A Dissertation

Entitled

Oral History of School and Community Culture of African American Students in the Segregated South, Class of 1956: A Case Study of a Successful Racially Segregated High School Before Brown Versus Board of Education

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Foundations: Educational Sociology

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An Abstract of

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The purpose of this oral history is to document the lived experience of the learning environment of African American students and culturally specific practices of African American teachers who taught in the legally segregated Louisvlle Central High School. Historically, segregated African American schools have been depicted as inferior educational institutions. By offering a counter-narrative of educational success within a segment of the African American community in the Jim Crow South the central thesis of this oral history is a counter-narrative to the suppositions of cultural deficit as the primary theory explaining the achievement gap between the majority population and minorites. By exploring the lived experience of the characteristics of the school culture and environment and the characteristics of those responsible for teaching, this oral history adds to the body of literature which shows that the achievement gap cannot be adequately explained by reference to cultural deficit. Moreover, the counter-narrative points toward significant issues pertaining to education and justice. As a legal, constitutional matter by legally denying free and equal access to public institutions and the public sphere *de jure*

segregation violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and was thereby unconstitutional. In striking down legal segregation *Brown* established an equal civil right to equal access and thus formal equality of opportunity. As an *educational matter* (as opposed to a strictly constitutional one), however, the findings of this oral history, that the educational environment of Louisville Central High School was *not* culturally and educationally deprived, suggests that the quality and effectiveness of education is a matter that is independent of the strictly legal matter of the right to formal equality of opportunity as equal access. While being of the greatest significance for a democratic and just society, the civil right to free and equal access to public institutions *alone* does not guarantee nor does it protect *fair equality of educational opportunity*, the core principle of a just distribution of education in a democratic society.

INDEX WORDS: African American students, African American teachers, African American achievement, Oral history, Segregated schools, Desegregated Schools, Peace Education

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Chapter 1

Background

There are many challenges facing public and higher education today. Most of us have preconceived ideas as to why public education is failing so many students. There are historical reasons why public compulsory education was instituted. Many people believed that compulsory public education was valuable because an educated workforce was needed as the United States moved from an agricultural based economy to one based on industrialization. African Americans, in particular, have reason to ask probing questions about how the educational system is faring because present research shows that African American children are failing to graduate from high school in alarming numbers and many who do graduate lack the basic skills needed to assume jobs which pay a living wage (Employment Policies Institute. (1997).

Sowell (1986) suggests we look no further than the high performing black school from before the Brown decision of 1954. Thomas Sowell, a renowned economist (Umstead, 2019) called for a reexamination of the role black schools played in elevating black Americans into a more middle class and professional life which they enjoy today (Sowell, 1986). Sowell identified eight such high achieving schools and admitted there were more. Sowell acknowledges that there were more than the eight he named and Louisville Central High School should be among them. The graduates of these schools are still available to tell their stories and a qualitative study of their history can be told through oral history. This oral history will be a presentation of the lives and experiences of ten black students who graduated from Louisville Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky in 1956. The public schools in Louisville, Kentucky were racially segregated by law until the Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954. The

Southern states delayed implementing the law, so therefore the class of 1956 of Louisville Central High School became the last graduating class which had no option to attend a racially integrated school. The author also attended the same school and graduated in 1968, very little having changed.

The landmark court case of Brown v. Board of Education of 1954 ruled that separate but equal was inherently unequal, but the goal of the case has not been fulfilled. African American children still lag behind their white classmates and may have fallen farther behind (Rodrigue & Reeve (2015). It is important to note the degree to which the American Civil Rights Movement turned to the schools to provide the solution for many larger issues of social inequality. This was a deeply American point of focus. As with other issues, leaders of the civil rights movement of the 1950s believed that if the schools could treat children as equals – if segregation could end and a quality education could be provided for every child – then some large strides would have been made towards creating a larger society of freedom and justice for all (Fraser, 2010). A consideration of the nature of injustice is significant in exploring some of the causes of this problem and it points to the fundamental importance of a theory of justice if we are to examine this problem critically. Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen have written about what they call a "realization-focused orientation" to justice (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009). This approach looks at the societal outcome for the individual and their individual quality of life taken in the context of the society they live in. It is only then we can ascertain whether there has been success or failure. Dale Snauwaert (2011) wrote,

> A realization-focused orientation to justice, as articulated by Nussbaum and Sen, looks to the actual quality of life of individuals as the focus of justice. It is an out-

come-based view that is oriented toward individuals' actual lives, in the sense that justice concerns the individual's capability of being and doing what they freely choose and is a 'human life-centered' approach (p. 323).

The 'realization-focused' capabilities theory of social justice articulated by Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen is particularly concerned with institutional injustice and the inability of oppressed people to realize their full potential. Nussbaum said, "The approach is concerned with entrenched social injustice and inequality, especially capability failures that are the result of discrimination or marginalization" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18). Here Martha Nussbaum focused on the fact that this injustice is often entrenched and the institutions of the society itself are operating in an unjust manner to the detriment of the aggrieved citizens. Sen said, "The focus of justice is not the articulation and achievement of a perfectly just society; rather it is centrally about 'preventing manifestly severe injustice' (Sen 2009, p. 21) and 'the removal of injustice from the world' (Sen 2009, p. 7). Sen and Nussbaum perceive justice as, "The need for an accomplishment based understanding of justice linked with the argument that justice cannot be indifferent to the lives that people can actually live" (Sen, 2009, p. 18). The Capabilities Approach to justice can be defined as an approach to comparative quality-of-life assessment and to theorizing about basic social justice" (Nussbaum, 2011).

Without a proper education one cannot develop their human capabilities to the fullest. Nussbaum recognized the fact that there are environmental conditions that work against people developing their full capabilities. She wrote, "Bad conditions can, however, cut deeper, stunting the development of internal capabilities or warping their development" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 30). Without a proper education these students will

be financially and socially impaired and trapped in poverty, ignorance and a culture filled with elevated levels of violence. Educational inequality has always been a problem for African Americans since the first black slaves were brought to what would become the United States of America. From this very beginning, the continued denial of an equivalent educational opportunity has been a concern and a social injustice.

Many African Americans believe that in some cases they received a better general education and were better equipped to succeed academically before the end of *de jure* segregation, and question whether the Civil Rights Movement was a success or failure based on literacy, graduation rates, and other quality of life measurements after 1970 (Sowell, 1986; McKoy, 2008) .[1] The Civil Rights Movement had among its stated goals to end racial segregation, improve the educational opportunities for minority students, and bridge the educational gap between black and white students among others. Almost everyone in the United States attends public schools paid for by the public, but for reasons for which the public has trouble understanding, many poor students and especially minorities, struggle to reach graduation. Not only do they fail to graduate but often lack academic and social skills needed for success in the modern world. Fine (2011) wrote, "In urban areas, especially for low-income African -American and Latino youths, public schools may offer everyone *access* in, but once inside the doors of public schools, many low-income urban youths are virtually *disappeared"* (p. 24). There are structural

[1] Americans of African descent, especially those who are descendants of the black American slaves, use the words African American and Black somewhat interchangeably, but with subtle differences. Byers (2013) wrote, "Black is common as an adjective, but as a noun, it is more common to use African American (p. 1)." This is the approach adopted in this study. This is also the approach advocated by the National Black Journalists Association.

and institutional problems which encourage unequal outcomes (Fine, 2011) . Students have legal access, but still can be denied an equal educational opportunity. There is a striking difference in educational results which call for further examination. “Legal equality of opportunity to attend public schools does not guarantee an equal education. Public schools can be structured to deny equal educational opportunity” (Strouse, 2001, p. 217). The issues raised in this study will help us to find the answers that lead us beyond formal equality of education to fair equality of education.

Problem Statement: Disparities in Public Education

How a society educates its children touches at the heart and soul of the citizens of most nations. One of the purposes of education in the United States of America is to prepare young people to grow into adults that can take their rightful place in a democratic society. Education prepares young people to become productive, informed and dutiful members of the society, who will one day take the places of the previous generation. It is through the educational system that societies like ours prepare the leaders of tomorrow and therefore the direction of the nation. Education is necessary for societal regeneration. The United States of America is a democracy and is supposed to be built on democratic ethics. All persons are created equal and must be given an equal opportunity. Gordon (2005) wrote “Nothing offends democratic ideals more than the fact that a typical poor or African American twelfth-grader reads at the same level as a typical middle-class or white eighth-grader” (p. 24). Political power determines educational policy and how material and human resources are allocated. How these resources are distributed is one of the most important political issues and is an urgent matter of justice.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The goal of this study is to determine some of the underlying culturally relevant themes that helped and benefited the educational performance of African American students during the days of "separate but equal". This study used the methodology of oral history with interviews. By doing so, this study seeks to identify the cultural aspects that led to positive outcomes for African American students. The central question of this study is: What were the lived educational experiences of African American Students who graduated from a racially segregated high school in 1956 and attended a racially segregated school before and directly after the *Brown v. Board of Education decision,* and how did this experience impact their lives? Specific research sub-questions are as follows (a) What do these students report about teaching styles of their black teachers?; (b) What do these students report about the overall school climate, this includes teachers in the building, and parent and community involvement before and directly after the *Brown v. Board of Education decision*?

This study will add to the body of literature in reference to the educational experience of black students before the Brown decision and their reaction to that schooling, which may lead to educational strategies that will lead to a more positive outcome for socially and economically disadvantaged students. This study will examine the particular outcomes of the educational experience these black students encountered and help us to find strategies used during that period that promoted positive academic outcomes and life success among African-American students. The study of African-American students before the Brown decision explores a novel, ignored and often marginalized population.

Much of the research on black education in the United States since the 1960's concentrates on what is called the Deficit Model (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). The deficit model leads to creation of programs that aim to remediate what is wrong with the individual but allow the underlying structure of schooling to remain untouched. That is, it concentrates on the cultural differences between black and other students that leads to lower achievement. The deficit model leads to creation of programs that aim to remediate what is wrong with individual but allow the underlying structure of schooling to remain untouched (Tozer, Gallegos, et al., 2011). Much of the research on black education has been performed in the post segregation era after the Brown v. Board of Education period and ignores much of the wide body of literature which explores the black educational experience during the period of racial segregation in America. There are notable exceptions such as James Anderson's, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (1988) and *Reclaiming the Multicultural Roots of United States Curriculum* (2016) by Wayne Au, Anthony Brown, and Dolores Calderon. The study of black education before the Brown decision is available but often overlooked (Sowell, 1986).

There are notable exceptions like the history of Dunbar High School in Washington DC (Hundley, 1965), before racial integration. There is also *A Class of Their Own* written by Adam Fairclough (2007), *Their Highest Potential* by Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) and other books that highlight the pedagogy of the segregated classroom. Most of these books and literature of this period tell the story of early black education from either the vantage-point of the Whites that shaped African American education or the story is told from the vantage point of the black educators of the period. This research adds to this body of literature because it tells the story of the successes of black education

during the period of "Jim Crow" and tells the story from the vantage point of the black students. Notable scholars such as Dr. Carter G. Woodson, Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Dr. Janice Hale, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a host of others have all asserted that an effective education is of fundamental importance in the progress of African Americans (Saddler, 2005). By exploring the lived experience of the characteristics of the school culture and environment and the characteristics of those responsible for teaching this oral history adds to the body of literature which shows that the achievement gap cannot be adequately explained by reference to cultural deficit. Moreover, the counter-narrative points toward significant issues pertaining to education and justice.

The Achievement Gap

Graduation rates are one indicia of the health of public education in the United States. Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters (2006) calculated public high school graduation rates for the nation, for each state, and for the largest one hundred largest school districts in the United States. They calculated graduation rates overall, by race, and by gender, using the most recent available data (the class of 2003). Among their key findings were: The overall national public high school graduation rate for the class of 2003 was 70 percent, but there is a wide disparity in the public high school graduation rates of white and minority students. Nationally, the graduation rate for white students was 78 percent, compared with 72 percent for Asian students, 55 percent for African-American students, and 53 percent for Hispanic students. Female students graduate from high school at a higher rate than male students. Nationally, 72 percent of female students graduated, compared with 65 percent of male students. The gender gap in graduation

rates is particularly large for minority students. Nationally, about 5 percentage points fewer white male students and 3 percentage points fewer Asian male students graduate than their respective female students. While 59 percent of African-American females graduated, only 48 percent of African-American males earned a diploma (a difference of 11 percentage points). Further, the graduation rate was 58 percent for Hispanic females, compared with 49 percent for Hispanic males (a difference of 9 percentage points).

According to this same study, Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters (2006) believe high school completion rates have not been accurately reported. They state, "Official estimates of state completion rates are too high, and the U.S. Department of Education is examining ways to obtain better measurements" (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2007, p. 5). Graduation rates are important as a reflection of the failure or success of the schools. These reports are significant because they show the differences in graduation rates for the various demographic groups. When researchers look at the breakdown of the statistics a better picture of the health of any given community can be seen. It is important to research graduation rates of black boys before integration. "The "No Child Left Behind" Act (NCLB) in 2001 renewed interest among researchers in estimating high school graduation rates. NCLB made increased high school graduation a primary objective and required states and schools to monitor them as measures of adequate yearly progress" (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2007, p. 4). NCLB was superseded by ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) during President Obama's administration. ESSA maintained the broad contours of NCLB but gave states more flexibility within them. It maintained the basic federal testing requirement but gave states leeway to help address concerns about "overtesting" (Hess & Eden, 2017).

One National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) series going back to the 1980s is on the mark, but never seems to be reported in the press. This series, titled: One-third of a nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities, written by Paul E. Barton of the Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center, (2005) found that part of the problem with reporting is the lack of standards and administrators deliberately overstating their graduation rates. Haney and Associates reported that between 1970 and 2000, dropout rates for African Americans tripled, crime rates increased in poor urban areas and a sense of hopelessness and despair took hold (Tozer et al., 2011). This includes a large increase in the number of students expelled and suspended from our schools. Activities which before would have been labeled childish misbehavior, have more recently led to involvement with the criminal justice system. Deborah Archer (2009, p. 868) wrote, "Despite clear evidence that violence and crime in our schools is decreasing, the often, misguided approaches of our criminal justice system, with its focus on punishment rather than rehabilitation, are bleeding into our schools."

This has led many school districts to "crack down" on our children, focusing on punishment and criminalization rather than education. Today, children are far more likely to be arrested at school than they were a generation ago. The number of students suspended from school each year has nearly doubled from 1.7 million in 1974 to 3.1 million in 2000. This disturbing phenomenon is called the school-to-prison pipeline" (Archer, 2009). Across the country, an alarming number of students, and a disproportionate number of students of color, are being removed from mainstream educational environments. Therefore, it is not surprising that the impact of school-to-prison pipeline policies are most severely felt by students in high-minority and high-

poverty schools, where overcrowding, unqualified teachers, and fewer resources collide with these misguided policies. The school-to-prison pipeline is also one of the most urgent civil rights challenges we face (Archer, 2009). Studies have shown that African American students are disproportionately suspended, expelled, or arrested for conduct similar to that of their white classmates. And although African American students represented only 17% of public school enrollment nationwide, they accounted for 34% of school suspensions in 2000" (Archer, 2009).

Graduation rates are important as a reflection of the failure or success of the schools. These reports are significant because they show the differences in graduation rates for the various demographic groups. When researchers look at the breakdown of the statistics a better picture of the health of any given community can be seen. Further, Thomas Sowell (1993) in his book, *Inside American Education*, stated, "More than 116,000 students scored above 600 on the verbal SAT in 1972 and fewer than 71,000 scored that high ten years later" (p. 8). Not only have graduation rates declined, but SAT scores have declined correspondingly. This problem is highlighted by the numbers of incoming college students needing remedial courses. Billions of dollars are spent by the educational system and many students are dropping out of school with limited scholastic ability or prospects for the future. Billions of dollars have been spent on special programs with no increase in results and as a result many believe the public- school system is beyond repair.

When we look at the dropout numbers, patterns of social class emerge whereby students that are poor and/or of a racial minority are more likely to find themselves without a high school diploma. This is compounded by the fact that many of these

students are functionally illiterate even if they are graduates (Lattier, 2015). Fine (2011) wrote, “Dramatically different patterns of dropping out by social class, race, ethnicity, gender, and disability characterize U.S. public schools. The patterns stand as evidence that the promise of equal opportunity is subverted institutionally by the guarantee of unequal outcomes” (p. 26). Fine made the claim that the institution of education guarantees unequal outcomes. When these patterns are examined, it becomes clear that the issue of fair equality of education is a matter of race and class, with the poor receiving an unequal educational opportunity. Speaking of the persons who find themselves dropped out, Fine (2011) said, “In the 1990’s every child may enjoy access to a public education. But in the 1990’s the bodies are disproportionately bodies of color and of low-income students” (p. 25). Twenty-five years later things have little changed and, in some cases have grown worse. The policies that contribute to these results can and should be examined.

Lack of discipline is a major problem in some schools. It is almost impossible for children to receive a quality education where teachers must deal with severe discipline issues. Schools determined to bring discipline to the schools have initiated zero tolerance policies which have had a negative impact on graduation rates and literacy. There is a high correlation between the falling graduation rates and the rise in youth prison incarceration rates. “Schools with the highest proportion of minority students were more likely to report crimes (and serious violent crimes) than schools with the smallest proportion of minority students” (Barton, 2005, p. 24). More and more school children are charged with crimes serious enough to come to the attention of the courts, while there is evidence rates of serious crime is going down.

Schools have tried to deal with the issue of disruptive behavior by suspension and expulsion of disruptive students. “Schools are suspending and expelling students at a rate more than double that of 1974. In 2006, more than 3.3 million students were suspended out-of-school at least once and 102,000 were expelled. Between 2002 and 2006, out of school suspensions increased by 250,000 and expulsions by 15 percent” (Dignity in Schools, 2010). This is an astonishing increase in suspensions and expulsions. This is an astonishing number of lost school hours with the predictable results for the students that find themselves in this situation. There is a well-documented correlation between high school graduation, unemployment rates, future income and finding oneself in prison. The statistics show that it is the boys that have borne the brunt of suspensions and expulsions and there is a correlating decrease in boys’ interest in school. Boys are graduating at a lower rate than females and now make up a substantial minority of college students at every level. Minority boys in particular are disproportionately represented in the numbers of students being expelled and suspended, and predictably graduate at a lower rate, go on to college at a lower rate, and then graduate from college at a lower rate and then find themselves the largest percentage of the prison population.

Across the country, an alarming number of students, and a disproportionate number of students of color, are being removed from mainstream educational environments for nonviolent violations of school policy, which many would consider to be typical childhood behavior. School children who are removed from mainstream education environments, even for short periods of time, are far more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system, use drugs, or drop out of school. Few would question the importance of keeping our schools safe, but it is the overuse and misuse of

these policies that raise concern; arresting students should never be seen as an acceptable method of discipline. Indeed, policies such as policing in schools and zero tolerance have been shown to be ineffective as corrective measures and instead serve to demoralize our children.

Indirectly, schools put children on a path that far too often ends with incarceration through suspensions, expulsions, high-stakes testing, push-outs, and the removal of students from mainstream educational environments and into disciplinary alternative schools. Our under-resourced public education system is often linked to behavioral problems and violence in schools. Therefore, it is not surprising that the impact of school-to-prison pipeline policies are most severely felt by students in high-minority and high-poverty schools, where overcrowding, unqualified teachers, and fewer resources collide with these misguided policies. The school-to-prison pipeline is also one of the most urgent civil rights challenges we face (Archer, 2009).

