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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Nicholas Scott Mariner entitled "'People Who Look Like Me': Community, Space and Power in a Segregated East Tennessee School." I have examined the final electronic 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 Philosophy, with a major in Education.

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"People Who Look Like Me": Community, Space and Power in a Segregated East Tennessee School

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
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Nicholas Scott Mariner
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For Owen and Lily

two beautiful souls
who give all my work meaning
daddy loves you so

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

This Cultural Studies dissertation comes from extended research on three East Tennessee school districts as they attempted to integrate after the Supreme Court mandated an end to segregation in the United States. The study focuses on the experiences of former students of Austin High School, the segregated black school on the eastern edge of Knoxville, Tennessee. From looking at their schooling experiences in the context of the area's failed attempts to integrate, I address the myriad ways these participants and white citizens took up the term community to advance or block integration efforts. Community, I argue from this research, is a socially constructed discourse situated in a specific context of power that can simultaneously empower and oppress targeted groups in its creation. This study that centers on the stories of alumni of Austin High shows the negotiation of local power as defined through the efforts to maintain geographically separate spaces for each race in their schools and neighborhoods. In my research, I developed a methodology called historical ethnography to address these questions. By employing a historical ethnographic approach, I attempted to show that the history of education must take into account that schooling is not an experience *lived* and *remembered*, but one that is *continually relived* in every act of remembering. Therefore, it is not a standard historical account of a segregated school. It is an interdisciplinary exploration of how power can be recreated in schools through claims to community and how my participants engaged that power still in recounting their own school experiences.

Preface

A researcher should be clear about where she or he is in the work, to locate passions and positions in the stories told and to embrace this connection for its impact on the interpretation one is capable of presenting (Goodall, 2000). With this in mind, I would like to present a brief narrative of myself as the researcher, to highlight how I came to be interested in issues of school segregation and what life experiences guide my commitment to the research on segregated education presented below. The purpose of this opening tale is to offer the inaugural point of reflexivity that remained a constant part of the research process (Pillow, 2003). From the interviews with participants who passionately shared their school-day memories to the hours logged in archival research, the life story I provide here guided me to specific questions asked, allowing the study to be not only one of historical discovery, but also of self-discovery and re-discovery. Though not always revelatory, the intimate connection between self and research, between text and emotion, produced a worthwhile study of education, space and identity that others will, I hope, find valuable herein.

I grew up in a small, predominantly white, middle to upper middle class village, a suburb of a much larger industrial city inhabited by mostly minorities and having high rates of poverty. Upon reflection, I have come to terms with how profoundly impacted my conceptions of the world were from the separate spaces of *de facto* segregation, living in a community with little to no minority presence due to white flight and economic barriers like housing prices and

commercial opportunities. I willingly rejected the overt racism espoused by my parents and grandparents, which for me masked my ability to recognize the ways in which I still formed unfair notions of race due primarily to lack of exposure to diversity and the trappings of the grand narratives of white privilege. That is to say, as long as I knew I was not actively expressing bigotry, I was able to assume that I was, by default, not racist.

My research, then, is an attempt to come to terms with how the spatial separation of races is so integral in the perpetuation of race narratives and destructive to the practice of education. Throughout my formative education, I was always aware of the schools "over there," the high-minority, high-poverty city schools across town. We would talk about what these schools were like, what kind of students went there and teachers taught there, why the education was so "bad," their test scores so low, and how dangerous daily life there could possibly be. Of course, we were making assumptions not based on experience but based on our predetermined metanarratives provided to us through growing up in our privileged enclave. The few interactions we actually had with these schools (mostly sporting events) then worked as reifying events for our own assumptions. It was not until I headed into one of these schools as a teacher in training that I was able to disrupt my long-held conceptions of the school, but I was still able to find shadows of these same dominant stories in the schools themselves, mostly from the predominantly white teacher base.

Of course, even with an awareness of my own racial construction and a hope to address it through the research, I still come to this study as a white, majoritarian researcher, a benefactor of white, patriarchal privilege. To do this study, I wish to keep racial identity at the forefront of its

intersections of class and gender to avoid reinforcing the majoritarian narrative that racism, especially like that of Jim Crow segregation, is a thing of the past (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002). To do so, I am choosing to rely on narrative and storytelling. Much in the same way that I have just presented my story to conceptualize my own racial identity, this study will revolve around the stories collected of the participants to present their own particular racial constructions. Stories can be tales of community, of sameness and shared meaning. They also provide the opportunity to subvert, to make clear the arbitrariness of our systems, values and constructions (Delgado, 2000). Privileging the stories of the students who attended an all-black high school allows me, as a white scholar, to access these stories of suffering, hope and victory, and to allow the participants to guide the presentation of their own lives while acknowledging the role I play in producing the final written product. This approach will be central to defining the direction of my study.

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Chapter One
Introduction

When the Civil War ended and the South rejoined the Union, four million black[1] slaves found themselves suddenly free. One of the central difficulties facing this new population of freedmen throughout the South was the issue of schooling. Public education for blacks in the South was a project began by missionary societies as early as the liberation of Port Royal off the coast of South Carolina in 1862. Negro education projects then became official federal policy under Johnson in 1865 with the creation of the Freedman's Bureau (Du Bois, 1935; Butchart, 1980; Foner, 1988). Large planters and wealthy whites feared a literate black population while other reformers advocated a basic education for former slaves as a means of reinvigorating a crumbled agrarian economy. Throughout the vigorous debate, education, or more specifically public schooling, policies and laws funneled Southern schools toward one critical characteristic that persisted throughout the Jim Crow era: segregated spaces.

The discourse of education for blacks from the end of the Civil War to the movement for desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s started from this position of separate educational systems. Black education reformers debated the intent of Negro[2] education, from pragmatic industrial

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[1] I am choosing to use "black" and "African American" in this dissertation interchangeably, mirroring the language of the participants, who used both. "African American" was usually used when discussing specific people and institution, where as "black" was used for more general discussion of race.

[2] I have also chosen in appropriate instances to use the term "Negro" to reflect the discourse of the late-

education to higher-order learning for the next generation of black leaders. Education scholars and historians worked to draw attention to the negative impact of segregated schools, pointing to the drastic disparity between the quality of resources available in white schools and their black counterparts. At the center of these scholarly movements was an Afrocentric intent that focused on the proper way to "lift up the black race" through a culturally specific education.

Schools in the South remained *de jure* segregated from the period of Reconstruction until 1954, when the United States Supreme Court handed down their decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The decision overturned the half-century old standard of "separate but equal" by recognizing that separate, by its very nature, was unequal. The following year, responding to slow and resistant integration processes, the Supreme Court followed with a second *Brown* decision, ordering schools in all states with official segregation policies to overturn those laws and desegregate "with all deliberate speed." Although the language of the decision was vague and ineffective, the process of desegregation in cities and towns throughout the South[3] became a sometimes unifying, sometimes divisive issue in the black community and its supporters and a stage on which the racial tensions remaining in the South manifested with varying degrees of intensity.

The purpose of this study is to analyze one particular example of a segregated black school and the role the separate educational spaces in the context of Jim Crow, a term used to

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nineteenth-century thinkers on race and education when discussing it in this context.

[3] This study is specifically about schools in East Tennessee, so most of the literature reviewed will pertain to Southern education. I will not discuss those works looking at Negro education in the North, although there is work available on the topic. (Franklin, 1979; Horton, 1993)

identify the legal subjugation of blacks in the South, played in forming notions of race, community and power. Austin High School remained legally segregated until 1969, when the district merged the students into nearby East High School to participate in the district's integration efforts. Even then, integration as a project failed to occur in this new school and throughout the area. I have selected Austin High as a cite of the construction of community that occurred during the era of segregated schooling in the South. I used archival evidence and interviews with a small group of the school's former students to focus on this one segregated school in the South and supplemented this story with my analysis of the public discourse around desegregation throughout East Tennessee. I intend to argue, as many previous scholars have suggested, how community identity and membership is socially constructed and performed around shared values, actions and material markers (Noddings, 1996; Abowitz, 1999; Hooks, 2003). I attempt to extend this observation, however, by arguing that the process of constructing community is necessarily coupled with notions of race and power, which often intersect with class, gender and sexuality, in ways that can simultaneously empower and oppress targeted groups. In this study, the constructions emerged within a spatial context in which the physical and political geography in the framework of Jim Crow segregation defined the possibilities of inter-group interaction. This historical ethnography, I believe, can be extended to address the larger question of space, community and power that continues to have profound implications on the field of United States education. Before I may present these ideas, however, I must first highlight the literature available on segregated education to establish a need for such a study to

occur.

The Afrocentric Movement: Early Negro Educational Thought

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the debate over education for the Negro race in the United States persisted between black intellectuals and reformers, white landowners, and state and local educational institutions and school boards. Before the movement began to reveal the inequity resulting from segregated schools, this debate centered around the proper mode of education to be made available and to be pursued by blacks in the North and South. In this section, I present the two trends of thought for black education advocated at the time, that of Booker T. Washington's industrial education and W.E.B. Du Bois's intellectual education for future leadership. Then, I will analyze the importance of their work through subsequent educational writings and the secondary analysis of their contributions by other historians. I will end by briefly addressing how a concern with these two schools of thought for black education in the South will inform my own analysis of Austin High[4].

The most influential black educational leader in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth was Booker T. Washington. Born a slave in Franklin County, Virginia, he spent his entire life working in the South to create and promote a better standard of life for freed people and a more amicable relationship between whites and blacks. His thinking about the potential of education came from the industrial training he sought out as a young man at the Hampton Normal and

[4] Throughout this study I will refer to Austin High School primarily as Austin High.

Agricultural Institute (Washington, 1901). Samuel Chapman Armstrong established the Hampton Institute as a place of "racial education," based on the understanding that blacks were not capable of rigorous academic work and should instead focus on a career in trade that would be a less obtrusive path into assimilation in American life. Under his tutelage, Washington quickly distinguished himself as an outstanding pupil (Morgan, 1995).

Washington, as a result, viewed such an industrial education as the most promising approach to black education in the South. Education for labor supplied the basic foundation on which one could build a lasting, passionate character. In his autobiography, Washington wrote that "I not only learned that it was not a disgrace to labor, but learned to love labor, not alone for its financial value, but for labor's own sake and for the independence and self-reliance which the ability to do something which the world wants done brings" (p. 54). Using this commitment to labor and self-reliance, Washington founded the Tuskegee Institute in 1881 as a normal school for the training of teachers in the industrial model.

Washington almost immediately found himself on opposing ends of a philosophical and practical debate about the reality and possibility of black education with many academic leaders, including the founders of the American Negro Academy (ANA), the first "learned society" for black intellectuals (Moss, Jr., 1981; Norrell, 2009). The ANA remained small in its twenty-seven year existence, but its membership included some of the leading race advocates and scholars at the turn of the century, most notably Washington's outspoken critic, Atlanta University professor William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. W.E.B. Du Bois argued for a higher-level education to be

given to the most promising black students that would act as future leaders of the race. These new intellectuals, what he called the Talented Tenth, would support the race by then teaching future generations, creating a cycle of more independent, more capable Negro men and women (Du Bois, 1903). Only through the process of educating men[5] could the black race elevate itself. Therefore, to Du Bois, the efforts of industrial education proposed by other proponents like Booker T. Washington allowed blacks to earn wages but led them to be nothing more than wage-earners. Instead, education should be about creating a standard of manhood capable of guiding men to the necessary attributes of autonomous work. He posited, "intelligence, broad sympathy, knowledge of the world that was and is, and of the relation of men to it — this is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true life" (p. 33). To understand his position on education, it is essential to discuss his racial ontology, as well.

In 1903, Du Bois also published his most lasting and influential treatise on black life in America. In the forethought of *The Souls of Black Folk*, he wrote that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the color-line" (p. vii). Blacks in the United States lived with a double-consciousness, forced to identify both as Americans and as Negroes. Using the imagery of the Veil, he lamented the conditions that impaired whites from understanding the Negro and the Negro from understanding himself. Most importantly, Du Bois defined an Afrocentric essentialism in for blacks in the United States, a definition of a common struggle against racism

[5] "Men" would be the term most often used by Du Bois in his own writing. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the works of others who critique the low presence of women in Du Bois's writing and in historians' analysis of his life and works.

and oppression that transcended geography and class and appealed to the metaphysical unity of all people with black skin.

He devoted a chapter in *Souls of Black Folk* specifically to addressing the industrial model of education put forth by Booker T. Washington. Washington's positions, according to Du Bois, were at best misguided half-truths. His views fell short by defining self-reliance and autonomy as thrift and hard work. To Du Bois, the Negro could not possibly achieve the measure of an American man unless endowed with basic rights like suffrage and civic equality. The goal of education, then, should be one of equality, and it should be demanded at an engaged level until granted. His most central critique of Washington's position was that it placed the burden of the Negro problem on the shoulders of the Negro himself. Education, and by extension race relations, would be incomplete until recognized as a national problem that required absolution, not navigation (p. 58).

Historians and education scholars have debated the relative merits of the models proposed by Du Bois and Washington for decades. For education research, the interpretation of their impact has the potential to define the appropriate course for considering race in schooling. Because of the added weight of this approach, scholars initially rejected Washington as Du Bois did, as at best an enigmatic political opportunist and at worst an Uncle Tom accommodationist (Harlan, 1972; Carroll, 2006). Even his most accomplished biographer, Louis R Harlan (1972) prefaces the successes and failures of Washington by describing his role in black education as erudite politicking devoid of ideal or principle, an onion that when peeled further and further

reveals that the center is nothing profound, or worse, nothing at all. In response, other scholars have completed some compelling recovery work on the life and efforts of Washington. Adam Fairclough (2001) argued that Washington's skillful politics helped an entire race survive disfranchisement and unyielding white supremacy to sustain its educational institutions and eventually come together to challenge Jim Crow (p. 18). Robert Norrell (2009) went beyond excusing Washington's anachronistic appeasement of the white race to herald the hope and optimism he exuded as the true progenitor of the modern Civil Rights Movement, only to be obscured by an inappropriate politicization of historical interpretation by later generations. In this sense, Washington's value as a black leader at the turn of the twentieth century is the subject of an exhaustive reclamation by historians who wish to view him as the most appropriate guide for an entire race one generation removed from slavery, regardless of the applicability of his message to twenty-first century educational needs.

If the academic haranguing of Washington has subsided recently, so, too, has the celebration of Du Bois's racial and educational thought as the guidepost for interracial understanding in some historical interpretation. Although he lambasted Washington in his work for avoiding political activism in education reform, historians have recently pointed to his own failures in that arena. Cally L. Waite (2001) revised the Du Bois narrative by focusing instead on the women who informed and carried out his ideas. To Waite, Du Bois's work was largely theoretical and women like Mary Church Terrell, Anna Julia Cooper and Ida Wells-Barnett led the most significant and lasting efforts to put the Talented Tenth into place. Waite's argument

importantly indicates an increased need for engagement with the intersectionality of identities occurring in the dialogue around race in segregated schools, as the discourse and activism developed in an era steeped in firmly defined mores around gender, class and sexuality, as well.

Other scholars move beyond the voices left out of the narrative and critique the lasting impact of *Souls of Black Folk* and its interpretation. Thomas Holt (1990) continued to focus on the importance of Du Bois's work in advancing racial equality, but reminded readers that Du Bois himself moved beyond his position in *Souls* to confront new trends in thought coming to the United States like Marxism and Freudianism. Given his own personal intellectual evolution, Holt argued that Du Bois's writing at the turn of the century should be regarded as anachronistically as Washington's accommodationist agenda, as an understanding of Negro existence manifest of 1903 specifically. Adolph Reed, Jr. (1992) also warned against the historical specificity of *Souls,* pointing to the various ways it has been used to sustain a misguided Afrocentric campaign. According to Reed, scholars cite Du Bois as evidence of an essence of experience for blacks in the United States without verifying contemporary evidence of the same universalism he proposed. Should such an attempt be made, it would be clear that such an essentialism no longer exists and harms efforts at effective racial analysis.

The historiography of Negro education at the turn of the twentieth century reveals the political implications for the historical interpretation of its intellectual roots. For instance, Booker T. Washington's industrial education emphasized thrift and self-reliance, but did so at the cost of losing the importance of his contributions to generations of historians who labeled him as

an accommodationist to advance more politically engaged racial theory. But those historians like Robert Norrell who seek to recuperate Washington by positioning him as the essential forebear of the Civil Rights spirit leave out the importance of the Afrocentric metanarrative provided by Du Bois that structured most of the discourse of that movement sixty years later. A study of segregated education, like the one I offer here of Austin High School, must take into account how these two educational approaches often worked in tandem. Industrial model curricula existed alongside a notion of community based in a shared essence, a unity produced through common struggle, and one that often intersected with other identities, gender and class, in particular. Whereas Du Bois and Washington promoted educational philosophies that seemed diametrically opposed in their time, students and teachers took up both charges in the daily practice of pushing against Jim Crow. Having argued for the necessity of negotiating the tension between the approaches to segregated education in a historical study, I will now move on to address the various works available describing the education of blacks in the South during the era of Jim Crow.

Segregated Education in the South

Early commentary on black schooling came from black scholars assessing the quality of education impacting the Negro in the seventy years following the Emancipation Proclamation. Carter G. Woodson (1933) drew from his experiences as an educator and a "highly educated negro" (as he sardonically uses quotations) to condemn the overall mission of black education in

the United States. To Woodson, the current process of racial uplift, the typical public discourse of the era, failed if only using census criteria of educated blacks to gauge its success. He noted that "if they are of the wrong kind the increase in numbers will be a disadvantage rather than an advantage" (p. *xi*). The problem of black education, the mis-education, came from the persistence of ethnocentric curricula for black students that colonizes and conforms their mind to white principles. When returning to their own communities, they come with little value of their neighbors or hope for their ability to succeed. According to Woodson, the only solution possible was for blacks to uplift themselves.

Horace Mann Bond (1934) echoed Woodson's sentiment by illustrating the various ways in which black schools lack proper economic stimulation to elevate their promise to properly educate blacks. He lamented the American social order that will forever position the black citizen not as an American but as an "American Negro" (p. 8), and advocated for coordinated social planning within black communities to resist institutional oppression. His work was far more practical than Woodson's though. While Carter Woodson struck out philosophically against social stratification through improper education, Bond guided education reformers by offering renewed suggestions for improving the system. These suggestions include resource allocation, intense training, and individual lesson plans for testing intelligence and planning vocational courses.

Bond and Woodson departed in other critical areas. Bond firmly believed in the potential for education if black schools had properly trained educators and adequate resources. He

supported his point by meticulously comparing the funding, education levels of teachers and access to resources between white and black schools in the South. Woodson argued that economic stimulation by increased funding and resources could not solve a pernicious curriculum of subordination. This curriculum, he stated, maintains black inferiority:

> If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. (Woodson, p. 84)

Woodson launched vitriolic attacks against accomodationist black leaders, striving for equality when available and supporting segregation when necessary. Bond praised the ground work laid by previous advocates like Booker T. Washington. "American democracy," he claims, "has had no greater triumph for its theory of equalitarianism than the rise of the little Virginia slave boy to a lasting place in the history of the Nation" (Bond, p. 126). In these ways, Bond and Woodson engaged in their writing a debate over the place of blacks in the social order that positioned practical reform and intellectual uplift as opposing forces using discourse similar to the works of Washington and Du Bois.

