To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Lana Carmen Seivers entitled "Words of Discrimination, Voices of Determination: Reflections on the Desegregation of Clinton High School." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Education.

Mary Jane Connelly, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Provost and Dean of
Graduate Studies

WORDS OF DESCRIMINATION, VOICES OF DETERMINATION: REFLECTIONS ON THE DESEGREGATION OF CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lana Carmen Seivers

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DEDICATION

To my son, Matthew. His unconditional love and trust have taught me to take nothing for granted, to celebrate even the smallest accomplishments with joy, and to pursue every goal in incremental steps. Because of him, I view life from a different perspective and find miracles wherever there are caring people.

To my nephew, Charlie Seivers, and to my niece and namesake, Jennifer Carmen Seivers. Their compassion, honesty, humor, and the traditions they have created have been a source of discovery and delight. They have made many happy memories for me, and I hope I have done the same for them.

To my brother, Larry Seivers. I believe God created only a few truly good people, and my brother is one of them. He is an “All American” in the truest sense of the definition, and I wish I could be more like him.

To my parents, James "Jiggs" Seivers and Frankie Melhorn Seivers. They taught us that we were "only as good as our word" and to "never quit what we had started." Sometimes I think those were the only reasons I have seen this dissertation to completion. They have supported me during times of despair, withheld judgment when I disappointed them, encouraged me in everything I ever attempted, and loved me no matter what. The value my parents placed on education set clear expectations for me early in life, and this doctorate is as much for them as for me.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of the federally ordered school desegregation of Clinton High School in Tennessee beginning in August 1956 when twelve African Americans enrolled and culminating with the October 1958 bombing of the school. The study presented a review of case law and national events leading to the court ordered desegregation and described the effect these decisions had upon Clinton, Tennessee. The experiences and perceptions of those who were students and educators at that time were collected through semi-structured interviews. Although Clinton High School was desegregated before Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, the story of the Arkansas students is much better documented. This study, therefore, documents an important chapter in civil rights history.

Common themes were elicited from the personal stories of participants. Data were compared and coded into categories to determine emerging themes. Related literature and archival data provided the background for examination of participants' experiences, and their stories were told in the context of five themes: (1) Values and Beliefs; (2) Personal Benchmarks; (3) Leaders, Antagonists, and Everyday Heroes; (4) Looking at the Past and Present; and (5) If History Could Repeat Itself.

Recommendations for further research include topics directly related to the desegregation of Clinton High School as well as suggestions pertaining to the status of school desegregation since that time.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"It is difficult through law and through force to change a man's heart."

President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Growing up in a small town is synonymous with happy childhood memories of school days and the peaceful, tranquil times spent with friends, family, and neighbors. As was the case throughout most of the United States in the 1950s, schools, neighborhoods, and churches in Clinton, Tennessee were racially segregated. Approximately four thousand people lived together, albeit separately, in quiet harmony.

White children attended Clinton Grammar School, and African American children attended Green McAdoo School, both established in 1895 under the jurisdiction of the Clinton City Schools (Pratt 52). The schools were less than one half mile apart, and after completing sixth grade the students remained racially segregated. White students remained in Clinton Grammar School in the seventh and eighth grades and transferred to Anderson County Schools as ninth graders. There they enrolled in Clinton High School, located across the street from their former grammar school. African American students were bused to Vine Junior and Austin High Schools in Knoxville, although Green McAdoo School was within walking distance—less than three tenths of a mile behind both Clinton High and Clinton Grammar Schools.

Separate schools did not prevent white children and African American children from gathering regularly "downtown" on the front lawn of Clinton High to play ball and other games. After playing, the children often sat together on the wall in front of the courthouse, watching the traffic on Main Street and eating ice cream cones they had purchased at the drive-in restaurant up the street.

Alfred Williams, an African American adult who was transported by bus to Austin High School in Knoxville, recalled the way they chose sides for their games with each team alternately choosing between the white children and the African American children. He remembered they all thought this was "fair" even though no one had required them to choose their teams this way. Other than the usual kinds of disagreements and squabbles experienced in childhood competition, they had no problems playing together and certainly no problems attributed to race. They played together and then returned to their own schools and lived in their own neighborhoods until the next sunny day when they again would have the opportunity to choose sides.

The happy childhood memories of choosing sides for fun soon turned to choosing sides for all the wrong reasons. In 1956 the federal court ordered the desegregation of Clinton High School, and the tranquility of this small town turned some friends, families, and neighbors into enemies and made others fearful for their safety. Twelve African American students who had attended Austin High School now attended Clinton High School with the white students, some of whom had been their playmates for years.

The African American and white children no longer played together or passed the time watching the cars from the courthouse wall. Instead they watched the Tennessee National Guard and the Highway Patrol surround the courthouse and line Main Street. The children saw the Ku Klux Klan march and crosses burn. They witnessed the beating of the white minister of First Baptist Church by white supremacists (Murrow). They read flyers espousing hate and heard the hostility in the voices of outsiders who had come to promote violence (Brittain 113). They saw fear, opposition, and distrust in the faces of people they had known all their lives.

The tempestuous times in Clinton, Tennessee both reflected and anticipated the nation's struggle over desegregation issues. Teachers and children in southern schools faced desegregation requirements while enduring conflicting pressures, uncertainty, and inequity. In a broad sense, in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka,* the U. S. Supreme Court's ultimate decision to abolish the "separate but equal" doctrine did nothing more than end separate schools for white and African American children. In actuality, it forced educators, churches, businesses, and municipalities to focus more closely on the equal treatment of all the people served by these entities. This decision did not apply just to legislative and judicial bodies in the nation's capital, but to small towns and large cities throughout the United States.

In a reference to school desegregation and civil rights during a press conference held September 5, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "It

is difficult through law and through force to change a man's heart" (qtd. in Clark A1). Truer words were never spoken than in Clinton, Tennessee, where individuals were forced to examine their own beliefs, values, and sense of right and wrong as they sought to obey the law of the land.

At both the state and national levels, those for and against desegregation fought vigorously to promote their agendas. Many proponents of desegregation have stated that since the writing of the United States Constitution too much time has lapsed without complete adherence to the fundamental guidelines upon which it was formed.

The term desegregation is defined as a means to put an end to the forced separation of races in public schools, housing, employment, and public facilities. A more palatable term for some supporters of desegregation is "integration," which is defined as making education, housing, transportation, and employment open to all races on an equal basis. However, integration did not bring about a widespread admission of African Americans to all-white schools, and in most instances, desegregation was court-ordered rather than voluntary. The Preamble to the Constitution espouses the philosophy that all men are created equal, yet desegregation events in Clinton, Tennessee and later in other parts of the United States, clearly show that all were not treated equally.

The law has been shaped and interpreted by several major judicial decisions. The "separate but equal" doctrine was decided in 1896 in *Plessy v.*

Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 when the Court ruled explicitly that it applied to public schools (Alexander 410). The Court reasoned that if the races were treated equally, then integration was not constitutionally required. In order to apply the issue of segregated railway accommodations to public education, the Court cited *Roberts v. City of Boston, 163 U.S. 545,* a Massachusetts case resulting in the endorsement of school segregation in which the Court endorsed " [. . .] instruction of colored children in separate schools established exclusively for them, and to prohibit their attendance upon the other schools" (*Plessy* 5).

A major case that accelerated the move toward public school desegregation occurred in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483* when the message of the U. S. Supreme Court resounded throughout the nation (Wolters 3). The Court based its opinion upon the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and delivered the unanimous opinion that the doctrine of "separate but equal" had no place in public education. The Court acknowledged that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal and at least in theory, if not in practice, outlawed segregation in public schools (Bates 9).

One year later, in *Brown II, 349 U.S. 294,* the Court ordered local school authorities to comply with its earlier decision. The Court ruled unanimously that all public schools be desegregated "with all deliberate speed [. . .] a pace intended to permit adjustment to administrative difficulties but not

to authorize indefinite delay pending a change in public opinion" (Wolters 79-80). While this ruling marked the turning point in America's unwillingness to comply with desegregation, school districts were left to face the consequences of centuries of discrimination and prejudice.

Compliance was extremely difficult to achieve, especially in the South. One of the first places to enforce the desegregation law was Clinton, Tennessee. Once again the schools were faced with adhering to the letter and intent of the law while responding to the views and demands of their own community and society in general. As a result, the country waited and watched as a small East Tennessee town struggled to enforce the rulings of the Supreme Court.

Although Clinton High School was desegregated before schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, the story of the Arkansas students is much better documented. The experiences of the courageous students and adults in Clinton, Tennessee remain largely untold in spite of its significance in relation to Arkansas. This study, therefore, documents an important chapter in civil rights history.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

This researcher grew up in Clinton, Tennessee and was a student in the early primary grades during the desegregation era. The recollection of scenes, events, literature, friendships, and discussions witnessed throughout childhood and continuing into adulthood evoked significant memories and

emotions on the part of this writer. To this day, the memory of standing in the backyard and watching crosses burn in the valley beside the Clinch River remains vivid. In the small world of a child, not being able to visit grandparents and friends because of the violence and presence of the National Guard was difficult to understand. The terror of feeling the house shake when the nearby school was destroyed by dynamite was even less comprehensible.

This researcher attended grades one through eight in the segregated Clinton City Schools and, in spite of the court-ordered desegregation of Clinton High School, did not attend school with an African American student until 1964 upon enrollment in the ninth grade in the Anderson County Schools. Today, as superintendent in the city school system, this writer is amazed that the Clinton City Schools remained "separate but equal" for so long. While the reasons for this remain unknown, there existed a personal commitment to explore the experiences of those students and educators who paved the way for today's Clinton students. One of the students during desegregation, Alfred Williams, is employed by this school district and talks to students each year about the events that occurred when he attended Clinton High School. This study hopefully provided a framework to teach students not only the significance of the historical event that occurred in their own hometown, but the important role played by people they know.

The personal experiences of the researcher were a part of this study. Van Manen stated it is almost impossible to put everything known about an experience aside and suggested that personal biases be "held at bay so as to come to terms with the lived experience" (47). This study attempted to present an accurate view of the experiences of those involved and an objective history of the events surrounding the desegregation of Clinton High School.

PROBLEM

The desegregation of Clinton High School established Tennessee's role in the court-ordered desegregation and the state's prominence in predicting the struggles soon to be faced throughout the United States. The events in this small East Tennessee town were indicative of the impact of the desegregation era on the history of education and civil rights.

Little did the five African American students who first attempted to enroll in Clinton High School in 1950 know that their actions would result in a chain of events that would make national news. Among these were a 1950 law suit against the Anderson County Schools and subsequent appeal in 1952 that paralleled the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education;* the court-ordered desegregation of Clinton High School in 1956; the graduation of the first African American male (1957) and female (1958) from a Tennessee public high school; and the bombing of Clinton High School in the fall of 1958.

Although historical publications exist regarding the desegregation of Clinton High School, there was little documentation of the experiences of students and educators involved in this event. This void was illustrated in the words of an African American female, Jo Ann Allen, who was a student at Clinton High School during this era:

> There was little written about the black families [. . .] and the impact this had on all of our lives. There has been no follow-up ever as far as I know as to what any of the original twelve children of Clinton are doing or how their lives changed because of these tumultuous events. (Adamson 37)

While it is important to document history, it is critical to take time to listen to those who were a part of the historical events surrounding desegregation and to examine their attitudes and perceptions. Failure to explore every facet of the desegregation era weakens our understanding of a crucial societal experience and does an injustice to those who lived it.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the federally ordered school desegregation of Clinton High School. Specifically, this study examined the perceptions of students and educators who were a part of this era in order to explore and gain insight into the events.

Information was gathered with emphasis on the experiences of participants in order to produce a more comprehensive historical reference

describing the desegregation of Clinton High School. Benefits from this study included a contribution to the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the general history of desegregation and to the history of desegregation in Clinton, Tennessee in particular.

FRAMEWORK

The chronological review of literature provided the background for examination of the experiences of the participants in the desegregation of Clinton High School. This study included a review of case law regarding desegregation beginning in 1849 with *Roberts v. City of Boston*, the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal" doctrine, and the 1956 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

The presentation of case law and national events leading to the court ordered desegregation described the effect of these decisions upon the desegregation issues in Clinton. The research focused primarily on the desegregation of Clinton High School and spanned approximately eight years, from 1950 until 1958. The review of the events in Clinton, Tennessee began with *McSwain v. Anderson County Board of Education*, a case filed against the school system in 1950 by five African American students (Adamson 33). United States District Judge Robert Taylor's decision to dismiss this case, and McSwain's subsequent appeal to the U. S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati was discussed in relation to the 1954 Supreme Court decision in

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka which ordered an end to the nation's segregated schools (Roberts 57).

The review included United States District Judge Robert Taylor's January 4, 1956 order to desegregate Clinton High School, a decision which shifted the focus from one of national importance to one of local urgency (Roberts 58). The study described the events of August 1956, when twelve African Americans enrolled in Clinton High School and culminated with the 1958 bombing of the school (Roberts 54-58). The experiences of those who were students and educators at that time were studied to determine the impact of these events on the children and citizens of this small town.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study was further based upon George Santayana's assertion that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Augarde 190). As the initial mandate to desegregate Clinton High School approaches the half-century mark, it was noted that six key sources are deceased: D. J. Brittain and W. D. Human, Clinton High School principals during the desegregation and bombing of Clinton High School; Horace Wells, editor of the *Clinton Courier-News*; Paul Turner, minister of First Baptist Church and supporter of desegregation laws; Judge Sydney Davis, a proponent of desegregation who was targeted by those in opposition; and his wife, Eleanor Davis who taught at Clinton High School. It was imperative that the experiences of those participants still alive today were

documented so we can reflect on events of the past to better understand the present and future.

Review of the literature indicated that few publications or sources existed that present the experiences of participants in the desegregation of Clinton High School. Newspaper archives, chapters or pages in books on the history of Anderson County, and previous dissertations offered the only published sources available as references and provided only a chronology of the events that occurred in Clinton. Among those cited in the review of literature were *Children of the South* by Margaret Anderson; D.J. Brittain's dissertation, which focused on the problems faced by school officials in the desegregation of Clinton High School; *The Days Before Yesterday* by Horace V. Wells; the bicentennial edition of the *Tennessee Blue Book*; stories and articles by Anderson County historian Katherine B. Hoskins; *Few Black Voices Heard* by June Adamson; and *The History of Clinton Senior High School: 1806-1971* by Snyder Roberts.

The intent of this study was to add to the body of knowledge depicting the rich heritage of this geographic region and its people. Understanding the tremendous impact of the desegregation era is crucial to the history of education and civil rights. The significance of this study was its description of Tennessee's role in federally mandated desegregation and the state's prominence in predicting the struggles that would occur throughout the United States.

DEFINITIONS

African American: A term used to replace terms previously used in reference to race, such as colored, black, Negro, and Afro-American.

Black: A term that emerged in the 1960s to denote African Americans.

Colored: A term used in the 1950s to denote African Americans.

Desegregation: The process of putting an end to the forced separation of races in public schools, housing, employment, and other public facilities. School desegregation refers to the removal of statutory barriers, and integration may or may not occur as result of such legal action (Koontz 4).

Integration: A term used to make all constitutional privileges inclusive of African Americans through full participation in all aspects of society, including social, educational, extra-curricular, and athletic activities (Koontz 5).

Jim Crow Laws: Laws that separated whites and African Americans in all areas of life (*Creation of the Jim Crow South* 1).

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the years between 1950 and 1958, the most significant time span associated with the desegregation of Clinton High School. In August 1950 the first African American student applied for admittance to Clinton High School and in September 1957, the school completed its first desegregated school year. Newspaper articles, interviews, school publications, books depicting the history of the area, and news documentaries were among the primary sources used to describe the

desegregation of Clinton High School. Oral histories were limited to statements that could be documented from reliable primary sources who were members of the student body and school staff during the desegregation of Clinton High School.

The study was further limited because many of the primary sources are deceased, and data obtained from archival documents provided a limited view of their experiences or recollections. Constraints existed regarding difficulty in interviewing other primary sources due to physical proximity. The possibility existed that participants may have been less than candid or somewhat hesitant to discuss such emotional, divisive events. Since Clinton High School was desegregated as a result of a court ordered mandate rather than by voluntary action, no attempt was made to analyze or evaluate school desegregation as opposed to school integration.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based upon the assumption that the decisions of the United States Supreme Court interpret the existing laws of the land. While there was no way to anticipate the events that may result from the laws, the experiences of those involved in the desegregation of Clinton High School provided insight and may have benefited others faced with similar issues.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of

the study, a definition of terms, and the identification of limitations and delimitations, and assumptions.

Chapter 2 contains a review of significant literature relative to school desegregation in general and specifically the desegregation of Clinton High School from 1950-1958. Archival data presented includes information from secondary sources such as newspapers, school annuals, video tapes, and magazine articles utilized to present historical information, case law, and literature regarding the desegregation of Clinton High School. This chapter also contains a brief history of Clinton, Anderson County, Tennessee.

Chapter 3 describes the qualitative methodology used to collect data for the study. It focuses on the research design, data collection methods, and procedures for analyzing data. Data collected were compared and contrasted and coded by categories and emerging themes.

Chapter 4 includes the findings and analysis of data obtained from interviews with primary sources involved in the desegregation of Clinton High School. Analysis of the data identified themes and searched for patterns that developed in order to reach conclusions and derive meaning from the data.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, conclusions drawn, and recommendations for future studies.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study was based upon the assumption that the review of the desegregation of Clinton High School is historically relevant because it was

the first court-ordered desegregation case in the State of Tennessee. The study allows a better understanding of these events through the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of the participants. According to Van Manen, phenomenological research is the ongoing and open-ended study of lived experiences (9). Narratives derived from the interview process were one way of making sense of lived experiences by focusing on what the person experiences in language that is as loyal to the lived experience as possible. This type of inquiry seeks to describe and clarify the meanings of human experiences (Polkinghorne 33). This study combined both historical events and qualitative experiences. It utilized oral histories obtained through interviews as well as archival documents including newspaper and magazine articles, school publications, and records of Board of Education meetings to compile data.

The study reviewed national and local events surrounding the desegregation and included data gathered from documents, artifacts, interviews, oral statements, and secondary sources including newspapers and other publications. Interviews with former students and educators attempted to reconstruct the events of the desegregation phenomenon in order to "gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (Van Manen 9).

Data were compiled and analyzed for relevance to this study. Data analysis centered on common themes and patterns relative to the events

surrounding the desegregation of Clinton High School and personal stories of experiences from individuals involved in that desegregation process. The researcher was mindful of developing themes but refrained from structuring or analyzing categories and meanings prior to reconstruction of the data (Rudestam and Newton 33). It is hoped the research conducted for this study provided a better understanding of these events and the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of the participants.

Participants in the study were primary sources who could provide a direct account of the events, as either a participant or an observer. The University of Tennessee's *Human Subjects Review Board* approved a maximum of fourteen interviews.

The sampling frame was obtained from the review of literature in which specific names of potential participants were identified as students or staff members who were present during and engaged in the desegregation events. While other names were identified during the interview process, the literature listed the names of students and staff due to their role or a specific action or event in which they were involved. From the names generated, the investigator utilized the internet, telephone directory, and friends and families of those identified to obtain addresses and contact information.

Participants were selected from among those who agreed to be interviewed, and preference was given to those who were accessible and willing to participate. Only twelve African Americans were students during the

desegregation, and some of the students and staff identified in the study were deceased at the time of the study. Nine interviews were conducted with staff members and African American and white students enrolled in Clinton High School from 1956 until 1958 who were participants in the desegregation events during that time period. Among the former Clinton High School students interviewed were three African Americans and three whites who were similar in grade placement at the time of desegregation. A tenth interview occurred during the meeting between the researcher and a former teacher when her husband, an attorney and former legislator, provided insight into specific events.

To minimize the risk of infusing personal biases of the investigator, each participant had the opportunity to receive a copy of the interview in order to make corrections, additions, or deletions. The participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. After the taped interviews or field notes were transcribed by the researcher and reviewed by the participant, electronic tapes and the researcher's field notes were given to the doctoral committee chair to be destroyed.

The nature of the study was potentially highly charged and perhaps considered controversial by some. In order to ensure minimal risks by the participants, complete anonymity was guaranteed to all participants in the study. In this case each was to be identified by a pseudonym, and the actual identity of the participants would be known only to the researcher. The study

included a provision in the *Informed Consent Form* for the use of the actual name of the participant if he/she signed a written statement of their desire to forego anonymity that is included Without exception, all participants opted for use of their actual name.

Prior to data collection, the researcher informed each participant of the purpose and methodology of the study. Individual participants understood that participation was voluntary, they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and could refuse to answer any question they found objectionable.

The issue of disclosure of criminal activity was addressed, and procedures were established for the cessation of audio-taping. If during the interview process, the participant had begun to divulge criminal activity, the researcher would direct the interview away from this issue. The researcher maintained control of the structured and non-structured interview process by limiting questions and responses to those approved by the committee.

Potential participants were contacted in writing and by telephone by the researcher who informed them of the nature and purpose of the study. The purpose, methods, risks, and protections as previously outlined were explained to each person contacted. A discussion ensued between the researcher and the potential participant to determine if he or she completely understood the project, the nature of individual participation, the procedures, risks, and protection offered.

During initial contact, the researcher emphasized that participation was voluntary and that participants could refuse to answer any question they found objectionable or withdraw at any time without penalty. Once decided by the researcher and the potential participant that he or she wished to take part in the study, a mutually convenient date and place to conduct the interview was determined.

The *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix A) was signed at the time of the interview in order to provide the participant another opportunity to ask questions prior to participation in the study. The *Informed Consent Form* described potential risks, explained voluntary participation, provided for informed consent by participants, and allowed an option for withdrawal and the deletion of data. Interviews did not take place until the *Informed Consent Form* was signed, and each participant was given a copy of the signed form. All interviews were conducted in person. However, in the event of a telephone interview, provisions were made for the *Informed Consent Form* to be mailed to the participant to be signed and returned in an enclosed stamped envelope addressed to the researcher.

The interview utilized open-ended questions to gather responses, facilitate dialogue, and elicit recollection of experiences. During the interview process, participants were asked to relate their experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School. No efforts were made by the researcher to alter or embellish the participants' stories. Phenomenological

inquiry formed the basis for the study by describing the meanings of human experience through interviews and extended conversations as the source of data (Rudestam and Newton 33).

The framework for the study addressed the desegregation of Clinton High School in terms of the attitudes and experiences of the students, faculty, and citizens involved. The following semi-structured interview questions were used as the basis for data collection and served as a guide during the review of archival documents for relevant data on the integration of the school.

1. Tell me about the events that occurred during the desegregation of Clinton High School that are the most memorable or significant for you.
2. Tell me about your involvement in those events.
3. Tell me about your feelings regarding those events.
4. What do you believe were the major influences on the events that occurred during the desegregation of Clinton High School?
5. Tell me what experiences you had during the desegregation of Clinton High School that influenced your life at that time.
6. How do you feel your experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School have influenced your life today, some forty years later?
7. If we could re-live history, what do you believe could have been done differently during the desegregation of Clinton High School?

During the course of some of the interviews, additional comments were elicited based upon the responses of the participants. Taylor and Bogdan

stated that researchers should follow a flexible design in qualitative studies and "[. . .] develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories" (5).

Participants were interviewed in person at a time and physical location mutually agreed upon by each participant and the researcher. Each interview lasted approximately one to one and one-half hours. All interviews were audio taped with the participants' permission, and interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The study included provisions for a telephone interview to be conducted and for the researcher to take copious notes in the event a personal interview was not feasible or if permission to audiotape was not granted by the participant. The study included a provision for any field notes obtained by the researcher during the interviews to be expanded immediately following each session to ensure accuracy and completeness of data. All interviews were conducted in person, and all participants agreed to be audiotaped. After the interviews or field notes were transcribed by the researcher, each participant had the option to review a copy of the transcript in order to ensure accuracy and to provide the participant the opportunity to make corrections or deletions.

Signed *Informed Consent Forms* and transcribed interviews and field notes were given to the doctoral committee chairperson to store in a locked file cabinet in an office at the University of Tennessee for a period of three

years after completion of the study. All documents will be destroyed after that time. Upon completion of the study, data compiled in the form of electronic audio recordings or written field notes of interviews were presented to the doctoral committee chairperson for destruction. Participants in the study were given the option to receive a copy of the study in its entirety upon completion.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

"The names of unknown villages suddenly become national symbols of violence….Hoxie, Mansfield, Sturgis, Clay, Clinton: towns where main streets become battlegrounds overnight, and the pupils learned their lessons of citizenship in the school yards rather than the classrooms."

Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely

(*Neither Black Nor White* 349-350)

DESEGREGATION

When Sarah Roberts, a five-year old African American girl, left home for school in 1849, she had to walk past five elementary schools designated for white children in the city of Boston to reach Smith Grammar School, which had been established in 1820 for African Americans. An evaluation committee resolved that the designated school was in poor condition. Sarah's father worked diligently to place her in a better school closer to her home. After numerous attempts, Sarah's father secured lawyer and civil rights advocate, Charles Sumner, to represent his daughter and challenge the inequity. From this action came the doctrine of "separate but equal" (Douglas 93).

Sumner, citing excerpts from the Massachusetts Constitution for his argument, stated that compelling African American children to attend separate schools was to effectively "brand a whole race with the stigma of inferiority and degradation." Sumner maintained that a separate school "exclusively devoted to one class must differ essentially, in its spirit and character, from that public school known to the law where all classes meet together in equality" (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 409).

Justice Shaw of the Massachusetts Court was unconvinced by Sumner's assertion. As a result, race was viewed by Shaw to be a legitimate rationale for classification, and in 1849 he asserted that school segregation was for the good of both races, a decision that lasted for over a hundred years (Ravitch 233). Even though Shaw agreed with Sumner that all persons ought to stand equal before the law, he maintained that the standard of equality did not give the same civil and political powers to all. Shaw further stated that the law simply entitled people to equal consideration and protection for their maintenance and security. He maintained that the protected rights were dependent on the laws adapted to their respective relations and conditions (Harrison 7).

Shaw's historical opinion formed the basis for the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal doctrine" that remained in place for over six decades until the 1956 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The precedents set in these and in subsequent court decisions confirmed the view

of Oliver Wendell Holmes: "The law is a magic mirror by which we see reflected not only our own lives, but the lives of all men that have been" (Bartlett 643).

Precedents established in desegregation cases led to the U. S. Supreme Court adopted the separate but equal standard from the Massachusetts Constitution into the Constitution of the United States in 1896. Shaw's decision was cited in many state courts and by the U.S. Supreme Court as a way to justify state-approved separation of the races (Kluger, vol. 1: 93). Decisions of the Courts and the states' interpretation of the laws as they relate to precedents were described in *Simple Justice:*

> It is a maxim among these men that whatever has been done before may legally be done again: and therefore they take special care to record all the decisions formerly made, even those which have through ignorance or corruption contradicted the rule of common justice and the general reason of mankind. These under the name of precedents, they produce as authorities and thereby endeavor to justify the most iniquitous opinions. (Jonathan Swift qtd. in Kluger, vol. 2: 685).

In 1868 the United States ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to assure the constitutionality of revised statutes that had been enacted to prohibit racial discrimination. The primary purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment was to "assure the colored race" the enjoyment of all the civil rights that under the law

are enjoyed by whites. In spite of this, the Supreme Court refused to ban discrimination in private enterprises such as "restaurants, inns, conveyances and places of entertainment" (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 410).

Issues involving private discrimination moved to state-sanctioned discrimination when in Mississippi, a statute requiring segregated train cars was upheld because it pertained solely to transportation within the state. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U. S. Constitution was circumvented, thus making way for state-enforced classification of citizens by race. In the South, state action transformed the private custom of discrimination into state laws. Jim Crow laws that imposed racial segregation in all areas of life originated in Florida in 1887 and spread rapidly throughout the *South (Creation of the Jim Crow South* 1). These laws separated the races on streetcars, in boardinghouses, at water fountains, and in theatres. Even on the witness stand in courtrooms, different Bibles were designated, with "whites" written on the edges of the pages of one and "blacks" written on the other. Peck cites a courtroom in Asheville, North Carolina where the white clerk could not hold the "black" Bible when swearing in an African American witness (24-25).

The Civil Rights Acts of 1875 required equal access to and enjoyment of public transportation, inns, theaters, and other public places regardless of race. This was nullified when the courts addressed the issues of whether private citizens were included under Section Five of the Fourteenth

Amendment prohibiting discrimination. Justice Bradley delivered the opinion of the Court and concluded "[. . .] the law was concerned only with the state practicing discrimination. It makes no mention of individual persons infringing on individual rights" (*The Civil Rights Cases* 1).

Bradley followed the letter of the Amendment, but in a dissenting opinion Judge Harlan focused on the spirit of the law. The significance of the Court's assertion that this action was unconstitutional impacted the general history of desegregation. Justice Harlan stated:

> The opinions in these cases proceeds, it seems to me, upon grounds entirely too narrow and artificial. It is not the words of the law but the internal sense of it that makes the law; the letter of the law is the body; the sense of the law is the soul. If the constitutional amendments be enforced, according to the intent with which, as I conceive, they were adopted, there cannot be, in this republic, any class of human beings in practical subjection to another class, with power in the latter to dole out to the former just such privileges as they may choose to grant. *(The Civil Rights Cases* 5)

In 1896 the separate but equal rationale of the Sarah Roberts case became a national standard in *Plessy v. Ferguson* when the U. S. Supreme Court maintained the constitutionality of a 1890 Louisiana law. The statute, entitled "An Act to Promote the Comfort of Passengers," provided separate

but equal accommodations for the white and "colored" races. The Court maintained that because state legislatures had wide discretion in promoting public peace and good order, such actions would be upheld so long as they were reasonable (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 410). Although this case involved segregated railway accommodations and not educational issues, the Court cited the earlier Massachusetts case, *Roberts v. City of Boston,* in which the state high court endorsed school segregation. From this decision, the Court ruled explicitly that the "separate but equal" doctrine was applicable in the public school context (*Text of Supreme Court* 9).

Justice Brown, as the voice for the Court, made the Equal Protection Clause subject to custom and tradition in accordance with legislative interpretation—no matter how the law affected the African Americans. In disagreement in *Plessy*, Justice Harlan attacked the majority opinion and resolved: "Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among its citizens. In respect to civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law" (Erler 3). Harlan maintained that separation of the races was a "badge of servitude." According to Kluger in *Simple Justice*, the decision in the *Plessy* case was handed down by a very "conservative" court and seemed contradictory to the principles upon which this nation was founded (99-101).

After the *Plessy* case the prior stance of separation of the races was extended to education, a premise tested in 1899 in *Cumming v. Board of Education of Richmond, Georgia*. The Richmond County Board of Education

discontinued the black high school and turned the building into an elementary school because it needed more facilities to accommodate African American children at the grade school level. The high school students were told to seek their education in church-affiliated schools. When challenged, the U. S. Supreme Court maintained the only interest of the federal judiciary in this matter was to see that all citizens shared equally in the tax burden. The Court further maintained that the matter of education and how it was conducted and supported by that taxation was solely a state concern (Douglas 102).

Segregation in education continued to flourish and was upheld by the federal Court as evidenced by the 1908 case of *Berea College v. Kentucky*. In this case the U. S. Supreme Court upheld a state law that forbade any institution as a corporation to provide instruction to both races at the same time unless the classes were conducted at least twenty-five miles apart. This law, named after its author, became known as the "Day Law." It was established specifically to prohibit integration at Berea College even though the college had been founded in 1859 to provide non-discriminatory education for both African American and needy white students. The Court concluded that the college was a corporation of the state of Kentucky, subject to state regulation, and not entitled to all the immunities to which individuals were entitled under federal law (*Lincoln* 1).

The *Plessy* and *Berea College* cases did not completely give the state lawful rights to operate a separate system of education for African Americans

and whites. However, the decisions did allow the state to require that private schools be segregated as well. As a result, these cases served as the foundation for unlimited state discretion in defining what constituted separate but equal and ensured that the federal courts would not get involved (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 411).

Review of case law regarding desegregation indicated that separation of the races in education expanded to other ethnic groups. In 1927 the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Gong v. Rice*, held that states could segregate a Mongolian girl from white schools and force her to attend a school designated for black children. Since the state legislatures had the authority to define the limits of separate but equal, the concept was accepted with little controversy (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 411).

During the 1930s the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) addressed the issue of racial abuse by seeking judicial clarification of the limits of separate but equal as legal basis for segregation. The initial intent of the NAACP was to attack segregation where equal facilities were apparently inadequate or nonexistent. As a result of the NAACP's efforts, in 1938 the U. S. Supreme Court ruled seven to one in the landmark desegregation case of *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada.* The Court maintained that a Missouri law prohibiting African Americans from entering the University of Missouri Law School was unconstitutional because there were no other public law schools in the state to which African Americans

could go as an alternative (Hughes 136). The ruling was significant because it placed some boundaries on the implementation of separate but equal doctrine and represented explicit judicial authority in clarifying the Equal Protection Clause as a limitation on previously unimpeded state action in education (*State of Missouri* 5).

With the onset of World War II, very attention was given to desegregation issues until the 1950s when more direct judicial action was taken on the separate but equal doctrine. In 1950 the U.S. Supreme Court rendered two opinions in *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oaklahoma State Regents*, cases that defined the *Plessy* doctrine as an outmoded relic (Egerton 525).

The separate but equal doctrine was first tested when Sweatt, an African American mail carrier in Houston, sought admission to the University of Texas Law School. The state did not have a law school for African Americans, and under the precedent of *Gaines*, a lower Texas court ordered the state to establish such a school. The school was inadequate and caused Sweatt to reassert his request for admission to the University of Texas Law School (*Sweatt* 1).

This time the Supreme Court was forced to compare the two schools and render a decision as to their similarity. Chief Justice Fred Vinson resolved that even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of

race deprived minority children of equal educational opportunities. He further stated: "To separate children from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." The new law school "could never hope to be equal in reputation of the faculty; experience of the administration; position and influence of the alumni; standing in the community; tradition and prestige" (*Sweatt* 4).

Vinson's decision eliminated the use of separate law schools for African Americans when he maintained:

> The law school to which Texas is willing to admit (Sweatt) excludes from its student body members of the racial groups which number 85 percent of the population of the State and include most of the lawyers, witnesses, jurors, judges, and other officials with whom [he] will inevitably be dealing when he becomes a member of the Texas Bar. With such a substantial and significant segment of society excluded, we cannot conclude that the education offered [Sweatt] is substantially equal to that which he would receive if admitted to the University of Texas Law School. (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 412)

On June 5, 1950—the same day that the Court's decision on *Sweatt v. Painter*—was handed down, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *McLaurin v.*

Oaklahoma State Regents. The court ruled that if a state chose not to establish separate and substantially equal facilities for African Americans, it could not segregate them within the white school. The Court held unconstitutional the fact that McLaurin, a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Oklahoma, was required to sit and study in designated sections for African Americans in the classrooms, library, and dinning hall. The Court required that a "Negro" admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students. When making its decision in the *McLaurin* case, the Court took into account intangible factors such as "his ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession" (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 415).

In *Briggs v. Elliott,* a companion case to *Brown,* the issue of desegregation versus integration was defined by a federal district court in South Carolina. The Court maintained: "All that is decided, is that a state may not deny to any person on account of race the right to attend any school that it maintains…the Constitution, in other words, does not require integration, it merely forbids segregation." The northern courts also differentiated between desegregation and Integration by stating: "There is no constitutional duty on the part of the board to bus Negro or white children out of their neighborhoods or to transfer classes for the sole purpose of alleviating racial imbalance" (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 418).

While these cases exposed the weaknesses of the separate but equal doctrine, they were not enough to correct conditions for African American elementary and secondary public school children. However, there were several cases meandering through the lower courts that had the potential for challenging the separate but equal doctrine. The Supreme Court grouped five similar cases to be heard in 1952: *Brown v. Board of Education* from Kansas; *Briggs v. Elliott* from South Carolina; *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* from Virginia; *Belton v. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart* from Delaware; and *Bolling v. Sharpe* from Washington, DC. (Kluger, vol 2: 680-683).

These cases gave the U. S. Supreme Court several situations in which to view issues related to school segregation. The District of Columbia case questioned the stance of due process and congressional power. The Kansas case focused on permissive segregation for elementary children in a northern state, and the Virginia case centered on a compulsory segregation law for high school students in an upper southern state. South Carolina represented the deep South, and Delaware a border state. These cases, grouped as a single case, gave the Court's decision more significance because of the varied circumstances and the large size of the geographical area (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 413).

In Kansas the plaintiffs were African American children of Topeka who brought suit against the state for maintaining segregated schools. One of the

first events to perpetuate movement towards desegregation in schools occurred in 1954 with the case *of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. In this case, Reverend Oliver Brown objected to his daughter having to attend a distant, all-black school even though she passed an all-white school in the neighborhood on the way. The lower federal court concluded that segregation in public education had a detrimental effect on African American children but failed to give relief to the students because the facilities were substantially equal (Wolters 3).

The lower court in Virginia and South Carolina acknowledged that the black schools were inferior and ordered improvement for equalization. However, the court did not request admission for the African American students to the white school while repairs were being completed (*Text of Supreme Court* 6).

In *Belton v. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart*, the Delaware Court of Chancery's decision for the plaintiffs was upheld by the Delaware Supreme Court. This decision required admission of African American children to schools previously attended only by white children. In the Washington, DC case, *Bolling v. Sharpe*, African American children contended that segregation deprived them of due process of law under the Fifth Amendment since the Fourteenth Amendment did not apply to Congress (*Text of Supreme Court* 6-7).

The Court was reluctant to make a hasty decision in *Brown* because of the impact it would have on subsequent cases. The case was heard on December 9, 1952, but the Court did not reach a decision. On June 8, 1953 the case was rescheduled for presentation of new arguments that fall. The Court also submitted a list of questions to be addressed by the legal representatives of both sides (Douglas 113).

When a decision was finally reached, the message of the United States Supreme Court resounded throughout the nation. Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the unanimous opinion of the Court: "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of separate but equal has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (Wolters 5).

The effects of a separation in educational opportunities, both tangible and intangible, were eloquently and emphatically stated in *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka:

> Segregation of white and colored children in public has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of the law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of

> some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated school system. (Kluger, vol. 2: 986)

In theory, the *Brown* decision outlawed segregation in public schools (Bates 9). The case was one of the most important decisions ever rendered by the U. S. Supreme Court and had a dramatic impact on society. According to constitutional scholar Lewis H. Pollak, "Except for waging and winning the Civil War and World Wars I and II, the school Segregation Case was probably the most important governmental act of any kind in the United States since the Emancipation Proclamation" (qtd. in Kluger, vol. 1: i).