Minority students are disproportionately impacted by the pipeline and are among those most severely disciplined in school. Studies have shown that African American students are disproportionately suspended, expelled, or arrested for conduct similar to that of their white classmates. And although African American students represented only 17% of public school enrollment nationwide, they accounted for 34% of school suspensions in 2000" (Archer, 2009). For many minority students, especially in large urban areas, the social contract has broken down between teacher, administrator and student. There is anecdotal evidence that needs to be further researched, that black students in some cases really are behaving badly and are more disruptive. Rather than hide behind political correctness, let's assume this is true. This has not always been the

case. The data show that the rate of suspension and expulsion has doubled between 1974 and 2003. It would be fair to assume that a large proportion of these are minority males.

This matter requires further research, but this would imply that suspensions and expulsions were comparatively low before 1974. One only need go back to the late sixties, when graduation rates peaked to see a marked shift in student attitudes toward teacher and principals as authority figures. The question is, what should teachers teach? Kay Hymowitz (2000) wrote, "What's been lost is educator's crucial role of passing on cultural values to the young and instructing them in how to behave through innumerable small daily lessons and examples. If the children become disruptive and disengaged, who can be surprised? The full consequence of these dramatic changes has been to prevent principals and teachers from creating the kind of moral community that is the most powerful and dependable guarantor of good discipline ever devised." It is almost impossible for teachers to be effective when too many students are disruptive, leading to alternative placements, expulsions and suspensions. Students cannot learn if they are not in school and social problems are increased.

The loss of black teachers after integration is another factor which has been ignored. "By one estimate, based on the assumption that if schools had remained segregated the black teaching force would have continued to grow at pre-Brown rates, thirty-one thousand teaching posts were lost between 1954 and 1972" (Fairclough, 2007, p. 407). It would be worth researching the role these teachers played in the community because these teachers were among the most educated and identifiable members of the up and coming black middle class. Teaching was not just a profession, but a calling, a messianic participation in the uplifting of the race. Knowing themselves to be role

models, they took themselves seriously and performed their duties with dignity and the highest of character, passing on these traits to their students. Insubordination and disorderly conduct were almost unthinkable, students knowing that parents would support the teachers in enforcing discipline. The authority of the teacher was unquestioned and strictly enforced. It has been widely reported that more than 30,000 African American teachers lost their jobs as a result of the Brown decision (McKoy, 2008).

There are anecdotal reports that many of the white teachers, unaccustomed and resentful of desegregation, full of racial animosity, and prejudiced against them, made school life very difficult for the black students. McKoy (2008) stated, “Black teachers also faulted their white colleagues for failing to adapt their teaching methods to black students, complaining that their approach was too didactic, that they tended to lecture too much. The black approach to education before desegregation could be considered liberation education” (p. 40). Anecdotal evidence points to graduation rates as high as 90 % and very few discipline problems at these schools despite high poverty rates. More research must be done to learn the facts about these high achieving black schools and their pedagogy. Racial integration has been achieved with limited success, but the data show that black children have suffered a decline in graduation rates and literacy. This has led to other societal problems such as joblessness, increase in prison populations, increases in teen pregnancy and a loss of civility within the community. These have been some of the unintended consequences of the civil rights movement.

As stated before, graduation rates are important as a reflection of the failure or success of the schools. These reports are significant because they show the differences in graduation rates for the various demographic groups. When researchers look at the

breakdown of the statistics a better picture of the health of any given community can be seen. It is important to research graduation rates of black boys before integration. One National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) series going back to the 1980s is on the mark, but never seems to be reported in the press.

- A number of independent researchers have made recent estimates that put the national rate variously at 66.1, 66.6, 68.7, 69.6, and 71.0 percent. The High School Completion Rate Has Been Falling.
- Nationally, after peaking at 77.1 percent in 1969, the rate dropped to 69.9 percent in 2000.
- From 1990 to 2000, the completion rate declined in all but seven states. In 10 states, it declined by 8 percentage points or more.

Part of the problem with reporting is the lack of standards and administrators deliberately overstating their graduation rates. Not only have graduation rates declined, but SAT scores have declined correspondingly (Sowell, 1993). This problem is highlighted by the number of incoming college students needing remedial courses. Almost everyone in the United States will attend public schools paid for by public tax dollars, but for reasons that the public is unwilling to recognize, many poor students, and especially minorities, numbers dwindle as they reach graduation and their test scores, or academic ability falls short of their peers. Fine (2011) wrote, "In urban areas, especially for low-income African-American and Latino youths, public schools may offer everyone *access* in, but once inside the doors of public schools, many low-income urban youths are virtually *disappeared"* (p. 24). There is a striking difference in educational results which call for further examination. "Legal equality of opportunity to attend public

schools does not guarantee an equal education. Public schools can be structured to deny equal educational opportunity" (Strouse, 2001, p. 217).

More research is needed in this area. Many African American scholars who attended segregated schools believe the graduation rates at their schools were much higher than they are today, and the discipline problems were miniscule in comparison. Standard One of the Ohio Standards for Principals said, "Principals help create a shared vision and clear goals for their schools and ensure continuous progress toward achieving the goals". Students that have been suspended or expelled from school do nothing but fall farther and farther behind and many of them eventually drop out or graduate with diminished academic skills. Many of these same students will find themselves chronically underemployed or in prison with no hope for the future. Something has gone terribly wrong when more and more schools use police officers or "school resource officers" to maintain order and safety in the schools. Thomas Sowell has written extensively on high performing segregated schools before integration. Thomas Sowell (2001), in his article, "The Education of Minority Children" wrote,

> When I first published this information, more than twenty years ago, those few educators who responded at all dismissed the relevance of these findings by saying that these were "middle class" children and therefore their experience was not "relevant" to the education of low-income minority children. Those who said this had no factual data on the incomes or occupations of the parents of these children – and I did (p. 80).

There is very little specific research on black academic success from before the end of de jure racial segregation so there has been a concentration on the lack of

achievement since the 1970's. As previously stated, Haney and associates (2004) reported dropout rates of American students tripled from 1970-2000, and researchers attribute much of this increase to the increase in African American students failing to graduate. Signithia Fordham and John U. Ogbu, (1986) explored some of the reasons black students did so poorly in school and discovered there was what they called inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to academic effort. This phenomenon has also been explored by John McWhorter (2000) in his book, *Losing the Race*. He explored the idea of black Americans who are engaged in what he calls a cult of victimology. He explained that "the grip of the Cult of Victimology encourages the black American from birth to fixate upon remnants of racism and resolutely downplay all signs of its demise (p. xi).

Graham and Anderson, in an article, "I'm Trying to get My A: Black Male Achievers Talk About Race, School, and Achievement", in the Urban Review wrote, "There appears to be a shift in academic discourse on black males, moving away from the deficit views on male academic identity to anti-deficit or asset approaches" (as cited in Allen, 2015, p. 210). Timothy McGettigan (2013) wrote,

> In contrast to determinism…. I argue that humans have a capacity for agency. Agency can be defined as a form of individual-level intellectual creativity that enables individuals to conceive original ideas and then act upon those inspirations—often in opposition to limitations that are imposed within a particular environment. Humans have the capacity to transcend environmental limitations (p. 1).

Different environments impose different limitations or opportunity for growth, some

more conducive to positive results than others. The present study is consistent with the shift from a deficit model to one based on assets.

Chapter 2

An Oral History Approach

This research project used oral history methods in the form of narratives to uncover social patterns from the past in a racially segregated southern city of the United States. "Narrative researchers collect stories from individuals (and documents, and group conversations) about individuals' lived experiences" (Creswell, 2013, p. 71). This research documents a particular school structure and how individuals created, changed, and made those structures work in spite of the obstacle of de jure racial segregation. Oral history is a qualitative research method that seeks and records answers to questions in an effort to understand the experiences of others (McKoy, 2008). For this reason, oral history is the qualitative method used to explore the "lived experiences" of the black students, who attended a racially segregated high school in the "Jim Crow" South and who participated in this study.

I selected oral history methods because this allowed me to gather and represent the stories that the participants wanted to share about their experiences of attending segregated Louisville Central High School before and after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In this study, the researcher asked the ten interviewees to discuss their experiences and talk about their own stories of living in the segregated South of the United States. Mears Lunsford (2009) wrote, "An oral history interview asks individuals to talk about their experiences, to tell their own story without being subjected to interrogation requiring confirmable details of cognitive recall or demand" (p. 56). This oral history asked the interviewees to tell their stories from many years ago, knowing that people's memories are often clouded by time.

Therefore, by using oral history methods, this study provided insight into the

educational experiences of the participants. Oral history was used in this study because it crosses the research tradition of two distinct methodologies. Like historical inquiry, it is concerned with reconstructing the sequence of activities and events throughout the period of the school's latter segregated history and with recording and interpreting the students' response to these events. Consistent with historical methodology, the work also tried to capture a sense of a past time and place.

Participant Selection

In order to provide information-rich cases, qualitative research calls for purposeful sampling. "This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). In this case, selection was based on convenience, the researcher was based in Maryland and the participants were in various states of the United States, but most in Kentucky. Because of this the interviews were done by telephone and recorded digitally with their permission. Sampling done for convenience has the advantage of saving time, money, and effort, but at the expense of information and credibility (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). The goal of purposeful sampling in this study was to find students who attended Louisville Central High School and graduated in 1956, who could provide detailed information about their experiences in this racially segregated school before implementation of the Brown decision. Although there are many types of purposeful sampling procedures, the researcher used convenience as the criterion for sampling in this study.

The ten participants selected for this study met the following criteria for selection: each participant attended Louisville Central High School during the era of racial

segregation in Kentucky, before and after the Brown v. Board of Education court decision of 1954. The entire cohort of students in this class consisted of 336 students, with 228 still living. Most of them are now 81 years old or will be in 2019. In regard to the number of narrators selected Carolyn Lunsford Mears (2009) wrote, “The important thing is that for in-depth interviewing, you are not seeking a random sample but one that serves a purpose related to your work. You are also not seeking a large sample (perhaps only six to nine narrators) because your goal is depth, not breadth” (p. 87).

Prior to starting this research project, the researcher made initial contact with the selected participants through their class leaders to explain the purpose of the study and to solicit their help. Because some of the participants are familiar with the researcher prior to the study, rapport was easily established. The researcher was provided with a class list with the best available addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses. The researcher then attempted to contact the potential participants. The potential interviewees were contacted by email, by telephone, regular mail, and through the alumni association. All members of the class were given the opportunity to participate, and after securing the cooperation of ten the research proceeded. The potential participants were initially provided with a written questionnaire to make sure of their participation and willingness to proceed. After securing cooperation of ten potential interviewees who completed the written questionnaires, permission was gained for the telephone interviews and the research proceeded.

Prior to starting this research project, the researcher made initial contact with the selected participants to explain the purpose of the study and to solicit their help. According to the Principles and Best Practices for Oral History, Oral historians must

inform narrators about the nature and purpose of oral history interviewing in general and of their interview specifically. Oral historians insure that narrators voluntarily give their consent to be interviewed and understand that they can withdraw from the interview or refuse to answer a question at any time. Narrators may give this consent by signing a consent form or by recording an oral statement of consent prior to the interview. All interviews are conducted in accord with the stated aims and within the parameters of the consent (Oral history Association, (https://www.oralhistory.org/best-practices/).

According to the best practices, interviewees hold the copyright to their interviews until and unless they transfer those rights to an individual or institution. This is done by the interviewee signing a release form or in exceptional circumstances recording an oral statement to the same effect. This was one of those exceptions where the narrators did not sign a written consent form, though one was offered, but by giving oral consent prior to the interview. There are methodological issues which must be addressed that are particular to minority researchers doing research involving their own ethnic community, especially when they would be considered an insider. The researcher must face the possibility of their own bias. Laura Serrant (2002), addressed the methodological issues for black researchers working in minority ethnic communities. She stated that professionals working within their own communities have been accused of bias. She wrote,

> Researchers must constantly place themselves within the research, examining their own social identity alongside that of the population under study. This calls into view the need for all researchers to consider their role in the research and the

effects their own socialization and life experiences might have on the study (p. 36).

In this qualitative study, the researcher would be considered an insider, having graduated from the same racially segregated high school, therefore he must examine and be aware of his own preconceptions, and remain as objective as possible within the confines of qualitative research which recognizes a certain level of subjectivity. The researcher is never completely objective. The researcher in this study attended the same high school under study and has known some of the respondents for many years. The objectivity of qualitative researchers is now being seriously challenged, "with many researchers allying themselves as advocates (collaborators/joint authors/editors) with the people who are studied, or researchers being members themselves of the communities whose everyday lives and meaning perspectives are being studied through qualitative inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 53).

In this case the fieldwork involved the researcher as interviewer. In order to proceed with his or her work or to engage in qualitative research, how one goes about the process of establishing and maintaining those relationships is of the utmost importance. Glesne (2011), in her book, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*, stated, "For many, qualitative research should move in a direction in which trust is needed for working together on the issue under inquiry. Rapport, however, is often a precursor to building trust and part of gaining access and fitting in" (p. 141). The researcher must have a feel for the individual and the culture of which they are trying to access. The researcher must be cognizant of their position and gain the trust of the person or group being researched.

There are also those situations where the researcher can be described as an inside/outsider.

As the world of research became more diverse, researchers began to turn their attention to their own communities or cultures which beforehand had only been examined by outsiders. This insider/outsider phenomenon has opened up new opportunities and challenges for researchers. This problem is examined by Sharon Subreenduth and Jeong-eun Rhee (2010). This can be quite problematic and can cause unforeseen issues with the researched and researcher and effect the rapport and trust between the two. Positionality is the personal place of the researcher, establishing the personal importance of the research questions to the researcher, how the researcher has experienced the questions personally and professionally, often going to the core of who they are. The researcher must be aware of his or her positionality in the analysis of the data or in this case the interviews. The researcher must be aware of the interviewees views as an insider, an emic perspective, and then synthesize the data filtering it through the researcher's etic or scientific perspective to develop an overall cultural interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

The traditional framework of objectivity has evolved and the boundaries between researcher and researched have been blurred as more researchers have turned their attention to under explored populations which the researcher may have a personal interest. "Traditional frameworks of sanitized data collecting techniques, separation of personal and professional, friend versus research participant, field versus home, researcher and researched collapsed creating permeable boundaries and blurred distinctions" (Subreendeth & Rhee, 2010). As their research study showed, the issue of identity and identity politics often has an effect on the relationship between the

researched and researcher which is true in this study but should help this study to produce a positive outcome. In the case of this study the relationship between the researcher and the researched was very important and had an impact on the direction of the study. The researcher and the research subjects shared several commonalities, the same ethnic group, same community, same high school, shared history that goes back for several generations. This gave the population studied a sense of familiarity and also permitted access. The researcher was related by family to two of the participants and has known several others since birth.

Often overlooked are the positive benefits of doing research within one's own ethnic community. Often narrators are more at ease and open about issues and will reveal their true perceptions. Instead of seeing this as problematic, it can also be seen as a benefit. With the population from which this sample of interviewees is drawn, gaining access was somewhat difficult even for an insider. The researcher graduated from the same high school but twelve years later, and in the beginning period of racial integration. Often, researchers working within their own communities have been accused of bias, and the researcher must be aware of their own reasons and emotions. Laura Serrant (2002) wrote,

> In academia, where there are few black researchers, it is not difficult to see the positive benefits. In this context, my own position as a black person might be viewed as advantageous in that, apparently, it could ease some of the aforementioned problems concerning access and familiarity with the lives of the study group (p. 37).

Therefore, the pros and cons must be taken into consideration and often the pros

outweigh the cons.

Data Collection Methods

Oral History Interviews

Qualitative researchers use several methods, and in the context of oral history narratives, interviewing is used most often. The interviews may proceed through various stages. There is the stage of building rapport, moving from apprehension to participation, and differentiating between more advanced stages of exploration and cooperation (Spradley, 1980). Another consideration is the length of the interviews. This depends on the participants and sometimes the intensity of the experience. In interviewing, it is imperative to get the consent of those persons that are being interviewed whether the interview is by note-taking or recording. As mentioned, many researchers today use digital recording devices. There are advantages to this method such as the easier attention to what has been said, and the fact it provides a near complete record of what has been said. It is important that the researcher transcribes what has been recorded as soon as possible which increases the validity of qualitative research.

Interpretists have reshaped the relationship between researched and researcher. They are no longer seen as separate entities but are part of a dynamic. Researchers are more aware of their own subjectivity and see themselves, not as separate entities but as a part of the community. Some subjects and questions can be quite sensitive. The researcher must create an atmosphere of trust before such questions. Rapport, fitting in, building trust, creating friendships, field relations, power, connecting, and subjectivity, and monitoring for bias, and being aware of one's own emotions are part of the researcher's awareness. Researchers must know how to construct a well-ordered

interview protocol to guide them in their interview, create questions that follow a logical order, and that lead to sub-questions that move from the concrete to the specific and later to the abstract. For purposes of follow-up and validity, the actual recording of the interview is the primary document and the transcript is the secondary document (Ives, 1995). As recommended by the Oral History Society, as soon as possible the researcher must make a transcript of the recorded interview with a transcription, usually using pseudonyms with header information, preserving this information for later reference. Qualitative researchers use all of these techniques to gather the necessary information that informs their research.

Oral history as a form of qualitative inquiry has allowed researchers to access and to document information that has previously been unavailable (Askew, 2004). Therefore, the primary data gathering techniques for this study are oral history interviews that are conducted with each participant. I elected to use oral history interviews because they are autobiographical in nature and elicit stories about one's personal experiences. According to Creswell (1998), the cornerstone for writing an oral history is the open-ended interview. However, there are various strategies for obtaining an oral history ranging from using a structured set of guiding questions in which the researchers' intentions are uppermost to asking participants to tell their own stories in their own way, in which case the participants' intentions are uppermost (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000).

In designing this study, the researcher recognized the significance of oral history research in producing historical text about minorities in the field of education. Thus, for the purpose of this study, oral history interviews were conducted to gather first-person accounts from the ten participants in reference to their own individual experiences and

practices in both a segregated and desegregated school environment. The scholarly oral history research model found in Sitton, Mehaffy, and Davis' (1983) *Oral History: A Guide for Teachers and Others* was used to guide the interview process for this study. According to Askew (2004), the stages of scholarly oral history research identified by Sitton et al. include:

1. Pre-interview Research—Pre-interview research must be well informed. First the topic must be selected, and participants identified. The researcher should consult many primary and secondary sources to validate ascertains. Following this process, a pre-interview guide should be developed. This guide is a roadmap that should direct the initial interview. The interview guide is not a script, but a set of guiding questions to use with each participant.
2. Initial Interview—This interview is based on background information gained during the pre-interview research. This interview sets the tone for the series of interviews. The initial interview should begin with basic identifiers i.e. who, what, when, and where. The interview should then move into substantive themes. All non-verbal oral author explanations should be translated into explicit verbal accounts. The interview must be conducted in a comfortable noise free environment. The proper spellings of people, place, object and event names must be clarified before the close of the interview. Throughout the interview session, the researcher should function as the consummate listener.
3. Tape Analysis—This procedure allows the researcher to conduct more precise interview sessions as the interview process continues. Interview tapes should be analyzed for content and breaks in interviewer technique. The researcher should

conduct the tape analysis.

