation and hate | Representatives from this research pool recognize extreme racism as part of White history. However, a critical aspect of racism needs to be more evident to teachers. The quiet institutionalized forms of racism that exist in the United States need to be made more visible and be targeted for reform. |

**Heritage and Appearance**

“First, typical English heritage comes to mind,” (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007) explains one teacher. An “English speaker”
(Participant 7, personal communication, July 21, 2008; Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008) echoed another in a separate interview. “Pale skin – How we were referred to when we first came to America is my best explanation,” says another. “In general conversation if someone would say, ‘he is White’ I would think skin color and nothing else really” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). No other description or characteristic of Whiteness came to mind for this teacher who would later be characterized as static in his understanding of whiteness. “It’s just like somebody that lives in the United States that their skin is fairly pale,” one participant explains. They continued by saying that, “White is not paper White. It is different hues of peach, tan or olives” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008, also see Figure 27).

Figure 27. Participant 4, Image of Whiteness, personal communication, May 23, 2008.
Figure 27 drawn by Participant 4, who teaches Art, would later be placed as exploratory in her understanding of whiteness. Her drawing indicated that she understood that White was a color defined by different lightly colored shades of white such as peach, tan or olive. Another participant produced a similar notion, as shown in figures provided (see Figure 28). “Whiteness is the color inside the circle below, which is not the color of my White skin” alluding to other skin tones (Participant 7, personal communication, July 21, 2008). Interestingly, the white in the drawing is surrounded by black. This is possibly representative of White culture’s tendency to define themselves in contrast to the others. Rather, we define the other and take our self for granted. This juxtaposition of White and Black represent our historical understanding of race as well as the social and biological constructs of race (Jones, 1997).
These images contrast from the images presented in Chapter Four, in that these participants demonstrate very basic understanding of the complexity of Whiteness and the characteristics, behaviors, history, policies and privilege that comprise Whiteness when examined more closely.

Another teacher defines Whiteness simply, “A typical White person would be one you see everyday around here. A man, 40ish, blond/brownish hair, 6 foot about 220 pounds with jeans and a t-shirt on” (Participant 9, personal communication, August 12, 2008, also see Figure 29). Another initially responded with similar characteristics: Light skin, trendy fashion, but added competitive nature and privileged among the description.
that arose. Teachers could respond verbally, in writing or draw responses or reactions to particular questions.

*Figure 29. Participant 9, Image of Whiteness, personal communication, August 12, 2008.*

The images in this drawing not only encompass what White means but another theme around “America” meaning the majority of White America views this image of the nuclear family as being a part of White culture as well (Riis, 1997; Roediger, 2002).

Additionally, a teacher wrote and drew the following image for Whiteness. “I think of suits and bibs. I believe most view ‘Whiteness’ as a form of authority or power, due to the make up of our government. I see bibs because the other form of ‘Whiteness’ I
see are the hard working individuals that founded the country” (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008, see Figure 30). Does this mean that Whiteness has been historically been deemed as a “White man’s” country? Her words, “as a form of authority or power, due to the make up of our government” mean that this person only has seen White people in positions of power. She equates White with hard working, leaders and founders of this great nation. The history she has learned as well as the media images affirm this conception. Consequently, one might ask how could this person ultimately deem others as having power and as part of the structure of our society when they have been educated in schools and in their communities to see only White people in this role?
I think of suits and ties. I believe most view ‘whiteness’ as a form of authority or power because of the make-up of our government. I see ties because the other form of ‘whiteness’ I see are the hard-working individuals that founded the country.

*Figure 30.* Participant 11, Image of Whitness, personal communication, September 14, 2008.
Figure 31 echoes the White role of Leadership and adds a few terms like, “cracker” and “white trash” that did not arise in other participants’ data. A reference to “trailer park” and “white trash” do point to socioeconomic differences within White. This economic inconsistency can be seen as one drives along country roads of southeastern Ohio. You may drive past a massive ranch, farm or even a mansion then soon come up a trailer or a group of shack like dwellings. This range is major factor in
leading to the conclusion that Whiteness is not monolithic. It does not mean the same for everyone within the race.

Two teachers wrote on their paper, Caucasian/White and drew the little box with a check (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008, see Figure 32). This is an image we have seen on so many forms and job applications. “It is just what I am and the only time I really consider it is when I have to mark the spot on a form,” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008) is the sentiment the participant conveyed. Moreover, it links to the conception of power in that on most applications White is often the first choice given to check. In turn, the conception of White being synonymous with power is not only reinforced by the history we present, but by the social structures what support this connotation.
Participant 8 refers to White with a male label not once but twice. She expresses what we typically were taught in schools and particularly through the historical and social studies curriculum that the pale skinned, English man dominates and leads our American nation. What you can’t see well are the letters K.K.K. that the participant wrote as part of her vision of Whiteness but then erased as if she did not want the characteristics of that
group associated or remembered as part of the meaning of Whiteness. This is much like
the approach of some historians and public school leaders. They want to portray what
they consider the positive aspects of our race….describing the founding and building our
great nation of freedoms while omitting the contributions of others and the cost paid to
Native Americans, African Americans and other minorities to establish the now United
States. Now, we have scratched the surface. Clearly, the teachers define Whiteness as a
color, an attribute, a normal experience or a privilege. The origin is placed outside of the
United States ----- “English.” What else do they think about Whiteness? When they
think hard and are willing to share more of their inner thoughts? “Since I am not a very
good artist, let me describe what Whiteness looks like to me” begins this teacher, who
with her words very artfully drew a picture of her impression of Whiteness.

Whiteness has the face of a hard working, middle class steel worker or coalminer
struggling to get time off to attend his children’s school functions. Whiteness has
the face of a housewife trying to juggle a job while at the same time keep her
home and instill good values in her children. Whiteness can also have an
unoriginal face as Whites try to imitate other cultures in their daily behavior.
Whiteness can also have a helpless, dependant face as individuals ride social aid
programs and teach their youth all the “angles” of this process, also. Whiteness
can also have a shameful look when one considers the course our country has
taken concerning Native Americans and Blacks. (Participant 2, personal
communication, December 13, 2007)
Color is at the heart of the White experience or culture, whether it is “different hues of peach, tan or olives.” It is still defined by the phenotypic presentation as “White”, “pale skin” and originating from England and defined by the language of English. It is structurally defined in forms by checking the appropriate box. Its variations are defined by social experiences, expectations, as well as privilege and shame. Whereas the teachers struggled to define Whiteness, they understood what it means to be White in the US, and the privileges associated with it regardless of class or gender.

**Education in the United States**

Another theme that arose from within teachers explanations of Whiteness was education. One teacher describes Whiteness as, “White, middle class, male education.” Then, explains, “I say that because the curriculum that we have been taught to teach is basically White middle class, mainly toward male audiences” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). Another teacher commented that White males were the founders of education in the U.S. and they designed the curriculum to teach their values to the masses. When asked if they felt that this has changed, each hesitated then responded, “Yes.” The sum of their proof of change was that classroom materials are more multicultural now. They described the improved materials as stories with diverse names, lessons about other countries and information on minority leaders (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008).

Participant 2 (personal communication, December 13, 2007) and 6 (personal communication, July 15, 2007) had no verbal responses to this question. Participant 2
shook his head and Participant 6 merely shrugged. Participant 2, however, was later deemed emergent in their understanding of whiteness. On the other hand, participant 6, a male social studies educator, was found to be static based on the data he presented in the interview. Participant 1 expressed that the school does nothing to incorporate lessons of diversity. “It is completely up to the teacher of the class ‘they’re’ in.” This teacher who was exploratory in her understanding of whiteness and diversity was implying the need for lessons in diversity only exists for the groups or classrooms where there are minorities in the classroom (personal communication, November 14, 2007). The fact that many teachers did not address race in the educational setting demonstrates how schools have moved race to an unconscious place in the implicit and explicit curriculum. Leaving diversity education up to chance demonstrates a lack of understanding for the need to teach White students about diversity in our society. Further, this lack of recognition for the need to address diversity in a homogeneously White class implies a greater need to educate teachers on the institutionalized Whiteness in schools. The curriculum in schools maintains Whiteness as the basis for education. According to Apple,

Schools exist through their relations to other more powerful institutions, institutions that are combined in such a way as to generate structural inequalities of power and access to resources. Second, these inequalities are reinforced and reproduced by schools (though not by them alone, of course). Through their curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative activities in day-to-day life in classrooms, schools play a significant role in preserving if not generating these inequalities.
The research implicitly and explicitly indicated not just “White, middle class,” (six instances of middle class in teachers’ descriptions) but also “male” (three inclusions of male) as the normed and valued experience when asked to define Whiteness. It is at the core of the curriculum. “Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal” (McIntosh, 1990, p. 3). Paulo Freire (1972) challenges educators to recognize the oppressive tendencies built into our curriculum. Once they are aware and have understanding of the pedagogy of oppression, they should not heed. He pushes people to critical consciousness which includes taking action against the oppressive elements institutionalized in schools that are illuminated by that understanding.

**Power and Status**

Power is the domination of one group of people over another in major aspects of human society. White people have a history of dominance and oppression of others (Fine, 2004). Thus, when Abraham Lincoln indicated that if the US had to have a position of inferior and superior provided to people, then he preferred that the superior position be given to White people. Thus, social, political, economic, legal and cultural power was embedded in the structure of the US and it was placed squarely in the hands of White people. Consequently, “Whiteness, as an analytical object, [has been] established as a powerful means of critiquing the reproduction and maintenance of systems of inequality” (Hartigan, 1997, p. 496). Because White is normalized when people who are not White are not provided the same access to power, Whites are rarely able to identify the privilege provided them due to their skin privilege. Still, these teachers recognized
that there is power in Whiteness. The following are the variety of ways the teachers conveyed the power of Whiteness.

- “For me one of the things that always comes to mind is White males, White males, with power,” one teacher very frankly said (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007). He understood that power is not only based on race but also gender.

- “I still believe that being both male and White are the two biggest advantages in the job market” (Participant 3, personal communication, March 9, 2008). This male teacher seems to recognize his advantages in United States society. Hence, White males gain an unearned privilege from just their race and gender. They do not necessarily have to prove themselves as White women do or people of color of either gender. Alison Konrad, professor of Organizational Behavior, Richard Ivey School of Business explores race and gender discrimination. She has found that women and visible minorities are less likely to be promoted than White men (Konrad, 2006).

- “Dominant, White male,” and “force, power, privilege, domination…” - because usually people in power are White males (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007). Again, this participant has been taught that power is White and gendered (Loewen, 2007; Lipsitz, 2006).

- “Leadership” – because it’s usually White males have roles of leadership (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008 and Participant 8,
personal communication, August 10, 2008) and “dominant White men have been the leaders. I mean we are the dominant group” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008). As Tyack and Hansot (1982) indicated, the leaders of our educational system were White males. This has not changed today in our schools, particularly in rural communities in southeastern Ohio.

- “Privileged” (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007 and Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). When Peggy McIntosh discussed the idea of “White privilege” (1988, p. 3), she linked it to access and power to the mundane resources such as a band-aid to the important resources such as housing.

- “Founders of our country” (Participant 7, personal communication, July 21, 2008). Clearly, there is no textbook in schools, in the past or the present that provides an idea about how the “founder of our country” killed many people to set in place their way of being. Nor do they speak to the desecration of people whose culture was eradicated in the process. Again, they the “others” are only viewed as violent threats to our way of life versus people who had the right to their land and their own cultural way of being. An ex-slave James W. C. Pennington was direct to the point when he described the historic actions of the White man as they founded this country, ”proud and selfish Anglo-Saxon seized upon the Negro to be used merely as a beast” (Bay, 2000, p. 6). Bay presents a view of Whiteness with a Black perspective. White rural teachers should consider how others may
perceive their proud history and if the curriculum they are presenting provides an accurate portrayal of history in the United States.

- “Competitive nature” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). Yes, they were and remain competitive, particularly if we listen to the language used today to create policy related to our ability to compete in the world market, particularly if our schools remain behind others in achievement. What will this mean for our maintaining our rightful place as a country of privilege and power? Tomas Larsson (2001) writes that reason that the world masses have been going without is primarily due to the uses and abuses of political power by the privileged elite who have manipulated government policies for their own purposes.