Professional historians and academics expanded the work of revealing institutional inequality between black and white schools, as well. Coming from the C. Vann Woodward school of Southern history, Louis Harlan (1958) wrote in *Separate and Unequal* that white leaders in the South, like those on the Southern Education Board, "argued that public education would increase the productivity and income of white Southerners and destroy the economic basis

of racial discrimination" (p. *xvii*). These white leaders invested in white schools over black schools, instigating a massive education gap and placing unrealistic pressure on a single institution for addressing social malady. The villain in his tale was racism and the moral bankruptcy of whites who employed it:

> Educational reform within the context of racism partook of racism, whatever may be the long-range effect of expanded education on white attitudes. Discrimination in education was a cancerous growth that fed on reform. The Southern Education Board's sympathetic and gentle approach to the race issue in Southern public education lacked the moral firmness of such a movement as Gandhi's Soul Force, and was therefore weakened by compromise. (p. 269)

The cancerous growth of discrimination, in this sense, did not just subjugate blacks through poorly funded schools, but it also sabotaged political efforts to boost *all* education through tax initiatives through a ground-swell of resistance by whites who willingly rejected their own interests to maintain an uneducated, immobile class of black laborers. Certainly Negro schools in the South were far more starved for proper funding than white schools, but by through rejection of measures that could provide more funding to local schools, white Southern schools still trailed their Northern counterparts significantly. Harlan expanded earlier studies that focused specifically on the failure to properly fund black education in the South to illuminate how politics ensconced in the language of racial hierarchy worked to the detriment of *all* Southern education, another long-lasting legacy of Jim Crow.

Donald Spivey (1978) added to the interpretation of educational *funding* as social control by focusing on the expansion of industrial education in the South. These industrial schools, he

argued, managed to keep freed blacks in their place, and one "should not have to conjure up an elaborate conspiracy theory to understand why industrial education received full support from Northern industrialists who had economic interests in the South" (p. *x*). The leaders of the Freedman's Bureau and education reformers pursued their industrial education plans through Spivey's research by resting on the wide-spread assumption that the "newly emancipated people were a childlike people, inferior and unable to fend for themselves" (p. 5).

According to Ronald Butchart (1980), identifying control of the modes of production from Northern interests to a disfranchised class of Southern blacks does not necessarily indicate an overt, universal goal of domination by all whites funding black schools. He argued instead that many of the schools started by philanthropic groups like the American Missionary Association maintained modest funding and altruistic goals for the Freedmen, despite the fact that Reconstruction in the South required the internalization of an entirely new system of being for blacks, meaning free from chattel slavery but still submissive to a capitalist-planter hierarchy. The real failure of Freedman's Bureau schools came from a misinterpretation of the needs of four million newly freed Americans. The construction of schools was an inappropriate first measure in the South because of the depth of racism and rapidly industrializing capitalism in the South, overlooking more immediate goals for discernible power like land-ownership. He quipped that, "although they [the Freedmen's Schools] conclusively proved the intellectual equality of Afro-Americans, and inadvertently disproved education's role in mobility, equality, or liberty, few Americans noticed either lesson" (p. 10).

These authors offer explanations of institutional oppression in various and colorful ways that interpret the relationship between the reform movements of those holding power within their professional spheres, for instance school boards and black intellectuals, and an overarching theme of violent embodied and systemic racism and committed segregation. These interpretations still give us a great deal from which to draw, and their illustrations of racist institutions are detailed and effective. However, *racism* is commonly the assumed beginning point of each. Illustrations of institutional oppression provide a frame for understanding the context of schooling, and segregated school spaces were perhaps the most intense expression of racial discrimination in Southern education. But the work of institutional oppression maintains a macro-level interpretation without recognizing the layered and shifting power dynamics that potentially resulted from spatial separation and the discourse of identity. This micro-level, the level of daily interactions among black students, teachers and their schools and communities throughout the South, provided the stage on which they contested and brokered the right to agency. As historical interpretations shifted in later works, concern for the voiceless actors in the black schools and communities would become more present.

During the rise of social history, historians turned from the consistent focus on institutional oppression to find examples of agency inside black schools and began doing black educational history "from the bottom up." The impetus for these studies came after the publication of James Anderson's *Education of Blacks in the South* (1988). His work stands as the most significant social history of black schooling to date. Anderson recognized that black

education, often simultaneously, educated black men and women for democratic citizenship *and* second-class citizenship. Within this context, Anderson strove to give more meaning to the ideological movements within the schools while documenting them thoroughly.

He developed this agenda through four chronological stages. First, he described how the newly freed slaves struggled to pursue and define a new emancipatory education system that fit their own lives. Second, he determined that second-class education was a logical outgrowth of the prescribed social position of blacks. While they recognized the inherent subordination of their own design, the efforts pursued by black educators in the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes set the stage for more active revolt. Third, he examined the national debate between W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, linking their views to an already developed educational movement started and supported by African Americans. Fourth, he developed a concise history of the impact these reform movements had on the daily lives of teachers and students in black schools throughout the South. In suggesting these four major periods, Anderson hoped to extend the historical understanding of large-scale reform while focusing more heavily on the shifts in daily life within the schoolhouses (p. 3). His ground-level approach to black educational history provided a new narrative that others could use to interrogate the relationships of power, politics and ideology in Southern schools.

Inspired by the mission set forth by Anderson, historians returned to the sources to find other evidence of agency and redefine the successes and failures of black schooling. Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) refocused the discussion of black schooling to the positive contributions of

the school as community. She noted that "although black schools were indeed commonly lacking in facilities and funding, some evidence suggests that the environment of the segregated school had affective traits, institutional policies, and community support that helped black children learn in spite of the neglect their schools received from white school boards" (Walker, 3). The study she submitted relies predominantly on the accounts of those in the community who still lived in the area and wanted to share their stories. Rather than conceive of an ambiguous notion of "good" schooling from her perspective, she focused on how and why these men and women remembered the school in the way that they did. She privileged the stories of the black students in Caswell County, not to see "how black education compared to white education but to understand more fully a historical moment in the cycle of black education" (p. 11). Her work is useful for exhibiting the value of black education as lived experience, a history that can and should be told without presupposed comparisons to white systems. I will return to the discussion of her contributions to the interpretation of community in segregation later in this chapter.

David Cecelski (1994) and Adam Fairclough (2007) continued to celebrate the accomplishments of teachers for their strong and effective leadership, and track community efforts in the South to keep black schools open after being categorically denigrated and abolished after the *Brown* decision. Cecelski looked at two black schools in Hyde County, North Carolina as the area moved to desegregate. He focused primarily on the ways whites resisted the process of enrollment rezoning and how, most often, it was the black culture that diluted and

disappeared as a result of the two cultures merged. Through his work, Cecelski challenged two major assumptions of the historiography of black education. First, the community school movement, while assumed to be indicative of Northeastern support in later decades, persisted as a sustained effort by blacks in Hyde County and throughout the South. Second, he moved past the institutional focus of earlier authors like Harlan or Spivey (and even Anderson) by focusing on the impressions of those students and teachers who attended the schools. These activists and their traditions "point to the true quality that black educators, parents, and students managed to foster in those educational institutions despite vastly unequal funding" (p. 13).

Adam Fairclough (2007) also focused on the negative effects of desegregation. Centering his study on black educators in the South, he interpreted the losses dealt to their professional agency as a result of either losing their jobs from school closing or being reinstated in a mixed school only to be reinterpreted as an inferior teacher. He celebrated the spaces made by black teachers in their classrooms as "centers of scholarly excellence that were populated by dedicated and caring teachers, principals of almost superhuman industry and wisdom, and pupils who repaid their teachers' devotion with respect and hard work" (p. 13). His study avoided an immaculate portrayal though, developing strong evidence of the intense dependency concomitant in segregated schools. Black teachers required the assistance and support of white teachers and administrators, which often impaired and challenged their commitment to their mission. Overall, however, Fairclough's mission resembles that of Walker and Cecelski in rescuing the story of a dedicated, charismatic group of educators from the depths of historical

amnesia, as previous historians left out these important accounts.

Historians like Walker, Cecelski and Fairclough have done critical work in moving the understanding of black educational history in the South away from institutional and intellectual reform to the difficult task of navigating insufficient resources and financial support, what Arnold Cooper (1989) calls the "web of subordination," by teachers and students in the schools. In reaction to decades of depictions of oppression with little voice of those oppressed, these authors potentially overestimate the positive function of community and teaching in the black schools though. Fairclough admits certain deficiencies by discussing teacher dependency, but dependency in his explanation is a deficiency imposed by the system of segregation, not a deficiency in teacher skill or passion. This may be a useful paradigm. Elizabeth Jacoway (1980) urged education historians to avoid assessing the success of segregated schools by their end products and instead focusing on the active resistance of those steering the schools against a culture of white supremacy.

Community rescue narratives, however, fail to explore the ways in which other modes of production and control, like capital and labor economic systems, persisted through lessons intended to uplift the students and provide them with basic tools of agency. Walker and Fairclough provide substantial work in appreciating the high quality of education in segregated schools, but speak little of the institutional maneuvering that allowed segregation to persist and become more legally defensible, like through supposedly objective bureaucratic processes or standardized testing (Baker, 2006). Educational historians can advance this discussion by

researching communities for the support and unity they provided in the movements against racism and also for the specific ways that community defined along racial and spatial lines fortified and exacerbated identity creation and the resulting power dynamics. A more nuanced deconstruction of community is required. My project seeks to contribute to this process.

Community and Segregated Schools

Before analyzing the extant literature and its treatment of community, it should be noted that community takes a dualistic, layered construction in its creation by actors within it as well as historians researching its form and function. In visiting the United States in the 1940s, Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal (1944) identified the great American dilemma as the "Negro Problem," or more specifically the process by which Americans continually negotiate and reconcile the opposing values of political equality and racial segregation. The terrain on which Americans form their notions is one of material and of valuation, where geographies, institutions and biological characteristics are both created from and give meaning to an individual's perceptions (lxxxi). Myrdal's observation of Jim Crow America is critical to understanding the production of community by both the historical actors and the historians documenting them. Scholars often spoke of the "black community" by the material geography of skin color and location (Rodgers, 1975; Franklin, 1979). Other scholars choose to identify community as a process by which a disfranchised group found unity against struggle (Cecelski, 1994; Walker, 1996). One of the central tasks of this study is to present the fluidity with which most students

and teachers in a black high school moved between these two ideas, creating meaning by simultaneously engaging with both their material lives and the values attached to it.

The focus on community within segregated black schools was profound and ubiquitous throughout the Jim Crow era. Blacks in segregated towns and schools embraced community as a system of support against the oppressive system that continuously held them, as Anderson (1988) describes, in second-class citizenship. In this section, I discuss the activities of community organization within segregated communities as discussed in the significant secondary literature. From these depictions, it is possible to establish a more sophisticated conception of community that can guide future research in education history and theory. My study attempts to engage a conversation on how our research of community can become even more complex in questioning structures of power, inclusion and exclusion.

Theories and efforts to improve education in the context of separate spaces drew their intellectual support from W.E.B. Du Bois. After considering the necessity of separate schools for black students, he posited their value based on the educational benefit it afforded the Negro student. Du Bois submitted that separate schools allowed black students to be nurtured and guided by members of their own race. These teachers understood and sympathized with the background of their students and could more appropriately cultivate in them the necessary predilections toward higher-order thinking, social equality and the skills for basic function (Du Bois, 1935). Not only could schools cultivate the necessary learning habits, but separate schools also offered a safe haven from white animosity and vitriol. Du Bois understood that he was

writing in a time when the divisions of class and race were still so profound in American society that integration would impair the efforts of racial uplift. This awareness came from his notion of common identity through the unique experience of race (Du Bois, 1903), and it was within this context that black teachers and leaders engaged in community activism.

The main supporters of black community that emerge from the literature are the black teachers in segregated schools. The movement by historians to celebrate the contributions of teachers in coordinating and sustaining a positive, vibrant community in their schools came from the need to revise decades of literature on the oppressive structures of Jim Crow education. Black scholars like Carter Woodson (1933) and Horace Mann Bond (1934) and historians like Louis Harlan (1972) structured a narrative of black education that rallied against racial domination by documenting the extreme inequity between white and black school systems. These works meant to affect the political change to equalize education and tear down Jim Crow, but they did so in a way that offered very little evidence of the support of black teachers and the positive contributions they made to community organization.

Coming from the aforementioned attempt to rescue the accomplishments of black teachers from historical obscurity, education historians produced various projects that placed the teacher at the center of empowerment through community activism. Walker (1996) discussed the imperative connection of black teachers and administrators with their local community. She recognized that because institutions of higher education for blacks were few and even more uncommon in the South, most local communities accepted teachers from outside the immediate

area. Teachers who came into the community found massive support, however. Walker argued that this support came in spite of the regional origin of the teacher, so long as that teacher or administrator understood how to interact within the community (p. 83). Simply participating in community organizations could not sustain an effective relationship within the small community. School personnel would master the fluid transition between dialects and slang depending on the audience in a way that maintained comfort and reinforced a sense of community between equals. Because of the cultural savvy of these teachers and administrators, the county she studied saw tremendous support and contribution to a school that became the central unit of engagement in the black community.

Walker (2009) followed up these observations on community work in a later study in which she focused on the role of the administrator in Southern schools. While the historiography of segregated education typically consists of individual cases, she recognized a consistency throughout the structures and pedagogical practices of schools across the South that historians usually described as isolated from one another. To explain the phenomenon, she looked at the role of the principal and the network of Southern administrators that created a professional community for segregated schools. By belonging to such a network, principals and superintendents engaged the difficulties of separation and low resource levels, shared approaches and theories on managing school activities, and disseminated the shared ideas in their own schools and districts. Therefore, Southern black schools belonged to another community layer, one of professional organization, through the works of passionate, capable leaders.

The theme of the school as the anchor of the local community remains persistent in the literature on segregated education. Fairclough (2007) illustrated the intensity of the connection through stories of dedicated teachers and beneficial parent-teacher partnerships throughout the South. To Fairclough, blacks in the South understood that segregated public institutions like schools would remain separate into an unforeseeable future (p. 8). He found that the reality of unending separation provided the impetus for community organization. Communities would rally to the financial support of local schools, a constant struggle due to the unequal funding within segregated systems. The school acted as a central meeting place in the same way as churches, and the dependence on the school for community support produced an erudite class of community leaders on the part of the teachers and administrators. The focus on teacher success and skill in the historical literature reflects a notion of community that requires respect and knowledge of local customs, as well as a required acceptance on the part of those in the intended community.

Acceptance of community members created the most tenuous position for segregated school teachers in the Jim Crow South. Glenda Gilmore (1996) likens Southern black teachers to "double agents" because of the necessity of teaching to a black community while cooperating with the white majority to garner financial support. Black teachers walked a difficult line between community loyalties. Though it was in the interest of the segregated black school, collaboration with white philanthropists and education reformers would commonly be viewed by blacks in the South as a betrayal of the mission of racial uplift through self-reliance so ingrained

in the discourse of the black experience (Fairclough, 2001). Black communities protected themselves against a material fear of discrimination and racial violence by intentionally self-isolating. Community came from solidarity against outside encroachment, but the character of that solidarity shifted depending on the position of power maintained by the community's members, or more appropriately, on the potential for that autonomy to be economically viable.

A final source of evidence of the school's role in segregated black communities can be found in the movements to save particular schools from closing after the integration of local systems. Black schools in the South not only served as central meeting places for a number of community activities like religious services and Parent-Teacher meetings, as discussed in Walker, but they also served a large, sprawling geographic area, much more so than the districts of white schools (Cecelski, 1994). When local districts moved to integrate their system, the black school most often faced closing, sending nearby black students into the white schoolhouses and reintegrating distant students into other districts. In areas like Hyde County, North Carolina, a closing of the black school represented more than the difficulty of rezoning. Closure of the black school meant a loss of the primary vehicle for community identity (Cecelski, p. 9). In Hyde County, black leaders coordinated a school boycott to protest the closing of the black school to prevent the loss of a community center and to protect the students from racial antagonism by whites through the process of desegregation.

The story of Hyde County and the various narratives historians have provided of conflicts arising during desegregation point to another difficulty in researching communities, especially in

the context of segregation. Segregated schools acted as communities within black communities within larger geographic communities. The efforts to maintain the economic independence of black schools and the eventual desegregation of school systems found opposition based on a complex understanding of community loyalty and membership. The narratives in the historical literature suggest that students and teachers in segregated schools transitioned through the concentric communities, from school to family to city, requiring knowledge of the interactive customs and expectations of each. Community in this sense requires performance for the sake of survival. In a segregated system, blacks in the South performed various community identities as a means of navigating and withstanding a powerful system of discrimination in Jim Crow.

This study of Austin High School uses the work done on community construction and performance as its embarking point. I contribute to the literature I have discussed by interpreting how community is socially constructed in segregated schooling and how these constructions, based in this case primarily on race and class, cannot be separated from systems of power. My research shows the intricate way models of industrial and intellectual education coexisted within these efforts to build community through education. I borrow from previous works like Walker (1996) to focus on the experiences of the students and teachers of Austin High independently from comparison with their white counterparts. Most importantly, my work offers an explanation for how the intersecting constructions of community in a segregated system, between the material realities of geography and race and the unification of shared value and struggle, can often work to empower disadvantaged groups while simultaneously providing

language to maintain their second-class status.

A passion for the concept of community, as discussed in the works presented throughout this first chapter, still persists among those scholars doing educational scholarship. In the context of segregated schools, education historians present evidence of the role of community in restoring hope and dignity for blacks in the South against Jim Crow. Education philosophers and action researchers present or seek to define a normative concept of community, a theoretical guidepost that can be ascribed to various educational situations for the proposed good. My study, historical in scope and interdisciplinary in design, seeks to suggest considerations of community that will supplement and expand our thinking of its possible articulations in schools. To do so, I attempt to reconsider the various, localized social constructions of community and how those forms can impact the scope of our research.

According to Enrique Murillo (2004), "the modern concept of community...has long been incapable of understanding our fragmented and often paradoxical identities that are negotiated between and betwixt multiple worlds" (p. 173). I wish to frame community as always socially dependent, as not existing in any form outside of the context within which it is located, conjured and described, and that those creations depend upon and define power dynamics in a social system. In the segregated system of Jim Crow, for instance, community at once provided essential support to oppressed groups while also establishing the primary vehicle for inclusion, exclusion and performance for blacks in the South who delicately navigated their second-class

citizenship.

The following chapters are broken down to guide the reader through the form of the study and the considerations necessary to help address the questions I have described here, a detailed account of the historical research collected through this methodology, and the implications that the body of original research I present will have across the field of education foundations. Chapter Two focuses exclusively on the methodology I have developed for my study which I call historical ethnography. The questions of space, race, community and power that developed in a segregated region could benefit from an interdisciplinary extension of the historical process that recognizes that schools at specific moments create communities that stretch across entire lifetimes in memory (Nora, 1989). To assess the construction of these communities then requires more than a basic historical analysis of archives and interviews, a process I describe in full with the next chapter.

Chapters Three and Four will be devoted to the presentation and interpretation of the data collected from this methodology. I will use Chapter Three to look specifically at the materialities of space and race that existed in the lives of these students and teachers. This chapter will include most of the archival research on schools in the greater area of East Tennessee and the processes for integration. Through presenting both archival record and stories collected, this chapter seeks to give the reader a more thorough understanding of the specific forms segregation and desegregation took in East Tennessee during the 1950s and 1960s. The three systems in focus, public districts in Clinton, Oak Ridge and Knoxville, all had different

local politics to navigate to attempt integration. Each faced markedly different public reaction to their schools integrating and saw few substantive changes in the racial make-up of their schools. All of these battles existed in a specific geographic context, East Tennesse, an Appalachian region, which carried with it unique challenges to desegregation and claims to community, as well. The participants' stories in this chapter will be discussed for their role in speaking against Jim Crow, even in the (re)telling of these experiences.