4. Re-interviews—These sessions help to thicken data, as respondents can be asked to expand on certain items or produce additional details, clarification, or remembrances. Further, respondents can be asked to particularize general answers or explain special terminology.

Individual interviews were conducted with each participant. Pre-interview information was gathered during the literature review process and a list of guiding questions were prepared in advance to guide participants to speak about their experiences as students (Appendix A). Following this model, the ten students were asked to participate in a personal interview. The first interview was approximately two hours in length. This interview sought to detail the factual account of the participants' experience as students, to recall practices and procedures used in the classroom, and ascertain the personal reflections of the school setting and the people in the schools. Because of the preparation and questions a second interview was not needed. The goal of the interview was to capture the deep meaning of each participant's experiences in his or her own words (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Interviews were digitally recorded with permission by phone, transferred to computer hard drive and backed up on a flash drive and later transcribed for analysis. The recordings and transcripts will be kept until a depository is found to accept them for preservation. After producing transcripts of the interviews, the interviewees were given a copy of their transcript and narrative to review for accuracy and were given the opportunity to make corrections, revisions, or to add additional information. According to the Principles and Best Practices of the Oral History Society (2009), "Whenever

possible and/or practical, oral histories–either individual or many within a project–should be deposited in a repository such as a library or archive that has the capacity to ensure long-term and professionally managed preservation and access" (https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/). With the consent of the interviewees, the recordings will be offered to The Kentucky Historical Society for those who might have a later interest. Finally, if a project deals with community history, the interviewer should be sensitive to the community, taking care not to reinforce thoughtless stereotypes. Interviewers should strive to make the interviews accessible to the community and where appropriate to include representatives of the community in public programs or presentations of the oral history material (Oral History Association, 2000).

Data Analysis

This study employed a three- stage process of analysys. The first step in the process is to name and categorize the transcripts of the interviews line by line. The second step in the process was to look for patterns and themes in the responses from each participant. Connections within the data were compared and related to one another in order to determine relationships. The final step in this process was conceptualizing the data into main themes. The transcripts were analyzed manually; with particular awareness to the teaching practices experienced by participants and the school culture. The data was presented as a narrative about the experiences of the ten African American student participants. Glesne (2011) wrote, "The purpose of this research approach is to demonstrate relations between conceptual categories and to specify the conditions under which theoretical relationships emerge, change, or are maintained" p. 21).

As discussed below, three themes emerged from the study participants' recollections about their high school experience (a) students and their families had set educational goals which often included post high school education, (b) students and their families believed educators were transformational. Students expected to move into the middle class, educators and students had a shared goal of racial uplift through education, and students often attained a higher education than their parents, (c) students believed they had been treated fairly in relation to their abilities and aspirations, and students were happy with their education, careers and lives they had led.

Five additional themes emerged regarding the social climate of the school. The participants also revealed that (a) schools had high standards which included dress codes for students and educators, strict discipline and few discipline problems, (b) Christian values and moral teaching were an important part of school; educators, families and students attended church regularly, (c) the racial oppression of African Americans was openly discussed in classes (d) teachers and students openly participated in political activism which ensured political efficacy and (e) the vast majority of students would have chosen to go to Central High School even if given a choice and the students looked upon their school as a positive uplifting experience. The participants believed their human potential had been maximized.

Trustworthiness

The results of research must be trustworthy enough that the conclusions reached are acceptable within the community of scholars. This raises the issues of validity and reliability and transferability. There are philosophical and practical dimensions in qualitative research. In order to be valid, research must be able to state that it measures

what it is intended to measure and be a true representation of the facts and results. According to Maxwell (1992) “Validity has long been a key issue in debates over legitimacy of qualitative research; if qualitative studies cannot consistently produce valid results, then policies, programs, or predictions based on these studies cannot be relied on” (p. 279). Maxwell believed validity is not a matter of technique, but a quality of the methodology of the researcher. He stated, “Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques…Rather, validity is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances” (p. 281**).** He called this a realist conception of validity inherent in the relationships.

Qualitative researchers define validity, not by technique, but by their accurate portrayal of the data collected by observation, their descriptions, interpretations, and in their grounded theories. Maxwell stated the first concern of qualitative researchers is to give an accurate account of what has been observed and to not invent, make up or distort, what they have seen and heard, (Maxwell, 1992). Thus, it is important to establish validity in which there is correlation between the way the participants actually perceive their teaching practices and the way that the researcher portrayed their viewpoints. Reliability refers to the repeatability of the findings. Qualitative studies must be able to consistently produce valid results so that policies, programs, or predictions based on these studies can be relied upon (Maxwell (1992). Qualitative researchers must also be concerned with what the observed behaviors mean to the people involved.

The researchers must also concern themselves with an accurate interpretive account. Maxwell (1992) then took up the matter of theoretical validity. He wrote, “Theoretical validity refers to an account’s validity as a theory of some phenomenon.

Any theory has two components: the concepts or categories that the theory employs, and the relationships that are thought to exist among these concepts" (p. 291). Theoretical validity concerns itself with the consensus within the academic community concerned with that particular type of research (p. 292). In the case of this study we are concerned with critical theory. Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. Therefore, the validity of an oral history research project is dependent on the degree of conformity between what the participants' report concerning past events and the events themselves, as reported by other primary sources.

Qualitative researchers have always been concerned with equity and the redress of research that has tended to present women, minorities, and other cultures in a negative light and portray them as inferior, serving the interests of the status quo. This status quo has always been to justify capitalist interests. In education research, some researchers have called for what they call catalytic validity. Catalytic validity refers to how the research process itself transforms and energizes the participants. By participating in the research project, the participants become more aware of their condition and are often moved by it. According to Patti Lather (1986), catalytic validity "refers to the degree to which the research process re-orients, focusses, and energizes participants in what Freire (1973) terms "conscientization," knowing reality in order to better transform it." The participants should come away with a better sense of awareness and their own place in reality. D. Beach (2003) in his article, "A Problem of Validity in Education Research", stated, "My suggestion is that because of the inequities of capitalism, education research should be concerned with trying to improve equity and democracy both within and

through education" (p. 860). In fact, he went so far as to make the claim "catalytic validity is perhaps the only democratically valid form for education research validity under capitalist circumstances" and catalytic validity is necessary for democratic change. Critical theorists are certainly concerned with the ethical principles of democracy and whether our actions and policies are consistent with those principles.

Transferability

The findings of a qualitative study may be useful to others. Transferability in qualitative research refers to the ability to "generalize the findings about a particular sample to the population from which that sample was drawn" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 261). In qualitative research, there may be a problem transferring the findings to another setting. Qualitative research is not generalizable to other populations. This study may be transferable to other students at this particular high school, but the findings may not apply to other similarly situated segregated high schools. According to Ritchie (1995), oral history research is used to study the heritages of populations whose histories have not been well researched or recorded. Additionally, oral history research has been used in the exploration of the histories of ethnic minority and other non-majority culture groups (Askew, 2004). In this case the results are not intended to predict that every student who attended segregated schools in the South would have the same experiences, beliefs and recollections as the participants, but there may be some aspects of the study that may be useful in analyzing the historic record.

Ethical Considerations

Generally speaking, ethics concerns itself with the right and wrong way of doing things, especially when the result can have a harmful impact on others. In research, there are many situations where there is the potential for harming others, the researched. In research, positivist believe that there should be no connection between researcher and researched in order to maintain objectivity, while interpretists believe there is no reason to separate the two (Glesne, 2011). Qualitative researchers, because of their connection to their research subjects, must be aware of the ethical issues in the discipline. Ernest House (1990), in his article, "An Ethics of Qualitative Field Studies", discussed what he called the three basic principles of mutual respect, non-coercion, and non-manipulation. House (1990) said, "All the ethical principles delineated are for individuals and are what Rawls calls natural duties, duties that are required for ethical behavior regardless of what else one does and regardless of social institutions" (p. 162). We can speak of particular ethics in detail, but they basically fall within these broad categories.

There are also the two ethical positionings described by Glesne (2011) as ethical absolutist and the situational relativist positions. Plummer identified "two ethical positionings: the ethical absolutist and the situational relativist positionings" (Cited in Glesne, 2011, p.181). There must be a professional code and at the same time researchers must have an internal compass that guides their ethical behavior. Problematic to qualitative research is the imbalance of power between the researcher and the researched. The researcher is generally in a position to write the narrative, often without the researched knowing of the final script. Field relations and power in the case of this field study is quite subtle but must be considered. Researchers also have the power to portray

the researched to others which calls for awareness. Lindahl (2012) also spoke of culturally embedded double standards. Lindahl stated, “Students of the human sciences, like other culture voyeurs, tend to reach their worst conclusions when the humans they study are out of the room” (p. 140). This has long been a problem in research.

The researcher must always uphold democratic principles. As a culture, we should be bound by the “democratic ethic”. “The third and most contentious ethical principle is the duty to uphold democratic values and institutions. We live in a democratic society and have an obligation to support the democratic values of that society” (House, 1990, p. 161). One of the most important of those democratic values is intrinsic equality. There is a call for basic equality between the powerful and the powerless in our dealings with all peoples. The powerless are those who are usually the subject of qualitative studies. House (1990) wrote, “Only their behavior is subject to scrutiny, and, if information is power, these studies act against the powerless and the marginal” (p.162). The researcher must be aware that they are not acting against the interests of the researched.

There are other ethical considerations such as right to privacy, deception, reciprocity, and others that researchers must be aware of and take into consideration. These issues can be considered in relation to the individual and in relation to culture, but almost always fall under the considerations of power and the use and abuse of power, whether the researcher is considered an adherent to the ethical absolutist or the situational relativist positions. Researchers must be aware of the ethics, not only of how research is gathered but also how the research is concluded. Traditionally, ethical concerns in a qualitative study have revolved around the topics of receiving consent by the subject after having carefully and truthfully informed him or her about the research, protecting the

identity of the subject, and protecting the subject from physical, emotional, or any other kind of harm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). For the purpose of this study, after thoroughly understanding the research project, each participant was asked to give the researcher consent to participate in this study. In addition, each participant was asked permission to use their real name and given the option of using a pseudonym. Finally, the ethical guidelines of the Oral History Association (2000) was followed for this study.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the design and procedures that were used to conduct this study. This study used an oral history approach. By exploring the researcher's role, this chapter provided detailed information on the researcher's approach to the study to gain accurate data from the participants while accounting for trustworthiness. By exploring oral history theory, the researcher provided background for the rationale behind the oral history research method. This methodology recognized the importance of the African American student as a valuable informant in researching school and community culture.

CHAPTER 3

Historical Context

Because it is dependent on the perspective of the historian, history is open to interpretation. In his essay, Warren made the case that the discipline of History of Education has changed to include many more sources, and that history should be examined in context (Tozer et al., 2011, p. 42). History is told by those with the knowledge, position and ability to examine such matters, often leaving out matters important to minorities. Bernard Bailyn was an early critic of educational history. Speaking of Bernard Bailyn, Warren said, "The absence of setting was his chief criticism of educational history when he surveyed the literature of the late 1950's" (Tozer et al., 2011, p. 42). Warren claimed most of educational history has been dominated by an eastern elite, whose interpretations have been too narrow. The author posits that life was different in different places, there were secret schools, unexamined religious phenomenon, resistance, hoops of collective memory lost, storytelling, myth, and other under-explored historical territory. Warren made the claim, "Useful information and clues lie imbedded in specialized literature" (Tozer et al., 2011, p. 54). Writers like Thomas Sowell (1986) also examined this idea of a failure to include much of the history of black education in America. Much of this lost history is a history of class struggle in America which included the Common and Progressive School Eras.

To understand black education in America is to understand the history of the Negro in America. More so than any other ethnic group, African Americans had to fight for the right to schooling and then for the right to equal schooling. This has been part of an evolving cultural process which has shaped the thinking of African Americans and has helped reshape America. Fordham and Ogbu (1996) wrote, "Thus, blacks may have

transformed white assumptions of black homogeneity into a collective identity system and a coping strategy" (p. 184). As stated, this ever-evolving cultural process, taking shape at the macro–level by large numbers of people and over time, is called history. Processual theory is useful in setting up my study because the recognition of the importance of the change process and how it is brought about through agency is central to the lived experience of many African Americans and is central to my research. African Americans have always used their collective agency to end their caste-like social condition and have developed what Fordham and Ogbu refer to as fake kinship. They said, "In anthropology, fictive kinship refers to a kinship-like relationship between persons not related by blood or marriage in a society, but who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship" (Fordham & Ogbu p. 183). They describe in detail the nature of this relationship and how collective cultural identity can be used to make cultural changes for a group benefit, using the agency of the group.

Common School Era and Before the Civil War

The Common School Movement is of particular importance in the history of education in the United States, being recognized as the period of time from roughly 1820 to 1860 when the idea of universal compulsory education took hold. This idea of universal compulsory education came to be adopted in the eastern, northern and western parts of the country and was slow to be adopted in the South, where many black and many white southerners received very little formal education before 1900. "The pattern of public schooling we know today—tax-supported, free, and essentially compulsory---emerged in the United States during the four decades prior to the Civil War" (Fraser, 2010, pp. 44-45). Some would argue the ideas developed but were not implemented until

much later.

There was opposition to this expansion of taxpayer supported education in every part of the country, North and South, but common schools for most students in the North and South did not become the norm until after the Civil War. The movement had some strong and forceful advocates. Fraser (2010) wrote, speaking of the Common School Movement, "Horace Mann, who served as the first secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education from 1837-1848 was perhaps the most articulate and certainly the most often-heard voice in the common school movement" (p. 44). African American students were often deprived of the opportunity to attend public schools during this period in the North and the South. Little has been written about legislated, or de jure, school segregation in the North, but as early as the 1820's Ohio refused to set aside public funds for the education of its black citizens and when pressed, required separation of the students into separate facilities. "When the public-school system spread to Ohio**,** citizens and legislators alike objected to educating blacks from public funds, in part because it would tend to encourage blacks to come there and settle" (Harper, 2003, p. 1). Laws were passed in many northern states which required district school directors to set up separate schools for black and white students. The Ohio courts rejected the idea of racial integration and upheld this segregation in 1850 and 1859. There was also open hostility to African Americans opening private schools and this hostility sometimes erupted into violence. Harper (2003) wrote, "Yet segregation was not enough for many Ohio whites, and they insulted, opposed, and sometimes literally attacked private schools set up to teach black children. Whites destroyed newly opened schools for blacks in Zanesville in 1837 and Troy in 1840" (p. 1). As the opportunity for public schooling

spread during the Common School Era, hostility to schooling for freemen and women of African descent was a fact of life in the North and the South.

The South was much more agrarian, and wealthy landowners were reluctant to endorse such plans for public education for economic and social reasons, but eventually the movement prevailed throughout the states. Even within the South there were distinct regional differences. The upper South, sometimes called the Border South could be distinguished from the deep South. “The rise of the Border South in the nineteenth century as a section was accompanied by conflict over slavery. It was a geopolitical region whose complexities of identity, commerce, and family make it both deeply Southern and at points open to other regions, cultures, and influences” (Thomas, 2004, p. 1). The upper South was usually referred to North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and West Virginia and Delaware. The upper South was just as committed to the continuation of slavery as the deep South. Kentucky had a large slave population and by 1830, blacks made up 24% of Kentucky’s population (Bush, 2008). Kentucky held more slaves than some of the states in the deep South, except Georgia and Virginia and Jefferson County which included Louisville held over 10,000 enslaved persons (Thomas, 2004).

Citizens of Kentucky were very apprehensive about the outbreak of the Civil War because of its ties to the North and South. Louisville’s population was rapidly increasing and by 1860, its population had increased to 69,739 with 4,903 being slaves (Bush, 2004). Bryan Bush, speaking of the railroad wrote, “When Louisville connected with Nashville, Louisville became the “gateway to the South” (Bush, 2008 p. 16). Louisville, to this day, is still known by this name. There was nothing but hate in Kentucky for the Union military and for Abraham Lincoln (Bush**,** 2008). Bryan Bush (2008) wrote,

"Louisville embraced the Lost Cause and saw the Confederate soldiers as fighting a just cause. Louisville searched for regional identity and found the South to be the perfect fit for its needs" (Bush, 2008, p. 110). This hatred carried over to white attitudes toward the education of slaves before the war and afterward and had an impact on the development of education for African Americans in Kentucky and Louisville.

The idea of differential educational treatment of the African slaves was evident from their introduction in the 1600's. The racial caste system was well in place by the middle of the 18th century and continued to be adjusted and refined by the time of the Civil War. Even though the Common School Movement improved the educational opportunities for most Americans, this barely included the African American population. By the 1770's, the racial caste system was born, justified and protected by a colorblind constitution "based on the ideals of equality, liberty and justice for all" (as cited in Lindsay, 2014, p. 13). Therefore, from its beginnings, the racial caste system was a violation of the democratic principles by which the country was founded.

During this expansion of educational opportunity, African Americans were often excluded from the publicly funded schools. The East, North and West were not as blatantly oppressive as the southern states where laws were passed making it illegal to teach the slaves to read or write. The education of African Americans was either ignored or completely outlawed. "Educating the black population was not on the agenda for the white majority in much of the country. Education for African Americans in the South especially was prohibited, where educating even free African-Americans was made illegal in order to the preserve the status quo" (Lindsay, 2015, p. 13). In spite of this repression of education for Americans of African descent, there were always those slaves

and former slaves who found a way to learn to read and write in the South knowing there would be severe penalties if they were discovered. Even under the oppression of the slave system, African Americans realized the benefits of having the ability to read and write.

After the Civil War in 1865

Technically, slavery did not end in Kentucky with the Emancipation Proclamation. Kentucky, never seceding from the Union, was not affected by the proclamation. For all practical purposes, slavery ended in Louisville with the arrival of the Union Army at the beginning of the war and officially ended with the Thirteenth Amendment. “Practically, however, slavery ceased in Louisville with the start of the Civil War and especially with the coming of the union army. Slavery officially ended in Kentucky only with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 18, 1865” (Wright, 1990, p. 20). The bitterness of the southern Whites persisted for many years in the form of violence against the former slaves. Because it had not seceded, Whites in Kentucky were allowed to run their own affairs. This was disastrous for the freemen. Wright (1990) wrote,

> The end of the Civil War ushered in a prolonged period of racial violence in Kentucky. This violence would be just as severe and long-lasting as that found in the Deep South, but too often it escaped the immediate attention of federal officials. Because Kentucky had officially remained a loyal state, its citizens were allowed to rule their own affairs in a way not permitted in the former Confederate states, and that situation worked to the benefit of a large number of former Confederates who returned to their homes in Kentucky after the war (p. 19).