On the same day as *Brown*, the Court decided in *Bolling v. Sharpe* that racial segregation in the public schools of the District of Columbia was a denial of the due process of law guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment applied to the state but not the District of Columbia. The Court stated: "Classifications based solely on race must be scrutinized with particular care, since they are contrary to our traditions and hence constitutionally suspect" (Kluger, vol. 2: 991-993).

The *Brown* case has been re-opened many times. The decision in *Brown I* established school desegregation as a national policy. In essence, the Court ruled that segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race deprived minority children of equal educational opportunities, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors might be equal.

One year later, in *Brown II,* the Court forced its mandate and unanimously ordered local school authorities to comply with its earlier decision for desegregation of public schools "with all deliberate speed" (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1955). The phrase, "with all deliberate speed," was actually a slowing procession used by lawmakers to take their time in desegregating the schools (Douglas 115). This tactic was clearly demonstrated in Virginia when Judge Sterling Hutcheson stated that the Prince Edward Schools were doing "all that could reasonably be required in this period of transition." The Fourth Circuit Court ruled not only that Hutcheson should have set a time for compliance, but also gave clarification: "Deliberate speed [. . .] was intended to permit adjustment to administrative difficulties but not to authorize indefinite delay pending a change in public opinion" (Wolters 80.)

Southern political leaders, led by Senator Strom Thurmond, attempted to force a reversal of the Brown decision, pledging "[. . .] to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution." This defiance of the Supreme Court ruling resulted in the "Southern Manifesto" issued by ninety-six southern congressmen in March 1956. This document asserted that the Court had "[. . .] substituted their personal political and social ideas for the established law of the land" and was damaging amicable race relations, creating suspicion in place of friendship, and destroying public education. Included among those who would not sign the decree were Tennessee Congressmen Howard H. Baker, Sr., and Joe L.

Evins and Tennessee Senators Estes Kefauver and Albert Gore, Sr. (Egerton 621-623).

Racial conflict occurred in many of the states following the *Brown* decision. One of the incidents most publicized, both at the time it occurred and today, took place in Little Rock, Arkansas in the fall of 1957 when a federal court put an end to legal racial segregation by ordering the desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School. Governor Orval Faubus refused to obey the directive and ordered the National Guard to block the nine students, later known as the "Little Rock Nine," from entering the school (Katz 477). The governor and the Arkansas Legislature stated that they had no duty to obey federal court orders directed to them to achieve desegregation. In a televised speech on September 2, 1957, Faubus said if African American students tried to enter Little Rock's Central High School, "blood would run in the streets" (Morrill 6). As a last resort, President Dwight Eisenhower sent in the 101st Airborne Division to restore order (Beals 2).

Some historians view this act as the beginning of the equal rights movement. The U. S. Supreme Court was called on to render judgment in the Little Rock case with Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall presiding. The Court responded:

> In short, the constitutional rights of children not to be discriminated against in school admission on grounds of race or color declared by this Court in the Brown case can neither be

> nullified openly and directly by state legislators or state executive or judicial officers, nor nullified indirectly by them through evasive schemes for segregation whether attempted ingeniously or ingenuous. (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 417)

The *Brown II* decision marked the turning point in America's mandate to face the consequences of centuries of racial discrimination (Douglas 117). "All deliberate speed" was put to the test in the autumn of 1956 when a federal judge ordered immediate desegregation of the high school in a small east Tennessee town. In Clinton, Tennessee the consequences, though less publicized, were felt both before and after those that occurred in Little Rock, Arkansas.

HISTORY OF CLINTON, TENNESSEE

Clinton, Tennessee is located in Anderson County, one of the oldest and richest mining districts in Appalachia. Its neighboring communities are Oliver Springs, Lake City, Norris, and Oak Ridge, the latter built during World War II and formerly known as the secret city. Historian Wilma Dykeman describes the uniqueness of these communities:

> They are living evidence of a succession of frontiers: part of the trans-Appalachian frontier of the Old South, the industrial resource frontier of coal mining, the development of great hydroelectric power sources as well as the power generated by planned human communities, and the ultimate challenge of the

frontier of nuclear energy (Dykeman in Overholt, *Anderson County* 11).

Settlers in search of land and solitude founded Anderson County in 1790, but the Cherokee Indians were not happy with this invasion and massacred the settlers of the French Broad and Clinch Valleys. The early settlers vigorously fought the Cherokee and demonstrated that they had no intentions of leaving the East Tennessee Valley. By 1794 most of the violence had ended and the settlers began to develop the land. In 1801 Anderson County, along with Roane County, was officially created from what had formerly been a portion of Knox County. The decision to create two new counties out of Knox County was made because it was a long and difficult journey to the county seat. The newly formed Anderson County took its name from United States Senator Joseph Anderson who served in the Senate from 1797 to 1815. Anderson, a territorial judge, lived in Knoxville and was well known by the settlers in the region (Overholt, *Anderson County* 19).

Originally Clinton, Tennessee was named Burrville in honor of Vice-president Aaron Burr. Less than one hundred and fifty people lived in Burrville in 1803. During its first decade Clinton, Tennessee enjoyed growth and improvement. According to Robert Marlowe, lawlessness was brought under control, roads were improved, and religious congregations were organized although no churches were built at this time. A post office was established with a postmaster, and mail came from New York and

Philadelphia to Knoxville, leaving Knoxville on Mondays for Burrville. However, in 1809 with the demise of Aaron Burr, the citizens sought to change the name from Burrville to Clinton in honor of Thomas Jefferson's second vice-president, George Clinton (11-12).

During the second decade of Clinton's existence, the War of 1812 took place and was followed by a period of depression and the panic of 1819. During this time farms were sold for taxes, and businesses struggled to weather the storm (Marlowe 12). In 1810 the population of Anderson County was approximately four thousand, and by 1860 more than seven thousand people had moved to the area. Around three hundred of these residents lived in Clinton where more rapid growth would occur following the Civil War. During this time a two party system was established in Tennessee as Republicans controlled the eastern portion of the state while Democrats became firmly entrenched in middle and west Tennessee (Marlowe 12-13).

According to former Anderson County historian Katherine Hoskins, it was almost impossible to accurately trace the progress of education in Anderson County during the first six or seven decades after its formation, and local education reports before that date are non-existent (*Anderson County* 60). Although most of the early settlers were farmers, they realized the benefits of education and established home schools and field schools. In some situations churches were used as schools, and the preachers also served as teachers. The first school established in Anderson County was

located at the top of Walden's Ridge in 1802 when Rice Levi purchased fifty acres of land on which the settlers built the first school house in the area (Pratt 47).

In 1806 the Tennessee General Assembly provided for the establishment of "subscription schools." Funding sources included student tuition and proceeds from land sales, and Tennessee was required to set aside one hundred thousand acres to be used for schools and to establish one school in each county. As a result of this legislative action, the Union Academy of Anderson County was established in 1806 in the town then known as Burrville (Pratt 48).

Union Academy was originally established to admit only male students. Thirty-four years later it became mandatory under Tennessee law that "all county academies entitled to and drawing a portion of the academy fund of the state should receive female as well as male pupils and teach them in the several branches now being taught in said institutions." In 1817 Union Academy's charter was amended to admit females. Since all county children could not attend Union Academy, many individual citizens sought ways of providing an education for all of the children of Anderson County (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 62).

Although there were no free schools in Anderson County for many years after it became a county, from the very beginning the County Court made provisions for the education of indigent children. Orphans were "bound

over" or indentured to families for their work as servants in return for their room and board. Without exception, the head of household was ordered by the court to teach, or cause to be taught, a specified minimum education for the child (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 60).

In remote sections of the county, parents established home schools. Some parents established community schools where a sufficient number of families lived and pooled their resources to pay a teacher. Many one-room schoolhouses appeared, and school often was held in churches with the preacher as the instructor. Books were scarce, and on many occasions the teacher had the only textbook (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 62).

Almost all that is known about the history of Clinton from 1820 to the beginning of World War I comes from county records. Clinton flourished during the years 1820-1860 when schools and churches were built and businesses increased (Marlowe 12).

Tennessee's first school law was passed in 1823 and emphasized the need for education for all children regardless of economic or social standing. People who believed that education was only for the wealthy resisted this law which provided for the education of poor whites as well as African Americans (Pratt 48). Schools were established in any available buildings. Some parents provided firewood and made payment in the form of oats, iron, wheat, corn and whiskey. Dutch Valley community school, built by citizens of the

valley in as 1840, was destroyed by fire during or shortly after the Civil War (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 62).

In 1846 the subjects taught at four schools in the county were reading, writing, arithmetic, English, geography, spelling, and natural philosophy. Clinton Seminary, a Baptist school, was established in 1847 (Pratt 48). The Bible was one possession that families never left behind when they moved, and it was widely used as both a scholastic and religious textbook. The Bible provided "food for the mind and the soul" and served as a place of safe keeping for vital statistics such as records of birth, deaths, marriages and other important events. In many cases the Bible provided the only written account of such events until federal, state and county systems of permanent records were established (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 60).

According to Hoskins, there was a strong rivalry between the Baptist and Methodist denominations, each trying to outdo the other in religious activities as well as in education, business, and other aspects of community life. In 1847 the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee granted a charter of incorporation to the Clinton Seminary trustees. This was the Baptist School which, according to information received from older citizens, was located on Main Street. In 1849 a charter was granted by the state legislature for the Methodists to open a school. Known as the Clinton Grove Academy, it was built across the street from the Baptist School. It was a two-story brick building, and one of the earliest teachers was Charles D. McGuffey, who

became Anderson County's Superintendent of Schools in 1867 (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 62).

Clinton delegates were among those in attendance at a common school convention held in Knoxville in April 1848. The delegates recommended the appointment of a superintendent to preside over a state department of public instruction. Other recommendations included the division of counties into school districts, the selection of county boards of education by county courts, and the publication of a state journal devoted exclusively to the cause of education (Pratt 49).

Many events that affected Clinton took place in America in the years to follow. Among these was the *Trail of Tears*, which resulted from an order that removed the Cherokee Indians to the west and ended the last Indian claims in Tennessee. Other events included the Mexican War and the issue of slavery. Records indicate that slavery existed in Clinton and Anderson County, and 260 slaves and five free African Americans were included in a total county population of 3,959 in 1810. By 1860 there were 583 slaves and eight free African Americans among the county's total population of 7,068. It is thought that only 1.7 percent of Anderson County's residents owned slaves because the East Tennessee landscape and settlement patterns was not suitable for slavery. Of the 108 slave-holding households in 1860, fifty-nine percent owned five slaves or less. One man, Collins Roberts, owned forty slaves (Marlowe 13).

Although very little is known about slave conditions in Clinton, several merchants did buy and sell slaves for profit. The county contained at least two slave markets, one in Andersonville and the other in Robertsville, an area that would later become part of the city of Oak Ridge. Buying and selling slaves was handled on a private basis just as any other property, and many such transactions were recorded in the register of deeds office similar to land transfers. Slaves were often willed or bequeathed to relatives or friends, and there is no written account of extreme cruelty or gross neglect. Absence of such documentation, however, does not preclude the existence of mistreatment. The 1860 census noted that there were 583 slaves resided in 134 homes in Anderson County (Marlowe 14).

According to Hoskins, the role of African American citizens in Anderson County has not been sufficiently documented to fully portray their historical significance in the development of the region, what they overcame in the process, or the renewed interest in preserving black culture and heritage for future generations. The general belief of those who sought to preserve Anderson County's history was that any and all findings, pleasant and unpleasant, would provide further insight and perspective into the history of the county (*Anderson County* 259).

During the post-Civil War reconstruction days, Gov. William G. Brownlow sought to protect the African Americans. In his plea to the general Assembly on April 6, 1865, Brownlow asked legislators to pass laws for the

protection and government of the emancipated slaves: "The negro has had no agency himself in bringing all our troubles, and does not merit unkind treatment at our hands" (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 256).

Fear and anxiety engulfed Anderson County in the 1800s when a rumor spread that a band of one thousand slaves was marching from Virginia toward Clinton. More than five hundred men supposedly gathered in Clinton to meet the anticipated invasion which never occurred. During the 1840s slavery caused a huge rift between the North and the South and, in Tennessee, between the eastern part of the state and the other two grand divisions. Abraham Lincoln's election to the Presidency in 1860 provoked the South's final break from the union over the issue of slavery (Marlowe 14).

Tennessee prepared for war in 1861, and middle and west Tennessee gradually fell to Union control the following year while much of east Tennessee remained under Confederate control until the end of 1863. Clinton and Anderson County found themselves divided just like the rest of east Tennessee. Shortly after the beginning of the Civil War, most schools in Tennessee were closed, and the next few years would see little progress in education.

Although no major battles took place in or near Clinton, the town was on one of the main routes between Knoxville and Cumberland Gap and other mountain passes into Kentucky. The road was traveled constantly by units from both sides, and the area was caught in the crossfire. General Robert E.

Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865, and five days later Abraham Lincoln was murdered. As vice president Andrew Johnson of Tennessee assumed the presidency during the early Reconstruction era, former slaves experienced many problems. Rumors spread of night riders whipping ex-slaves and ex-Unionists, and a group similar to the Ku Kux Klan sprung up, often riding in full regalia through the streets of Clinton (Marlowe 14-16).

At the end of the Civil War the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Tennessee reopened. The first report by the Office of Superintendent prepared in 1869 by John Eaton, Jr. stated: "The organization of free schools for the universal education of the people, has by Divine favor, been affected in Tennessee" (Pratt 49).

This revision of the 1866 school law passed by the Tennessee legislature provided free education to all African American and white children between the ages of six and twenty. Failure to comply with this law would result in a loss of state funds (Pratt 49). In an interview, Judge Buford Lewallen reiterated this point: "We had a law in Tennessee that stated that if a governing body like a school board or city allowed the commingling of the races, they were denied access to school funds."

Tennessee's African American children were to be educated in separate but equal facilities, although state funding proved to be inadequate in providing for the needs of such schools. A law passed March 5, 1867

allowed districts to levy school taxes, but by 1872 Anderson County had levied no school tax, poll tax, or property tax (Pratt 49).

The first school superintendent in Anderson County Schools, Charles D. McGuffey, served from 1867 until 1872 when county superintendents were appointed in Tennessee and submitted reports to the state superintendent. He was followed by James C. Scruggs who is credited with making "strenuous efforts to provide equal school facilities for Negro children" (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 127-129).

It is believed the first school for African Americans was established in 1869 on land donated by a freed slave. On May 1, 1869 Andrew Freeman of Anderson County executed a deed conveying 1.25 acres of land to the school directors of the Eighth Civil District of Anderson County. The deed stated: "Andrew Freeman is desirous of donating a site for a school house for the colored children and colored people of Anderson County, and for a place of religious worship for the colored people of the county." Since few records of educational activity were preserved for that era, no record other than the deed has been found regarding the operation of what was known as the Whittier School House. A later school, Woods Chapel, was located in the old Fourth Civil District of Anderson County, and twenty-five children were enrolled in grades one through (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 263).

As a result of the School Board Ordinance of 1895, the Clinton City Schools were established. According to the September 11, 1895 article in the

Clinton Gazette, Sampson DeRossett, Ph.D., was appointed to head the Union Academy for 304 white students. The article stated "[. . .] Miss Hatcher with firm hand and experience established her authority as principal of the colored school" with an enrollment of seventy students. While the high school remained under the jurisdiction of the Anderson County Schools, the city's newly established school system undertook the responsibility for educating Clinton's elementary age students. Clinton Grammar School was constructed for white students, and Green McAdoo School was built for African American students. Clinton Grammar School had an enrollment of around two hundred students and a staff of six while Green McAdoo School's enrollment fluctuated from fifty to one hundred students with a staff of one to three (Pratt 52).

The Green McAdoo school was named for the late Green L. McAdoo, a respected and loved citizen of Anderson County. McAdoo served in the Army for twenty years with the 24th Infantry and often wrote his mother, Mrs. Lottey McAdoo of Clinton, about his numerous battles with Indians. In 1896 at age forty, Green McAdoo returned home from the Army and was employed by the Anderson County Court as a custodian for twenty-five years (Hoskins, *Anderson County* 263).

Following the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, African Americans gained considerable freedom and equality. However, during the 1880s and 1890s southern legislatures, which were back in the hands of conservative Democrats, sought

to diminish those rights in an effort to control voting privileges and other rights. Referred to as Jim Crow laws, these fell under the premise of "separate but equal" and had a long lasting effect on both African Americans and whites in Clinton. Clinton did not differ from other towns that practiced Jim Crow laws, and the number of Negroes voting decreased as "whites only" signs became visible. Public and private facilities reserved for Negroes were generally inferior to those designated for whites, and the local newspaper referred to African Americans with terms such as "high yellow" and "young buck" (Marlowe 19).

Time brought change in Anderson County even though many residents tried to cling to qualities of pioneer life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Clinton had its own bank, school system, library, new courthouse, thriving businesses, saw mills, and newspaper, but also had separate facilities for African American citizens. The next few years brought continued growth as bridges replaced ferries on the river and the first motor car came to town. The town also experienced tragedies that deeply affected Clinton. Coal mines suffered severe explosions, and many miners lost their lives in the explosions of 1902 and 1911. Two major fires in 1905 and 1908 destroyed many businesses and several homes (Marlowe 19).

From 1930 to 1960, Anderson County became a landmark with two major dams and two new cities, Norris and the secret city of Oak Ridge, which was built for a secret war mission. The federal government began buying up

land south of Clinton, and the county grew to a population of 75,000. In 1943 the county seat of Clinton grew from a population of four thousand to more than seventy-five hundred. On August 6, 1945 the world's first Atomic bomb exploded over Japan, and it was announced that the radioactive heart of the atomic bomb was developed in nearby Oak Ridge (Marlowe 20-22). Clinton survived the war and prospered only to face a different kind of domestic war that would garner the attention of the entire country as it divided the citizens of a small East Tennessee town.

DESEGREGATION IN CLINTON, TENNESSEE

Politicians and lawmakers throughout the South displayed open and complete defiance of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown* as soon as it was announced. The "Southern Manifesto" decree denounced the *Brown* ruling and called for "all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution." As a result, the pace of integration began to slow down considerably. Although two hundred school districts had become newly integrated in 1956, only thirty-eight new ones had integrated one year later (Katz 477).

The integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas directed national attention to the issue of Civil Rights and the enforcement of the 1954 *Brown* decision (Katz 478). Although the literature suggested that less media attention has been given to the 1956 desegregation of Clinton High School in Clinton, Tennessee, the events were comparable to those of Central High

School and generated national and international attention at the time they occurred. An article in the *New York Times* Magazine stated: "[. . .] no town mirrors another. But Clinton's struggle with the race question has many of the elements common to other communities in the South" and offered the opinion that Clinton may determine the course of events for other states that pledge to carry out the Supreme Court's mandate for integrated schools (Barrett 11).

In August 1950 Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville attorney, formally requested the enrollment of five African American students in Clinton High School (Roberts 54). Citing Tennessee law forbidding their entrance, Principal D. J. Brittain and Superintendent Frank E. Irwin instructed them to attend Campbell County Colored High School in LaFollette (Roberts 54). Prior to August 1950, African American students had been transported to schools in LaFollette and Rockwood in Roane County (Greene 193).

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed suit in U.S. District Court on behalf of five African American students in Anderson County who were seeking admission to Clinton High School (Wells 79). In an unpublished manuscript, Sydney Davis, attorney for the Anderson County Schools, cited twenty seven key points relating to the *McSwain v. Anderson County Board of Education* case:

> On December 5, 1950, Joheather McSwain, James Dickie, William Dickie, Lillian Willis, Shirley Willis, and parents Allen McSwain, Clifford Dickie, Mary Dickie, and O.W. Willis filed suit

> against the County Board of Education of Anderson County, Tennessee, Frank E. Irwin, and D. J. Brittain, Jr., in the United States District Court in Knoxville, Tennessee. The suit was docketed as Civil Cause Number 1555. School Board's individual members sued were J. M. Burkhart, C. L. Brown, Dr. J. M. Cox, Jack Duncan, O. C. Mayes, Thomas A. Sharp, and J. M. Sisson.
>
> Attorneys Z. Alexander Looby of Nashville, Avon N. Williams and Carl A. Cowan of Knoxville were provided by the NAACP as counsel for the Negro children. (Roberts 55)

Among Davis' other points was a question: "Why did these attorneys and Thurgood Marshall pick Anderson County to strike at Tennessee's constitutional and statutory requirements for the segregation [. . .] in public schools?" In an attempt to answer the question, Davis stated that there were three high schools for 1,169 white students in Anderson County, and the *1934 Tennessee Code Section 239.7* prohibited building a high school for less than seventy-five students. Therefore, the thirty African American students would continue to attend the "Grade C" school in LaFollette as opposed to the "Grade A" Clinton High School (Roberts 55).

Following this litigation Anderson County Schools contracted for African American students to attend school in Knoxville. Greene surmised that this contract was more economical for the schools and required the

students to travel farther to schools "possibly superior to those in LaFollette or Rockwood" (193). Brittain, however, maintained that the African Americans had been sent to LaFollette for budgetary reasons since tuition was $30 per pupil there and $190 at Austin High School (53).

Davis pointed out that the Board of Education "[. . .] voted to pay all expenses [transportation and tuition] for any Anderson County Negro child desiring to attend Austin High School in Knoxville, Tennessee, or an equivalent amount for attendance at other high schools." The Board attempted to send the African American students to Oak Ridge High School, which was operated at government expense on federal property, but was refused by Oak Ridge authorities (Roberts 56).

Meanwhile the *McSwain v. Board of Education* case proceeded in Federal Court with Davis and W. Buford Lewallen, assisted by John T. Gilbertson of Knoxville, serving as special legal counsel to the Board. On June 25, 1951, upon the advice of these attorneys, the Board adopted a resolution stating four key points: (1) the impossibility of operating a high school for African Americans in Anderson County; (2) the designation of Austin High School [in Knoxville] and Rockwood High School [in Roane County] as the official schools for African American students with bus routes established accordingly; (3) the policy to provide African American students in Anderson County the same and equal opportunity as whites to a high school education; and (4) the intent to obey the Constitution and statutes of the

country and state and to provide equal school facilities at all grade levels for both African American and white students (Roberts 56).

The trial began on February 13, 1952, and the attorneys for both sides based their arguments on well-known cases. Davis wrote that the attorneys for the plaintiffs argued if it was unlawful to send a student to school out of state as had been ruled in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, then it was unlawful to send students to school out of the county in which they resided. Attorneys for the Board of Education based their case on the "separate but equal" ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. On May 19, 1952 Judge Robert L. Taylor dismissed the case on the grounds that the Board was providing equal or better educational facilities to the African American students (Roberts 57). In denying their petition for entrance into the all-white school, Judge Taylor stated:

> The court finds on the basis of testimony by plaintiff students and their parents that in general none of them are 'aggrieved' at the present arrangement, and that they are not happy in their role of hostility toward defendants, who are their neighbors and personal friends. (*Tyranny* 7).

For almost six years, Anderson County fought the suit at a cost of approximately seven thousand dollars (Overholt, *Anderson County* 172). The Tennessee Federation for Constitutional Government's publication, *Tyranny at Oak Ridge*, found it odd that a suit of this nature would be filed in an "East

Tennessee county where racial problems had been conspicuous by their absence." This conservative, segregationist organization further maintained that the county had been "singled out as a 'pilot project' for the integration of the races in Tennessee" (7).

The plaintiffs in *McSwain* took the case to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati on June 13, 1952 (Roberts 57). Although some maintained this case was destined for the U. S. Supreme Court, a decision was handed down in *Brown v. Board of Education* that would determine the appellate court's ruling in *McSwain* (Lamon 99). On May 17, 1954 the unanimous decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that "separate but equal" had no place in public education would change the course of events in Clinton, Tennessee.

Prior to 1954, the posture of the courts dictated that segregation of the races was acceptable (Overholt, *Anderson County* 172). However, following the May 31, 1955 announcement that public education for African Americans must be provided with all deliberate speed, the plaintiff's attorneys in *McSwain* petitioned the U. S. District Court to require the students' enrollment at Clinton High School. This was a moot point for the original plaintiffs since all had graduated from high school. A decree submitted to Judge Taylor by Anderson County Attorney Eugene Joyce restrained the Board from refusing to admit students on the basis of race (Roberts 57-58). In an affidavit to the U. S.

District Federal Court, Anderson County Superintendent of Schools Frank E. Irwin asked for a delay of the order:

> I believe that immediate integration can do irreparable harm to relations between parties of both races, and that common sense dictates that caution be used when entering into an action that is overthrowing a tradition that has endured in Anderson County since its beginning. I believe it is to the best interest of both races that a sufficient time be allowed in order that the people affected can become emotionally conditioned to the idea of integration, so that the possibility of violence might be lessened. Having this thrust on our county too soon can result in a situation beyond our power to control. (Brittain 52)

On January 4, 1956 when the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Judge Taylor to rule in accordance with the *Brown* decision, he stated that the African American students in Clinton were acting not just for themselves, but for all students in similar situations. In a final decree *in McSwain v. Board of Education*, Judge Taylor was specific in his definition of "all deliberate speed" when he ordered that segregation of high school students in Anderson County be ended no later than the fall term of 1956 (Roberts 58).

The Tennessee Supreme Court 's declaration that all statutes requiring segregation in Tennessee public schools were unconstitutional marked the beginning of an unexpected chain of events in Clinton, Tennessee. According

to Stokley and Johnson, this small county seat town in Anderson County was an unlikely candidate for the headlines that spread across the world in 1956, 1957, and 1958. The headlines told of the violence that accompanied the integration of Clinton High School and resulted in the deployment of the National Guard, the arrest and conviction of the leading segregationists, and the dynamiting of the school (113).

Anderson County school officials were instructed to register African American children at Clinton High School in the 1956-57 school year (*Tennessee Blue Book* 412-413). Quill E. Cope, Tennessee Commissioner of Education, informed the Superintendent of Anderson County Schools, Frank E. Irwin, that the opinion of the state Attorney General "placed the problem of school desegregation in the hands of local school boards" (Brittain 61). Irwin delegated the problem to the principal, D. J. Brittain, who stated:
"Since Clinton was the only county high school with Negro applicants, responsibility for implementing the order of Judge Taylor was left in the hands of one person—the Principal of Clinton High School" (68).

A committee consisting of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) presidents and principals of each "white and Negro school in Anderson County" met with members of the Board of Education and County Court on November 3, 1955 for the purpose of formulating a plan for school desegregation. The "Integration Committee" identified these obstacles: "A definite lack of facts among the parents; crowded conditions in the school and

on school buses; the small number of colored children in the county; and the attitude of citizens of the county" (Brittain 62-64).

According to Brittain, he and the high school staff planned cooperatively with the committee. Plans included formal and informal discussions with faculty integration, and communication with the public through the news media, personal conferences, home visits, public meetings, and school visitations. Teachers planned assemblies, debates, themes, articles in the school paper, and open discussions to educate students regarding integration. The principal and teachers personally conducted orientation at each elementary school in the county to answer questions, informing both white and African American students that "integration would not be extended to social functions held outside of school hours." The final component of the plan was the high school faculty's adoption of a policy to obey legal authority, treat all students impartially, and accept integration on an educational basis (71-83). It was publicized that African American students would take the same achievement tests as whites and could participate in athletic events provided none of the competing all-white schools objected (Wells 81).

One year earlier, in 1955, eighty-five African American students enrolled in the Oak Ridge junior and senior high schools without incident (Lamon100). In *Crisis in Print* written by Hugh Davis Graham, it was noted that newspapers in Tennessee "took little more than judicial notice" of this

event since Oak Ridge was under federal jurisdiction. Oak Ridge High School was not considered a Tennessee public school and had been ordered by the federal government to desegregate (76).

Race relations in Clinton had been relatively good with African American citizens participating in joint religious and civic activities and owning homes in predominately white neighborhoods. Some believed the conflict in Clinton was not between the races but between proponents of desegregation and those who felt that the court order should be obeyed (Stokely and Johnson 114).

Horace V. Wells, Jr., editor and publisher of the *Clinton Courier-News*, substantiated this view in an editorial written on August 30, 1956: "We have never heard anyone in Clinton say he wanted integration in the schools, but we have heard a great many people say, 'We believe in the law. We will obey the ruling of the court. We have no other lawful choice'" (Fleming 443).

According to a field study conducted by Fisk University in December 1956, influential businessmen and civic leaders did not attempt to resist or defy the integration order. When asked, they simply said, "It is the law" (Holden and Valien 10). The study quoted a member of the Clinton Board of Alderman who had hoped that the Supreme Court would eventually reverse its decision: "Ninety percent of the people in Clinton are opposed to integration, but you can't find a business man or person with any influence who is so much against it that he will violate the law to oppose it" (14).

In his book, *The Days Before Yesterday*, Wells said, "This was the first time I was brought face to face with my view of segregation." He concluded that African American students in the county had been afforded separate, but not equal, school facilities in the elementary grades at Lake City and Oliver Springs and noted that the Clinton City Schools did have a "relatively new" brick building, Green McAdoo School (Wells 80).

On August 20, 1956 more than eight hundred students registered for school in Clinton. Of the twenty-six teachers and two administrators, none had ever worked in an integrated school (Brittain 58). Interviews with student Alfred Williams and Gail Ann Epps (later Upton) identified eleven of the twelve African American students who made history when they enrolled in Clinton High School: Jo Ann Allen, Bobby Cain, Thresser Caswell, Minnie Ann Dickey, Gail Ann Epps, Ronald Hayden, Alva J. McSwain, Maurice Soles, Robert Thacker, Regina Turner, and Alfred Williams. The name of the twelfth student, a male, could not be recalled by any of the participants and was not found in the literature. Both Epps (Upton) and Williams believed this student was in school only a short time before his family moved from Clinton. One article identified Williams' brother, Charles Williams, and his half-brother, Edward Lee Soles, as attending Clinton High School in 1956. In an interview, however, Williams stated only he and his younger brother, Maurice Soles, enrolled in school there that year.

On the first day of school these African American students were met peacefully by the staff and white students, although a small group of white protesters had gathered at the school (Lamon 100). An African American student, Jo Ann Allen, was elected vice-president of her homeroom, and integration at Clinton High School was calm and orderly (Barrett 12). On August 27 classes began with 727 students and no protest, and 806 were present on August 28. Attendance dropped to 706 on August 29 and to 600 two days later. The following Tuesday, the day after Labor Day, a total of 260 students came to school, and the reasons for the drop in attendance soon became apparent (Wells 83).

Protests began and attendance fell when Asa Carter of the Alabama White Citizens Council and John Kasper, a staunch supporter of segregation from New Jersey, arrived in Clinton (*Tennessee Blue Book* 412). In a 1959 dissertation, D. J. Brittain, principal of Clinton High school, identified specific individuals as "opposing school integration." These included residents Alonzo Bullock, Laurence Brantley, Mary Nell Currier, W. H. Till, Clyde Cook, John Roy, Clifford Carter, and John Gates. Non-residents were John Kasper, Asa Carter, and Raulston Schoolfield, who was a Judge in Hamilton County (86). A July 21, 1958 article in *Time* magazine, reported that Schoolfield had been removed from the bench by the Tennessee Legislature on three counts of misconduct: "(1) accepting a 'gift' Pontiac from local racketeers, (2) using the

bench for political purposes, and (3) indulging in obscene language in court" (Brittain 103).

Organizations identified in Brittain's study as "opposing integration" were the Ku Kux Klan, the Tennessee Federation of Constitutional Government, the White Citizens' Council, and the White Citizens' Youth Council (85). An article in *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* named three additional organizations that came to Clinton to encourage white defiance: the Pre-Southerners, the States' Rights Council of Tennessee, and the Tennessee Society to Maintain Segregation (McMillen 319).

According to the literature, Clinton was one of many places in the South where Kasper attempted to incite the citizenry. Morrill told of Kasper's visit to Charlotte, North Carolina where he delivered an inflammatory speech in front of the courthouse and called for whites to fight the school board. He referred to "provocative and outlandish comments made by a racist rabble-rouser name John Kasper" who had already incited crowds in Winston-Salem and Greensboro (7). In Nashville, Tennessee Kasper held nightly rallies and was the one individual who was named most often by officials for "stirring up opposition to school integration" in Nashville as he had done in Clinton (*Now: Dynamite* 75).

Kasper, the executive secretary of the Seaboard White Citizens Council, saw it as his mission to disrupt the integration order by distributing leaflets and soliciting others to join his movement. He began his efforts by

calling parents and heightening their anxiety about the mixing of African Americans and whites in the school. Some parents hung up while others listened with renewed anxiety. He went from door to door arousing suppressed emotions and fears by showing pictures of African American soldiers kissing white girls and asking if that was what they wanted for their daughters. He warned that unless integration was stopped, a mongrel society would be the end result (Stokely and Johnson 113-114).

Interestingly, McMillen wrote of committee hearings held by the Florida State Legislature in which Kasper acknowledged that he had socialized with "Negroes of both sexes" and had hosted interracial parties at his Greenwich Village Bookshop (320). L.D. Poynter, head of a state federation of citizens councils, was quoted in an article in the *Arkansas Democrat*: "Kasper is not affiliated with the council movement in the Southern states and we have some doubts as to his origin" (*Kasper* 1).

His origin was found partially in his affiliation with poet Ezra Pound, as disclosed in an interview with Celdon Lewallen, former English teacher at Clinton High School. Ostensible confirmation of this relationship was found in an online book on the American Nazi Party web site. In describing a Washington meeting to organize the right-wing contingency, the web site reported an event in a McLean, Virginia mansion belonging to a correspondent with Bill Buckley's *National Review*. John Kasper was one of about fifty who attended, and he came to the meeting with an Arab friend:

> [. . .] John Kasper [. . .] ran a tiny right-wing bookstore in Georgetown which was frequented by a Bohemian set of odd-balls, dope addicts, poets, and patriots. We confessed to one another our dedication to Adolf Hitler, whom he called "the Saint"—but he had an even greater love: Ezra Pound [. . .]. John Kasper led a circle of worshipful admirers who sat at the master's feet there in the hospital ward full of raving madmen. (11-12)

The author stated that Kasper worked at the direction of Pound and treasured and obeyed Pound's daily letters of instruction. He also believed "John's activity in Clinton and elsewhere was largely inspired, if not directed, by Pound" (American Nazi Party 12). This association was further confirmed by Katha Pollitt in an online posting:

> [. . .] Pound's neo-Nazi racist disciple in the 1950s [. . .] was a young man named John Kasper, who, with Pound's help from the hospital, founded the Seaboard White Citizen's Council after the Supreme Court outlawed segregation. Motto: Honor- Pride-Fight/Save the White! Kasper was also connected to the American Nazi Party and the KKK, and was involved in [. . .] anti-desegregation riots in Tennessee. [. . .] Eventually, Kasper went to federal prison, a copy of *Mein Kampf* under his arm. (1)

As a result of the Florida State Legislature's committee hearings, Kasper was ostracized by even the most extreme white supremacists, and his appearances at rallies were cancelled. Segregationists claimed Kasper was a "[. . .] double agent, planted by race-mixers in order to discredit the entire resistance movement" and denounced his activities, saying the Citizens' Councils of America were not "Ku Kluxers" or "John Kaspers" (McMillen 321).

The literature suggests that many citizens of Clinton agreed with Amis Gutridge, an attorney and charter member of the Council in Little Rock, who said: "We do not want him in Arkansas. He will not be welcome in Arkansas. We will not have anything to do with him" (*Kasper* 1).

On Saturday, August 25, 1956, twenty-six year-old Frederick John Kasper did come to Clinton. When newspaper publisher and editor H. V. Wells learned that Kasper would be coming to the *Clinton Courier-News* office to "buy poster board for placards," he contacted city officials—mayor W.E. Lewallen, assistant attorney general Walter Fischer, and the Board of Aldermen: Carl Long; R. A. Moser; William A. Turnbill; F. A. Hobbs; George E. Anderson; and James M. (Mack) Sievers, Sr. In a meeting with Kasper, they urged him not to picket the high school (Wells 83). The town leaders informed Kasper that they had fought desegregation for five years and now intended to obey the court order. Kasper replied: "[. . . under common law, people were superior to the courts, and if enough of them opposed a rule, they could change it" (Graham 93).

That evening about fifty people gathered at the courthouse where Kasper urged them to picket the school. In spite of assurances that the protest would be peaceable, Fischer ordered Kasper's arrest, charging him with vagrancy and inciting a riot. He was taken to the county jail in lieu of a five thousand dollar bond, and from jail he reportedly phoned friends in Washington, D.C. to ask them to spread the news of his arrest (Wells 83). The Nashville *Tennessean* hailed Kasper's arrest as "Mission Unaccomplished" (Graham 93). Unfortunately, the headline did not accurately predict the events that would follow.

On Monday, August 27, the first day of school, less than a dozen people picketed the high school with their homemade signs against desegregation. When the African American students arrived, three of the protesting white students put down their signs and went to school where the "[. . .] day passed quietly and with no major incident." This changed when Kasper was released from jail on Tuesday, August 28 for lack of evidence. He and more than twenty adults immediately went to the high school to demand that forty-one year-old principal D. J. Brittain either "run the Negroes off or resign" (Graham 94).

In an assembly held that day, the principal informed the students of his intent to follow the court order regarding desegregation. Teachers were not present at a meeting conducted by Student Council President Jerry Shattuck when students voted 614 to zero to support their principal. This was followed

by a poll of their parents who, in a secret ballot, supported the principal by a vote of 447 to six (Brittain 185).

By Wednesday, August 29 the crowd at the high school had grown to about one hundred adults and teenagers who resorted to violence when they confronted African American students trying to enter the school. That evening when Kasper addressed one thousand people in front of the courthouse, a restraining order was served by a U. S. marshal. The order, issued by Federal Judge Robert Taylor at the request of local officials, prohibited Kasper from "hindering or impeding desegregation" at the high school (Graham 95). The order was torn up by Kasper who continued speaking to the crowd, an act for which he was sentenced to a year in jail for contempt of court when he later appeared before Taylor on August 30 and 31 (Wells 84). Kasper filed an appeal and remained out on bond, continuing to be a vocal force against desegregation.