Power was defined in Whiteness from a generalized, privileged and class and gender situated positionality. It is valuable information to see that five participates acknowledged this part of Whiteness. It connotes that White has unearned power and privilege due to the understanding that historically White leaders created this country. Yet, they do not recognize that they decimated others along the way. However, as you can see from the brief comments. This was an area that no one chose to elaborate on. They seemed to recognize it exists but minimized it, unintentionally or not or avoided dwelling on thoughts about it.
Regional Culture

A teacher pointed out that “White” might mean something else to White people from various regions of the United States. “I think it depends of which White people you are talking about and where they live or where they came from. Their experiences would be different” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008). This understanding could be linked to the place and context of this study. This study took place in Appalachia, a section of the country known to be historically different because of its culture even though it is predominately White. Because it is predominately White, however, does not mean that historically all White people have been privileged in social, economic, educational and in political spheres (Aptheker, 1992; Ignatiev, 1995). One participant points to their Appalachian culture as part of their White identity,

There is nothing that I think that we (White people) do that identifies us culturally. I mean, yeah, maybe a little bit more when you start thinking Appalachia (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008).

Thus, White people “see” the differences amongst themselves even if they do not always designate it as difference. Other participants shared the idea that there are different cultural groups within the White race; they used their region as an example. Their geographic area is known as Appalachia, where the Appalachian Mountains and hills roll through the countryside. “When you start thinking about Appalachian culture, you start thinking about the things they did in the olden days, like the activities shared at the Bob Evans Farm Festival (log rolling, blue grass music, apple cider and baskets)” continued
Participant Four (Personal communication, May 23, 2008). She described visions of people making bean soup over the fire, churning butter, sewing quilts and other things that Americans would have done in the Colonial period.

Appalachia is described, in materials from the Jesse Stuart Foundation, the values of the Appalachians are less modern than the customs of some bigger cities in America. Others refer to the mountain people of Appalachia as hicks, rednecks, and hillbillies. Some people believe that Appalachians are uneducated. This is because it took a few generations to get schools when the new settlers came. Most Appalachians value the commandments of the Bible and think of themselves as Christians. Appalachians hang the United States flag in public places, on their houses, on their cars, wear them on their clothing and even decorate the inside of their homes in Americana. Farms also produce dairy products, poultry, beef and pork. Because of the many river systems and natural resources from the Appalachian Mountains, many factories have located in the region. Some are oil refineries, steel mills, chemical plants, power plants, and lumber mills. In the craft making industry, Appalachia is known for basket weaving, quilting, woodcarving, rug making and making musical instruments—dulcimers and fiddles (Jessie Stuart Foundation, 2010).

Place or setting is connected to race for these teachers. They seem to connect rural, Appalachian farms to White people. This has been their experience. bell hooks (2008) that writes about place and race might have different image of rural farmers. According to hooks, ninety percent of African Americans lived in the farm land of the
south prior to the early 1900’s period of urbanization. Further, she explains many Blacks are still dedicated to farming and nature today. In slavery and in freedom, African Americans were part of rural culture. This is continued in that the participants knew of some racial diversity in their communities, primarily African American.

White Appalachian was a reoccurring theme for these Rural Ohio teachers. Appalachia is a beautiful part of the region’s culture that is rich in traditions, food, music and visual arts and crafts. However, as various pieces of evidence in my research suggested teachers in this region do not generally attach themselves to Appalachian culture or what they may perceive as “hillbilly” images. One participant illustrates this as she talks about Appalachia,

We live in Appalachia. So, quote unquote, I’m an Appalachian. I’ve lived here all my life. My gut reaction would not be to say, I’m Appalachian. But further thought makes me consider it more. I guess it is an integral part of who I am.

(Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008)

The participant’s “gut reaction” probably could be a result of the negative connotations of Appalachia that exist and are perpetuated through media. No one wants to be known as “backwards” or “hillbilly.” Consequently, White identity resolves as well as covers the distinctions of class and culture within White culture.

Whiteness can be defined by cultural context and place. But, the overall understanding of the context of “Appalachian” or “hillbillies” created dysconscioius or conscious understanding that all Whiteness is not the same. Class is a factor and whereas
middle class is the good for most American – Appalachian indicates lower class connotations even when connected to White.

**American Equals White**

This theme of “American” began as the theme titled “Other.” Data from the interviews produced many themes. Yet there were some themes that emerged early from four or five teachers that related to aspects of Whiteness. However, there was one that did not fit with the others; “American – Because when you think of American you think White person” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008) stated one teacher. The researcher thought this would be the only comment like this. So, the comment was tagged as “other,” while doing the post interview notes and analysis. However, this topic developed into a reoccurring theme in a few interviews and the researcher had to change “other” to “American.” The idea of “White America” was introduced by various participants. Their comments varied greatly. While reflecting on the topic of Whiteness, one teacher asked,

Can they say it’s our country? I mean we are the dominant group. But does that mean that it’s ours? Is it White America or is it just America. Do we assume it’s our country and other people just live here in our White country?

The researcher asked her, “Do you think people feel that way?” She replied,

Yes, I think so. I think some people think it’s White America and they’re not concerned with where it originated from… I mean Europe…. Just White skin tones. I think we have others that go beyond that. There are those who would
like our country to be “pure White” whatever that is. So, we don’t want Jews or Italians… even though their skin is White… the extremists… They’re out there,

(Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008).

Participants’ understandings reverberated a theory that White was synonymous with American which is part of the historical and social construction of whiteness explicated in Chapter 4. Toni Morrison, African American novelist, has expressed this impression in her work, “In this country American means White. Everybody else has to hyphenate” (Guardian, Jan. 29, 1992). Consequently, is there really a need to learn about the other or even the self and how Whiteness has shaped this country? Is it necessary to teach not just about White people but all people who make up the U.S. if it is viewed as a “White country”? The ability of the participants to speak their truth about the understanding of Whiteness was liberating as well as daunting. It left the researcher with more questions that could be answered in future research on the topic at hand. After reflecting on the conversations with these particular participants and reviewing recordings and transcript notes, this researcher would argue that their comments possibly may have been some of the most honest responses that have addressed the issue of race and Whiteness in literature (Clark & Desharnais, 1998). The participants did not pause before they answered the questions. Nor did they slowly answer while constructing a politically correct answer; they blurted out their answers with conviction. Possibly, their views maybe a true sample of how Whites in the area define Whiteness and is more prevalent than the literature indicates or has been able to discover (Tehranian, Jan. 2000). There
are those White Americans and White American teachers who when prompted with the word “White” ---equate it with America. What does this mean to their willingness to teach about diversity? As Terry (1981, p. 120) puts it, "To be White in America is not to have to think about it.” This "invisibility" of Whiteness leads to a general social tendency to assume that Whites do not "have" a race and to focus analyses of race upon peoples of color (Roediger 2002, p. 12). Another possibility is that some White people in the United States, mainly those of distant descent from multiple European countries, tend to see themselves as belonging to no ethnic group at all, but just "American.” This was confirmed in the data collected in this research and is existent even in rural southeastern Ohio.

Blank Culture?

Several teachers responded with blank stares when posed with the task of describing Whiteness. Therefore, the “blank culture” heading seems appropriate. The teachers struggled to find ways to define or list characteristics of their race. “There are no specific images of ‘Whiteness’ that come to my mind. We are indescript,” (Participant 6, personal communication, July 15, 2008) says one teacher. As indicated in Chapter 4, however, there are many images that designate the connotation existent in American culture. Yet, this respondent could not think of any. Another participant explained, “Hmm, if you’re thinking initial gut reaction to White American, it’s just like somebody that lives in the United States that their skin is fairly pale. There is nothing that I think that we do that identifies us culturally,” (Participant 4, personal
communication, May 23, 2008). The response of no description is as telling about the meaning of Whiteness as actual description. These comments are surely representative of the other teachers in our schools, particularly in rural, homogeneous communities such as the context of this study.

The best available sociological evidence indicates that White Americans have a lower degree of self-awareness than other racial/ethnic groups in the United States (Feagin & Vera, 1995). Interestingly, there is very little research on the nature of White racial identity; that is, where subjects are asked, "what does it mean to be White?" (Feagin & Vera, 1995, p. 139). In interviews with White participants, both Terry (1981) and Feagin and Vera (1995) found that the most common answer to questions concerning the meaning of Whiteness was "I never thought of it." These findings--and the general lack of research on the subject--indicate a low level of group self-awareness among White Americans. Moreover, it links back to the connotation of “colorblindness” in that the only time you see color, your become colorblind to it. In turn, reinforcing the idea of Whiteness because White people do not “see” their Whiteness as well. Hence, as educators teachers do not see the need to identify themselves or acknowledge the uniqueness of their students who are not White. These actions or practices, particularly in curriculum and schooling practices, leave the structure and hegemony existent within White privilege intact. Bell Hooks (1994) in *Teaching to Transgress* encourages teachers to rethink their practices and students to transgress against racial and social boundaries in order to attain freedom.
Racism

One teacher’s initial response to describing Whiteness was, “Baseball, leadership, slavery and K. K. K.” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). Participant 10, however, was one of the static described participants as identified by the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum. Of course, this participant elaborated on many aspects of the topic later, but his initial concise response leads us into the theme of racism. Professor James M. Jones postulates three major types of racism: (i) Personally-mediated, (ii) internalized, and (iii) institutionalized. Personally-mediated racism includes the specific social attitudes inherent to racially-prejudiced action like discrimination and stereotyping. Internalized racism is characterized by self-devaluation. Finally, institutionalized racism, like the racism in schools, hides in policies, practices and economic and political structures which place non-White racial and ethnic groups at a disadvantage in relation to an institution’s White members (Jones, 1997). The following are comments shared by teachers who directly brought up the topic of racism as a part of the description of Whiteness. A participant shared,

I’m not sure I have a picture of Whiteness. I try to assess people on their morals and values. To me there is good and bad in all cultures and everyone should be given the same opportunities. If I had a picture of Whiteness, it would reflect the principles of racism and hate (Participant 5, personal communication, June, 16, 2008).
Participant 5, who was male, is an American History teacher. Clearly, as a history teacher, he probably had studied social, political, and economic structures, and how they reinforced “racism and hate.” This is a part of White history and must be included when attempting to improve the understanding of Whiteness. Yet, when we think of rural America, we think of Pollyanna. However, how do people in this context come to understand the concept of racism? If we look at media sources, as well as historical events, we know that an African American was hung on the Athens Bridge in the 19th century. In the present, we know that in the area, there are Klan rallies. Consequently, the images of “racism and hate” have been historically as well as contemporarily embedded in the minds of the White community in rural areas. Moreover, according to Gerber (1978), the majority of petitions presented to the legislature in Ohio against the settlement of Blacks in the region hailed from southeastern Ohio. Thus, there is a history of lack of tolerance of difference in the region while at the same time, the Underground Railroad traversed the region as well (Siebert, 1898). Other teachers added more understanding to this concept.

Additional teachers addressed racism; they felt it was an integral part of the history of White people in the United States (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 12). This represented over fifty percent of the participants. Racism was in the forefront of a few teachers’ minds when initially asked about Whiteness, “When I think of Whiteness the first thing that comes to mind are images of the K. K. K., Nazis, and the racial tension in the South of the sixties” (Participant 7, personal communication, July 21, 2008). This
participant who was in the ages between 41-50, probably witnessed these events through the media. “When I think of White, two things come to my mind. I first think of White Americans as myself, who are not racist and enjoy the company of all races. The second thing that comes to my mind is the K. K. K. and their belief in White supremacy” (Participant 3, personal communication, March 9, 2008). Participant 3, was a male in between the ages of 21-30. His lived experiences and historical understanding of such events was probably very different from the participants in their 40’s or 50’s. Again, these comments or understanding relates to the many images of Whiteness presented in Chapter 4. Their understandings address the virulence of racism and how it is embedded in the very fabric of American society just as the images of the K. K. K. are related to hate, lynching and White power.

The seven themes that emerged from the participants including heritage and appearance, education the United States, power and status, regional cultures, American, blank culture and racism all embodied different conceptions of the participants’ understanding of whiteness. These understandings represented their lived and learned educational experiences and a range of understandings as well. This research, however, sought a deeper understanding of these understandings by utilizing images to further explore their conceptions of whiteness, particularly through media forms.