Because of the violence against them, many former slaves, seeking protection in black communities, began moving to Kentucky's cities, especially Louisville and Lexington (Wright, 1990). Not only did black refugees flee into the cities like Louisville for protection, but also to escape the poverty of the deep South. In Louisville, black citizens were under constant threat of beatings and killing by Union soldiers and others. Directly after the war, Union soldiers searched the city for black men to kill. Luckily, there were no reports of Union soldiers killing black refugees, but many suffered beatings. Union General John Logan ordered an end to the harassment of Blacks (Bush, 2008, p. 104). In contrast to the harsh treatment of Blacks in other parts of the South, Wright (1985) explained that in Louisville, Blacks later came to experience what he called a "polite form of racism". Black citizens in Louisville understood their "place" and they were basically left to their own devices. This arrangement had a profound effect on the development of black education in Louisville. Wright (1985) wrote in his book, *Life Behind a Veil* that the black experience was different in Louisville from what Afro-Americans experienced in other southern cities. Host to a "polite form of racism" between the end of the Civil War and the Great Depression, Louisville offered its black community little harsh treatment and no lynchings during a period in which most blacks in the urban South were the object of intimidation and violence.

The black citizens of Louisville, knowing well the precariousness of their situation, made the most of their circumstances and advanced economically and educationally through their own efforts and along lines they, themselves, determined most advantageous to themselves and to their race (Wright, 1985). African Americans were very aware of the benefits education and of being able to read before the Civil War

and this interest continued after emancipation. Anderson (1988), explained that black slaves were knowledgeable about liberation and freedom and he wrote,

> Their ideas about the meaning and purpose of education were shaped partly by the social system of slavery under which they first encountered literacy. After slavery, many of the leading black educators emerged from among the rebel literates, those slaves who had sustained their own learning process in defiance of the slave owners' authority. They viewed literacy and formal education as means to liberation and freedom (location 270).

The period of time immediately before and after the Civil War coincided with the Common School Era, and even the slaves were aware of the desirability of knowledge contained in books. James Anderson's book tells the story of the unique system of public and private education that was developed by and for black southerners between 1860 and 1935. It examines the structure, ideology, and content of black education as part and parcel of the larger political subordination of blacks, for it was the social system in which blacks lived that made their educational institutions so fundamentally different from those of other Americans.

A central theme in the history of the education of black Americans is the persistent struggle to fashion a system of formal education that prefigured their liberation from peasantry (Anderson, 1988). The Reconstruction Era in United States history is the period, 1865-1876 that followed the American Civil War and during which attempts were made to redress the inequities of slavery and its political, social, and economic legacy and to solve the problems arising from the readmission to the Union of the 11 states that had seceded at or before the outbreak of war. "Reconstruction, and the literacy campaigns

that went with it, came to an abrupt halt in 1876 with the withdrawal of Union troops and the return of white segregationist governments across the South, leaving blacks at the mercy of the reconstituted segregationist governments" (Fraser, 2010, p. 103). Although most slaves emerged from bondage completely illiterate, they emerged from this status filled with the desire for schooling and in the pride of which they spoke of those who had acquired this ability. Fraser (2010) insisted, "Blacks emerged from slavery with a strong belief in the desirability of learning to read and write. This belief was expressed in the pride with which they talked of other ex-slaves who learned to read or write in slavery and in the esteem in which they held literate blacks" (p. 102).

After emancipation, the freed slaves, often with the help of the Freedmen's Bureau and philanthropic organizations, organized schools for the ex-slaves to the great discomfort of the leaders of the white community. These efforts at early education for the ex-slaves and often for poor Whites were greatly discouraged, but the ex-slaves often persisted even at their own cost and expense. When missionaries from the North went South to help with this educational effort, they were surprised to the extent the ex-slaves had begun the educational process of bringing the uneducated black masses from their literary ignorance. Anderson (1988) wrote that the missionaries from the North were astonished at the schools they found among the recently freed slaves and said, "Many missionaries were astonished, and later chagrined, however, to discover that many ex-slaves had established their own educational collectives and associations, staffed schools entirely with black teachers, and were unwilling to allow their educational movement to be controlled by the civilized Yankees" (location 132). Missionaries who came to Louisville were under constant threat, and George Wright (1985) wrote, "In fact, by the

end of 1865 several of the northern missionary societies stopped sending their workers to Louisville and elsewhere in Kentucky because of the numerous threats on their lives and the state's refusal to protect them" (p. 28).

Not only did the ex-slaves develop their own schools but they also insisted that education be publicly funded, as they echoed the sentiment of the Common School Movement. This development was of course opposed by the southern elite class, who saw mass education as a threat to their domination of the minds of the southern poor, white or black. Anderson, in his book, highlighted the "deep-seated desire" that African-Americans had to regulate and maintain schools for themselves and their children immediately after emancipation" (as cited in Lindsay 2014, p. 15). The freed slaves led the drive for universal education in the South, being well aware of its denial during the long years of slavery. This denial fueled a pent-up desire for its acquisition. Some historians go so far as to make the claim that universal public education in the South was the idea of the former slaves. Anderson (1988) wrote, "He contends that African-American ex-slaves had a strong-belief in the desirability of learning to read and write" (as cited in Lindsay (2014, p. 15). They expressed this belief in the value of education through demands for universal publicly funded education. Anderson notes W. E. B. DuBois as remarking: "Public education for all at public expense was, in the South, a Negro idea" (as cited in Lindsay, 2014, p. 15).

In larger cities in the South, often there was more educational opportunity for black citizens than for Whites. John Batchelor (2015) wrote, "In larger cities, however, more educational opportunity was being provided to blacks than to Whites during the period immediately after the Civil War. Only 275 of 600 white children in Raleigh were

attending school in 1868, compared to 700 of nearly 900 black children. Similar figures appeared in Charlotte and New Bern" (p. 8). This is a contradiction of the idea that education was brought to the freedmen from benevolent societies from the North. Lindsay (2014) wrote,

> Although historical evidence frames early African-American education to Yankee benevolence or federal largess, many black schools in the late 1860's and afterward were established and supported largely through the efforts of African-Americans. The prevailing opinion at the time by the newly freed was that "literacy and formal education [was a] means to liberation and freedom" (p. 9).

Many historians have noted this, but the real debate took place between the adherents of Booker T. Washington and the followers of W. E. B. DeBois as to the form that education should take. DeBois advocated for a liberal arts education spearheaded by the "Talented Tenth" while Washington was more in favor of vocational training for the freedmen and women.

While the education of black Americans in the South forged forward, the education of poor white Southerners lagged behind. After realizing that this was a rising tide which could not be thwarted, the southern gentry eventually gave up and began to adopt a system of universal education for most children. Tozer, Senese and Violas (2013) said, "In terms of schooling, it is noteworthy that African Americans were successful during the Reconstruction period in establishing schools for black children throughout the South. In general, southern Whites had less access to quality education than did southern Blacks" (p. 156). Denied access to public funds, African Americans, now citizens, took matters into their own hands, acquired land, built schools, and staffed teachers to ensure

their children would get the fundamentals of a formal education. The ruling class of the South made some concessions but made sure the road to equal educational opportunity for the now new black citizens would not be easy or equal.

All over Kentucky the education of black children was met with hostility and open contempt. Many Whites joined the Ku Klux Klan to drive Blacks out of the state. Mobs destroyed schools, assaulted teachers, beat anyone who attempted to educate the ex-slaves and had no problem resorting to lynching. "Thomas K. Noble, head of the bureau's education program, explained that Louisville blacks strived to better themselves in an atmosphere of bitter hostility toward "nigger schools". Everywhere the colored man hears these schools spoken of with contempt…" (Wright, 1990, p. 37). As the new black citizens made economic and social gains, the political powers of the defeated South, moved to ensure the economic hegemony of the white South would remain intact. "Louisville's leaders, for instance, concurred with Washington on the importance of industrial education for blacks. They also wanted the economic power that Washington talked about for the race, and they believed in self-help. On the other hand, local black leaders saw the necessity of higher education for blacks" (Wright, 1990, p. 156). Louisville's black leaders were determined that they would have a high school and that its mission would not only prepare African Americans for the trades, but it would also prepare them for college. By 1873, they opened The Central "Colored" School with grades one through eight. Ruby Wilkins Doyle wrote, "However, when the Central School was erected, the plan was that it would eventually become a high school. That was the beginning of Central High School" (Doyle, 2005, p. 194).

Over a period of years laws were enacted to ensure the subordinate position of

black Americans would be codified into law by what would be deemed de jure segregation of the races. This would later become known as “Jim Crow” or “separate but equal”. Jim Crow in the United States started to rear its ugly head during Reconstruction with legal enforcement beginning in the late 19th century. It made sure legal racial ostracism which Lomotey noted, “extended to churches, schools, housing, jobs and eating and drinking establishments” (as cited in Lindsay,2015, p. 15). Strict separation of the races had become the law of the land in 17 southern states.

Progressive Era 1890-1950

The period of time after the Reconstruction Era coincided somewhat with what would be called the Progressive Era in American education the United States. During this time period, great changes came about as to how the public institution of education was delivered, but African Americans, especially in the South, found many obstacles to their pursuit of a quality education continued. For African Americans, the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson,* which crafted the separate but equal doctrine justified racially segregated education facilities among others, which continued for most of this period. African Americans continued to be deprived of equal facilities and equal expenditures per child during this period at the turn of the century. There were objections from the black community to this unequal treatment, but “Jim Crow and the doctrine of “separate but equal” were now codified in law. “States in the South authorized segregated education for African-Americans. In the “*Separate but equal*” doctrine, the separate was emphasized more than the equal. African-Americans were denied equal opportunities in elementary, secondary and higher education institutions. These schools also received much less funding and attention by states” (Lindsay, 2015, p.15).

The inequities in expenditures and facilities are well-documented, especially by black historians of education such as Dr. James Anderson (1988) in his book, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. It should also be added that despite these inequities, many black schools, especially in some of the larger cities thrived and were noted for the quality of education the students received. African Americans continued the trend of moving to Louisville for the next thirty years of the nineteenth century. Public education was one of the factors which brought black people to Louisville. "Louisville, though dragging its feet, did develop a public-school system, including a high school, quicker than other Kentucky cities and counties" (Wright, 1990, p. 43). By 1900 the United States had entered this new period of education reform. The meaning of "Progressive Era" varies depending on different writers, but it coincided with the period of great expansion of technology and the industrial age. Lasting from 1890 to 1950 by some accounts, "Perhaps no reform movement in American education lasted so long or had so much influence as progressive education, often associated with the work of John Dewey" (Fraser, 2001, p. 215). There is some discrepancy in the actual years of this period with some writers such as Tozer and al. (2013) marking this period as taking place between 1900 to1920.

African Americans continued political agitation for equal access to public funded education throughout this period and made great gains. By 1900 Louisville ranked tenth nationally in black population, with Central Colored High School representing, by some accounts, the largest black public school in the United States (Aubespin et al., 2011). Education was very important to the black citizens of Louisville and it often determined one's social position. "Some scholars observed that blacks relied more on education than

occupation to determine class position. With the narrow occupation range available to blacks, education was used to mark off social divisions within the same general occupation level" (Wright, 1985**,** p. 136). The importance of education was apparent in Louisville, for a degree from a college spelled rapid admission into the ranks of the elite. At Louisville Central High School, "The classes ranged from Latin to physics and from typing to workshop. Many of the teachers held multiple master's degrees. A few had doctorates. The goal at Central was to bolster Louisville's growing black middle class—with or without the help of whites" (Garland, 2013, p. 39).

By 1915, Louisville was the home of black professionals with degrees from Fisk, Howard, Tuskegee, Hampton, Wilborforce, Berea, McHarry Medical College, and state universities in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan. Louisville Central High School was also known for its sports dominance with basketball the center of attention in the community. George Wright (1985) wrote,

> By 1915 basketball was well on its way to overtaking baseball as the most popular sport. Kentucky State University and Central High fielded basketball teams which created great interest within the community. Indeed, as in a later period (roughly 1950s to the mid-1970s) when Central High dominated basketball in hoop-crazy Kentucky and was the center of attention, the fans figuratively lived and died with the successes and failures of their teams (p. 138).

The black citizens of Louisville through the NAACP continued their advocacy for better conditions throughout the 1930's, but under the framework of separate but equal. Lowe (2004) wrote, "The NAACP began its effort to achieve desegregated schools in the early 1930s but initially did so within the "separate but equal" framework of Plessy v.

Ferguson. It tried to make separate schools more equal in facilities, teachers' salaries, school terms, and transportation as a way of putting financial pressure on the South to dismantle a dual system of education" (p. 1). This effort was mostly unsuccessful, but the effort continued. The black population continued to grow putting pressure on the city to improve the quality of accommodations for black students

black high schools in urban areas. James Anderson (1988) wrote,

> But as the region's urban black youth populations grew rapidly during the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the sheer magnitude of the problem forced a new attentiveness to the question of black public secondary education. Consequently, the same coalition that transformed white public secondary education joined forces to forge a new system of urban black secondary education" (location no. 2750-3061).

According to some authors, the progressive era encompassed the two world Wars and the Cold War. It was around the turn of the century and in the post WW years during World War I and World War II that African Americans migrated in large numbers to the large industrial cities of the North. They were more than happy to take even the lowest jobs which were often shunned by white workers. This migration to the North changed the demographics of the northern industrial states and created new challenges for the schools. Although not bound by law, racial segregation took other forms which came to be called "de facto" segregation, usually created by overt housing discrimination. School districts were usually drawn to reflect these segregated housing patterns. Some have called this the golden age of United States education because during this period, aided by advances in education, the United States became the preeminent world power.

The meaning of the Progressive Era evolved after World War I and the Great Depression as many educational leaders pressed the schools to take the lead in societal reforms. Some political commentators pressed the schools to lead in these reform efforts. Fraser (2001) wrote,

> As the Great Depression of the 1930's replaced the prosperity of the teens and twenties, those who believed that progressive education meant using the school to build a larger progressive society became more militant and expanded on their belief that educators needed to provide leadership for changes in the larger American society (p. 216).

Central High School was the pride of the black community and almost every black person in the city had ties to the school. "Louisville blacks attended different churches, maintained loyalty to numerous fraternities, sororities, social clubs, and cliques. But they had only one high school. Central High was unquestionably the pride of the black community and would remain so for decades (Wright, 1985, p. 139).

The teachers and faculty at Central were part of the community also as church leaders and usually knew the entire family, often having taught multiple generations. Often, their own families had attended Central, including bothers, sisters, parents, children, and the entire extended family. School was a home away from home with the teachers being like extended family. "To many students, the teachers were a part of an extended family that provided discipline, demanded respect, and helped mold them into adults capable of competing and achieving in an often-hostile world" (Aubespin et al., 2011, p. 175). Maude Brown, the first assistant principal, was remembered fondly by her students and exemplified the discipline and high standards demanded at Central. Her students revered

her and at the same time feared her. She was remembered as also being "concerned about development of black culture and the refinement and uplifting of black people, according to her former students, friends and fellow teachers" (Doyle, 2005, p. 530). One of her students who studied English under her said that "when the stern teacher walked into the classroom, everyone got quiet and stayed that way until the final bell rang" (Doyle, 2005, p. 531). Her students loved her. The school was known for academic excellence, discipline, and fine teaching. Almost every black person in the city had an affiliation with the school.

Louisville was uniquely situated on the side of the Ohio River and many Louisvillians like to think of their city as more northern than southern and this affected their attitudes toward their black citizens. They considered the city quite progressive. Sarah Garland (2013) wrote, "The city sat on the southern banks of the Ohio River, once the last barrier to freedom for slaves running north, but many white Louisvillians preferred to think of their city as northern at heart, more Ohio than Mississippi" (p. 19). The city was quite urban and Adam Fairclough (2007) and James Anderson (1988) both described the differences in educational opportunity between urban and rural areas.

Desegregation and Decline of Graduation Rates and Literacy

African Americans continued to fight for equal rights in the United States and that fight eventually led to the now famous civil rights case, *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954. Many people believe that the Brown decision was a success because of the level of racial integration in the public schools. But, there are serious questions as to whether the Brown decision was a success based on literacy and graduation rates. Some refer to the period between 1954 and 1970 as the second phase of the Civil Rights Movement and it

left its impact on black education along with other areas of society. This phase was "characterized by more frequent use of direct action, public protests, confrontation, demonstrations, boycotts and other tactics to overcome more intransigent and often violent resistance to change" (Aubespin et al., 2011, p. 185).

Louisville did not have a black college, so the students at Central were pressed into the battle for equal rights. Teachers and administrators alike were sympathetic to the cause and tacitly gave their approval if not direct participation. Sarah Garland (2013) wrote, "In the 1950s, Central had been an organizing ground for Louisville's civil rights movement and cultivated many of the city's leading black figures, from lawyers and intellectuals to boxing legend Muhammad Ali" (p. 8). Lyman Johnson, a teacher at Central High School led civil rights demonstrations and became a noted figure for opening the doors to University of Kentucky and University of Louisville. As early as 1956 he led groups of Central students, many of them members of the NAACP's Youth Council, to conduct sit-ins protesting segregation at downtown businesses (Aubespin et al., 2011; Garland, 2013). The black community continued to press ahead not only in civil rights but also in sports.

Louisville Central High School during this time produced one of the best-known and influential athletes in United States history, Muhammad Ali. He began his boxing career in 1954 and by 1960, had won an Olympic gold medal. Before desegregation, African American teams were not welcome at state tournaments. Consequently, Louisville's black teams played other black teams. At the end of the season, those teams competed with other all-black teams in a national tournament. Central won the 1956 National Negro Basketball Championship (Aubespin et al., 2011). Louisville Central

teams dominated in basketball and also football and "Tales of basketball and football victories from its early years, and the elaborate parades that accompanied them, were repeated in Louisville barbershops decades later" (Garland, 2013, p. 8).

By 1956, Louisville, along with other southern cities like Memphis, Tennessee, sought compliance with the desegregation orders by using a freedom of choice plan (Pohlmann, 1957). Speaking of the desegregation plan, Aubespin et al., (2011, p. 174) wrote,

> The most significant breakthrough occurred when the Louisville Public School System desegregated on September 10, 1956 – using a "freedom of choice" plan that gained national recognition. Still, desegregation occurred on only a token basis in Louisville. For example, in the school-year 1956-1957, only a handful of black students enrolled in previously all-white schools, and 45 percent of these students requested transfers back to all-black schools.

During this time, black students and their families had little to complain about so far as the education of black students in the city. They had some of the best teachers and in 1953 the new Louisville Central building had been dedicated. In 1953, a few months after the school desegregation cases were argued in the Supreme Court, the new Central building opened. Board members dubbed it "the South's finest high school for Negroes, and it probably was" (Garland, 2013, p. 51). At great expense, it was not only the finest high school for Negroes in the South, but at the time it was the newest, most modern high school in the Jefferson County Public School System.

Out of the handful of black students that transferred to previously all-white schools, 55 percent remained at the previously all-white schools, so the slow painful

process of school integration in Louisville began. Besides many white citizens, many black citizens of Louisville and Kentucky were apprehensive about the coming plans for desegregation of the schools. Many black educators, knowing well the history of racial discrimination in Kentucky expressed those feelings in letter and speeches. Whitney Young, a leading black educator wrote as early as 1950,

> We must beware lest the theory of integration becomes the flame for extinguishing 90 percent of all job opportunities for the more educated Negro. I am not opposed to integration, but I want integration to take place on both sides of the fence. I do not want any group to have the final say about, where, when, and what type of education our children shall have (Doyle, 2005, p. 373).