In an editorial published in the *Clinton Courier-News* on August 30, Wells beseeched the citizens to obey the law and spoke of Kasper by name, calling him a "[. . . smart trouble maker who had nothing to lose [. . .] when he leaves, the scars on the community will mark his passing." Wells' editorial hit home with the readers:

> The trouble this man Kasper is creating will serve only two purposes—to line his pockets with membership fees he will collect and turn this community upside down—bringing us

> headlines throughout the country, headlines that will make it practically impossible to interest new *industries* to come and locate here, that will drive away people who might want to come here and build homes.
>
> [. . .] This country of ours was founded on the Constitution—and Kasper would have you throw away the Constitution. He calls others Communists, but he is using the very same tactics they use [. . .] mob rule [. . .]. This is a democracy—if 803 students and their parents are willing to accept the ruling of the court and attend school, then the majority certainly has ruled and that should be the final decision. (Graham 96)

The unrest continued as a crowd of approximately two hundred people threw things at the African American students as they left school. Although three were arrested following this incident, Clinton's six-man police force faced serious problems controlling the growing crowds (Graham 96).

Some media reports were critical of Judge Taylor's actions against Kasper and credited him with contributing to the unrest. The *News-Free Press* of Chattanooga asserted that Kasper had been used as "[. . .] an example and a convenient target of the court's indignation," stating:

> If the [. . .] judicial action to deny freedom of speech to those who dissent, we have indeed come to dangerous times. [. . .] If such rulings become accepted, they might well be applied to

> all who are critical and not only to agitators like Kasper.
>
> (Graham 98)

News-Free Press editor Roy MacDonald felt Clinton was an example of "ugly excesses by the mob on one side and the Federal judiciary on the other." One possible solution he suggested was the "replacement of public schools with private ones." The editorial closed with a warning statement: "Clinton is not far from Chattanooga—in miles or in time" (Graham 98).

This proved to be an ominous prediction when, on August 30, a Klansman named Asa (Ace) Carter arrived from Alabama and began making speeches that incited segregation advocates (Overholt, *Anderson County* 173). Twelve to fifteen hundred people were joined by about two thousand others who had been attending the football game a block away. The large numbers gave the segregationists the attention they craved, and numerous threats were made, including burning the courthouse and the mayor's home (Wells 84). Cars were overturned, tires were slashed, and African Americans traveling though town on highway 25-W, the only major thoroughfare to the north, were threatened (Graham 98).

Things had worsened to the point that forty special deputies, including Sydney Davis who had represented the schools against integration, were sworn in by a local judge (*Boldest Move* 37). This group of local citizens, referred to as the home guard, included teachers, attorneys, and merchants. They obtained guns from the Knoxville police and "formed a wall around the

Courthouse to protect it from the mob, which was angry because County Judge J. D. Yarnell had refused to let them use the courtroom for their meeting" (Wells 85).

Brittain's dissertation confirmed the role of the Auxillary Police, or home guard, by listing them as one of the "organizations supporting integration." Others identified were the Chamber of Commerce, Civitan Club, Clinton Courier-News, Clinton High Faculty, Clinton High Student Council, Law Enforcement Officers and Some Public Officials, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), and various religious groups (137). The twelve individuals named as supporters of integration all were residents of Clinton. Those identified were: W. E. Lewallen, mayor and merchant; H. V. Wells, Jr., editor and publisher of the *Clinton Courier-News*; Paul Turner, minister of First Baptist Church; R. G. Crossno, school board member and dairy owner; J. M. Burkhart, school board member and merchant; Francis Moore, school board member and chief of police; Leo Burnett, office clerk; and Jane Miller, PTA president and housewife. Also listed were four attorneys Walter Fischer, Leo Grant, Sidney Davis, and W. Buford Lewallen (138). Davis and Lewallen had represented the Anderson County Schools in the *McSwain* case.

At first the state of Tennessee refused to become involved in the desegregation problems in Clinton, although threats of violence eventually brought the Tennessee Highway Patrol and later the National Guard to Clinton. The arrival of the state police and National Guard in Clinton was what

Clement later would refer to as the "hardest decision of his life." Reportedly Clement managed to be "unreachable" most of that week, knowing that whatever action he chose could be politically dangerous. Word was sent to officials in Clinton that the governor would consider sending state assistance only upon word from the sheriff that they were losing control (Greene 204).

On September 1, 1956 H. V. Wells sent a telegram to Clement: " Lives and property are threatened by mobs that rage out of control. [. . .] We need immediate relief." This was followed by a resolution from Mayor W. E. Lewallen and the Board of Aldermen requesting help. Finally sheriff Glad Woodward made an official written request that was flown to Nashville by special plane: "I therefore formally request that you direct State Assistance be sent to Anderson County immediately and to remain during the emergency. Please give me your decision by telephone or telegram at the earliest possible moment" (Greene 205).

Greene wrote that the buck had now stopped with Clement, and the state's leaders met at the Governor's mansion to plan strategies. Among those present were Adjutant General Joe Henry, Assistant Adjutant General Van Nunally, Secretary of State Joe Carr, and Attorney General George McCanless. Some wanted to send in the troops without ammunition, and others wanted to send only those troops who were over twenty-one years of age. Henry refused to do either: "[. . .] when I take the National Guard, I'm going to take all of them." Henry recalled that the troops went in with loaded

guns: "It was not a sham or pretense. We were ready in Clinton" (Greene 205).

After these decisions were made, Clement said in a statewide broadcast to Tennesseans: "I cannot sit back as governor and allow a lawless element to take over. If they can take over Tennessee because of one issue they can take it over on others. It may be your home they take over next" (*Halting and Fitful Battle* 37). The public actions of Clement were accompanied by those of a private nature when he asked religious leaders, including pastors and a rabbi, to come to the state Capitol building to pray with him for the safety of the troops (Greene 206). Greene reported that the media were not present, and few knew of the meeting between the anxiety-ridden Clement and the ministers whose presence gave him comfort and confidence in his decision.

It is reported that the state police arrived just in time to assist the home guard who, by releasing a tear gas bomb, had infuriated the crowd gathering at the Courthouse. Wells provided a vivid description of the arrival of the state police:

> As the mob [. . .] moved in on the home guard, the state trooper's cars, with flashing red lights and sirens screaming, came over the Clinch River Bridge. When they reached the Courthouse, they circled it and their commander, Gregg O'Rear,

> unfolded to his more than six-foot-eight height and told the people to go home. They did. (85)

On Sepember 2, 1956—Labor Day weekend— more than six hundred National Guardsmen, seven M-41 tanks, and three armored personnel carriers arrived in Clinton to replace the state police. Troops came from middle and east Tennessee and camped in the middle of town. By nine o'clock that night, Henry had led two platoons in dispersing a crowd of more than one thousand people and had set up road blocks where nine out of every ten cars were turned away following his ban on incoming travel at night (Greene 206).

On September 3 Henry restricted outdoor public speaking, parking, assembly at the courthouse after six p.m., and the use of any public address system out of doors. Both the crowds and the problems ended, and pictures of tanks sitting in front of Clinton High School were seen throughout the country, as well as in Japan and Moscow (Overholt, *Anderson County* 173). *Life* reported the arrival of the National Guard:

> In Clinton, Tenn. there was a week of disorders that at times bordered on anarchy. But thanks to the action of an aroused citizenry, some of whom themselves bitterly opposed integration, and the courageous action of a governor, white and Negro children were sitting together in the public school. It was a peace enforced by the bayonets of the National Guard—but it was law and order. (*Halting and Fitful Battle* 35).

By the following week end, only 250 of the National Guard troops remained, and these left in the middle of the following week. Clement and Sheriff Woodward held differing views on the sheriff's responsibility for maintaining order. A news clipping in which Woodward said he had never asked for state assistance was sent to the governor by Henry with a note: "This takes the cake." Woodward ultimately accepted the governor's view regarding local order and organized a special force of two hundred citizens who would take over when the troops left (Greene 207).

From the time the first crowds began gathering in late August, segregationists became vocal and active. Chancellor Joe M. Carden denied a petition filed by The Tennessee Federation for Constitutional Government and several Anderson County citizens who sought an injunction prohibiting enrollment of African Americans at Clinton High School. Upon appeal, the Tennessee Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision on October 5 when it ruled that the *Brown* decisions of 1954 and 1955 had rendered void the state's segregation laws (Greene 207-208).

In the meantime, Kasper's appeal of Judge Taylor's sentence on charges of sedition and inciting to riot was heard in Anderson County Court. The segregationist cause was reinforced on November 17 when Kasper was acquitted by an all-white jury composed of Anderson County residents (Greene 208). During the trial Kasper had launched into a diatribe against the NAACP, the press, the "Communistic" Supreme Court, and Jews. This tirade

energized his devotees who had jammed the courtroom, giving them courage to cheer Kasper's acquittal despite the strong warning of the judge not to react to the verdict (Graham 106).

Kasper then organized the White Youth Council, whose primary function was to harass African American students and keep other whites from developing friendships with them. Although sporadic incidents took place throughout the city, the students remained in school. Some of the students worked together to dismantle the White Youth Council (Katz 476). Inspired by Kasper's acquittal and continuing presence, slightly more than one hundred teens from Clinton, Lake City, and Norris high schools belonged to this organization. Between forty and fifty of these students attended Clinton High School where they threw things at the African American students, tripped them, and verbally insulted them. The mayor's place of business was vandalized, and a "private detective was hired by Kasper's group to [. . .] investigate the high school's asthenic, balding and bespectacled, but determined principal." African American students withstood the intimidation for about a week before refusing, as a group, to return to the school unless their safety could be guaranteed (Graham 106-107).

The Rev. Paul W. Turner, thirty-three year old pastor of the 650 member First Baptist Church in Clinton, spoke from the pulpit about obedience to the law and what the Bible said about race. Reacting to the rallies and the absence of the African American students from school following

organization of a White Citizens Council for teenagers, Turner called a meeting of all the Clinton ministers. "We decided it was time to really lay it before the people" (Cleveland 21). He contacted the families of the African American students and volunteered his support.

On December 4, 1956 Turner, along with attorney Sydney Davis and Magnet Hosiery Mills accountant Leo Burnett, escorted a group of African American students to Clinton High School (Greene 209). Behind the school the hill leading to their neighborhood was lined with angry protestors who yelled, "nigger lovers" and "son of a bitch" at the men who accompanied the students.

Nothing happened as the students entered the school, but as he was leaving Turner was confronted by three men. Running toward a small office building where Union Planters Bank is now located, Turner was beaten and kicked by the men and two women who had joined the melee. A man from an insurance agency and a woman from a florist located in the office building attempted to assist Turner, but were pushed back and hit with eggs (*True Face of Clinton* 21-22).

Bob Allison, a news reporter for CBS, testified that he "stepped out of his role as a reporter" and summoned the police to assist Turner. Allison provided a vivid description of the assault when he testified in *U. S. v. Bullock*:

> Just as I reached Reverend Turner on the corner of Bolling and Broad Street, I was about four or five feet behind him.

> There was a crowd there and some of them were swearing at him [. . .] it was accompanied by profanity.
>
> One of the men in the crowd threw, I think it was a left hook, into Reverend Turner as he passed him. He backed away—at that time three or four of the group attacked him.... Turner retreated across the street and again they converged on him.... This time he went down on his knees. His head up against the rear fender...his head was being bounced against the fender of a car. I saw roughly two groups of approximately four people each. I would say between seven, eight or nine people...most of them were swinging at him or trying to get at him to hit him. (Brittain 227-228).

The minister of the largest church in Clinton had been attacked in broad daylight. By the time the police arrived, Turner's "blood had splattered the car near which he stood and stained the sidewalk" (Dykeman and Stokely, *Courage in Action* 531). One of the assailants remarked, "That'll teach yuh, Reverend." Word of the attack spread throughout town (*True Face of Clinton* 21-22).

December 4, 1956 was also election day in Clinton. *Life* magazine reported that both Turner and the citizens of Clinton made their stand on integration known that day at the polls. Two segregationist candidates for

alderman and one for mayor were "overwhelmingly" defeated (*Boldest Move* 39). *Time* reported the election results:

> [. . .] Clinton (pop. about 3,700 law-abiding citizens and about 300 defiant segregationists), a town with a split personality, began a critical day in its history" as citizens went to the polls in record numbers. By a margin of three to one, all segregationist-backed candidates were defeated at the polls that day, and Judge T. Lawrence Seeber was elected mayor (*True Face* 21).

Following the attack on Turner, two people entered the school and knocked down a teacher, the wife of principal D. J. Brittain. Once the intruders were back outside, they dared Mrs. Brittain to "come out and fight." Principal Brittain was "completely unnerved" and after consulting with members of the school board closed the school because of "lawlessness and disorder" (*True Face* 22).

Students became involved when the principal announced that school was closed "until further notice" (Brittain 228). Led by President Jerry Shattuck, the Student Council called for compliance "with the Federal Court order to provide an education for all the citizens of Anderson County who desire it" (*True Face* 22). Some students expressed resentment toward the events that had interfered with their lives and were concerned that they may not be able to graduate if school remained closed (Anderson 19). Following adoption of the Student Council resolution, Shattuck and a group of students

went to the Anderson County Schools central office and requested that school be reopened (*Boldest Move* 42).

Meanwhile Brittain led a delegation to meet with Judge Taylor in Knoxville *(Boldest Move* 41). U.S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. ordered the FBI to arrest the segregationist leaders, and sixteen people, including White Citizens Council Leader W. H. Till, were charged with criminal contempt for violating a federal injunction (*True Face* 22). All were released on bail with instructions to stay away from the school, and Judge Taylor threatened to revoke bail if those arrested caused more trouble, "even on the telephone" (*Boldest Move Yet* 42).

A Nashville newspaper wrote that Kasper was a rabble rouser who had engaged "white-collar race baiters" to stir up trouble in Clinton (Graham 103). In *Crisis in Print*, Graham said: "If white collars were guilty of rousing the rabble, as the *Tennessean* had charged, the rabble thus aroused wore blue." Two of the sixteen whites arrested were female, one was a teenaged boy, and fourteen were adult males. Among those were two carpenters, a school bus driver, two house painters, three unemployed industrial workers, two grocery store clerks, a used car salesman, an itinerant preacher, and an unemployed laborer (Graham 108). The Tennessee Federation for Constitutional Government, a segregationist group that had denounced "outside agitators" and violence, solicited contributions to assist with legal expenses incurred by

the group, although the organization did not contribute to John Kasper's defense (McMillen 323).

In the meantime, Turner's actions became known far beyond the boundaries of Clinton, and the publicity brought the minister and his family both support and threats. Turner stated: "I was made to understand someone was to die in my house. One of my deacons hired a bodyguard for me. Friends stayed [. . .]. I slept with a pistol and shotgun nearby." Letters from across the nation and his refusal to "listen to or try to reason with intimidators" sustained Tuner and his wife through emotionally trying times (Cleveland 22).

These acts of protest and violence garnered the attention of the national news media. Margaret Anderson described this phenomenon best when she said: "That morning the twelve Negro children started their lonely trek of no more than half a mile down the hill to the white school. By the end of the week they had walked into newspaper headlines all over the world" (10). News media such as *Time*, *Life*, and *The New York Times* published numerous articles recounting the events in Clinton. The CBS television series, *See It Now*, presented the documentary, "Clinton and the Law" narrated by Edward R. Murrow (*Tennessee*, Hoskins 92). Among those interviewed in this program were Jerry Shattuck, Jo Ann Allen, D. J. Brittain, and the candidates for mayor, J. B. Meredith and T. L. Seeber. The documentary provided coverage of Kasper's rallies, PTA meetings, and the arrival of the National Guard. Murrow reportedly said to Turner, who had

assisted with the documentary, that he had "been waiting for a church to take this stance" (Cleveland 23).

On May 17, 1957 seventeen year-old Bobby Cain became the first African American to graduate from an integrated public high school in Tennessee. Exactly three years after the Supreme Court had handed down its decision, Cain joined eighty-eight other seniors for the graduation ceremony held in the Clinton High School gymnasium (Dykeman and Stokely, *Neither Black Nor White* 355). News media from across the nation returned to Clinton to cover the event, but were refused entrance by the principal. In an interview with June Adamson, Cain's father expressed pride in seeing his son graduate and spoke of an incident that occurred after the ceremony. The lights were turned off in the basement room where students were removing their caps and gowns, and Cain was hit in the face. His father recalled that he wasn't hurt badly, and some of the football players went to his aid (40).

At the national level in 1957 Congress passed the first law since Reconstruction to protect the rights of African Americans. It enhanced the powers of the attorney general to halt obstruction with school desegregation and established a Civil Rights Commission to report to the president on what progress was being made toward equality. The 1939 civil rights section of the Department of Justice was made a full division with additional staff and funds (Katz 478-479).

The trial of Kasper and the other sixteen who were arrested following the assault on Turner originally was set for January 28, 1957. However, the hearing was postponed indefinitely by Judge Taylor, son of Republican Alfred Taylor and nephew of Democrat Robert Taylor, brothers who had opposed each other in the gubernatorial election of 1886. On July 8 a jury of ten white southern males and two white southern females was sworn in to hear the case of John Kasper and fifteen defendants. The sixteenth defendant, John Gates, owner of a café in Clinton, died in a mental hospital prior to the trial (Graham 108-113).

Four of the defendants had been acquitted, and on July 23 four others were found not guilty. Kasper was sentenced to one year in federal prison, and the six remaining defendants found guilty included two used car dealers, a part-time preacher, a fireman, a machinist, and a housewife. All were placed on probation for periods ranging from one to two years (Greene 219). Those convicted were William Brakebill, Lawrence T. Brantley, Alonzo Bullock, Clyde Cook, Mary Nell Currier, and W. H. Till (Brittain 230).

In spite of arrests and convictions, Kasper remained in the forefront in the anti-segregation movement. While Kasper awaited appeal of a fifteen month sentence in federal prison for his role in the Clinton events, he continued to stage rallies in Alabama, Maryland, Florida, North Carolina, and Kentucky, saying: "We want trouble and we want it everywhere we can get it" (McMillen 319). An article in the *Arkansas Democrat* referred to Kasper's

recent conviction for "causing violence in Clinton, Tennessee " and reported Kasper's possible appearance in Arkansas:

> Even the possibility of Kasper's putting in an appearance has brought sharp protests from leaders in citizens councils and other groups who favor continued segregation [. . .]
>
> Governor Faubus said in an article in the *Arkansas Democrat* a visit by Kasper would be "definitely detrimental. A man is guaranteed freedom of travel and freedom of speech [. . .] I am certainly not going to send him an invitation." (*Kasper* 1)

For the next two years things seemed to calm down in Clinton with only sporadic incidents of disturbance. Explosions in churches, synagogues, schools and the homes of African Americans were reported in Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, Wichita, and Nashville (*Terror* 33). Clinton, Tennessee did not escape this latest rash of hate crimes. Blasts shook the town in the early morning hours on Sunday October 5, 1958 when Clinton High School was torn apart from three dynamite charges. Parts of the school were substantially damaged from the bombing while other parts were totally destroyed (Overholt, *Anderson County* 174). Lamon expressed the irony of the bombing when he said:

> What Bobby Cain and his companions did in Clinton was as important as the NAACP-supported desegregation case itself.

> [. . .] Other parents and students at other schools would be called upon to face those same dangers and indignities, and they would know about the students at Clinton. In retrospect, it was anticlimactic when [. . .] after twenty months of racial calm, three massive explosions blasted Clinton High School to rubble. The battle in Clinton had already been won [. . .]. (101)

Local officials were determined to continue school. James Newman, the new superintendent who had assumed that position just two days earlier, said, "I have been knocked down, but never knocked out" (Winfrey 12a, Part III). The Oak Ridge Board of Education and the Atomic Energy Commission offered the vacant Linden Elementary School as a place to hold classes. Students and other citizens salvaged what they could from the debris, and three days later classes resumed at Linden School (Stokely and Johnson 114). This return to "normalcy" was in direct contrast to Little Rock where Governor Faubus closed the schools for more than a year (Katz 478).

That first morning of classes at the "new" school was filled with excitement. The Oak Ridge High School Band stood in front of Linden School and played as the school buses delivered the students. The students remained at Linden School for two years until repairs were completed at Clinton High School (Stokely and Johnson 114).

The individuals who destroyed the school were never caught. Drew Pearson, a nationally syndicated columnist, began a campaign to rebuild

Clinton High School by selling "Bricks of Love." Contributions poured in from all over the world. Pearson raised $22,971.45 and was on hand to view the building after it was rebuilt. A plaque hangs in the foyer of the school expressing gratitude for Pearson's support (Wells 89).

Review of the Clinton High School annuals from 1957 until 1960 provided a look at the high school culture as it related to desegregation. The 1956-57 *Dragon*, published the first year of desegregation, made no mention of the year's events and contained no pictures of African Americans with the exception of one photograph of students in the hallway between classes. This candid shot included one African American male who was partially pictured at the edge of the photograph (17).

The first African American female to graduate from a Tennessee public high school, Gail Ann Epps, was pictured in the 1958 *Dragon* (13). Epps also pictured with the Glee Club, and the motto beside her senior picture was: "Her life has many a hope and aim." Freshman Nevie Barton was the only other, and there was no mention of desegregation.

Although the 1959 annual included only two pictures of African American students, freshmen Elizabeth Gadson and Lois Moore, the tone of the *Dragon* changed as two pages of pictures and text documented the bombing of Clinton High School. The term "desegregation" was not mentioned, the dedication page alluded to the situation:

> [. . .] we can all look back on many memories [. . .] which will live with us throughout our lives.
>
> The eyes of the world were on the students of CHS and they, by their actions toward one another and the world around them, have really "done themselves proud." They have shown no bitterness—only a willing spirit of helpfulness and cooperation in whatever was asked of them.
>
> To these students, though, it is only a small token of gratitude when measured by what they deserve, we the annual staff salute you [. . .]. (4)

The 1959-60 *Dragon* included class pictures of six African Americans: freshmen Barbara Hill, Willie Mae Dyer, and James Allen Ellis and sophomores Hattie Cain, Elizabeth Gadson, and Betty Barton (3). The 1960 *Dragon* also contained pictures of columnist Drew Pearson and one of principal W.D. Human looking at checks that had been donated from around the world and made direct reference to the 1958 bombing (2). The annual's theme was "Dreams of the Future, " and the architect's rendering of the new high school was pictured along with the statement: "To get back into our own school is the dream of every student now at CHS" (3).

The 1959-60 annual was dedicated to Eleanor Davis, an English teacher who was considered a supporter of desegregation (4). Her husband, Sydney Davis, had represented the school system in the *McSwain* case and

later escorted the African American students to school. Both were leaders in the community, and the literature indicated that both became targets of segregationists.

D.J. Brittain, principal of Clinton High School during desegregation, earned a doctorate at New York University in 1959 when he completed a dissertation on the problems faced by school officials. The 301 page study presented extensive information on the planning process prior to integration, the role of students, forces that supported and opposed integration, methods used by school officials, and a description of crucial incidents that occurred during integration. Brittain examined archival data from a wide variety of sources and included in his dissertation copies of many of the flyers, letters, and literature that were circulated during this time period. A history of the state, county, and city set the stage for the study, and a description of Anderson County Schools and Clinton High School provided data relating to the school setting (36-48). Brittain's disclosure of incidents and specific individuals evolved from his own experiences and interviews and provided a first-hand view of the events that occurred during desegregation.

Brittain's tenure as principal was documented in *The History of Clinton Senior High School: 1806-1971* written by Snyder Roberts (50-53). This publication provided a chronological overview of some of the events surrounding desegregation. A highlight of Roberts' book was an unpublished listing of key legal points pertaining to desegregation which was written by

Sydney Davis, a local attorney who had represented the Anderson County Board of Education in the *McSwain* case (54-58).

In a book written by Horace Wells, Jr., editor and publisher of the *Clinton Courier-News*, the chapters titled "Integration" and "The Explosion" gave an inside look at some of the events that transpired during this time period. Wells provided information regarding all aspects of the desegregation of the high school and related his personal views and experiences about these events.

A comprehensive summary of the story of the Clinton High School desegregation was provided *in Crisis in Print: Desegregation and the Press in Tennessee*. The author, Hugh Davis Graham, recounted the events as reported by the press throughout Tennessee. The book contained editorials and cartoons and cited feature articles and editorials that reflected all aspects of the era, giving specific details of the desegregation as seen through the eyes of the press.

In the years since *Brown v. the Board of Education*, experiences of the descendents of Brown and students in places such as Little Rock have garnered a great deal of publicity. Considerably less attention, however, has been given to the experiences, beliefs, and feelings of the students and educators who were a part of Clinton's desegregation.

Among the publications that provided follow-up to these events was *Children of the South*, a book written by Margaret Anderson, a teacher at

Clinton High School during the desegregation. This book offered a poignant look at the students from the eyes of a teacher who was described in the interviews as someone who befriended African American students. Anderson related events not only from 1956-1958, but told of future encounters she had with students in her role as guidance counselor. Interviews and informal conversations with African American students and their parents gave the reader a more personal, insightful look at their lives and beliefs.

In *Neither Black Nor White*, a book published in 1957, authors Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely interviewed faculty, citizens, and parents of African American students. One such parent said that the principal and teachers had "been fine to the children." One of the students spoke of her walk down the hill with the Rev. Turner: "[. . .] he just kept saying to us, 'Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. I won't let them hurt you.' He knows courage all right. But I think he must have had something else, too. Mr. Turner must know love" (355).

In a 1965 thesis written by William E. Koontz, former science teacher in the Clinton City Schools, studies were reviewed regarding the desegregation of schools in cities such as St. Louis, Baltimore, and Washington. He contended that the "chief value of a school program is its influence on the post-school lives" of the students. Koontz was particularly interested in the educational achievement, school activities, and vocational pursuits of African American students (3). Methodology included a questionnaire, interviews with

parents, students, teachers and counselors, and examination of the Permanent Pupil Records at Clinton High School, Koontz provided information on the status of the African American students who attended Clinton High School between 1956 and 1965 (5, 19).

Newspapers reported the desegregation of Clinton High School in the late 1950s and years later many papers, mostly local, re-visited the era as they observed the anniversary of certain events or commemorated local events. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported the current status of Clinton High School in 1970 when it interviewed several students and staff members, including Margaret Anderson. In that article Anderson and assistant principal Gordon Irwin credited the desegregation of the elementary and junior high schools in the county with alleviating some of the problems at the high school level. An African American student said: "I've learned more in one year here than in all the years I spent in segregated schools." The article stated that sixty-two African Americans had completed work at Clinton High School since 1957 when Bobby Cain became the first African American to graduate from a Tennessee public school (Glenn E-1).

In 1976 the *Courier-News* provided a chronological account of desegregation in an article entitled "School Integration Came Twenty Years Ago." The article summarized the major events that had occurred but did not include the thoughts or reflections of those who had been students, teachers, parents, or community leaders at that time (Powell A1,4-5).

An interview with former principal D. J. Brittain was reported in the Knoxville Journal in May 1984. Brittain, who had returned to Clinton to live, recalled that his life "changed drastically" as a result of the events. He told of the lack of support of the Board of Education and superintendent, some of whom advised him to "let discipline get so out of hand that the white students would run the blacks out." Brittain said his resignation was the result of a year of "living hell" which he could not repeat (Weintraub A12).

In February and March of 1993, the *Clinton Valley Chronicle*, a now defunct newspaper, featured a three part series of articles which included an extensive accounting of the actual events as well as an interview with a former student, Jerry Shattuck, who recalled that the principal had asked some of the football players to patrol the halls "to keep things under control." Shattuck recalled: "More than once, as I walked to school, people would spit on me and call me a 'nigger-lover'" (Winfrey, Part II).

The final article in the series related the successes of African American students who later attended Clinton High School. It also told of a different kind of discrimination faced by a twelve year-old middle school student who was afflicted with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This time, however, the protesters' violent demands were countered by the public support shown by many Clinton Middle and Senior High School students, teachers, and parents. Winfrey wrote of the gesture of tolerance and humanity exhibited:

> Clintonians, you see, had already experienced and survived their own trial by fire, three decades earlier. It took a long time to get there, but in a sense, on that October night in 1987, Clinton at last buried the last ghosts of 1956 and rose, as a school and as a community, from the ashes toward a new beginning. (Winfrey, Part III)

A December 22, 1993 issue of the *Clinton Courier-News* announced that three of the twelve African American students who had enrolled at Clinton High School in 1956 were recipients of the Anderson County Distinguished Black Citizenship award. Bobby Cain, Gail Ann Epps Upton, and Alfred Williams were presented the award and the key to the city. Epps expressed happiness that "somebody remembered us" while Williams thanked his friends and loved ones. Cain, who has not given interviews about the events, said he accepted this award "on behalf of my family for their support and the community for its support" (Strohl A-6).

Cain's experiences were shared by Margaret Anderson in her book, *Children of the South*. The oldest of the twelve African American students, Cain was the "hero" for the others. One of the students later said: "He was the one who went first—the one the white folks picked on—the one who waited for us in the afternoon until the last one of us was safely out of the building." Anderson felt that Cain was not always as courageous as he appeared and did not want to attend the school "because he didn't want the

white people to hate him." Anderson wrote that Cain's mother encouraged him to go so that his siblings could attend school there later, saying that the family did not have the money to send the children to another school away from home. In a rare statement, Cain said he would go to bed and "pray to the Lord to help me get through that line the next morning" (Anderson 11).

In an article in the Spring 1994 *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, author June Adamson wrote of the desegregation from the viewpoint of the African American students and citizens who during that time were ignored by the press or mistakenly identified. She interviewed Jo Ann Allen, Gail Ann Epps, and Regina Turner for the article. Bobby Cain, a social worker with the Department of Human Services, lived in Nashville and was reluctant to be interviewed. He told Adamson he "just wanted to forget the crisis years" and saw the coverage of the events as "fair but not full" (40). Cain's father, however, spoke freely with the author, who wrote of the commitment and strength among the Cains and the other African American families.

The views of those interviewed toward their education, the press, the intimidation they endured, and the fear they sometimes felt were interspersed throughout the article's account of the events that took place in Clinton. Turner left Clinton to live with her aunt in Florida where she later graduated from a segregated high school. Allen's family moved to California where she still lives, and Epps graduated from Clinton, an event that went unnoticed by

the press even though she was the first African American female to graduate from an integrated high school in Tennessee (Adamson 31-41).

A 1995 thesis, *The Desegregation of Clinton High School: Then and Now*, by Valerie Marie Hulett Herd, studied the event "through the perspective of status politics and counter-movement theory" and analyzed the events from a sociological framework. Herd's study focused on social and political events in a historical context "to clarify attitudes toward events of that time and to measure changes in attitudes and race relations between then and now" (Herd 2,3). Sixteen individuals who resided in Clinton during the desegregation and at the time of the study were interviewed, three African Americans and thirteen whites who were students, members of the press, business people, and observers (Herd 14). Interview questions addressed participants' awareness and reactions to integration, familiarity with incidents that occurred during desegregation, and knowledge of the activists both for and against integration. Questions in the study focused on the racial composition of neighborhoods, racial relations, and attitudes toward the races in the 1950s and at the time of the study in 1995 (Herd 73-75).

The October 10, 2001 supplement to the *Clinton Courier-News* commemorated the city's bicentennial and contained interview with Celdon Lewallen, Engish teacher at Clinton High School, and her husband, W. Buford Lewallen, attorney, both of whom had been interviewed for this study. The issue also featured a story written by Jerry Shattuck who spoke of "decent"

people in a "decent" community who in the late 1950s "[. . .] accomplished one of the great social reforms of the mid-twentieth century. Shattuck wrote:

> [. . .] Yes, desegregation is now integration and an accepted fact that very few people ever give a second thought. The students themselves today even have difficulty in imagining why there was such an issue. I can only hope that they can grow to become the kind of citizens their grandparents and parents were in the fifties and that they, as citizens in whatever community, can realize that reform and growth will always occur. They, in turn, will be confronted with challenges [. . .]. Those challenges can be met effectively and constructively if they develop a depth of character based on a quiet, but firm commitment to their own sense of decency and civility (Shattuck 23).

In contrast to Clinton, the events in Little Rock, Arkansas contained very little civility and decency. Today, some forty years later, the stories of Central High School are familiar as history continues to record the experiences of the Little Rock Nine. In 1997, at the fortieth anniversary of the desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School, Betty Finley, a white female student at the time, said: "It was all so stupid, so asinine. I mean what was the problem? I had no objection going to school with blacks" (Moffeit 1).

As a personal gesture of acceptance to the African American students, Finley walked up to Ernest Green on the day that he was finally admitted to

Central High School and handed him class notes from the previous week so he would not get behind in his school work. Green asserted that the Little Rock Nine were passionate about pursuing the best education possible and in the midst of adversity, he was successful in receiving a high school diploma and two college degrees (Moffeit 2).

When U.S. soldiers came to Little Rock to enforce the U.S. Constitution, an eleven year-old white boy, William Jefferson Clinton, was a student at a segregated school in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Forty years later, he returned as president of the United States to salute the Little Rock Nine and to acknowledge a national debt. "Like so many Americans, he said, I can never fully repay my debt to these nine people. For with their innocence, they purchased more freedom for me, too, and for all white people" (Bennett 9).

Some historians considered the statements made by Arkansas Republican Governor Blank Huckabee as the strongest of the day when he said: "Today we come to say once and for all that what happened here forty years ago was simply wrong. It was evil, and we renounce it. What the people did who tried to hold those nine from entering the doors of this high school is forgivable, but it is not excusable" (Bennett 9).

When Green returned to Little Rock in 1997 for the fortieth anniversary of the stand-off, he didn't dwell on the negatives. In his speech, he made a powerful statement of hope for the future:

> If one young person out there has seen the story of the Little Rock Nine and can take from it a belief that he or she can open a door, succeed against the odds, dream the impossible dream, turn 'no' into 'yes' or navigate uncharted waters, Green told the crowd, "then the Little Rock Nine become the Little Rock Ten, the ten hundred, the ten thousand, the ten million" (Moffiet 3).

Brief comments of those involved in the desegregation of Clinton High School have been reported locally, but the stories of how the citizens of this small town in Tennessee "navigated uncharted waters" have been found for the most part in publications reporting only the events that occurred at that time.

In 1956 Alfred Williams was one of the twelve African American students who made the "long" walk down the hill to Clinton High School. Today he works at Clinton Elementary School where he carries on Ernest Green's hopes that young people know the story of the desegregation of Clinton High School. Every year Williams speaks to sixth graders about his experiences. He said he talks to them "about that tragedy and how you had to cope with it and overcome it. You know what? I don't mind telling kids this because on down the road, somewhere down the road, it might help him or her."

Williams said most of the children have no idea of the incidents that took place in their own community, and he believes strongly that we must

share these experiences with them in order to "learn to live together." During the past seven years, more than one thousand young people have heard about what happened from Mr. Alfred, as he is affectionately known to them.

This study is an effort to help today's children and those of future generations hear the story of Clinton High School and the experiences of those who survived the struggle there. It's a start. It will be up to the schools, parents, and communities to really listen and take to heart what is said.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Sir Winston Churchill

INTRODUCTION

As the initial mandate to desegregate Clinton High School approached the half-century mark, it was imperative that the experiences of those participants still living today are documented and recorded. There was no single publication or source that provided a comprehensive account of the events in Clinton, including the area's history and the experiences of those who were directly involved in the desegregation process. Review of the literature indicated that few publications or sources exist which present the experiences of participants in the desegregation of Clinton High School. Newspaper archives, chapters or pages in books on the history of Anderson County, and previous dissertations offered the only published sources available as references and provided only a chronology of the events that occurred in Clinton. Among those discussed in the review of literature were *Children of the South* by Margaret Anderson; D.J. Brittain's dissertation which focused on the problems faced by school officials in the desegregation of Clinton High School; *The Days Before Yesterday* by Horace V. Wells; the

bicentennial edition of the *Tennessee Blue Book*; stories and articles by Anderson County historian Katherine B. Hoskins; *Few Black Voices Heard* by June Adamson; and *The History of Clinton Senior High School: 1806-1971* by Snyder Roberts.

The experiences shared by the participants during interviews formed the basis for the research. Their stories provided the framework for analysis and established the "heart" of this dissertation. Due to its historical nature, the study included a provision for the use of the actual name of the participants. A written statement of the interviewees' desire to forego anonymity was included in the *Informed Consent Form*. Without exception, each participant elected to use their names in the study.

Complete anonymity was guaranteed to those who did not wish to be identified. In the event this option had been selected, each of the participants would have been identified by a pseudonym, and their actual identity would be known only to the researcher.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of the study, a definition of terms, and the identification of limitations, delimitations, and assumptions.

Chapter 2 contains a review of related relative to school desegregation in general and specifically the desegregation of Clinton High School from

1950-1958. Archival data including information from secondary sources such as newspapers, school annuals, video tapes, and magazine articles were utilized to present historical information, case law, and literature regarding the desegregation of Clinton High School will be presented. This chapter also contains a brief history of Clinton, Tennessee.

Chapter 3 describes the qualitative methodology used to collect data for this study. It focuses on the research design, data collection methods, and procedures for analyzing data. A phenomenological approach was used to conduct the study. The participants were asked to tell about their experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School, and their stories became the phenomenon. The stories are in the participants' own vernacular so that the data will be "as loyal to the lived experience as possible" (Polkinghorne in Rudestam and Newton 33). Data collected was compared, contrasted, and coded by categories and emerging themes.

Chapter 4 includes the participants' stories or narratives as told in interviews. Only primary sources, those who were a participant in or a direct witness to the desegregation of Clinton High School, were interviewed (Fraenkel and Wallen 436). The findings and analysis of data obtained from these interviews identifies patterns or themes that develop in order to reach conclusions and derive meaning from the data.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendation for future study. The summary recaptures the experiences of

the participants as findings, and the recommendations are those offered by both the participants and the researcher.

The Modern Language Association of America (MLA) documentation style was used in this study. MLA style lists no publication dates in the text and is used most often in the humanities because the majority of past research and information remains relevant for a long period of time (Gibaldi 115). The nature of this study relies heavily on historical research, case law, and archival data in which more current publications do not alter information obtained from earlier sources. Gibaldi also credits MLA style with enhancing readability by keeping the text free of detailed information that is listed in the bibliography.

POPULATION

Participants in the study were Clinton High School educators and students who were present during the desegregation events from 1956-1958. For the purpose of this study, the University of Tennessee's *Human Subjects Review Board* approved a maximum of fourteen interviews.

Sampling was "purposive" rather than random in order to ensure that each participant possesses certain characteristics that are relevant to the study (Fraenkel and Wallen 383). The sampling frame was obtained from the review of literature in which specific names of potential participants were identified as students or staff members who were present during and engaged in the desegregation events. Some names were identified during the

interview process, and the literature provided the names of students and staff due to their role or a specific action or event in which they were involved. From the names generated, the investigator used the internet, telephone directory, and friends and families of those identified to obtain addresses and contact information. Alfred Williams was especially helpful in locating and contacting the African American students.

Participants were selected from among those who could be located and who agreed to be interviewed, and preference was given to those who were accessible and willing to participate. All were given the opportunity for anonymity, and all participants chose to have their names used in the study.