Images of Whiteness: Participants’ Understanding

After exhausting the participants’ description of Whiteness, the researcher provided them with a collection of images, in the form of a slide show that could
represent Whiteness. The images are not a complete collection. However, their topics varied greatly. They included images of White indentured servants, White racists, White protestant American leaders, White people in pop culture and more (See Appendix E).

The images were designed to evoke further thought on the topic of Whiteness and stimulate reaction and comments that may contribute to the definition of Whiteness. In addition, the researcher hoped to cause educators to consider this topic beyond our interaction. Another point of this research was to develop further interest in the topic as well as raise consciousness of the participants who were practicing educators. Thus, the researcher hoped to gently stir emotion and thought on the topic of Whiteness. As the literature on the subject indicates an awareness and understanding of racial identity are vital to preparing well-qualified teachers (McIntyre, 1997; McIntosh, 1988, 2010).

The participants were surprised by the images of White slaves and indentured servants. The researcher explained that according to some data, there were more White indentured servants than Black slaves in America prior to 1780. This is representative of the economic class differences within White. The participants commented that this is something that they had never heard before. Yet, this is a portion of White American history.
Figure 33. Russell-Fry, N. (Photographer). Blue represents White servants and red represents black slaves, before 1780. [Photography]. Source: Ellis Island Immigration Museum.
Figure 34. “Emancipated Slaves, White and Colored” Harper’s Weekly, January 30, 1864.

Text at the bottom of the image (Figure 34) read: “The children are from the schools established in New Orleans, by Order of Major-General Banks” Names left to right: Wilson Chinn, Charles Taylor, Augusta Broujey, Mary Johnson, Isaac White, Rebecca Huger, Robert Whitehead and Rosina Downs. The caption reads “Emancipated Slaves, White and Colored.” However, the use of the word “slave” in conjunction with White does not do justice to the chattel slavery of Africans that existed in the U.S. (Rodriguez, 2007). Whereas some historians may consider Whites who were bounded in servitude as “slaves” it is clear, however, that they were not bound as slaves for life and could work their way out of servitude. They were indentured servants. On the other
hand, Black slaves, unless manumitted by their masters, or freed of their own will, could never work their way out of servitude. In essence, this connotation serves to lessen the impact of slavery and its generational horrors on the descendants of slaves by comparing the experiences of “White” slaves to those of Black slaves. As a curriculum piece, teachers must be willing to critically interrogate what purposes such comparisons hold. Do they leave intact White privilege?

Next, the participants were all disturbed by the images of White supremacy, Ku Klux Klan, White pride or other racist behaviors. The images of these racists made the participants very uneasy. They seemed to recognize that these groups are connected with White people and only White people. Therefore, people of other races will associate these groups with Whiteness. The participants adamantly expressed the fact that they do not want to be associated with these extremists. They do not want people to look at them and wonder if they are a racist. The images of children involved in modern day supremists groups raised their discomfort even further. The realization that these extremist behaviors still occur in the United States and that racism cannot be dismissed as the past was troubling to the teachers.
Those days are not ancient history or entirely in the past. The Indiana Historical Research Foundation provided evidence of racist attitudes among Whites in the United States. These images seemed to generate thought about how others may perceive Whiteness. One teacher said, she has had Black friends growing up but she never thought about how they may perceive her because of her Whiteness (Bay, 2000; Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008). “I think there are some White people who don’t think about it at all…. Not that they’re racist…just that they don’t think about it because they are White.” She continued to reflect on the topic and indicated saying; “They don’t get caught up into it as an issue. But I’ve never met a Black person that hasn’t mentioned it as an issue or concern…. they talk about race” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 23, 2008). This participant understood that
she “did not have to think about it” where on the other hand people of color always have to think about it. To them, race and particularly Whiteness is not invisible (Bay, 2000; Cimbala & Himmelberg, 1996; Davis, 2001).

The researcher received a range of responses throughout these interviews for example, another teacher agreed that she did not like the association with Whiteness and racist groups, yet the same participant continued to say, “I guess, sometimes I think they have a point. I think the White male has become the person who is discriminated against rather than people from other cultures” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). Whereas this teacher is honest in her understanding of “who is discriminated against” she/he fails to address society as a racist structure that has historically privileged White males and continues to do so. Instead, she/he designates it as “culture” rather than racism. The inability to understand the differences between race, culture, racism, discrimination and prejudice need to be clarified for pre-service teachers (McIntosh, 2010). Often, there may be no discussion of such concepts because people have chosen to interchange the words, when in actuality; the words have different meanings and different structures attached to them (Jones, 1997). This leaves teachers unclear about how to combat racism, etc. in the classroom (McIntyre, 1997; Nieto, 2010).

These discussions demonstrate that teachers are not completely comfortable with race and do not fully understand their racial identity. It also suggests that teachers are heading into the classroom at different phases of self-awareness, racial identity, understanding and abilities to teach diverse classrooms or homogeneous White
classrooms. Listed in Table 3 are the locations of where the researcher believed these teachers were on their *Understanding of Whiteness Continuum*.

Table 3. Participants’ Placement on the *Understanding of Whiteness Continuum*.

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<th>Participant</th>
<th>Static</th>
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<th>Emergent</th>
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As indicated in the table, these teachers appear to be at different stages of their White racial identity development and their understanding of their whiteness and the
privileges embedded in it. The youngest teachers in the group (3 from the 21-30 year old range) were all in their exploratory stage, surpassing some of their elders. This would indicate they have grown up in a society that has provided an atmosphere that allowed them the development of different attitudes about race. This could be in part due to modern communication systems, internet and more diverse media presentations. The eldest of the group is at the highest level of understanding. This would make sense that the person with the most lived experiences and dedication to education would have a greater aptitude in such important areas of study. Those who had traveled more widely were at higher levels of understanding. However, master’s degree level of education did not noticeably enhance teachers understanding of race. This examination is of consequence because their level of awareness or identity development impacted their ability to see Whiteness in its many forms, and interrogate it through social and curricular means (McIntyre, 1997).

Finally, observation of classrooms provided no evidence that race is or is not addressed in their classroom. The classroom materials were all content-based math, language and science materials that did not demonstrate the incorporation of diversity. However, the complete absence of images of diverse peoples does indicate that diversity is not a priority.

**Summary**

Much like the meaning of rural, Whiteness is difficult to define. However, collectively, the participants have provided multiple interpretations of Whiteness and
provided understanding into their perspectives of race in education. These White rural southeastern Ohio practicing teachers indicated through their responses that their preparation for dealing with race issues in the classroom was somewhat limited. Further, the content of their responses suggest that more must be done to increase White rural teachers’ awareness of their racial identity and understanding and the institutionalized practices of White privilege in their schools. “Unless one becomes comfortable with confronting one’s own race, as well as that of others, it will be difficult to be effective teachers in communities and schools where members are from racial groups unlike one’s own” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p. 89). Teachers must prepare for working with diverse classrooms and for educating homogeneously White classrooms about diversity in the United States and the global society in which we now exist in the twenty first century. This begins with understanding their own racial identity.
Chapter 7: What They Didn’t Learn: Lessons from Teachers’ Education Experiences

This phenomenological case study of rural White educators in southeastern Ohio sought to understand how White rural teachers understand the meaning of Whiteness in their own lives and in the educational setting. The hope was that this research would serve as an agent of change. This study has implications for school curricula in K-12 settings and higher education programs.

Lack of Preparation

Based on careful analysis of the qualitative data collected, teachers in rural contexts are not prepared to teach our increasingly diverse school populations or to prepare their homogeneous classes to integrate into a diverse society. Since the development of multicultural curriculums more than thirty years ago (Grant & Sleeter, 2003), it still appears that institutions of higher education fail to properly integrate multicultural or racial understandings and their implications for teaching and learning in their core curriculums.

Collectively there are 23 college degrees among the twelve participants in this study. Clearly, their education programs did not prepare teachers sufficiently in the area of race. Colleges of teacher education must take on some responsibility in facilitating this essential area of teacher development. Teachers must be better prepared to meet the needs of their diverse or homogeneous populations. Gary Howard (2006) states it simply in the title of his book, *We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know*, words borrowed from
Malcolm X. If educators are charged with preparing students for skills needed in a diverse society, they must possess those skills themselves. This process begins with self-exploration of race (Howard, 2006). Change is needed. Teacher preparation programs need to incorporate Whiteness studies into their curriculums. Current teachers must be required to explore Whiteness and race issues.

**Racial Identity**

The participants in this inquiry possess a low-level understanding of their own racial identity and lack awareness of the implications of this deficiency in their teaching. McIntyre urges pre-service White teachers "to be more self-reflective about our own understandings about race and racism and for us to challenge our own constructions about what it means to be White in this country" (1997, p. 14). Additionally, Sleeter (1996) explains that White teachers need to understand their own "biases, limitations, and vested interests" (p. 152). Joyce King agrees, she describes this as the dysconscoius racism of White teachers. They proceed about their daily lives unaware of the affect of their Whiteness on their teaching and student learning. Their attitudes and approaches are “the norm.”

**Continued Institutionalized Whiteness in Schools**

During both the colonial period and the golden age of immigration, the education system worked to institutionalize the meaning of Whiteness as the norm (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Today, our schools need to alter this embedded curriculum for the benefit of all, particularly White teachers who pass it on in their curriculum. Some areas of
curriculum and instruction are reproducing the initial education systems’ agenda of promoting Whiteness. One such way is through the continued lessons on our great American White Protestant leaders as the discoverers and benevolent caretakers of the less fortunate, uneducated and uncivilized peoples. These lessons, as discussed in *Schoolbook Nation*, have been institutionalized through textbooks (Moreau, 2004). Over the years, various special interests groups have protested against textbooks they deemed un-American, or anti-Christian, racist or somehow harmful to children. Most conflict centered around bias regarding religion, politics and social issues. For example, among books banned by the Georgian State Board of Education is Edwin Fenton's *The Americans: A History of the United States*, in 1972 for its views on race and the Vietnam conflict (Georgia Humanities Council, 2004-2011). Over time, some texts have changed to incorporate the contributions of our diverse populations. However, Loewen (2007) in his second study on history textbooks found that textbooks still repeat lies. He calls for texts with actual chronological history, real images and comments from diverse viewpoints to compile historic accounts in schools. This is significant particularly since four of the twelve participants in this study taught history. And one of the least evolved participants concerning their understanding of whiteness was a male social studies teacher. Now, there are some schools that may be considering adopting a “no-book” policy, where students would retrieve their information from a variety of on-line sources, with access to many perspectives. The Governor of Texas, Rick Perry discussed this concept at a technology conference. "I don't see any reason in the world why we need to
have textbooks in Texas in the next four years. Do you agree?” Perry was suggesting students and teachers use technology as their resources (Shannon, April 7, 2010). However, not all schools have access to new materials or technology on a daily basis. Even if they do, teachers emphasize areas they like or are more comfortable to them. In addition, most teachers were raised and educated on a certain American history, which is often repeated and emphasized in their classrooms. The participants in this study reinforced this idea as well. However, most teachers speak to and teach what they know. Unfortunately, what they know is a White version of American history. It is all that many were taught.

The White teachers in this rural southeast Ohio context indicated that their understanding of Whiteness was informed by:

- History – presumed and learned
- Experiences
- Education

In addition, teachers have acquired habits from the teachers they had throughout their career as a student. We need to undo the bad habits they have learned from years of public or private school (grades k-12). This on-sight training occurred 182 days a year, for thirteen years (k-12). This equates to around 2,376 days of teacher training in teaching methods, topics and behaviors. In addition, there were four to six years of undergrad and graduate school teacher’ observations that most likely, based upon this research did not compensate for their lack of real experience in diverse context or
curriculum. Most often, college courses were taught by White teachers, teaching areas they were comfortable with. “Lacking specific training teachers often do what they recall their own teachers doing” (Guskey, 2007, p. 16). We need to change these habitual behaviors. New teachers as well as old teachers need engaging, thought provoking, practice changing multicultural and antiracist education that includes critical Whiteness studies. “He that would be a leader must be a bridge” is a Welsh proverb that the researcher believes addresses this need clearly. In order to be a leader for the future of education in the United States, a teacher must be a bridge for access to education for all students, regardless of the context. They must have the sensibilities and skills to address student needs, communicate to their diverse student population, and connect students’ homogenous populations to the diverse population of our global community, even in rural predominantly White communities.

New college graduates have had more exposure to lessons on diverse populations, but they are still quite limited. Their studies seem focused on examining the surface overview of “the others.” Most teachers can discuss Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman, our forty-fourth President Barack Obama and then they might struggle to present other less known minority leaders in our nation’s history.