For the most part, black children had been shielded from the worst racism in Kentucky, which was deep-seated and had a long history. Many expressed fear for what the children would be subjected to at the hands racist white teachers, and black teachers and principals feared for their jobs, knowing full-well the extent of racial discrimination in employment opportunity, housing and educational opportunity in Kentucky. Garland (2013) wrote, "Fear for the well-being of black children was not the only reason blacks in the South were uneasy about integration in the lead-up to and the immediate aftermath of *Brown.* Black teachers and principals feared for their jobs. In a poll of 150 black teachers from the South, only about half said they would prefer desegregation to the segregated system" (p. 49).

In 1957 the city of Louisville, like many other southern cities, moved to implement a freedom of choice plan. The freedom of choice plan became the dominant desegregation approach in the South. Each student was given the unrestricted right to

attend any school in the district, except for extraordinary circumstances (Brown, 1968). In Louisville, anticipating racial problems, the superintendent Carmichael sought to train the teachers on the coming of desegregation. Teacher training didn't go as planned and he discovered how deep-rooted racism was among the white teachers. "Some called the prospect of teaching black children a bitter dose or simply repulsive" (Garland, 2013, p. 53). There were violent reactions all over the South as states tried to implement desegregation of the public schools and the violent reaction captured national headlines. Hardly any place were the negative reactions any worse than in Louisville. It was reported that Martin L. King observed that violence in Louisville was worse than the deep south and "when busing finally began, only Boston outdid Louisville's resistance" (Wright, 1985, p. 1).

The Civil Rights Movement had among its stated goals, to end racial segregation and at the same time improve the educational opportunities for minority students. Clearly the goal of ending de jure segregation was a success, but the implementation was a struggle and the goal of improving the academic success of a large number of minority students has remained as elusive as ever. De facto segregation still continues and after sixty years it is appropriate to reexamine the Brown decision and its effects. Because of the social dynamic of the black community in relation to the public schools, in many cases African Americans had a higher rate of positive academic outcomes than after the end of legally sanctioned racial segregation. Saundra McKoy (2008) wrote her doctoral dissertation on teacher attitudes in de jure segregated schools. Her dissertation discussed and reported her research into historic colored schools and she found although there were, in some instances, inferior buildings, inadequate resources and outdated textbooks,

studies have failed to explore the ingenuity and dedication of the teachers, parents and the community support as factors where black children were very successful in even segregated schools. In fact, there has been some research into highly successful segregated schools, but the research has been widely ignored.

Thomas Sowell (1986), in his book, *Education, Assumptions versus History*, identified eight historic high performing high schools. Sowell stated, "One small, but important, part of the advancement of black Americans has been educational achievement. Here, as in other areas, the pathology is well known and extensively documented, while the healthy or outstanding functioning is almost totally unknown and unstudied" (p. 7). He examined the patterns of this excellent black academic achievement and he discovered it goes beyond one or two outstanding achievers. He has identified a pattern whereby an unusual number of outstanding academic achievers has come from a fair number of particular schools like Dunbar High School, established in 1870 as a school for colored children in Washington, D.C. The eight schools mentioned in his book are just a few of the known outstanding schools that produced more than its share of high achievers. These schools have several things in common such as high expectations of the teachers, love of learning, and excellent discipline. With a rich heritage of high academic achievement in segregated schools, more research needs to be performed to discover if lessons can be learned from the methodology.

Much of the segregated black community was greatly changed after the Brown decision and other civil rights legislation of the period and can be studied almost as a separate culture during the period of Jim Crow. Philip Salzman (2001) stated that to explain institutions, they must be related to other institutions in the culture to which they

coexist and to which they can be correlated. When change happens in one part of the culture, there will be a corresponding change in other parts of the culture. There is difficulty when the cultural phenomenon happened in the past. A cultural anthropologist might use ethnography and oral history as a way to understand how individuals think of themselves in relation to the rest of the world. This technique can help anthropologists understand how culture shapes individuals either consciously or unconsciously, on the one hand, and the ways that individuals contribute to the production of culture, on the other hand.

This study, using the methodology of oral history, will analyze the cultural interconnectedness between family, community, church and the educational system to discover the reasons for the academic success of the class of 1956. Although the real argument of this study can't be known before the study is conducted, I expect that the data might lead me to argue that in some cases African Americans were quite successful in some racially segregated public schools before the Brown Supreme Court decision of 1954.

Chapter 4

Oral History

Teaching and Learning in a Racially Segregated Kentucky Community Before Brown v. Board of Education

Ten former students of Louisville Central High School were participants in this study. The ten students selected were asked to share their oral histories about their student experiences in relation to the students, parents, community and overall school climates. They were asked to reflect on their student experiences in a racially segregated large urban southern city as well as school practices that affected their overall achievement. A common strand between the participants in this study was that each participant attended the same segregated high school, attended segregated elementary and junior high schools and lived in racially segregated enclaves within the city before schools in Kentucky observed the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. This chapter presents the oral history of teaching and learning in a specific Kentucky community through the eyes of these participants.

Learning in Segregated Schools

Historically, segregated African American schools have been depicted as inferior educational institutions. However, oral history accounts from those that attended and taught in segregated schools reveal that the initiative and ingenuity of principals, teachers, parents, and community residents enabled the schools to succeed in providing good programs for children in their communities (McKoy, 2008). This oral history study begins with the personal accounts of the ten participants as they describe their own educational experiences being educated in a racially segregated school system

in Louisville, Kentucky.

Edward Alston

Edward Alston always wanted to be an engineer, but the unusual thing about finishing high school in a segregated southern state, there were certain academic pursuits which you could not pursue at the colleges, in other words he could not go. So, he initially attended Ohio State University. The reason he attended Ohio State was that he could not go to University of Kentucky and pursue engineering. The only college blacks in Kentucky went to was Kentucky State College, now Kentucky State University, which had no engineering department. That was the de facto college put in place to eliminate having black students at the University of Kentucky. So, as soon as he said engineering was what he was going to pursue, the state of Kentucky said, "we'll send you somewhere else for your engineering and we will supplement your tuition". Both his mother and father were college educated and they considered themselves middle income level economically, not poor and not rich. His father was an Episcopalian minister, so he went to church every Sunday. There were several educators at his church who taught at Central High School.

He stated he had a great high school experience. He said, "We had certain groups of kids, choral groups, musical groups, sports teams, a great social environment, great teachers, the facility was new. What could you complain about as a kid." At school there was an excellent culture (various clubs, sports teams, friendships for life time) in preparing students to understand their uniqueness and needs for survival in society. He said, "We were "black and proud and we were willing to say it loud". In his opinion, Central High School had excellent teachers, excellent principal and learning environment. The high school had just been built and his African American teachers were excellent and

motivated the students to learn. He said he never had a poor teacher. He said, “No, I can’t think of any teachers considered poor teachers, all of our teachers were highly motivated, good backgrounds, good educations, and at the time it seems like we were getting a pretty good education. There were never any discipline problems at Central. No, not in my class, the students were divided up by their potential for academics. You had 12-1, 12-2, 12-3. You had 11-1, 11-2, and most of the students 1s and 2s were designated as college preparatory”. Mr. Alston was in the college preparatory program at Central and pursued a career in engineering after he finished attending Ohio State. He took no remedial classes. Central had prepared him well, and in fact, he said he was as prepared as those students that were from Ohio. Calculus was the only subject for which he had a problem.

Other students in classroom 12-4 and 12- 5 took shop classes which at the time were really good, which prepared students for a trade. He said, “Everybody was not being prepared to go to college, some were prepared to earn a living and that’s part of our shortcoming right now that we’re trying to prepare all of our kids and all of our kids have an ambition to go to college, and college may not be the best alternative.” Mr. Alston knew Mr. Lyman T. Johnson, a teacher at Central and a highly respected educator in Kentucky, very well. Mr. Johnson taught the economics and statistics class and he became quite famous in Kentucky as a civil rights leader. In fact, Mr. Johnson organized nonviolent efforts for racial equality, soliciting Central students, and is still remembered for sit-ins at lunch counters in downtown Louisville that refused to serve black citizens. Mr. Alston claimed Mr. Johnson was ahead of his time. They presently have an exhibit at University of Louisville Museum in his honor.

Mr. Alston stated, “As I reflect on my life, my high school experience was wonderful. It was not a detriment. The subsequent integration of schools has to be evaluated as a possible detriment to African Americans. Early learning with those like you is important to your self-esteem. Schools must also insure the teachers believe that their students can learn and succeed.” He now advocates for the development of schools that cater to just mostly very young African American students. He now influences high school African Americans to attend Historic Black Colleges and Universities to insure they get the experience of being in school with other African Americans, and believes graduate school is a good time to attend an integrated learning environment. He said, “No, He would not have attended another high school”.

Samuel Brooks

Mr. Samuel Brooks’ father was eighteen years old and his mother was only sixteen when he was born, so they were very young, and could barely look out for themselves. His mother’s parents took her away to another state and his father had to go to work, got married early to someone else, so my grandmother raised him by herself. They were very poor, and he had to go to work at fourteen years old just to stay in school. He worked summers to buy clothes and other things to get through the school year which his grandmother could not afford. In high school, Mr. Samuel Brooks wanted to be something mechanical, so he ended up taking machine shop which had a welding class in it and he took up welding. He welded until he retired. His was the first class to attend Central High School in the new building.

He was very excited to move to the new Central High School building. He stated, “It was wonderful, the building I had come from junior high school, DuValle Junior High

School, God was built back in the 1800's. In a way I knew we were being segregated, yes, but Central was a new school. It was newer than anybody else's school, so I felt wonderful, I felt we had a gift that other schools didn't have, and later on, I learned we had teachers that were better qualified than a lot of the other teachers in the other schools. I always knew the white schools had the best of everything. It didn't affect my attitude negatively. I always wondered why we couldn't go to the other schools and they had all the better equipment, the better you know stuff, shops and whatever". He learned this from talking to people he worked with on jobs as they would talk about their schools.

After high school he could only do one thing and that was go to the military. He couldn't go to college, couldn't get a good, decent job, the kind of job he wanted welding. It was nothing like that available for African Americans, so all I could do at that time was work in the factories, shine shoes, or work in the hotels. Well, they found reasons not to hire you. Matter of fact when he came back to Louisville, Kentucky the first time he got discharged, 1962, they were building a bridge across the Ohio River and they needed welders and he went out there and the guy looked up as if to say, where did you learn welding? Are you certified? And Mr. Brooks said, "yes, I've got papers right here in my pocket? He said, we're not hiring right now". He knew they didn't want any African Americans working for his company. When he got out of the military, he moved to California and attended a deep- sea diving school**.**

Mr. Brooks stated, "I think if you look at the few schools I have attended since I left Central High School, I think Central High School had the best staff of teachers that you could ever ask. They all had attended universities, most of them, and they were really good, they really knew how to teach, and they were very disciplined". He remembered

Mr. Lyman Johnson and Ms. Maude Porter. He remembered Mr. Johnson as one of the first African Americans to attend the University of Kentucky, and that they were better qualified than teachers at some of the other schools. He said, "The environment was very good because most students knew each other, there being only two junior high schools. Our culture was church on Sundays, dinner at someone's house on weekends, Y.M.C.A. on weekends and after school, and swimming on weekends." There was only one swimming pool at Magazine and 17th Streets. He remembered the general culture as being very disciplined. He said, "We had a vice-principal, Ms. Porter, if you looked like you wanted to fight her or looked the other way, she would be right on you (laughter). I'm telling you. So, you didn't do anything." He never saw or heard of any student ever hitting a teacher. On occasion he had talked back if he thought he could get away with it. He thought Ms. Porter was the most disciplined person, being around her being like in the military. He said, "You had to be quiet, you had to keep yourself neat and clean, and you had to study. While you're sitting there you had to be reading out of your book. He claimed that in spite of this she was a very wonderful person. Looking back on it, perhaps if she hadn't been that type of person, a lot of students wouldn't have stayed in school, wouldn't have graduated. In high school Mr. Brooks wanted to be something mechanical, so he ended up taking machine shop which had a welding class. They had machine shop, welding, plumbing, electrical, tailoring, woodwork, cooking and one of the best auto mechanics courses that you could think of. Mr. Brooks was a certified welder for twenty-eight years, on the job and six years in the army.

Mr. Brooks felt deprived because he knew whatever trade that he had or how much education he could get, he knew that he could not get a good paying job like the

white students when he graduated. One month after graduation he could not find a job, could not attend college, so he joined the army and stayed for six years. After the army he went to Oakland, California to attend a deep diving school. He stated, “He did not believe he would have attended one of the white schools if given the opportunity. Central was new at that time and had those new shops and equipment and what have you. I think I would have gone to Central although it was all African Americans. They had the best of everything”. He loved all the teachers because he didn’t have much of a family at home. He remembered his high school as the best part of his life. He wished he could do it all over again at Central High School. He hoped someday to move back to Louisville. He said his high school experience enhanced his life choices and chances because he became an adult while he was in there. He was learning, had to work, it built him up and made him stronger.

Mary Francis Clark

Among the roughly estimated 60 black female U.S. Air Force dietitians who retired at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel is Mary Frances Clark. This unlikely success story finds its beginnings in 1938, the year Mary was born into a por family in Shelbyville, Kentucky. At the age of three-years old, Mary moved with her family to the poor section of Louisville, Kentucky, known as Smoketown. Smoketown was government housing and had the distinction of having sustained three characteristics since the Civil War: it is at once a black, unregenerate, and economically-challenged community. Mary journeyed from childhood through adolescence to young maturity in these conditions.

Mary's mother and father married at an early age. While her mother cleaned houses and took in ironing for various families, Mr. Clark was a butcher for the Fishers Packing Company, from which he retired. Mrs. Clark was a quiet woman who, in an era in which black mothers worked and raised children as a matter of course, took charge of guiding her three daughters to social and personal maturity. With little education or travel, and no professional experience outside of domestic work, Mary's mother guided as best she could. She taught them how to maintain a clean-living environment and care for their personal needs. For example, on Saturday mornings Mary 's sister and she had to assist their mother in cleaning the house, washing clothes, ironing, etc. (Wash-and-wear fabric garments were not an option…because they had not been invented!) This was not how Mary wanted to spend her Saturday mornings, but there were good lessons taught and learned and never forgotten. As one result of those lessons, Mary grew a strong, unstoppable drive to achieve a lifestyle of means and freedom of choice.

Laudable goals were these as Mary did not know how poor her family was; the entire neighborhood suffered similar financial needs. As far as she knew, her parents, similar to most in her community, earned a small income and engaged in many discussions over it. However, similar to most in her community, her parents sacrificed and did their best to maintain the household. Like the wash-and -wear clothing, government support for those living hand to mouth had not yet been invented. (There were no alphabets like EBT, ADC, HUD, or MEDICAID). Folks had to work and contribute where possible. For her contribution, Mary did small jobs like baby-sitting during the week, as well as, summer jobs when school was not in session. Although attending school and church (the Jacob AME Zion Church on Preston Street) were musts

and demanded by Mrs. Clark, the neighborhood helped raise the children. Families trusted each other for sheer survival. Borrowing small things like an egg, cups of flour, or cornmeal were common daily occurrences among and between. Within the dynamics of school, church, and survival, Mary grew to respect the meaning of parent/child obedience.

As previously mentioned, the family had limited income, followed by no health insurance. Mary's younger sister was born with a deformity that required major surgery. The Tripplets, the family for whom her mother worked, paid for the surgery. Decades later, Mrs. Clark shared that she had reimbursed the family by working for them year after year for bus fare only. As a direct result of this dance of generosity and responsibility, Mary 's sister was able to maintain a better life. (The truth of the matter is that money speaks volumes about control.) In school, Mary excelled academically. She attended Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Jackson Junior School. The schools were not racially integrated because all public schools in Kentucky were segregated. She always recognized that but did not understand why the books from both schools had pages missing, and marks and someone else's note-taking on those that were left. Even though this was the norm, Mary did not feel educationally deprived. Moreover, while she may have wanted her own, new books, that goal was wholly unattainable during the era of Jim Crow.

In retrospect, Mary acknowledges that her teachers did a marvelous job and skillfully worked with the given situations. The students had the best of best for teacher education. In this time, black teachers, regardless of degrees, recognition, and experience, took employment where they could get it. Miss Evans and Miss Bush were two such

teachers. Miss Evans was Mary's first-grade teacher; she taught her the art of penmanship. Miss Bush, her sixth-grade teacher enforced perfection, work, and discipline. These character traits would carve the path for a future of constant achievement. In junior high, Mary developed and learned physical education motor skills, learned healthy eating principles, and cultivated interaction with peers of older ages and social maturity. In 1956, Mary graduated from Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky. Central High was the only senior high school designated for black students. Not unlike today in 2019, there were dark and light complexioned black people; Mary was of the darker complexion. While there was an appearance that some teachers favored lighter toned students with preferential treatment, Mary can't say that such was a fact. However, even now, she wonders if her skin color was an impediment during her high school career.

The curriculum that stands out was the shop courses toward trade job skills. Mary's teachers, especially her senior year instructor, were driving forces for enhancing her career choices. Mary's mother, perhaps because of her own educational limitations, relied upon and trusted the teachers for educational guidance. Mary's homeroom teacher suggested the college preparatory curriculum and with this baseline of studies, she was prepared for college-level entrance. Determined to advance from the squalor of Smoketown and the possible proliferation treatment from a poor family, Mary left for Wilberforce, Ohio to attend Central State University. While there, she was the first black student to attend a dietetic internship at Dayton, Ohio's Miami Valley Hospital. In addition, she gained field experience at both Ohio State University and Antioch College.

In 1961, Mary graduated from Central State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Dietetics.

Her first professional job after college was as a clinical dietician with the Veterans Administration Research Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, now known as the VA Chicago Health Care System. Glass ceilings for women and racial barriers for blacks were status quo in the early Sixties. During her three years with the institution, Mary was one of less than a handful of female, black, VA-employed dietetic professionals. A shrewd observer of reality, she realized she would never significantly advance beyond her current professional status in a workplace of systematic gender and racial bias. Undeterred, Mary saw an opportunity to advance her professional career as a commissioned officer in the United States Air force. Because she was a professional civilian as a dietitian at the VA Research Hospital, the Air Force gave her a commission as a First Lieutenant. The Air Force viewed her credentials as critical to the health concerns of that branch of the military. Therefore, she was offered a position she would never have achieved at the VA Hospital – chief and consultant dietitian. From 1965 to her retirement in 1993, Mary was immersed in the lifestyle of a commissioned Air Force Officer.

In 1971, Mary earned a Master's degree in Institutional Management from Michigan State University (MSU), the eighth-largest university in the United States and a Public Ivy. (Public Ivies are the academic equal of Ivy League schools, MSU, a public research university, ranks among the top Public Ivies in the country.) Twenty-eight years of service made Mary well-traveled. She had tours of duty in Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Alaska, Japan, where she was the chief consulting dietitian for the entire Pacific

Command. She further did tours in Illinois, Michigan, Florida, and finally, New Jersey where she retired. Mary returned home to Louisville, Kentucky where her family support remained. Twenty-six years later Mary is still enjoying retirement. She takes care of herself and has discovered her hidden talent as an artist. In her leisure time, of which she enjoys quite a bit, Mary frequents the art studio of the senior retirement building that she calls home.