Only twelve African Americans were students during the desegregation, and some of the students and staff identified in the study were deceased at the time of the study. Interviews included three participants who were staff members at Clinton High School during the 1956-1958 time frame. Among the former Clinton High School students interviewed were three African Americans and three whites who were similar in grade placement at the time of desegregation.

Nine interviews were conducted with staff members and African American and white students enrolled in Clinton High School from 1956 until 1958 and who were participants in the desegregation events during that time period. The African American students interviewed were Gail Ann Epps Upton, Theresser Caswell, and Alfred Williams; white students included Jerry

Shattuck, Robert Manning, and Patsy Meredith; and staff members were Bill Driskill, Margaret Anderson, and Celdon Lewallen. A tenth interview occurred during the meeting between the researcher and Celdon Lewallen when her husband, Judge Buford Lewallen, provided insight into specific events.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The study addressed the desegregation of Clinton High School in terms of the attitudes and experiences of the students, faculty, and citizens involved using a semi-structured interview format. The semi-structured interview format is often used when the researcher has only one chance to interview a participant. This type of interview has many of the same qualities as an unstructured interview, although the semi-structured interview relies on the use of an interview guide and allows the interviewer to follow leads (Van Manen 47-48).

This study combined both historical events and qualitative experiences, and oral histories were obtained through interviews with people who were involved in or witnessed past events. According to Frankel and Wallen, this valuable source of information in historical research is undergoing somewhat of a revival as its use increases (436). Archival documents including newspaper and magazine articles, school annuals, and records of Board of Education meetings also were used to compile data.

The study's review of national and local events surrounding desegregation included data gathered from documents, artifacts, interviews,

oral statements, and secondary sources including newspapers and other publications. The qualitative nature of the study was used to obtain a more holistic impression or picture as it described the details of what occurred during this time (Fraenkel and Wallen 380).

Interviews with former students and educators attempted to reconstruct the events of the desegregation phenomenon in order to "gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning or our every day experiences" (Van Manen 9). Qualitative research was utilized in order to capture the thinking of the participants from their perspective as accurately as possible (Fraenkel and Wallen 381).

Phenomenological inquiry formed the basis for the study in its attempt to describe the meanings of human experience through interviews and extended conversations as the source of data (Rudestam and Newton 33). The interview guide was built around a core of questions from which the interviewer could deviate in order to obtain more details or explore areas of interest. Lead questions were open-ended and broad in nature in order to gather responses, facilitate dialogue, and elicit recollection of experiences. According to Fraenkel and Wallen, it is important for researchers to ask questions that focus on " what the participants in a study were thinking and why [. . .]. Assumptions motives, reasons, goals, and values—all are of interest [. . .] (Howe in Frankel and Wallen 381).

A bracket interview of the researcher's recollection of the events surrounding the desegregation of Clinton High School was conducted by a colleague prior to data collection. The purpose of the bracket interview was for the researcher to "make explicit our [. . .] biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories" (Van Manen 47).

The interview guide approach recommended by Fraenkel and Wallen suggested that topics and issues should be determined in advance by the researcher who would decide the sequence and wording of the questions during the course of the interview. This method made data collection more systematic and allowed the researcher to anticipate and close any gaps that occurred during the interview. As recommended, interviews remained conversational (387).

The following interview guide was used as the basis for data collection and served as a guide when reviewing archival documents for relevant data on the integration of the school.

1. Tell me about the events that occurred during the desegregation of Clinton High School that are the most memorable or significant for you.
2. Tell me about your involvement in those events.
3. Tell me about your feelings regarding those events.
4. What do you believe were the major influences on the events that occurred during the desegregation of Clinton High School?

5. Tell me what experiences you had during the desegregation of Clinton High School that influenced your life at that time.
6. How do you feel your experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School have influenced your life today, some forty years later?
7. If we could re-live history, what do you believe could have been done differently during the desegregation of Clinton High School?

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher and the participant conversed about their families, jobs, and mutual friends in order to establish rapport. A degree of rapport with the researcher and comfort with the interview process existed since the researcher knew eight of the ten participants. Each participant provided information regarding their personal demographics at the time of the desegregation. All were given the opportunity to remain anonymous, and none chose to do so. Interviews lasted approximately one to one and one-half hours, and each participant was aware that the interview could be stopped at any time without penalty. Although each participant answered all questions, occasionally several asked that the tape recorder be turned off or requested that specific statements they had just made not be used.

During the interview process, participants were asked to relate their experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School. The semi-structured interview also was retrospective in its attempt to encourage the participants to recall and reconstruct their experiences from memory (Fraenkel

and Wallen 386). Interviews were conducted without regard to time constraints, and no efforts were made by the researcher to alter or embellish the participants' stories.

During the course of the some of the interviews, additional comments and or questions were expanded based upon the responses of the participants in order to elicit more in-depth and accurate responses and comments from the participants. Taylor and Bogdan advised researchers to follow a flexible design in qualitative studies and " [. . .] develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories" (5).

In the course of the interviews, the responses to many of the questions became intertwined as the participant related his or her experiences. This was especially the case with the first three questions. The researcher relied on design flexibility, a characteristic of qualitative research, open to " [. . .] adapting inquiry as situations change and avoids getting locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness" (Fraenkel and Wallen 382). Each response was carefully considered to ensure that all questions in the study were addressed at some point during the interview.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The research method for this study was qualitative, and the nature of the study was primarily historical. It was based upon the assumption that a review of the desegregation of Clinton High School is historically relevant

because it was the first court-ordered desegregation case in the State of Tennessee. By studying documents of the period and interviewing individuals who lived during the time, "an attempt is made to reconstruct what happened during that time as completely and accurately as possible" (Fraenkel and Wallen 433). This study hopefully provided a better understanding of this event through the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of the participants.

A phenomenological approach was utilized to conduct the study, focusing on the desegregation of Clinton High School as the phenomenon. According to Van Manen, phenomenological research is the on-going and open-ended study of lived experiences (9). Qualitative data obtained were characterized by direct quotations from participants regarding their personal perspectives and experiences (Fraenkel and Wallen 382).

Edie maintained that phenomenology seeks to grasp the essence of a phenomenon as it is presented to us. Phenomenological research methods are grounded in philosophy because philosophers felt it offered the "clearest exposition of what they had been thinking or trying to think all along" (in Peterson 24). Peterson stated that "by reflecting on our experiences one can flesh the processes of awareness that normally remain hidden and 'see again' the phenomenon as it emerges" (24).

The qualitative data sources used were the interview and the researcher's impressions and reactions. Kaplan and Maxwell maintained that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the

participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when the textual data are quantified (in Myers 3). Qualitative research allows detailed description of the phenomenon, the opportunity to clarify and explain and sometimes to correct inaccuracies found in previous accounts of an event (Fraenkel and Wallen 435).

Narratives derived from the interview process are one way of making sense of lived experiences by focusing on what the person experienced in language that is as loyal to the lived experiences as possible. American novelist Bernard Malamud said, "The past exudes legend [. . .] There is no life that can be recaptured wholly as it was" (qtd. at Cheekwood Museum). However, the questions used in this study were designed to allow the participants to speak freely about their feelings and perceptions.

This type of inquiry seeks to describe and clarify the meanings of human experiences (Polkinghorne in Rudestam and Newton 33). Etter-Lewis concluded that editing produces a neat version of the data and increases readability but can obscure the distinct style and subtle linguistic features of the narrator's speech" (p.xii). Therefore, the researcher must take what is narrated and make sense of it. As the receiver of stories, the researcher must accept what he or she hears and/or reads at face value, narrate each participant's responses, and subjectively interpret the text.

According to Carol Gilligan, voice is natural and cultural and is composed of breath and sound, words, rhythm, and language. It is a powerful

psychological instrument and channel and is a key for understanding the psychological, social, and cultural order—a litmus test of relationships and a measure of psychological health (xvi). Hooks asserted that speaking allows one to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being the object of a study to the actual subject. "Only as subjects can we speak. As objects, we remain voiceless—our being defined and interpreted by others" (12).

The qualitative technique used generally focused on primary and secondary sources of data (Myers 8). Many of the primary sources of data were unpublished, and all were gathered directly from the people who were directly involved in the desegregation. Secondary sources were any materials such as books and articles which had been previously published. According to Fraenkel and Wallen, "historical research [. . .] is the systematic collection and evaluation of data to describe, explain, and thereby understand actions or events that occurred sometime in the past" (433). This study combined both historical events and qualitative experiences. Oral histories obtained through interviews and archival documents were used to compile data.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The interview was the basis for the inquiry technique used in this study. Information obtained in interviews focused on the experiences of the participants and was used to determine the accuracy of data gathered from archival documents and other interviews (Fraenkel and Wallen 389). The

names of potential participants were obtained from historical documents related to the desegregation of Clinton High School, interviews with primary sources, and literature containing the names of those who were students and educators during that time period.

Approval was obtained from the University of *Tennessee's Human Subjects Review Board* to contact potential participants by telephone and in writing. The researcher informed them of the nature and purpose of the study. Each participant received the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix A) which described risks, explained voluntary participation, provided for informed consent by participants, and allowed an option for withdrawal and the deletion of data. The written consent form stated that participation in the study was voluntary and all participants were free to withdraw from the interview process at any time without penalty or prejudice.

Because of the historical aspect of this study, specific individuals were identified in the press and in previous publications. The study included a provision for the use of the actual name of the participant upon submission of a written statement expressing their desire to forego anonymity. This provision allowed those who wished to be identified to be given that opportunity. It guaranteed anonymity to the other participants who would be identified by pseudonym and known only to the researcher. All participants who were interviewed expressed orally and in writing their desire to use their actual names throughout the course of the study.

DATA COLLECTION

The research design for this study was historical in its review of national and local events surrounding desegregation and qualitative in its examination of lived experiences. The researcher examined documents pertaining to the desegregation of Clinton High School and interviewed former students and staff in an attempt to reconstruct the events of the past. Cross-checking, or triangulation, employed the use of a variety of data collection instruments to support findings and conclusions to enhance validity (Fraenkel and Wallen 400). The data gathering method consisted of the analysis of documents, artifacts, interviews, oral statements, and secondary sources such as newspapers, school annuals, and videotapes. Data collection occurred in much the same manner as described by Edward J. Carr who states that the researcher "spends a long preliminary period reading his sources and filling his notebooks with facts" (qtd. in Fraenkel and Wallen 437).

Keichtermans ' data collection format was used as the basis for conducting the study and included a bracket interview of the researcher as well as semi-structured interviews with the participants, transcription of data, and the selection of stories for presentation as data (198-220). Interviews were conducted near the end of the study " [. . .] as they tend to shape responses to the researcher's perceptions of how things are" (Fraenkel and Wallen 385).

Potential participants were contacted in writing and by telephone by the researcher who informed them of the nature and purpose of the study. Participants were selected from among those who agreed to be interviewed, and preference was given to those who were accessible and willing to participate. The purpose, methods, risks, and protections as previously outlined in this proposal were explained to each person contacted. A discussion took place between the researcher and the potential participant to determine if he or she completely understood the project, the nature of individual participation, the procedures, risks, and protection offered.

The *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix A) was signed at the time of the interview in order to provide the participant another opportunity to ask questions prior to participation in the study. The researcher reminded them that they were free to withdraw from the interview process at any time without penalty or prejudice.

All participants were interviewed in person at a time and physical location mutually agreed upon by each participant and the researcher. Each interview lasted approximately one to one and one-half hours, and all interviews were audio-taped with the participants' permission, and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Any field notes obtained by the researcher during the interviews were expanded immediately following each session to ensure accuracy and completeness of data.

No efforts were made by the researcher to alter or embellish the participants' stories. To minimize the risk of infusing personal biases of the investigator, each participant received a copy of the interview transcript and had the opportunity to make corrections, additions, or deletions. Those who reviewed their transcripts made only grammatical or syntactical changes in the text. The participant had the option to withdraw from the study at any time, even after review of his/her transcript. None chose to do so.

Signed *Informed Consent Forms*, transcriptions of the interviews, and field notes were given to the doctoral committee chair for storage in a locked file cabinet at the University of Tennessee. All documents will be destroyed three years after completion of the study. Participants were given the option to receive a copy of the study upon its completion.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis centered around common themes relative to the events surrounding the desegregation of Clinton High School and personal stories of experiences from individuals involved in those events. Hypotheses were not constructed at the outset of the study, but emerged from the data as the study progressed (Fraenkel and Wallen 383). The research, it is hoped, contributed to a better understanding of these events and the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of the participants.

In order to obtain similar data from each participant, semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were used to elicit unrestrained responses.

Qualitative researchers such as Bruner, Hooks, and Polkinghorne maintained that narratives or stories are one way of making sense of lived experiences. Grumet stated that the narrative fills the space between 'what happened' and 'what it means' (in Kramp 8).

The essence of this study is found in the participants' stories of experiences. No effort was made to discredit, embellish or minimize the data, and caution was taken to not manipulate the data. According to Bruner, the stories provide a combination of experiences—some good, some bad, and the narrative is a way of connecting information with experience to construct knowledge (11-32).

Data analysis included reading and re-reading the transcriptions in order to reflect on personal biases, determine the meaning of the stories, and denote and interpret the themes. Interpretation and analysis were continuous as conclusions were drawn throughout the study (Fraenkel and Wallen 383).

After all interviews were completed, the information was compared, contrasted, and coded into categories. The researcher examined the categories for emerging themes relevant to this study. Rudestam and Newton (33) recommended that the researcher be mindful of developing themes but refrain from structuring or analyzing categories and meanings prior to reconstruction of the data. Once the themes were identified, the researcher further analyzed them to see if thematic relationships existed among all of the data. After the compilation of data, all facts were analyzed using the constant

comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 19). During data analysis, each participant's story was examined for common threads and ascribed a central theme.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the years 1950-1958, the most significant time span associated with the desegregation of Clinton High School. A maximum of fourteen interviews were approved by the University of Tennessee *Human Subjects Review Committee*. Participants for this study were primary sources who could provide a direct account of the events, as either a participant or an observer. Interviews were conducted with former teachers and with African Americans and whites who were Clinton High School students during the desegregation era.

Participants were selected from those contacted who volunteered, and preference was given to persons who were accessible and willing to participate. The interview process included three individuals from each of the categories previously listed, and African American and white students who were interviewed were in similar grade levels during the desegregation era. The spouse of one of the educators, an attorney and former Speaker of the House in the Tennessee Legislature, also participated in that interview and offered insight into specific events.

The study was further limited because many of the primary sources were deceased, and data obtained from archival documents provided a limited

view of their experiences or recollections. Constraints existed regarding difficulty in interviewing other primary sources due to physical proximity and their desire not to participate in the study. It is possible that participants may have been less than candid or somewhat hesitant to discuss such emotional, divisive events. Since Clinton High School was desegregated as a result of a court ordered mandate rather than by voluntary action, no attempt was made to analyze or evaluate school desegregation as opposed to school integration.

Other limitations defined by Fraenkel and Wallen included the lack of controls used in other research methods. They believed the sample's "representativeness" cannot be maintained and the reliability and validity of the findings cannot always be verified. Other limitations specified were the characteristics of those who prepared the documents, and threats associated with maturation, attitude, and location (440).

SPECIFIC RISKS AND PROTECTION MEASURES

Although the nature of the study was potentially highly charged and may have been considered controversial by some, the participants in this study were not expected to encounter any foreseeable risks. Prior to data collection, the researcher informed each participant of the purpose and methodology of the study. Individual participants understood that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and also could refuse to answer any questions they found objectionable. During several interviews participants asked that the tape

recorder be turned off or requested that something they said not be used in the study.

Participants were informed that the issue of criminal activity would not be addressed in the interview questions. They were told that if, during the interview process, the participant began to divulge criminal activity, the investigator would cease audio-taping and would direct the interview away from this issue. The principal investigator maintained control of the structured and non-structured interview process by limiting questions and responses to those approved by the committee.

In order to ensure minimal risks to the participants, complete anonymity was guaranteed to all participants who desired to remain identified only by a pseudonym and known only to the researcher. The study included a provision for the use of the actual name of the participant upon submission of a written statement of their desire to forego anonymity. In these cases, written informed consent forms clearly stated that actual names, rather than pseudonyms, would used due to the historical nature of this study. In all interviews conducted, participants opted to use their actual names throughout the study.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits from this study included a contribution to the general body of knowledge that existed pertaining to the history of desegregation. This study offered a comprehensive source of information regarding the

desegregation of Clinton High School and may enable people to better understand the events and actions of the past so they may learn from past successes and failures (Fraenkel and Wallen, 433).

Participants were given an opportunity to talk about and reflect upon their experiences. Individual reflection on the barriers and hurdles encountered and surpassed by the participants may have provided a sense of personal accomplishment. Any possibility of risk to the participants were similar to those encountered whenever personal or lived experiences are verbalized.

This study offered benefits to educators in general and specifically to this researcher. Those responsible for providing a free and appropriate public education to all children must be mindful of the overt and subtle factors which segregate children in today's society. By examining desegregation in earlier years, this educator became more aware of existing and potential problems preventing equal access to education, as well as a greater sense of responsibility toward the children in the Clinton City Schools.

METHOD OF OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT

Potential participants were initially contacted in writing (Appendix A). A follow-up telephone call was made by the researcher who again explained the study. The purpose, methods, risks, and protections previously outlined in this study were explained to each person contacted. A discussion between the researcher and the potential participant determined if he or she completely understood the project, the nature of individual participation, the procedures,

risks, and protection offered. During initial contact, the researcher emphasized that participation was voluntary, participants could refuse to answer any question they found objectionable and could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Once it was determined by the researcher and the potential participant that he or she wished to take part in the study, the researcher set up a mutually convenient time and place to conduct the interview.

The *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix B) was signed at the time of the interview and provided the participant another opportunity to ask questions prior to participation in the study. Although no interviews were conducted by telephone, the study included a provision for the *Informed Consent Form* to be mailed to the participant with an enclosed stamped envelope addressed to the researcher. Interviews took place after the form was signed, each participant was given a copy, and original *Informed Consent Forms* were submitted to the doctoral committee chair to be stored in the office in a locked file cabinet for a period of three years after completion of the study.

ADEQUACY OF FACILITIES TO SUPPORT RESEARCH

Special facilities were not required for this study. All interviews took place ensured in an uninterrupted block of time at a location convenient to participants. There was no effort to rush or condense the interview sessions, and data collection from each participant was completed in approximately one to one and one-half hours. The principal investigator possessed adequate

computer and copy equipment, a tape recorder, dictaphone, and storage facilities to support this project.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

"There are men and women particularly remembered from this journey [. . .] because they made an effort to communicate as one human to another, because they seemed to echo the sentiments of many besides themselves—or because they spoke from the lonely depths of their own experience and convictions."

Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely

(*Neither Black Nor White* 339)

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Nine of the participants in this study were students or teachers at Clinton High School and one was an attorney during the desegregation era. Some individuals preferred not to be interviewed, but all who agreed to do so chose to use their actual names in the study.

Participants Margaret Anderson, Gail Ann Epps (Upton), Jerry Shattuck, and Buford Lewallen previously had been interviewed at length for articles written about the events surrounding desegregation. Others, such as Bill Driskill, made presentations to classes at Maryville High School where he was principal. The remaining participants have, upon occasion, been quoted briefly in the local news media, and the African American students have been recognized at special events. Prior to this study, Alfred Williams and Thresser

Caswell had not given extensive interviews that had been published. Williams said: "Nobody has ever sat down with me and asked me about my experiences back then." Demographic information on each participant is summarized below:

- **Margaret Anderson,** white business teacher at Clinton High School. Anderson was author of *Children of the South* and was interviewed on the *Today Show* by Barbara Walters. She later became a guidance counselor at Clinton High School where her husband was band director and their two daughters attended school. Anderson continues to reside in Clinton.
- **Patsy A. Bell (later Meredith),** white student at Clinton High School. Meredith was a sophomore at the onset of desegregation in 1956 and graduated in 1959. She resides in Clinton where she serves on the City Council. Meredith's two sons attended school in Clinton.
- **Thresser Caswell,** African American student at Clinton High School. Caswell moved to the area as a 13 year-old freshman in 1956. She still resides in the Claxton community located outside of Clinton, and her children attended Clinton High School.
- **William (Bill) Driskill,** white teacher at Clinton High School. Driskill grew up and attended school in Clinton and served in the army in Korea. He was in his second year of teaching in 1956 and

was assistant principal at Clinton High School. Driskill later became principal of Maryville High School and presently resides in Maryville.

- **Gail Ann Epps (later Upton),** African American student at Clinton High School. Epps was a junior at the time of desegregation and in 1958 became the first African American female to graduate from a Tennessee public high school. She attended Tennessee State University and resides in Sweetwater, Tennessee. Her mother still lives in Clinton.
- **Celdon Medaris Lewallen,** white English teacher at Clinton High School. Lewallen grew up and attended school in Clinton, as did her daughter. She and her husband reside in Clinton where she is actively involved in the community and in numerous civic organizations.
- **W. Buford Lewallen,** white attorney and spouse of Celdon Lewallen who was an English teacher at Clinton High School. Lewallen was elected to the Tennessee State Legislature and was the youngest Speaker of the House. He later served as judge in Anderson County, and his father was mayor of Clinton during the desegregation era. Lewallen resides in Clinton.
- **Robert (Bob) Manning,** white student at Clinton High School. A senior in 1956, Manning was a class officer and member of the

football team. He graduated from the University of Tennessee and returned to Clinton where he still lives and where his son attended school.

- **Jerry Shattuck,** white student at Clinton High School. Shattuck was a senior, president of the Student Council, and member of the football team in 1956. He was interviewed in the Edward R. Murrow documentary, *See It Now*, and in numerous national publications. Shattuck attended Princeton, served in the United States Marine Corps, and earned a law degree from the University of Tennessee. Shattuck returned to Clinton where his four children attended school. Today he practices law and resides in Clinton.
- **Alfred Williams,** African American student at Clinton High School. Williams was a senior in 1956 and had grown up in Clinton. He is employed by the Clinton City Schools and is active in church and community activities. Williams resides in Powell, Tennessee and was preparing to move back to Clinton.

THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

In order to present a collective story from ten separate accounts, five major themes were identified:

- **THEME # 1: VALUES AND BELIEFS -** All participants spoke of obeying the law, the "right thing to do," family expectations, and community unity.

- **THEME # 2: LEADERS, ANTAGONISTS, AND EVERYDAY HEROES -** The participants identified people they considered as positive and negative influences during the desegregation era.
- **THEME # 3: PERSONAL BENCHMARKS -** The interview process evoked memories of specific events in which the participants were involved or observed.
- **THEME # 4: LOOKING AT THE PAST AND PRESENT -** Participants related how their lives changed as a result of their experiences.
- **THEME # 5: IF HISTORY COULD REPEAT ITSELF -** This theme focused on what could have been done differently in order to avoid the conflict that ensued.

Selected excerpts from the interviews offered detail and insight into the events cited in the review of the literature. In order to preserve the linguistic features of each participant's speech, quotations were presented verbatim (Polkinghorne in Rudestam and Newton 33). The actual words, rhythm, and language were as loyal to the participants' experiences as possible. The distinct style of the narratives reflected the social and cultural background of the participants and served to capture the essence of each person's experiences (Gilligan xvi).

Theme # 1: Values and Beliefs

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The experiences related by the participants in this study should not be told without first looking at the values and beliefs expressed by those interviewed. Each person made reference to certain basic values that had been fostered by their families and governed their later decisions. Their responses to the situations in which they were thrust appeared to be the result of a strong belief in family, respect for the law, and "doing the right thing."

Teacher Bill Driskill, who had served in the army in Korea with integrated troops, believed integration should have "been done a long time ago." He recalled, however, that the previous state and federal laws had backed up the concept of separate but equal. "Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, makes all the difference about segregation and integration. Just think what happened from 1876 until 1954 when the court [finally] ruled that separate but equal had no place."

Celdon Lewallen, an English teacher, referred to the attitude toward court order to desegregated Clinton High School. She said, "We were kind of put on report from the very beginning, you were either going to be for the law or against it."

African American student Gail Ann Epps (Upton) expressed the views of the African American students, some of whom preferred to continue to attend all-black high schools. According to Epps, "It wasn't just us saying, 'We're gonna go down here and go to school.' This was the law."

Margaret Anderson, a teacher who had grown up in Kentucky, said, "I don't know how to explain it. I was never against desegregation. My father was a lawyer, and I was reared to obey the law."

Jerry Shattuck, Student Council President in 1956, referred to the attitude of the teachers and community:

> The teachers talked about it in class, and the general consensus was that we're a law-abiding community, and this is the law of the land. We're going to try and abide by it regardless of what our personal feelings might be. I think that attitude was pretty well accepted by the student body. Mr. Wells wrote editorials in the *Clinton Courier* and he more or less conveyed the same message. The community, I think, was of like mind to obey the law of the land as enunciated by the Supreme Court.

Judge Buford Lewallen, an attorney who in 1956 had served in the Tennessee Legislature and whose wife, Celdon Lewallen, taught at the high school, said:

> There was never any question in my mind what I was going to do. My dad never studied the law a day in his life, and he knew

> that in a minute. He was the mayor, but he didn't have anything to do with running Clinton High School—it was a county high school.

Lewallen and attorney Sydney Davis had represented Anderson County Schools in *McSwain* case, arguing against integration:

> See we had a law in Tennessee that stated that if a governing body, like a school board or city, allowed the commingling of the races, they were denied access to state school funds. That was the system. That's the reason the school board had as such. There might have been one or two of them that were a little bit hot under the collar about it, but I don't think so. If they were we were not aware of it. The school board didn't instruct us to do anything except to follow the law. Of course we had to follow the law. Syd and I both were county attorneys; we had been appointed by the county. What happened was Sam Carson was elected county attorney, and Sam got sick, and there we were trying this case.

Senior class officer and member of the football team Bob Manning said: "They fought it in the courts. When you lose, you lose, and you go ahead and play the game by the new rules." He recalled a meeting before school started in August between the football team and D. J. Brittain, high school principal. "He came down and explained all the County did—how they

fought that lawsuit for years. He said, 'We've lost. We're law abiding citizens, and we've got to accept that it's the law of the land. I want you fellows to help us out.'"

Alfred Williams, one of the twelve African Americans who entered Clinton High School in the fall of 1956, felt no one had a choice but to accept the law. "They were gonna have to go to school, coloreds or white. Because the law already had been passed that they integrated, and there wasn't no way out of it. They might as well just buckle down and just, as they say, just buckle down and do it."

As legal counsel for the school system, Lewallen and Davis had to apply the decision in the *Brown* case to *McSwain*:

> Well, we represented the county school board. The county school board was told to integrate the schools. That's what we told them. "Whether you like it or not, you're going to integrate the schools." We didn't give them any chance to argue with us about it. We said, "That's it. If we're going to be your lawyers, you're going to have to do what we ask you to do."
>
> And that's what happened. Had we tried to explain other than just verbally here and there, then we'd get challenged about the law. Of course with some people you couldn't reason with them anyway. They're going to do what they damn well please and that's it. We had some of those. We had some differences

> of opinions with members of the school board. They were fine citizens and are today if they're still living, and [they] didn't understand what we were trying to say when you've got to follow the law.

The interview with Shattuck reinforced the strongly held belief of the participants that the law must prevail. He explained:

> The overwhelming majority of the people wanted to abide by the law. Even the parents who kept their kids out of school were doing it primarily because they feared for their safety. They didn't know if they were going to go in there and take over the school. Those types of people, they don't form counter mobs. They just stay home and go about their lives as decent, law abiding, civil people, civilized people. It wasn't that they were great champions of desegregation or activists in some great social movement. This was their town, and it was a decent town, and it was going to stay that way. The unity of the town in supporting the law of the land was a function of "This is our place and we want it to be a certain way; that is law abiding and civil."
>
> All of us had grown up in an atmosphere of segregation and we were decent, good people. You say, "Well, why did you put up with separate schools, separate water fountains, and toilets

> and public accommodations and so forth?" Well, that's the way we had grown up. Our sense of decency had never been called upon to address the issue. It was forced on us. Most said, "Okay, that's the law of the land." I won't say the overwhelming majority said, "That's right!" Some did, probably many, but the rallying unifier was that we're going to abide by the law of the land and maintain a decent law abiding community.

While obeying the law of the land may have been the result on a respect for authority, the participants were compelled to examine their own philosophy regarding civil and human rights. None of the white students or teachers had ever gone to school with African Americans. They all reached the decision that integration was "the right thing to do." Anderson revealed the thought process that accompanied her decision:

> It's just that when you're faced with it, a crisis like that, then you have to decide where you stand and what you stand for. I think when I saw that beautiful black girl sitting in my room and nobody would pay any attention to her. [. . .] It made me look deeply, and I thought, "What do we stand for? What's this country all about? What have we got to do to make this better?"

Driskill said the belief in "doing the right thing" evolved over time. He believed the attack on Turner "solidified the community that it was going to work because it was right, not just because it was the law." It was his opinion

that the community gradually changed from "That's the law, and we're going to do it" to "We're going to do it—that's the right thing to do."

His view was shared by Shattuck who said: "Doing the right thing in an event of that relative magnitude, given what you normally go through as a teenager in a small town, is a big reinforcement. I honestly feel that the whole town of Clinton felt like it did the right thing. That was what was important. The main thing is doing the right thing."

Epps (Upton) said that things happened that were "just sort of a hate-like thing. I knew it was the right thing to do because it was no reason for us to have to get up in the cold and go on a bus every morning, you know, to Austin High School [in Knoxville]."

As for going to school with African Americans, Manning stated that he didn't have strong feelings about whether or not they attended Clinton High School.

> I wanted to do what's right about things. You know, if they came into one of the classrooms with me, I didn't think it was going to affect my education. What I got out of it would be what I put into it. I know these children. I've played ball with them over there in front of the school before all this. It was no big deal to me.

Throughout the interviews, family relationships and values were credited with teaching participants the importance of doing the right thing. Williams said:

> I might not like you, but I got to love you. The Bible says love, it don't say hate. I don't see nothin' in the Bible that says you got to hate, but it says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Honest truth. I learned that through my parents and their teachin' and everything and the churches.

Thresser Caswell, one of Williams' classmates, reiterates the impact of family:

> I'd always been taught to love and go about your business, so I never…I guess I just stayed on that path." Williams said, " My parents told me 'There's some people you gonna have in life that don't—won't—accept you 'cause of your color. You gonna go through life like that, but don't you look at people like that.

The families of white students felt the same way as the African American families. Shattuck's statement, "That's the way I was raised" was reflected in the words of others like Patsy Bell (now Meredith):

> My mother always taught us that we were no better than anyone else. It didn't matter. We were taught that from little kids up. Some things I did I guess simply because I think back to what mama said, and I think we all did that. The most memorable thing was my mother saying to us we had better not mistreat anyone, no matter what their color was, that everybody needed an education.

Manning said his father gave him "strict orders" about being home after football practice. He recalled his father saying, "If they have trouble with this, I don't want you involved with it. You better be home." Manning repeated what others had said: "Clinton was just one of those unlucky places that we had to go first. When you go first, you know, you have to work out all the kinks for the people to follow afterward."

Theme # 2: Leaders, Antagonists, and Everyday Heroes

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke

"Working out the kinks" was not easy for the people of Clinton, and all of the participants felt strongly that outside influences made the task even more difficult. Those interviewed believed that even those who lived in Clinton and opposed desegregation would have accepted it without major incident had it not been for "outsiders." Names like John Kasper and Asa Carter surfaced repeatedly as instigators, and the attention of the local and national media was thought to have assisted them in their cause.

By the same token, individuals and collective groups of people were identified as leaders who were positive influences on the events. Their intent to obey the "law of the land" was accompanied by actions that lent credence to the words they had spoken in support of desegregation. Some held

positions of power by virtue of election or appointment, while others simply assumed the responsibility they felt came from living in a small town. Some were known as leaders throughout Tennessee, while others were known only to friends and family or to their classmates. Some had name recognition within their chosen profession, while the names of others were known only to members of their congregation, to readers of their weekly newspaper, or to students in their classes.

A leader is generally known as one who is knowledgeable about a particular topic, is charismatic, and has the ability to encourage others to follow his or her lead. Individuals interviewed for this study named many who had a positive impact during the desegregation of Clinton High School. However, they were adamant in their belief that there also were leaders who created a negative influence. When asked what they thought influenced the events that occurred in Clinton, all participants were unanimous in concluding that people who were not residents of the town or county caused much of the violence and protest. Bob Manning spoke of these leaders in collective terms:

> You take someone who comes in here and rouses, a rabble-rouser, and gets people all stirred up, they'll do things that they normally wouldn't do. If they could have eliminated those outsiders, I don't think it would have been one tenth. They were stirring it up every night. They'd get up and give these fiery

> speeches like, “the government was taking over everything and denying you all your freedoms.”
>
> If you didn't have that— I shouldn't use the term “low mentality”— but somebody that's not well educated to see through these things. If you hadn't had that, you know they wouldn't have gotten so upset. There would have been nobody there to stir them up. So I think that if they hadn't had that situation, I don't believe they would have had one tenth of the problem. Probably wouldn't have had any problems at all. I don't just feel like there was that much opposition to them [African Americans] in the school.

Celdon Lewallen also talked about the influence segregationists had on the citizens and the students:

> I think the outside encouragement, recognition by the outsiders to those who were just ripe. They just needed somebody to tell them what to do and were willing to do it. I saw people that I would never thought would be a part of a riot. I saw children that I never thought would be trouble makers, but they were influenced. "You're a member of the Youth White Citizens, you've got something to show for it." It's recognition that they had not formally had.

> I remember this judge that came from Chattanooga. He was a white supremacist. I remember the, I don't remember names. I remember the one that came from Alabama. If they had a following, I wasn't aware of it.

Participants also were very staunch in naming John Kasper as the main antagonist. Celdon Lewallen said news of Kasper's arrival in Clinton spread quickly.

> We knew that Kasper was a loner. You know how he got recognition, do you not? He had been trying to attract the young people. He defecated on the sidewalk in front of the building, the city building, and got arrested.
>
> That made him one of them. He was a follower of Ezra Pound. He had followed him in Chicago. We had been told then and since that he had a black mistress. I think he was an opportunist. This was fertile ground for him.
>
> Now he never came in the school to my knowledge. He just incited. The people he attracted were people that this was their opportunity to be known and previously they had not. This was their big moment.

Judge Buford Lewallen remembered walking out of the school and seeing Kasper talking and preaching to a group of a hundred to one hundred fifty people in the street:

> We walked right into the crowd. We wanted to see what he was talking about and that's when he was talking *about Blackstone 's Commentaries*. But the people I knew who were there, and I don't mean to be disrespectful to them, they didn't have the collective…the intellect was not…there was not a lot of Harvard graduates out there is what I'm trying to say.

Margaret Anderson recalled Asa Carter coming in from Alabama and John Kasper stirring up the people:

> They began to stir up people in Clinton—not just people that I happen to know, but they must have brought them from the outside. There was a big crowd around the courthouse. We've always got people who may be very uneducated people who would have those feelings of hatred. Then I think maybe they wouldn't have done anything, but then these leaders came in and influenced them and they followed—people who have these feelings. They stirred the community. You've got people who believed anything they said. After a while they began to catch on.
>
> I remember hearing him [Kasper] speak in the courthouse yard. He was very convincing to some people. Asa Carter—he was the same way. They had the ability to arouse others. Maybe we didn't have enough people at that time who were

> speaking out. So many of the good people and fine citizens would just say, "Well this is going to blow over. Best not to have anything to do with it." A lot of people were like that.

Thresser Caswell concurred with those who attributed the protests to people like Kasper:

> I think it was mostly outsiders. Maybe some of the people that lived here thought that way, but I think when this guy [Kasper] came in, you know, they just needed somebody to get 'em stirred up. The police took us up on the hill [the predominantly African American neighborhood located behind Clinton High School]. You could look down and see all the people standing down there. They were waiting for us to come out of school. They took us out the back door. Some of the stuff like the bombing that went on up on the hill…you won't ever know who did that.

Kasper traveled throughout Clinton in an effort to enlist people to the segregationist cause. When asked if Kasper ever approached any of the students, Manning recalled:

> I'm sure he did. He never did me, but I'm sure he did. He did a lot of calling and contacting parents of children. He never personally approached me or never approached my parents. My parents were just nobodies, you know. They weren't nobody

> that anyone would be interested in. They wouldn't have gotten involved with it anyhow, you know. I think there was a lot of parents and a lot of people got carried away by these agitators. They had Kasper and seems like they got some fellow out of Alabama or Georgia to come in one time. I didn't hear him but it was in the paper. He was head of the White Citizens Council of Georgia or someone of the KKK down there in Georgia. He came in. He was in one of those organizations.

One of the participants did not identify any other "outsiders" except Kasper. Gail Ann Epps (Upton) recalled:

> I don't think there was any outsiders except Kasper. The main person that brought Kasper in here and got Kasper to go to all these people that sprang up from I-don't-know-where, you know, I don't know where they came from. I mean, I guess they were Tennessee people though, that lived out, or I just couldn't say. But he did…Kasper did. He must have had transportation and stuff to go around to these people.

According to Jerry Shattuck, when John Kasper showed up in town, he got five people to carry pickets that first morning; however, they left within five or ten minutes. Alfred Williams identified John Kasper and another man, The Rev. Alonzo Bullock as the "big needles." He recalled:

> Them 'bout the only two I could think, but they was mostly the instigators of it, kept it goin' and everything. Because the people, they would just be out there in the street, just hollerin', "Get them niggers out this school, get them niggers out this school." They didn't have no big influence on it. I think they done it [desegregation] right until John Kasper come in. That's where the problem started, from John Kasper. I believe if Kasper hadn't never came in here, I believe you would'a had some hard times, but I don't believe it'd been near as bad as when they integrated Clinton High School back then. I don't believe it'd been near as bad. You know, you might'a had some incidents and stuff.
>
> Sure, you have incidents now. You have incidents now, because even right now you read about what's going on down there [high school] between blacks and whites and everything. They act up every now and then. You gonna always have a bad, a bad apple in a barrel."

When asked to expand on the connection between Kasper and Bullock, Williams replied:

> Oh yeah. Yeah. See, it was just more and more, more like a team. Oh yeah, they had it going here [protests]. I tell you it was terrible, now. It was rough. John Kasper caused a whole

> heap of it, because you see, he just brought, when he came in here, he stirred the people up. He got the people all stirred up about the twelve blacks. And they just kept on just pestering, just rubbing the salt in our wound ... and people just, hey, they just went off, you know. They just didn't want it and everything. It was bad.