Based on the numerous offerings of diversity classes found in on-line course catalogues, the education system recognizes the need for change and has incorporated curriculum on diversity and multicultural education. According to participants, differences among groups are not emphasized or examined closely. Recognition needs to
be given to the diverse groups that have contributed to the history and the continued development of our nation. Yet, most teachers do not want to create defined lines between groups. Comments like, “I don’t see color when I look at people” or “I treat everyone the same” are indicators that teachers prefer to minimizing differences. Much like the leaders of the past who felt they were blending everyone together for a peaceful society, they want to bind everyone together (Lindley, August 30, 2010). However, we are a unique nation composed of people from many lands, with many ideas, beliefs, traditions and colors of skin. We are united through our citizenship to this country and for the betterment of it.

We Americans struggle with sustaining diversity within unity, or maintaining community amid our conflicting interests. We long for a strong sense of community, harking back to a small-town life where face-to-face connections fostered a sense of recognition, obligation care and common purposes. Yet, we simultaneously recognize that modern life insists that we acknowledge the multiplicity of individual and subgroup differences of identity, values and interesting our culture. We recognize that our differences make us stronger. But how do we reconcile the two seemingly opposite impulses? (Achinstein, 2002, pp. 3-4)

Society struggles with this, so does our education system and according to the data so does White teachers in southeastern Ohio rural communities as well.
One fundamental way would be for us to learn more about each other --- not only Whites about peoples of color, but Whites about Whites, also African Americans about Hispanics and Asians about African Americans. Our diversity stimulates cerebral activity for teachers, students and society to come to a better understanding of race in the United States. There is no doubt we are a multicultural and multiracial society. It has moved to a question of, how diverse people, of different races, ethnicities or cultures, can constructively coexist and become a united community, while still identifying and respecting our unique qualities? Information and comprehension of facts are essential in making quality decisions for policy and procedures within schools and communities. Becoming a multicultural and cognizant multiracial community means accepting and valuing cultural and racial diversity even if none exist in the actual community. Any given community is comprised of separate individuals whom are connected by some common thread of interest, proximity or characteristic. Distinctively, communities vary in a range of individual factors: ages, ethnicities, family sizes and countless other unique qualities. In addition, they vary by the services available, economic conditions, job opportunities, health and childcare options. However, within communities, there is commonality or an area of common ground. We must identify the commonalities that will bind us together while simultaneously celebrating our uniqueness.

Within the context of this study, the community was extremely homogeneous --- ninety-nine percent White Appalachian. Consequently, in these communities where teachers rarely experienced any kind of diversity or learned about it through curricular
means, it is essential that issues of diversity in its many forms including racial diversity are central to combat taken for granted meanings of Whiteness. As one teacher commented, regarding her understanding of Whiteness, “When you think of American, you think White.” America, however, is a multicultural and multiracial society (Takaki, 1993). It always has been; our schools and more importantly our curriculum should reflect this.

**Teacher Preparation Programs Need Racial Reform**

Examining the current discourse of diversity is only the beginning of a comprehensive discussion on the current state of Whiteness in society and schools (Nieto, 2010). Teaching is a multi-faceted endeavor. A teacher’s behavior and pedagogy are leading contributors in helping students excel regardless of their race, religion, language, gender or other unique characteristics of the students. However, the heart of the educational process is in the interaction between teacher and student (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997). “The way the teacher interacts with the student is a major determinant of the quality of education the child receives” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1973, p. 3). It is through this action that the school system makes its major impact upon the child. This relationship, like any other, requires true dedication, investment and understanding. Understanding racial differences will help teachers and students understand the complexity of our multicultural and racial society, particularly in rural White communities. Further, teachers must be aware of their own racial identity and its implications upon their teaching and their relationships with their students. My research
indicated that Whiteness remains a concern in our schools. This lack in teacher preparation should be addressed with our current teachers through in-service programs. In addition, teacher preparation programs need real reform to include curriculum that would address Whiteness issues.

Teacher preparation programs strive to prepare their teachers with various teaching methods, strategies, skills, knowledge, curriculum and cultural awareness. The development of carefully designed curriculum for preparing teachers is essential to producing an effective workforce of professional educators. As stated in the text, *The Curriculum Studies Reader*, (Flinders & Thornton, 2004) the scientific method is being applied to the field of budget-making, systems of grading and promotions and many other fields. It explains that “if it is wrongly drawn up on the basis merely of guess and personal opinion” the results will not be efficient. It continues to argue, “The scientific task preceding all others is the determination of the curriculum. For this, we need a scientific technique. At present, this is being rapidly developed in connection with various fields of training” (Flinders & Thornton, 2004, p. 11). Flinders and Thornton’s (2005) research speaks to the fact that we should use data about students and teachers to make decisions when developing the curriculum for preparing educators for the classroom. With this in mind, this inquiries qualitative data indicates more attention needs to be placed in the field of Whiteness studies. Once we change how teachers think about race, we may have the opportunity to change what they do in the classroom.

This research indicated a myriad of understandings about White culture. For example,
some teachers are at an entry level or static in their understanding of Whiteness. Some felt Caucasians are the blank culture, some felt White was synonymous with American and one “was shocked by the Black culture” she observed in college. Not only did teachers demonstrate a lack of personal understanding of their Whiteness, they seem to be missing the perspective of others, “White people are unaware that other racial groups see us in particular ways because of our Whiteness” (Howard, 1999, p. 89).

When asked about the extent of their training in diversity or multicultural education, the researcher discovered that one teacher did not recall ever discussing diversity or multicultural education in college. Nine of the twelve teachers could be classified as having some basic instruction on diversity. However, their experiences varied. One teacher described her multicultural education class as being project based. The culminating project was a multicultural recipe book. This curricular output of a multicultural class does not ask pre-service educators to critically examine structural inequities embedded in our society but places people of different cultural and/or racial groups as contributing food to our society and nothing more (Banks & Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2010; Sleeter, 2006). Instead, it leaves White hegemony intact and further objectifies the experiences of racial and cultural groups that are not White. One teacher described the essence of most teachers learning experiences in this area, “It dealt mainly with educating minorities.” This means that the purpose was not to alter their understandings of how race and culture have different access points or power in our society but that Whites had a responsibility to educate “minorities” through a cultural and
historical lens of unquestioned Whiteness. Instead of looking at self, they were looking at the others. However, did they clearly see them or a version of them through a White lens (Neito, 2010; Takaki, 1993)? One teacher had two courses, but commented the same White instructor taught them. Another recalled her similar experience with a critical view, expressing the difficulty of learning about other races in an all White class, taught by a White teacher and using a textbook as their main resource. This teacher also recognized that her classes were missing a discussion of the White race. They only looked at others not at themselves. Only two students seem to have more in depth experiences taking multiple classes focusing on diversity in schools and society. Out of these experiences, none had taken a course focusing on Whiteness and only three had ever discussed the concept of Whiteness in their collegiate careers. However, a few teachers have gone beyond the limitations of their course and through their personal experiences and interests and have gained a greater understanding of Whiteness. The two main contributors traveled outside of homogeneously White rural, southeastern Ohio and anti-racist attitudes developed by their family upbringing. Consequently, these teachers had varying degrees of understanding of Whiteness. Thus, the researcher designed a continuum to describe teachers’ stages in the perpetual process of understanding their racial identity for these White rural southeastern Ohio educators.
Understanding of Whiteness Continuum

Static
- Treats White as the standard; unaware of own White racial identity
- "Color blind"; doesn't respect racial differences; oblivious to race
- Uncomfortable with "others"; remains isolated from others
- Believes racial stereotypes
- Can be overtly prejudice; appears opposed to racial equality
- Benefits from Whiteness

Exploratory
- Curious about race
- Aware of Whiteness
- Recognizes White privilege
- May experience guilt when exploring White history
- Seeks opportunities to learn from other groups
- May still unknowingly participate in the possessive investment in Whiteness

Emergent
- Comfortable with "others"
- Supportive of racial equality
- Comfortable with own Whiteness
- Possesses a well balanced and realistic view of race
- Antiracist; Actively fights racism
- Continually persues opportunities to grow in areas related to race

Figure 37. Russell-Fry, N. (2011). Understanding of Whiteness Continuum.
The understanding of Whiteness continuum is an adaption of Helms (1993) work on racial identity development. It has been altered to align the contextual factors related to this research; namely White and rural southeastern Ohio. Additionally, it is designed as a continuum to denote the process of movement through the levels of understanding. It is intended to show an endeavor that does have an ending point. You may always continue to develop further in your understanding of Whiteness. There are three stages in this continuum. The stages are designated as static, exploratory and emergent, Static.

The researcher would place two participants at the initial stages in exploration of the White race. They are at the “Static” stage. In their words, they “treat everyone the same” and are “colorblind.” This shows a lack of understanding or effort in recognizing differences in their self from the others. Additionally, it is a reflection of their understanding of not being prejudice; seeing everyone as the same. These teachers, at the “static” stage, choose to remain isolated. These two participants have not left rural southeastern Ohio. Words teachers in this stage used to describe Whiteness: “light skin, trendy fashion, competitive nature, American, leadership, baseball, slavery and K. K. K.” There was some acknowledgement that racism has been a characteristic of Whiteness; however, they framed this racism as historical. One of the two feels “good” about the history of White people in America and neither feels they have benefit or been privileged due to their race (Participant 6, personal communication, July 15, 2008). Participant 6 had very little insight to add to the meaning of Whiteness, other than to demonstrate
teachers’ lack of awareness of White racial identity after the completion of two college degrees in education, which included a course in multicultural education.

After seeing the images of Whiteness, Participant 10 said, “The images of white people from other countries were interesting. Hitler as an image of Whiteness, I don’t really like that association.” The researcher then posed the question, “Do you think that other people may perceive that image of White people?” She responded, “I don’t think it does in America. I don’t think we want to be associated with anything like that. But I not sure about how they might perceive white people. The White Jews (immigrants) was another I hadn’t thought of but it makes sense.” Somehow, this participant had not considered White Jewish immigrants to be from within her own racial group. She contested that she did not appreciate being associated to the K. K. K. due to her Whiteness. Although this participant acted offended by the racist images as a part of the whole impression of Whiteness, she continued to verbalize that, “I guess sometimes I think they have a point. I think the White male has become the person who is discriminated against rather that people from other cultures” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). The researcher inquired about this comment further, “so, you believe there is reversed discriminations now?” The participant responded, “Yes, if I was anything but a White, middle class female, I could have gotten a scholarship to college. But because I am a White middle class, female I had to work my butt off to pay for it on my own” (Participant 10, personal communication, November 1, 2008). This participants understanding of the impact of affirmative action is
incorrect. However, her lack of historical understanding of racism and its continual structural impediments to people of color makes one question not only her understanding of whiteness, but her attitudes about people of color as well.

The teachers at this stage did not demonstrate movement on the *Understanding of Whiteness Continuum* nor the desire to increase their understanding of other races or their own White racial identity. They were and appear to intend to remain static in their understanding of race. They were unaware of their own racial identity. Participant 10 demonstrated prejudice attitudes, was uncomfortable with “others” and chooses settings that provided an isolated and White environment.

**Exploratory.**

The majority of the participants in the study, seven out of 12, were further along in their development of the understanding of Whiteness within the rural context. The researcher would place seven of the twelve teachers at the “Exploratory” Stage on the *Understanding of Whiteness Continuum*. They conveyed acceptance of others’ differences. “I try to access people on their morals and values. To me there is good and bad in all cultures and everyone should be given the same opportunities” (Participant 5, personal communication, June 16, 2008). Another teacher shared her thoughts on the importance of recognizing differences. While completing her counselor’s training, she had learned, “the background of a family and race can lead to different counseling techniques; not to offend the client” (Participant 9, personal communication, August 12, 2008). Her counseling experience can be applied to the classroom.
At this stage on the continuum, their description of Whiteness is more encompassing. These participants were teachers who had a greater understanding of their racial identity. They were in touch with positive and negative aspects of White heritage. “When I think of White, two things come to my mind. I first think of White Americans as myself, who are not racist and enjoy the company of all races. The second thing that comes to my mind is K. K. K. and their belief in White supremacy” (Participant 3, personal communication, March 9, 2008) one teacher explained. “When I think of the history of White people in America, I think of force, power, privilege, domination, imposing their will on others without consideration of other cultures” (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007) another teacher recognizes racist behaviors that exist among a portion of White people.