Chapter Four will focus more on the valuations and constructions of community that developed through the processes of meaning making in which the participants engaged. I will present the ways that race acted as one of the central identifiers of community belonging to the participants and how the attempted integration of their school and city carried with it a perceived loss in a community of color. I will also discuss in this chapter the specific stories of the teachers at Austin High and the critical role they played in engendering community mentalities for the participants. Separating material realities and the constructed meanings across Chapters Three and Four is not an attempt to separate their relationship in the lives of the students. Throughout these chapters I will return to the many layers that these factors created in the identities of my participant that powerfully impacted their life experiences.

Chapter Five has three purposes. First, I will discuss some of the considerations made and theories used for cultivating the interpretation of the stories gathered. Using Pierre Nora's (2009) notion of *sites of memory,* I hope to contribute new ways of asking questions historically for education researchers and useful ways to use the data gathered from those questions. Then, I

will discuss those considerations for how they may improve the standing in the field of education foundations writ large, placing this work in the context of a conversation of history of education's role in the debate over policy and praxis. Last, I will create some final implications for future research, arguing what I believe to be the strengths and weaknesses of the work I have done here and what other historians or education researchers might take from my study to follow-up on the narrative I have created. Most importantly, I hope to end this study by providing some considerations for the critical dynamics of the *creation of power* produced by segregating the races into separate educational spaces.

Chapter Two
A Case for Historical Ethnography

I nearly drove past the Douglas Cultural Center on my first trip. The renovated Victorian home turned museum and resource center sits nestled comfortably behind manicured shrubs and tall oaks in a residential area of this mid-sized city in the heart of an Appalachian county. Upon entering the building, I wandered for ten minutes before meeting any assistants. A short stroll through its viewing areas reminded me why this building is the place in East Tennessee "where African American history comes to life," as Tanya, the administrative assistant, loves to say to new visitors. The Center is a celebration of fifty years of contributions by the African American community to the South and the United States, displaying historic artifacts, reference materials and art from students at a nearby elementary school.

After finding Eddie, a former Austin High grad and lighthouse keeper for most of the school's graduating classes, and introducing myself, I explained the basis of my project to Tanya and him. They responded to my explanation politely and offered me refreshments before the interview began. Being a figure of notable historical status, participating in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, marching with and sometimes arm-wrestling Dr. King, Eddie sat for interviews almost daily. The process, to his staff and him, was as innocuous as setting the alarm before closing. I moved to another room and prepared my notes and recorder for my session with Eddie. while he ran two local boys out of the Center for not going to school after missing the bus. "Now, had they been suspended from school, I'd let them come in here because I want

them off the street," he explains to me. "But they cannot come here and tell me the excuse that they missed the bus. They need to be in school someplace, the importance of education, right? You got to have that kind of guidance in terms of the community."

The community. The word pervades every level of discourse throughout the interviews and archival data of my research in malleable ways to describe a host of interconnected relationships. As I conducted the interview and listened to Eddie. give his observations and projections of the community, I wondered, is community something that can be explained to me, or do I have to belong to it to understand? I do understand that I am not part of his community, at least not the one that revolves around a segregated school in the Jim Crow South that Eddie. describes. I am a white researcher, almost forty years younger him. I am a Northerner, as well, who has only been attending a predominantly white institution in the South for two years. Having attended an all-white school throughout my formative education, I have my own opinions and theories about how notions of identity develop in the context of racially segregated school spaces. But in this study, I am observing the celebration of a community to which I do not belong temporally, geographically or racially. I do not believe this impairs my ability to pursue and engage in my study. Instead, my status as an outsider must be rooted in a firmer commitment to stay true to the discourse and representation of the students and teachers I meet along the way. I see this as a reasonable goal, but one with tremendous responsibility. As Noblit, Flores and Murillo, Jr. (2004) point out, researchers doing such work "must assume they exist within a critical discourse that in part makes them responsible for the world they are producing when they interpret and critique" (p. 24).

The question then became, how do I do this? Most historical study comes in the form of case study, selecting a specific era or decade, centering the research around an event or location that can be used to provide new data for on-going interpretive debates and possibly a set of instances that can create new ideas and questions to engage our contemporary world. But the single identifying quality of a case study is boundedness, a delimiting of the subject matter by the researcher to determine the necessary parameters that may produce greater understanding of a topic (Stake, 1994; Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2009). As I spoke to the participants in the study, I realized that any attempt on my part as the researcher to define a chronological, or even geographic frame, would risk losing one of most essential characteristics in the making of community, that of lifelong membership. To those in my study, belonging to a school at a specific time and a specific place created unique notions of identity and community, but those notions transcended the era in which they were located. Refusing to be left in the past, these constructions of self and group were carried with the students of Austin High onward and ever-after as part of the process of always becoming.

The task in front of me, then, is two-fold. As an education historian, my attempt is to transmit, describe and interpret the stories shared and information found of life in a segregated school and city, and as a scholar in an interdisciplinary field like education foundations, I employ a variety of qualitative approaches that can lift these stories from their historical lock-box and suggest new questions and meanings around space, identity and community. In this way, my study can supplement the body of historical knowledge constantly being developed about schooling and segregation and also engage the constant concern of historical scholarship

contributing to the larger fields of education foundations and education proper (Donato and Lazerson, 2000; Mahoney, 2000; Christou, 2009). For this to happen most effectively I have borrowed from and built upon a methodology most appropriately called *historical ethnography.*

In order to name my study as historical ethnography, I must articulate two basic considerations for the process. First, I should identify what a historical ethnography is, including its approach and purpose. Second, I need to justify its use for this project over other interview-based forms of historical analysis like narrative or oral history. The purpose of this chapter is to explore these features of historical ethnography specifically as it relates to my project. Then I will describe some of the specifics of the study, including the theories used in framing the data, methods of collecting and representing the data, and descriptions of the participants that will be the primary actors in this work.

Historical ethnography comes predominantly from the field of anthropology in an effort to synthesize field experience with large bodies of archival data to describe cultures and communities as they existed in a historically specific context (Sahlins, 1993). The basic methods of historical ethnography look quite similar to other ethnographies. They rely extensively on participant interviewing, and the process involves intense document analysis in archival collections of images, reports and student-produced work, as well as site visits to structures from the era still intact and available for analysis. Peter Woods (1993) suggested in doing historical ethnography that including any celebratory functions of the participant groups specifically pertaining to their lives in the time under study. I place special emphasis on the value of celebratory events within the participant group. Celebrations like class reunions,

museum exhibits and retrospective publications can offer critical insight to the process of communal creations of memory and meaning. Because it is a celebration, it can present a positive memory, but the act of creating such a memory, especially for shared participation, is an essential component for understanding the relationship between actors, experiences and institutions in the creation of community (Woods, p. 363).

To this end, the historical ethnographic method looks much like other ethnographies, relying heavily on the incorporation of document analysis and still employing similar forms of triangulation and comparative analysis. The more important consideration would be to determine why historical ethnography is a superior methodology to explore a group in its historical context to more widely used approaches like narrative and chronology. After all, history (especially cultural history) and ethnography essentially seek to make the same claims about the interactions of certain groups (Furet, 1984).

Historical ethnography originally came as a response to charges of creations of the "other" in modernist anthropological paradigms. In these research approaches, ethnography became the tool to describe non-Western (traditional) cultures, whereas history remained the teleological right of advanced (modern) societies (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992; Deloria, 1969). A blending of these two approaches worked to restore historical subjectivity to subaltern cultures while simultaneously theorizing the creation of the basic categories of otherness created between dominant and oppressed groups. Assuming such an ethnographic approach to history rejects two historically predominant academic orientations: the ability of the researcher to speak for another and the possibility of analyzing systems and structures without considering lived

experience. According to Comaroff and Comaroff (1992), if instead"we seek to understand the *making* of collective worlds – the dialectics, in space and time, of societies and selves, persons and places, orders and events...we may traffic in analytic constructions and can acknowledge the effects of history upon our discourses" (p. 12). The making of the collective world of Austin High School with this focus on space, time and discourse will be the central methodology of my study.

For a study to rely on space, time and discourse to describe a collective world defined by the actors within it, it must be rooted in a postcritical epistemology on the part of the researcher. Postcritical ethnography recognizes the partiality and positionality of all research, making the researcher morally responsible for the worlds created in the research process (Noblit, Flores and Murillo, Jr., 2004). Postcritical ethnography recognizes the potential of critical ethnographic theory to engage power structures and advocate change (Anderson, 1989; Madison, 2005), but it also positions critical theory as only a single option among an array of critiques that could engage these (manufactured) structures. A postcritical historical ethnography could provide a rich account of a group in its temporal and spatial context, allowing the recollection and celebration by its members to guide the path to meaning by creating an academic space for meaning to emerge from their discourses.

The move to postcritical is important to me also, as a white researcher interacting with black participants, because while opening a space for the critique of power, postcritical commitments also make a clear critique of the role of the critic. Noblit (2004) asserted that "critical ethnography wishes to reveal domination and ideology, but in doing so replaces the

hegemony of power in social life with the hegemony of the critic. The critic/author poses superior knowledge and insight" (p. 316). As I moved through my work with the four alumni of Austin High, I took up this imperative from postcritical ethnography to remain cognizant of the ways in which my voice as the omniscient, white researcher, the voice of authority and expertise, could colonize the stories they shared and relegate them to mere historical objects. Many of the stories shared in Chapters Three and Four will engage this dynamic between myself and the participants, recognizing how my presence in the conversation possibly affected the account given and allowing their version of memory to remain intact. Again, Noblit reminded us that "postcritical ethnographers tell stories to reduce the teller's omniscience in service of the listener's interpretation" (p. 317). I will move into critique throughout the next two chapters, making claims about community and power in a segregated system. My postcritical commitment also necessitates that the majority of the stories told in this work remain engaged primarily at the level of story to allow the reader to interpret while reducing (although never eliminating) my role in *giving* meaning in the process.

Postcritical ethnography has immense potential for addressing concerns of identity and relations of power. Most importantly, we can use a postcritical epistemology to circumvent oppositional positioning among actors, focusing instead on the myriad intersections of identity simultaneously occurring in every context (Abu-Lughod, 1991). A confrontation of oppositional texts will be central to my focus at Austin High. Because of the nature of segregation, the participants have expressed a common notion of the "black community." This community was often based in an understanding of opposition to the white community, a geographically and

racially separate group. Much of the research so far on the topic has used a similar positioning of white and black cultures (Cecelski, 1994; Fairclough, 2007; Walker, 1996). The postcritical approach allows us to move beyond and trouble the opposition of racial groups, the simple black/white binary. Instead, we can begin to look at the issue of segregation as one of many factors creating identities based in opposition that often masked and exacerbated other forms of oppressive identity creations (Abu-Lughod, 1991) and promoted layered and competing constructions of community that excluded and included simultaneously (Joseph, 2002).

Community is always a process of inclusion and exclusion, a perpetual redefinition of otherness (Talburt, 2004). Ethnography can provide a means for complicating the relations that produce otherness, even within subaltern communities, that avoids community research as romantic or primarily for the reclamation of subjectivity of oppressed groups (Talburt, 2004, p. 109). To make such a move, an emphasis on spatial relations becomes an initial consideration for the study. Space and time together inform contexts in a given study, and they also point to the continuity of group identity and community creation. Again, it would be inappropriate to arbitrarily bind a study within confines of a specific time and a specific place. Instead, it would be more effective to research those contexts as moments within a continuum of perpetual meaning making. Much worse, an artificially bounded system always already demarcates the reader from the ethnographer from the participants (p. 117). Such a process, as Fabian (1983) argued, others the participants temporally. By employing research methods that treat the stories of participants' lives as artifacts of the past, knowledge to be mined and recovered for a narrative that the scholar constructs, those participants are denied the possibility of existing in the study as

active creators of critique and the representations of their own lives. The goal of the historical ethnography I have constructed here is to be constantly aware of the duty of the scholar to confront and work with the participants to bridge this temporal gap and recognize that those sharing their lives in this work are sharing it not just as recollections of another time, but as critical actors (re)creating themselves in our present interactions. In this sense, then, they are not sharing *lived experience* as much as they are sharing *experiences being lived.*

Although my study looks at Austin High School at a particular moment in time because of a particular set of sociopolitical circumstances, I have argued also for the emphasis on celebration and storytelling within the community precisely to eschew the boundedness of the parameters set up by chronological markers. Although the school existed at a certain point in history, the actors within that school maintain their ideas of community and membership based on their recollection of the school and its centrality in defining inclusion from exclusion. This postcritical historical ethnography is one that uses ethnographic methods to examine identity creation and refuses to limit the spatial and temporal context to the (arbitrarily) determined borders for the study established by the researcher. That does not mean that I will not be setting borders around the study. I will have to at some point demarcate what is included and what is not. The postcritical approach forces constant reflexivity on those choices, though, and asks that the researcher understand the role of taking part in creating the story by making those choices.

For the purposes of the study, I will be framing my research through works that engage identity and power on the levels of space/geography and the creation of community. Critical geography, one example of the body of works that analyzes material space, marks the attempt by

researchers of social groups to account for the spatial organization of communities and their latent power structures. Critical geographers argue that we each exist spatially, interacting with the physical world through interpretive, social practices both within and outside our own consciousness (Helfenbein, 2006). Critical geographic theory emerged in two essential iterations since its formulation. Marxist researchers (Harvey, 2000; Harvey, 2001) sought to uncover the underlying modes of capitalistic domination in our spatial relationships. Other authors, heavily influenced by Foucault and postmodern/post-structural theory (Soja, 1989; Soja, 1996; Dimitriadis, 2001) looked at space and place less for its reflection of pervasive mechanizations of power and more for its social creation by the actors within each context. From these creations come identities and power relations. Although Marx and Foucault wrote extensively in their works on geography, I will focus here on the authors who use their basic paradigms to design expansive spatial studies.

One of the original and most important advocates for critical geographic theory, David Harvey (2001), sought to move the field of human geography in a direction that supported his neo-Marxist position. To Harvey, the great task of sociohistoric geography came in explaining the spatial structures and restructuring of populations and nation-states to sustain the capitalist model. He argued that capitalism primarily sought to establish a physical landscape conducive to propagating its own structures, fashioning with those structures the requisite characteristics to destroy and rebuild when necessary. All creations of space, though seemingly disruptive or progressive, serve to sustain ideal systems of capital in our daily lives.

Harvey's (1985; 2000; 2001) work sought to negotiate a path between experiences in

historical and geographic contexts and the construction of theory, or more appropriately, a theory of the rich complexity of the capitalist mode of production. Such a path can most effectively be created through a constant interpretive process of speculation (positing systemic interactions creating a context for experience) and reflection (evaluating experiences within those contexts to reform, extend or advance our understanding of them). The result would be a greater theoretical understanding of the relationship between systems and experiences (Harvey, 1985). This approach, according to Harvey, also brings together oppositional analyses of globalization and the body. While structuralists looked for expansive global patterns, the postmodern turn mapped all struggles for power to the body, rejecting larger systemic factors of causation. Harvey looked to geography to accommodate both perspectives, to examine the socio-spatial structures (global) that determine relationships between actors (the body) (Harvey, 2000). Identifying the interactions of system and experience, structure and the body, is critical for this study of identity within a segregated school because it creates an opportunity to explore the various creations of identity and community by the students and teachers while also analyzing the layered contexts within which a segregated school existed politically. That complex relationship will be explored thoroughly in Chapters Three and Four.

As the theoretical approach of critical geography progressed, scholars began approaching their studies using postmodern and poststructuralist emphases provided by philosophers like Foucault and Derrida. Poststructural geographers advanced the field by creating a new theoretical approach, one that avoided the language of systemic control and adopted an analysis of the relationships between systems that exist on the surface (Raffestin, 2007). Unlike Marx's

base/superstructure framework, these scholars determined that all social systems are created and exist within the superstructure. There is no base determinant. Instead, critical geographic theorists position space as a relational construct, an outcome of processes and actions between actors that produces concomitant structures of power and identity (Murdoch, 2006).

The most influential critical geographer to employ a poststructural scope is Edward Soja (1989; 1996). Like Harvey, he sought to recognize the primary importance of spatiality in our lives for determining, and often masking, relationships of power and struggle. However, Soja argued for a significant shift in ontological interpretation and deconstruction should we truly want to understand and describe these determinations. Doing extensive research in Los Angeles and its "real-and-imagined places," he advocated a radical postmodern approach to geography that used space as the link between historical and social theories, a transdisciplinary field through which the binaries of social research interact, contradict and supplement each other to erase the structuralist imperative of polar opposition between approaches (Soja, 1996, p. 5). Such an approach, one that uses spatial theory to explore systems while giving the researcher greater independence to creatively cross disciplinary boundaries informs much of this project I call a historical ethnography.

In the last decade, education researchers have taken on critical geography and the study of space to address questions around schools and their power structures, as well. Scholars like Robert Helfenbein (2006a, 2006b) argued that geographies of schools serve to identify the precise intersections between identities and power dynamics in the lives of youths (2006a). In his study of an after-school computer lab called the WELL, Helfenbein discovered that the

interactions specifically bound to a spatial context created multiple layers of identity and interaction within the student body. The relationships formed in the liminal space between school and home became a place where students "create identity forms in complex and fluid ways and then use them in what become economies of identity" (2006b, p. 90).

Attempting to expand on the restrictions space can create as a determining mechanism, Greg Dimitriadis (2001) asserted that places are intentionally created and sustained by knowledgeable actors. The places created through these processes always already determine the types of selves that could be developed by those who interact within them. For instance, the structure of a classroom can determine how authority is positioned and the available channels through which to challenge that authority. In his study of youth, identity and hip-hop culture, Dimitriadis found through critical geographic theory that students used the messages received in music to form specific spaces out of a similar place, a Southern urban center. From his study, the element of performance becomes another crucial component in constructing spaces and claims to identity within geographic organization.

I have chosen to lean on studies that employ critical geographic theory for my interpretive purposes because of the profound creation of space inherent in *de jure* segregation. A segregated Southern town possessed a clear demarcation of spaces in which communities and identities could form and perform. The purpose of my study is to interpret the various functions of identity and power that resulted specifically from the legally mandated separation of spaces of segregation. I plan to employ the approaches exhibited in other poststucturalist geographic frameworks, looking at the myriad ways students formed identity within a layered system of

spaces and how they engaged its borders. While critical geography is only modestly converging with educational research right now, its application to education research on segregated communities does not exist. My hope in completing this study is to show that this theoretical frame could contribute immensely to our understanding of segregation and its effects on school spaces.