As the participants mentally revisited the desegregation of Clinton High school, Patsy Bell (Meredith) reflected on her memories of the event:

> There was a man called John Kasper, and I think I shall never forget that name. He was not by himself. You read in the paper there were others involved. I have no idea about that. John Kasper, that name just kept ringing and ringing and ringing. They had meetings with individuals who wanted to attend meetings to stop this integration. They would stop it.

Epps (Upton) remembered seeing Kasper in town. She recalled the crowd that gathered with Kasper at the courthouse that Saturday night in August:

> Yeah. I, we, I remember we was, we was sittin' in church when on a Sunday morning, no, it was Saturday night when they had this big crowd of people. Had they [protestors] not went, had they went to the hill as they call it [predominantly black neighborhood] where , they [African Americans] were waitin' on

'em. And that's what would'a been so sad was…would'a been a lot of bloodshed up there 'cause they were waitin' on em'.

They said they was gonna invade, you know, to tear up the…to bomb 'em all this time, or whatever, but they got the word that the black people was waitin' on 'em so..... [She was asked who the people were.]

That's what we don't know. That's, that's what I'm sayin'. These people, they said "these people," but it was just a crowd of people that, like I say, that're in this crowd. I've got a picture. I've got a picture that I cut out the paper, and I said, "Well, I know him… I know him…I know him, blah, blah, blah." But then these, all these other people that I didn't, I had never seen before in my life. Where those people came from…But now, I could pick out the people that were from Clinton, but I don't know where they come from. I do not today know where those people come from. I really don't.

John Kasper, I've been as close to him as you, and he never opened his mouth to me. He walked the streets of Clinton. He walked the streets. I've, I walked the streets, and I mean, you know, I was goin'…where was I goin'? Hoskins Drug Store? 'Round, 'round down there, you know, the one downtown. He, he never…I looked at him, he looked at me, and he knew who I

> was 'cause my picture been all over the place. He never said a word.
>
> And, in fact, they say he was goin' with a black woman. So, you know, he wasn't even, he wasn't even interested in what was goin' on here. He just wanted the money, whoever hired him to come in here. [She was asked if she believed somebody hired him to get things stirred up.] Most definitely! Most definitely. Yes, he was. Why would he stop by? He just was a...(sigh)...he was a mess.

Driskill expressed his feelings about outside agitators: "I don't feel very kindly toward people like Asa Carter coming in and Faubus, I can't think of his first name, he later became governor of Arkansas. Kasper attracted them I guess. Now these are intelligent people, even if they're in the wrong."

Along with individual agitators, other outside influences were noted. The Ku Kux Klan (KKK) made sure its presence was noted during this racial tension. Epps (Upton) recalled "lookin out over the town as a little girl...seeing crosses burning."

> They were here, don't get me wrong but this was a just a little bunch of 'em. Mess from here, you know what I'm sayin? This little Ku Kux Klan bunch that rode through here, they rode on Foley Hill as you call it—up on the hill we call it. And this little bunch—two groups— would come through with Confederate

flags and they would start that out there, "Booooo, Booooo, Booooo!"

Williams also talked about the Klan's visit to his neighborhood:

> The Ku Kux Klan come in you know. The Ku Kux Klan come up there on the hill and rode through. And then they had to bring the National Guards in there. They brought 'em in to protect us, keep us from getting hurt cause they was bad. I remember seeing the Klan come through. Yes, I do! I was standin'...hey, they came up on the hill, the black hill. And we blacks was standing up there pretendin' like, like the whites was standing down here, and we were telling them, "You get out my streets." We was actin'...we was handling guns...blacks had guns because we played it like this—if they stopped up there, it would be some killing up there. They just rolled through, you know, let us know that they was in town and everything. With they hoods on and everything, you couldn't tell who was who.
>
> It was a terrible time. Because we youngsters, you know, we was trying to go to school, and then our parents had to go to work. They was workin' in Oak Ridge at the time. We had to sit up at night.

The Klan's visits were not confined to African American homes and neighborhoods though. Incidents were reported at the homes of people

identified as supporters of desegregation, including Sydney Davis, Buford Lewallen, and Mayor Lewallen. One such visit was described by Celdon Lewallen:

> They [African American students] were put in a very precarious, dangerous position. Their own families ultimately were threatened by some. We had the burning of the cross. We had one at our house. Eleanor Davis [teacher and wife of attorney Sydney Davis] had one at hers. She lived farther from the road. Dancy [Lewallen's daughter] and I had been to Knoxville and had just driven in and had gone in the house when the white robes came out in front of the house with the cross. I went in long enough to get a gun. I told Dancy to stay in the back bedroom, and I said, "You all get the hell out of here." And they did.
>
> They never got the cross in the yard, so they didn't get it burned. I got the license number, and I went before the grand jury and tried to indict them. There wasn't anybody on that jury that had the guts enough to do it...some local people.
>
> I didn't have any sense I was so angry. I didn't think about it twice. Once I got Dancy in the house, I thought that would be all right. I thought that anybody who dressed in a robe and only would get out at dark didn't have much intestinal fortitude.

The Klan, according to Anderson, "would have loud meetings across the river—just speaking that hatred. I believe they burned a cross in Mrs. Davis' yard [one of the teachers]. She was threatened by them." Anderson maintained that she couldn't see anyone but she could hear them. "Then of course the night they nearly took over the town, I did see that. That was when the Guard was called in—right after that. They were turning over cars and everything."

The growing crowds became too much for the three-man Clinton police force to handle. As tensions heightened and unrest increased, a home guard was established in Clinton to maintain law and order pending the arrival of the National Guard. According to Celdon Lewallen, "We didn't have a very brave police force. They had sudden illnesses and were not available. They really needed the home guard."

According to Shattuck, "The mob of course…at night they had Kasper and others giving these rabble-raising speeches and they buried some crosses around the community. There were bomb threats to prominent citizen's homes and to the principal's home. It was a very tense situation."

Once again the citizens of Clinton were called on to maintain law and order. Judge Lewallen, whose father was mayor, described how the "home guard" was formed:

> Federal officers had told us, the FBI had told me and Sydney Davis. Now incidentally I knew the agent in charge of Knoxville,

he was a fraternity brother of mine. They told us that they had word, they didn't know how accurate it was, that a mob was coming in here on Saturday night to burn the courthouse and burn the school building. We knew that, and that's why we were down there.

What happened was Syd Davis came to my house early Saturday morning, and we began to call people that we knew and told them to come and bring their neighbor with them and this that and the other. We were going to have a meeting at a certain time at the municipal building, which we did. It got bad down there, and everybody that came, we swore them in as an auxiliary city policeman. Now where we got that authority I can't tell you.

Now Dad [mayor] came down and said, "What am I supposed to do?" and I said, "Just read this and tell them to answer the question." Syd and I had written it for Dad to read and swear them in. We figured he ought to be able to do something.

So that night, that afternoon the crowd began to swell around in front of Hoskin's Drug Store [across from the courthouse], the courthouse closed and it was at that time when the crowd was getting pretty rough. Our home guard was back against the

building, they were not out trying to tell people they couldn't walk on the sidewalk or somewhere. Jody Fisher [high school coach] made the only arrest that there was made that day. He put a man in jail over at City Hall.

One thing happened was part of the mob surged around from out of the courthouse up this way and broke a couple of plate glass windows in a business that wasn't open at the time. That was on Saturday night. Now Saturday night down in front of the courthouse where we had our so-called home guard and our people. I could see it because I was up in the courthouse with a Thompson submachine gun.

Mrs. Lewallen explained how her husband and the home guard set out to protect the courthouse that night.

They organized the home guard. Buford had gone—he knew somebody in the police department—had gone over and gotten some machine guns. There was only one shot fired. He was unloading the gun and it went off. That was the only shot fired. All of those things you think about now, and they were really humorous.

That was the night my mother had become so concerned that we went over to the hotel in Knoxville. The three of us [Celdon, Buford, and their daughter] spent the night that night. She lived

> right across from us, and it was very trying for her to have all of us so exposed. We went over there. In fact D. J. and Clarice [principal Brittain and his wife] also did that night. We stayed in a hotel.

Epps (Upton) put the situation in perspective when she said: "Just to think that all those crowds of people were downtown…and National Guard. I mean, you could see…I mean if it was a disaster or somethin'. But just because—I forget—twelve of us little black kids was goin' to school."

Both Epps (Upton) and Shattuck attributed Governor Clement's involvement to Judge Lewallen, former Speaker of the House in the Tennessee State Legislature. Referring to Clement, Epps (Upton) said:

> I think Clement was in at the time. He was slow about sendin' the National Guard, but I think Judge Lewallen was in that bunch…they had to go all the way to Nashville to talk to the governor to get him to help do somethin' here.
>
> He had to go try to get the National Guard to come in. That was that night they done all....you know, I was tellin' you they had all this goin' on downtown, turnin' over cars and all that type thing. It was bad that Saturday night.

Mrs. Lewallen confirmed her husband's involvement. "That's the reason we got the Guard here…because Buford called the Governor." Judge Lewallen explained the events leading up to his call:

I'll tell you what happened with that thing. It was getting so rough, and this town was filled— so was the Park Hotel—with people from Mississippi, Alabama, other states, North Carolina, South Carolina. You had a southern group that came in here and they were just rabble rousers.

Negroes who were driving through here on this main highway got stopped down there, got the tires cut off of their car. Well they shook a lot of them, but one of them, someone came up and told dad about a car being just up on the hill, going north on 25W, that all four tires were down that they had cut the tires off of the car. Some people were up there harassing these blacks, and when he heard about it— when Dad heard about it, he got in touch with somebody on the police force or something and they got some people up there. Those people were scared, you can imagine just driving through a little country town somewhere and you get a bunch of nuts that start cutting the tires off of your car.

No governor or anyone else wants to get involved in a personal fight like that. I don't blame Clement. When I found out that the mob had marched on Dad's house up there, and incidentally Carson Ridenour's brother was a policeman here at that time. His name was Clyde Ridenour. Clyde was down

> here, and he was a policeman in this town and a good one. He was the one that got that mob to turn around from my father's house up there. I didn't learn about all this 'til later.

The mayor lived in the "Lewallen homeplace" on Main Street which was actually highway 25W. According to Shattuck, "25W was the main north-south artery from Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Lexington through to Atlanta and further south because I-75 didn't exist then." Celdon Lewallen spoke of the night they called Nashville from the home of her in-laws:

> We were there. That was the night we talked to Frank Clement who was the governor. He didn't want to make a decision. It wasn't politically good to make a decision. I said, "This is not up to you. It's a matter of life or death. If you've got any guts you'll do it." We had all been friends, his wife and I and Buford. There were a whole group of us that were friends.
>
> He [Clement] knew that it had to be done, and he just dragged his feet, because it wasn't politically expedient. It was not popular at the time.

Judge Lewallen said on that Saturday night, Clement sent in the "highway patrol, and then right on top of them came the military…the tanks." Mrs. Lewallen declared, "I'll never forget it. They must have started in Knoxville, cause they came over the bridge with the lights and everything flashing, and it really did look good."

Shattuck recounted the arrival of the state police in vivid detail:

> It was funny, I can remember that Saturday night. I had a date, and we came through town. The mob was out there, but everything was sort of quiet at that point. Everything happened while I was with my date, but I'm told that the mob was getting more and more out of hand. The home guard decided it had to clear the courthouse square. The mob was not a bit happy about that. I heard, again there were rumors, that they were going to get armed themselves and come back and retake the courthouse square.
>
> At that point the governor said, "Go!" They tell me that the whole line of highway patrol cars came, with their sirens and lights on, across the bridge there into Clinton. A big line, very dramatic, came across the bridge, down Main Street into town, and the lead car pulled in front of Hoskins Drug Store there.
>
> Greg O'Rear was head of the highway patrol at that time, either the head of the state or in this region. They said he was about six feet eight, and he climbed out of that patrol car and had to come out in sections because he was so big. He finally stood up, and of course at six eight he towered above this whole mob, threw that shotgun over his shoulder and said, "All right boys, it's all over." And it was. By the next morning the National

> Guard was here, and we were under marshal law for about two months.

The arrival of the National Guard was, according to the participants, a turning point in controlling the impending violence. Caswell said, "The kids in Little Rock had one thing going against them—their governor who was in charge of it all. He sent in troops to beat them up, to keep them out of school. We didn't have that. At least the governor [Clement] pulled the troops in here so people would let us get home safely."

Williams agreed with Caswell about Clement and went on to talk about desegregation and the governors in other states:

> Well, I think what made the difference now is the governor. You know, he was anti [desegregation]. I think that's what done it in Arkansas. And all that burnin', they done a lot of burnin' in Central High School there in Little Rock and everything. And here, you wouldn't need as much, but this was the first place, this was the starting point, right here.
>
> The governor of Tennessee...see, he wasn't like that, see, he wasn't like that. Just like the University of Alabama. You remember that governor? Wallace. You remember when he just stood in the door, say he wasn't gonna let her [a student] in there? And, at the time, John Kennedy was the President, and he deputized those National Guard. Right then. He told 'em, tell

'em, say, "You step out the way and let her go in here." She went in.

Remember Meredith of Mississippi? Yeah, the governor's the leader. See, lot of leaders had something to do with, didn't want us to get where we're at today. The leaders have a lot to do with what, how, what people remember, National Guard coming in or whatever. They say, "You remember that when they had it in Clinton when the National Guards come in, state troopers and all that?" Lot of 'em did. That was a hard, that was tough time then. It was rough then. Then the National Guard was there. They was ordered to protect us because if they hadn't' of came—the National Guards—a few people might'a got killed.

Celdon Lewallen said, "Finally Frank Clement took the bull by the horns and sent Joe Henry [Adjutant General] in, and he went through Oliver Springs. They said it was a sight to behold all those tanks. He was riding in full regalia, and he had a riding crop. He was in his element, and he was leading them. They camped out down on the football field."

Two of the football players talked about the troops. Manning said he was glad "they got everything quieted down. They stayed a week or so, but we were going to school all the time this was going on. They had a little kitchen-like down there beside the rec [recreation] hall across from the school. On the way to football practice, we'd go down through to the field."

Shattuck referred to them as "just kids from other National Guard units, not a whole lot older than we were. But I remember they took over the field house. The football team had to dress up in the gym, in the basketball players' place. But everything returned to normal. Then the National Guard left, and everything was still normal. No more problems."

The high school was a likely place for problems to occur, both inside and outside of the building. Clinton High School was considered a focal point and source of pride in the small town. It was no wonder then, when positive influences were named, that people associated with the school were mentioned often. The principal, as well as some of the teachers and students, played a pivotal role in providing leadership and continuity within the school and community. Anderson expressed the opinion that some were against desegregation because of the way they had been raised in the South:

> We had those feelings that were left over I suppose, many citizens. At the same time, the citizens of this community proved themselves very solid people and good people who wouldn't deliberately hurt others. At the same time they probably didn't believe in desegregation. We even had teachers like that. They weren't going to disobey the law. At the same time they weren't going to mistreat anybody. That was the general feeling in the South. I think people began to change when they saw what desegregation really meant.

Epps (Upton) said most teachers were nice to her— "I never had one to be ugly to me." Alfred Williams recalled the names of some: "Mr. Brittain and Mr. Driskill and Miss Anderson. Like I said, boy I'm telling you, they were some sweet people. Everyone in the school did good, and the teachers, they did good…did all they could."

Williams' view was reiterated by another of the African American students. Epps (Upton) declared: "Now I had real good teachers like Miss Lewallen. All those teachers were really, really nice. They were nice people, you know. Miss Anderson, she was a guidance counselor, and she was just a sweet person, you know. They were just real good people. I didn't have any problems with teachers at all."

Caswell remembered teachers who may not have been so good, but she gave them the benefit of the doubt because of the stressful situation they faced. "Like I say, a few teachers weren't fair, but I guess they knew that they were being watched, too. I think everybody was just scared."

Even though Williams spoke highly of his teachers, he said, "well, you know, I don't think I had no good memory [of school]." He explained further:

> Only thing, I really enjoyed my homeroom teacher, Miss Carson, at the time, and I liked Miss Lewallen, Buford Lewallen's wife. Mr. Driskill was just a nice man and Coach Fisher…he really, really stuck out. Oh, yeah. He's a big man, big tall man.

> Well, Mr. Brittain, he was a real good man. He was a real fine man.
>
> But Miss Anderson, she was a lady. She was, she was a snowball. She done everything in her power, you know, to try to protect us, and see that, we were treated equal and everything, but she had a job to do just like everybody else to do. You know, she had, there was so many students.
>
> Now some of the teachers they would lean over backwards and try to help us and everything, and some of 'em, you know, they had a job to do and they had to live in their community. They had to live with that because they didn't want to have that word when they go home, "Oh, you nigger lover" and all this. But it was good, you know. You had some good memories of some of the teachers, you know.

Both good and bad memories also were shared by teachers, and Anderson's recollections were of a personal nature. All of the participants remembered her as a positive influence and as a teacher who got to know her students. Anderson said:

> Well, it really affected me. I can say that. There were people all around me who didn't feel that way. I don't think they were as close to the children. People who didn't have children, black children in their classes, or people in the community. When you

> look at a child in your class, and you think, "What kind of a teacher am I? What am I here for?" All those things come to mind.
>
> I just knew that I had to be their friend, that they had to have a friend. Talking with them, sympathizing with them, I guess. Outside of school I did talk to several. Things would happen and I'd call them at night. I don't remember, except I just tried to be their friend.

The white students also credited the teachers with keeping things calm inside the school. Bell (Meredith) said, "I have the utmost respect for educators because of what I saw them go through. I think they were the key. They had an impact on my life on how I handled it [desegregation]."

Shattuck spoke of being "guided by our teachers and the administration." Another white student, Manning, talked about the guidance of the faculty:

> I think Ms. Lewallen was a real influence on trying to keep the peace. There were a lot of teachers who went out of their way to keep the peace and keep down problems. Ms. Emerson was a math teacher. She was from up North where they had integrated many years before. She lived in Norris, and she was instrumental in trying to help.

> A lot of the faculty, the faculty probably worked together quite a bit. Ms. Lewallen helped especially. I'd have to sit down and think about some of the teachers we had back then who helped. We had Jody Fisher. We had Martin Peters and Ms. Emerson, Ms. Davis, and Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. There wasn't any dissension there in the faculty.

Teachers such as Celdon Lewallen, Margaret Anderson, and Eleanor Davis were vocal in their support of African American students and their right to attend school. Mrs. Lewallen recalled:

> Some students had been brought up to believe that whites are superior to blacks. In my homeroom, I didn't give them a chance. We read the Bible each day; everybody took a turn...you know you can't refuse to do that. That's all we did in homeroom when we were going through this thing. I didn't give them a chance to talk about anything.
>
> Several of them asked me what I thought about this White Citizens Council, and I said, "I think you're dumb. I'm white, but it didn't cost me twenty dollars to prove I'm white. That's all you're buying is something to say that you're white which makes you different from anybody else." I said, "You look white to me."

Another teacher, Eleanor Davis, spoke up in a PTA meeting following the closing of the school in December 1956. According to Driskill, "Eleanor

was saying, 'We didn't want to go home. We didn't want to be defeated. We didn't want to send the students home.' She made an eloquent speech about we had to make this work here."

The strong stance taken by teachers like Celdon Lewallen and Eleanor Davis, both English teachers, may have made things easier for African Americans in the classroom. Caswell remembered: "The classes were all right, and most of the teachers, I think, were all right. You really didn't…once you got in the classroom, most of the time, you didn't have a problem."

Celdon Lewallen attributed encountered in her classroom primarily to three boys. Mrs. Lewallen recalled:

> I only had those three that really were threatening to me. I would go in and they would have written on the board, "Ms. Lewallen's a nigger lover."
>
> I said, "You're absolutely right. I even love some of you little devils, so I'm not discriminating against you at all." I told them, I said, "You're not going to pass in my class."
>
> I had some pretty feisty ones in there that wanted to be on the outside and wanted to hassle me, and finally I just…they were pretty big boys, too. I called them in and I said, "You all are talking about discrimination." I said, "You're practicing discrimination, and I'm going to give you a good example of it. Not a single one of you can pass if you don't cheat. From now

> on every time you do, I'm putting a zero in my grade book." I said, "Now, that's discrimination. But I'm not stopping there. Not only that, you're not going to pass, so you can't graduate. But even if you get by some place else, I'm going to write on your permanent record that you were not fit for service with any branch of the government. So if you plan on going into that, don't. Do we understand each other?"
>
> They said, "You're discriminating against us?". And I said, "You're right I am." I said, "That's the way it's going to be."
>
> I didn't have but three that gave me any trouble. One of them turned out to be a preacher. I met him not long ago, and I said, "I don't believe this."

Bell (Meredith) also spoke of how the teachers maintained order in their classrooms. She gave credit to the teachers for helping things such as club activities to go on as normally as possible. She recalled:

> We had some teachers who were very strong and very adamant about, “You will behave.” Back then they could suspend them. They had more tools to deal with in that respect than you have today.
>
> Then there were some of them [teachers] who were absolutely like the kids…they were scared to death, and I don’t blame them. I know they had to be under a lot of stress. They

had to be. Not knowing if that student who came into their classroom was going to cause an uproar because we did have young white people who did not believe in them coming. They didn't care. They would hang their head out the window and yell nasty remarks at them [African American students]. Some of the teachers, I am sure, were just under an immense amount of strain trying to say, "Okay, we need to be controlled."

Attempts to intimidate those who supported desegregation were prevalent, and Celdon Lewallen was no stranger to threats. She spoke of those who tried to frighten her:

> That's why I locked my [classroom] door. I was on that main [hall] when you come off of whatever that street is that comes down from the hill, Broad Street. See they [segregationists] came in; I was the second door on the right. I had seniors, and I was the one that had the colored children. I was not the only one, but they knew that they were in there. I never was attacked. I was threatened, but I thought, "They don't have the guts. They're not going to carry through with anything."
>
> Except I was upset about the attempt to burn the cross in front of the house. I thought, "We're dealing big time." I know the people, I knew who they were then, I know who they are now. You'd be surprised."

Participants acknowledged that the principal in 1956-57, D. J. Brittain, was most responsible for the safety of the students and staff and for the success or failure of desegregation. Driskill felt that Brittain "may have taken too much responsibility for desegregation."

Epps (Upton) referred to the principal in these terms: "Poor fella. He did the best he could. I think it probably scared him to death 'cause he didn't know. I mean, you take all those many people out there in front of your school, and you're looking at cameras."

One of the white students spoke of D. J. Brittain's physical appearance. Manning described the principal: "Mr. Brittain was a little, frail skinny fellow to begin with. Before this was over, he was looking pretty haggard. I'm sure he was losing sleep, and people were calling him and what have you and harassing him and all that. I'm sure the faculty helped him a lot.

If the faculty was of assistance to the principal, Brittain pointed out in his dissertation that the superintendent of schools and central office were not. This premise was shared by Anderson:

> Things were just running wild. Strangers in the school. We couldn't get any help. Mrs. Juanita Moser was our assistant principal. She was very disturbed. Mr. Brittain, they were taking his time with the newspapers and reporters and all that, you know. He was getting all kinds of threats. He was just almost beside himself. Juanita went down to the county office and told

> the superintendent of schools, "If you ever meant anything to that school, we need you."
>
> The response she got from him was, "Everything's going to be all right. Don't worry about it. Everything's going to be all right."
>
> Strangers were running through the schools. Children were being kept at home. Parents were afraid for them to come. Teachers were beginning to be afraid, some of them. It was very tragic.

Brittain resigned at the close of the 1956-57 school year, and the name of his replacement, W. D. Human, was brought up in many of the interviews. Human was principal of Clinton High School from 1957 until 1968 and was known as a strict disciplinarian. Anderson recalled: "Mr. Human had come from Morgan County. He was an old army man. He knew how to handle the situation, as you well remember. Well, he was what we needed I'm sure at that particular time."

Several of the participants, though not all, agreed with Anderson. Bell (Meredith) described what it was like when the new principal came:

> We got a man who was an ex-military man who was not afraid. I'll tell you why I think that. The first time that he came in, we used to have assembly in the mornings. The first time he came, he walked into the chapel room or assembly room, and

> you could have heard a pin drop. Nobody said anything; you know all these people that had been hanging out windows were even quiet. Nobody said a word. The students called him Hitler. He walked in, and he let them know from the start he was in charge.
>
> I think that was the key element. He showed no sign of fear, no sign of backing away from anything or anybody. It was, "I'm General Patton, and I'm here, and we're going to do it my way." It was sort of, his remarks were very stern, but very, I don't know how, what word to use. He was not; he didn't show any emotion at all. It was just, "I'm here and we're going to go to school. We're going to get an education, no matter what color we are."

It appeared that Human was almost the opposite of Brittain. Driskill compared the two: " Now in contrast, They got to Mr. Brittain, they really did. I was sorry for him. I was his friend…he was one of my best friends ever. But W. D. Human, if it ever got to him, nobody knew it. Nobody knew it and that might be a good approach."

One of the African American students also spoke highly of the new principal. "I loved him," Epps (Upton) said. She recalled a particular incident in which she and her sister were involved:

> He was…he was good. Yes sir. Now he was, I liked him [Human]. Because we had problems, my sister and myself,

> getting to go home in the afternoon because they would, some of the bus students would block our path coming. See, I'd have to go meet her sometime, and then I'd have to go past, you know, past the school and they'd be getting on the bus and they'd block our way. So, he found about it. So he goes and helps 'em, shows 'em how to get on the bus. He said, This is the way you get on the school bus, blah, blah, blah.
>
> And my sister and myself we were so tickled, but we, you know, we didn't laugh 'cause we just, it was a really serious situation, you know. And he waited, we had to wait till he just showed them how to get on the bus. They didn't know he was standing there waiting. He just grabbed 'em by the arm and said, "This is the way you get on."
>
> And I said, "Uh-oh." Then we, my sister and myself, went on through.

Some participants in the study mentioned that teachers may have been against desegregation, but as Williams put it: "Some of the teachers, I figure some of 'em—I feel like they was just prejudiced, but they had a job to do… had a job to do."

Epps (Upton) agreed that some teachers in the school were prejudiced. She recalled a conversation that occurred in the hallway between a teacher

and a white student that was overheard by one of the African American students.

> They were passing by one of the teachers, and one of the white kids said, "We don't want to go to school with these niggers."
>
> And the teacher said, "Well, I'm like you…I don't either. I feel the same as you do, but honey, we have to do it."
>
> Had it been me, I wouldn't have said it, even if I didn't care to do this. I wouldn't have said it in front of a child.

All of the participants in the study emphasized the leadership of the students. Anderson recounted examples of both positive and negative types of student leaders:

> We had some very strong student leaders. They were a great help on those really bad days. We had others who weren't. They were very silent. You didn't know what was really going on or what they were being told at home and that sort of thing. I remember one day I had a black girl who left study hall. I asked her why she left. She said, "They were whispering things."
>
> That would go on underneath. In the years since, I've talked to many of the students, and they've told me things they went through that even the teachers didn't know. How they would

threaten them, and some were very open about it, very open. The school authorities of course would try to calm those down.

We had some very strong student leaders. Student Council was strong. In some of the worst days, they were a great help.

We had students who believed just the opposite. Sometimes they would threaten them [African American students] with knives or things like that. They could do it at times and in ways that teachers or the principal wouldn't know about it, or it could be off the school grounds. Yes, there was a lot of that.

This is strange, but in the years since, some of those students have come back and they've said, "Whatever got into me?"

There was one boy in particular. He threatened to kill the black students. Then he went off to Vietnam. When he came back he came by one day, and he said, "Well how are you getting along with this and that?" I told him things were a lot better.

He said, "Whatever had gotten into me?" He said, "I wasted so much time with hate." So he did change.

The African American students interviewed discussed some of the things they encountered at school. Epps (Upton) believed the actions of the students simply reflected the views of their parents. She explained: "Their

parents were against us. Most kids that were doing this, I imagine their parents was prejudiced, so that's where they got most of it. And then some of the kids didn't say anything. They just didn't say anything at all."

Caswell called the first day or two of school "calm" and talked about some things that happened later. Referring to the actions of some white students toward them, Caswell said:

> Now the boys were a little bit more... the boys had a harder time, I think, than the girls did. 'Cause they did, like Alfred's brother, I remember.....they put a snake in his shoe in study hall. They [Maurice] didn't go to school the same year we did. They were still in grammar school. So when they came along...I can remember they put a snake in Maurice's shoe. So they did a lot more mean things to the boys than they did to the girls.

Williams talked about students who made going to school difficult for him. He described these students:

> They had that animosity in 'em, makin' it that much worse on us by comin' in already in class, whoopin' and hollerin' and you know, pointin' fingers and throwin' things and tellin' us Negroes get out of there. "Blacks get out, go home" and all this. No, not all the kids was like that. No, not all of 'em were. Some of 'em would sit, you know, try to talk with you and everything, said, "Don't pay them no attention, don't pay them no attention."

> Well, they tried to get to know us. They tried to get close. But just like I told you, they would be close to us long as they was in school, but when school broke up, they went they separate way and we had to go our separate way.

Of the students who supported desegregation, Jerry Shattuck was at the top of everyone's list. Teachers, white students, and African American students praised Shattuck for his efforts. Epps (Upton) said, "Well now, take like, Jerry Shattuck, that's just one, I don't know why but he was always a leader, you know at school." Driskill shared her opinion:

> Another memory that I have is Edward R. Murrow and *Clinton and the Law* coming there [Clinton]. I was just remembering now…Jerry Shattuck. He had a good base. He was football captain on an undefeated team, he was president of Student Council, and later on in that year he was elected as Mr. Clinton High School. When he talked on *Clinton and the Law*, I was so proud that we could have a student that could do that.

Judge Lewallen said Shattuck was in his wife's class and was a "good student." He related an incident that happened at school:

> The thing about it was that they didn't have any blacks that caused any problems in the schoolhouse. There might have been a little pushing or shoving or something by some rednecks to the blacks, but if there was we didn't know anything about it.

> Except on one occasion and I don't know remember what it was but Jerry sort of bowed up a little bit. He was one of the football players. I don't think there was ever a blow struck from it, but there might have been if they [football players] hadn't stepped in.

Williams, talked about how Shattuck had treated him. He also pointed out the names of several other supportive students:

> You take Mrs. Lewallen's daughter, Dancy. Honest truth, she was a real nice girl. She would talk to us. And then you had the McCormick brothers, J.T. and the other McCormick. And then you had Jerry Shattuck and all of 'em. Jerry, he would talk with us, and Bob Manning would talk to us. I can't think of those boys' names, I just know 'em by they last name, some of 'em, and hey, you just had good guys. I'm tellin' you truth. It was a bunch of 'em.

Among those educators and students mentioned as leaders or supporters of desegregation was The Rev. Paul Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church. The participants in the study adamantly supported the literature in crediting Turner with changing the minds and attitudes of the community. Margaret Anderson recalled the day that ordinary citizens did an extraordinary thing:

> Two of the citizens in the town, prominent citizens—I think it was Leo Burnette and Sydney Davis— and Brother Turner, the

> Baptist minister, went up the hill to bring the children back to school, the black children back to school. I remember seeing them come down the hill, because my room was on the end of the building. We could look out and see everything. These people were standing, just crowds of people, were on the streets. They were screaming, and yelling, and saying very bad things. Those children just walked straight ahead with Brother Turner and the two citizens and came into the building.
>
> I remember brother Turner going back out the building. He was very solemn, and he passed my room. I spoke to him. He had his coat on his arm. He walked down, and as he did the people said very bad things to him. Then he got about a block and they beat him up. I do remember that.

These men did not walk the African American students to school because it was their job or because they wanted to make the news. They were motivated by the students' need for protection so they could attend school unharmed. According to Epps (Upton):

> Well, I may be surprised. I wouldn't say disappointed, you know, but I was surprised at some of the people that I saw. And then I was surprised at the people that I saw that was for us. You know, I mean, you would think, well, that person's against

us, but no. They were the ones that came forward and done what…you know.

Well, you take Dr. Turner. He was a nice person—a wonderful person. But him being involved as much as he was, I mean I don't think he was against us or anything like that, far as that's concerned. But him just coming forward and just giving his all for a bunch of little black kids was really amazing to me, you know. I mean, I thought, well that is…that is a wonderful man. But I never would have dreamed that him having a, a position of First Baptist Church, you know, and everything, that he, that he would just—what you say—stick your neck out for a bunch of little black kids. But he did. You know, he got all beat up and all that type of thing for that.

Oh, Lord, yeah. You know, I mean it's people that really just was nice people, and they, you know they were, but they were just so scared to speak out. Now, you take Brother Turner and several of them, they took on their lives, you know, to help.

Epps' opinion of Turner was shared by many. Williams said:

He was a good man. The one they beat up. Boy, he's a good man. He walked down there, too. He walked with us every day, and I knew something was gonna happen to that man. I knew it! You know what? You could feel it…the animosity toward him

> because he was tryin' to help us blacks. And honest truth, his own people was turned against him, was callin' "nigger lover" and all this, "We hate you" and all this. I knew somebody gonna jump on him. You could just feel it.

The crowd that turned against Turner was out in full force that day in December. Shattuck described what Turner, Burnette, and Davis faced as they walked the students to school.

> I think it was election day that Reverend Turner and other citizens escorted the black students down the hill because the mob had been active again. I don't think it was five hundred this time, fewer than that, but still loud and boisterous and getting a lot of press coverage. Reverend Turner escorted the kids down and then on his way back to the church he got attacked. He was rescued by a lady from, I think, Queener's Flower Shop, which shows you the courage of those people who jumped Reverend Turner. You've seen it. That blonde headed lady, I've forgotten her name, but I think she worked for the flower shop.

Driskill expanded upon Shattuck's recollection and provided more details about the attack on Turner:

> As they followed him [Turner] to the back of the courthouse, he was going to retreat over to the Bishop building. They kept

> trying to get somebody behind him so somebody could come and hold him and somebody else could beat him.
>
> Vivian Yarnell Shoopman came to his aid when there were a bunch of men standing around. The men standing around might have been on the other side, but Vivian Yarnell Shoopman came out of the Bishop building and participated in the scuffle there.
>
> It didn't last very long. He wasn't hurt badly, but it could have been real bad. People were hollering, "Kill him, kill him!" It was that vicious. That's where most of the people got convicted and then put on probation.

Driskill held strongly to the opinion that the attack on the minister had a great deal of influence on bringing the community together. "Reverend Turner was beaten up and it [public opinion] changed from, 'That's the law and we're going to do it.' It changed then to, 'We're going to do it, that's the right thing to do.'" Driskill, a member of First Baptist Church, related a sermon delivered by Turner the Sunday immediately following the incident:

> [The attack] solidified the community that it was going to work because it was right, not because it was, not just because it was the law. I don't know that's a hundred percent right, but Paul Turner had a sermon related to this that I remember, since I went to his church, after he'd been beaten up. Very kind.

> "This is going to work," [Turner said]. It was just a timely thing for him to have that sermon. That was a traumatic experience that backfired on them [segregationists] as far as I know. It certainly had the opposite effect than they hoped for.

The influence of the editor of the *Clinton Courier-News*, H. V. (Horace) Wells, was one topic on which participants agreed. They believed that the change in Wells' views had, in turn, influenced the views of the community. Driskill explained:

> Horace Wells, first his editorial supported separate but equal. Then it was "We obey because it's the law." Then it was that we're going to do it now because it's right, and hindsight said we ought to have been doing this all along. He even mentioned why he was changing—Reverend Turner being beat up.

In his interview, Williams often spoke of people who surprised him with their lack of support. He expressed an equal amount of surprise at those who supported desegregation, one of whom was Wells. Williams said: "Well, you had a lot of 'em would support you. They have a lot of support in them. And one I thought wouldn't support me, did. You take Mr. Wells over here, the *Clinton Courier*. Mr. Wells done everything in his power to help us blacks. That's a nice man. Nice, nice as he could be."

Celdon Lewallen said Wells was "harassed because of his position and the paper, but of course it wouldn't stop him." Judge Lewallen told of an

incident where someone "put some dynamite in Horace Wells' front yard up here. Whether we could have prevented any of it or not, I don't know. There's nothing particularly intelligent about a mob of some kind."

The press played a crucial part in the desegregation of Clinton High School, and many of the participants felt the reports from the media made a bad situation even worse. Manning thought the "news people made more of an issue of it than what it really was."

Two of the teachers gave examples of how the press influenced what went on in the school. Anderson said the press was taking a lot of the principal's time "with the newspapers and reporters and all of that." She said, "They would just come into the school, interrupt your classes, or anything. I can remember people—strangers—standing in the hall."

Celdon Lewallen recalled how the press approached the students for interviews. She laughed, "Some of the kids were great ones to talk. One boy, a senior in my homeroom was interviewed frequently." The press was always there, Mrs. Lewallen said.

> One of the problems that I had was some of the black children and seniors. We had these people from *The New York Times* and the *London Times*, and they would catch the students as they came into the school and want to interview them. I told them [the students], I said, "I know this is a great thing for you all to be able to be asked to be interviewed, but I think you're doing

more harm than good. I can't tell you not to do it, because you don't do it on the school grounds." They stopped them outside, away from us. But I said, "I don't think you're helping the situation any."

The press might not always have been welcome from the students' perspective either. Bell (Meredith) talked about the constant presence of the media:

I guess now that I look back on it, the thing that stuck, the thing that has always bothered me about it, was "How afraid were they [African American students]?" You know, they're walking to school and there's nothing but whites surrounding them. It just made cold chills, and there was not a morning that you didn't come into school that there wasn't a TV camera in your face or a reporter in your face. I don't mean that detrimental to news media, but that made in harder on the blacks and the whites because we couldn't begin a normal day and say, "We'll all be friends." When someone stepped off of the school bus or someone walked off the hill, there was always someone in your face wanting a comment or wanting you to say something good, bad, or indifferent maybe.

When you take the media and every day, every day you're on the front page. Something about Clinton is on the front page of

> the paper every day. It makes you think, "They [citizens of Clinton] don't know how to do anything. Do their leaders not know how to stop this?" I think people got that impression, and that was the wrong impression because the leaders were working hard to try to get everything calmed down. I think that created a fear.

Anderson expressed another viewpoint: "Probably we needed it [media attention], maybe so that everyone could realize what was happening and how terrible it was." She countered that with: "I saw all these people running in and out of the school and then running to the newspaper with the story of some kind, and I thought, 'What do they really know about what's going on inside the classrooms with these children and how this is affecting them?'"