Mary Frances Clark is a living testament of one girl's drive to achieve a lifestyle of means and freedom of choice. The result of that drive is a well-earned and secure retirement, replete with a plethora of past accomplishments, easy Saturday mornings, and a little artwork along the way. Her parents were raised by aunts. Both of her parents' mothers died at an early age. Neither parent graduated from senior high school. During the ear of her parents the unity of the family always included the female; therefore, the aunts took on that responsibility. This was an extremely sad situation for both parents. Her mother's father contributed financially but her father's situation was consistently worse as his own father abandoned him at an early age.

Kenneth Clay

Mr. Kenneth Clay spent many of his early years in the housing project called College Court. At the time, College Court was a transitional place that was rich in history and culture. Many prominent families lived there. This is where he met some of his life-long friends, Allen Martin and Charles Wilkins, who also attended Louisville Central High School. His class was among the first to enter the new Central High School building located at 9th and Chestnuts near central Louisville. Mr. Clay considered his family to be middle class. His mother and father were college graduates. His mother had taught school

for a while in Tennessee. After getting married and moving to Louisville, his mother was unable to get a job teaching and at times did day work. Mr. Clay's father did factory work and often worked a second job waiting tables, so they were fairly well off financially. He said his family could easily transition to upper middle class because of their mentality and work ethic. They were very proud people who had been indoctrinated to be upwardly mobile. His family attended church regularly and his counselor and several teachers at Central High attended his church.

Mr. Clay took to school naturally and at Central was placed in College Prep. Central High School also offered training in the trades, and Mr. Clay was impressed by his friends that took tailoring. He approached his counselor and asked to be enrolled in tailoring and remembers being denied. Miss Porter, the Assistant principal, knowing his academic potential, refused his request. Ms. Porter, the assistant principal told him, "Ain't no way in the world we going to let you do that", and college preparatory is where he remained. Mr. Clay described Central's culture as an extremely positive place to be. He thought the teachers and the administration set the atmosphere. Mr. Clay said, "At least for learning, it was where you could challenge yourself to be as good as you can be. I was competing against kids who were from more professional families and was always in one of the top classes, but those were the kids that I had to compete with, so I was challenged, or I challenged myself to be amongst the top regardless." While he was at Central, the more academically gifted students were more looked up to than frowned upon. The atmosphere was of such a nature that it seemed that didn't enter the arena of relationships between the students. He believed all the students were appreciated for who they were. While at Central, Mr. Clay never heard the smarter students described as

"acting white". Mr. Clay stated that, "wanting and expecting to achieve more in life was inbred in him as racial uplift, just a matter of being proud of who you are, being proud of your people, to be able to achieve and progress and uplift ourselves yes, without a doubt. Educators wanted more for the children and tried to bring out their best because the students had to be able to compete."

Most of the teachers, if not all of them, had attended college, so the students already had role models right there at school. The students knew that since the teachers had done it, they were passing on their knowledge and their wisdom and they knew that they could do it, so this knowledge was passed on by example. Mr. Clay believed the graduation rate at Central High School when he attended to be about 90%, and 55% or more went on to college. Mr. Clay believed at least 50% of the teachers were male. The male teachers wore suits and ties, and were very professional in their look and in their manner. The female teachers were the same way, dressing immaculately and being well-groomed. He said, "The teachers all that just by their presence, by their conversations, the way they related to us. They were like family. They could say things to us that I'm sure they would not say if there had white students in the class. It was all about uplifting the race and they could say that in the classrooms. I was excited to just be amongst that group of people. The teachers, you know Central had teachers who had advanced degrees. They went away and some of them even went abroad to study to get their advanced degrees, so they came back to Louisville and the only place they could teach was at Central High School because like I said it was segregated during those days. That was the only opportunity that those black teachers had to use their craft and share their knowledge, was among the students of Central High."

It was a living experience if you were fortunate enough to be in Mr. Lyman Johnson's class. There was Lyman Johnson who taught Civics and Social Studies. He is best known as the plaintiff whose successful legal challenge opened the University of Kentucky to African-American students in 1949. As a teacher at Central High School for thirty-three years, he quickly became the most vocal public-school teacher in denouncing racial discrimination and being involved in issues concerning minorities. Although he left University Kentucky before earning a degree, he received an honorary, Doctor of Letters, degree in 1979. Mr. Clay stated**, "**Yes, Lyman Johnson lived for sit-ins. He put it together with the students and it was very crucial during that time because the sit-ins to end racial discrimination and demonstrations were happening all over the country and most of the citizens were conducted by college students. We didn't have any black colleges in Louisville so the students at Central High School were solicited. Everybody trusted Mr. Johnson". Mr. Clay related that he was sitting with him once at a store downtown at the lunch counter and they wouldn't serve them, of course, and there was a napkin on the table and some ketchup and mustard. Mr. Johnson took a piece of that napkin and put some ketchup on it and ate it.

The students at Central High School were very respectful of the teachers and administrators. Mr. Clay could not remember ever seeing a student talk back or strike a teacher. He related that there was a gym teacher that everyone feared and if there was a problem, teachers would send the student to the gym teacher. There was another teacher who taught auto mechanics and he was well known for using that paddle on the boys. Most of the men teachers and some of the female teachers had paddles and were known to use them, but mostly there was complete cooperation from the students. Mr. Clay also

had fond memories of Mrs. Maude Brown Porter. He described her as being the enforcer and if you were in the halls, she would run you down and in her booming voice inquire as to your reason for being there. Mrs. Porter knew Mr. Clay's parents and attended his church, so he had known her practically all his life.

Mr. Clay believed his life was enhanced by attending segregated Central High School and that the black children have been collateral damage in the struggle for racial equality in America. He majored in psychology and received a master's degree at the University of Louisville. He worked for the Urban League for about ten years, the War on Poverty for another ten years, the Kentucky Center for the Arts, and did all the cultural programming for the Multicultural Community. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate at Stephens University in Louisville, Kentucky for lifetime achievement and if he had it to do all over there is no doubt he would have attended Central High School.

Geneva Flanagan

Ms. Geneva Flanagan grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, but her mother and father were originally from Hudson, Alabama. They came to Louisville after the great Ohio River flood of 1937. She was born the following year. She grew up in the central area of Louisville. Her family was poor to lower middle class and they lived about eight blocks away from the Central High School. Ms. Flanagan's mother went to high school in Athens, Alabama, and she was not sure how far she got. Her mother had to work. Her mother didn't know too much about Louisville and they lived in three rooms in a house. They never lived in one of the housing projects. She would go south to Alabama to stay with her grandparents when school let out for the summers. When she went south, she lived at Charlie Jones Crossroad and that was ten miles from town. She stayed with an

aunt, her mother's sister. There was a cotton gin where everybody brought their cotton and a grinding mill across the road. She remembered picking cotton. She had two sisters and a brother that grew up there with her grandmother. Her grandmother had a farm down there and they picked cotton, chopped cotton because it was cotton picking time in the summer and she was there. She picked corn, cotton, and watermelon. Her grandmother had an orchard next to the house and they had peaches, apples, watermelon, a garden in the back, and her grandmother had corn in the fields and they just had food on top of food.

Ms. Flanagan enjoyed her time at Central High School, describing it as fun, just a regular high school. She imagined it as no different from any of the white schools and she really appreciated the fact of being around her peers. The majority of the kids at Central were poor, there were a few doctors' kids and that sort of thing, not many, but she loved it. She never went to any integrated place of education, but everything was black as far as school was concerned, but I didn't know any different, and she never had any problems. Going to segregated schools didn't affect her attitude toward school and she didn't feel deprived. But she didn't like her teachers and principal too much because the principle said they were too poor, and they would never get yearbooks. One teacher she did remember well was Mr. Lyman Johnson, whom she loved. She said, "He told us all the time, not to go to Sears and get a baby. He used to tell stories about segregation and University of Kentucky. I loved him." She took either Political Science or it could have been American History from him. She also remembered Ms. Maude Porter, who she remembered as Maude Brown Porter, who she said kept the hallways in order.

Ms. Flanagan was determined to go to college. She said her guidance counselor in junior high school told her she should go into something clerical because she wasn't college material, so she took typing at DuValle Junior High School and Central. This made her really determined to go to college by hook or by crook and to this day, she still didn't like that teacher. She did attend college and like a lot of her peers, she attended the then segregated, Kentucky State College, later to become the Kentucky State University. She never had a white teacher until she got to college. She only liked one subject that she had at Central, and that's what she majored in at Kentucky State College. I loved English. Attending Central affected her career choice by helping her to make a choice. She liked some of her teachers and she loved English, literature and grammar, mostly. Her high school experience enhanced her life chances and it was not a detriment. The fact she got an education at Central High, that's what she went for. It did not help her get a job but the fact she was educated enough to get a job. She worked for thirty-seven years for the State of Kentucky as a principal interviewer. She didn't have enough courses in counseling to be an employment counselor at the state, so she had to settle for being an interviewer. She was proud that she had made it to principal interviewer when she retired. After leaving the college scene, she looked forward to getting state government or federal employment, with two goals: one, to become self-supportive and two, to receive a good retirement. She would not have attended a different school. Mission Accomplished.

Betty Jordan

Ms. Betty Jordan's father and mother both had government jobs, so they were quite middle class. Both of her parents graduated from Central High School. She said she

enjoyed going to Central and knew nothing else but to go to Central. She had a brother who also graduated from

Central. She believed the students at Central to be very, very smart kids. She said, "Everyone at that particular time had to work hard, study, and they had a whole lot of one-on-one if they needed it. The majority of the kids that went to school with her all turned out with good professions. They were doctors, lawyers, teachers and so on. The kids were more mannerable, dressed well and the guys always had on a shirt and a tie and nice shoes. The girls also dressed nicely. She said, "Today the guys come to school any kind of way with their pants hanging down. Very few girls got pregnant before graduating from high school and she did not remember any of her friends getting pregnant early. They were in fear of their parents who maintained very strict discipline." She was the oldest in her family and her parents did not allow her as much freedom as her brothers. It never occurred to her to disobey her parents or to talk back to them.

She thought about going to college or to a school where she would have two years of schooling and then get a job. She, therefore, had to make sure her grades were good. She was in college prep. Tracking was an established practice and it was a matter of pride to be admitted to the upper classes, designated by the second number after the grade. Ms. Jordan was in class 10-2, 11-2 and 12-2, indicating advanced placement. She knew all of her teachers at Central personally, who were friends of the family. All of her teachers, except for two she knew through her church because her family, attended Plymouth Congregational Church. She knew them from when she was a child. Mr. Lyman Johnson, a very well-respected educator at Central, was a member of her church. Ms. Jordan couldn't remember exactly whether it was 10^{th} or 11^{th} grades, but Mr. Johnson taught her

Social Studies. At that particular time, he had already applied for University of Louisville and got accepted and was one of the people who opened up University of Louisville as well as University of Kentucky for black students. Ms. Jordan remembered Maude Porter as the person who handled discipline at Central. Ms. Jordan stated, "When we saw her coming you knew you were in trouble. There were not a lot of discipline problems because Ms. Porter and the other teachers walked the halls. The students knew what they could do and what they couldn't do because if we messed up our parents were on us. They were really very strict." Ms. Jordan did not remember ever seeing a student hit a teacher or talk back to a teacher. She said, "No, no, you wouldn't do that because your parents would be up there to Central and they would discipline you. The teacher would let the parents know if the child talked back to them. The parents were very discipline oriented so there weren't any problems with the children.

Ms. Jordan's mother and father expected them to go to college, as that was a given. For her parents and grandparents, that was the only way at that time. Education was very important so that when you got married you would be able to raise your children and you would be in a higher income status. She said, "if you don't go to school, you just be another person out on the street." Ms. Jordan went to college right out of high school. She went to University of Louisville, which was then accepting black students, for a couple years and then she decided that she didn't want to be a teacher but wanted to be an x-ray technician and then went on to General Hospital to do her practicum. At the University, like most of the black students, she remembered taking remedial English. She was really good in math, English being her weakness. English, she had to work on that and she still works on it even now to this day. That's the reason why she didn't like

to write papers from scratch. She said, “I always had to have someone to read over my papers before I turned them in to make sure that I spelled them correctly and had two sentences written correctly.” She did not like English at all, but she loved math.

Ms. Jordan did not feel deprived at all by attending Central High School. She said, “No, I wasn’t deprived. I wasn’t deprived at all. Education wise it was very good as far as I was concerned. I was listened to and if I had a problem, I could go to one of my teachers or to my parents. It didn’t affect my career choice because I knew what I wanted to do.” She believes attending Central enhanced her life chances. She believes that Central at that particular time and even now they still have some very smart students, and I think the teachers are very interested in the students becoming whatever they want to become. It helped her personally, economically and educationally. The teachers took time with the students. If given the choice she would not have attended a different high school. No way.

Allen Martin

Mr. Allen Martin grew up in a lower middle-class family in the Limerick Neighborhood of Louisville, Kentucky. Originally, the working-class Irish immigrants lived there in modest shotgun houses, with a moderate number of African Americans living in the alleyways behind them. By the 1940’s the number of African Americans in the neighborhood had greatly expanded. His mother worked at Falls City Tobacco Company, 18th and Main, where they got the tobacco in and prepared it for Lucky Strike and Phillip Morris companies. The job demanded seasonal manual labor nine months out of the year. In the summer his mother would do day work, like many other black women of the time, catching a bus to the affluent Highlands area and different places. Speaking

of his mother's job at Falls City Tobacco, Mr. Martin said, "Well for that time period, that was a pretty good job." His mother finished high school and he wasn't really sure about his father. Mr. Martin's father died when he was about three or four years old.

Mr. Martin said his mother was as supportive towards his education as she could be. He said, "Actually, when I got into about the 9th grade and from the 9th grade all through high school I usually had a little job after school and then I worked summers. So, I actually contributed. The main thing was that I really like to dress well, and my mother mentioned to me when I was thirteen or fourteen, that son you might have to get a little job because the way you want to dress I can't afford that." After that he worked but he did that mostly just to buy his own clothes and dress himself well. Attending segregated schools did not affect his attitude toward school. If at all, it affected his attitude in a positive way. Mr. Martin said, "It affected my attitude positively because during that time, you know, I think we were still, I think we were being extended from the emancipation because for the most part people that I attended school with were all about upward mobility." The black part of Limerick where Mr. Martin grew up was very close to Municipal College, which was black. It was a great influence to be able to see the college from his grade school, Mary B. Talbert.

Mr. Martin said, "Growing up it was inferred that if you were going to racially integrate in this society that you would have to be well prepared because one thing you have to remember was like in the mid 1950's, 55, 56 that area the Civil Rights Movement was just started and we were trying to be prepared because we were getting ready to make another step which we did because we wanted to just not integrate the schools. We integrated everything just about and so there was also a feeling, wanting to be equal of

seeking equality. It was like a movement and you could feel it." In the early 1960's he was living in Chicago and he saw some of the kids that came after them. He remembered the feeling of being able to go downtown and being served at any business establishment. "It was in the spirit where we knew we had work to do, and in my area, it was starting to happen". In fact, when he and his friends, Ken Clay, Cecil Clay, and Charles Wilkins would come home in the summer from college they would stage impromptu sit-ins at downtown business establishments. He explained that they were not organized like the NAACP or anything like that. On their own they would go downtown sometimes and would walk in and sit down and try to get served. They would say I'm sorry we can't serve you. He said, "One time we went somewhere, and the waitress actually went to take our order and when she went to the back the manager told her and she came back and told us that the manager said that she couldn't serve them. So, we just left, but we were trying it".

Mr. Martin thought Louisville Central High School was just a unique environment. The teachers were very well educated, and he thought Central was a place if you went to seek knowledge you could get it even though it was segregated, and he never felt inferior to any of the other schools. He said the teachers were very nurturing, and they served as role models and he had nothing but a positive experience with them. They had very few discipline problems because they just had a high respect for the teachers and it was just a different era because no matter your socioeconomic background, you just came up to respect others, and respect the system, the government and you just worked with respect. He never witnessed anyone talk back or hit a teacher. He may have heard someone say something, but it was just not common place because we had so much

respect for elders and our teachers and that didn't happen. He said they would paddle the kids in Jackson Junior High School where he attended but did not in high school.

Mr. Martin pursued two curriculums at Central because he also pursued a trade. He studied tailoring, but they also offered auto mechanics, electricity, and other trades. He studied tailoring and took college preparatory courses. He took enough college preparatory classes that enabled him to enter college. After high school, along with his best friends, he enrolled at Central State University in Ohio. He first started thinking about going to college in elementary school because, then again, when I was living across from and going to elementary school right across the street from Louisville Municipal College. He said, "It was just embedded in me that this is what you do." Martin is also an accomplished musician, mastering the flute, a flute instructor, artist and art instructor. All of this creativity had its roots at Central High School

Mr. Martin never felt deprived in any way by going to racially segregated Louisville Central High School. He said, "I never felt deprived. It was all upward mobility to me and if anything, you have to understand at Central, Central was a place that existed with just a lot of interesting people. I mean intellectual, talented, visual arts, performing arts, intellect, intelligence. I mean, it was all about pride. I was just honored and happy to go to Central."

After moving back to Louisville from Chicago, he took the exam for federal meat inspector and passed that and was the first black person in Kentucky to become a United States Department of Education Federal Meat Inspector and that's where he retired. Looking back, he said he would not have attended one of the white high schools. He would have attended Central over one of the white schools. Central, he said, was

embedded in him. At the time when he was growing up, even before he went to Central, their basketball teams, for example, used to play at Municipal College in their gym because they didn't have a big enough gym for spectators. He was so engrossed in Central because even in elementary and junior high school he would be over there watching their games, knew every player on the team and he wasn't even at Central yet. He really loved basketball, played some basketball too, but he would have wanted to go to Central even before he went there. That's how much he loved Central.

Gwendolyn Radford

Ms. Gwendolyn Radford's family was poor and lived in one of Louisville, Kentucky's housing projects. She described it as poor and proud. Her father did not graduate from high school and her mother had graduated from high school and had attended Kentucky State College which later became Kentucky State University. Her mother had done some teaching in Greenville. Her mother did not graduate from college with a four-year degree but did attain a vocational certificate. It was a two-year degree. Ms. Radford described her parents as very, very supportive of her educational aspirations. Attending segregated Louisville Central High School did not affect her attitude toward school. She described the general culture as good because that was all she knew, they had to take what they had and do the best with it you know. So, they just hung in there together and made the best of it. She thought the teachers, the principals, and the learning environment were tops.

Ms. Radford did not remember much about Mr. Lyman Johnson, but remembered Ms. Maude Porter well. She remembered her as being very strict. Ms. Porter made the students do what they were supposed to do. You couldn't be a minute late. If you were,

there was no way to avoid her, but it helped. Ms. Radford says she was never in any trouble. Unlike today, she thought they did pretty good because the teachers had the upper hand on the students more so than they do today. She said, "Well, we listened to what they said do and we did what they said do. Now the kids are not like that." She never talked back to her teachers. "No! We talked about it amongst ourselves but not to them, no." It was because they were her older peers and that's what they were taught at home where you just didn't do that.

Ms. Radford remembered the curriculum at Central as being geared toward home economics, sewing, cooking and things that prepared you to be a stay at home mom. She was in the commercial class, so the curriculum that she did helped her out in the long run. Though she was not in college prep, she later attended St. Helene's Commercial College located in Louisville at 4th and Breckenridge Streets. Ms. Radford said going to Central High School did not make her feel deprived. She said, "I didn't because I didn't know anything else and didn't know if the grass was greener on the other side or not, so we just took what we had and tried to make the best of it. But I didn't really feel deprived. I got out, I graduated, then attended St. Helene's Commercial College for almost a year then and then got a job." At 80 years old, November of 2018, she was still working part time. She said, "I really didn't feel deprived and I feel that I did pretty good. So, what I had to do with no help."