But a critical lens immediately complicates my already declared *post*critical epistemology in this work. Authors like Harvey and Helfenbein remain committed to critical positions that require the researcher to make connections and critiques across the data, whereas postcritical approach elevates the voices of the participants in the process of making meaning. As I suggested above, a postcritical imperative forces the researcher to always be aware of his/her role in the creation of meaning around the research and actively reflect on the responsibility of that for the process (Noblit, 2004). Such a methodological tension can be reconciled through an awareness of the limits of each in informing a conversation around space, place and identity. The existing scholarship that uses critical geography points to a set of questions around material place (geography) and the meanings and values applied to those structures (place). In my study of East Tennessee, the students who attended the Austin High constantly navigated the creation of identity and community by engaging the material and its constructed values in shifting, complex layers, out of which came productions of power within and between groups. A commitment to a postcritical frame allows me to follow this theoretical path while privileging the participants' stories, emotions and reflections as the source of critique and understanding. Additionally, it disrupts the use of grand narratives, including neo-Marxist positions, to explain

the creations of meanings that are far more complex and ambiguous. Critical and postcritical positions, in this sense, work together to provide both the base of questions and the scope of understanding available that can guide a study on geographic space and power in a segregated school

Additionally, I will supplement the spatial analysis with a cultural studies concept called "knowable communities." Raymond Williams (1973) developed the idea of knowable communities in his work deconstructing the separation of the city and the country in literary descriptions. Within his concept, he posits that the search for a known community – an identifiable whole – relies on those making the observations, not the body of objects that can be observed or learned (p. 165). Therefore, there is no real community, not in the sense of a community existing outside of the awareness of those who perform within it. Rather, community depends on the intention of its members to define for themselves what practices, identities and actors can be included and the relation of each actor to these determinations.

Williams's theory will be critical to my interpretation of the discursive formation of communities in segregated education. While collecting the stories of former students and teachers, I will use the "knowable communities" concept to identify the various conceptions of community shared through the actors' identification of which definable communities exist and who is allowed to belong to each. Many times 'community' is used in the sense of neighborhood living, and many times 'community' is described as "people who look like me." This approach couples with a critical spatial analysis well, as the two together provide the language to define my assertion that these community creations are dependent on context, and the context of

segregated education produced multiple notions of community that determined interactions of race and power.

Research Design

Site Selection

I have chosen Austin High School primarily for its position within the community and the tremendous celebration of its importance still practiced by its alumni. The school sat at the Eastern edge of Knoxville, Tennessee. It is now the primary building for a local middle school, while the magnet school created to integrate the system sits only a mile east the same road. In the 1960s, when the schools were still segregated, Austin High marked the dividing line between what those in the community considered the white and black parts of town. A great deal of the demographics of the metropolitan area that still exist today came from the dividing and rezoning of districts to maintain segregated school populations for Austin and East High School. I have chosen this site in particular because of the geographic apex it created in dividing the city populations. Also, I will pay special attention to the school building itself, examining how its architectural structures created another spatial layer in which students and teachers interacted and the added layer of meaning it gave the construction of community as the building changed from a high school to middle school, changing and complicating the educational paths of the next two generations of students.

Sample Selection

My sample consists of four students who attended Austin High School from the years 1947 to 1969. I attempted to find as broad of a range of socioeconomic and gender

representations through these students as possible, although I will explore the limitations of this attempt later in the dissertation. By expanding to the widest range of social markers available, I was able to interpret a variety of factors determining identity creation within the school. The study also benefited from a process of snowball sampling (Glesne, 2006), in which participants provided entire lists of new potential alumni that would be interested in documenting their experiences, sometimes going as far as to put me on the phone with them and set up interview days and times. Pursuing sampling in this way added one more instance to reflect on the making of community to these participants, as each of them had the names and contact information of several former classmates stored in their memories and planners, still keeping in close contact with those with whom they shared the intimacy of belonging to a group. Because the school only maintained a student body of approximately 120 students every year, keeping the participants within the proposed range was an attempt to prevent a saturation of data. The stories and experiences became consistent even after a half-dozen participant interviews. This study focuses more heavily on developing a theory through intense reflection of a concentrated set of data (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991) rather than theory building through massive amounts of data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

As this project developed, I had the opportunity to interact with and collect the stories of six different participants. Their stories were by no means the same, although they addressed common themes like "community" and "passionate teachers." As I will be referring to them constantly throughout the essay, I offer here a short description of each participant, to highlight the differences and similarities of each person and the life experiences from which they (at least

temporarily) draw to create the narratives of their school days.

> **Eddie:** The keeper of the kingdom for Austin High School. Eddie is an active member in the black community still in East Tennessee and a contributing member for the activities at the Douglas Cultural Center. After attending Austin High, he became an active member with organizations like Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, marching alongside other Civil Rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., Ella Baker and Marion Barry.
>
> **Leroy:** A late transfer to Austin High. Leroy was already attending another high school in a nearby district that had already integrated. After facing a series of aggressive confrontations with white students and administrators, he started traveling the distance to Austin High to find a more conducive, welcoming educational environment. He now works as a pastor in an East Tennessee church.
>
> **Harold:** A career educator. Harold holds fond memories of Austin High School and remembers the safety created for him in his community, as long as that community remained within its designated borders. He graduated from Austin High and moved on in his college education, working as a educator to exhibit the same character he so admired in his own teachers. Harold eventually took the encouragement of his former teachers and moved on to achieve his doctorate before returning to his alma mater (now merged into an integrated school) as a teacher there.
>
> **David:** The school's historian. David has maintained close contact with the graduates of Austin High since his days there. He moved on to college after graduating, eventually becoming a well-respected scholar of local history and the premier historian of Austin High. He has published several works on the history of Austin High, hoping to keep the experiences of his and his classmates' schooling alive in East Tennessee.

Data Collection Procedures

I collected two forms of data. The first and most important was the participant interviews. My study focused primarily on the lived experience of the students at Austin High. Because of this focus, the use of interviews was essential to the process. The interviews I

completed allowed the participant to guide most of what was discussed in the interview process. I started with some basic, open-ended primary questions (see Appendix), such as:

- Could you please give me a brief description of your experiences at Austin High School?
- How did you feel about the education you were receiving at Austin?

These basic prompts gave the participants the opportunity to decide what they found important to convey in the process of memory and recall. Because my theoretical framework depends upon the social creation of identity through expression, this interview protocol was critical to achieving these ends.

I did have some questions more focused on notions of space and segregation, as well. Some of the questions I asked were:

- How do you remember thinking about the white schools at the time?
- How was segregation talked about within the schools/classrooms/etc.?
- What was the response within the school when the *Brown* decision was announced?
- How were teachers and students talking about the possibility of desegregation?

The purpose of the study was to discuss segregation and identity, which required that I at least guide the interview in that direction, but it was never necessary for me to make that move. Speaking of segregation, at least the awareness of belonging to a community offset from the geographic whole, came unprompted in all recollections of the participants' schooling experiences. Still, these questions maintained the possibility of the participant to guide what language and direction to use in discussing these issues. Each interview lasted sixty to ninety minutes with some participants giving an additional thirty to sixty minute follow-up interview.

Second, I supplemented these interviews with intense document analysis. The nature of historical research prevents the possibility of site observation. Instead, I used the archives of the

University and the local depositories that house information of the school and district of the time. Because I focus heavily on the factor of geographic space, I verified and interpreted the interview responses with town maps. These maps can provide a physical depiction of the spaces through which the participants describe their movements and experiences. Also, I used student-produced documents like yearbooks and newspapers to delve further into the expression of identity created by students. These documents were as critical as the interviews given that they were produced in the era being discussed.

Documents like yearbooks and newspapers provide the additional opportunity to gain access to the school spaces that other documents would not. These books contain pictures and reflections by students and faculty that depict the daily spaces and structures of classes and school-related events. Such a window into the world of these students could help relieve some of the "silences" of education history (Grosvenor, Lawn, Rousmaniere, 1999) and potentially produce the same benefit of a thick description gained from extensive on-site observation.

Data Analysis

With the same intention of privileging participant positions, I analyzed the data using *in vivo* coding (Goodall, 2000). *In vivo* coding attempts to focus specifically on the language of the participants while determining coding categories. Through *in vivo* coding, it is possible again to elevate the position of the participant over the knowledge of the researcher. Because this study depends upon a subjectivist creation of knowledge in which meaning exists through discourse and interaction, it makes little sense to assume that I can apply categorical labels to the expressions of the participants. Instead, I relied on their symbols and expressions to determine

the possibilities I have for analyzing and interpreting the data. The titles of the chapters and section headings in this dissertation are all taken directly from the words of the participants, as is the title of the entire work.

In an attempt to capture the complexity of the stories collected through this process, I chose to re-present the words of the participants in the form of ethnopoetics at various points. Poetic transcription, the re-presentation of stories as "found" poetry, works to develop a third voice in between the researcher and the participant that engages and celebrates the interconnectedness of words and meanings (Norum, 2000; Glesne, 2006). I use ethnopoetic representation throughout Chapters Three and Four to untangle the layers of remembering and retelling and understanding that the participants and I navigated throughout the interviews. These layers, created and re-created through tellings and retellings, memories and remembering, are untidy, intersecting, shifting and and sometimes contradictory.

The central purpose in producing a poetic re-telling is to acknowledge that the participants' identities, their worlds created in relation to their varied experiences and emotions, are always being negotiated. This negotiation takes place in every moment (Bruner, 1986) but collecting the narratives stands as a specific moment to re-assert and re-create meaningful insights into how they understand their role as actors in their own lives and the lives of others. To take their stories, these negotiations of identity, and pattern them poetically is my attempt to de-simplify the linear narratives we build of our lives (Mariner and Lester, 2010). Seeking to find the complexity of meaning around the participants' identities, especially around space and community, provides an essential narrative around which I have attempted to build an

ethnopoetic work. For example:

Places, always certain places
sit in the balcony
eat out in the street
downstairs at the Student Center
different service stations
some places you can't use the bathroom
I never passed a white school.

Places, always certain places.
That was pretty much the Community.

Elm
To Park
To Riverside
To Church
To College
Common Ground.

It should also be noted that choosing to re-present the participants stories in this ethnopoetic way works as an extension of the postcritical orientation I have already discussed. By taking up postcritical work, I seek to critique power and deconstruct the legitimacy of certain experiences and ways of knowing and telling. Postcritical work relies on a constant recursive reflexivity on the part of the researcher and seeks to establish reciprocity between those researching and those researched, between those telling and those 'collecting.' In this way, writing as an academic researcher, re-presenting the stories of my participants in a forum such as a dissertation, I remain engaged in a delicate balance of privileging their stories and knowledge while acknowledging the power endowed to me through the nature of these academic processes. The postcritical orientation does not remove from the researcher the ability to critique power, but

reminds him/her of the tacit ways power is re-created in re-presenting and asks for a constant awareness and reflection upon that. The poetic re-tellings throughout Chapters Three and Four allow me to remain as conscious of my role in creating them as the words and stories of the participants themselves.

Strengths and Limitations

Though I collected data from several sources throughout the process, the interviews with the participants remained the centerpiece of the study. These interviews determined many of the codes and themes that emerged from the data. Because the interviews consisted initially of memory making through storytelling, it was also useful to employ some methods of oral history analysis to the participants' recollections (Errante, 2000). Michael Frisch (1990) suggested that when looking at an oral interview, one must consider three questions: who is talking? What is he/she talking about? What is he/she saying about it? From these three questions, we can analyze interviews more intricately to uncover the discursive layers that dictate what and how we remember our lives. Such an approach goes beyond the usual charge of oral history, however. Many oral historians continue to pursue oral interviews as a collection and cataloging process with little theoretical interpretation. Frisch instead claims that we can learn as much about memory making by uncovering what a participant is *not* saying (p. 11) about their lived experiences as what he or she is saying. I would add to this point that we could also concentrate on who a participant is not including when employing terms like we, them, and community.

Oral accounts, at their core, are a form of storytelling. Storytelling can be a critical tool, especially in postcritical analyses, for letting participants speak for themselves and removing the

dominating omniscience of the narrator (Brayboy, 2006; Noblit, 2004). Oral stories can be used by subaltern or indigenous cultures as guideposts for future generations to maintain their heritage (Brayboy, p. 439), or they can be used to negotiate the creation of meaning between participant, researcher and reader (Noblit, p. 317). To create a truly empowering postcritical ethnography, the stories of the participants must be allowed to stand alone, to allow meaning to emerge between the text and the reader.

I have already posited the theoretical framework through which I will explore the experiences of the students and teachers at Austin High, looking to spatial constructions as the imperative determinant in identity creation. I argue that this frame can exist by recognizing the primacy of the participants' stories and the continued (re)creation of meaning in each moment of memory – process that keeps their lives and stories from being merely a "case." Each interpretive section of the study will begin by letting the stories stand alone, introducing the section and guiding the reader through the words of the story tellers. The second half of each section can then offer insight and connection to the stories by discussing the discourses within them and ensuring that their stories they present are not subjected to intense critique by a disconnected narrator. In this way, meaning becomes a cooperative process between the participant, the researcher and the reader.

I would like to conclude this chapter describing the methodology of my historical ethnographic study by discussing the potential limitations of the research. Hayden White (1975, 1987) cautions the historian to be aware of two assumptions made when engaging a historical text. First, language can be used to objectify rather than clarify (White, 1975, p. 49). The

historian must first understand that the choices of language in her/his interpretations are not apolitical tropes, but laden with assumed authority and objectivity. To attempt to avoid a linguistic hegemony of interpretation, I have argued for *in vivo* coding and the reliance on pure storytelling that still relies on language but allows analysis to come from the participants' language, while I still recognize, confront and interrogate my role in making the final decisions around the text produced.

Storytelling and oral narratives create another limitation to the study, however. As is recognized in postcritical work, especially when coming to terms with positionality and contextuality, experiences and an actor's articulation of those experiences are always partial and incomplete. The process of narrative imposes on shared accounts a uniformity of certainty that the experiences recalled and described were actually experienced in the way we recall them (White, 1987). In historical research, historians tend to make the fallacious assumption that describing a story in a chronological manner is a standard part of the narrative process. Chronological narrative fails to question the dominant objectivity of the researcher as capable of controlling the complex web of social determinants, giving her/him the power to confidently say Event P occurred and Event Q happened as a direct result. In order to move away from this assumption, I have established the study as an ethnography rather than a narrative chronology.

That leaves open the same critique for the narratives of the participants themselves. It must be taken into account that the recollection of specific experiences as mitigating factors in the understanding of the participants' social world is more of a reflection of the person telling the story in 2009-2010 than the person in the story in 1949 or 1965. The forty-five year or more gap

between the stories also has a way of solidifying versions of the story through repetition of recollection. Again, an ethnographic approach could be the most reasonable response to this research difficulty. Rather than lamenting the flexibility of memory for uncovering historical facts, the partiality of narrative can be addressed by removing the bounds of a case under analysis and treating the participants in the present as engaged in the same struggle for meaning, identity and community as they were in period under study. This approach emphasizes incomplete meanings and continuity between space and time, making what could be a limitation of a historical account into a potential advancement of our thinking about historical research. After analyzing the stories in this way more in Chapters Three and Four, I will come back to this point in conclusion during Chapter Five.

In this chapter, I have laid out the methodology I used when entering the field and collecting the stories of those who participated in a segregated education in East Tennessee. I framed this methodology as a historical ethnography specifically to reconcile the flexibility of memory with the role of the researcher in creating narratives out of narratives in the research process. By identifying this constant interactive process between participant, data and researcher, I believe I have developed a methodology appropriate for answering questions around space, community and power that emerged from the themes found in the research. As I move onto Chapter Three, I will present some of the data I found that gives an indication of the material systems like race and geography firmly in place in East Tennessee as the region confronted the possibility of integrating its schools and neighborhoods.

Chapter Three
Races and Spaces

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the lives of students attending Austin High by contextualizing them in the local politics of race and education facing East Tennessee during the 1950s and 1960s using the material markers of race and geography. Many of the episodes described here provide a frame for the spaces and identities created publicly through the political maneuvering of integration and define the reference of geographic location within which the participants negotiated their own sense of self and other. While the participants were often aware of local, state and national efforts to integrate schools and other politics surrounding the Civil Rights decades, the stories they tell reveal also how essential personal lived experience is to understanding the (re)creation of race, power and identity in Jim Crow schools.

During these two decades East Tennessee bore witness to a series of efforts to integrate public schools, some of which mirrored the sensational, headline-grabbing episodes like the Little Rock Nine entering Central High School among crowds of white protestors in 1957 and Governor George Wallace standing in the doorway of the University of Alabama to prevent his state's flagship academy from integrating in 1966. Many of the integration efforts, however, drew much less protest in the name of overt white supremacy rhetoric. Instead, legislative and judicial processes bogged down by bureaucratic squabbling resulted in the continuation of almost entirely segregated schools and very little legal recourse to integrate them. Because of the Supreme Court's ambiguous order for Southern school districts to integrate "with all deliberate speed," schools like Austin High remained entirely segregated and thoroughly

underfunded until almost 1970, remaining so even after merging with nearby East High as part of the city's school pairing plan.

As the social landscape of the United States, and especially the South, shifted dramatically across the 1950s and 1960s, and the schools stood as contested terrains for the politics of Jim Crow, even after it was rhetorically dismantled by *Brown* and President Lyndon Johnson's series of Civil Rights legislation. Concerned citizens, parents and sometimes outside agitators weighed in through available channels like letters to local newspapers, attending public speeches advocating or admonishing the "abolition of discrimination against colored students in public schools" (214 F.2d 131, 1956), and picketing some schools' early integration efforts. Others chose more pernicious and not-so-subtle techniques of resistance like vandalism and assault. Through all of the open acts of defiance to state and federal authority and the public drumming of integration and equality as patriotic responsibility, black students and teachers still went to school, still made friends and had dances, still found jobs and joined sports teams. As this chapter develops, I will move between the telling of the historical processes that created the material life of segregation, arguing for a more complex historical telling of the relationship between material forms like race and geography, political processes that sustain power over the body and the actual lived experience of those forms and processes.

This approach to re-telling the historical narrative of segregation in East Tennessee maintains the postcritical project laid out in the previous chapter. The stories told below are a mixture of historical record and stories gathered by the participants. Although critiques will be made of the system of domination that was Jim Crow, the focus of the chapter is to bring forward the participants lives as they navigated such a thoroughly oppressive racial order. These

stories are sometimes of poor conditions in schools and an awareness for the need for safety against race violence, but often the participants emphasized the banality of growing up as a teenager and attending a public high school. By privileging their narratives, the historical record can be expanded and critiqued in two ways. First, it can create insight for the daily interaction between targeted groups and the systems that target them. Such understanding has been one of the central goals of historians collecting oral histories for decades (Ritchie, 2003; Perks and Thompson, 2006). Second, and more central to this study, these narratives can provide a dialogue between past and present that gives those telling a measure of domain over the critique of their own lives. These stories, as I call this project historical ethnography, are not meant to be treated solely as artifacts collected. They are the reclamation by those subjugated through Jim Crow of the very means by which their lives are remembered. This chapter will work to present the historical conditions of these lives while giving the participants the space to assert their own existence within it.

A Lot of Problems

Broke all the lights
Every light
Every window
Because I was black
And I had a car

Called me names and everything
What they wanted you to do is quit
If he grabbed me a couple of times
I'm kicking his ass

It's crazy
A paradox
A contradiction

We couldn’t eat here
We couldn’t play there
This is a public park

We had to be better
Two times better than whites
We had two strikes against us

The negotiation for shared spaces in East Tennessee was historically one under intense public scrutiny, producing passionate commitments by segregationists and integrationists to focus the politics of racialized spaces on the public school systems. The most sensational episode in the area came from the debate to integrate Clinton High School in Clinton, Tennessee when the NAACP filed a petition seeking the enrollment of the black students of high-school age within Clinton city limits to be admitted to the city's public school (214 F.2d 131). At this point, black students were being bused primarily to Austin High in Knoxville, a distance of about thirty miles, to complete their secondary training. In response to the petition, Federal judge Robert L. Taylor cited Tennessee law requiring that the state's schools remain segregated, and that there were not enough Negro students within Clinton's limits to justify the construction of a separate and equal facility. Such a motion could be granted only if the city had over seventy-five Negro students of high-school age, and by 1952, Clinton only had a black student population of around thirty. Furthermore, Taylor declared in review of the petition that the busing to Knoxville did not constitute a substantial enough cause to pursue desegregation because “Austin [High] is of a higher quality school than CHS and the 'inconveniences' of travel are inconsequential” (KJ, April 5, 1956).