Shattuck attributed the increase in the size of the crowd to the news reports. "With all that media attention, and it was national media attention, about this great protest in Clinton, Tennessee, the next day there were fifteen [protestors] and the next day, fifty and the next day, five hundred." Shattuck professed a strong belief in freedom of the press, saying you shouldn't control the press. He also believed, however, that the instigators who came from outside Clinton were "directly related to the press." Again referring to the protestors, Shattuck said:

> I blame the press for it. Now they did their job, they were reporting the news, but they misreported it. I mean imagine that

> first morning there were literally five people at the most carrying pickets. Everybody was laughing at them. They were gone in five to fifteen minutes. They were gone, but the headlines were, "Protest at Clinton!"
>
> I'm talking about, that first week was Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, five, fifty, hundreds by Thursday, five hundred by Friday, marshal law Saturday. Back in those days, we had television, and they had the nightly news, but it wasn't like it is now. There were national papers and national radio reports, so it was the national news. There's no way those cars could have shown up that quickly—not that many of them.

Celdon Lewallen agreed: "The more excitement we had, the more reporters that came in here. Who would have thought that *The New York Times* would come? Who would have through they would have come from London?" Lewallen thought the attention the press gave the protestors encouraged the crowd to do create even more havoc. "They agitated so they could make headlines. I don't think there's any question that they [the press] were not a good influence. Not everybody, but I would say that to make news, they stirred the pot."

One of the agitators who needed very little encouragement was John Kasper. Shattuck called Kasper a catalyst, saying:

The point is even as the catalyst, they cannot be successful unless they get media attention, and he did. But at any rate, when he came back [in December 1956], he got it organized again. By this time the national press had sort of changed the tone of its reporting in that it wasn't the people of Clinton protesting. It was this ugly mob trying to disrupt the law-abiding student body and those poor students. They [students] were trying to do the right thing—that was the message the press was into at the point because it was the truth.

So Kasper, smart, realized he needed to start trouble inside of the school, and he organized what they called the Junior White Citizen's Council.

Beginning in late November, early December, there were just a few of them, but there were a couple of incidents inside the school. It was petty stuff, jostling a black kid in the hall or putting a tack in a seat or pouring ink in a locker, some petty stuff. But the first day it happened, D.J. Brittain got the football team together, and we organized so that at every class break there were two or three of us at every hallway intersection to watch over that. That was the end of it. It never happened again, but again the press got wind of it, and it was in the papers, and all of a sudden the mob forms again in December.

Theme # 3: Personal Benchmarks

"A life [. . .] can really be a succession of lives, each revolving around some emotionally compelling situation or challenge, and each marked off by some intense experience."

Brian Lanker

Today, forty-five years later, the problems are still remembered, but so are the accomplishments. Vivid memories remained in the minds of each of the participants, and many of these have been reported in other themes identified in this study. Feelings evoked from these memories ranged from fear and anger to a sense of pride and achievement. The recollections or events for some were intensely personal—relationships that had gone awry following desegregation; the actions of teachers; threats of violence; things people said and did that they've never forgotten. They also recalled details surrounding the events that made the news—the arrival of John Kasper; the arrival of the state police and National Guard; the attack on the minister; and the bombing of Clinton High School.

"Personal benchmarks" mark those events in life when one always remembers exactly where they were or what they were doing at a certain time. These may be significant only to the individual, but they are memories that have stayed with them over the years. Judge Lewallen remembers vividly his whereabouts when the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown*:

We went to Cincinnati and tried that lawsuit [*McSwain v. Anderson County Board of Education*]. The paper said we retried the case in Cincinnati. That's not true. You don't retry a case in appellate court. You retry the law. We went to Cincinnati up there.

Just in a few days after we were there they had a bar convention—a state bar convention—in Gatlinburg. Bang! Here comes the *Brown vs. School Board Topeka, Kansas*. Well that puts us out of business.

The school board didn't have authority to do anything but integrate the schools. In fact when *the Brown vs. School Board Topeka, Kansas* decision came down, which we were waiting for the decision of the Court of Appeals in Cincinnati. Judge Hicks from here [Clinton] used to be the presiding judge of the Court of Appeals. Judge Hicks was long off of the bench by that time, by the time we tried this case. We had gone up there and argued the case, appeared before the court. The presiding judge at that time I believe was Judge Martin from Memphis. John Martin, John D. Martin, I think it was. They took it under advisement.

The normal thing you do, like any other case, was to appeal to the Court of Appeals in Cincinnati from the United States District Court in Knoxville. We were just waiting for them to see

what they were going to decide. It's a rare instance that an appellate court ever gives you a decision from the bench. That left us, we heard that up in Gatlinburg.

In fact, I'll tell you—and I don't think it's general knowledge—but we were not certain we were going to win that lawsuit in Knox County. But apparently Judge Taylor, there was so much fighting and getting mad and this that and the other with this thing. It had caused him considerable discomfort too. I think he thought that...well, I don't know what he thought. I know what he said about the, talking about the fact that four or five blacks may be inconvenienced to a certain extent by having to walk by the school house and onto the bus to go to Lafollette or Knoxville or somewhere to school.

It wasn't fair. But we didn't make the law. We had to enforce it. Now what happened was, I think people didn't understand this. Every lawyer is what's known as a ministerial officer of the court. Now he's supposed to be if he's going to practice before the court.

Bill Driskill related a significant event not only for him, but for the student body. It involved another attorney who, as a "ministerial officer of the court," played a prominent part in enforcing the law. Driskill recalled:

One thing, I was in the auditorium when this happened. Eugene Joyce had then been elected county attorney. He stood up and read the injunction [from Federal Judge Robert Taylor] to the student body. And he said, as far as he knew it was the only case in the history of the U.S. where a student body received the reading of an injunction.

The injunction happened after we got back into school. December 4th was when school closed, and we were out five days. It was when we came back...that was when Eugene Joyce read that to the student body. Very impressive, when he was standing up and reading it. When they were filming that...they filmed it. That would have been before Edward R. Murrow, and he used this clip in his report. While he [Joyce] was reading it, it [film] showed some of the black students. That really impressed me. I think that it impressed a lot of the students.

And that's what stopped it all. That's what stopped Kasper, sent him to prison. It's what got the others who were involved, and there was no opposition after that. Here this injunction, and you know when they put an injunction out even today, it means something.

Judge Lewallen talked about Kasper's first encounters with some of Clinton's citizens. He recalled an incident when Kasper visited the home of Leo Burnette, one of the men who accompanied The Rev. Turner as they walked the African American students to school. When Kasper first arrived in Clinton in August 1956, he visited Burnette:

> Leo was working at Magnet Knitting Mills. He was one of the people in the office at the mill. He was out there—you know where they lived up there on Medaris Street. He was out in his garden on, I think it was Saturday, hoeing around, working or something. This man climbed the fence and came into his garden and started talking to him. Leo told me that what he wanted to know was, he just wanted to know, he just said, "You know they're going to have to integrate the school system here next Monday?"
>
> Leo said, "Well I knew the school was opening." Well he [Kasper] said, "What do you think about it, what do you want to do about it?" Leo told him that he wasn't going to do anything about it.
>
> "Why?" Kasper said. Well, he began to preach at him about segregation and integration and this that and the other. If you knew Leo, he was a very quiet, an unassuming kind of person—small in stature. He was a keg of powder when he got upset.

> So he just ordered him out of his garden. That was a week before we even knew what he [Kasper] would be doing.
>
> Leo knew this man [Kasper] from that instance. Later on he [Leo] helped. One morning he walked down the hill—off of Foley Hill with the preacher and those black kids.

Driskill also remembered seeing Kasper. He was monitoring the cafeteria on the lower floor of the school, near the recreation hall.

> Mr. Brittain had told us if you see outsiders around, so down in the corner where the rec [recreation] hall was, there was a man out there talking to some of our students. That wasn't unusual, but just not knowing what it was, I got up from my lunch table where I could see out the door. I went out there to talk, and later I realized that I may have been the very first faculty member to confront John Kasper.
>
> He's out there talking to some students, and he didn't say who he was, and he didn't say anything negative. The bell rang soon after I came out there, and he politely said, "I'm just passing by, talking to these young gentlemen." It was all boys out there. So I did have a time when I talked to John Kasper there, and it really didn't take a challenge to get rid of him. He didn't want adverse publicity. He was just getting acquainted at that time.

Judge Lewallen remembered his first sight of the Ku Klux Klan, years efore they came to his house to burn a cross during desegregation:

> The KKK, when I was a boy I remember going somewhere down in the direction of Ed Jones' home [west end of Clinton] When I was a boy we went down in there somewhere and found a cross burning. There was a KKK meeting. We didn't get close to it. I didn't even know there was a KKK in Clinton, in Anderson County.

Later, when trouble began in Clinton, Lewallen had a different type of encounter with the KKK—one of direct confrontation:

> We had three policemen from a nearby town that were rabble-rousers in the KKK, and they were meeting in at the feed store. Syd [Davis] and I went up and backed one of them into the wall and said, "You've got to make a choice one way or the other." That was just Sydney and I. He agreed to let us listen.
>
> We didn't even have a tape recorder at that time, you didn't have anything but wire recorders. We borrowed a wire recorder from the Oak Ridge police department and set it up there in that room. We were up in the store part of the building, and we could monitor it. They had this meeting in there, and you ought to have heard all the talking and laughing and drinking whiskey

> out in that feed room. Talking about laughing about scaring people and all that business. We had the wire recorder.
>
> The next day I called one of the men and told him he'd better come over to my office. I had something I wanted to talk to him about. He came over all puffed up and big. I knew that he was a member. I had heard previously that he was a member of the KKK. I didn't know he was the Grand Dragon, didn't make any difference, but anyway he came in and I said, "I want you to sit down and I want you to listen to something." I started playing him that wire recorder.
>
> I told him, "Remember what the law is about this type of intimidation that you've been doing." I told him, "You could go to the penitentiary for twenty years for what you've done already. You know what I'm talking about." We didn't have any more trouble out of them.

The literature and the interviews indicated that Clinton had more than its share of trouble. The crowds of people, the near riots, and the arrival of the police and National Guard produced numerous recollections from participants. Bob Manning recalled exactly what he was doing when he first saw the crowds:

> Now I knew what was going on in the schools and this, that, and the other, but I didn't, the only time I was at the courthouse

was after the ballgame. They [protestors] was hootin' and hollerin' around the courthouse there. We came up, myself, and J.T. McCormick. There were three or more of us fellows from North Clinton. After the football game we were going home, and we walked up by the courthouse. Some of them [protestors] come out. We had our football jackets, sweaters on. They said, "You people are a disgrace to the County for going to school and playing football while we're out here defending you."

The crowds kept getting larger and larger and larger every night, so they said. Now people and the news media were saying. We watched it on television. I thought, "Well now sooner or later they'll be a lot of bad trouble and people will get hurt." After that, seems like they brought, after the State Troopers came in and got everything quieted down, they brought the National Guard in. I was sort of glad to see it come in and quiet things down.

They were the rioters, the people doing the rioting. That went on, and then the only other time I was down there was on Sunday when the State Troopers came in. Buzz Elkins and J.T., and I, we were in the drugstore—sitting in the drugstore drinking a coke. We heard all these sirens. We ran outside, and we saw all the State Troopers coming in. That big mass of cars coming

> down the…They went around the courthouse. We stood out there and watched them for a few minutes. By that time the crowd started disappearing. We went on back home, but that's the only experience I have with them, 'cause my dad gave me strict orders.

Judge Lewallen also recalled the mobs and later compared the situation to that of Little Rock, Arkansas:

> We had cutting tires off of cars and breaking the windows out of cars. I could see that up from the second story of the courthouse where I was [the Saturday night before Labor Day]. Primarily we knew [the crowds were coming] and we had told Leo Grant. Leo was a lawyer in Oak Ridge. He knew quite a bit about how to handle mobs. He had had training in that. He just told us what to do, and we did it. It was a rough situation, believe me. To deal with people that we didn't know. Some of them we might have known. I don't know how many people were down there in front of the courthouse and between there and the picture show. I would say there was five hundred to a thousand people.
>
> The thing that happened, the Little Rock thing, the governor said, "I ain't going to let them go to my school house." The National Guard was brought into active service, and he was told

> to stand aside. That was the splash about it. As far as I know they didn't have anything that we had. I had defended a man for murder from Little Rock. I got to know Governor Cherry of Arkansas. In fact, he came here and helped defend this man. Cherry came in here and helped try that lawsuit.
>
> Anway, I talked to Clement because when I went up to the house. I got out of there [courthouse] some way and went up to the house to see if everything was all right with my father's home. My mother had a pistol. She didn't know one end of a gun from the other. She said dad had given it to her. The mob was almost up to dad's house. It was at the ice house [on Main Street, highway 25W], around in that area when I got up there the back way. That's the way that the police got up there. That's the night that the highway patrol came in then right on top of them came the military, the tanks… the Tennessee National Guard.

Gail Ann Epps (Upton) distinctly remembered the arrival of the National Guard. She recalled where she was the Sunday before Labor Day when the tanks rolled into town:

> I tell you, that is the weirdest feeling you have ever had in your life when you hear—and I saw the people that's in war, you can sympathize when you see on T.V. I can sympathize with

them, and mine wasn't even a third to what they're goin' through, far as that's concerned.

But that's the weirdest feeling you'll ever have in your life when you hear tanks comin' into your town. We was in church, and it just about stopped church. I went to church on the hill. It just about stopped church when you heard that [makes tank noise]. And you could just hear it, couldn't you? You know, those tanks. And see, we was up and lookin' down on, you know, downtown, and [makes tank noise] you could just hear this, and it just about stopped church. We just sorta, you know...I mean that's weird to see somethin' like that in town.

But my sister had got...I mean she was young, and she would just laugh. I mean you know, 'cause she was thinkin' this was...she wasn't really even, you know, I can imagine, a little kid...you know, and she said, "Look! Look!" And when the guys would come by ridin' on the jeeps comin' through, there'd be about four of 'em, and some be just hangin' on the side, you know, just ridin' through. And she just run from one window—we lived in that house down there then—and she just run from one window to the other and we'd go upstairs—I mean our bedroom was upstairs. She'd go upstairs and look down and we'd just, you know, it was amazing to us.

Thresser Caswell's memories of the Guard's arrival were just as vivid.

> Oh, yeah. I can remember those National Guard. Oh! I can remember that so good! I can almost still see that. I can see the dress I had on. My mamma had made me a striped dress with the stripes in it. It was red, white and blue, and I can remember it just like it was almost yesterday. I sat in there with my books in my arms and those National Guards just goin' round and round until that bus came to pick me up after school. It was right there at the "V" [intersection behind the school] where you go from here, you know, you go up one hill that way, and go up the other that way.
>
> You gotta find me [a picture] in my little striped dress! It had a flag tail and little flags, and that's when we used to wear those stiff slips. It didn't have a crinoline on it, but it was full dress. My mama sewed, and I thought that was the prettiest dress!

Alfred Williams described the situation as "a scary time [. . .] a really scary time." The streets were not safe, especially for African Americans. According to Williams:

> People was comin' through town, you know, strangers comin' through town. Hey, they turned a black man car over there, right there in front of the light [at the courthouse]. That poor man, it like to scared him to death. He went over at the Hoskins [drug

store] and everything. He was lookin' for protection. It scared him to death.

Epps recalled a situation that occurred when her boyfriend came from Knoxville to see her before he shipped out for the Navy. The picture of him being protected by the National Guard has been re-printed several times since then.

He was on his way, he was on his way to Corpus Christi, Texas at the time and he wouldn't be back for a while, so he came to see me, brought me a little ole' radio. And when, on his way out [of Clinton], on his way out, they said, "Get that whatever.... 'N' word."

Okay, when they, on his way out they grabbed him. They, they…they grabbed him. And he had his uniform on, what I'm talkin' about. He had his uniform on. That, that, and that's everybody was so, oh, they just had a fit 'bout that. 'Cause had he just been…well, it's bad enough for anybody to just grab anybody like that 'cause they were black, but him havin' a uniform on—protecting the United States. You know what I'm sayin'. If he, if there's war, he'd have to go fight with them that was doing all this mess.

He wasn't hurt. No, the National Guard, it was just so ordered the National Guard had come in that morning, I guess.

> But evidently, they just got him in the jeep and they took him all the way home to Knoxville. Yeah, in the jeep. They sure did. Sure did. And they had all these pictures. And see, I didn'teven know anything about it until he got home [to Knoxville].

That picture, as well as others depicting the violence in Clinton, had been picked up by the wire services. Judge Lewallen recalled a trip he and his family took to Canada shortly after the trouble subsided. "I registered in a motel in Ontario, and I said, 'Clinton, Tennessee.' That fellow looked at me and said, 'You've had a war down there haven't you?' I said, 'Yes, I have. What do you know about it?' He said, 'It's been all over the damn papers up here.'"

The events that had made national and international news had taken its toll on Clinton, particularly the African American citizens. Many recalled specific incidents of fear. During the interview Epps (Upton) was joined by her mother, Anna Mae Moore Hale. They both remembered a time when her mother had heard there was going to be trouble at the school.

> *Epps (Upton):* Mama, she was more scared because one day she come and got me out of school. She was just so scared that somebody was gonna hurt me or something. She just come and got me out of school, you know. But they were supposed to come in and get us that day and kill us that day…the crowd or whoever these people were. These people....'cause my mother

come and got me. She tore her dress all up, too. The police had thought that she had been attacked or somethin'. He said, "Oh, lady, are you hurt?" She says, "No," says, "I just got my dress hung on a…on one of the bushes on the back of that little place at the back door and just ripped it."

But see, he thought, the police thought that…and he said, "Who do you want, lady?"

And she said, "I want my daughter out of that.' And so, they come and got me. So they dismissed school at.....

Hale: A white woman called my mother [Gail Ann's grandmother]. Some of the white folks that was our neighbors was good but they was afraid, but they called my mother. She called my mother and told my mother to tell me to go get Gail. She said, "They're goin' in there to get....and if they're still in there, they're gonna kill 'em." Mama asked the lady, she said, "Well, who are you?" She said, "Miss Moore, it doesn't matter"…said, "just tell her."

Epps (Upton): The woman who called knew my mother and my grandmother by name. She [Gail's mother] wasn't really mad, she was just tryin' to get me out of there.

Hale: But I had to get my child. And I ran into the bushes. And it was a pretty little blue silk dress. I saved a piece of it for a

souvenir. One of the teachers, she said, "She'll be just as safe there [at school]."

I said, " No ma'am, she won't." I say, "I have to work," and I say, "I cannot work and somebody's gonna kill the child." I said, "I'm gonna take her home."

Epps (Upton): Well see, that was the day that they did close school. They closed school that day. They closed that school. They closed it at twelve. But, I mean that afternoon, it was on Wednesday. I remember that was a Wednesday. I don't know why it was in my mind, but that was on a Wednesday because they came and got them out of school.

Caswell also remembered that day. Although she lived in the Claxton community outside of Clinton, the police escorted her and the others to the predominantly African American neighborhood "up the hill" when trouble broke out. Caswell said:

One day we came out, we got out of school…no, I was sittin' in study hall, and the teacher come in and tapped me on the shoulder. She said, "Get your books."

And, we had been out at lunch time. One of our friends, a McSwain girl, her mother worked at the jail. At lunch time, we'd walk to the jail and talk to her mother. Her mother cooked at the jail, and we'd walk down there. That day we had walked down

there and come on back, and that same afternoon the teacher told me to come on.

She took me out the back door [of the school], and there was two police cars sittin' out there, waitin' to take us up the hill because there was a mob outside. And…what was his name? That man, that John Kasper. He had come and stirred up a whole...and the police took us up on the hill. You could look down and see all the people standing down there. They were waitin' for us to come out of school. And they took us out the back door.

Now that day I did get a little scared, you know, you think what could've happened. My mama didn't know 'cause she was working in Oak Ridge, so she didn't know anything was goin' on till she came home that evening. But I don't think we went back to school the next day.

One of the most vivid descriptions of that day came from a teacher. Margaret Anderson, who later wrote of the incident in *Children of the South*, talked about it during her interview. Anderson, clearly still moved by the events, said:

I definitely remember one girl who was so outstanding. She sat on the front row. She seemed so sad. She could hear these people outside. I remember a young man [one of the African

American students]. I've forgotten his name right now. His mother, no, his grandmother, when things were so bad…I mean these people were running in and out of the building. They were shouting bad names. One morning I went in my room and there were White Citizens Council leaflets on the desks, on the seats.

This one day, this young boy was in my class, and things were so bad outside, his grandmother came to get him. She said she'd come to get him because things were so bad. She was afraid for him. I went over to tell him that his grandmother had come, and so he just very methodically got his books and everything together and met her at the door. I remember she had on a big apron, and she said, "Come on, my old apron's dirty, and spit won't hurt it."

They walked out. Before he left, as he was picking up his things, he said to me, 'What are we going to do tomorrow?"

I will always remember this because I had to examine my own self at that point. "What are we going to do tomorrow?" I think at times like that when you have a crisis, you do have to examine yourself. It's just that when you're faced with it, a crisis like that, then you have to decide where you stand and what you stand for.

> I think when I saw that beautiful black girl sitting in my room and nobody would pay any attention to her. Then I saw that young man go to his grandmother and she put her apron around him. It made me look deeply at things.

Epps (Upton) recalled something that had happened in her neighborhood that remains frightening to her to this day. Her family lived in an integrated neighborhood near Eagle Bend Road. She told what happened one night:

> See, my room was upstairs, my sister and myself, we stayed upstairs. Okay, I heard this noise, and it was just a scrapin', like they's gonna tear the screen off the house…not my side of the house, but it was on the other side. I mean not where I stayed, but on the other side. And I thought, "Well, don't Mama and my grandmother hear this what's goin' on?"
>
> And I let it go on for a little bit, you know, to see, and then I say, "Let me get up and see" because I didn't hear nobody stirrin' downstairs. I said, "Grandma," I said, "Mama, don't y'all hear that noise."
>
> And they said, "What is it?" I said, "Oh," I said, "somebody's tryin' to break in." And my uncle—Uncle Raymond already, he'd already gone when that happened. He had gone to work in Knoxville. He had just left. Yeah. He had already gone

because he had to leave at four. And they was watchin' to see when he left. See we had a little house right there where those hedge, a little wood house of a thing, so you could park a car back there and you couldn't see it, you see.

And you could hear after my grandmother turned, I guess, Mama turned on the light, back light. We had spot lights out there. By the time Mama got to the porch, the car started and went on. Somebody was ready, and they weren't there to say, "Let me help." They were tryin' to scare me so I wouldn't come back [to school].

Because every day that we come back, there was this certain little man would be standin' there [at the school], and he said, "Don't you know"... them N words..."came back here again this morning, even after they dynamited and had done all that stuff." He was standin' at the school—yeah, every morning. He'd be standin' there and when we'd come off the hill and stand there, you know, right down where we're gettin' ready to go into the school, he'd be standin' there and he said, "There them....., don't you know they came back here again this morning."

Every time they'd do somethin' they wouldn't think we were comin' back. Yeah. Even that day that they closed the school for several days after that day that Mama come after me. They

> closed on Wednesday, they didn't open it up no more till Monday. Monday morning, here we were. And oh, he [the man] just went all to pieces. He wasn't the one that ran for mayor. He wouldn't knowed mayor from.....I doubt if he could write his name! I doubt if he could'a wrote.....if you tell him to write his name on the sign post or read it, he wouldn't know. You know, one of them kind, just uneducated, ignorant type people. That's what it is. See, that's what got me mad lot of times. Lot of times it was just people that, like I said, if you put his name on a sign post, he wouldn't know it. Couldn't read, couldn't write, but he was there tryin' to stir it up because we were black, and he looked black his self. He looked like a black man his self. He was dark as I was.

Events that occurred inside the school were memorable for all the students interviewed. Some, like Caswell, endured circumstances that made the transition even more difficult. In 1956 Caswell was a freshman whose family had moved here from Fairfield, Tennessee the year before. Although she said she really wasn't afraid, the fact that she was a new student and had a physical disability made the situation harder for her:

> I do remember I was afraid to go to school. You know, I had a lot of surgery on my feet, and my mother, I guess she didn't want to say, "You go to school." But I thought, "Oh, I can't go to

school on these crutches." 'Cause it was kinda hard going to school anyway, especially with the tall guys, you know, would come by, bump you on your head or do something to you. I thought , "Well, I don't think I ought to go to school with these prejudices." So I didn't go to school when I had surgery, I would stay at home. I had surgery when I was thirteen, and I had surgery when I was fourteen, fifteen, and stayed on crutches for quite a while.

But, I can remember being a little afraid not to go to school standing on my own two feet. And we had very few friends. We didn't have many friends. And we were all so divided out that we couldn't really be close to each other. I was new here anyway, but I had gone to school half a year, so I knew several. But see, the other kids had gone to high school in Knoxville, so I didn't really know them. I only knew the ones that were freshmen and that had gone to school with me in the eighth grade.

Patsy Bell (Meredith) said her most vivid recollection occurred as she watched the African American students walk down the hill to school.

The first class I had in the morning was a home economics class, but out the windows you could see the black children walking down the hill to come to school. It was like…the most memorable thing would be watching those kids come down that

> hill. I guess now that I look back on it, the thing that stuck, the thing that has always bothered me about it was, "How afraid were they?" You know, their walking to school, and there's nothing but whites surrounding them. It just made cold chills.

Although Epps (Upton) did not live "on the hill," she joined the others each morning, and they made the walk together. According to Epps (Upton), "I met the others so we could all go to school together, you know because, I mean, we just did that. Everybody…you see pictures of us in old papers and old film and things, we're all together, you know?"

Manning referred to a concrete wall on the edge of the school grounds that ran parallel to Broad Street where the students congregated:

> We used to sit on the wall all the time. We'd go to football practice and whatever, and we'd sit on that wall under the shade tree. Every morning before school we'd sit on that wall. Then when the bell rang, we'd all go in.
>
> You could see up there [the street leading off the hill]. They [African American students] would come in and sometimes they'd go in that back door. We'd be sitting down there. I didn't pay much attention to it. I just thought, "Well, you know, they may hear that they're going to get hurt or something like that and they want somebody to come with them."

Caswell did not live inside the city limits and didn't walk to school with the others. Even though the school was desegregated, school transportation was not. Caswell said the school bus she rode transported African American children of all ages from the Claxton community. "They let me off at the high school, then they'd go on to the grammar school. It was Green McAdoo then." Caswell said she never had any problems on the bus because "it was all black kids on the bus. Sometimes, she said, the parents where she lived "were afraid to let their kids go to school, so I was the onliest one going to school, so I was on the bus by myself."

There was a time when road construction prevented the bus from picking her up. Caswell remembered well that a white girl offered her a ride on their bus:

> This girl said, "Thresser, you can ride the bus with us." But that was too scary, you know. I just couldn't. Even though she was friendly, I didn't know about the other people that was on the bus. There was another person—she runs the hardware store down here now, her and her husband—she was friendly. It wasn't very many people. I don't know. Some of 'em was just not friendly. Some of 'em were probably afraid to be friendly.

Manning speculated on who would have hurt the students:

> I don't think there would have been any…not from the students, as such, but now some of these rabble rousers across

> the street and some of these parents that got carried away with this might have tried to harm them. I don't think the students would.

Some of the students, however, did try to hurt them. The African American students remembered times they were victims of prejudice. According to Epps (Upton), these things were most likely to occur in the halls between classes. She spoke of the climate that existed when students changed classes and of one particular incident she will never forget:

> It was the strangest thing, that some of those people was bitterly against us and say all this, with blah, blah, blah. But when I was in study hall a lot with 'em, they would just talk to me like it wasn't nothin'. And I don't understand. I do not. Today I think, "Why would they talk to me?" And I don't, I haven't talked with the other students to find out if they did them that way or not, the black kids, you know, but they was just like it wasn't anything.
>
> But out in the hall when all this was goin' on, it was a bunch of, I mean not to me, exactly, but to anybody, any black kids, you know. In the hall it was always talk and confusion and stuff, you know. And they would take and walk on you, like goin' down the hall, and you never would catch em' exactly who it was, but you had a idea who's standin' behind, who was behind you. But

they would just take their foot and knock down on the back of your heel. Mine even bled sometimes. That's the truth. Mine has, mine has really blistered up and bled where they walked on my heels.

And I had an experience that, at one time. At one point I would have been a dead person if this man had…Well, this guy had pushed me over into the…into the auditorium. You remember when they built some on to the school with the old auditorium? Okay, it was built up higher, and they left the windows open of the, you know, where they built on, they just left those windows in there. They took the windows out, but they left this opening where you could look down into the auditorium.

Okay, we were going back toward…I don't know what that street is out there at the back of the school. That's where I'm talking about. We were goin' that way 'cause I had meet to my sister and some more kids up to go home, 'cause we came this way, and most of the kids went to the hill. See we lived over here [other side of town] all my life. Okay, I went to meet my sister comin' off the hill 'cause she was in the elementary school. Well, I would meet here and then we'd walk home, or my aunt would pick us up or whatever.

Anyway, I was startin' to go to that place, that particular place, that door, and as I said, we passed this place where they had built on. This guy was literally puttin' me out this window. Had I fell, if I hadn't done what I done to him, I would have been a dead person because I didn't weigh, I guess I didn't weigh ninety, ninety-five, 'hundred pounds maybe. I was just real thin. I would'a fell out this window onto the seats in the auditorium, and that would'a broke me all to pieces 'cause it was that far, you know. I would'a just been a dead person. If I hadn't, I'd'a been all broke up, you know, maybe paralyzed or whatever.

But I had…had the knowledge to hit him with my elbow in his stomach, and that…that just sort of…"UH!" He done like that and dropped me, and I had hold of that thing too, in order to get my balance. I went on out of the school, and, but I didn't say…

It's just one of those things. I didn't tell nobody about it. Well, I told my parents or whatever, I mean my mother and all, but I just went on out of the school. Lot of things happened. We just didn't tell, you know. We just didn't say anything bad was wrong. We figured it'd probably make it worse, or whatever.

Others confirmed stories of difficulty in the hallways. Caswell said:

They would do things like glue your locker up, or maybe if you was comin' by, they might not touch you, but they'd make you

feel like it. Like if it was a tall boy, you know, and they would make you jump, you know. Act like they's gonna hit you on top of the head and make you jump. I did that quite a bit.

Williams also remembered well how it was when they changed classes. He explained:

Well, when you would go to your, your locker, see, there was a bad incident. They would be in the hall, all around, you know, 'round you like this, and they didn't want you to go. Seem like they would keep shut and keep you from going to your locker room. They would be pushin' and shovin', and they would be in a crowd.

You couldn't just particular pick out one person and say, "Him," 'cause there was so many of 'em in the crowds, and we was going up and down the hall, white and black you know, passing back and forth. Then one of 'em hit you, something like that. You couldn't say, "Well, he hit me," or something like that, or "She hit me," or something like that 'cause there was so many of 'em, and it was just us twelve blacks.

They might be, it might be two blacks going down that hall at that time, going to they class, and maybe two or three more be going the opposite way. Some be going left, some be going right, different places. All you doin'…you be goin' to your class.

Jerry Shattuck remembered an incident in the hall that involved a teacher. In this case, protesters had entered the school:

> The day or two before Christmas break, some of that mob came in the back end of the high school building over there by the band room and the home ec department. Mrs. Brittain intercepted them, and she got shoved out of the way. A boy by the name of Dennis Holland—everybody knew Dennis. He played in the band. Dennis came to her rescue and ran them off.
>
> That hit so close to home that D.J. Brittain, who was the principal and the husband of Ms. Brittain, the home ec teacher who got shoved aside, said, "That's the end of it. I'm shutting school down." He shut school down. It was noon or early afternoon. At that time, most of us students went over to the Board of Education and presented them with another resolution to get the school back open again in compliance with the federal law.
>
> During the two weeks of Christmas break, the federal marshals came into town and arrested I think sixteen people, including Kasper. School was back in session after the Christmas break as if nothing had happened. By that time the

> mob was gone. The ringleaders were arrested and charged and ultimately stood trial in federal court.

African American students interviewed told of incidents inside the school where they were intimidated or hurt. Epps (Upton) described the atmosphere from her perspective:

> I really, just sittin' here talking to you, I really couldn't explain how we did, how it was really for us. I mean it was bad. You didn't know whether you was going to get knocked in the head or, like I say, sit down in the seat and get your behind tore up with a nail, with a screw. They'd take the screws out of the seats and "pling!" you up side of the head. You liable to get hit in the head or anything.

Manning recalled a time when, early in the year, some of the white students "got in a big fuss." Manning said they were having a senior class meeting, and "some of them got to fussin' back there. You had some people that probably still had some strong feelings and what have you. It was over Alfred and some of them. I went over and broke it up. I said, 'Look, we're not gonna' have any problems in here while I'm Sergeant at Arms.'"

With graduation just a few months away, Williams was involved in a incident that remains steadfastly imprinted in his mind. He was expelled for fighting and was unable to graduate. Not getting the diploma still haunts him today. Williams shared his version of what happened:

Well, I was fightin', trying to take up for my youngest brother [Maurice Soles]. They was gonna gang him, wasn't gonna let him go out the school door and everything. It was late gettin' ready to go home that afternoon. I was in my locker. I seen the crowd up there, and when I got up there, this boy I was telling you about, they had my youngest brother all hemmed up and everything. And I always carried a knife. I still carry a knife. I don't carry a knife to cut nobody with because I carry knife around here, I'm always opening boxes and tearing boxes down, and I had that knife. And that's where they had me, that knife. And see, that was my protection.

And honest truth, ain't no way I could open up all those people, all those kids up there in there. They had my youngest brother surrounded like this, in a circle like this [drew a picture]. Ain't no way me and him could'a fought all those people.

Yeah, they were picking on my youngest brother, and I went to his defense and everything. And I already had that low—you know, my grades was low, and this just was the turning point right here to get me suspended because my grades was steady fallin'…fallin' 'til, like I was tellin' you long time ago, you couldn't study. How can you study, the teacher got you in the front and you got hecklers in the back throwing spit? I mean pebbles and

stuff, little ole gravels, anything, and then drop they head like that…like they don't know who throwing and hitting you. It was terrible. It wasn't a good sight.

Now I don't know this white boy transferred to Lake City or what 'cause a lot of the parents didn't want 'em to associate, be in the same classroom with us, so a lot of 'em took they kids to Lake City.

I don't know if he ever got suspended or punished or what. But I know the next morning I went down there, they had me in the office, Mr. Brittain had met me in the office. A man had a lot to do with the school board back then and everything was there. I was just down by myself and everything. They said, "Mr. Williams, since your grades so low and everything and this incident happened and everything," say, "you got a choice. We can suspend you or what."

Because, see, they wasn't gonna make no, wasn't gonna make no example out of me 'bout letting me the only black to go back to Austin after they had integrated Clinton anyway. And so I didn't have no other choice but you know, to get suspended or sit out a…sit out the year or try to fight to get back in. My parents could've came down here and say they could'a raised

> the roof off the school board, and they might'a got me back in. Then they might'a not.
>
> But at the time I thought, I told my uncle and them...I told him like this, I say, "Well, just drop it. I just go on get me a job and go on to work." And then after I got to workin' and everything, I still wasn't happy, I still wanted that diploma. And I should'a, you know.

There were few reports of verbal or physical intimidation inside the classrooms. From all indications, the teachers appeared to be controlling the situation. However, there was an incident with a teacher that stood out in Caswell's mind:

> You were always afraid to ask a question or say anything. You just kind of sit there. I know when my glasses were broken, I couldn't see, and I wanted to sit up front so I could see the blackboard 'cause we did a lot of things on the blackboard. One teacher, he let me sit on the front for a while. And then one day he didn't. It was so much better when I was sittin' where I could see, and I thought, "I wonder why he made me move." But you know, you didn't say anything, just did what you were told. You were afraid to ask any questions, you know.

Not all situations were stressful, and times such as the one reported by Celdon Lewallen helped ease the tension. She laughingly remembered an

incident in her English class:

> I remember that I had Dudley Redcorn [native American Indian] in my class. Sometimes when things were just in an uproar I just thought, "To heck with grammar," and we'd just talk. They were all excellent students. We were having what I thought was an excellent discussion, and finally Dudley said, "I don't see what your all's problem is. I am the only true American in here. I was here before the white people were." Dudley Redcorn you know, or whatever it was he said, and it just brought the house down.

However, some situations were anything but tension-free. Driskill was another teacher who said the "one thing that I'm going to remember very vividly for the rest of my life is the only time that I ever coached or played at a basketball game where my prime purpose was not to win." He recalled a basketball game between two schools that remain arch rivals:

> In 1956 we played Oak Ridge on a Clinton floor, and we integrated TSSAA sports. Now we got by it, there was no major incident. It's just sort of like at the last minute the Oak Ridge principal and the Oak Ridge coach announced that they were bringing a black.
>
> Now you remember Oak Ridge [school run by the federal government] integrated the year before we did. We say we're the first public school, which is right, but now they integrated one

> year before we did. We had black students, but as it happened, in that first group, we didn't have an athlete that came out for basketball. We had one that maybe did, but he didn't stay very long. We said, "Please wait, let him play on your court first."
>
> But they didn't. They brought him to Clinton and like I say, I'm a competitor, but I was more interested in getting through that ball game than I was winning. I think Oak Ridge won, but there were no incidents. That was a real traumatic experience. That's a focal point that the rednecks can buy a ticket and get into.

Another school event that was open to the public was graduation. In the spring of 1957, Bobby Cain became the first African American male to graduate from a public high school in Tennessee. Shattuck, who missed graduation because of a car wreck, said the press was there "trying to make a big deal out of it" [Cain's graduation], and "the football players surrounded Bobby Cain to keep the press away from him."

An incident that occurred following graduation was reported in the literature and in some of the interviews. Williams recalls what happened after the ceremony was over when the graduates when into a room to remove their caps and gowns:

> See, it was terrible 'cause see, Bobby had a whole lot on him. See because people were pullin', you know, wanted him to

> be the one to graduate, and see, his mother and his daddy was just about the only blacks was there when he graduated. It wasn't no whole lot of blacks there when he graduated. And you know 'bout how that feels, you sittin' out there in the audience and you got people lookin' at you. Honest truth, that's not a good feelin'.
>
> And when he did graduate, the night of his graduation, down there on that stage, they cut the light out on him when he went down stairs and somebody hit him, in the dark, and he never did know who hit him after he graduated. That was at the school. I tell you, it wasn't no good thing.

Driskill, who served as assistant principal at Clinton High School until 1968, believed the relation between African American and white students changed over the years. He cited an example:

> You know the assistant principal gets saddled with discipline quite often, and I remember a black boy and a white boy coming up and scuffling. You could see they had been, and they both blurted out at about the same time, "This has nothing to do with black and white, we just got mad at each other."
>
> I think we had so much emphasis that by then we were getting along, and it was a good statement. It had nothing to do

> with him being black and me being white, two boys got in a fight. That's when you think you've won the whole battle.