Many teachers mentioned the privilege or advantages of White people. However, no one recognized a time when they had personally benefitted from Whiteness. At least, as one teacher explained, “I am not aware of it, but I still believe that being both male and White are the two biggest advantages in the job market” (Participant 3, personal communication, March 9, 2008). Whereas this teacher did not speak of his own experience, he clearly understood that these were factors in accessing power and privilege in the US context, historically and in the present. Still, one common factor among these teachers was that they all have traveled to larger cities, other states and many have traveled internationally. One teacher spoke about experience, “It was a different feeling when I first traveled being around all the cultural diversity” (Participant
He was referring to the first time he interacted with many other races in a foreign setting, as opposed to the homogenous Whiteness of rural southeastern Ohio. One teacher had only been to a couple large cities and admitted remained in tourist areas that were predominately White. Although her behavior suggests, she may be uncomfortable with those that are different from her, she did not convey any overtly racist attitudes. However, she felt more comfortable around people who were from her own culture (Lawrence & Tatum, 1999). The more well traveled a person was the more comfortable they seemed with diverse populations. “For me it is not an issue (referring to interacting with people from diverse races). I have never had a problem” (Participant 1, personal communication, November 14, 2007) one teacher casually explained, whose lists of major destinations seemed endless. In sum, these teachers seemed open to learning more about race. Their answers were more thoughtful and provided more detail. They have considered their White identity. They have some understanding of Whiteness and displayed an interest in discovering more about others and themselves.

**Emergent.**

These teachers are coming into themselves. They are rising into a level of greater understanding of Whiteness. The researcher reserved the “Emergent” stage of the *Understanding of Whiteness Continuum* for those who seem somewhat comfortable with their own Whiteness and the differences of others, based on observed behaviors and
attitudes expressed in their responses. When I asked one teacher for his image of Whiteness, he vividly described a range of understanding:

Whiteness is the face of a hard working, middle class steel worker or coalminer struggling to get time off to attend his children’s school functions. Whiteness has the face of a housewife trying to juggle a job while at the same time keep her home and instill good values in her children. Whiteness can also have an unoriginal face, as Whites try to imitate other cultures in their daily behavior. Whiteness can also have a helpless, dependent face as individuals ride social aid programs and teach their youth all the ‘angles’ of this process, also. Whiteness can also have a shameful look when one considers the course our country has taken concerning Native Americans and Blacks (Participant 2, personal communication, December 13, 2007).

This participant does well to show additional dimensions of Whiteness. Many refer to White as a male designation. This contribution includes women and children. This meaning of Whiteness incorporates not only gender but also class. It also considers guilt experienced by White people regarding past transgressions of their race and current prejudiced or racist behaviors of a segment of the White population. It also mentions a unique perspective of Whiteness. It suggests that some Whites, who lack their own identity, copy or adopt the characteristics of another distinct cultural group within another race.
After viewing a variety of images of Whiteness, one participant said, “There is a common human thread and not a White one, Black only or Latino only image.” He explained further, “The history of any race, ethnicity or culture is a mix of good and bad, noble and ignoble” (Participant 12, personal communication, October 10, 2008). These teachers expressed emotion and appreciation for humanity and clearly represented what Sleeter (1996) and others have indicated are the necessary critical reflections about who they are and what role their race and culture play in United States society (McDermott and Samson, August 2005). The key difference between this process and the static level is that White educators are actively seeking ways to understand the racial and cultural experiences of people different from themselves as well as their own understanding of themselves as they seek to emerge themselves in knowledge and/or experiences where they walk a mile in another’s shoes, and accept that the shoes may hurt their feet.

Through the dialogue of the interviews, these participants shared stories that demonstrated anti-racist behaviors such as hosting international exchange students, making long-term friendships with people of different races or cultures, teaching their students about diversity and discussing race issues with others. The teachers in this stage seek opportunities to influence others to critically examine race issues. One teacher highly recommends hosting foreign exchange students. She has done this on more than one occasion. She believes these experiences have benefited her family and the students in the schools where they attend. This participant expressed concept of how people in
southeastern Ohio are very isolated and have little exposure to the diversity that exists in the world. She sees this as a concern for her family’s and local student’s development.

I think it is very important to experience people from other cultures, invite them into your home. We had an exchange student from Taiwan, a wonderful young lady. It was a wonderful experience. We were able to learn a lot about her and her family and their traditions and in return, she was able to learn what we celebrate and how we live. My children and I were able to talk to her. It was an excellent experience. (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008)

This teacher, who comes from a modest Appalachian family, recalls when she first became aware of her White racial identity through the experiences of her adopted African American sister:

My little sister, my parents adopted her when she was two, there was one day when she came home from school, she was in kindergarten, and my mom said she came home really upset and went straight to the bathroom and she was in the bathroom scrubbing her little arms as hard as she could. Apparently, some of the other kids were making fun of her and she was trying to get the brown off of her. She was trying to get the dirt off of her (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008).

Her mother comforted her sister and then confronted the school about the situation. This speaks to the need of adults in the community to be advocates of better racial understanding. From what the participant can remember, her sister’s teacher responded
to the family’s needs by talking with the students about what had happened and they learned some songs about how people are different and yet similar. The students learned a lesson about treating others as if they want to be treated and the teacher who demonstrated recognition of racial difference probably began the continuum of understanding race and Whiteness. This teacher is among those who life’s experiences have provided them what their teacher education did not: lessons on race and Whiteness. Moreover, because she had a sister of a different race she was able to understand and reflect on how Whites treat people of different racial groups from her sister’s experiences as the “other” in a predominately-White rural community.

I designed the continuum to establish the concept that understanding of Whiteness is a continual process. If teachers are provided the right facilitation, experiences and have the personal desire, they will continue to grow into their understanding of race, including Whiteness. I do not suggest there is a point when a teacher reaches enlightenment. Rather, their understanding of Whiteness and racial identity can deepen. In future studies, I may employ the use of a Post-Emergent level to denote those who are completely immersed and aware of their racial identity and its’ impact on relationship and connections to a more diverse society. However, this study did not warrant the use of such a designation.

How can we ensure that movement exists on the continuum of understanding? Colleges of Education and United States Department of Education must be somewhat responsible for ensuring this process is occurring in the development of pre-service
teachers, if they are certifying teachers’ capabilities to effectively teach the youth and future of our nation. They must require meaningful Whiteness studies in teacher preparation curriculum. Moreover, it is the responsibility of every teacher to equip themselves with knowledge of their own racial identity for the betterment of their students.

Helms (1990, 1993) designed a White Racial Attitude Scale that consists of two phases and includes six stages. They are Phase I: Abandonment of a Racist Identity (Contact, Disintegration and Reintegration) and Phase II: Establishment of a Nonracist White Identity (Pseudo-Independence), Immersion-Emersion and Autonomy. This model is a psychological examination of attitudes that are measured by degrees of loyalty to or stances regarding race and consequently, differing levels of adherence to or estrangement from what are considered the common values of White culture. *The Understanding of Whiteness Continuum* focuses on the path toward greater understanding of Whiteness and the benefits and unearned privilege that undergirds the racial group rather than just White racial attitudes. The ideas that we can grow and expand our understanding of ourselves as White people if we so choose will lead to a greater understanding of Whiteness. Thus, making White teachers capable of teaching White students about race particularly in homogeneous rural contexts and improve their ability to teach diverse classrooms as the rural context continues to have an increased migration of racial minorities.

Finally, according to this study, this greater understanding was derived primarily on their own initiative. They are at a different place in their understanding of Whiteness
due to personal experiences, primarily through travel, exposure to diversity and family upbringing. It was certainly not because of their official teacher training. Therefore, teacher preparation programs need to begin facilitating this exploration process to ensure that it is occurring. Additionally, it must be a holistic approach and incorporated into each class subject rather than sit solely within a course on diversity.

**Whiteness Studies Needed for Rural Educators**

In the past, major cities contained most of the racial and cultural diversity. Rural areas remained somewhat homogeneous in race; White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). However, with current immigration and migration trends, those areas are becoming more diverse. Whiteness is an area that deserves more attention in preparing teachers, particularly in rural areas. While teaching a graduate education course at a rural satellite location, I discussed the concept of Whiteness studies for educators. I recall an interesting response, “I am White. Why should I study about Whiteness? Isn’t that wrong to focus on Whiteness, anyway? Shouldn’t we be learning about other people?,” an in-service teacher asked. This reaction sparked renewed dedication to my research into the understanding of Whiteness among White rural educators. Most certainly, teacher preparation programs should strive to instill in their students a desire to learn about, appreciate and understand those different from themselves. However, by excluding understandings of Whiteness from race studies, we are providing a disservice to our future population of learners in the United States, particularly in rural contexts. The argument for Whiteness studies is further supported by the lack of understanding of
Whiteness as demonstrated through teacher responses in this study. Further, teachers described insufficient preparation in the area of diversity studies and Whiteness in their teacher preparation programs.

In examining the teacher preparation curriculum of Ohio State University in a state with many rural communities, I found they have an impressive array of courses addressing diversity. A sampling of their course titles follows: “Global Education: Social Economic Perspective”, “Teaching About Africans and African Perspectives in K-12 Classrooms”, “Teachers and Teaching: The Changing Context in Equity”, “Diversity and Exceptionality”, “Gender Education”, “Education and Spirituality: Holistic Perspectives”, “Conceptions of the Body in Western Culture”, “A History of the Education of Women”, “Developing Syllabi for Second-language Classrooms” and numerous other courses covering almost every imaginable topic are listed in the education courses on their Multicultural Center website (Retrieved 2007). Yet, even there I was unable to detect a course offered in Whiteness studies for educators. Southern Oregon University offers education courses entitled, “Humanizing Instruction”, “Issues in Native American Cultures”, “Diversity”, “Education in Anthropological Perspectives” “Children with Disabilities and their Families” and many more courses touching on various aspects of diversity. Once again, the researcher did not find Whiteness studies. The researcher found this true in the course listings for a wide spectrum of universities. However, after incidents of racial tension on campus, The University of California has record enrollment in the Cross Cultural Center’s elective course, “Whiteness, White
Identity and Racial Justice” (Clay, April 7, 2010). Many universities do discuss diversity, yet do they truly require their students to explore how their own race will affect their teaching? Remembering that the majority of the teaching force in the United States are Caucasian, are they preparing the future teachers of our nation to be effective in teaching a diverse or a predominately-White student population? Whiteness studies are something that has certainly not been a priority in teacher preparation programs. To be honest, it has not been a necessity in the preparation of teachers for rural communities, until recently.

In the twenty-first century, White teachers in rural southeastern Ohio, however, must prepare students to understand race and integrate into a diverse society. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers be equipped with understanding of White racial identity. Most universities recognize the growing diversification of student population in the United States and the importance of attention to students’ unique needs. In addition to the diversification of student populations, it is equally important to realize that most teachers in the United States are White. This is more significant than one might think at first. According to the United State Department of Education, in 1971 eighty-eight percent of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools were White. One might assume that over the years this percentage may have decreased significantly. It has not. There has only been a four percent change in this number over thirty years. In fact, this number changed due to desegregation and the dismissal of many African American teachers and principals (Tillman, 2004). In the year 2000, eighty-four percent of our
teachers in public and private schools (excluding pre-kindergarten teachers) were White non-Hispanic (Snyder, 2002).

The present need to address Whiteness studies is compounded concerns for the future. It is projected that by the year 2042, Caucasians will account for less than 50% of the U.S. population. This is based on a New York Times report from U.S. census data. They state that, “Americans who identify themselves as Hispanic, Black, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander will together outnumber non-Hispanic Whites” (Roberts, Aug. 13, 2008, para. two). If data trends continue then the statistics suggest that a predominantly White teaching force will be responsible for the education of an increasingly diverse population of students. This is an additional argument for the need of Whiteness studies in teacher preparation programs.