Taylor dismissed the petition on May 19, 1952, at which point the case was sent for appeal to the Sixth Circuit Court in June of the same year. Although it remained on the docket

for a full two years, it was eventually sent back to Judge Taylor for review in the summer of 1954. This time, however, the petition to desegregate public schools in Clinton, Tennessee had in its favor a month-old Supreme Court decision declaring that segregated schools were by their very nature unequal. On September 16, 1955, Robert Taylor again agreed to review the NAACP's petition, issuing the official ruling that he was continuing the task set forward by the Supreme Court of the United States to rid Southern schools of racial segregation, and ordered the school's in Clinton desegregated by the Fall of 1956 (214 F.2d 131). While the initial reception to the ruling of the Court in Clinton appeared to be stunned acquiescence, it would only take a short time before debate escalated to a hysteria that drew national attention.

The most vitriolic agitators against Clinton's integration would mostly come from outside the city, even from outside the state of Tennessee. However, whites in Clinton were not in full support of what they considered to be federal imposition, either. Horace Wells again took to his local newspaper to proclaim that “ninety percent of Clintonians would vote against integration” if given the choice, but “they were not given [that] choice and they must follow the law” (CC September 20, 1956). He later added in reflecting on the frustration of Clinton's citizens, liberally using the term 'we' in most of his references:

> First, we thought we had the situation whipped when we won our lawsuit (the 1952 Taylor decision that upheld segregation). Then the Supreme Court pulled the rug out from under us (all of us) with its new version of 'equal rights.' To me, the law is the law and until it is repealed, I can't see it another way (quotes original). (TNP, October 1956)

Wells expressed in these notions dutiful Clintonians obeying “the law of the land” a common discourse used by whites in the area to begrudgingly follow along with court-ordered integration. It was that same discourse that allowed the people of Clinton to identify those

voices raised loudest in opposition as outsiders.

Having come from Alabama to work on the Norris Dam project the previous summer, Asa "Ace" Carter, founder of a local organization called the White Citizen's Council, launched some of the first public opposition to the possibility of the South's first public school integration project. Targeting the Supreme Court, NAACP and a list of 365 other organizations that he believed held liberal or Communist sympathies, he condemned these groups for "working toward the mongrelization of our children." To Carter, it was less about not allowing one Negro student into one white school as it was about "getting the wheels of resistance started" (KJ, September 1, 1956). Not immediately receptive to the polemics of Ace Carter, local papers initially ran stories of his background, labeling him an imported laborer from the Deep South who "brought his prejudices with him. He had no connection to Clinton High School or its community" (OR September 10, 1956).

Again, we see in this argument of the Southern rabble-rouser a similar notion of community invasion expressed by Harold in his remembering of safety and security in Knoxville's black community. In this case, Ace Carter is understood to have infiltrated an otherwise peaceful, law-abiding population of white Clintonians through labor relocation. The racist vitriol he spits, while regrettable, can be explained away, or at least the consciences of whites in Clinton could be assuaged, by positioning him as an outsider. Identifying his state of origin, Alabama (and his secretary from Mississippi), to support this claim reiterates the language of geography in building notions of communities or, more importantly, the "other." Additionally, Carter found himself an outsider in the eyes of Clinton's whites though social performance, speaking out in ways deemed inappropriate to other white community members.

By declaring publicly that he opposed the admission of even a single black student into the all-white Clinton High School, Carter parroted the sensibilities of ninety percent of the town's population according to its leading paper. But maintaining the language of Clinton whites as law-abiding carried a notion of community performance, the performance of civility, that allowed the area's whites to mask their own discrimination against what they constructed as the hostile disruption of their way of life by a "foreign" agitator. The othering of Carter helped the people of Clinton position themselves as "good whites" (Thompson, 2003), allies to the cause of racial justice, while actively expressing their own trepidation over the very idea of forced moves to social and racial equity.

Ace Carter commanded only a small following in his efforts to block Clinton's integration. Washington, D.C. white supremacist John Kasper, however, arrived in the summer of 1956 to stir a much more extreme, physical, and sometimes violent protest of the twelve new faces attempting to enroll at Clinton High that year. The students that became known in the national media as the "Clinton Twelve" trekked a path "across the tracks" to the white section of town that contained the high school. Their entrance into the school that day met no opposition from defiant governors or white supremacists groups. Instead, the twelve students were escorted into the school by the white captain of the school's football team, Jerry Shattuck (Jones, Clark and Molen, 2007). But thanks to Kasper's public speeches at local churches and efforts to arrange public pickets starting August 28, the third day of school, "their way would be along a street lined with white adults and young people who tried to scare the Negro children to stay home" many of these parents and students wearing buttons reading "Keep Our White Schools White" (KJ, December 8, 1956; CC, December 1956). Kasper's efforts proved effective, as

attendance at the school dropped by almost two hundred students by the end of that first week, and when the following Monday came around, Clinton High School's attendance dropped from 727 on the first day to 260.

John Kasper's organized picketing created a discernible drop in school attendance, but the protests that he extended across the area are what drew national attention to the desegregation battle in Clinton. On September 2, 1956, a mob of almost fifteen hundred organized protestors started a demonstration at the Anderson County courthouse before marching directly to Clinton High School to continue their protest there, eventually breaking onto school property and burning a cross in the corridor leading from the school to its gymnasium. The protest would rage into the night before being forcefully confronted by three hundred national guardsmen (KJ, September 3, 1956). In an interest to address the growing hostilities in the area, the Anderson County School Board issued a letter to the parents of each of the Clinton Twelve stating that the county was prepared to pay for the transportation of any of the black students to a school system within "reasonable distance" if he or she submitted a request in writing. Not a single student or parent submitted such a request (KJ October 12, 1956).

Kasper and his segregationist crusaders were not done in East Tennessee. John Kasper himself faced arrest and trial for inciting the September riot in Clinton, being acquitted of all charges on November 20, 1956. In the Anderson County courtroom that morning, it took him twenty minutes after his decision was handed down to finally exit the courtroom while trying to "navigate the crowded room of well-wishers" (OR November 21, 1956). Less than one month later, Judge Robert Taylor issued a warrant for the arrest of sixteen of Kasper's followers for the

assault of Reverend Paul Turner. Turner was a local Baptist minister who had escorted the Clinton Twelve into the school several times after the earlier riots, as the students had asked for escorts to school if they were going to continue to attend (KNS, November 20, 1956; KJ, December 6, 1956). After these sixteen men and women were arrested and testified, Taylor was able to amend the warrant to include Kasper and his close confidant John Gates, leading to Kasper's conviction and one-year imprisonment (KJ, October 17, 1957).

The histrionics of Kasper, Carter and their followers in Clinton proved to be atypical for the other local efforts to desegregate schools and the lived experience of Jim Crow segregation for the participants of this study. Although the debates in Clinton ebbed for a time, they eventually led to the school being destroyed by dynamite in 1958 (Jones, Clark and Molen, 2007), the experience of racism for the participants was relayed in their narratives as the micro-aggressions of every-day existence. I use the term micro-aggressions (Solorzano, 2000) to describe the subtle forms of racism that pervaded daily life and rarely made for sensational headlines. For instance, sometimes the system of segregation entered even the most basic decisions and bodily functions of daily life, as Eddie describes:

> But, even in junior high school, the future was still very grim in terms of looking at you know, the mid-1950s, Segregation was still the action of the day. Even the basketball teams, we played other black teams. We ran against other black schools. We didn't have the buses. We had to ride in automobiles, I remember after basketball, particularly after the game. I don't know if you ever played ball but you get cramped up in the car, your knees hurt, and you got to pull over to the side of the road to use the restroom because even back in those days, you know, African Americans had different service stations and some places you couldn't use the restroom, so you had to stop on the side of the road. But those are interesting times. Traveling the highways of America was always [interesting], particularly with your mother and grandmother and whatever, they had to go in the woods someplace to use the restroom. Now it's not that difficult for a guy to use the restroom if you need to urinate you know you just stand up and turn your back or whatever. But it's very difficult for a woman, a girl,

> particularly an elder. So, even when I was in school and stuff and we'd try to take trips, we'd try to travel early in the morning, 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning in case you had to stop and use the bathroom. And you'd try to reach your destination before the sun came up because it was less dangerous you know traveling at night on the highways, particularly if you need to use the restroom or whatever. Low and behold if you break down or something, you had to knock on the door. I remember as a young man down in the Concord area, a guy broke down and knocked on the door and they shot him and killed him. His car there, he was just asking for help and they shot him and killed him. So, it was even dangerous at a time that you just had to move the car to the side of the road because it was not safe to go and knock on somebody's door.

Jim Crow laws, or at least the looming threat of violence that Jim Crow supported, manifest in Eddie's story as an extension of the biopower that segregation imposed on blacks in the South. Michel Foucault (2004) calls biopower "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power" (p. 1). The extent to which, as Eddie described, a family must plan their trips, taking into consideration basic biological functions such as using the restroom simply for the purposes of security, is an example of this relationship between state systems of law, the legal protection it afforded those perpetrating racial oppression, and the thorough control that oppression had over the bodies of a targeted group like blacks in the South. Segregation, then, comes with the ability to deny access in specific spaces, surely, but it also extends further, controlling the means in which those who are excluded from some areas are allowed to move themselves even in the spaces within which their presence is allowed.

Such a control of the body suffocated opportunities for the participants, their families and friends through implicit power, but often the enemy they faced was physically present and active, even though this hostility usually did not take the form of extreme assault or bodily harm. Before eventually transferring to Austin High for the last two years of his secondary education,

Leroy attended nearby Rule High School, which had been one of Knoxville's earliest laboratories for school integration. Rather than protests and riots, Leroy faced daily micro-aggressions that served as a consistent reminder that he was unwelcome as a black student in a newly integrated space:

> At the time I was, I probably was the only African American that had a car, and I parked it up on a hill where I could see it from school and just because I had a car and it was a poor neighborhood and they found out it was mine, and they broke all the lights, out all the windows, every light and window in there they broke them, windshields and everything. Simply because I had a car, I was black, and I had a nice car, you know? A '54 Chevrolet. Then since I couldn't find out who did it, the principal, the assistant principal didn't do nothing about it, you know? So, like I said they did it, then we fought. And the guy was laughing about it, I cold-cocked him. The assistant principal came down to break it up, he kicked me while they were holding me, and I jumped on the principal about it, the assistant principal, and I said 'you gonna hold somebody, you gonna hold both of us.' You let him kick me while I was [being held], and I told him 'you let him kick me again, I'm gonna fire on you,' and he said I was being disrespectful. But anyway, I had a lot of problems. I mean we fought. That was a common thing, fighting, because they didn't want us there, they didn't understand we didn't want to be there either but it was mandatory integration, so that was the school closest to us, so we walked the railroad tracks to school every day up on the hill, and that's where they'd ambush us and we'd fight. But I wasn't privy to that til they broke the windows in my car. Then I had to get it fixed and replace all that stuff and pay for it. The school wouldn't, wouldn't be liable for it. Yeah, that's how it went, the taunting and stuff, stepping on your heels as you went down the hall. I take it about two or three times then I throw one behind me. Then I'd be in the office, you know I was an honors student, and my father said that's it, the next semester you're going back to Austin, where I was slated to go before integration anyway, but because I was fighting and I wasn't really concentrating on school, that was it.

The participants in this study used their stories, narratives like this example from Leroy, to speak back to the racial order of Jim Crow by producing counterstories of resistance against the positioning of blacks as victims at the hands of devilish whites or active agents who through their own strength or political erudition forged ahead. Counterstories can act as a tool for the narrator to disrupt metanarratives like victimization, and even metanarratives of agency, and

reframe common tellings of oppression, in this case racial oppression in the era of segregation (Delgado, 2000). Leroy reclaims his own voice in the retelling of his early educational experience through a narrative that focuses on the complex interactions of race and power present in an integrated system, a system in which resistance is possible, a sometimes daily occurrence, but the racial order in place perpetually counters and creates the necessity of the daily struggle. In this way, Leroy is neither hero nor victim. He is instead a raced actor navigating an environment not of his own making.

Other participants discussed daily acts of resistance to the racial order in their narratives, as well. James C. Scott (1987; 1990) refers to the weapons with which voiceless populations push back against daily oppression as the *hidden transcript*. This hidden transcript existed as a set of language and behavior that restored engagement with the political order to those otherwise disfranchised. That language of pushing back, not through marches or sit-ins but through basic acts of defiance over those spheres of control available to the participants like work and school, are consistent in the participants' stories. Eddie explained the lessons of working in restaurants during segregation:

> There was a Krystal, a Blue Circle, and Orange Julius, but all of those places you had to go to the end of the counter to order your food then they'd give it to you and you had to go out in the street and eat it. And that was true of most the restaurants in the community or you'd go to the back door and order. The Regas is whatever, some people would order dinner from the Regas and go to the back door and pick it up. But you could not go inside and eat it. And that's the paradox and the contradiction in particular because some of these restaurants, it was blacks who were doing the waiting on people, cooking the food, that you'd trust people to handle your food, bring you your food, then you'd mistreat them like this. I remember way back, Bob Neyland, you know Neyland Stadium is named after him...he was a real racist. Now I remember as a student working at the Elks, you know he'd come in drunk. I said if he grabbed me a couple times, I'm kicking his ass, and people had to endure that, and some people didn't like it, got out of control and you'd have to sit them down or whatever. And others

> would become a little too intoxicated. Again, you have people handling your food, and some people did a lot of payback to the food. Now you raising hell and mistreating somebody, then you're gonna say something's wrong and try to send it back? That's not a sane person. That's crazy. I tell my wife sometimes, matter of fact, I say it's real dangerous to raise hell with your waiter.

Overwhelmingly, the participants took up the politics of resistance in their stories of the educational motivation passed on to them by their teacher and principals, especially at the secondary level in Austin High School. Harold knew, to get ahead, that he had to do more than study hard. He had to be better:

> We always were aspiring and told that we had to be better than our white counterparts, even though they were not any smarter than we were. We just had to be better because they made the competition a little bit different when it came to our white counterparts and ourselves, so just knowing something was not enough. You had to know more. You had to know where to find information. You had to be aware. There's a sense that, okay, this is a world that doesn't have your best interest at heart, and the best way that you can conquer that is through education. Whatever they do, they can't take what you know and your integrity, you have to have that and character. Those are things very important to us, that were taught to us, and not only in school but at home so there was a reinforcement of what you got at home in what you got at school with those kinds of things there. We knew we had to learn our lessons. I don't know that we thought, maybe some of us that were high achievers, they may have seen it a different way, but there was some competition. I can remember the Spelling Bee that the News-Sentinel used to sponsor and there was one black girl, who would always end up being number two, but it was such an accomplishment that she could compete. That was an integrated competition there. There were some integrated competition at the University like the science fair where you got to go and compete and compare your work against others. But I don't know that we sat around and lamented about being better than white folk.

Leroy told the story of excelling in education in a similar way. While he emphasized the received knowledge of a world that "doesn't have their best interest at heart," he also told a story of educational excellence as a path to transcending the discourse of black inferiority:

> One of the things they emphasized more than anything was if you're going to be able to compete with other races, if you were going to have to be better. You were going to have to do more. You were going to have to excel. You were

> going to have to know more if you were going to compete with them because they always taught us that we already had one strike against because we were born black or African American because we knew from living and from going to different things and being around, we knew we were second-class citizens. They would take what they had and try to push you to excel beyond because they mostly always talked about what it was going to take for you to make it in the rest of the world, competing against other cultures, other races, you already were at a disadvantage they would tell you because you were black, and as a second disadvantage, you didn't have the same books, the same education opportunities afforded to you that were afforded to them. So therefore, you were going to have to study harder, you were going to have to do more, you were going to have to excel more just to compete. That was one of things that most of you teachers always instill, or try to instill in you. They knew that integration was coming, and they would always tell us, 'you gotta be ready for it. You need to be ready.' One thing they always told us and reminded us, 'they already think you're dumb, lazy.' That's what everybody said back then because of your race, that we were inferior. And sometimes people would buy into that, but I always thought that I could accomplish anything that anyone else could accomplish. James Brown helped me with that, "I'm Black, I'm Proud." I think that was a song that changed a lot of us, "I'm Black, I'm Proud," because before that, you heard all your life and you thought it was a detriment to learning, to everything because of the way that it was instilled in you by the Caucasian race that you weren't as good, that black was evil. After a while, you get to believing this stuff and I think that's what happened to a lot of our forebears. They beat their heads against the wall, in that song, you know, 'we beat our heads against the wall,' doing stuff and you never get any recognition. After that song, I always thought, not more highly of myself that I ought, but I thought I could really do something, and I had to look and be proud of black skin. I had to take pride in that, and things like that helped me to take pride in being black because you didn't ask to be born that way, you gotta take what you're given and use it to your advantage.

David felt the same message of "being better than the whites" throughout his education. The story of this message, in his narrative, required a delicate care on the part of the teachers to protect students from potentially damaging stories of racial oppression that could undermine the neo-liberal notion of success through determination:

> We were receiving from our teachers that you really can be anything that you want to be. You're in a segregated society, and what you have to do to succeed is to be two times as good as the white boy or the white girl and then they can't deny you. And when there were terrible things that happened to black people,

> we weren't told those things. Like when Marian Anderson, the great opera singer, was denied the right to sing at Constitution Hall, which was owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution, they declined to let her play there because she was black. We were told that she performed at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 to a crowd of 75,000 people. That was a great triumph, but we weren't told that she couldn't sing at Constitution Hall. They protected us from that. We knew about the guy who invented the gas mask and the traffic light. We were told about his achievements. But we were never told that he had to hire a white man to front for him to present these things to the cities and the U.S. Army, and he pretended to be an engine assistant to the white guy who would present the product. We weren't told that, because they didn't want us to know that even black geniuses were discriminated against. We didn't grow up with that kind of psyche, that 'poor me because I'm black. I can't do this and I can't do that.' That was not in the education we got. None. Not at all. We were shielded from a lot of stuff, and it was only until I got out of school and started to read some of the things that they didn't tell us about because they were protecting us. I was thankful for it. It didn't injure me in any kind of way. I grew up thinking that if you were the best, you could be anything that you wanted to be. But if I heard these stories about no matter how good you are, you still have to face racism and you're still going to be pushed to the side? No. I think they played it just right.

Education stood as a critical site of resistance against segregation for these participants. In Scott's notion (1987; 1990) of the *hidden transcript* and *infrapolitics*, these stories share an intentionality of utilizing education for social uplift because it was the environment over which they could control in daily, lived existence. Most importantly, those daily lived experiences were removed from, that is to say invisible to, the direct manipulation of whites. Scott claims that this invisibility "is by design – a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power" (p. 183). Leroy, Harold and David all take up education as resistance with an intimate awareness of the balance of power, the notion of "two strikes" against black students, not only for being black but also for competing with inferior materials. The teachers at Austin, as David shared, continually made calculated decisions to spare the students from negative stories of discrimination against successful African Americans, themselves aware of the potentially

destructive force racial segregation could be even at the level of story and memorial. Such an education was co-constructed between teacher and student, one in which teachers instilled the hidden transcript of racial equality through educational merit and the participants created ways to embody that message to navigate segregated education and segregated life in the East Tennessee.