The students, educators, and community just thought they had won the battle that first year. When the high school was bombed in the fall of 1958, a new collection of memories were formed for those who witnessed the destruction. Anderson County Schools had a new superintendent, James Newman, who had been principal of Norris High School and later became Superintendent of Knoxville City Schools. Driskill recalled Newman's introduction to his new position:

> Frank Irwin [former superintendent] had left to take a state job. Frank Irwin left on Friday, and the school was blown up on Sunday. So Jim Newman, I guess wanting to make a name for himself, declared we would not miss any school. His first day on the job, really…when he faced this. First day on the job.

Those who had graduated the first year of desegregation related their feelings about the bombing. Jerry Shattuck thought it "was just an anomaly, and people thought it was over." Bob Manning described what he was doing when he first heard the news:

> I commuted to UT; I was a freshman. I remember I was home studying. Somebody either called, or I saw it on television or on the radio that they had bombed the high school. I quit studying for a while. It was on a Sunday afternoon. I walked

> downtown, and by that time they had the police around the high school. I walked around the block to see what all they had done to it. It was sickening to me to see.
>
> Number one, people were talking. I didn't know if they knew what they were talking about. They said there was just one blast. Well, I couldn't understand how that whole school could be flattened like that with just one blast. Somebody later said it was probably somebody who was a professional that had blown buildings up. Whether that was true or not, I don't know.
>
> Well, it was a shock. Everything had quieted down. They weren't having any problems. All of a sudden, boom! You wouldn't dream anybody would be that foolish to do something like that.

Epps (Upton), who had graduated in the spring of 1958, also remembered how she learned of the bombing. She was in college at Tennessee State in Nashville. "See, I picked up the paper when I passed by that morning. You know, they laid papers out for you, and I just picked up the paper, looked at the headlines, and there is was—Clinton all over the place where they had bombed it. I said, 'Well, my goodness.'"

The teachers interviewed talked about how the school looked and how they carried on their duties. Anderson described the first time she saw the building:

> I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't believe it. I was personally affected in the sense that my husband [high school band director] had just brought...The building was blown up I think in the early morning. At that same time the week before, he had just brought a hundred and some odd students back into the building. They had come back from the Southeastern Music Festival. Those children, a week later, they would have been in the building. That really shocked us. The whole building, my office, I was the assistant principal by then. My office was in complete disarray. We couldn't get to records or anything.

Celdon Lewallen's room was bombed, but not totally destroyed. She remembered: "We got out the school paper. I had journalism class. The typewriters were affected in some way. I don't remember, but we did something to compensate for it. It was a bloody mess."

Anderson said she heard early that morning that the school had been bombed.

> We rushed out to see what had happened. We couldn't believe it because we thought things were better. Looking back, I can see how negligent we really were. After things got better, by the end of that first year and everything in the community seemed at peace. Then to have the school bombed.

> I realized since I started thinking about this, we didn't have any protection, really. We should have had guards. The school was being repaired from all the wreckage from the year before. There were all sorts of strangers in the school that year. So many people had access to the building day or night. That's when those bombs, that dynamite was set in the school. We had no guards as I remember. We had started the school, and everything was very peaceful. The school was being repaired. We just looked forward to a good year. They caught us off guard.

Driskill called the bombing "a vivid time in my life." He remembered how the school looked:

> The FBI was in there early. The memory… one memory that I have is that three bombs went off. They used the coal mining method, time fused where the miners could get out. One of them went off outside my classroom— this is kind of eerie to think of. It laid the wall on my desk. One of them was in the home ec department. You know the school, you know where that is, and then one of them was the bathroom going down toward the new gym. The new gym wasn't blown up. It stayed, and we used it.

> Now they were not going to let anybody back in that school. I think at a certain time they might have wanted to let somebody back in the school, but FBI was here. We had people—maintenance people from the county—go in there and get the books. Now remember in the wide spaces between where bombs went off, they might have just gone into a locker and thrown them in the back of a truck or a wheelbarrow and then in a truck. But some of them, where the things were blown up, it's a miracle that with bombs, there wasn't a fire. That didn't happen. There was no fire. So they [maintenance] went in with corn scoops—snow shovels are the same kind of thing—to get the books.

Those who were students at the time also recounted their memories of the bombing. Caswell said:

> I remember the day after they bombed the school. 'Course quite a few blacks was goin' [to Clinton High School] by the time the school was bombed. ! I remember the day after they bombed the school 'cause I remember hearing it and I thought, "Gosh, we won't have to go to school. No more school."
>
> And then they said, "Oh, you're gonna have to go to school. You gotta go to school in the mornin' anyway." So, we couldn't come to the front of the school. We had to park over like where

> the fire station is, on that side. I remember, they let us off that bus and somebody [in the crowd of onlookers] said, "Damn. Here they [African American students] come again."
>
> And, 'course, you know, we just bounced off the bus and go on our merry way 'cause we had to get our books and stuff out of the school. That's why we all had to go to school that day, and then just took us to Oak Ridge to school.

Bell (Meredith) said the attitudes of the students changed as a result of the bombing. "When you are confronted with, 'You don't have a school to go to,' some kids say, 'Whoopee, we don't have to go to school.' But that was not the case, that was really not the case. It became a sad, sad time when you saw that you didn't have anywhere to go."

Manning said it was also a time that changed the thoughts of some citizens and leaders in the community.

> When they blew the school down, here came all the FBI agents and people like that into town. I don't know whether they found out about anybody or not. You go out here and you get a nitwit. He might have access to dynamite, but knowing how to blow a building down, he may not be able to do it.
>
> I think when they blew the school up.... You know when you get in a person's pocket; he looks at things a little bit different. They realized that this thing got out of hand, there's no reason

> for that. A lot of people, you know I'm talking about the community leaders, said, "That's going to cost us. We'll have to be rebuilding this school.
>
> These people that were involved in this, they sort of went from being on this pedestal…to they weren't as well thought of after that. Carrying a sign around hootin' and hollerin' is one thing. Going around blowin' a school up is a different thing 'cause you could kill somebody. It was an inconvenience for the students to have to go to Oak Ridge. It was costing the County money to haul them down there and back. That caused a lot of people to have a second thought. People that were really involved with it had a second thought after that.

According to the participants, the community worked together to ensure minimal interruption to the school program. Even Clinton's arch rival, Oak Ridge, worked with school officials to come up with a plan for continuing school. Anderson remembered:

> The response was wonderful. It showed the strength of the people in the community, and how the community had changed and come to cope with reality. We met in the gymnasium the next day. We had a new superintendent of schools, Mr. James Newman. We met in the gymnasium, because we couldn't go in

> the building. Everyone was ready. We were going to have school in open air even. We were not going to be defeated.
>
> Then shortly thereafter or maybe at that time, the people of Oak Ridge offered the Linden School. This was just wonderful. We got the offer to go to Oak Ridge. This meant we could have school the next two years. The building was in good condition. Well we were glad to have anything, believe me. We were glad to have a school. It was equipped for an elementary school. You see we were moving a high school into the elementary, with small desks and everything. We managed. Those were insignificant things.

Several things of significance did occur after the bombing. First was the amount of parental support shown. Driskill remembered a P. T. A. meeting held in Oak Ridge at the old Linden School—the "new "Clinton High School:

> Another thing that did it in my mind is we had a PTA meeting. I know we were delighted if we could get twenty people at a PTA meeting in high school, but we participated in a PTA meeting with a gym full at Linden. We had twice as many outside as could stand wall to wall in the gym. So you just couldn't believe that much interest.

Driskill recalled that the logistics of starting school in an unused elementary school were tremendous and the accomplishments, nothing short of miraculous. He had been relieved of his teaching duties in order to oversee the move to the new school:

> We didn't miss a day of school during the time after it was bombed. Mr. Human stayed with the faculty and the kids and got me a substitute. Now I went to the Linden school, and Clinton had a new radio station, WYSH, and they gave my name and said, "Bill is down there [in Oak Ridge]."
>
> Linden School, of course, was just stacked up, you know like you do when you close the school. "Take your cleaning supplies, and Bill will direct you."
>
> You know, I was coaching football, but I was sort of relieved of all that. My basketball season would have started soon, and we could kindly put that on hold. But I was down there for the clean up.
>
> People were so cooperative. I'd just give them a room there, and they'd go in there, and they'd clean the floor, and they'd do all this. The Oak Ridge personnel moved whatever we wanted to move whenever we wanted it moved. They'd put it all out in the hall, we'd clean the room, they'd put it back and dust it off.

During that three days [after the bombing on Sunday], we moved in on the fourth day. We moved in on Thursday. That Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, the kids met in the gym and on the football field for class and had a lot of intramurals.

Anyway, more people showed up at Linden than I could direct really. Some of them had to direct themselves. I'd run from one end to the other trying to keep up with them. They were just so…they weren't critical of me. They'd just step in when they saw something that needed to be done. But actually when I got to them I'd say, "We've not got anybody in room so and so."

Now a memorable thing also…this was published in the paper and I think researched. Not a place in the United States could a school have been blown up and thirteen miles away there was a school with the same number of rooms. I counted the rooms and called him [Human] back up at Clinton, and I said, "You're not going to believe this, but they've got the same number of rooms that we had." And he and I on the phone, with me doing it in actuality, said, "Room 101 will now be 195" or whatever. It worked beautifully.

I tried to keep the math and the science and all of that together. It worked out. Even to the fact that we didn't have

> room enough to have study hall on the last period. Always anytime I've ever known of a high school schedule, more people want that, and some way they get it—study hall last period of the day. Well, we ran one bus because we didn't have room for them in that big study hall. It really was a gym, but we wanted to use the gym for phys ed. The little old study hall that we had the rest of the day was down close to the cafeteria. So they ran one bus early so we could make room, maybe two buses early. People who had last period study hall actually got to leave an hour early.

Anderson recalled that she had been sent to Oak Ridge to assist Driskill with the scheduling and room assignment. Referring to her administrative position, she said, "The assistant principal's duties in those days seemed to be mostly office management."

> Mr. Human told me to go to Oak Ridge. He had to stay here to take care of things. He told me to go and arrange the layout of the building, the office, the rooms, and all that. I spent most of my time at the Linden School getting ready for our school to come down there. They had done a lot of the cleaning and preparation and had it ready for us. I just had to assign different rooms and get the office in order so we could operate, things like that.

Driskill recounted the logistical problems associated with the distribution of textbooks:

> One thing that I'm proud of, you know sometimes things just happen. Now this is after we all got together. They put our books from Clinton into Linden gym. They put them in there. We came on to school and I think stayed in homeroom a while. W. D. [Human, principal] came up with the idea that he was going to send students in there to find their books, you know "the needle in the haystack."
>
> You're not going to find a book in that way. Okay, I was still relieved of my [teaching] duties. I did not have a class or didn't have a homeroom, but after people had not found any books in five or ten minutes, it just hit upon me what they were going to relate to. They were to pick up five books that they thought they could find the owner, and that's the way they got their books back. After that I learned my lesson, I always had them put their names in their books.
>
> You know by about Monday of the next week [school was fully operational]—that makes five days in school, and three of them had been up at the other place— it was a miracle.

Another miracle was the show of support from rival Oak Ridge High School. Anderson related the experience:

> When the buses brought the students, it was very touching. The Oak Ridge High School band was there to meet us, to meet the Clinton students. The president of the student council made remarks and all. They gave him the key to the building, and he opened the Linden School. We were there for two years.

Bell (Meredith), who was a junior then, talked about that day. She said:

> I guess in all the history of Oak Ridge and Clinton that was one time there was no rivalry at all. We went to Linden, and the water fountains were kindergarten size, and we were high school kids. But the Oak Ridge band welcomed us there. It was like we had a place to be.

Driskill also talked about the strong memory created by the journey of the buses from Clinton to Oak Ridge:

> Another memorable thing was eighteen school buses gathered at what was left of Clinton High School. At the football field down that way, eighteen buses took off at once. You know that Clinton and Oak Ridge have really been rivals, and that's to say it mildly. But it was a very moving thing to me when we drove into there with those eighteen buses, and Mr. Fisher—Jody Fisher and I rode the bus. We did much of the time during that time—rode the bus. Eighteen buses pulled in there at Linden, and the Oak Ridge band was playing our fight song.

Shattuck also marveled that the move had been so thoroughly and quickly accomplished. He explained his position:

> The fact that this community had that high school back in session in a week or two…That's a hell of an accomplishment, and it could not have been done without the community supporting, not desegregation per say, but just, "We're just not going to let this happen to our students."
>
> Oak Ridge was very instrumental in that. The people in Oak Ridge contacted the Anderson County Board and really went to heroic measures to help the Anderson County Board of Education get that abandoned school building equipped and ready for a school. I wasn't here, but they say the first day they opened school, which was in a week or so, the buses pulled up and the Oak Ridge High School band was there playing for the students. I think it was a miraculous accomplishment.

Participants also believed it was quite an accomplishment to have the support of nationally known and respected people. During desegregation and after the bombing, many such individuals lent their support to Clinton. Driskill recalled some of these:

> We met some real prominent people. Edward R. Murrow, there was no better known. W. D. [Human] and I worked with him doing the documentary, and it won the documentary of the

year. Drew Pearson, I talked to him before.

Then Billy Graham came, and as you would note, Billy Graham fills stadiums. The gym was a new gym and would probably seat two thousand plus, and we filled it all up. W. D. had enough knowledge to make some pre planning. First Baptist, St. Mark's [Methodist], and Memorial [Methodist] all had audio. That was before the time of video. But Billy Graham in his wisdom, when he was informed that we had everybody assembled in the gym together, he said, "We'll go to those [churches] first."

So he went to First Baptist, St. Mark's, Memorial. He had some people here with songs and so forth, but Billy's the only one that went to these. These people were really impressed that he would do that for them.

Theme #4: Looking at the Past and Present

"When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world."

George Washington Carver

Time has passed, and some of the people of Clinton look back on the desegregation years as ones they would like to forget. Others speak of it as a time when a community achieved a goal not only for itself, but for communities

throughout the South. Still others think they are stronger in spirit and mind because of these events. One thing is certain—their lives changed because of their experiences. As the participants reflected on their lives then and now, they talked about changes in relationships, school and education, attitudes, and beliefs.

Many who were interviewed spoke of the good relationship that existed between African Americans and whites in Clinton before prior to 1956. They cited examples of how things changed following the court-ordered desegregation. Gail Ann Epps (Upton) lived in a predominantly white community in another part of town. She talked about children she played with in the neighborhood before and after desegregation:

> Clinton kids that I saw everyday, you know, downtown and all this type thing, 'round the neighborhood and all, like Jim Webber's kids, why, we traded funny books. She'd come to my house, sit on the porch, we'd trade *True Romance* and all that stuff my grandmother didn't allow us to read, but we put 'em inside a funny book and we could take the funny book and trade the funny books. You know… teenagers…girls. I mean we was just little girls, but like we was twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old and they lived, Jim lives right here now, but they lived on Hendrickson Street, right down the street from us.

Now Dancy, Miss Lewallen's girl, would come over here cause I was, my sister was still young like Dancy. Yeah. They were playin'. They were real good friends, Dancy and my sister was, see, 'cause they was about the same age. Now, after this school was integrated that year…well, these kids, these girls, yeah, they were still friendly, they wasn't...they were just scared. They just stayed…everybody you didn't see. About this time of evenin', you really didn't see nobody because, you know... they were just scared.

Now take these kids live next door here, they didn't say anything, and they just barely would speak. And they…Lord, they've eaten my grandmother's food and everything else, but yet and still, they were just kind of quiet like when all this was going on. What I can understand. Yeah. I can understand that. They were afraid.

Most every day one of my friends [white] would come to my grandmother's house, before this happened now, I'm sayin. She would come to my grandmother's house and watch soap operas mostly every day, but she stopped. She wasn't prejudiced. She was just scared. She was scared to come out, that they was, you know, didn't know what they was gonna do.

Bob Manning talked about playing with the African American children as he was growing up:

> We knew they [African Americans] had an elementary school. We played over there behind the Baptist Church between… that field…there's a shopping mall now. We used to play ball over there all the time and over there on the fairgrounds. Those Ellis kids from over there on Eagle Bend, you know they'd come over there and play ball with us. Well we knew where they went. We'd come down here in front of the high school and yard and we'd play ball down there with them. We knew that the young ones went up there [Green McAdoo], and then the older ones went somewhere else [to school]. We didn't know exactly where.

Alfred Williams also related many stories about playing with the white children, eating together, and getting along well with each other.

> We didn't have no problem. We didn't have no problem. We would come down here, we would sit there at the old courthouse. You remember the old courthouse? We used to sit there. We used to watch the traffic coming from out of Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan. People be comin' through, just waving and everything. We'd play football and we'd leave there and go up to Richey Cream and get some frozen custard ice cream.

> And right there where the middle school's at, where the gym used to be, it used to be real clean out there, and had a big tree out there, and we used to team up and play touch football, and we would have a ball out there. Black kids and white. We'd choose up among these. We just wouldn't be black on one side and white on one side. I'd say, "well, I'd choose you," and then they'll choose one black, then they'd choose a white, then they'd choose a black. Choose a white, choose a black.

In a town that had been peaceful, suddenly they could not carry on with life as usual. Epps (Upton) said:

> We couldn't even be by ourself anymore, after…you know. Just like we walk downtown just like we would usually do 'cause I'd go do my grandmother's banking and everything for her. But when this was goin' on we didn't go to town, you know, by ourselves. No.
>
> Well, it was sort of a mixed sort of feeling. You're scared, and then you're mad, you know. I mean it's just a…mixture of different feelings because you were just surprised that…like Jerry Shattuck said, "This happened in our town."
>
> We all, both of us, have used that phrase because this lady reporter, she said, "Well, it's amazing that you two would both use the same phrase"…that it happened in our town because

> actually, we know it was…everything was just peaceful around here [before desegregation].

Williams said the children no longer associated with each other after they started going to school together. "We'd have a good time until they integrated Clinton. And when they integrated Clinton, the powderhouse, the keg of dynamite blew up. I mean, hey, everything started happening." Williams remembered a particular incident:

> Some of 'em were kids we played with before we got integrated. I remember one boy, honest truth, I never thought he would'a turned like he turned. He didn't go to school, but honest truth, he hated us. He showed his colors. We played with him. Honest truth, man, he was gonna jump on us, I'm tellin' you. But before that [integration] happened, I'm tellin' you we played together. I don't believe it would near be as bad now as it was back then because In my days because, hey, it might of been good while we was playing, but when school would break up, he went his way, I went my way.

Thresser Caswell talked about people she had known whose behavior toward her changed during desegregation. "You know that you just didn't think some would be like that…good Christian people that called us their friend."

Epps (Upton) reinforced Caswell's opinion. She said it was the "feeling of disappointment because you wouldn't think that once you played with all these kids. I mean, it wasn't them, but it was white people in general." She found herself thinking of all white people, including her friends, as against desegregation. "You say, 'Well, if they played with me and all this and then all these other people are like that, then everybody's the same.' You sorta put everybody in a category, which they weren't."

Epps (Upton) expressed surprise in the way people acted. She, too, faced acts of prejudice that she had not experienced prior to desegregation:

> People you thought that was, well, you didn't really know whether they was for you or against you, but people that you thought that wasn't that prejudiced, I knew that they, you know—they didn't want us goin' to school with 'em or whatever. You know that to a certain extent, but you didn't realize there was that much, that much hate. You know, you knew it was a prejudice thing, but you didn't know there was that much, that much hate goin' on.

Williams also remembered how things changed in 1956 when the community learned the school would be desegregated. He recalled:

> We knew school was starting. We knew it's gonna be tough, and you could feel the atmosphere. You could feel it. When we integrated, like during the summer and we just say we gonna

> have to start this fall to school and integrate here, see, you could start feeling it when you come to town. People would look at you, and look at you, lookin' at you. They wasn't near as friendly as it was before, you know that I was telling you how we used to come down and play football. The kids wouldn't talk to us as much as they would, see. 'Cause see, they parents had told them, "You all gonna have to go to school with some blacks."
>
> And then, John Kasper and them people, you know, begin to get this goin'. It was a turning point. It was gonna soon, later have go blow up anyway, you know, because they kept it all bottle up in 'em so long.

Judge Lewallen remembered the African American families that he had grown up with in Clinton. He spoke of one of his friends:

> There used to be a family of Negroes that lived over here on Hendrickson Street [near Lewallen's childhood home], and they had boys. One of them was named O. C. O. C. was at my back door practically every day in the summer time. We were just kids now, I'm talking about before high school. We climbed every mulberry tree up and down that creek in this town and ran together. We grew up and O. C. got to be a good size boy, and I got him to play on our sandlot type thing football. We played down in the "Y", where the railroad "Y" is. O. C. would head for

> the river or somewhere to go fishing, and he ate the same sandwiches we did.
>
> Going to school together never entered my mind. It never entered my mind. I guess that's probably part of the South. Well, it just never occurred to me that there was any difference. I just knew they had a different school for them. I never got on a crusade or anything. I don't know anybody particularly that ever did that around here. Nobody thought anything about it. Nobody. That was the law, that was a Tennessee law. It was enforced by money, lack of money. If you in your position [superintendent of schools] integrated the Clinton Schools, you cut them off from the taxpayer's money.
>
> That's just the way it was, but by the time I was in high school I realized that the Negroes were not getting the same opportunity we were. Primarily I was thinking, "They're up there in a one-room school house, and they don't have these inside toilets and things that we do." I wasn't thinking about the academic.

Epps (Upton) used almost the same words when she explained about her relationship with white children: “Onliest thing, we didn’t go to church together, and we didn’t go to school together ‘cause that’s the way it was. Everybody knew that’s the way it was.”

"The injury that was discovered was in education." The words of Celdon Lewallen echoed throughout the interviews as participants talked about the academic and extra-curricular aspects of school. Lewallen said:

> We lost a lot of good time. They [students] were shortchanged with all the turmoil. See we had it right outside our window… where I was, the courtyard, the principal's office and all of that. All of the activity was right out there and on Broad Street. It was very disconcerting. You can't really always hide that.
>
> Sometimes you just had to stop and talk about it. I felt like they needed to get it out in the open, even the ones who were opposed to it. No, the children were the ones that were short changed. We lost some good time, teaching times with them, even when school was going on.

Margaret Anderson probably spoke for many teachers then and now when she said:

> I think the war came with those children and seeing what a teacher sees and every teacher saw it, the same thing. You tend to have a different outlook on things. You have a different way of looking at it then you would have if you had never been with children.

> It was a great privilege and a very heartbreaking experience at the same time to work with those first black children, the first eight or ten years maybe. I learned so much from them. That's how I guess my life changed intellectually and as a teacher.
>
> Since then I've tried to keep in touch with as many as I could. They come to see me. It's been very rewarding because even way back as a teacher, and I'm sure every teacher is the same, you could see the talent in these young people that was going to waste if something—somebody—didn't intervene. You could see that talent or feel their hopes and their dreams. Since then much of that has come true. It's amazing, the success when they had an opportunity to go to college and to learn. It's been wonderful.

Both Anderson and Bill Driskill felt those early years at Clinton High School changed their professional paths. Driskill said his experiences working with the two principals, Brittain and Human, influenced his entrance into administration a lot earlier than he would have otherwise. Referring to his subsequent administrative positions, Driskill said, "I guess it did make a significant difference in my life."

Anderson's career path included school counseling and writing. She shared how she came to write *Children of the South*, a book dealing with her experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School:

> That was really a compulsory thing. Maybe that was the answer. I don't know. I had never written anything. I had written articles, but not any real thing outside of academic. I saw all these people running in and out of the school, and then running to the newspaper with the story of some kind, and I thought, "What do they really know about what's going on inside the classrooms with these children and how this is affecting them?"
>
> By that time, as a teacher I could begin to see the effects of this—of years and years, not just Clinton, but generations of discrimination. You begin to see things I'd never really dwelt on a lot before. That's when I started writing. I thought, "They really don't know what's going on inside the schoolroom in the hearts of these children." That's when I started trying to write.

Celdon Lewallen recalled trying to keep things on an even keel at the school. "As I remember though, we didn't give up chapel. I think we still congregated, and still had ballgames, did all those things. We tried to go on anyway. I think that was one thing in our favor—that we tried to be as normal as we could."

The African American students felt like they missed out on the extra-curricular activities that should have been part of the high school experience. For Caswell, high school was not a time she enjoyed:

> Just really, to think about it, and I haven't ever thought about it, I really just hadn't ever thought about anything being good. You know, 'cause high school is supposed to be when you're movin' on up and just havin' a good time and just enjoyin' it. But we didn't ever have that. We never had that.
>
> High school's supposed to be a good time in your life. You think about goin' to proms, and goin' to ball games, and just havin' a good time.
>
> We could not participate 'cause the principal said even though if we went, we would not…they didn't have any way to protect us. Mr. Brittain said, you know, "You can go."
>
> No, I think it was the one that came after Mr. Brittain—Mr. Human—'cause Brittain, you know, he left. He couldn't take it.

Epps (Upton) shared this view as she talked about the typical high school events she had missed:

> But you take, I don't know…clubs and stuff. At Austin I was in some of the clubs, but when I come out at Clinton High you didn't do that. You just went to school, and that was it. No extra stuff, no ball games…Lord, no. Nooooo. No, you missed like, now, like I say, you missed your junior and senior prom, actually participatin' in anything. You just, like I say, I went to school, done my work, come home and that was it.

> I didn't enjoy the things that actually my daughters and my sons are enjoying right now. To the point that where I didn't have a senior prom, you know. They had one, but I didn't go. Like you say, graduation. Course it was different with my sister 'cause she sang at her graduation.

Although Epps (Upton) felt like things improved when her sister attended Clinton High School a few years later, Caswell did not. According to her:

> Well, things really hadn't got that much better. The only thing I think that happened in that time frame that didn't get that much better is the black kids just got bitter. We couldn't have any activities, we couldn't go to any activities. We could go, but they [school officials] said they couldn't be responsible for us, so we never had any activities.

Driskill also talked about school activities in relation to African American students and the fact that their pictures were not in the school annuals that first year. When asked about later years, he responded:

> By then, yes. We had blacks on the basketball team, in the chorus, and we had leaders in the chorus. You know when you just have twelve students and some of them dropped out, there was just not enough to really get involved with the student life.

> And why they're not pictured in the annual, that's a little sore point to me as to why they are not. I would prefer that they be, but I believe when I was in high school—and that was seven years before— if you wanted your picture in the annual you went up to Clinton Art Studio and had your picture made and brought it to them. Which you know, that was no problem, it didn't cost much probably, but the blacks didn't do it.
>
> But the students said they didn't feel qualified to join the clubs. Nobody urged them, that's the reason I think as I started this, we needed to be more friendly and get them in [school activities].

The desegregation of Clinton High School put Epps (Upton) in the limelight in other ways though. In 1958, she became the first African American female to graduate from an integrated public high school. She told of experiences she probably would not have had otherwise:

> But I have been on several shows and different things, you know. It made the news all across the country. And I was on TV. I had been interviewed by....gosh, what's that man's name? Edward R. Murrow and this other guy on CBS. Several times, you know. Several times. Took my yearbook. Never did get it back.

The comments pertaining to graduation ranged from what had happened to Bobby Cain after the ceremony to the logistics of graduating when the school was bombed. Patsy Bell (Meredith) recalled:

> When they bombed the school, I went to Oak Ridge for two years, rode a bus. We got to graduate from the gym [at Clinton High School], but we had no practice for graduation. We were going to school in Oak Ridge, so we'd come back. We just met at the school and all walked in.

Although Epps (Upton) did graduate, Caswell and Williams had different experiences. Neither graduated, and they talked about how that affected their lives then and now. Caswell said:

> None of our...I didn't graduate either. I can't really blame it on that [desegregation], but I do blame it. That's why the black guys didn't get to graduate. It was just, you know, somebody was always pickin' at 'em or doin' somethin' to 'em 'cause kids are gonna do that, but it was worse. Yeah. I think that's why Alfred didn't graduate. It was rough. Yeah.
>
> Knoxville College gave us tutoring classes, but you'd go over there and study, get tutored, but you know, when you got back in school it just...it was hard to concentrate. It was very hard to concentrate.

Throughout the interview Williams often spoke of not graduating and the impact that had on the direction his life took. He believed if he had gotten his diploma, he would not have "been on this side of this broom," referring to his job in school maintenance. Williams' testimony on what this meant to him then and now tells the story better than anyone could:

> Well, at the time, when they integrated Clinton, we thought it was gonna be a good thing by comin' near home and everything. But after we got down here and we seen the situation we was in, hey, I preferred to stayed at Austin. Old Austin High School in Knoxville and everything because the kids was hecklin' us and everything. John Kasper, he'd got the people all stirred up 'bout "kill those niggers, kill those niggers." That was their word, you know, "kill those niggers."
>
> They didn't want us to go to school there. And now, from my standpoint, I didn't want to go to school down there no better than they wanted me to go because, hey, only thing I wanted was that piece of—they say it's sheep cloth—only thing I wanted was that diploma.
>
> And I would have been glad to get out of there and give them the school, but I wasn't gonna take the hassle and trying to study, too, because, see, my grades was already low and everything, you know...at Austin. See that was pushin' me. And

if I would'a graduated I would'a had to go back to school to make up some courses in order to get my diploma at that time.

I said, "I just go on get me a job and go on to work." And then after I got to workin' and everything, I still wasn't happy, I still wanted that diploma. And I should'a, you know. I felt deep down in my heart I should'a had got that diploma like Bobby [Cain] got his and everything, if I did had to make up those courses that I was behind in. Because I could always carry 'em to summer school and spent maybe an hour or two in this class, hour or two in that one, maybe three hours a day, and then I could'a got my grades back up, got my sixteen courses like you supposed to have when you graduate from high school.

Well, I tell you one thing, it wasn't a good feelin', 'specially for me, and 'specially, you got somebody done got kicked outta school and then wanted that diploma and everything. And then add hate. I learned to hate, too, you know, because honest truth, I had that, hey, I was just as mad as they were.

And honest truth because, see, they done put me out of school, didn't have nothin' to show for gettin' kicked outta school, you know, little old incident. I think it was a little incident. I call it a little incident, but I knew my grades was low, and I knew I had to pass in order to graduate. You got to have sixteen courses

and everything, and honest truth, and I knew they was low, and low, and they wasn't gettin' no better.

It's actually, it don't bother me now. I can look back over it now and, honest truth, and I can smile, but I still wish I had that diploma. I'm always crying 'bout that diploma. I wish I had it. It just something I can show, I can say, "Well, I fought hard for that."

And honest truth, but when Mayor Diggs [Clinton] gave me and Bobby [Cain] that black award down here [in 1993] and everything, and, honest truth, and I got the key to the city and the mayor of Oak Ridge and Clifford Moore—you remember Mr. Moore? His wife and all of us, you know, we received that certificate. I got it right now, at home, on my wall, in the living room. When you walk in my door, you see it right there. I like to have that diploma sittin' right there in the middle of that, you know, but, you know, just like I told Vera [his wife] one day, me and her was talking and she said, "Honey, you can always go back to school. You can always go to night school if you want to just to get that diploma if you want to."

Just as those times limited the lives of some, the lives of others were influenced in a broader sense. Bob Manning talked about how many of the students in those days would graduate and get jobs in the steel mills up North

or the hosiery mill in Clinton. He recalled his attitude toward advanced education:

> We didn't have an interest in education. I just got to thinking, "You know, maybe I ought to go get me an education and get a better job. Maybe I can get a job around here and work here instead of having to leave home." That sort of...I really felt sorry for people like Alfred, because I know me and my wife have talked about it a lot. We feel like they've got two strikes against them in a lot of respect. The only way they're going to get out of their plight is through education. The only way a lot of people like me that was living in that end of town [North Clinton] that were just high school graduates, that's the only way we were going to get out of it, too."
>
> I thought, "I think I'll go off and get me a college degree and try to make something out of myself." I don't know that that was the primary motivation, but it had an influence on me. I could see that those people, they had two strikes against them. They were in the school here and people hootin'and hollerin' some of the people didn't want them in there. When they got out I thought, "They're going to have a hard time getting a job."
>
> It's still true today in a lot of respects. About the only way anybody's going to get out of a situation is they've got to

> educate themselves out. If they don't get an education, their chances of getting ahead in life is almost nil now days. They might luck up and get a job in a factory somewhere, but there's just a limit on how high they can go.

In examining their own beliefs, the philosophy and attitudes of the individuals were reinforced and sometimes altered. Anderson explained:

> It influenced all of us. We were concerned about the safety of our families. We didn't know what to do ourselves. "Is this going to be any better? Had you better get out of this?" All those things go through your mind. Well, where do you go if you get out of it? My own family thought we were crazy to stay here. We had a close feeling with the community. We weren't that afraid. We felt like in times of trouble you stay, you don't run.
>
> In adversity you examine your own self. We all had crisis in our lives, and it's those times that we have to look at ourselves and ask, "How are we going to deal with this?" I think you grow up. Maybe I did.

Manning said, "I've always had a philosophy. I don't care what the color of skin is or your sex. It's how you treat me. You know you've got to live and let live and treat people like they want to be treated." According to Manning, that philosophy formed the basis for his attitude during desegregation:

> I felt those people [African Americans] were citizens, and they had as much right to an education as I did. I didn't look on them as competition, like some people did. Back then, a lot of those protesting didn't have much of an education. They may—I don't know if this is true—they may have looked on these people as potential competition down the road somewhere. If you're up here [gestures upward], and somebody's down here[gestures], and you bring him up there, he can compete with you. As long as he's down here, everything is roses. But when he gets up here, he gets to be competition to you. I didn't look on it that way.

When asked how her life had been influenced, Caswell responded, "If I had an influence, it would have been bad. I don't think it…I think if it had been an influence, it would probably make me hate people, and it didn't do that."

Unlike Caswell, Williams did feel hatred back then. He admitted:

> Well, back then, honest truth, when I got kicked out of school, well, I tell you one thing…I had animosity toward all whites, see. I was just, hey, I wouldn't be anything to do with anybody was white. Just tell you the truth. That's all I had—that hatred. I had that hatred just like John Kasper had come here and stirred up hate among those twelve blacks. That same way I had hate among the whites, see. But I learned. It grew out of

> me after I'd sit down. I learned to turn from hate to love I learn how to love people, see. You know, it grows on me.
>
> Say, like I tell people, I'm not a smart man, I'm not a educated man, but, honest truth, I'm a gifted man. I learn by watchin' and everything. I pick up on things. That's one reason these kids [at Clinton Elementary School] love me like they do, you know, because, hey, I don't have a high school education. I don't have a diploma, but I can sit down and relate to these kids just as good as they teacher can because something about, 'bout…I guess they's just something 'bout God-given talent I got, honest truth.

Bell (Meredith) talked about how the lives of those who experienced desegregation had altered the attitudes of the future generations. Referring to the court-ordered desegregation, she said: "So here you are going to school in a forced situation all the way to now…seeing your children and grandchildren have a whole different view. You don't see color." She felt a lot of her classmates, as well as the educators, learned a great deal from the events that occurred. "I hope they did. I hope they learned as much from it as I feel in my heart."

Caswell was one who learned from the acts of hate and prejudice she witnessed. Determined not to act the same way, she said:

> I guess I pity people that feel that way, and then when you work

> with the public like I have for forty years and still so many people that still feel that same way. You'd be surprised at today's time… how some people are still the same way they were back then. It just makes you have to not let it get to you, not let it make you bitter. It could make you bitter. Real bitter. I think in all the things that have happened to me, I don't think they happened to me because of what happened in school. I think I handled it pretty good. I've never been a bitter person.

The basic values of others who were interviewed had not changed because of desegregation. They spoke of how their values had been strengthened and how their beliefs in others may have been confirmed. Jerry Shattuck diminished his own role in the high school desegregation, saying, "At that point in time, at that age, I knew it wasn't me. It was the events." The events had led to the formation of a recreational program organized by the Student Council. "It was at the rec [recreation] hall for kids to have something to do at night. I wrote a report on it. We got a national award for it. That was primarily because it was Clinton."

Attitudes toward race, he believed, were formed by his parents who were born in New York State and who had "grown up in integration." After Shattuck's birth in Pennsylvania, his family moved to Tennessee "and loved it". He referred his belief following desegregation: "As a matter of fact, it reaffirmed what I'd always thought about people. I think people are good.

They do bad things. They have biases and reactions that they shouldn't, but people are good."

When asked how his life may have been influenced by all that happened, he replied:

> That's hard to say. It really is. In the sense, very generalized, at the time and ever since I feel like I did the right thing. Now whether or not I did, whether I could have done more of the right thing, I don't know. But, generally speaking, then and ever since, I feel like I did the right thing. Having a commitment to doing the right thing... that is important. Going through that and doing the right thing was a reaffirmation of that type of attitude. It doesn't matter if you have a political disagreement with somebody, that's fine. ["Did you have a commitment to doing the right thing anyway?"]
>
> I hope I did. I hope I did. That was the way I was raised. Doing the right thing in an event of that relative magnitude, given what you normally go through as a teenager in a small town is a big reinforcement, the attitude of doing the right thing. I honestly feel that the whole town of Clinton felt like it did the right thing. That was what was important.

Celdon Lewallen spoke of her resolve to retain her basic philosophy:

> It didn't change my values. It changed my opinion of some

> people that I was disappointed in. I would never have thought about going anywhere else, except for that one time we did leave [referring to spending one night in a Knoxville hotel when things in Clinton escalated]. I thought, "This eventually is going to be okay."
>
> I just wish they hadn't stared with us, but we were the place to go because we had a school where those children [African Americans] were eligible to come to, and we were busing them twenty-six miles away, which was a hardship for them. So actually we were discriminating against the blacks.

Epps (Upton) listed all the places she had gone to school—not because of where she lived, but because of her skin color. Epps talked about her education:

> They wasn't any money involved, because they [Anderson County Schools] were payin' out more money to send us to Austin High School on a bus and payin' tuition. They had to pay so much for each child to go to Austin High School. But rather than go close, I passed up school on my— what you might say— goin' up on the hill to school. Really, I could have went to North Clinton or whatever, but I had to go to the hill [to Green McAdoo School].

> When I got high school age I had to go to Vine Middle School—they called it junior high then—for a year because this school stopped at eighth grade. Okay, over there, they had seventh, eighth, and ninth grade at the middle school. Okay, we had to go to that school, then in the tenth grade I went to Austin High School before I came to my junior and senior year here at Clinton.
>
> So, evidently it had to be a lot of hate and stuff because by us goin' to school here, they would have saved money. The state would have given 'em even more money. And, you know, and the government. I mean they [county school system] would have got more money by us bein' here. And why would they bus us all the way. I mean it just was stupid to me.