Ms. Radford believes her high school experience enhanced her life chances. She stated, "I think it enhanced it because I think with what I had I did well. Compared, I could have had some greater resources maybe, but I was pleased. I never really ran into any real hard times or anything." She said she and her husband both had really good jobs

and they raised two boys. We did a lot of stuff, took cruises, saved a little money that we thought we had to do, and we just enjoyed life really." Ms. Radford said, if given a choice she would not have attended one of the other high schools. She said, "No, I doubt it, the reason being I graduated in June and that following September when school took up again those kids could go where they wanted and the majority of them stayed at Central. They just wanted to continue to go there even though they had a choice, but I didn't have a choice. But I think if I had a choice I probably would have stayed at Central.

Alma Scales

Ms. Alma Scales grew up poor, but she said everybody was really poor. She thought her family had an advantage because they lived in one of the housing projects, Shephard Square and by them having indoor plumbing, a heating system, and indoor bathrooms they were a little better off than the friends that she knew who lived in alleys and who didn't have that. She grew up in a household with her mother and father, sisters, and grandmother who worked and contributed. Her mother was a domestic worker and her father worked at the powder plant, so they were really comfortable and never missed a meal and her parents were able to dress them well. Her parents didn't go any further than 9th grade and she believed that was the reason they emphasized education to their daughters because they didn't continue theirs. The family attended church regularly. In the East End of Louisville where they lived they were surrounded by churches. Ms. Scales' mother told them to pick one, so, they started with the Baptist Church. In Sheppard Square there was also a community center that was run by the Presbyterians. They had something for the kids every day: classes, activities, sports and they had a

movie once a week in the park where the families could come. She ended up being a Presbyterian but was brought up in the Baptist Church.

Ms. Scales found school fulfilling and thought it prepared her. She related this story about her and her sister. She said, "Her mother gave them carfare to go to school. Trying to save the money, they would wait for this guy who had a car to take them to school and there were several times when we were late and Ms. Brown Porter was on you, so you had to go to detention. So, while you were in there she was telling you the importance of being on time or even fifteen minutes early. That impressed her so, that's the way she is even to this day. On the job, if she was supposed to be at work at 3p.m. she was always there at 2:30 or maybe quarter to, 2:45 p.m. She always strove to be on time. For her, it was really a learning experience, not only knowledge but everyday living. She had no problems at Central, but she remembered a teacher in elementary school that seated the students by their skin color. She sat the darker students in the back and the lighter skinned students in the front of the class. She related that she was very fair, and her best friend was darker, so they could not sit together because of the way the teacher had seated them. She said she told her mother and they stopped the teacher from doing that.

Ms. Scales did not feel deprived but privileged. She believed all of her teachers were really qualified and what made them really so special was that they were dedicated to teaching the students at Central. The teachers knew the students were going to face a lot of challenges and they prepared the students for those challenges. Ms. Scales was in college prep but did not attend college. She said, "That was the only downside to the segregated schools because we had some teachers and counselors who were biased and

what happened was they gave all the good scholarships to the children whose parents could afford to send them to college like the doctors the lawyers, the preachers and teachers' children and people like that. So, when it got down to me where my mother was a domestic and dad worked in a plant, all I received was $750 to a state college. Her parents couldn't cover anything, so she started working that summer trying to accumulate enough money to go to college. And after I got in the workforce I sort of got out of attending college. Ms. Scales still believed attending Central High School enhanced her life and she would not have attended another school.

Archie Wilkins

Mr. Archie Wilkins couldn't remember the year his mother and father broke up, but they were together most of the time. Mr. Wilkins grew up in the California area of Louisville, Kentucky. African Americans settled in the area west of the downtown business district after the Civil War. Mr. Wilkins described the family's economic situation as being middle class. His mother had gone to college in Alabama. He didn't know if his father had attended college, but he believed his father had finished high school. He had two brothers that also had attended Louisville Central High School. His parents were very supportive of their educations and insisted that they get at least a high school education. Attending a segregated black high school did not affect his attitude toward school at all. He was not in college prep but received a general education. He remembered the teachers, principal, and the learning environment as being great. Regarding discipline at his high school, he said, "There were not a lot of discipline problems, they settled things a lot differently than they do now. Mr. White or Mr. King

would kick your ass if you screwed up." Speaking of discipline, Mr. Wilkins claimed that Ms. Porter, the Assistant Principal ran the school and was the law.

At Central, Mr. Wilkins took up auto mechanics as a trade. At one time he had thought about going to college, had some scholarship offers but didn't take them. After high school he went to work at a service station and later worked at a bowling alley. He did not feel deprived by attending Central, it was not a detriment and it helped him because he was taught survival and how to get by. He would not have attended a different high school because that's where all the blacks went.

Preparation for College and Social Mobility

Before racial integration of the schools African Americans were immersed in a society that was somewhat separate and produced leaders, church and school, who had an overlapping shared vision of racial oppression, racial uplift and an overlapping shared vision of how it could be confronted. The shared vision began with education and to get as many students into college as possible. The participants in the study except for one were the first in their family to attend college. Often, the parents of the study participants expressed their love of education by insisting that their children get a college education even though they often had not graduated from high school. One of the study participants, Ms. Jordan, stated that her mother and father expected all of her brothers and sisters to go to college as that was the only way. Ms. Jordan's mother had said, "Education was very important so that when you got married you would be able to raise your children and you would be in a higher income status". Mr. Allen Martin, another interviewee, spoke of how attending Central High School affected his attitude toward school in a positive way. He said, "It effected my attitude positively because during that time, you know, I think

we were still, I think we were being extended from the emancipation because for the most part people that I attended school with were all about upward mobility" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

Allen Martin, an interviewee, first started thinking about going to college in elementary school because he was living across from and going to elementary school right across the street from Louisville Municipal College which was Black. He said, "It was just embedded in me that this is what you do" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Samuel Brooks was aware of the fact they were being segregated but Central High was a new school. He said, "It was newer than anybody else's school, so I felt wonderful, I felt we had a gift that other schools didn't have, and later on, I learned we had teachers that were better qualified than a lot of the other teachers in the other schools" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Central High School was new at that time and had those new shops and equipment. He believed he would have gone to Central anyway, although it was all African Americans. Brooks said they had the best of everything. He loved all the teachers because he didn't have much of a family at home. He remembered his high school as the best part of his life. Mary Clark's teachers, especially her senior year instructor, were driving forces for enhancing her career choices. Ms. Clark stated, "My mother, perhaps because of her own educational limitations, relied upon and trusted the teachers for educational guidance" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

Ms. Clark's homeroom teacher suggested the college preparatory curriculum and with this baseline of studies, she was prepared for college-level entrance. Determined to advance from the squalor of Smoketown and the possible proliferation treatment from a

poor family, Mary left for Wilberforce, Ohio to attend Central State University. Both of her parents' mothers died at an early age. Neither parent graduated from senior high school. Ken Clay spoke on how the more academically gifted students were more looked up to than frowned upon. While at Central, Mr. Clay never heard the smarter students described as "acting white". Mr. Clay stated that, "wanting and expecting to achieve more in life was inbred in me as racial uplift, just a matter of being proud of who you are, being proud of your people, to be able to achieve and progress and uplift ourselves yes, without a doubt. Educators wanted more for the children and tried to bring out their best because the students had to be able to compete" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

The schools which provided part of the public space for this kind of public discourse hardly exist in this capacity since racial integration of the schools. Paulo Freire considered this as part of the idea of divide and rule and wrote, "Concepts such as unity, organization, and struggle are immediately labeled as dangerous. It is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken the oppressed still further, to isolate them, to create and deepen rifts among them" (Freire, 1993, p. 141). Ultimate decision making is taken away from the oppressed and ultimate decision making is placed with the oppressor. Critics within the black community who raised these concerns before racial integration were selectively ignored and their voices repressed. Freire (1993, p. 160) wrote, "Cultural invasion further signifies that the ultimate seat of decision making regarding the actions of those who are invaded lies not with them but with the invaders".

Cultural transmission of the respect and high regard for education was transmitted through long traditions in family, school and church. Black educators produced a school

culture which they deemed most advantageous for their own advancement and the advancement of their children. Tracking, which was used extensively, and strict discipline were accepted practices. Tracking was an incentive and reward for hard work, effort and excellence in school. Discipline was applied to keep order and remind students of the seriousness of the matters at hand. The participants in this study spoke fondly of these practices and considered them a plus. Tracking worked because there was no racial component to it at all and the students and parents believed the students were being treated fairly.

Those students at Louisville Central High School graduating from the college preparatory and general tracks were almost assured of success in college. Students were assigned classes according to their perceived potential for academic success and especially their potential for college. Classes 10-1, 11-1 and 12-1 would have been the designation of the highest and most challenging class work. This class assignment was preparation for college with the most advanced courses, four years of math, four years of language arts, two -three years of foreign language, with choices of Latin, French, Spanish and German. As an example, Mr. Alston was in the college preparatory program at Central and pursued a career in engineering after he finished attending Ohio State. He took no remedial classes in college. Central had prepared him well, and in fact, he said he was as prepared as those students that were from Ohio. Ms. Jordan spoke with pride, having been assigned to classes 10-2, 11-2 and 12-2, indicating advanced placement. She knew all of her teachers at Central personally, who were friends of the family. Ms. Jordan's parents did not attend college, but she attended the University of Louisville. Mr. Kenneth Clay took to school naturally and at Central was placed in College Prep.

Central High School also offered training in the trades, and Mr. Clay was impressed by his friends that took tailoring. Dressing for success was well established at Central High School. He approached his counselor and asked to be enrolled in tailoring and remembers being denied. Miss Porter, the assistant principal, knowing his academic potential, refused his request. Ms. Porter, the assistant principal told him, "Ain't no way in the world we going to let you do that", and college preparatory is where he remained. Mr. Clay described Central's culture as an extremely positive place to be. He thought the teachers and the administration set the atmosphere. Mr. Clay said, "At least for learning, it was where you could challenge yourself to be as good as you could be" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). In high school, Mr. Brooks wanted to be something mechanical, so he ended up taking machine shop which had a welding class. Mr. Brooks said, "They had machine shop, welding, plumbing, electrical, tailoring, woodwork, cooking and one of the best auto mechanics courses that you could think of" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Mr. Brooks was a certified welder for twenty-eight years, on the job and six years in the army.

Respect and Discipline

Central High School was a very positive learning environment where the students were shielded from direct and cultural violence and graduated from high school with their dignity and aspirations intact. The participants in this study all related the level of discipline in the high school and how disciplinary infractions were dealt with. Disciplinary problems were dealt with with no uncertainty, but with fairness and with little disruption to the learning process. Students were paddled and/or could be kept after school for detention which was dreaded. Instead of being thrown out of school with its

own set of problems, students were given more school and more discipline. Students were expected to spend their time in detention doing school work. Samuel Brooks said he never saw or heard of any student ever hitting a teacher. On occasion he had talked back if he thought he could get away with it. He thought Ms. Porter, who became the assistant principal, was the most disciplined person, being around her being like in the military. He said, "You had to be quiet, you had to keep yourself neat and clean, and you had to study. While you're sitting there you had to be reading out of your book" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). He claimed that in spite of this she was a very wonderful person. Looking back on it, he said, "perhaps if she hadn't been that type of person, a lot of students wouldn't have stayed in school, wouldn't have graduated" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

The students at Central High School were very respectful of the teachers and administrators. Mr. Clay could not remember ever seeing a student talk back or strike a teacher. He related that there was a male gymnastics teacher that everyone feared and if there was a problem, teachers would send the student to him. Almost all of the male teachers had paddles, often with personalized carvings. He said, "There was another teacher who taught auto mechanics and he was well known for using that paddle on the boys" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Most of the men teachers and some of the female teachers had paddles and were known to use them, but mostly there was cooperation from the students. Ms. Betty Jordan said the majority of the kids that went to school with her all turned out with good professions. They were doctors, lawyers, teachers and so on. She said, "The kids were more mannerable, dressed well and the guys always had on a shirt and a tie and nice shoes. The girls also dressed nicely.

Today the guys come to school any kind of way with their pants hanging down" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Allen Martin spoke of the respect the students had for the teachers. He said, "They had very few discipline problems because they just had a high respect for the teachers and it was just a different era because no matter your socioeconomic background, you just came up to respect others, and respect the system, the government and you just worked with respect" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). He said he never witnessed anyone talk back to or hit a teacher.

School children who are removed from mainstream education environments, even for short periods of time, are far more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system, use drugs, or drop out of school. Indirectly, schools put children on a path that far too often ends with incarceration through suspensions, expulsions, high-stakes testing, push-outs, and the removal of students from mainstream educational environments and into disciplinary alternative schools. Although desegregation arose from noble and necessary impulses it was often implemented in a way that was devastating to black communities. It destroyed black schools, reduced the numbers of black principals and teachers who could serve as role models, and brought many black school-children into daily contact with teachers who made school a strange and uncomfortable environment that was viewed as quintessentially "white" (Buck, 2010). Desegregation as implemented was especially devastating to black boys.

Over-compensation, working harder, and strict discipline were the norm and corporal punishment backed by parents was effective to instill in the children the importance of education. Ken Clay's family attended church regularly and his counselor

and several teachers at Central High attended his church. He said, “The teachers all that just by their presence, by their conversations, the way they related to us. They were like family. They could say things to us that I'm sure they would not say if there had been white students in the class. It was all about uplifting the race and they could say that in the classrooms” (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

Cultural Transmission and Racial Uplift

The loss of black male teachers after integration is a factor which has been understudied. It would be worth researching the role these teachers played in the community and their loss because these teachers were among the most educated and identifiable members of the up and coming black middle class and role models for black youth. It has been widely reported that more than 30,000 African American teachers lost their jobs as a result of the Brown decision (McKoy, 2008, p. 42). There are anecdotal reports that many of the white teachers, unaccustomed and resentful of desegregation, full of racial animosity, and prejudiced against them, made school life very difficult for the black students. Black teachers also criticized the teaching methods of white teachers. McKoy (2008, p. 40) wrote “Black teachers also faulted their white colleagues for failing to adapt their teaching methods to black students, complaining that their approach was too didactic, that they tended to lecture too much. The black approach to education before desegregation could be considered ‘liberation education’ with black teachers adapting their lessons to the lived experiences of the black students knowing well what they would soon face as adults as opposed to the banking model of teaching. Education for black students by black teachers was transformative with black teachers being at the center at that transformation process. Paulo Freire (1993, p. 126) wrote, “If true commitment to the

people, involving the transformation of the reality by which they are oppressed, requires a theory of transforming action, this theory cannot fail to assign the people a fundamental role in the transformation process."

Mr. Lyman Johnson was an example of such a teacher who played such a role in this transformation process. Mr. Kenneth Clay said, "It was a living experience if you were fortunate enough to be in Mr. Lyman Johnson's class. There was Lyman Johnson who taught Civics and Social Studies. He is best known as the plaintiff whose successful legal challenge opened the University of Kentucky to African-American students in 1949". As a teacher at Central High School for thirty-three years, he quickly became the most vocal public-school teacher in denouncing racial discrimination and being involved in issues concerning minorities. Mr. Alston knew Mr. Lyman T. Johnson, a teacher at Central and a highly respected educator in Kentucky, very well. He stated, "Mr. Johnson taught the economics and statistics class and he became quite famous in Kentucky as a civil rights leader. In fact, Mr. Johnson organized nonviolent efforts for racial equality, soliciting Central students, and is still remembered for sit-ins at lunch counters in downtown Louisville that refused to serve black citizens" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Mr. Alston claimed Mr. Johnson was ahead of his time. They presently have an exhibit at University of Louisville Museum in his honor.

Although he left University Kentucky before earning a degree, Mr. Johnson received an honorary, Doctor of Letters, degree in 1979. Mr. Clay stated**, "**Yes, Lyman Johnson lived for sit-ins. He put it together with the students and it was very crucial during that time because the sit-ins to end racial discrimination and demonstrations were happening all over the country and most of the sit-ins were conducted by college

students. We didn't have any black colleges in Louisville so the students at Central High School were solicited. Everybody trusted Mr. Johnson" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Ms. Jordan, an interviewee, knew Mr. Johnson from school and church. All of her teachers, except for two, she knew through her church because her family attended Plymouth Congregational Church. She knew them from when she was a child. Mr. Lyman Johnson, a very well-respected educator at Central, was a member of her church. Ms. Jordan couldn't remember exactly whether it was 10th or 11th grades, but Mr. Johnson taught her Social Studies. Ms. Jordan knew at that particular time Mr. Johnson had already applied for University of Louisville and got accepted and was one of the people who opened up University of Louisville as well as University of Kentucky for black students. The students at Central High School knew the teachers and community were with them in their struggle for equality. It was a shared model of teaching and learning as opposed to the banking model as explained by Freire (1993).

Paulo Freire (1993, p. 109) spoke of people, as beings "in a situation," finding themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. The participants of this study fully understood their situation of a racially segregated nature, but they received an education that taught them to reflect on their own "situationality" to the extent that they were challenged by it to act upon it. A colorblind approach to education ignores their reality and denies the historic struggle for equality of black children in America, as opposed to black teachers who were heavily invested in racial uplift, and realistically and explicitly discussed the reality of race in America with the school children. "Research suggests that using curriculum and instruction that is explicit about race

and the impact of racism in schools and society promotes school cultures in which students of color feel more of a sense of belonging and empowerment" (French & Simmons, 2019).

Mr. Lyman Johnson is the best example of a black educator identifying with the black community in its struggle for equality and sharing their racial experience. Kenneth Clay said, "It was a living experience if you were fortunate enough to be in Mr. Lyman Johnson's class. There was Lyman Johnson who taught Civics and Social Studies. He is best known as the plaintiff whose successful legal challenge opened the University of Kentucky to African-American students in 1949. As a teacher at Central High School for thirty-three years, he quickly became the most vocal public-school teacher in denouncing racial discrimination and being involved in issues concerning minorities" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Mr. Johnson was looked up to by the entire black community. The idea of racial uplift goes back to before the time of W. E. B. DuBois, who was a strong proponent of this philosophy.

From the beginnings of black education in America, racial uplift and the part teachers played in this movement were preeminent. DuBois (2001), in *The Education of Black People: Ten critiques, 1906-1960*, wrote,

> What the Negro needs, therefore, of the world and civilization, he must largely teach himself; what he learns of social organization and efficiency, he must learn from his own people. His conceptions of social uplift and philanthropy must come from his own ranks, and he must above all make and set and follow his own ideals of life and character (pp. 56-57).