Sometimes the infrapolitics of daily resistance (Kelley, 1993), acts and movements that engage the social order at an unspoken level, tied directly into the physical space of segregation, or more appropriately, the challenging and negotiating of new spaces. Harold shared:

> Some of these things just happen when you're young that you're not attune to, that you knew there was integration. Like I worked at St. Mary's hospital and some of the other people that were at the hospital, I worked there after school and I would go by riding the school bus over to Broadway and walk over Hill there to work in the x-ray department. When I came along there, the other blacks in the department were not sitting in the lounge where whites were sitting, and I knew it had been integrated so you just sat in the lounge, the younger ones, and eventually the other ones would come because there was nothing that could be said at that point. So whether they like it or not, they weren't going to say anything. Maybe sometime some nut would say something out of the way, but I did not have the burden with it. I don't think my friends had it either because we were young and young people just don't pay that much attention.

Harold positioned in his story an act of resistance that required no disruption of the daily practices of whites. He engaged the hidden transcript of Jim Crow life by embodying a space previously held as off-limits to him because of his race. As I will discuss in the next section, those spaces in a segregated region were clearly marked politically and socially and carried with them understandings of community and safety by both whites and blacks. With those notions came a strong push to maintain those spaces for as long as possible.

Beyond Our Boundaries

You'd come from Morristown
You'd come from Jefferson City
Aloca
Clinton
Oak Ridge

White neighborhoods
We didn't venture into those places
By ourselves.
We never went
Beyond our boundaries
You cross at night
That didn't go over too well.
And if you miss the bus
It's walking time.

You know where your road ends
And somebody else's starts

The various communities throughout East Tennessee[6], remained segregated racially predominantly through housing and rezoning patterns, while state law officially mandated *de jure* segregation as the order of the day for public schools (KJ, April 5, 1956). The city of Oak Ridge, the once "secret city" populated during World War Two for nuclear experiments in the Manhattan Project, relegated its Negro citizens to its Gamble Valley neighborhood on the Southwest edge of town. While in its boom-town phase of settlement, scientists and laborers lived in 'hutments' throughout the clandestine community until more livable, more expensive housing was constructed, creating new neighborhoods only affordable to whites. The sub-standard housing then constructed for the black laborers in Gamble Valley isolated them from the rest of the denizens of Oak Ridge, and while some made arrangements to find better housing as far away as Knoxville, it would be 1955 before the township legally allowed its Negro

[6] In this study, I focus specifically on Knoxville, Oak Ridge and Clinton.

residents to search for housing outside their designated sub-division. Even then, concerned citizens groups pressured local landlords to make housing in white areas too unaffordable for blacks in the area to move out of the Gamble Valley region. One 1960 assessment of Oak Ridge's housing allocation stated that since the last of the industrial housing had been rezoned "the Negro residential area will probably become permanently isolated from the remainder of Oak Ridge, with little chance of rapprochment (*sic*)" (Peelle, 1960).

The same patterns of racial isolation existed in nearby Clinton, Tennessee, as well. By 1957, Anderson County only had about 30,000 citizens total, around 300 of which were African American and only about two-thirds of those men and women lived in Clinton, the county's largest town. While giving a speech in Columbus, Ohio in October of that year, founder and long-time *Clinton Courier News* editor Horace Wells praised the lack of prejudice in Clinton that was apparent in their housing arrangements. Certainly some of their black inhabitants lived among their white neighbors, but many preferred to stay closer to the "black section," according to Wells. These men and women still "passed sugar freely among neighbors" and they "didn't want to eat at your table. They just wanted their children treated fairly" (speech in Columbus, OH, October 4, 1957). Clinton's white population was happy to oblige to the request for fair treatment, Wells added, as blacks in the town are always politely referred to as "Negro" or "colored" people.

Horace Wells's sentiments echoed a common expression of local, tacit understanding on the part of whites and blacks in East Tennessee that segregated neighborhoods were acceptable, sometimes necessary, as long as no harm occurred otherwise. Some expressed this belief passionately when they believed it was challenged. After an Oak Ridge council member

attempted to petition for the district's schools to integrate, he received a letter irascibly explaining to him that "here in the South, we are concerned for the safety of Southern blacks and Southern whites, and these races both know that safety comes from racial privacy." The author went on to note, "of course, Southern Negro understands that the Bible forbids a mingling of the races" (Patton to Cohn, 1953). Not all white justification of segregation was so hostile, however. In an attempt to reconcile citizen's petitions to raise the cost of housing in white areas to exclude working-class and black families, one local woman celebrated how satisfied she truly felt that "the Negroes had their own community and could afford their own homes" (Peelle, 1960). Community provided a useful rhetoric for embracing segregation, as even though groups remained isolated from each other, the sameness of race provided a comfort of unity around which blacks could draw support and whites could condescendingly connote a modest quality of life.

Whites in East Tennessee were not alone in reconciling segregation using the language of community safety. Harold reflected several times throughout his telling of growing up in segregated Knoxville of the modest level of safety and security he felt as a child:

> There was not a danger. We never felt any danger of harm coming to us from adults. We didn't feel that. Adults respected children and adults wanted children to be safe and they did that. Your neighbor cared for you. The person down the street cared for you. I would have to say that my parents kept us in a close community, I guess for our own protection. Neighbors in the neighborhood always looked out for children because they knew the danger. It wasn't just passed on to us, but as you got older more things were said about being cautious and don't go into this area of the city at certain times. But I wouldn't say that we were beaten down with all the cowering about white people and what they were going to do to us.

Harold's telling of community safety indicates the specific role that space played in constructing and sustaining methods of protection against the material reality of Jim Crow racism. While

tucked away in the isolated section of town dictated to African Americans in Knoxville, just as in Clinton, Oak Ridge and other cities throughout East Tennessee, a certain measure of freedom, the freedom of movement, could be drawn from the perceived dislocation from constant threat. Harold retells this notion of segregation as the creation of safe spaces again as he shares the meaning of moving outside the safety of an isolated community or the idea of that safe area being potentially breached:

> We knew what was going on over in Clinton. We knew about that. We heard about those things and heard our parents talk about it. It heightened alertness and a concern with safety. You didn't know if somebody would drive through or what someone might do. It was apparent, but again, we weren't all hiding in corners and that kind of thing. Life didn't stop. Our teachers told us about it. It was in the newspaper. Our parents talked about it. It was on the news and we knew it [*Brown v. Board*] was a big decision. We also knew that we were very much concerned for the safety of the children because then we knew there were folks that would do harm just simply because they could do it. It's a kind of cowardly thing, that I can do it because I can get by with it because this person has no value. So we were concerned about that, and that was also in keeping with what our teachers and our parents had taught us, that we had to move ahead and try to improve our life. When we went beyond our boundaries we were with parents. If you went into a white neighborhood or downtown to shop and those kinds of things in an integrated setting, you didn't venture those places by yourself. I think it wasn't just somebody said don't go there. We weren't burdened down with that kind of thing. We just didn't do it and when you did go you were with a parent and knew you were a different area. Then when you got older you were told because of the reputation that some people would be there.

In this way, a segregated community existed within an interconnected series of *liminal spaces* (Bowers, 1986; Helfenbein, 2006a). To be able to draw comfort from the perception of a safe community also requires a tacit awareness of the geography that dictates where that community, and the protection it provides, ends. The participants in this study each gave intimate accounts of their movements across town, remembering street names, landmarks, local businesses, each defining for them the specific size and location of the area that they defined as community.

Eddie shared a story of navigating the town while navigating adolescent dating life, as well:

> I guess the interesting thing is that dating in Lonsdale, I don't know if you know where Lonsdale is or not way off Western Avenue? Way out there, and my home, I was literally born right across the street from the Coliseum where it is now. Such a very striving community, you know. A home sitting up on the hill and, whatever. Just imagine walking from that distance…and particularly if you get out there dating and forget and miss the last bus, it was walking time. So, many times I walked from Lonsdale or Mechanicsville around Knoxville College to home on Church St. Some people referred to it as Negro Removal, because where the Mariott Hotel is now and the Coliseum and the Safety Building, all of that was pretty much part of the African American Community, which is in walking distance from downtown Knoxville.

Geography in the system of Jim Crow segregation provided the materiality of the construction of space, or more specifically the construction of identities within specific spaces. While Chapter Four will discuss further what the construction of identity within these spaces actually looked like, I argue here that *de jure* segregation of neighborhoods, businesses, and, most importantly, schools created an actual material geography throughout East Tennessee of separate spaces that became one of the primary referents, along with race, of shared identity. The policing and negotiating of the geography of segregation between whites and blacks in East Tennessee created a stage on which both sides would contest the access to power separate spaces controlled. The political maneuvering to place Negro students in new spaces, predominantly white schools, met equally fluid and unspoken political resistance from those in control of the system more often than episodes like John Kasper inciting riots and assault.

Token Integration

> We lived
> In a segregated community
> Segregation was
> The Action of the day

We walked past the Tennessee Theater
Past the Riviera
Sat in the balcony
Out on the street

It was totally segregated
Walking
I didn't have to pass a white school
My wife graduate in 1967
She never had a white classmate

Clinton High School's desegregation and the subsequent pickets and riots it caused in reaction garnered local, state and national attention, particularly for the sensational drama created by the white supremacist groups that arrived to stir up resistance. In other East Tennessee school systems like nearby Oak Ridge and Knoxville, plans to desegregate happened through political debates, drew little by way of violent resistance, and, in the case of Knoxville, resulted in very little actual integration of the races in the city's schools. The purpose of this section will be to trace the politics of desegregating these two systems, focusing on the perpetuation of segregation through the maneuvering by local white groups, who utilized political compromise, precedent and procedure to sustain the separation of the races while often denying the intentionality of white supremacy. After discussing the perfunctory inroads made in the integration efforts, which led to the pairing of Knoxville all-white and all-black schools, including Austin High School, I will share more of the stories of the participants lived experiences of education in a segregated school.

On December 21, 1953, Oak Ridge City Council Chair Waldo Cohn issued a resolution declaring that "to continue the practice of segregation in Oak Ridge schools, which are supported entirely by federal funds and occupy only federal buildings, contravenes in spirit both

the principle that all men are created equal." He further requested of the Atomic Energy Commission, the central body of political oversight in Oak Ridge left over from the Manhattan Project, that the small township's school should be integrated "to bring this activity of the Atomic Energy Program into harmony with the views of the President" (Cohn's resolution, December 21, 1953). Cohn was referring to an action by President Eisenhower earlier that year to integrate any school operating on a United States Army base. The resolution passed with a 4-2 vote on from the Council. The two dissenting members, Clif Bril and Edward Beauchamp, "did not attack the principle of desegregation," but instead "merely argued against rapid action" (OR, December 22, 1953). Bril and Beauchamp found support in their opposition to Cohn's resolution from groups and individuals who used the same justification of political propriety and expedience rather than a moral objection to racially integrated education. In an anonymous editorial, the *Oak Ridger* expressed dismay at the haste of the Council over integration and listed several local issues that are more pressing and necessary that school integration, like the town's impending vote on a property disposal program (OR, January 14, 1954). Cohn and the City Council proposed the bill on the evening of December 21 without first publishing it on the agenda for the public to prepare for a debate, creating a furious local debate on republican responsibility.

A group called the Citizen's Action Council (CAC), headed by Edward I. Wyatt, began circulating petitions for Cohn's recall in January of 1954, admonishing the way in which his petition for desegregation was "crammed down the public's throats" (CAC Public Petition, January 9, 1954). Their rejection focused on the manner with which the petition was submitted and passed without allowing a public debate, and because Cohn mentioned in his petition that

the Council "recognized and accepted the potential loss of state funds should they desegregate" (Cohn's Petition, December 5, 1953). Because of his and the Council's willingness to execute a political act without consulting public will, the CAC argued that "Mr. Cohn has failed to carry out his moral obligation to the residents of Oak Ridge in his efforts to put into effect his own personal philosophies. He has tried unsuccessfully to shift the blame and evade the issue" (CAC Petition). The CAC followed up a month later by releasing an open proclamation by Wyatt in the *Oak Ridger*, claiming that it was "pointed out to him that the estimated loss in State funds for non-segregation totaled just over $380,000" (OR, February 4, 1954).

"How fortunate we people of Oak Ridge are in having individuals such as these to do our thinking for us," claimed one angry white citizen reflecting a similar distaste for local politics as the CAC's public haranguing of the lack of public consultation for Cohn's petition (OR, Al Brown, December 30, 1953). Such a move, the writer argued, dismantled the sacred forms of political participation handed to Americans from its founding generation. Another protestor named B.P. Hagood extended the animosity over white disfranchisement beyond Cohn and the City Council, likening their actions to another step in the Radical Northern takeover of the Southern way of life. He wrote in response to the "liberals touting the Fourteenth Amendment" as the progenitor of the integration movement that they should recognized how that bill "was imposed on the Southern States at gun point by Yankee military governments" (OR, B.P. Hagood, December 28, 1953).

Those rejecting integration efforts in Oak Ridge relied on the threat of the South's infiltration from various levels. After throwing the rhetorical bouquet to integrationists by stating that "some of our best citizens here are of the colored race," another local white defended

Tennessee's right, in fact requirement, by law to maintain segregated schools and noted that "all the fuss is created by when men, and Communists play it as a tool" (OR, Oscar Smith, Jr., January 12, 1954). That same threat of Communist subterfuge was sent in a letter directly to Cohn after the issued his public petition: "From the resolution I judge that Negro Communists are taking over Oak Ridge. From the spelling of your name I judge that you are a Jew. There is no harm in being a Jew as long as you steer clear of Communism" (Patton to Cohn, December 23, 1954). The language of "the siege" created a spatial dynamic to the concerns of whites over integration, and using this discourse, they identified threats from multiple directions. Northern interests came to the South and imposed unjust laws. Communists clandestinely entered American societies and pushed forward the Red agenda. All of which culminated in public policy that broke the spatial separation of blacks and whites, allowing white schools to face another siege, the siege of brown faces.

Still, the public dialog around desegregation in Oak Ridge, more often than the fears of the spatial siege by outside forces, stayed within the language of democratic and bureaucratic integrity. Although some regarded the City Council's actions as "proof of civic duty on display and something Oak Ridge should be proud of" (OR December 28, 1953), many respondents echoed the CAC's petition for Cohn's recall as a matter of the political process being compromised. They advocated that their criticism of Cohn's segregation plan "was not censure of the principle of the resolution, but rather of the manner in which it was passed," especially as it had been sent not only to the Atomic Energy Commission, but also to President Eisenhower himself without public approval (OR, January 14, 1954). Framing the rejection of integration by pointing toward a breech in political-bureaucratic protocol allows the protestors to block the

movement to social progress while simultaneously protecting the sacred ideal. Herbert Marcuse (1964) explained of the slow development of the technical and bureaucratic processes that "within the vast hierarchy of executive and managerial boards extending far beyond the individual establishment into...the national government and the national purpose, the tangible source of exploitation disappears behind the facade of objective rationality" (p. 32). By calling on a respect for the "sacred forms of government" inherited from the Founders, Oak Ridgers moved against integration by defending the objective rationality of the republican system which masked the concomitant exclusion of blacks from public schools.

The people of Oak Ridge turned to that same technical bureaucratic system to resolve their debate around integration. In an emergency referendum vote, sixty-two percent of Oak Ridge voters recalled Waldo Cohn from the Council. He stepped down as Chairman of the Council but remained a member to the end of his term (OR February 16, 1954). The City Council appointed K.Z. Morgan as the temporary Chairman to resume discussion of Cohn's original petition. The thirteen-member committee heard the arguments around the petitions and in August of 1954, the members present voted 5-1 to rescind Cohn's effort to integrate until the district could be more certain of the state legislature's official response to the *Brown* decision. The Atomic Energy Commission eventually handed down the order to desegregate Oak Ridge schools in 1955 and the school year began with forty-five new African American students. However, by 1960, a local report took an assessment of the district's success at integration five years later and reported that "it appears there has been little change in racial segregation patterns in Oak Ridge since 1955. While sit-ins nationwide provide some hope, Oak Ridge has few concrete changes in its pattern of community life and services to support this view" (Peele, 1960,

p. 13). The failure to integrate, even when politically mandated, continued in the schools of nearby Knoxville, as well.

Attempts to integrate Knoxville City Schools began almost immediately after the second *Brown* decision which ordered integration "with all deliberate speed." In July of 1955, a group of African American parents petitioned the School Board to integrate by taking specific measures to reorganize public schools in a non-discriminatory basis and to work out a plan for desegregation that would take effect no later than September of that same year (KNS, July 15, 1955). City schools failed to comply with the parents petition, and in 1959, the issue was raised again when local minister and Education Committee Chairman of the Knoxville Chapter of the NAACP Frank Gordon led a Negro delegation asking the city school board to integrate after it had denied access to twelve different African American students to Knoxville public schools (KNS, September 3, 1959). In response to the students attempted enrollment, School Board member J. Burkhart stated that "the Board reaffirmed its position that it is not ready to integrate" and "it is still studying the matter and intends to keep separate and equal facilities until we work out a plan for easy and smooth integration" (ibid.).

Gordon, supported by his delegation, declared in front of the board less than two weeks later that "I am a believer in the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court that segregation is dead. All we need to do now is have its funeral." Later in his testimony, he added, "Negro children are passing by half-filled Mountain View School to go to over-crowded Eastport, and Negroes living in the back door of East High School are going across town to Austin" (KNS, September 15, 1959). Gordon ran for a position on the school board that same year against popular incumbent Robert Ray, facing an army of opposition "not just because Mr. Gordon is a colored man, but

because he represents a pressure group which is determined to integrate public schools here at any cost and without consideration of local situations or requirements" (KNS, June 8, 2004). Both his motion for the school board to integrate public schools and his campaign for a spot on the same board were defeated that year.

After a series of court cases against the Knoxville school board were dismissed on technicalities like the changing number of board members on court petitions, the City Law Director T. Mack Blackburn warned the board in 1959 that it would be in their best interest to adopt a reasonable integration plan "rather than fight an all-out war in the courts" (KNS, September 18, 1958; KNS, January 8, 1960). In April of that year, the board adopted Plan Nine for integration, the ninth attempt to construct a desegregation plan to which all parties (board members) could agree. This plan adopted a grade-a-year integration program, meaning all students who entered a school at the start of the integration year could finish all grades in that school, effectively integrating the first grade every year until the system was fully integrated twelve years later. The plan they adopted also included a generous transfer plan for students that carried three stipulations for requesting a transfer: 1) when a white student was required to attend a school that previously served all or predominantly Negro students, 2) when a Negro student was required to attend a school that previously served all or predominantly white students, and 3) if a student requested to attend a school previously attended by his or her older siblings (KNS April 2, 1960).

Almost immediately after the public release of the school board's Plan Nine, seventeen African American students and their families filed official complaints to the Sixth Circuit Court, citing a lack of what the Supreme Court required as "deliberate speed" in a twelve-year

integration plan, especially as the city schools have already allowed five years to pass between the decision in *Brown II* and the creation of its plan (KJ, April 14, 1960). Robert Taylor, the Federal judge who presided over the integration order for Clinton public schools heard *Josephine Goss, et al v. The Board of Education, City of Knoxville* to decide the constitutionality of the school boards plan (373 US 683). Taylor officially approved the board's initial plan, but the plaintiffs in the case, the students and their families, challenged that ruling to request that the plan include a stronger implementation of vocational education for the remaining black schools and erased the provisions for majority-minority transfers. The case went through review as high as the United States Supreme Court, which merely rejected the final transfer policy of students transferring if they found themselves to be a minority in a school, but left the rest of the provisions to be finally decided by Taylor in 1967. In that decision, Judge Taylor upheld that the "city had no constitutional duty to bus or transfer students to alleviate a racial imbalance which it did not cause" and since the passage of *Brown*, "the city had moved toward integration with conscientious zeal" (KJ, May 18, 1979).