Anderson joined Lewallen in her belief that her values had remained in tact throughout the ordeal. She said:

> My basic beliefs did not change. Maybe in the fact that I should be more active and do something about it. I felt that way, because I'm inclined not to say a lot. I have a deep feeling that people have their own personal feelings, and you protect that sort of thing. In a situation like this, as a teacher, I felt like I had to begin to speak out.

> I feel like I have a deeper understanding of human nature and what can happen to man if he decides what man can do, I'm trying to say, to other men. I've been able to look at national problems differently as this sort of thing has happened all over the country. I think intellectually I might say it's certainly broadened my life.

Desegregation of the only high school in town also broadened the life of the community. The "Jim Crow Laws" that had been in place have since disappeared, and there is more interaction between African American and white citizens. In order to understand today's relationships, those of the "old" Clinton first must be examined. Participants related stories of how things used to be, and Bob Manning described the way he saw the town:

> I think Clinton's changed quite a bit. I think Clinton has changed from a small town, a rural—rural dominated town—to a more industrialized, urban type town. Even though we're not in a big city, we have a lot of ways of people living in an urban area where back then the big thing was: "What kind of crop did you raise last year? How much corn?" People lived on the farm. They come to town on Saturdays, and this, that, or other.
>
> And they worked at the hosiery mill. It was a town of about twenty-five hundred, three thousand now. It's about ten

thousand now. It's changed the individuals. Clinton's always had....I've always felt like Clinton had a...you have a...every town has its social strata. Clinton's always had a group of people that were associated with the hosiery mill. Then you have a group of people that's associated with farm areas out here. Then you had a group in between. Then you had the blacks. You had these social strata. You know how small towns are. Every town has them. I think at one time the hosiery mill people felt like they were the community leaders, and they were I guess.

Judge Lewallen recalled the way it was in Clinton and the involvement of African Americans in the community:

I don't mean that the people who were law-abiding citizens were all millionaires or anything, but they were, you know Clinton is a strange little town. When I was a kid growing up here, you had one bank, no we had two. Any Negro could walk into a bank and borrow money if he had a reputation, if they owned their own home. This little town was not; we had a good little town. The people in this town, we didn't have any race problems.

They [African Americans] were good citizens. Al Jarnigan was a Negro man...he was a gandy dancer. Do you know what

a gandy dancer is? A gandy dancer is a railroad man who drives the spikes and puts the ties down. There was a group of Negroes that worked on Southern Railway...used to have cars where those employees could live in them. They'd take the cars somewhere if they were working on a railroad down in Harriman or some place, and they could live there. They could bring them back on the weekends.

Al Jarnigan used to hold the election at City Hall long before he was ever entitled to vote. Dad was on the election commission one time, and they said, "Well now, who are we going to get to hold the election in City Hall?" Well, Al Jarnigan and people like that. You didn't know the Jarnigans, I know it. Murray Jarnigan and his wife came to work for my mother at four dollars a week, listen to this. At four dollars a week, she came in the morning and made the fire and got the breakfast, and she had lunch. We kids came home from school for lunch most of the time. Didn't we? Didn't have a place to eat [at school].

Well, he [Al Jarnigan] was that type, and the Negroes, I can just tell you, I can just about name every one of them there was in this town. A group of them lived over on Hendrickson Street. If you go out of Clinton just across the bridge, the first road that turns to the left goes out, it's Lewallen farm or Lewallen hill or

> something out there, the name of it. My grandfather had a farm out there, and on the way out there, and it was about a half a mile from that road there to the farm was on the river. There were a lot of Negroes, I say not a lot, but maybe fifteen, twenty Negro families that lived on that road going in there.
>
> Sanford Weaver, there never was a finer person, black or white or otherwise than Sanford. He voted. These people all voted. They borrowed money at the bank. They owned their own homes. They had their own churches. I don't know of anybody that was mixed up [in trouble] that was black even as late as 1960, '61, '64.

Williams told how African Americans were segregated in the public places in Clinton:

> You didn't have us to go and sit down in Hoskins [drug store across from the courthouse] in the booth and sit there and laugh and enjoy yourself. 'Cause back then you weren't allowed to go down there in Hoskins and sit on the stool and everything. If you go down there and order breakfast, you have to stand and order it, and you had to wait till they fix it, and then you got it and you went to the cash register, cashier, and paid for it, then walked out of there. And you ate it outside.

> Well, the movies, you had to go upstairs. You didn't go downstairs to the movie. They had a colored...you go upstairs. They had a white...you go down there. When we got ready to get popcorn or stuff, we came downstairs, went out, tellin' the lady was selling the ticket we's goin' in there to get some popcorn. We go in and get popcorn, come back and tell her we going back upstairs. And we did, we went back upstairs.

Today in Clinton, things have changed, and the lives of the have changed. Williams declared:

> Oh yes, Lord! It's so much better now. It's so much sweeter now! I can go down there now, I can sit down anywhere I want to now. I can go down there and sit down and just enjoy myself with Molly Hoskins [now Scarbrough and a member of the Clinton City Schools Board of Education].
>
> You know what? You know, just since all this happened, Clinton done come a long ways, and I'm gonna tell you the truth. It's really a nice community, a nice town to live in now. You know, people beginnin' to cope with each other. They beginnin' to accept each other more now. You know, you still got deep down inside, you gonna always have my kind of people, you gonna have people on my side [African Americans]. They...they still ignorant to the point of being they don't want no change.

> Some of 'em wish it would just stayed segregated. Some of 'em don't want no integrated and all like that, and you got your whites the same way, they wish it stayed just like it was.
>
> Well, I tell you one thing. You got some adults change, but you got some ain't gonna never change. That's includin' black and white. Our people just as worse as your people. They, hey, they hard nosed, they raised like that, they gonna die like that.

Some of these people, according to Caswell, were associated with the "outsiders" who caused so much trouble when the school was desegregated. "You have to remember some of those people are still there," she said. "I think of lot of 'em were mean, there's still a lost of mean people, you know, but sometimes they have to have somebody to help 'em get started." Caswell felt that prejudice still exists and gave an example:

> I worked at Shoney's for years and years, and I was waitin' on tables one morning and wasn't very many people there. This was a baby, one and a half years old, a baby, and he called me a nigger. And I thought, "That child had to be taught that, he's a little thing." That's what he had heard at home, so, you know, it's still there. It's always gonna be there.
>
> I worked at a plant in Oak Ridge for twenty-nine years, and it's still there. They've been taught just like that little baby. You know, I think it's sad. I think it's pitiful when you hear a small

> child, barely talkin', and he can already say "nigger." Well, you just have to think that there's a lot of good people. You know the good ones.

Williams thought desegregation eventually "brought people closer together," but as he talked, he seemed to refute the notion. He said "it took 'em a long time to get close again."

> Some of 'em stayed distant. They wouldn't come close to you. They would talk, but they never would related like they should'a related toward you because you were black. And the, honest truth, but I don't see no color myself 'cause I figure like this. If you want a degree and you work for that degree, I don't care if you're green, or orange, or black, or purple, or whatever color. I think if you deserve it, they should give it to you.

Caswell also believed the community never really came together during desegregation. She said, "I don't think they came together. They just got quiet. I think they just got quiet." Williams spoke of how things are different in Clinton now:

> People together more in the community. If you got something goin' on, you see white and blacks join in now. Lotta time, you know they go to this function, they'll go to that function, you see. And then the neighborhoods. The blacks moving in the white neighborhood, and white folks live in the black neighborhood. It

> gonna be, just like they say, if you got the money, you can afford to be there. I tell people, "Hey! I'm not gonna bother you. You just leave me alone. I'm stayin' over here. If you don't wanna be with me, that's your business. I'm gonna speak to you and go on 'bout my business."
>
> And churches do things together 'cause, see, you take me. I sing a lot at our church. We associate with white churches just as well as we do our own black churches. And people, and when we go to they church, they have a good time. [Did that happen back, way back then?] No. No, no, no, no, it never would'a happened back then. Nooooooo, Lord.All, none of that would'a happened. But see, now it happenin' now.

Bell (Meredith) also mentioned churches and things like the community-wide Thanksgiving service at her church [First Baptist] and the choir from the predominantly African American church singing at a church where the majority of the congregation was white. "Gosh, forty years ago you would have never dreamed that. I went to a service Thanksgiving last year at the Church of God, and they performed in a mixed choir. It would have never happened, and today I'm just so grateful to see that it doesn't exist in my thinking, and in my community, I don't even think it exists."

Celdon Lewallen was another who spoke of the community's attitude and of her own. Referring to desegregation, she said:

> Do you know I don't even think about it anymore? So many of those people are gone or dead. I think it did have some good effects. Perhaps we're more, I don't know that I'm any more different, but I think generally speaking the whole attitude toward our black population is more friendly and open then maybe it was before. Kind of a self-inflicted thing when I look back, it really was. The blacks came in the back door. We might have been friends, but nevertheless…they're where they need to be now.
>
> The ones I knew, well now? Jarnigan had raised the Lewallen boys. She'd quit them if they didn't mind her. She was just part of us. Gail [Epps] lived right up there. Those girls were lovely girls.

Williams talked about the jobs held by African American in Clinton. He recalled:

> I think people didn't understand because only thing they knew about black people then— white people did— would have 'em to come to they house and do they cleaning and stuff like that. But they never did get a chance to get close to 'em. Didn't get close enough to show 'em that love that they supposed to have and everything.

> You know jobs is better now. Black is gettin' positions that they didn't used to would'a had. Like they goin', like this lady come in here and everything [African American City Manager hired by Clinton City Council]. If you can, if you got the degrees, went to school and you got it, and you can get the job. It don't make no difference 'bout your color. If you can do the job, it's your job. I love my job [at Clinton Elementary School]. I love those kids. This what makes me feel good, and I think it's worth it all for me. If I had to do it again, I'd do it again.

Bell (Meredith) emphasized Williams' point about the involvement of African Americans in the community today and mentioned that there is an African American on City Council [Albert Turner].

> Law, how many years ago would that have never happened? That would have never happened. So it's just a total turnaround, but I think that tells you that our town has true integration…not just the word with quotes around it. It's true that we feel, and we care, and we respect those that are around us.

Education provided to today's children was brought up often in the interviews. Williams said, "These kids got so much opportunity now, so much things now. They ain't got limitations. Keep stayin' here, stay in school, and stay in those books like I tell 'em! Stay in those books! I said, 'They'll pay you to go to school now, kids.'"

they don't take what we took back then. So I'm glad we did it for my children's good."

The things students faced during desegregation have stayed with the African Americans who were interviewed. They believed their lives had changed by virtue of their impact on the future. All knew they had made a difference in the opportunities available to children today. In the words of Williams:

> They got to do, see like I tell 'em, stay in the books, stay in the books. Let 'em [negative people] talk about you. They gonna heckle you, they gonna talk about you this and that. They gonna talk about you whether you doin' good or whether you doin' bad. They got to have something to talk about.
>
> And see, like I tell you, the day where I can't love these kids, I walk down here, say… I look you straight in the eye, I say, "I give you my notice of today." All that stuff we went through was worth it. I love these kids. I love it [his job at Clinton Elementary School].
>
> And see, then another thing, what makes me feel good about it, because at the time, I was hating, but now I can look back over my life and say, I done a great thing because I paved the way for somebody else to learn that they can make it.

Theme # 5: If History Could Repeat Itself

"History sits in judgment on each of us…First, were we truly men of courage…Second, were we truly men of judgment…Third, were we truly men of integrity…Finally, were we truly men of dedication?"

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

(qtd. at Cheekwood Museum)

The history of desegregation has recorded events that will always be remembered and some that society wishes could be forgotten. The literature and the participants in this study identified individuals who demonstrated the courage of their convictions and who were dedicated to making the "right" decisions for the "right" reasons. Honest, upright people of integrity ultimately won out over the influences that briefly tore apart the small town of Clinton, Tennessee.

If, as Santayana asserted, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, " could things have been more peaceable and the goal more easily attained? Participants in the study talked about ways in which the community might have been more willing to accept desegregation, the role of the school, and the sense of personal responsibility they felt—then and now—for the outcome. What then could have been done differently?

Thresser Caswell answered that question by saying, "Well, you know, if there's a big difference, you'd have had to change a whole lot of people.

You'd have to change a whole lot of people 'cause what's gonna be is gonna be." She explained the attitude of the African American families whose children were transported long distances to attend all-black schools:

> You look at it, you're paying taxes in Clinton. You're paying taxes in Anderson County. But you're going away somewhere else to school. That should never have been. You're passing by three schools to get to one, and I guess some people think about, well, it's that way again with the desegregation, trying to mix all the schools. And sometimes probably it is, but there's a reason for it. Like you got some schools now that the education's just not the same, so that's why they mix it up, to make sure that everybody has the same school books to use.

Participants believed the schools in general, specifically the teachers and principal, could not have done anything differently to affect the outcome. Caswell said: "I just don't see how the school could've done anything else." She thought for a minute and then added:

> I just think they ought'a put prayer back in school for one thing. I think things went off real bad when they took prayer out of schools. Just think if they hadn't had prayer in the schools then. After they took prayer out of schools, it's breakin' down the schools. It made a great big difference. Now you just think, a child say he gonna call 911 on you.

Others believed the teachers were doing all they could. According to Gail Ann Epps (Upton):

> Well, I don't think, now like you say, most teachers were nice to me. I never had one to be ugly to me. And, actually, back then they didn't know about hall monitors and security guards that they have today. And kids that, and just thank Jesus that these guys, this crazy group of kids that they got some of 'em now, that they didn't have guns like they do now, goin' in schools and shootin' up everybody. I mean it's just amazing.

Margaret Anderson declared that they had "[. . .] realized the repercussion of hatred. We can't sit back and not be very diligent." She agreed with Epps (Upton): "Looking back, if this happened today, somebody would have been killed. They would have carried guns. We didn't even think about things like that."

Several of those interviewed maintained that communication was a key component in preparing for the desegregation of Clinton High School. D. J. Brittain's description of the method for informing the community indicated a well thought-out process that involved the students, their parents, the media, and the school staff. Aside from Jerry Shattuck's mention of class meetings held in his junior year, no one seemed aware of just how they knew of the plan to desegregate in the fall of 1956. Whether they learned of desegregation through the newspaper or at church, many felt there should

have been more communication, particularly with the students and their parents.

Alfred Williams learned through the newspaper that his senior year would be spent at Clinton High School. "We didn't know it—honest truth, and when we knew anything, it was in the paper. They didn't have a meetin' or nothin' with our parents. And we knew that we was gonna be havin' to come to Clinton High School. They didn't send us nothin'."

Caswell felt, "The more preparation they had, the worse it would have got," but Epps (Upton) agreed with Williams:

> They could have had a meeting. I would say, have a meeting because those kids had never been around black people before either. Whereas, now they played with some of them, you know, like in the neighborhood here. But now as far as really playing ball and stuff like that, they never did that before. Everybody went to their own place, you know what I'm saying?
>
> Now, it just so happened that I lived all my life with white people, but they should have had a meeting and brought everybody together, black and white, and explained to them what was gonna take place and why it was taking place. Read the law to them, that what had been passed in law. So they should've brought all of us together at one place, maybe the

> school auditorium or someplace, and read that law and say what we're gonna do and we want everything to be nice, blah, blah, blah, blah. And that might've helped. Because we did, I mean, a lot of kids, we knew each other. Like I say, we'd come to each other's house, trade funny books, but we just didn't go to school together.

White students also said they learned of the impending events in the newspaper or out in the community. Patsy Bell (Meredith) said, "I was not prepared. As a person thirteen or fourteen years old, I didn't know about it. Maybe I should have, but I didn't. We played softball, and I guess we heard it either on the ball field or when we went to church. It was not discussed in my home. I don't remember it being discussed in my home until they [African American students} walked off the hill that morning."

Judge Lewallen recalled:

> We talked to the town and the people here...wondered if we shouldn't have been able to do something further prior to the opening of school. Actually, in my opinion they wouldn't have had a lot of trouble, they might have had a fistfight or two at the school house or somewhere, without John Kasper coming in here.

Others reiterated Judge Lewallen's opinion that things might have been different if Kasper had not urged the crowds to protest. Epps (Upton) said:

> When they heard this man that was coming into town and what he was doing when he first started this...had they talked to Judge Taylor at the time and they would've had somebody there keeping this crowd away in the beginning, that would've been the best thing they could have done right there.
>
> Most kids that were doing this, I imagine their parents was prejudiced, so that's where they got most of it. And then some of the kids just didn't say anything. They just didn't say anything at all. Well, they either went along with the crowd or they didn't, you know. They went on home like most kids.

Shattuck believed the absence of Kasper or the press might have made a difference: "I'll be honest with you. You cannot deprive the press of its opportunity to report the news. To me that was the pivot point. When John Kasper and those four or five people got the media attention, they just snowballed it. You can't control the press and shouldn't."

Some, such as Bill Driskill, spoke of desegregation in more global terms:

> I sort of took a somehow broader view of that or I do right now. You know in 1876, eleven years after the Civil War, the white citizens in Tennessee and practically all over the South passed a law that the black and white students could not go to school together. I'd summarize history done differently sort of.

> In my opinion, how you can believe that segregation lasted all that time? Supposedly we fought the Civil War over similar issues, but it was certainly there until the 1950s.

Bell (Meredith) also spoke what could have been done differently in terms of how history regards the South:

> Well, you know, we learn from our mistakes. I'm not sure there's a different way to do it, and the reason I say that, I think the South has been depicted as all racial violence, racial this, racial that. I really have watched a lot of a lot of places that are still not really integrated, and they don't know what they're missing. The reason I say that is because there is so much knowledge to be gained from our black community. There is so much knowledge.
>
> I went to the dedication of Green McAdoo. You know, those kids rode to Knoxville how many miles a day to try and get an education. I can't see...I don't know what you'd do if you repeated history other than to say, "We should live as one."

While those spoke of what the world might have done to change things, other participants spoke of their individual actions, each one speculating that they might have said or done something that would have made a difference. One such person who was identified as a positive force by teachers and both

white and African American students was Jerry Shattuck. Even he wondered if the situation might have been helped or hindered by his actions:

> In hindsight, I wish I had made more of an attempt to be a friend. I felt like it was important, in whatever leadership role the Student Council had, that we not get too far one way or the other...that we tried to hold this whole thing together inside the school.

Later in the interview, however, Shattuck thought more about that statement, saying:

> That [my being more of a friend} would have had no effect on what happened. It might have had a negative effect, not on me necessarily, but on those of us who were perceived as student leaders. It could have had a negative effect on some of students who were sort of on the borderline. If we had gone out of our way being friendly, we could have alienated some of the other white students. I don't know if we consciously thought out the strategy of it in our minds.

One of the more poignant suggestions of things that could have been done differently came from a teacher. Driskill said:

> Maybe our emphasis was definitely on protecting the original twelve. Protection. I know I was a teacher then, not an administrator. I became an administrator soon after, but done

> differently.... Margaret Anderson was the main one that really set out to be their friend. Maybe more should. I think I did to a certain extent, but that wasn't an announced strategy as much as I look back and say it could, because the student that I talked with recently definitely now is the kind that you could have communicated with and got his loyalty. Probably some of that existed then, and you know being a friend is different from protecting someone and being their friend, too.
>
> Knowing what perils they faced at home—we were concentrating mostly at school. During the time we didn't let people come in from outside, but protection was there. But friendship…remember we were new at that as well as they were new at that. Get them involved you know, and that's communication. That's the main thing—communication—both ways, not one way.

Two-way communication existed in June 2001 when Bill Driskill and Alfred Williams saw each other again for the first time in forty-five years. The reunion between teacher and student gave Driskill the opportunity for "history to repeat itself." The two men shook hands and began to talk about the paths their lives had taken.

Driskill took the opportunity to share with Williams the sentiments he had expressed during the interview—the wish that he had been "more of a

friend." He looked Williams straight in the eye—adult to adult, not teacher to student—and told him he thought he may have made a mistake in 1956 when his main concern was protecting the students. He apologized for "not getting to know you as a person." Williams, true to his family's teachings, responded that he knew the teachers had done their best and thanked Driskill for "caring about what happened to us."

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

"[. . .] The country seems to have sorted out who it's going to remember and what it will forget."

Cheryl Brown Henderson

(P. Williams 3)

OVERVIEW

During the course of this study, extensive literature was found regarding desegregation of public schools in the 1950s. Numerous books, stories, interviews, and internet postings have been devoted to the "Little Rock Nine" and the anniversary of the *Brown* decision. With the exception of the local media, however, the story of Clinton High School remained in the background. Why? What of the people who made history there? In an article written about the *Brown* case in 1994, Cheryl Brown Henderson, an educator and the youngest daughter of Oliver Brown, said:

> The civil rights movement was all about ordinary people who weren't necessarily on the road to Damascus. If some lent their names, others lent their backs, or their expertise or their lives. It was life-threatening work after all, so nobody did it to get their name up in lights; you did it because there was no alternative. Neither fame nor anonymity existed as issues per se—that's

> come later [. . .] You were always thinking about what would make it better for the children. (P. Williams 3)

The names of the participants in this study still aren't "up in lights" like those of the Little Rock Nine. Why? Perhaps the actions of those who were not so ordinary—Tennessee Governor Frank Clement and Arkansas Governor Orville Faubus—decided the fame or anonymity of students at Clinton and Central High Schools. The responses of the two governors could not have been more different. In September 1956 the Governor of Tennessee sent the State Police and the National Guard to Clinton to enforce the law, and in 1957 the Governor of Arkansas proclaimed "blood would run in the streets" as he closed the doors of Central High School. His flagrant violation of the law interrupted the education of hundreds of children for more than a year and garnered national and international attention. The eyes of the world also were on Clinton during the first few months of desegregation, but focused elsewhere when the troops left, the violence stopped, the schools closed only briefly, and the citizenry collectively obeyed the law of the land. Perhaps, as some of the participants in the study suggested, the notoriety of Little Rock is directly related to the extended period of unrest.

How has desegregation affected public education some forty-five years later? Following the *Brown* case, desegregation was implemented sporadically as school districts throughout the United States experimented with various options to deal with the desegregation mandate. Some states

provided funding for private schools through tuition or vouchers, and other public schools were closed while private schools were operated with state and county funds. Many school systems established magnet schools to help abolish segregated schools, although inner city schools are still predominantly minority while suburban schools tend to be mostly white.

Today, many are disillusioned about the current status of school desegregation and believe that remnants of segregation remain throughout the United States in a variety of school districts. A 1989 report prepared by the directors of the ten federally funded Desegregation Assistance Centers entitled *Resegregation of Public Schools* described three generations of desegregation efforts since the *Brown* decision (Bates 3).

The first generation focused primarily on efforts to end physical segregation and court-ordered desegregation plans. When Oliver Brown sued the Topeka Board of Education, there were substantial disparities between schools for African Americans and those for whites in regard to buildings, books, and facilities. Many people assumed these disparities would be eliminated when African Americans were given access to schools that previously had been all white (Bates 2).

White-dominated communities of the South employed various political strategies to block the physical desegregation of schools, and it was not until the late 1960s that substantial progress was made in removing segregated schools. In 1968 *Green v. County Board of Education* brought about a

dramatic change in desegregation litigation by making school boards and school officials accountable for devising a plan that worked. Following the *Green* case, numerous efforts were made by school officials to physically desegregate schools so that "white" and "Negro" schools would become extinct (Bates 2).

In 1969, after waiting fifteen years for the lower courts to execute the desegregation mandate of *Brown II*, the U. S. Supreme Court required "all school districts operating in states that had legal segregation in 1954 immediately become unitary." The standard "with all deliberate speed" was replaced with the standard of "immediately," and the Court was unconcerned with the method used, be it rezoning, busing, or any other means to achieve desegregation without further delay (D. Alexander and K. Alexander 418).

As the movement to desegregate schools continued, there arose a second generation of desegregation problems centered around inequities within the schools themselves rather than between separate schools. Educational issues such as unequal access to classrooms and programs and the disproportionately high rate of suspensions and drop-out rates among minority students were among the concerns cited by African Americans. In addition to segregation by race, in-school segregation also occurred according to gender and national origin. Many of the second generation problems continue to plague schools today (Bates 2).

Issues of school desegregation also have a third generation of problems related to equal learning opportunities and student outcomes, and questions have arisen regarding academic tracking, over-identification of special education students, and under-enrollment in advanced placement classes. In the era of heightened accountability, data driven models have focused on teacher effect, and third generation issues are believed to be closely related to teacher attitudes and expectations of minority students. As a result of these continuous problems, some educational researchers have concluded that we have come full circle and are now in the process of "resegregating" America's Public Schools (Bates 2).

U. S. Supreme Court rulings in the 1990s favored a reduction in court-ordered remedies for civil rights issues and racial patterns. Decisions handed down included one allowing school districts to return to segregated neighborhood schools since housing patterns were segregated. Another permitted school districts to discontinue integration plans despite efforts to achieve "voluntary desegregation" by making schools more attractive and more equal educationally because the desired results had not been attained (Orfield 4).

Education in America's public schools continues to be scrutinized, criticized, and held accountable for all of society's ills and some of society's successes. The fact remains: "The school touches everyone's life; sometimes it seems to be everyone's business and no one's responsibility, but public

education is still a keystone of democracy (Dykeman and Stokely, *Neither Black Nor White* 170). This was true in 1956 when the events at Clinton High School touched everyone's life and became the business of the entire state and country. The actions of these leaders—the African American and white students, a minister, mothers and fathers, the mayor—have stayed in the hearts and mind of those who shared their stories.

The findings and conclusions of this study were imbedded in each of the thematic presentations identified: *Values and Beliefs*; *Leaders, Antagonists, and Everyday Heroes*; *Personal Benchmarks*; *Looking at the Past and Present*; and *If History Could Repeat Itself*. Participants revealed stories and experiences that impacted the community, as well as the lives of the individuals involved in the desegregation of Clinton High School.

FINDINGS

A strong set of values and beliefs were evident throughout the interviews as all participants spoke of obeying the law and "doing the right thing." Each person attributed their attitudes and behaviors to the expectations set forth by their families. The participants stated that community relationships had been good, but deteriorated after the court-ordered desegregation.

Those who influenced desegregation in Clinton, Tennessee were identified as leaders, antagonists, or everyday heroes. All participants spoke of the important role played by community leaders and educators who made

things better for the children. They cited specific individuals and groups of people who either supported or resisted desegregation efforts. All believed the conflict in Clinton was largely influenced by non-residents whose inflammatory speeches incited people to action. They attributed the growing number of protestors to these "outsiders" and identified John Kasper as the person most responsible for leading the resistance movement in Clinton.

Press coverage of the initial desegregation and the later bombing of Clinton High School was believed by some to increase the size and intensity of the protest. Participants felt residents of the community would have handled desegregation of the high school in a more peaceful, accepting manner had it not been for outside influences.

Many felt that the involvement of various law enforcement agencies, including the local home guard, directly affected the degree to which the protest escalated. The literature and the interviews indicated that the presence of the Tennessee State police, National Guard, and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) did much to curtail the violence and restore peace to the community.

Throughout the interviews, participants recalled specific incidents, both good and bad, that were personal benchmarks for them. While each person expressed his or her personal memories, certain events were remembered by the entire group. All knew exactly where they were or what they were doing when the National Guard arrived in Clinton, and all had vivid recollections of

the African Americans' long walk down the hill to the high school. Emotions such as fear, hate, and prejudice formed the foundation for many of the experiences related in this theme.

In examining the past and present, participants related how their lives had changed as a result of their experiences. African American students spoke of exclusion from every school related activity with the exception of attending classes. They expressed regret that they missed out on athletic events, dances, and other extra-curricular activities they would have enjoyed at Austin High School. Without exception, all participants said their experiences resulted in self-examination of their own actions and attitudes.

The findings in the theme, *If History Could Repeat Itself*, revealed the need for more communication in order to better prepare the students, staff, and community for desegregation. White students and teachers interviewed also spoke of getting to know African American students better and on a more personal level.

CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to generalize findings in a historical study for several reasons. First, and perhaps most important, the researcher is seldom able to study the entire population of individuals who participated in a specific event. They may have moved to a different location, be deceased or ill, or simply chose not to participate in a study of this nature. Even if all participants could be located and were willing to be interviewed, time constraints would prohibit

in-depth interviews with such large numbers of primary sources. Secondly, data collection was obtained only from the samples that remain from the past, and it is likely that certain documents were missing or could not be located. Finally, the available archives and population may not be representative of all the possible sources that did exist (Fraenkel and Wallen 439).

Even though it is hard to generalize, it was concluded that the ordinary people in Clinton—people like Alfred Williams, Buford Lewallen, Jerry Shattuck, Margaret Anderson, Gail Ann Epps, Horace Wells, Bobby Cain, Paul Turner, and D. J. Brittain—"did the right thing" according to their own definition. They obeyed the law and paved the way for their children and their children's children to have equal access to education. These values and beliefs served as an anchor during the turbulent times that occurred.

Adherence to the law provided the framework for community and personal benchmarks that would never be forgotten. The judicial system played an important part in the desegregation of Clinton High School, from Judge Robert Taylor's order for immediate desegregation to the Anderson County Court's acquittal of John Kasper. These judicial actions amplified tension in the community, even though the timing of Judge Taylor's ruling coincided with that of the *Brown* decision. His order to desegregate Clinton High School in the fall of 1956 preceded rulings issued in other school districts where desegregation was postponed.

The responsibility for accomplishing desegregation was shared by leaders and everyday heroes—a principal and teachers who were simply doing their jobs; attorneys who had sworn to uphold the laws of the land; and a newspaper editor who believed it was up to him to educate and inform the public even if the paper suffered financially. Still others assumed responsibility, not by the virtue of their profession, but by the courage of their convictions. The weight of the world fell on the shoulders of twelve young African Americans for whom "[. . .] the event and the moment had met with rare fortuitousness" (Dykeman and Stokely, *Neither Black Nor White* 353).

Although many positively affected the outcome of the desegregation movement in Clinton, it can be concluded that other forces had a negative impact on the community. The involvement of the KKK, the White Citizens Council, and "outsiders" such as John Kasper and Asa Carter inspired a group of citizens who might otherwise have remained quiet.

As the participants reflected on their lives then and now, it became evident that each had been placed in situations in which they served as an example to others. Their stories led this researcher to the conclusion that all had learned how to deal with prejudice, fear, and even anger. They learned how to overcome adversity and paved the way for others to live again in harmony.

By revisiting the events surrounding the desegregation of Clinton High School, educators and leaders can learn from past mistakes. The court order

forcing the desegregation of Clinton High School resulted in a reactionary stance on the part of the school system. In retrospect, the speed with which the school administration was forced to act left little time for planning and proactive measures.

It was concluded that the superintendent and Board of Education delegated the primary responsibility for desegregation to the principal, D. J. Brittain. Also, the entire educational hierarchy did not share fully in the day to day implementation or in the long term planning for desegregation. The lack of communication, planning, and teamwork resulted in a decreased focus on educational programs and increased responsibility for dealing with school safety and outside influences that created more problems for the high school principal and his staff.

As in other cities, desegregation had an immediate impact on Clinton and its citizens. Friends became enemies, African American and white children no longer played together, and peace and quiet was replaced by acts of violence that were reported nationally. A positive impact was seen in the resurgence of community unity as the minister of an all-white church and a newspaper editor set the tone for acceptance. The city of Oak Ridge loaned a school facility to their arch rival, Clinton, and donations to build a new school came from across the United States. Desegregation became integration as African American students joined in school activities, and friendships were formed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The long-term impact the desegregation of Clinton High School had on the community is a topic for further study. Determination of current attitudes toward desegregation would require investigation of conditions such as job opportunities, social interaction, and community involvement, and housing patterns in Clinton.

The role of the local and state leaders set the tone for the implementation of desegregation. A comparison of the leadership styles and backgrounds of Governors Clement and Faubus, as well how their decisions affected the outcome of desegregation in each state, are issues for future study.

What became of John Kasper and the effect his presence had on desegregation in other cities present topics for further study. The degree of involvement of other segregationists in locations other than Clinton may serve to reinforce or refute the belief that outside influences made desegregation more difficult to accomplish.

A more extensive look at the role and experiences of various groups involved in the events occurring in Clinton, including the national and local news media, law enforcement agencies, and the judicial system also merit further study. If the media's attention to the events in 1956 created more unrest, how would today's instantaneous coverage change the course of events? The extent to which the involvement of the *Clinton Courier-News*

editor, Horace V. Wells, influenced the events in Clinton warrants investigation. A study of Wells' role in comparison to the editors and journalists in other cities that were implementing desegregation may prove interesting.

Law enforcement and the actions of the court offer other topics for future study. Detailed reports of the FBI investigation, available through the *Freedom of Information Act*, would provide an additional perspective to this study. A study of Federal Judge Robert Taylor—his family background, political aspirations, and the proceedings in his courtroom beginning with the *McSwain* case—may provide insight into the motives behind his decision.

For the purpose of this study, no effort was made to contact those who the literature identified as opposing the desegregation of Clinton High School. The beliefs and experiences of those individuals certainly would provide more diverse information, and the findings would reflect both sides of the issue. It also would be advantageous if all of the original twelve African American students who are still living could be interviewed.

It would be of interest to study the extent of student acceptance and involvement in school activities in those districts where desegregation occurred in the elementary years rather than at the high school level. Desegregation implemented with younger children might have presented different problems and solutions, and the long-term effects on race relations and the quality of education may have produced other results.

The issue of "resegregation" warrants a closer look at the more overt indicators of school inequity. More subtle nuances of segregation that may exist in schools today, such as grouping, program placement, and disciplinary action present a wide variety of topics for investigation.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Memories of the events that occurred in Clinton, Tennessee in the 1950s were etched in the mind of an impressionable young child who did not know the meaning of the word "desegregation." The child is now an adult for whom the definition has taken on a much broader meaning. As the study progressed, new memories became firmly entrenched in the mind of a person responsible for the education of young children.

Because of the experiences of the participants, this researcher is more aware of segregation in the 1950s and in the twenty-first century. This study has resulted in a renewed personal commitment toward recognizing and preventing "re-segregation" of students with regard to educational opportunities and programs within the curriculum.

Those who were a part of the desegregation of Clinton High School shared their stories and unknowingly influenced the attitudes of an educator. Again the person and the event have "met with rare fortuitousness" as the researcher embarked upon a journey that led to a renewal of beliefs and values and contact with people who forever would touch the heart and mind of

this writer. One such person was Alfred Williams. When asked if there was anything else he thought was important for people to know, Williams said:

> You know what sticks out in my mind and makes me feel good is to see how the kids are gettin' along today. That's what makes me feel good. That makes my heart so much lighter, makes me so happy to see how they can get along. You watch 'em out there on that playground out there, black and white, how they play.

Today, next door to where Clinton High School once was located, Alfred Williams can be found on the playground or in the hallways of Clinton Elementary School. In the same school he was not allowed to attend as a child, Williams is always surrounded by children who admire and respect him. That makes everyone's heart so much lighter and the voices of educators so much more determined to "do the right thing" for children.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE OF PROJECT: *WORDS OF DISCRIMINATION, VOICES OF DETERMINATION: REFLECTIONS ON THE DESEGREGATION OF CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Lana C. Seivers
Doctoral Student - Department of Educational Administration and Cultural Studies
College of Education, University of Tennessee
106 Lakeview Lane
Clinton, Tennessee 37716

Date

Dear

I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, and the topic of my dissertation is the desegregation and bombing of Clinton High School. At this time, there are few publications that provide an account of the events in Clinton, and it is important that the experiences of those who were directly involved in the desegregation and who are still living today are documented and recorded.

You are identified in the publications I have read as a student or faculty member at Clinton High School between 1956 and 1958. The purpose of this letter is to request a one to one and one-half hour interview with you to

discuss your experiences. Your participation in this study will contribute to the understanding of the desegregation events and will provide a more accurate historical record.

While it is difficult to foresee all potential risks to you regarding this study, the topic is a potentially emotional one and may be considered controversial by some. You may benefit from the opportunity to talk about your experiences during the desegregation of Clinton High School. Discussing the barriers and hurdles you encountered and surpassed may provide a sense of personal accomplishment.

In order to ensure minimal risks to you, complete anonymity is guaranteed. If you wish to be identified by name as one of the participants in the study, you may indicate your desire to do so in the space provided at the end of this letter. At any time prior to completion of the study, you may change your request and wish to remain anonymous. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to stop the interview at any point. You may refuse to answer any question you find objectionable, and you may withdraw from the study at any time throughout the process.

If you agree to talk with me, you will be interviewed in person when your schedule permits at the location of your choice. With your permission, all interviews will be audio-taped, and I will transcribe the tapes. A copy of the transcribed interview will be forwarded to you so that you can make

corrections, additions, or deletions. Upon completion of your review of the transcript, the audio tape will be destroyed.

The issue of criminal activity will not be addressed in the interview. If during our conversation, the topic turns to one in which the names of those involved in such activities are divulged, the tape recorder will be turned off. Any information pertaining to criminal activities will not be included in this study.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are giving your consent to use all or part of the transcript in the researcher's dissertation and/or future publications. If you would like to receive a copy of the study, one will be sent to you upon its completion. Finally, you may contact me at any time if you have any questions or concerns about this study or your participation in it.

Sincerely,

Lana C. Seivers
106 Lakeview Lane
Clinton, Tennessee 37716-3405
(865) 457-0103

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have read the above description and explanation of the study. I understand the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, and my role in the research. I specifically understand that my actual name will not be used, and I agree to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Name (Printed) Date

_____

Signature

I have read the above description and explanation of the study. I understand the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, and my role in the research. I agree to participate in the study and specifically give permission to the researcher to use my actual name in the study. I understand that at any time throughout the process I may decide not to have my name used and can remain anonymous.

_____ _____

Name (Printed) Date

_____

Signature

VITA

Lana Carmen Seivers was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on December 2, 1950. She attended public school in the Clinton City Schools in grades one through eight at North Clinton and Clinton Elementary Schools and high school in the Anderson County Schools, graduating from Clinton High School in 1968. In May 1972 she graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science degree and later earned a Master of Science degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Beginning in August 1972 she was employed as a teacher and administrator in the Oak Ridge Schools in Oak Ridge, Tennessee until her appointment as superintendent of the Clinton City Schools in Clinton, Tennessee in July 1988. She receives the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration and Cultural Studies in May 2002.

She is presently Director of Schools in Clinton and has served as Chair of the Tennessee Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools; SACS Executive Board; Governor's Advisory Council for the Education of Children With Disabilities appointed by Governors McWherter and Sundquist; Superintendents' Study Council Executive Committee representing East Tennessee; Board of Directors for the Association of Independent and Municipal Schools (AIMS); and treasurer of the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS).

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