School curriculum has improved in the United States to be slightly more culturally representative of our nation. Textbooks are more inclusive, after much protest (Lindley, August 30, 2010; Loewen, 2007). In addition, with the assistance of education media and internet, the world is much more connected and diverse populations and their views are more visible to students. Yet, NAME the National Association for Multicultural Education contends that curriculum and textbooks remain biased. For example, they explain that U.S. History is still told as a story with a White ethnic point of view (NAME, May 13, 2010). Not only is our teaching population predominately White, they are more keenly aware of history told from the White perspective of our early government and educational leaders. Furthermore, they are a significant factor in
children’s lives. Each school day, most classes of America see a White face as a face of authority and leadership in their lives. For at least thirty-five hours a week, a White person controls their actions, activities, topics of discussion and holds the power. It would be ignorant to assume this has no impact on the education of diverse populations and White society. In a way, it is very much a reproduction of earlier days of education in the United States. This research would expect and hope to see in the future a much more diverse population of teachers. Since A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform (1983), we have tried to change this. However, based on U.S. Department of Education statistics (2010) and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education’s Holmes Scholars Programs (2011) this area needs further encouragement.

Teachers provide students with an opportunity to learn through the curriculum. If teachers, particularly White teachers do not believe or understand their own positionality and the positionality of their students, then we will not make progress in educating all students, regardless of their race, to the best of their ability. Policy measure such as No Child Left Behind fails to examine the role of race in testing, cultural practices and teacher positionality. If popular culture continues to be the medium from which most White teachers learn about difference, then the mis-education of White teachers will continue and they will be unable to see their racial and cultural expectations of students of color based on stereotypical expectations. In addition, more importantly, they will continue to privilege White racial and cultural ways of being and understanding (Spring,
2007). This does a disservice to the teachers and their students. Paulo Freire warns oppression dehumanizes both the oppressed and the oppressor (Freire, 1972).

**Racism is Institutionalized**

Racism continues in present day America through social and political practices. There is a continuation of White structure in our current society through “institutionalized racist” measures and our continued passive participation in the possessive investment of Whiteness (Nieto, 2010). Therefore, with evidence of the existence of a White culture that people participate within each day, it would be realistic to assume there is a population of White educators within the United States that must be unaware of or participate in their possessive investment in Whiteness (Lipsitz, 2006). Only a couple teachers verbally recognized that White has been synonymous with privilege and they referred to it more in the past tense. Honestly, no one seemed to address this privilege, as if it continues today. Where we are today is built upon the privilege and advancement of our ancestors based on this White privilege. The path is more difficult for many others. This supports the concept that it is necessary to examine the cultural curriculum in teacher education programs and in the public school curriculum.

Dr. James Loewen, a sociologist known for his studies of intergroup relations and confrontation of racism in American textbooks, told an audience at University of Wisconsin that in order to be an acceptable teacher you need to be: anti-racist, doing history locally (local issues) and teach against the textbooks (speech by Loewen 2009, as cited in Pederson, 2009). My study did not produce evidence that teachers recognize the
need to be actively anti-racist in their teaching practices. When asked how their school addresses diversity, many teachers were unaware of how diversity is addressed in their school. Five teachers clearly felt there was no need to address diversity in their school because their students are mostly homogeneous White. They felt that questions about addressing diversity in schools were non-applicable to them. Yet these are the very context where racial diversity should be addressed.

Another equated diversity with holidays, as she responded that they do not have time to cover various holidays, therefore they incorporate those of the mass public (White and Protestant). One teacher gave their art teacher sole credit or the task of covering this area for the school by exploring numerous cultures and discussing their traditions. Others shuffled the responsibility to the social studies teacher.

Very few teachers had diversity in their student population. Those who did felt that the needs of their diverse students and White students were being met by their schools. The researcher was able to garner that their conclusions were based on their observations of other teachers, impressions of teacher’s attitudes and evidenced by classroom discussions and activities that they are privileged to as colleagues. This is a valuable perspective; however, these teachers have limited access to the daily practices in other teacher’s room and were not aware of any school wide or district wide philosophy on diversity issues. One teacher said he felt the way race is addressed in their school varied from class to class and was entirely dependent on individual teachers. There were good examples; one teacher described how she uses literature to give the students an
opportunity to talk about other cultures. But stated that school wide, they do nothing to encourage understanding of diverse populations.

The researcher did discover some concerns about race issues with two participants. A teacher expressed concerns that not enough is done to educate students about race.

I feel that, especially in an area such as this, there is a lot of prejudice and that there is no reason for it. I don’t even feel that our school systems do anything to adjust the prejudice with all the rebel flags …I think that needs to be addressed. I am just so aggravated because of all the prejudice in students. They have no reason for it‖ (Participant 11, personal communication, September 14, 2008).

This teacher’s concerns speak to the legacy of historical racism in the US (Roediger, 2002). Because rural America is mostly homogeneous, this teachers’ understanding of the impact of racism is critical. It is within these isolated enclaves that racism can breed because there is a lack of credible information other than popular media. Consequently, schools and the curriculum in them can serve the community by creating racial understanding even when there is no “other.”

Another teacher provided clear evidence for the need to educate teachers and consequently their students in rural southeastern Ohio about race. On a trip to a competition in Columbus, Ohio, the students and teacher were having a conversation at dinner. Most likely because he had seen a Black person, he began to talk about people of color. The teacher tells the story,
He said that if African Americans, and actually that’s not the word he used, had gotten out of a vehicle and stepped foot on his property he would probably shoot him or her. And of course, I immediately started talking to the kids. You know about how that’s a terrible way to think, very unfair and very racial. The student proceeded to tell me that I was a very nice lady but that I would go to hell for thinking that way (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008).

The teacher was shocked at the racism, White superiority and prejudice she witnessed. However, she found this was not a unique way of thinking in the area. She was not prepared to conquer such overt racism. She did attempt her growing concern of student exposure and understanding of race through the literature she chose for her language arts courses. She later stated, “I think that it is really important when there is a moment that you can share with other people, with students, your thoughts, feelings and lessons. It is extremely important that you need to be there to help them grow” (Participant 8, personal communication, August 10, 2008). The sum of this data collected supports the concept that it is necessary to examine the cultural curriculum in teacher education programs and in public school curriculum, particularly for those educators who teach in a rural context such as in southeastern Ohio.

**Summary**

In conclusion, it was clear that the historical and contemporary setting of southeastern Ohio limited what the participants in this study understood about their own racial identity as well as the racial identify and experiences of others. Because of these
rural White teachers willingness or unwillingness to engage in self-reflection, external cultural experiences outside of the area, and even the concept of diversity in their teacher preparation courses, their understanding of their own whiteness varied. In turn, the participants encompassed the spectrum of possibility on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum. Consequently, all three stages; static, exploratory and emergent were found amongst the participants in this study. The data suggest a strong need for changes in the curricular experiences of pre-service White teachers, particularly those who will teach in rural homogeneous settings. In fact, this research indicates that teachers in such a context may need to understand their whiteness and the historical and contemporary underpinning of privilege embedded in our society even more than teachers in urban or suburban communities.
Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications: What I Have Learned, What I Say

Introduction

Through conducting this study, I challenge future White educators and present educators to explore the many aspects of Whiteness. They should understand the depth and breathe of the meaning of their skin color, their heritage and their race. It is a part of them … every day. It is a part of what “others” see every day. Let us not just examine “the others” in our multicultural education courses at universities, but also let us study ourselves. I predict, the teachers will be more soulful and thoughtful educators, once they have completed this self-exploration of their race. They will be more keenly aware of which historic figures they become excited about in class, which topics they skim over
and which literature pieces they spend more time on, what materials they place on their walls and more importantly how they relate to their students.

Should rural teachers be concerned with their racial identity? The answer is yes. This researcher contends this research indicates that it is important for White rural teachers to become more aware of their racial identity. It is a reality that most rural teachers are White. Presently, most of their students are White. However, research suggests the number of diverse students is rapidly increasing (Hodgkinson, 2001). Teachers must understand or attempt to understand themselves before they can attempt to understand and successfully communicate and educate their students. White is a part of who they are. One does need to define themselves by their gender, religion, culture or race. Yet, they are important factors in self-definition. So is race and culture. Dan T. Carter states it well in his *Reflections of a Reconstructed White Southerner*, “Our accents, our sexuality, our ethnicity are more than mere veneer, but less than the sum total of our common humanity” (Cimbala and Himmelberg, 1996, p. 47-48).

Further, White teachers of rural southeastern Ohio seemed to have a limited awareness of the commonness of cultural racism and need to combat racial stereotypes and attitudes. While this is true for my study participants, it does not mean that we can generalize to all rural communities or areas. Still the majority of teachers in this study were oblivious to the extent to which they contribute to the deficit of their students overall education by allowing diversity, particularly racial diversity to be invisible in the school curriculum. This is particularly important in schools that have little access to
multicultural cultural experiences for their student population, such as rural southeastern Ohio. Therefore, the responsibility falls upon the teachers to provide this integral part of students’ development in isolated areas of the United States.

This research hopes to instill in educators the desire to learn more about themselves and their racial identity. Thus, their ability to work with diverse classrooms may improve as well as their ability to teach about diversity in a predominantly White context. Educators should be well qualified and prepared for teaching a homogeneous or diverse classroom. In order to face this task, they must recognize race as an integral part of who they are. They should understand their intrinsic Whiteness.

**Recommendations**

There is a need for Whiteness studies for pre-service and practicing teachers. The study indicated a lack of awareness among teachers about Whiteness or race, as exemplified by the insights gained from the interviews. In part, this is due to the geographic isolation of the participants in rural southeastern Ohio and the lack of diversity in their communities. I believe that critical conversations need to occur with White educators to allow them to explore their own racial identity. “I contend that the artificial construction of Whiteness almost always comes to possess White people themselves unless they develop antiracist identities, unless they disinvest and divest themselves of their investment in White supremacy” (Lipsitz, 2006, p. viii). Within this exploration, they may become aware of ways in which they can evolve into a better teacher for all children, particularly White children in their rather homogeneous region.
This must begin by first understanding themselves and navigating through how others may perceive them. They must advance all the way through the various stages of the *Understanding of Whiteness Continuum*. This can be achieved through a series of experiences designed to explore psychological and pedagogical theories of race. Once more evolved in their understanding of Whiteness, teachers will not only incorporate diversity in their classroom but they may be willing to confront racist and ethnocentric school practices.

The following is an outline for a unit on the introduction of understanding the dimensions and implications of Whiteness in education. This study attests to the need for future and present teachers to explore the topic of Whiteness. To that end, I have prepared a sample course outline on understanding Whiteness. The unit provides a basic framework to facilitate this process. It provides activities, literature and assignments to help guide educators and future educators in their journey. It may be used as a curriculum for a Whiteness course for educators or portions may be used within a diversity course to introduce Whiteness studies. Further, I encourage school districts to incorporate Whiteness studies in their professional development plans for current teaching staff.
Introduction to Understanding the Dimensions and Implications of Whiteness in Education Unit

Figure 39. Russell-Fry, N. (2011). *Shades of White*. [Photograph].

**Subject/Topic Areas:** Whiteness, Educational Diversity and Cultural Studies

**Key Words:** Whiteness studies, race issues, diversity, multicultural education

**Designed by:** Nancy L. Russell-Fry

**Time Frame:** 9-10 weeks

**Target Group:** Collegiate level programs or In-Service/ Professional Development

**Grade Level:** Undergraduate and Graduate Education Students
Overview

**Brief Summary of the Unit:** In this introductory unit of understanding the dimensions and implications of Whiteness in education, students will investigate Whiteness. Students will learn about the history of Whiteness in America and the education system. The students will become aware of various views on Whiteness. They will consider how non-White people perceive those who consider themselves White, both historically and in present day America. They will develop their own definition of Whiteness and explore their racial identity. Students will educate themselves about the relationship between their racial identities and the existence of racism within United States society. They will take constructive action in the naming of racism and consider what they can do about it within the context of multicultural antiracist education. Students will consider how their racial identity impacts their communication with and education of diverse or homogeneous classrooms.

A performance or presentation component will allow students the opportunity to develop a representation of their personal racial identity. The culminating project will demonstrate students understanding of how Whiteness has and continues to impact education in the United States. This may take the form of a multi-genre research paper, a documentary video, a Prezi or other multimedia presentation.
Goals and Objectives

Identification of Desired Results and Established goals:

1. Define Whiteness.
2. How did people from European countries become White?
3. What was the historical role of Whiteness in a historical White protestant male dominated education system?
4. Consider the impacts of a White dominated society in the United States.
5. Explore possible issues in today’s education system that may be affected by Whiteness.
6. Explore personal racial identity.