The city board did face some pressure to integrate while *Goss v. Knoxville* made its way through the legal system. In 1963, the United States Justice Department reviewed the city's integration approach, admonishing its transfer stipulations but not ordering a restructured plan (KNS, January 13, 1963). Knoxville Civil Rights activist Walter H. Bishop filed the first complaint to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) against the city's schools using the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In his complaint, he submitted that the city lacked a time-table other than the grade-a-year plan and failed to provide sufficient notice to parents on school placement. He pleaded with HEW to "let the board know that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has

teeth in it. Delay now will probably mean the continuation of 'token' integration of the Knoxville city schools for another year" (KJ, April 30, 1965). Neither measure, the Justice Department reprimand or the HEW investigation created significant motivation for a more hasty desegregation. In fact, Superintendent of City School Olin Adams responded to Bishop's accusations by saying that his complaint "preempted the authority of the Federal court, which had already approved and was continuing to deliberate on the plan." He then went on to call Bishop and his wife "habitual troublemakers" (ibid.).

The city attempted to expedite the integration effort in only cursory ways. One of their main efforts involved a school pairing system, taking all-white and all-black schools near one another and merging them into one unified building. Sam E. Hill elementary merged with Lonsdale Elementary, Rule Junior High merged with Beardsley Junior High, and Austin High merged with East High in 1969 (KJ, November 15, 1990). The mergers represented, along with various contested busing plans, an integration agenda that proved almost completely ineffective. Two years after merging with East High, now Austin-East High School in 1971 maintained a student body of 780 black students and only 3 white students. That same year, the city reported that one in four of its schools still maintained no black enrollment. Even this report is misleading, as when looking again at enrollments district-wide, nearly half of the schools consisted of over ninety percent of a single race, either white or black (KJ, September 1, 1971). The impact of school merger could still be felt, however, in the loss of the sense of community shared by this study's participants that will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Before moving on to discuss the discursive function of space, race and segregation in creating notions of community for the participants in this study, I will end this chapter by sharing

more of their stories of their lived experiences in a school that remained segregated throughout their years as students and never fully integrated, even after merging with East High. Harold chose to remember his time in high school at Austin as just that, a basic high school education:

> It was just like any other school, it had a full curriculum at each grade level, you had home room, you had clubs, you had the athletic programs. There's PTA. And you followed your curriculum, as most students do, not being nearly as interested as you should be. And there were those that were superlatives, the cheerleaders, the football players, the real high achievers. And you had those people that were non-descript. Just a community, and educational community. You had your leaders, your principal, your lead teachers, your senior teachers that everybody recognized, guidance counselors, persons in the library and main office that everyone interacted with. People knew you by your name, they knew your parents, they knew if you had siblings that had come before you. Most of them also knew where you went to church, your pastor. There were celebrations. You had your holidays and Christmas celebrations, even the cafeteria workers preparing special meals, just as it is today. And of course the graduations and children getting into trouble. Your best friend. It was nothing magical, just something to get you through. The real difference was it was a segregated school, and there were some ramifications that we probably as students were not aware of, maybe not getting the same type of supplies and everything like that, or we were getting, sometimes we were told, hand-me-down books, but that not passed on into our psyche there. Our parents probably knew and they tried to work those things out through PTA, but the student was not.

Harold spoke against notions of the inferiority of segregated black schools in his story by refusing to embody the everyday experience of racial oppression. Although he spoke often of an awareness of the need for safety when moving outside his designated neighborhood or community, by telling the story of his daily life as "nothing magical" or "just like any other school," he is again creating a counter-story of segregated life that speaks back to the assumption he perceived in my questioning that our narratives of black schools in the South were either underfunded and low-performing or inspirational recruiting ground for racial activists or both. His school was not to be pitied, but it was not to be celebrated as the

motivational savior of a generation of black teenagers. To Harold, it was just school. A school that instilled in him lifelong lessons and notions of self and relationships that lasted into adulthood, but just a school nonetheless. In this moment, also, it was clear that he was speaking to me, a young, white researcher. In telling me that his school was "nothing magical," he attempted to de-mystify my questioning around race, education and experience, to explain to me that the education he received was a daily process not unlike the education most teenagers still receive. For me, he wanted the story of Austin High to be a story of typicality, not exception.

Other participants took up the stories of segregated education specifically as sites of resistance to an oppressive racial order. Leroy told of his thoughts about the surrounding white schools:

> One thing I did notice whenever we got a chance to go to white schools, like the books, they always had the newer books. Equipment, football, basketball, I played in the band. Our uniforms even, they were hand-me-downs from white schools. We never really had anything new, and I guess also the school budgets, I noticed there was a big discrepancy in that. White schools would get everything and we would get their old stuff, so we really never had anything new, books and everything. So by the time we get them, they have all these new stuff. I always hated that because I never understood why we pay the taxes and discrepancies as far as the school and neighborhood, why you didn't get equal monies distributed, equal access, equal education. It was always, the instruments and stuff, they were always hand-me-downs. Now I do know that when we left Beardsley and we got to Rule, it was far different from what we had been doing, and Beardsley, the books were, they had older books because Rule was a rural school. I mean they were in a poor section of town and it was predominantly white. They had newer books than what we had, but they were older than what other schools had ideally, and you had teachers that were, they wanted to teach back then and they were prideful in their teaching and they really wanted you to learn.

Leroy told specifically of an education where the materials were second-hand and inferior to what he knew white students, even white students in a rural district with already sub-standard materials, had. Historians have written at length about the sometimes desperate conditions of

segregated schools throughout the South (Harlan, 1958; Anderson, 1989; Baker 2006). By taking up descriptions of these conditions in his story, though, Leroy chose to connote the active engagement with struggle created by segregation. By already speaking at length about the received message of "having to excel," descriptions of inferior materials are a testament to the commitment to which students and teachers together forged an education of resistance together to push back against Jim Crow on a daily basis.

Ultimately, the participants shared their time at Austin as a time receiving a top-notch education. Harold, even though he told the story of high school as only high school, spoke of his education with great esteem:

> Austin High, it was quite an honor to graduate from high school. They made such a production of it. They had class days and the girls would have white dresses on and that kind of thing. It was a rite of passage. Grandmothers wore the white dress, and they had baccalaureate services at that time. We had Christian services the day before commencement. That was sort of the experience. It was a rich experience. No different than the experience I guess many children have now.

David added a similar impression of his Austin education:

> It was the very best. Even though it was a segregated system, we had the best teachers money could buy if they were being paid, but they weren't. I always like to tell people that we had teachers who could have been scientists working for Westinghouse, or they could have been writers working for TIME Magazine or Newsweek or whatever, but because of racial segregation they were stuck in the classroom teaching me biology and science or teaching me English. That's important. I had some of the best teachers that you could have because of racial segregation. We were segregated. We had run down buildings. We had used furniture, we had second-hand books, but the education was first-rate. Well it was just acceptable, that this is what happened to you. You knew the books were second-hand because somebody else's name was in them. So what? We got the information out of the books and it didn't bother me at all.

The stories the participants told, the dismissal of inferior materials and high esteem with which they regarded their education, acted as another opportunity to speak back to the material

conditions of segregation described throughout this chapter. The schools in East Tennessee pursued integration efforts with little impact on demographic patterns in cities like Oak Ridge, Clinton and Knoxville. Whites in these cities rejected the perceived threat of their exclusive spaces being entered by blacks, while the blacks in these cities formed notions of community and safety within the designated borders of their isolated sections of town. In telling of the lived experience of this system of segregation and segregated education, the participants in this study continued to engage and negotiate the control Jim Crow imposed on their lives by reflecting on their education sometimes guarded, sometimes resistant, and almost certainly of the highest quality. Battling segregation and racial oppression to these participants, then, was not a series of landmark political decisions and lunch counter sit-ins. It was the embodied experience of every-day life as a black teenager in East Tennessee.

Chapter Four
People Who Look Like Me

In Chapter Three, I presented an analysis of the historical and material functions of race and space in East Tennessee in the 1950s and the 1960s. In that geographic region, the rejection of school integration happened in various forms. While some groups actively picketed, protested and even destroyed school property to keep white and black students from attending school alongside one another, other areas allowed ineffective bureaucratic legal processes and residential housing patterns to maintain almost entirely segregated school buildings. All the while, the participants in this study went to segregated Austin High School daily and went home to their segregated neighborhoods, vaguely and in some cases never feeling a shift in their social lives because of the cursory moves to integration in the area. They shared descriptions of resistance in the last chapter, resistance to the "order of the day" through stories of high-quality education, a commitment to educational excellence, and the sites of contest where they would actively push back against aggressors and an oppressive system.

In order to navigate a system that held them as second-class citizens and to encourage themselves and their peers toward social uplift, the participants in this study all focused on the necessity of *community* in their experiences. Community, as we saw in the last chapter, could be constructed through spatial terms, and often was done so by official records. Until 1964, the City of Knoxville listed all houses belonging to African Americans with a C for "colored." But *community* is an ideal called upon in the stories of the participants and the people of East

Tennessee in response to the possibility of integration in layered and complex ways. It was a word used to designate unity along skin color and frame of mind, struggle and passion, power and plight. However, community certainly was not a word exclusively called upon by those struggling against oppression. Just as often, it was called upon by whites to exclude and extend the discriminatory practices of Jim Crow.

The purpose of this chapter is to take up an examination of community in the history of segregation in East Tennessee at the level of discourse (Clandinin and Connelly, 2004). More of the historical record from archival collections will be examined to add to the analysis, but the chapter will focus most heavily on the stories of the participants and the constructions of community that they offer in their narratives. By holding their responses against the competing discourses of community in Jim Crow East Tennessee, I will demonstrate that community, as a social construction, had the ability to oppress the same groups that it was uplifting. In re-telling their experiences as members of a vibrant, committed community, the participants continue the conversation about community even today, focusing on the unity of color and the unity of common struggle to maintain that same discursive commitment today. I will end this chapter by briefly discussing how even generationally, that is temporally, community is constructed by the participants.

People Who Look Like Me

> People who looked like me.
>
> That was pretty much the Community.
> Such a very striving community.

I guess with segregation, you knew everybody.
see them at the church
run into them at the grocery store
walking down the street
your neighbors
Common Ground

I saw all kinds of
People who looked like me.
That was pretty much the Community.
Such a very striving community.

The friendship is close here.
Even still.
People knew you
for what you were
for how you lived
People right around you
Every day.
These days our kids don't get to see
People who look like them.

People who look like me.
The Community.
Such a very striving community.

Chapter Three discussed the material ways in which community was constructed, through geographic boundaries and housing patterns. These material realities had profound implications on the lives of African Americans in East Tennessee, creating a subliminal control of their bodies as they moved through and between liminal spaces. The geography of race in these cities defined concerns around safety as well as notions of exclusion, who belonged to what area and who did not. Those material functions of segregated life cannot be ignored as tools of oppression. The purpose of this section, though, is to examine the discourses around the material, to focus on how power is recreated socially in the process of making meaning out of the material. The discourse of community in East Tennessee during Jim Crow, and as it appears

again in the narratives of the participants, reflected the way that groups used community, geography and race as a reference point of understanding but were also able to create meaning and (re)produce power separate from their material presence.

Waldo Cohn's petition to integrate Oak Ridge schools, as we saw in Chapter Three, ignited a fervor among the whites in the city against what they considered to be a breach in the political process that left them disfranchised. While they used the protocol argument to dismantle Cohn's plan and eventually unseat Cohn as chair, white Oak Ridge citizens also called upon notions of community to either accept or reject the entire idea of integration. One enraged writer wrote to the local paper stating, "I don't particularly want to live in a community represented by a bunch of transplanted Yankees who are not satisfied to live and let live but must always be stirring up muck and mud wherever they are" (OR, H.M. Glen December 24, 1953). Some Oak Ridgers went as far as to suggest that those without strong generational ties to Tennessee, using the State because everyone was first-generation Oak Ridger, should be excluded from the political process. In response, a lab worker originally from New York spoke back, writing, "I feel angry living here, because I don't feel I should lose my rights as a citizen because some persons are unsettled by a changing South" (OR, Herbert Parsons, January 14, 1954).

The politics of native primacy going on in Oak Ridge are similar to the reaction to the more sensational actions in Clinton of Ace Carter and John Kasper. The people of Clinton immediately identified them as outsiders from Alabama and Washington, D.C., using their status to position themselves as good republican citizens capable of following the law of the land (OR, September 10, 1956; TNP, October 1956). In Knoxville, an anonymous writer identified within

that argument a central contradiction blocking East Tennessee from fully integrating: "It's the law of the land all right. But laws alone will not accomplish desegregation. It will have to be a process of change by the people of the community" (KNS, April 6, 1958). The making of community by whites in East Tennessee, the process of including and excluding, was publicly being argued in the language of ideology. East Tennesseeans appreciated political deliberation, outsiders pushed integration forward for their own selfish agendas. East Tennesseeans obeyed the law and represented civic duty, outsiders disrupted the social order and created unsafe, unnecessary hostility in the community.

Equally as pernicious as Deep Southern racists or Northern carpetbaggers inflicting their unwanted ideologies on the people of East Tennessee, something had to be done about the Communists. The only three black jurors sitting for the trial of John Kasper that eventually found him not guilty of inciting a riot after Central High School had been flooded and a cross burned in their gymnasium corridor were removed from the jury at the last minute because it was found that they had ties to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an organization long-suspected by the people of East Tennessee to be a front for Communist activity (OR, July 10, 1957). When Reverend Ted Witt spoke as the chairman of the Law and Order Committee of United Forces and Good Government in favor of a speedier integration in Knoxville schools, he left a Sunday morning sermon to find a flier placed on his car and those of his parishioners by the Tennessee White Citizens Council stating:

COMMUNISM IN THE PULPIT

> Recent events have compelled preacher Witt to reveal his true color as that of a Red hiding behind the cloak of religion. Through his Lawlessness and Disorder Committee he has become one of the chief agitators of the Communist social revolution in the Knoxville area.

> It now becomes clear that preacher Witt and his comrades of the Knoxville Marxist Association are the real race-haters. The very concept of race is revolting to these misguided liberals who go about preaching the cult of equality. (KJ, January 21, 1957)

Within these communities of ideology existed the same language to sustain the *status quo* of Jim Crow segregation. The discursive creation of the good, anti-communist, law-abiding Southern republican citizens, allowed local whites to exclude instigators and excuse themselves from responsibility for the more virulent protests. Communists, carpetbaggers and racists all stood outside that ideological community, and all stood to bring to the East Tennessee white community a disruption of their way of life. As we saw in Chapter Three, that way of life was defined politically in the language of contentment in population segregation and hesitancy to move hastily toward integrating public schools (OR, Eleanore Bourdreau, December 26, 1953; KNS, September 3, 1959; Peele, 1960). Therefore, community in this sense, called upon to protect and separate whites from outside agitators, also carried the justification to legally block social progress for black students.

Interestingly, the discourse of community did not just position East Tennessee whites as members of only a local community. Often they called upon the community of the United States as their source of ideological identity. Certainly the notion of being American came by definition with the anti-Communist discourse. Others used patriotic duty to advocate the integration movement. When Waldo Cohn and the Oak Ridge Commission passed their resolution to desegregate public schools, a local high school student wrote him a letter congratulating him on taking the initiative, as "it would be un-American to continue to pursue segregation in our schools" (Reeder to Cohn, January 13, 1954). Another woman reiterated this commitment to the American ideal of equality and justice, calling upon the image of the original

Constitution, even going as far as to describe its exact framing and display in Washington, D.C. to garner an understanding of the sanctity of the text. To all those who would oppose school integration, calling out others by name who had written to the local paper to express as much, she would charge, "maybe you are not American. I like you just the same. I will list my address below so you may come over for tea and we can discuss it" (OR, February 17, 1954).

The notion that citizens belonged to the American community, which carried with it promises of equality and opportunity, did not just belong to whites in East Tennessee either. Eddie reflected on the question of belonging to a democratic America after reading the news of the brutal murder of Emmitt Till in Money, Mississippi in 1954:

> You know about Emmitt Till? So, I got a hold of a Jet Magazine and there were some pictures in there. And Miss Hudson again saw that I was very disturbed. Miss Hudson also was a Civics teacher, and she saw I guess I was disturbed by the photographs and she suggested that I write a paper to express my anger or whatever and I wrote this paper, "America, Are You Really America? Are You Really the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?" And, I guess I concluded through my writings and stuff that America was not the land of the free and the home of the brave, but I guess concluded this paper by saying that one day America throughout the system attitudes will be free and America you will be free to me.

Benedict Anderson, in his seminal work *Imagined Communities* (1983) provided a useful analysis for the complex relationship between the language of patriotism and the continuation of racist practices. He declared that nationalism, or more generally the concept of the nation, is a "cultural artifact of a particular kind" that, while entirely constructed, has the ability to elicit intense emotional commitment (p. 4). He does admit that nation-ness, in the form of patriotism, has produced some of the most romantic, eloquent expressions of love for the community modern poetics has to offer, looking specifically at patriotic anthems. Patriotism, even the love of a country like the United States founded on the principle that "all men are created equal", can

stand alongside racism because the nation is conceived in the language of historical destiny, “while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history” (p. 149). The imagined community of the nation exists through the ordained process of cultural progress. 'Race' becomes a category to define who belongs to that national community (Anderson uses the Vietnamese and the racial epithets during the Vietnam War as a specific example) but does not, in itself, belong to the discursive creation of national identity.

Eddie's essay to America, his expressed hope that someday the United States will be the “Land of the Free and Home of the Brave,” called upon that exact notion of patriotic destiny, the United States as a country with a destiny to eradicate race and racism as part of its national promise, not a country built upon the racist systems like slavery and Jim Crow segregation. Whites in East Tennessee who promoted integration borrowed that same promise, allowing the actual written words of the Founders to be reason enough to reject segregated schools. Patriotism, or civic duty, could also be heralded by segregationists, again pointing to the sacred ideal of republican government or the rejection of Communist (read un-American) suspicions. The two principles, patriotism and racism, ran parallel in East Tennessee without perceived contradiction. Competing groups, those who wished to integrate public schools and those who did not, called upon the imagined community of America to unify for their cause, treating the dismantling of race as something separately created from but intimately bound to the nation's destiny.

If the nation provided one frame of community discourse, race provided the most essential category of community membership, especially for the participants. Harold explained

the process of knowing community:

> We all sort of merged so you sort of knew all of your peer group in East Tennessee of one color at that time. The thing about it, the only difference of today, is that everybody looked alike. Everybody was of color in our schools, and that was a sense of, I don't know if you would say comfort because we always were aspiring and told that we had to be better than our white counterparts, even though they were not any smarter than we were. You're talking about community, and the students are the hub of that community, and school and the church were the two most important things in our community at the time. I think the biggest difference is again that we were all of the same color. There were superintendents and other white supervisors that would come into the school from time to time, but it was a domain where black people were in control and one that understood the need and the background of the students that were there. There was not any question about being accepted or anyone having to make you think that they're not prejudiced. But that didn't enter into our daily business there, as it does now, where sometimes you wonder who has the best interest of our children at heart.