Black teachers were the products of the effort and influence of people like DuBois and were at the vanguard of the teaching of social uplift to black children as cultural

transmission. For them it was personal. Mr. Allen Martin never felt deprived in any way by going to racially segregated Louisville Central High School. He said, “I never felt deprived. It was all upward mobility to me and if anything, you have to understand at Central, Central was a place that existed with just a lot of interesting people. I mean intellectual, talented, visual arts, performing arts, intellect, intelligence. I mean, it was all about pride. I was just honored and happy to go to Central” (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

Many have completely lost the message that the goal was not racial integration, in itself, but the improvement of educational opportunity for black children with an increase in academic skills. Mr. Alston stated, “As I reflect on my life, my high school experience was wonderful. It was not a detriment. The subsequent integration of schools must be evaluated as a possible detriment to African Americans. Early learning with those like you is important to your self-esteem”. He now influences high school African Americans to attend Historic Black Colleges and Universities to insure they get the experience of being in school with other African Americans, and believes graduate school is a good time to attend an integrated learning environment. He said, “No, He would not have attended another high school”. Racial integration of the schools was intended by a lot of sincere black and white people to serve as a mechanism to narrow the gap between black and white educational outcomes. Miller (2005) wrote, “Unfortunately, the cure given to promote Black equality is proving to be the lethal injection. In a strange kind of way, somehow in a cross fire, both Blacks and Whites were wrong. Who knew that the medicine for cure would have such a cyanide affect?” (p. 1). After more than sixty years

after the Brown decision the equitable distribution of the social good of education is more illusory than ever, judged by graduation rates and measurements of literacy.

Importance of Black Teachers

Without an education appropriate to the society in which one lives, one cannot fully participate in the society. Before integration black children got the education appropriate to the society in which they lived which moved many of the students from a life of poverty into middle-class America. Edward Alston said, “What could you complain about as a kid, at school there was an excellent culture (various clubs, sports teams, friendships for life time) in preparing students to understand their uniqueness and needs for survival in society” (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Central High School was such an uplifting experience that instead of seeing themselves as deprived, students saw themselves as having been given a distinct advantage. Ms. Scales did not feel deprived but privileged. She believed her teachers were really qualified and what made them really so special was that they were dedicated to teaching the students at Central. The teachers knew the students were going to face a lot of challenges and they prepared the students for those challenges (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

At Louisville Central High School, every black student was expected to graduate and seek post high school education, college or a trade. Kenneth Clay said in his interview, “Most of the teachers, if not all of them, had attended college, so the students already had role models right there at school. The students knew that since the teachers had done it, they were passing on their knowledge and their wisdom and they knew that they could do it, so this knowledge was passed on by example” (L. Doyle, personal communication,

September 25, 2018). White teachers expect significantly less academic success than do black teachers, according to Nicholas Papageorge, an assistant professor in the Department of Economics. “The low expectations of some teachers are not merely accurate forecasts of student potential. In some cases, they become self-fulfilling prophecies" (Papageorge et al., 2017, p. 1). Black teachers have a deeper commitment to the aspirations of black people as a race, often having experienced first hand the very same biases and have a personal commitment to transformation. More and more researchers are examining how the present lack of black teachers is having a detrimental effect on the learning of black children. New studies have been conducted at the Center for American Progress, the National Education Association and at Johns Hopkins University which are calling attention to what is being called a diversity gap at elementary and secondary schools in the United States (Holland, 2004). These studies call for a push to recruit more black teachers who will more accurately mirror the students in their classrooms.

Kevin Gilbert, coordinator of teacher leadership and special projects for the Clinton Public School District in Clinton, Mississippi said, “It becomes easier for students to believe when they can look and see someone who looks just like them, that they can relate to. Nothing can help motivate our students more than to see success standing right in front of them" (Holland, 2014, p. 1). Baltimore, Maryland has struggled for years to recruit and retain a teaching force that reflects the children it serves. According to a 2017 study at Johns Hopkins University, low income black students who have at least one black teacher in elementary school are significantly more likely to graduate from high school and consider attending college. Black teachers are also more

likely than white teachers to expect a black student to graduate, studies found, and to identify black students as ‘gifted’ and when evaluating the same black student (Papageorge et al., 2017).

Anecdotal evidence points to graduation rates as high as 90 % and very few discipline problems in some black schools before racial integration despite high poverty rates. Education was seen as the key to upward mobility and escape from poverty. Ms. Alma Scales was an example of the child of parents who expected their children to go further. Ms. Scales said, “Her mother was a domestic worker and her father worked at the powder plant, so they were really comfortable and never missed a meal and her parents were able to dress them well. Her parents didn’t go any further than 9th grade and she believed that was the reason they emphasized education to their daughters because they didn't continue theirs” (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

Like the other interviewees, Ms. Radford believed her high school experience enhanced her life chances. She stated, “I think it enhanced it because I think with what I had I did well. Compared, I could have had some greater resources maybe, but I was pleased. I never really ran into any real hard times or anything.” She said she and her husband both had really good jobs and they raised two boys. We did a lot of stuff, took cruises, saved a little money that we thought we had to do, and we just enjoyed life really” (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Samuel Brooks remembered his high school as the best part of his life. He wished he could do it all over again at Central High School. He hoped someday to move back to Louisville. He said his high school experience enhanced his life choices and chances because he became an adult

while he was in there. He was learning, had to work, it built him up and made him stronger.

Mr. Kenneth Clay is indicative of the kind of transformative experience high school was for him. Mr. Clay believed his life was enhanced by attending segregated Central High School and that the black children have been collateral damage in the struggle for racial equality in America. He majored in psychology and received a master's degree at the University of Louisville. He worked for the Urban League for about ten years, the War on Poverty for another ten years, the Kentucky Center for the Arts, and did all the cultural programming for the Multicultural Community. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate at Stephens University in Louisville, Kentucky for lifetime achievement and if he had it to do all over there is no doubt he would have attended Central High School.

Mary Clark spoke very highly of her teachers at Central High School. In retrospect, Mary acknowledges that her teachers did a marvelous job and skillfully worked with the given situations. The students had the best of best for teacher education. Ms. Scales wanted to attend college but entered the workforce after graduation. She said, "After I got in the work-force I sort of got out of attending college" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Ms. Scales still believed attending Central High School enhanced her life and she would not have attended another school. Her parents didn't go any further than 9th grade and she believed that was the reason they emphasized education to their daughters because they didn't continue theirs.

Ms. Radford believed her high school experience enhanced her life chances also. She stated, "I think it enhanced it because I think with what I had I did well. Compared, I

could have had some greater resources maybe, but I was pleased" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Teachers were also seen as leaders in the churches which were extensions of family and school and where racial uplift was also emphasized. Edward Alston, one of the interviewees, had a father who was an Episcopalian minister, so he went to church every Sunday. Like many of the students, there were several educators at his church who taught at Central High School. The teachers proudly presented themselves as role models of the middle class. Ken Clay, one of the interviewees said, "The male teachers wore suits and ties, and were very professional in their look and in their manner. The female teachers were the same way, dressing immaculately and being well-groomed. He said, "The teachers all that just by their presence, by their conversations, the way they related to us. They were like family" (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Mary Clark, a study participant stated, "Although attending school and church (the Jacob AME Zion Church on Preston Street) were musts and demanded by Mrs. Clark, the neighborhood helped raise the children. Families trusted each other for sheer survival." (L. Doyle, personal communication, September 25, 2018). Discipline by teachers and educators who were like extended family was hardly ever questioned.

It has been shown that students do best when the teachers are intimately involved and identify with their struggle for liberation and transformation. At the study school, we saw high expectations exhibited in concrete ways; they were not just a rhetorical device. Principals held high expectations for faculty and staff, who held high expectations for themselves and the students. After graduation the students were open to opportunities and choices of careers for which they had been prepared. They had choices of careers for

which Central High School had prepared them.

Discussion

There is a serious question as to whether the Civil Rights Movement of African Americans in the United States was a success or failure based on literacy and graduation rates. The Civil Rights Movement had as its stated goals, among other things, to end racial segregation and at the same time improve the educational opportunities for black students. Clearly the goal of ending de jure racial segregation was a success, but the goal of improving the academic success of a large number of black students has remained as elusive as ever. To reiterate, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, beliefs and school experiences of ten African American students who graduated in 1956 and who attended a de jure racially segregated high school in Louisville, Kentucky before and after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The study was conducted as an oral history which gathered the personal recollections of participants' experiences through in-depth interviews.

This study addressed one central question and two specific research questions: What were the lived educational experiences of African American students who graduated from a racially segregated high school in 1956 and attended a racially segregated school before and directly after the *Brown v. Board of Education decision,* and how did this experience impact their lives? Specific research sub-questions are as follows (a) What do these students report about teaching styles of their black teachers?; (b) What do these students report about the overall school climate, this includes teachers in the building, and parent and community involvement before and directly after the *Brown v. Board of Education decision*?

Three themes emerged from the study participants' recollections about their high school experience (a) students and their families had set educational goals which often included post high school education, (b) students and their families believed educators were transformational. Students expected to move into the middle class, educators and students had a shared goal of racial uplift through education, and students often attained a higher education than their parents, (c) students believed they had been treated fairly in relation to their abilities and aspirations, and students were happy with their education, careers and lives they had led.

Five additional themes emerged regarding the social climate of the school. The participants also revealed that (a) schools had high standards which included dress codes for students and educators, strict discipline and few discipline problems; (b) Christian values and moral teaching were an important part of school; educators, families and students attended church regularly; (c) the racial oppression of African Americans was openly discussed in classes; (d) teachers and students openly participated in political activism which ensured political efficacy and; (e) the vast majority of students would have chosen to go to Central High School even if given a choice and the students looked upon their school as a positive uplifting experience. The participants believed their human potential had been maximized.

Furthermore, one of the findings of this study is that the participants expressed the idea that the schools presented clear moral values associated with politics that allowed the students to develop their full potential which was the foundation of their later life success. Moral values were an important part of school teaching. Choices such as premarital sex and pregnancy out of wedlock, which negatively influence future success,

were openly frowned upon and active participation in politics for social change were positively reinforced. Racial issues and problems associated with class were openly discussed in school classes and the teachers knew the parents shared their vision for student success. Teachers and students were given the choice to openly participate in political activism leading to political efficacy with the agreement of the parents, who themselves often were politically engaged. Political activism created a mind-set of empowerment which also expressed itself in the desire for career advancement.

The idea of the democratic ethic is built on certain values and principles, such as equality, liberty, non-repression, and non-discrimination. The ability of a person to reach their full potential is part of this ideal. Participants in this study related a certain level of satisfaction with their choice of careers and life they had led. The participants knew the truth of their inequality and were given the tools to overcome their present situation. It was found that students believed they had been treated fairly in relation to their abilities and aspirations by the educators and had been given an equal chance. In fact, a minority believed there was some favoritism but for the most part they had been treated justly and prepared academically and socially to maximize their potential in spite of the injustice of racial inequality they would face in life. With the skills they had been taught, the participants were able to manifest their choices of a good life, within the meaning of liberty. The idea of liberty is one of the principles at the core of our understanding of a democratic ethic. The idea of liberty means the freedom to choose, the right to be free from coercive interference, and the right of self-determination or as some would say the right to be who one wants to be, of course, within certain boundaries as agreed upon by the culture. The students and their families believed their choice of school was an

expression of liberty and their best choice. They made their choice because it was the best choice in maximizing their potential.

All but one of the participants and their parents believed that Central High School was their best choice even though it was racially segregated. They believed the option of going to a white school was not their best choice for various reasons. The idea of empowering all parents to choose among schools for their children is in this sense the most democratic option. The participants in this study and their families had little or no desire to go to one of the white schools and Central High School was their choice. The students in this study looked upon school as a positive experience and would not have gone to one of the white schools even if given the chance. The concept of liberty includes the idea of freedom to choose and the students and their families weighed the pros and cons and made what they considered their best choice.

The findings of this study indicate that the participants in this study were happy with their careers, choices, and the lives they had led. The participants, and their families believed the educational experience at Central High School had been a transformational one. They believed they had received an education which allowed them to move into the middle class and it also prepared them to fully participate in the political process and better themselves economically. The participants in the study believed they had been treated fairly in relation to their abilities and aspirations with very little discrimination, especially racial discrimination in the school environment. They were also prepared for the racial discrimination they knew they would face after graduation. They believed they received the education appropriate to the lives they would lead. As a matter of justice, the participants believed they had been maximized as human beings. There are times when

the state must acknowledge that there are differences between people associated with a difference in history and experience, even within the same society. The element of time will eventually erase these differences, but until that time it may be impossible for the government to be neutral. Societies adopt their own interpretation of what is the good and part of the educational process is to steer people into their own, most productive areas.

The participants in this study knew that after graduation they would be prepared for racial integration, and the education they received at racially segregated Central High School best prepared them for this future. This was a reasonable and rational choice and they considered it their best option. Their choice was reasonable and rational. Another finding of this study was the participants all expressed the idea that the teachers at Louisville Central High School were transformational educators. The teachers developed the students' capacity for critical, ethical, and contemplative reflexive inquiry by questioning and examining the reality of their black experience and participating in political resistance. They were shown by example that they could question their reality and situation. Black teachers were the products of the efforts of people like DuBois and were at the vanguard of the teaching of social uplift to black children as cultural transmission. For them it was personal. Participants in this study learned from an early age from their teachers the seriousness of their racial situation. The teachers, because they shared a common heritage, could be honest with the students about what it would take to improve their situation and make the most of life's opportunities. The students therefore were empowered to improve their societal situation. Black teachers were the products of the efforts of people like DuBois and were some of the most important role models for the school children. For the teachers and educators, it was personal.

Summary

This chapter presented the oral history of teaching and learning in a racially segregated Kentucky community through the eyes of ten African American students who participated in this study. It presented a detailed analysis of their experiences, beliefs and practices in a segregated school environment. Their oral history accounts revealed that teachers in their segregated school did indeed exhibit mother and father-like behaviors, have high expectations, motivated their students to excel, and provided resources to address the real and perceived needs of their students. As evidenced by these oral histories, it is clear that the segregated school supported and reinforced the aspirations that students could grow up to "be somebody" (Walker, 2000, p. 267).

Chapter 5

Main Conclusions

Historically segregated African American schools have been depicted as inferior educational institutions. Moreover, cultural deficit is the basic presupposition of *Brown v. Board.* By documenting the lived experience of educational success within a segment of the African American community in the Jim Crow South this study offers a counter-narrative to the suppositions of cultural deficit as the primary theory explaining the achievement gap between the majority population and minorites. By exploring the lived experience of the characteristics of the school culture and environment and the characteristics of those responsible for teaching, this oral history adds to the body of literature which shows that the achievement gap cannot be adequately explained by reference to cultural deficit. Moreover, the counter-narrative points toward significant issues pertaining to educational justice.

One of the most important and comprehensive studies of education in the United States was the Coleman Report which was released in 1966. The report encompassed 3,000 schools, nearly 600,000 students, and thousands of teachers. The Coleman Report concluded that schools are remarkably similar in the effect they have on the achievement of their pupils when the socio-economic background of the students is taken into account. In other words, it's all family.

> The Coleman Report's conclusions concerning the influences of home and family were at odds with the paradigm of the day. The politically inconvenient conclusion that family background explained more about a child's achievement than did school resources ran contrary to contemporary priorities, which were focused on improving educational inputs such as school expenditure levels, class

> size, and teacher quality. Subsequent research has corroborated the finding that family background is strongly correlated with student performance in school (How Family Background, 2019).

The correlation between family background and student achievement has been well-studied. The meaning of family needs to be examined because the word “family” can have several meanings. The usual meaning of family is a small group connected by blood often adults and children. The meaning of the word “family” can also have a more expansive meaning such as community. Before the end of racial segregation of the schools, the broader definition of family could be applied to the segregated black community. The testimonies of the subjects of this oral history suggests that their cultural background in the community and within the school was not deficienct but constituted an educationally supportive environment.

As a primary social good, education is an urgent matter of distributive justice. The purpose of education in the United States of America, as a public good, is to prepare young people to grow into adults that can take their rightful place in a democratic society. Education prepares young people to become productive, informed and dutiful members of the society, who will one day take the places of the previous generation. As Martha Nussbaum maintains, the ‘point of justice is to secure a dignified life’ for all human beings and what matters for justice is the quality of life of people (as cited in Snauwaert, 2011). Education is necessary for the development of critical thinking skills, cultural transmission, and societal regeneration.

The established approach to distributive justice has been the idea of equal opportunity, which is a principle that justifies inequality of educational achievement if and only if it

results from equal opportunity. The central purpose of justice in a democratic society is to provide a moral justification for unequal but fair distributions of social goods (Rawls, 1971). The principle of equal opportunity is a means to that end. "According to this conception, justice generally requires that basic social goods – liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect – be equally distributed, unless an unequal distribution is to everyone's advantage" (Freeman, 2003, p. 1).

As a legal, constitutional matter, legally denying free and equal access to public institutions and the public sphere, *de jure segregation* violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and was thereby unconstitutional. In striking down legal segregation *Brown* established an equal civil right to equal access and thus formal equality of opportunity. As an *educational matter* (as opposed to a strictly constitutional one), however, the findings of this oral history, that the educational environment of Louisville Central High School was *not* culturally and educationally deprived, suggests that the quality and effectiveness of education is a matter that is independent of the strictly legal matter of the right to formal equality of opportunity as equal access. While being of the greatest significance for a democratic and just society, the civil right to free and equal access to public institutions *alone* does not guarantee nor does it protect *fair equality of educational opportunity*, the core principle of a just distribution of education in a democratic society.

Central to the idea of equal opportunity is the idea of fundamental fairness, that every citizen should have an equal chance to maximize his or her capabilities (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2011). Moreover, fair equality of opportunity requires that each student has the same probability of success relative to talent and ambition with educational

institutions functioning in a way that maximizes their capabilities regardless of their race, gender, and social class, among other morally arbitrary characteristics. "The only extension of basic education appropriate to a democracy is one that provides real opportunities, real intellectual freedom…" (Walzer, 1983, p. 208). Fair equality of opportunity demands us to look at the actual results, the actual lives people live, to measure institutions by their outcomes, and to correct if these institutions are incapable or interfere with normal development within that society, especially when the injustice has become part of the ideology that underpins those results. As Lindsay (2014) suggests, "It is hypothesized that formal educational opportunity is an example of symbolic manipulation and promotes passivity and quiescence in the minds of those most lacking in this opportunity" (p. 7).

Many students and educational stakeholders have been lulled into believing things are working well and have become complacent to actual educational outcomes. "Its guarantee of fair equality of opportunity requires that we not only judge people for jobs and offices by reference to their relevant talents and skills, but that we also establish institutional measures to correct for the ways in which class, race, and gender might interfere with the normal development of marketable talents and skills" (Freeman, 2003, p. 1). This lack of fair equality of opportunity is an urgent matter of justice. When and where this injustice is found, corrective measures are called for. Formal equality of education is not the same as fair distribution of opportunity and if our institutional policies are a contributing factor in the difference in educational results, then new policies must be explored which lead to fairer results.

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Appendix A

Oral History Interview - Guiding Questions

1. What high school did you attend, year graduated, and in what city?

2. Why did you attend that school?

3. Did you have the option to attend a different school?

4. Was your high school racially integrated?

5. How did this affect your attitude toward school?

6. What did you think of your teachers, principal, and learning environment?

7. Can you describe the general culture at your high school?

8. What curriculum did you pursue at your high school?

9. Did you feel deprived in any way?

10. How would you describe your family's economic situation?

11. How supportive were your parents toward your education?

12. What did you do after you graduated from high school?

13. How did attending this high school affect your career choices?

14. If you had had a choice would you have attended a different high School?

15. Would you say your high school experience enhanced your life chances or would you describe it as being a detriment?