What essential question will be considered?

1. What does it mean to be “White”?
2. Do you consider yourself White or Caucasian?
3. Why did some immigrants wish to be considered “White”?
4. How has Whiteness impacted education in the United States?
5. Have you experienced privilege due to your Whiteness? OR Have you observed others benefiting from their Whiteness?

What understandings are desired? Students will understand …

1. The existence of prejudice, racism and discrimination in America
2. The existence of privilege due to race in the United States
3. The founders and historic leaders of our nation and its education system were predominantly White, protestant males in most contexts.

4. To effectively communicate with others one must first be aware of barriers and how to overcome them.

5. We must understand ourselves before we can understand and appreciate others.

6. Whiteness is viewed by every person differently (some positive, others negative).

**What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?**

1. A basic understanding of the diversity within those who call themselves White or Caucasian (European immigrants and decedents).

2. There is no one definition of Whiteness.

3. Historical advantages of Whiteness.

4. The “possessive investment” in Whiteness in society

5. Many roles of White people in race issues.

6. Understand the potential impact of Whiteness on learning of student in a diverse or homogeneous classroom.
Assignments

Acceptable Evidence: What evidence will show that students understand?

Students will:

1. Complete a Pre-Course Understanding of Whiteness Survey to establish a starting point.
2. Maintain a self-reflection journal throughout the course to reflect upon exploration of Whiteness and how they personally define or understand it.
3. Complete White racial identity survey such as WRIAS = White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (Helms, 1990).
4. Respond to where the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum (Russell-Fry) or identity placement within the White Racial Identity Models (Rowe, Bennett and Atkinson, 1994) to determine their position on the spectrum of racial identity awareness.
5. One journal entry assignment should be to complete a racial autobiography.
   Sample question outline available at: http://sundown.afro.illinois.edu/ (Loewen, 1997-2010).
6. Explore their own family history or ancestry and generate a record of their findings.
7. Read and discuss a variety of literature and historical texts presenting different views on Whiteness.
8. “This is who I am” Project - Generate a creative representation of who they are and where they come from. This should incorporate their racial identity and other defining characteristics of each student. This can be performance, artwork, paper, video, podcast, PowerPoint or other forms of media.

9. Within a group, critically examine, collaborate, create and communicate a method to encourage practicing teachers to become aware of their own racial identity (P. S. A., Podcast, Wiki, Glogster Poster, etc.). The product should convey the potential impact of Whiteness on learning of students in a diverse or homogeneous classroom.

10. Students generate a culminating project demonstrating how Whiteness has and continues to impact education in the United States. This may take the form of a multi-genre research paper, a performance, a documentary video, a Prezi or other multimedia presentation.

11. Complete a Post-Course survey and reflection on course experience to consider progress on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum.

12. What other evidence needs to be collected in light of desired results?

**Other evidence:**

1. Completion of previously listed assignments.

2. Completion of readings.

3. Participation in discussions.
Procedure

Planned Learning Experiences

Where to: What sequence of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to engage with, develop and demonstrate the desired understandings?

1. Begin with an opportunity for students to draw a picture of Whiteness. This may be very difficult. Therefore, it will be an excellent place to start and to determine their degree of understanding Whiteness. Further, sharing of various perspectives will be excellent tool for expanding students understanding.

2. Have students write a definition of Whiteness, as the first entry to their journal. Journal - Reflect upon how you have expanded your knowledge of Whiteness in education. What understanding or goals will be assessed through this task? Through a written reflection, students will consider and discuss the roles of Whiteness in education. Students may react to discussions, literature, experiences and reflect upon personal feelings regarding Whiteness. Three to five entries will be chosen by student to share with the instructor. Daily entries are expected.

3. Have students complete a survey of their racial identity awareness to see where they are on the spectrum. Students complete and reflect upon a White racial identity survey such as: WRIAS = White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (Helms and Carter, 1993) or identity placement within the White Racial Identity Models (Rowe, Bennett and Atkinson, 1994) to determine their position on the spectrum of racial identity awareness.
4. Require students to create a record of their family genealogy. Students conduct genealogical research and create a representation of findings (Basic Family Tree, if one already exists, use this time to research further and expand your personal family history). This project allows students to explore biological and genetic origins and identify. Further, students will connect themselves to the ethnic and cultural identity of their ancestors.

5. Assigned reading: Students will add to their understanding of Whiteness through the use of literature on Whiteness. Selections will contribute to increased awareness of Whiteness in history, society and schools. Material could include excerpts from, but not limited to, literature in reading list.

6. Participate in a series of discussions on the articles presented providing different views on Whiteness.

7. Have student complete project entitled: “That’s who I am” This should be a representation of their personal ancestry, lineage, racial identity, unique personal qualities and interests. This could be presented in written form or other creative means through performance, artwork, media, etc. Students share projects, presentations or performances to share in progress of self exploration/identity.

8. Introduce multiple perspectives on Whiteness through images and literature. Students participate in a series of discussions on the articles presented providing different views on Whiteness.
9. Discuss the importance of teachers understanding of their racial identity and ideas for affecting current teachers’ awareness of their own racial identity. Within a group, students will critically examine, collaborate, create and communicate a method to encourage practicing teachers to become aware of their own racial identity (P. S. A., Podcast, Wiki, Glogster Poster, etc.). The product should convey the potential impact of Whiteness on learning of students in a diverse or homogeneous classroom. It must be designed with in-service teachers as the intended audience.

10. Students generate a culminating project demonstrating how Whiteness has and continues to impact education in the United States. This may take the form of a multi-genre research paper, a documentary video, a Prezi or other multimedia presentation.
**Assessment**

**Student Self-Assessment:**

Self-Assessment will occur through the use of the *Self Reflection Journal*. Students reflect upon how they have expanded their understanding of Whiteness and its connection to learning and teaching in schools. What understanding or goals will be assessed through this task? Through a written reflection, students will consider and discuss the roles of Whiteness in education. Students may react to discussions, literature, experiences and reflect upon personal feelings regarding Whiteness. Three to five entries will be chosen by student to share with the instructor. Daily entries are expected.

What qualities must all student work demonstrate to signify that the goals and objectives of this unit were met?

- Active exploration of various aspects of Whiteness through literature, media and experiences.
- Evidence that they are progressing on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum
- Evidence of steps forward in the development of their own racial identity

What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?

1. Pre-course survey
2. Completed White Racial Identity Attitudes Survey
3. Self Reflection Journal
4. Genealogy Research and representation of findings (Basic Family Tree, if one already exists, use this time to research further and expand your personal family history).

5. Completed “This is who I am” Project

6. Participate in a series of discussions on the articles presented providing different views on Whiteness.

7. Demonstrate critical thinking, collaboration, communication skills and creativity to develop a product designed to impact current teachers’ awareness of their own racial identity.

8. Performance on individual culminating project.

9. Post-course survey and reflection on course experience

By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?

1. Active participation in an exploration of Whiteness.

2. Development of an interpretation of their racial identity (even if only an introduction).

3. Increased awareness of Whiteness in history, society and schools.
**Reading List**


The author questions the White imagery of Jesus in various countries including Jamaica. He explains that Jesus was clearly of African/Asian origin. He considers a color transformation of images of Jesus. Further, he ponders on the possible reasons why Christians are more at ease with a White Jesus.


This book provides unique historical insights to the image of what people, as seen through African American.


This text addresses White racial identity in education and cultural areas.


This text examines what reflection Whites see when they look in the mirror.... How Whites see themselves. It, also, looks at how Whites see others.

This book provides evidence of the economic importance of the indentured servant work force in Colonial America. It leads us from its English origins and colonial adaptations through various characteristics of this free labor system to their contributions to the British Colonies.

Happy facade of race, The. (2002, April 8). *U.S. News and World Report*, 132 (11) 8. His article discusses images of Blacks and Whites together. It considers how these images are somewhat deceptive because of the racial lines that still exist in reality.


This book reads like a journal of confessions of a White racist but is actually a collection of confessions of White racist behavior observed by the author and others. It provides some valuable research on history of slavery.


Further Studies

There are several areas that I would encourage researchers to explore that would further contribute to the understanding of Whiteness. This research has pieced together some unique perspectives in the development of Whiteness and new avenues to explore to find further answers. I believe that with exploration into their own racial identity and further instruction on diversity issues, our White educators are capable of effectively teaching diverse populations. This would be an ideal area for future studies.

Another area that deserves future attention is the multiplicity of the meaning of Whiteness as experienced by people of various races, ethnicities and cultures. I would like to see a definition of Whiteness created from a variety of perspectives, which would include views form African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Asians and others. I believe this may contribute to a greater understanding of White racial identity for White people. Are there common views from the “others”? Whiteness is more than a Black and White concern. However, I found more resources on this dichotomy than other relationships.

Also, my research could be extended to examine the affects of the researcher on the ability to ascertain meanings of Whiteness from participants. Was I, as a White person, allowed to hear more honest views from teachers due to my membership in their race? How does the race of the researcher affect results of race studies?

Additional studies could explore why it was easier to learn about international students rather than native diversity such as Black, Asian or Hispanic Americans. Also,
I would like to see further examination of the life and travel experiences that most contribute to great understanding of Whiteness. Research should examine the effects of experiences in various diverse settings and the possible addition of such a requirement of pre-service teachers. Please, note I am suggesting a deeper experience than a teacher from a rural White area visiting a suburban White area with a larger population. I am proposing placement of teachers in setting that would allow them to experience not being the dominant culture or majority race present in the setting. This experience may ignite new thinking about race.

A study focusing on the material culture of Whiteness present in classrooms across America as compared to materials (books, posters, displays, teacher’s personal items, etc.) that explore diversity could produce relevant information when examining the institutionalization of Whiteness in schools.

A supplemental area of interest on Whiteness that could provide valuable insight into Whiteness would be a study how a teacher’s racial identity impacts students understanding of Whiteness. This research would be a study students’ understanding of race, comparing two contexts: classrooms with White teachers and classrooms with a minority teacher. I have also considered the idea of identifying a group of pre-service and in-service teachers who are categorized as static on the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum. Then, proceed through my “Introduction to Understanding the Dimensions and Implications of Whiteness in Education” curriculum with these teachers. The curriculum was designed based on my research and a multiple intelligences approach to experiencing learning. I would then monitor their progress on the continuum to determine the
effectiveness of the unit.

With a more global perspective, I would like to investigate the meaning of Whiteness through the eyes of a variety of diverse audiences. I would like to ascertain their impression of White people in the United States. I believe, if honest responses were obtained, the data may humble us. It may cause our society to become more globally conscious of the impressions we are conveying to the rest of the world. This could contribute to not only the field of education but also aide in international diplomatic pursuits.

These are a few areas of interest that arose during the research that deserve more attention in additional studies. Finally, further research in rural areas or even comparison of teachers in rural and urban areas and their conceptions of racial and cultural understanding could be examined.

Closing

The idea that the United States is a great melting pot, filled with people seeking fortune and freedoms is somewhat historically incorrect. Many did not come here by choice, and many were already here. Columbus did not discover America; he landed on it (Daniels, 1997a). Today, however, America or the United States continues to be a place where people migrate as well as immigrate to from urban to rural, East to West, and from Europe, Latin America, Africa and beyond. Yet, the diversity is taking on new dimensions. Geneva Gay (December 2003/January 2004), in “The Importance of Multicultural Education” expresses that, effectively managing such diversity in the U.S.
society and schools is at one a very old and a very new challenge. Accomplishing this end is becoming increasingly important as the 21st century unfolds. People coming from Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa differ greatly from earlier generations of immigrant who came primarily from western and northern Europe. These unfamiliar groups, cultures, traditions and languages can produce anxieties, hostilities, prejudices and racist behaviors among those who do not understand the newcomers or who perceive them as threats to their safety and security. These issues have profound implications for developing instructional programs and practices at all levels of education that respond positively and constructively to diversity (Flinders & Thornton, 2005).

It is important to note that this investigation into White racial identity of rural teachers is by no means an attempt to identify this topic as the most critical concern in rural education or other geographic areas are not in need of the same reforms. However, it is designed to draw attention to the significance of Whiteness as a factor among rural educators.

The historic and literature study portions of this research establish that through religion, state and education our nation was carefully crafted to promote Whiteness. These forums provided the means to reach the masses and policy and practice were established. This research has been able to verify the development, existence and preservation of Whiteness through evidence in material culture, media, literature and
practice in the United States. This construction was confirmed and interrogated to generate a comprehensive and concise resource for educators to learn about Whiteness.

This phenomenological case study sought to understand the meaning of Whiteness as it is understood by White teachers in rural southeastern Ohio. Teachers struggled to construct and reflect their subjectivities and identities. Yet, each teacher was able to contribute to the study to provide the reader with a better understanding of how he or she perceive his or her Whiteness and give additional meaning to White racial identity. Their collective responses centered on the elemental concept of pale skin. Their more complex visions of Whiteness compiled a series of themes including heritage and appearance, education in the United States, power and status, regional cultures, American, blank culture and racism. The study found the phenomena of Whiteness possesses multiple meanings and depending on context, additional derivations occur. The research revealed that teachers’ understandings of Whiteness and race were established by what they were taught about American history in schools, limited multicultural education in college and life experiences. It was constructed through the material culture of their lives, the formidable policies in our government, schools and society, through media and lack of experience or exposure to diversity. However, their combined realities provides a wide range of views and insight into the meaning of Whiteness based on today’s educators in rural southeastern Ohio.

In addition to adding meaning to Whiteness, we were able to examine teacher’s training on diversity issues. Through their interview responses, teachers revealed their
degree of understanding of White racial identity and their positionality on race. Some
even exposed racist tendencies. I feel that my interviews indicated that teachers in White
rural Ohio are at very different places in their understanding of White racial identity. At
least, it indicates that the sum of their experiences could be expanded or improved upon
further, particularly through teacher education programs or in-service programs. Hence,
the development of the Understanding of Whiteness Continuum, which could be used to
assess teachers understandings by school principals or through in-service education
activities in order to better serve the needs of students in rural areas.

The research revealed that Whiteness studies are required for teachers that are
responsible or will be responsible for the education of diverse student populations and for
those who teach homogeneously White classroom. To ensure that students’ needs are
met, both contexts require racially aware teachers. In the 21st century, we must teach our
students to think critically, be creative and communicate. Teachers must do the same.
Not only does a teacher need to understand how to best communicate with all their
students, they must ensure that their students are prepared to successfully contribute to
the global and diverse society of the 21st century.

I assert based on the findings of the research that teachers are not yet prepared to
meet the task. At the very least, the findings indicate that our current college education
curriculum is not sufficiently preparing our teachers to be aware of their own racial
identity or to consider the implications of the institutionalized White policies in schools.
The teachers are far from possessing the confidence in this area that is required to enact
change in the status quo of curriculum; a system where race is ignored if it is not visible in the form of a difference in their school. Even then, the execution of lessons on diversity in the classroom can be no better than questionable in quality due to the lack of understanding of their own racial identity.

Further, teacher preparation programs are responsible for providing the teachers with the critical race studies required to effectively navigate in an increasingly diverse classroom or a homogeneously White classroom. In essence, Whiteness studies are an area that American colleges should address more effectively in their teacher preparation programs. Additionally, this research calls for professional development training for practicing teachers. These programs are required to influence current teachers’ prospective about race, increase their racial identity aptitude, develop an anti-racist outlook, alter existing teaching practices and revise current curriculum (Sleeter, 1992).

This research hopes to serve as an agent of change. It hopes to instill in educators a desire to learn more about themselves and their racial identity and to understand the meanings, their own and possible others, embedded in whiteness. Thus, it hopes to improve their ability to inform students about racial and cultural diversity in homogenous or diverse classrooms. And finally, provide them with a more reflective and nuanced understanding of their own racial identity. More colleges of education should address this area in their teacher education curriculum. The research findings support reforming teacher education and consequently K-12 education. I challenge colleges in the United
States to go beyond the minimum diversity requirement and provide teachers with the quality training that is required in this area.
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Appendix A: Participant Demographics Questionnaire

Participant Demographics Questionnaire

1) Participant Identification ____________________________________________

2) Occupation of participant ____________________________________________

3) Age range of participant  ___ 21 – 30     ___ 31 – 40     ___ 41 – 50
   __________________          ___ 51 – 60     ___ 60+

4) What type of community do you live in? Rural, Metropolitan or Suburban?
   _____________________________________________________________

5) How long have you lived in this community? __________________________

6) Gender: Male ___  Female ___

7) Race:  ___ African American     ___ Asian American     ___ Native American
   ___ Hispanic/Latin American     ___ White/Caucasian American
   ___ Other: ____________     ___ Biracial: ____________

8) What is the highest level of education you have completed?  ___ High School
   ___ Bachelor’s Degree     ___ Master’s Degree     ___ Advanced Graduate Study
   Where did you attend school? _____________________________

9) Describe your academic degrees:
   _____________________________________________________________

10) What subject area and grades do you teach? What is your current teaching
    position?
    ___________________________________________________________
11) Number of years of teaching experience. ______________________

12) Describe the demographics of the students in your classes. ______________________

13) Do you have children? ___ Yes ___ No

14) Do you have children who have attended school in this area? ___ Yes ___ No

15) May I contact you again to clarify responses or ask additional questions?

___ Yes ___ No

16) If yes, how can I get in contact with you?

Address ________________________________

Phone ________________________________
Appendix B: Lay Summary for Interviews

Description of Research: One topic that is sometimes left out of diversity or cultural studies discussions is the subject of "Whiteness"--what does it mean to be "White"? I am a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction focusing cultural studies. My research explores the many faces of “White” identity in America. This research is designed to address the following questions: What does it mean to be White? What does the color White look like in America? What sounds, shapes, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage compose White identity? Many White Americans strive to understand and appreciate other cultures, yet we have no true understanding of own identity as a race. This is true in the classroom, also. Many teachers focus upon learning about cultures that are very different from their own. However, this approach tends to neglect discussing White identity. White students are often unaware of their own historical culture or heritage. Awareness of White identity has further significance in the classroom. Teachers of a diverse classroom could benefit from a greater awareness of their Whiteness and how it affects their teaching and their means of communicating with their students. This research is design to give some definition, shape and image to White culture by discovering how White Americans perceive their White identity.
Appendix C: Informed Consent Document

Introduction: You are being asked to volunteer to participate in a project conducted through Ohio University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The investigator will explain to you, in detail, the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask her any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

Nature and purpose of the project: One topic that is sometimes left out of diversity or cultural studies discussions is the subject of "Whiteness." This research explores the many faces of "White" identity in America. This research is designed to address the following questions: What does it mean to be White? What does the color White look like in America? What sounds, shapes, images, characteristics, behaviors and heritage compose White identity? Many White Americans strive to understand and appreciate other cultures, yet we have no true understanding of our own identity as a race. This is true in the classroom, also. Many teachers focus upon learning about cultures that are very different from their own. However, this approach tends to neglect discussing White identity. White students are often unaware of their own historical culture or heritage. Awareness of White identity has further significance in the classroom. This research is design to give some definition, shape and image to White culture by discovering how
White American educators perceive their White identity. This will add to diversity and multicultural education research.

**Procedures:** To find answers to some of these questions, I requesting your participation in this research project. This research is a purposeful sampling of White/Caucasian/European American teachers. You are being invited to take part in this discussion because I feel that your experiences as an educator or future educator can contribute to this discussion. If you accept, you will be required to complete a brief demographic survey and to participate in an interview with me. Your role in this research will be to give permission to be interviewed, and then spend approximately one-hour answering questions and sharing with me your thoughts, ideas and opinions about the topic. I would appreciate taping the interview so I can concentrate on hearing your thoughts rather than writing everything you say. The tape will allow me to review our conversation and create an accurate transcript of your ideas at a later time.

You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions posed during the interview, you may say so and then I will move on to the next question. In addition, at any time you may stop the interview, speak off the record, and still be able to continue with the interview if I want to. There are no right or wrong answers. I am looking for YOUR answers. If I ask for clarification, it is only to make sure I have understood what you are telling me. If at any time you decide you do not want to participate in this interview, you may stop the process by telling me you are no longer interested in taking
part or asking me to shut off the tape recorder. No one else but the interviewer will be present during the discussion. Further, you can choose to end the process completely without explanation.

As part of the interview, you may use creative means to answer one of the questions (drawing, sketch, basic image or words on paper). The image you create may or may not be used in the presentation of this research. Your identity will be protected, if images are shared. The contents of this research will be used by the researcher only for the purposes of academic research, including sharing with colleagues at academic conferences and in academic publications. Your anonymity will be respected (real names will not be used in the research dissemination nor will any personal details be revealed that could compromise my identity). Anonymity will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in research analysis and in publications and academic presentations of this research. No information will be released or printed that would disclose any personal identity.

Tape recordings of interviews and other data collected will be kept in a secure manner. All data will be kept on a secure computer which will be password protected. Access to the computer will be secured by use of specific passwords known only to the researcher. Other contents of the research, including the audio tapes, journals and images will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researchers’ office for a period of between 6 - 10 years after the date of research publications, and be only available to the researcher.
Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: Images of Whiteness
Researcher: Nancy L. Russell-Fry

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here or need further explanation, please feel free to discuss it with the researcher. If you decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained it to you. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

I, _______________________________, understand that Nancy L. Russell-Fry is conducting this interview as part of her research into Images of Whiteness at Ohio University. I understand that I will participate in an interview that will last around one hour. I understand that with my permission the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. I do not have to answer any questions I do not want to, and at any time, I may stop the interview, speak off the record and still be able to continue with the interview if I want to. I am aware that the audiotapes will only be used by the researcher. Any images I create may be used in the presentation of the research. All data will be kept on a secure computer which will be password protected. Access to the computer will be secured by use of specific passwords known only to the researcher. The completed interview transcriptions, audiotapes, images and other research data will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet. I understand that the contents of this research will be used by the researcher only for the purposes of academic research, including sharing with colleagues at academic conferences and in academic publications. My anonymity will be respected (real names will not be used in the research dissemination nor will any personal details be revealed that could compromise my identity). No information will be released or printed that would disclose any personal identity and all such research data will be destroyed after ten years.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact: Nancy L. Russell-Fry, Researcher at nancyrussellfry@roadrunner.com or Phone: (740) 384-3270. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740) 593-0664.

Any questions I have asked about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. Any risks or benefits that might arise out of my participation have also been explained to my satisfaction. Further, I understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and I believe that reasonable safeguards...
have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks. I understand that no compensation is available from Ohio University and its employees for any injury resulting from my participation in this research. I certify that I am 18 years of age or older. My participation in this research is given voluntarily. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which I may otherwise be entitled. I hereby consent to participate in this study. I certify that I have read and understand this consent form and agree to participate as a subject in the research described. In addition, I have been given a copy of this form for my own reference.

___________________________________________                        ______________
Signature                                      Date

______________________________________________
Printed Name

___________________________________________                        ______________
Interviewer                                     Date
Appendix D: Interview Questions

1. During your teacher training, did you have multicultural education courses? Describe.

2. Was “Whiteness” ever discussed in your courses?

3. What are some differences among the people who compose the community you live in? For example: Are there any Asians or Native Americans? Are there people from other areas of the United States or other countries?

4. What are some other places you have lived or visited?

5. Do you consider yourself White or Caucasian?

6. Do you know your family’s ethnic origin? Where were your ancestors from? Please, describe your ethnic heritage.

7. When you think of Mexican culture or Asian cultures, certain images come to your mind. Please, consider what does Whiteness look like to you? Please, use the paper and supplies provided to draw a picture, create a model and write words, phrases or anything that provides an image of Whiteness. Take as much time as needed.

8. How do you ever feel about the history of White people?

9. Are you aware of any situations in which you have received special treatment or privileges because or your Whiteness? Explain.

10. A.) I would like to show you a variety of images that may represent Whiteness.
B.) What reactions or thoughts do you have about any or all of the images you saw?

Is there any additional information you would like to share on the topic of Whiteness? Are there any ideas or thoughts that were sparked by our discussion that I did not ask you about?
Appendix E: Images of Whiteness PowerPoint for Interviews


Slide 34. Title screen from Little House on the Prairie (TV series from the United States). Screen capture from Little House on the Prairie DVD. Note: An image of the casts of a television pop culture was shown to participants. However, permissions and/or proper credits were unavailable for publishing this item. Little House on the Prairie. Retrieved April 29, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:LHMainTitle.jpg#filehistory


Slide 41. Casper

Slide 42. Cracker

Slide 43. Whitey