He went on later to define community more broadly in terms of how he understood it as an adult based on recollecting his lived experience:

> Sameness of purpose, common cause, common ground, a respect for the norms of the community and the norms of the community at that time. There was no harm to children. Men respected women and the reverse. The whole sense of Christianity, respect for your neighbor. It was family, extended family because we certainly were welcome in each other's home, circles of closeness, a community within the community. A sense of belonging, a place that is mine.

The notion that community was constructed through the daily interaction with people of the same race persisted throughout the participants' narratives. Leroy recalled:

> We had all African-American teachers, the principals, the coaches, everybody was African American, and you practically knew the people because they came from all over. Austin was the only high school so they came from Morristown, everywhere. It was the only high school back during the early times of segregation, so like from Alcoa, that's where they went, to Austin. It was a good atmosphere, it had a sense of belonging, a sense of family, a sense of pride because you had teachers who really cared about you and stayed on your cases. Most of them in the segregated school, they knew your parents because your sisters and brothers had gone there, so it was pretty well they knew your family. So if there was any kind of problem or anything, they'd just get on the horn and

> call your parents, and the parents would believe the teachers back then, so whatever they said, that was it and you didn't dispute it. It was a different time from what times are now, very different.

Raymond Williams' (1973) concept of "knowable communities" supplies a necessary approach to understanding the relationship between race and creation of community. As discussed in Chapter Two, Williams noted that community is a continual process of searching for an identifiable whole, a search that relies exclusively on the connections made by the observers themselves, not the actual substance of daily life. Race, to these participants, was the most identifiable material of daily life around which the participants revolved their re-tellings of sameness and common purpose. Their narratives then are not just artifacts to detail the creation of community in the 1950s and 1960s. They are also part of the perpetual process of making meaning of race through the discourse of community. In this way, communities are knowable across time, as well as across space and racialized bodies. The telling of community in this way, especially in targeted groups, allows the storyteller to identify in every (re)telling those components of community belonging from which s/he draws support against a system of marked discrimination.

For David, community provided support, even in the midst of intense poverty:

> We lived in a section called the Bottom on Saxton Ave. The people there were very poor people. There were mom-and-pop restaurants and pool rooms and things like that, but there were certainly nobody down there with any money except for the people who were numbers people or ran illegal whiskey. The school teachers didn't make any money, the preachers didn't make any money. We were there, we were poor, but I'm not sure we knew we were poor because television hadn't come yet. There was no comparison that television would show us. Movies were strictly Hollywood, and who really thought about comparing to anyone in Hollywood? It was just an interesting place. My mother was a maid. Sometimes when the boys in the house would outgrow their shoes or get tired of their shoes, those shoes would come back to my house and I wore them. Even though we were poor, we were taught about the Golden Rule. We were taught

> about being kind to your neighbor and all of those things. We didn't get into trouble. We were told to stay out of trouble and we didn't get into trouble. It was a very decent neighborhood to grow up in really, even though it was a poor neighborhood. And in those days, there were no zip codes, so people, when you got to school, the teachers weren't interested in where you lived or how you lived but that you had a brain like everybody else and you're going to get the work done in my class. I don't care if your parents went to school or not, I don't care whether you have a daddy at your house or not. It didn't matter. It was that village you heard about. I described it with the three S's, Miss Sadie, Miss Sallie and Miss Suzie, who knew everything that was going on, and if you said a hell or a damn, by the time you got home, your mother had the Octagon soap to stick in your mouth. If you were in a fight, they would report it. If they saw you doing something you weren't supposed to be doing, they'd tell you about it. Even the drunks would say (slurring) 'hey, you're not supposed to be doing that.' Everybody looked out for everybody. It was truly a village. How my mother knew things long before I got home, I don't know, but they'd report it. It was that kind of atmosphere where everybody looked out for everybody's children.

David took particular pride in describing the conditions of his childhood, stating:

> I love to tell people how I grew up, because we weren't expected to make it. It was one of Knoxville's worst ghettos. That was the place where killings went on and there were few fathers in the homes, and if there were they didn't make any money. It was a loving place, but it was a tough place. I'm proud of the fact that I came from the Bottom. I say it every chance I get.

David's community narrative spoke back to the order of Jim Crow and racial oppression, a tale of pride that provided for him a way to make and remake his racial and class identity with a re-telling of his experience at any possible opportunity.

Although the notion of knowable communities recognizes that community is constructed by those who actively belong to it, I would also argue that this construction is situated within specific relations of power, and the creation of community by its members always engages that power for protecting it, resisting it, or surviving it. Stories like David's and Leroy's, with the remembering of a youth where “everybody looked out for everybody,” draw upon notions of community in order to emphasize the shared struggle of the racial order and the powerful

presence community played in their daily lives, even if that community was a socially constructed imagining based on the material of race. But whites in Knoxville used the same language of community through shared interest to block and deny civil rights to blacks, resulting in ineffectual integration plans throughout East Tennessee that maintained segregated schools and neighborhoods. Community, then, is a social construction, but it must not be examined outside of the context of power in which it is constructed. The actors involved in creating community in the schools, the teachers, will be the focus of the next section.

Our Teachers Were Our Friends

> You ever hear of the Talented Tenth
> Our teachers
> Who really took a personal interest
> Mathematicians
> Scientists
> Writers
> Artists
> The Talented Tenth
>
> You remember all of them
> Willing to share their knowledge
> And love
> They gave us a sense of education
> A sense of pride
> A sense of community
>
> Our teachers were our friends
> Carried me home
> Knew my parents
> Held in such high esteem
> Members of the Community

As discussed in the introduction, much of the historical writing on the building of community in the segregated South focused on the role of the teacher as a primary builder in the

community foundation. Walker (1996; 2009) discussed the various ways that teachers had to be aware of particular local customs, having often come from the outside, in order to engage the population of students and parents, and also how the teachers and administrators built their own community of educators by attending meetings and workshops to develop an engaging curriculum across the South. Fairclough (2007) depicted teachers as those in the community most aware of the indefinite tenure of Jim Crow segregation and those most equipped (and often most successful) to guide student through their transformative years. Gilmore (1996) also notes the skill of the teachers of segregated schools, depicting them as "double agents" who went between two worlds to negotiate a better education and, with hope, a better social position for children as they advanced through education.

The major works focusing on African American teachers in the South identify the important role teachers played in implementing an education far superior to what Jim Crow sought to allow, but the focus of these historical accounts is almost exclusively a look into the lives and efforts of the teachers themselves. This section aims to present the teachers of segregated schools in a new way, through the stories of those they taught. Presenting the role of teachers through students' narratives serves two purposes. First, it will add to the already existing body of knowledge in education history on the intimate role that black teachers played in the lives of students during Jim Crow, from intensive education and motivation to after-school care. Second, the participants' narratives create a useful example of the ways community was constructed around the teacher, allowing that actor to symbolize both the necessity of a good education to rise against and move through racial segregation and possibility of accomplishment for black adolescents who looked to them as role models.

Overwhelmingly, the participants shared stories of their teachers as inspirational guides through a trying time. Leroy recalled guidance from some of his favorite teachers:

> There was Mrs. Cowen who was my homeroom teacher. She was, she also taught English but she was a people's person. She believed in you doing your work and she would befriend but she would still hold you accountable. Back in that day, you had to do the work that was assigned to you, and a lot of times, guys wanted to play ball and they didn't want to do the work. I was one of the few, I always went to school, never missed a day, and I always did my work even though I worked at night, I still did my work because that was just instilled in me as a child. So Mrs. Cowen stood out tremendously in my mind. And there was a guy, I'm trying to remember his last name now, because we always called him, everybody always called him Uncle Bill. He taught commercial cooking. Now the way you got to Austin after the integration, you had to take one of the trades to get over there, so I took commercial cooking because I was already working at the restaurant as a short-order cook. So that was the way, if you didn't take something that was not offered there, they wouldn't let you transfer in integration, so I took commercial cooking. I still can't think of his last name, it's been a couple years. But he was, he taught commercial cooking and he was a mentor for a lot of us because he took pride in the school and also he took pride in education. And although we were taking commercial cooking, he wanted us to understand that he still expected for us to be good students and that education was the priority, although we were taking commercial cooking, education was still the priority. He stands out in my mind. I hope I think of his last name before this is all over with. And one of the guys that I guess that was, I guess the most influential a guy named Nelson Nance, he was assistant principal. I met him when he was over at Beardsley, but he was, he advocated excellence, especially whatever you were doing, and he himself was a very intelligent man, you could tell just by talking to him. He influenced me tremendously, but I guess my math teachers and stuff like that, and Mrs. Cowen my homeroom teacher I think had the most influence on me because she pushed us and demanded that we study, that we turn our stuff in on time, and that we excel.

Again in this story, Leroy develops a narrative of transgenerational community building. In Chapter Three I discussed the "hidden transcript" of schooling that the participants shared, the process by which teachers socialized them around messages about educational excellence and "doing better" than their white counterparts as part of a daily method of pushing back against the culture of Jim Crow. The teachers, as part of that hidden transcript, played the role for these

students of imparting those acts of resistance by advocating, and modeling, the daily practice of integrity and character. But the participants would also acknowledge that the modeling of proper living stretched beyond the walls of the school, beyond the pedagogy of resistance, to the constant presence of teachers in daily community life. Harold gave a lengthy account of his ubiquitous teachers:

> One of the interesting things I think that you should note is that the majority of all of our teacher were trained at Knoxville College, for the most part. They received their teacher training there. So you had a system of very strong educators that took pride of their training there, and they were all very strong disciplinarians, as well as well prepared. This is from the first grade on through, these people that had been trained for the most part at Knoxville College, and others that had come from Tennessee State and other places, but the majority of the leadership of education in Knoxville were trained at Knoxville College here, and that gave us a real sense of an educational institution and exposure to college-trained people and people who had a sense of how to live and how to live well, and a sense of philosophy that they passed on to us. Any teacher that wasn't very caring in their contact with the students, and of course in those days you didn't have a whole lot of the sensitivity things, harassment and that sort of thing, so teachers often would almost adopt students, you would go home with them and be exposed. Also in those days, we had neighborhoods that were contained, so your teacher lived in your neighborhood with you and that also made a difference because that teacher knew your parents, your parents knew them, and the teachers often walked home with us. They were really a part of the community. I think that's part of the uniqueness about it, that the teachers were definitely extended family and invested in the community, in the school, knowing where all the students came from. It also allowed the students, because we had professionals as well as non-professionals in our neighborhood, you had choices. You could see how you want to live, do you want to live like the professionals or the non-professionals? That was part of the training, too, that came within that cluster of neighborhoods of where we came from. Certain teachers were held in high esteem in the neighborhood. They were community leaders and when they spoke that was it, because we respect their training and what they stood for. Our educational experience varied according to your different level of potential but I can recall all of my teachers being very dedicated and working very hard for us and there were those that were quite disciplinary. My favorite teacher in high school was Mrs. Mabry, and I would go to her house in the evenings and help her plant her gardens in the spring because she loved flowers. She shared those things with me. She and her husband did not have any children and I was sort of like their son at that time. Mrs. Macbeth and Mrs. Porter were favorite teachers

> of mine at that time. We had a very close bond. Again, they'd take you home, carry you home after school, that kind of thing, and they were very much about your goals. Mrs. Porter would whip me so many times, but she was always very concerned about me. She was so proud when I got a doctorate degree. She said it's just another paycheck for me. She was very fond of me and I was fond of her. In high school, there became another relationship you had with your teachers. They became focused on preparing you for college readiness, getting you ready to go out into the world and making sure that you had the skills that you needed for that. All through that line you saw professional, well-dressed people, well-trained people. I can't remember anybody that was sort of like a novelist or neophyte in their classrooms, not anybody I can recall. They all were full professionals. They were members of our communities, members of our church.

Teachers are called upon in this sense as the caretakers of a community, the guardians of children and adolescents in the African American neighborhoods. It is critical to the understanding of the performative and learned nature of community construction to look at the ways the participants centered their notions of community around both the examples led by their teachers and the intimacy with which they interacted in their daily lives. Community is being called upon in these stories not simply through geographic boundaries and racial makeup, but through the care exhibited by its assumed leaders in carrying the next generation, in Harold's story physically carrying him, over the threshold of a turbulent adolescence in Jim Crow East Tennessee. The school as community does not exist outside of the process of naming it so. The teacher as community organizer does not exist outside of the same process of naming her so. These stories of teachers going above and beyond schoolhouse instruction do not indicate an educational community in any material sense. Instead, they belong to the participants' naming process of the community to which they belonged and the powerful role teachers played in their understanding of community life. This will be important to remember later in the chapter as I discuss the loss of such a community, using the teacher as a reference point, during the area's attempts to desegregate.

If, though, the participants learned the value of the community in which they lived through the appropriate modeling of the teachers, they positioned the teacher in the stories as the actor capable of holding and exhibiting power through the constant reminder of the teachers' educational training. In telling the story of the teachers he valued, Harold reminded me first of the first-rate education each of those teachers received at Knoxville College, a school of high esteem for black educators. Eddie applied this same notion to his recollection of Austin's teacher corps:

> You probably read W.E.B. Du Bois, right? Well, he talks about the talented tenth in terms of the segment of the population. When I was in the public school system, I was fortunate to have the talented tenth because the sharpest and the brightest of the African American community were not employed in responsible positions, the TVA, Rohm and Hoss, for Oak Ridge, etc. So, they were in the classroom. The mathematicians, the chemists, the physicist, the English professors, etc. was really considered I guess the talented tenth. And it was a good experience. In particular, my experience in junior high school, I had a homeroom teacher named Galena Hudson, who was very meticulous and also really supported a savings program, and I guess opened up my first savings account when I was in junior high school. Miss Hudson took my dimes, quarters and nickels and dollars on occasions and deposited them into an account at Home Federal. And when I left Vine Jr. High School, I probably had more money saved than my parents.

Du Bois's (1903) notion of the Talented Tenth looked to design a system of racial uplift in which the most capable ten percent of the African American population would become the ordained leaders of the next generation of Negroes in American society. By placing the Talented Tenth in the classroom, the participants endow upon those teachers the essential task of uplifting an entire generation of black pupils. But in also sharing the various stories of success in their career lives, from establishing responsible fiscal habits as children to achieving doctorates to publishing books in later life, the participants do not only regard the teachers' task as mighty and noble, they depict them as *successful* agents of change. That is to say, by (re)creating teachers in their

stories as shepherds of the community and (re)telling their successes in life through the guidance of these highly qualified individuals, these narratives endow African American teachers in segregated East Tennessee as the keepers of an ethic of community resistance.

By adopting a postcritical approach to this study, I argue that whether or not the lessons passed on by the teachers actually came to fruition in the moments of opportunity for the participants, actually gave them the necessary skills to excel later in life is irrelevant to our historical knowledge on the topic. It is more important to understand how the participants themselves position the teachers as such successful pedagogues and leaders, giving primacy to the quality of their instruction. These narratives, again, are counterstories to the metanarrative of inferior black education in the South during Jim Crow in two ways. First, they celebrate the quality of education that the teachers themselves received while at Knoxville College and other historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Should that education have not been superior, the African American teachers at Austin High would not have been able to be part of the area's Talented Tenth. Second, they attribute the level of success they achieved in their own lives to the superior education then transmitted to them as students at Austin. The stories of teachers, then, are counterstories of resistance to the expectations of possibility made available in Jim Crow Life. Because the teachers stood at the center of the community, providing the source of power for community uplift through their knowledge and care, the loss of these teachers during the process of desegregation would also lead to a general sense of a loss of that community and that community power. This idea is the focus of the next section in this chapter.

A Necessary Evil, A Necessary Movement

Kids come here now
They don't know each other
African Americans are dispersed
They took our teachers
Our teachers dispersed
Devastated the Community

Painful to watch the news
A necessary evil
A necessary movement
Nothing was beating us down
They saw it as an opportunity

To show their expertise
To show their equalness
Furthering our understanding of equality
Devastated the Community

Even though it happened incrementally and sometimes only perfunctorily, the nominal effort of integration came to East Tennessee schools in the 1960s. David Cecelski (1994) wrote vividly in *Along Freedom Road* of the devastating effect desegregation had on schools in the South as their teachers and administrators continued the march for improved education for black teenagers by advocating the systems integrate to allow increased resources and opportunity of the students. The effect of this movement, according to Cecelski, was the deterioration of the sense of community that the schools provided for African Americans, as that central body of pride and community meaning dissipated and often the building itself closed or disappeared. This section seeks to describe that same phenomenon in East Tennessee schools through the participants narratives of their perceived losses in the movement to integrate. Within these stories lies another way to understand the role education and community creation played in the lives of students in segregated schools, by tracing what they identify as the loss of that idea they

had created for inspiration, for protection, and for hope.

Importantly, Knoxville's African American residents were not the only citizens expressing a concern for the loss of community during the process of integration. In response to the possibility of busing student across town to establish integration, a natural result of the city's lax racial transfer policies in integration Plan 9, a "bi-racial" committee of over three hundred Knoxvillians petitioned the school board to say, "We are opposed to busing to achieve any sudden mixing by larger numbers. We want neighborhood schools to remain as are, and we want enforcement of school zones as set forth" (KJ, August 18, 1971). In a similar proclamation, the concerned East Knoxville Citizens group rejected the school board's focus on the neighborhoods on the eastern edge of the city as the primary site of desegregation need. In their public statement, East Knoxville:

> has set the example for the entire city in racial harmony by adopting the integration of schools, and therefore should not be singled out as the sole solution to the city's problems and any shifting of pupils in the Holston area should be minimal and should be done only where it can contribute to better education and racial stability. (KNS August 26, 1971)

The racial harmony of integration to which this proclamation referred was the merging of Austin and East High Schools, which created the new Austin-East High. At the time of the East Knoxville Citizens group celebrated their efforts, Austin-East High had a 0.004 percent white student population. The group further went on to suggest the need for legal counsel to prevent any further disruption of their lives and to appoint a committee to keep the community informed of any developments. The report of this story went on to note that "no Negroes were present at this meeting" (ibid.).

Community again is taken up by whites, and the loss of that community or the perceived

loss of their community stronghold by dictated integration challenged the power dynamic within which they had situated their own community. Though East Knoxville whites felt an imposition by city government in their lives that tore at the power of their own enfranchisement as entitled citizens, calling on the ideal of community to protect themselves from that encroachment maintained a racial order of separate spaces for the foreseeable future. In 1979, ten years after Austin High merged with East High in an attempt to expedite the twelve-year integration plan and integrate East Knoxville, the federal Office of Civil Rights assessed Knoxville as the nation's eleventh most segregated school system (KNS, December 1979). The East Knoxville Citizens group probably had very little to do with perpetuating the actual *de facto* segregation in Knoxville, but their public petition at least showed that the fear of a loss of community was at least discursively, if not materially, shared by whites and used to advocate the status quo within the section of the city with the highest concentration of black citizens.

The participants shared the loss of community in their own stories, although they pointed to actual material losses in their daily lives. Eddie lamented the loss of black teachers to white schools after the move to integrate the system:

> When they finally decided to desegregate, which I do recall, they took the best teachers of the black schools and put them in the white schools and probably sent us the worst teachers they could find (laughs). But I don't recall in junior high school really discussing this whole thing of Brown v. Board of Education. I'm sure that I was cognitive of it in some way, but in terms of actually remembering the dialogue in the community, I don't recall. But that's the other thing that back in junior high school as well as high school, because it was a predominantly black school and the principal was black and whatever, most the kids were student members of the NAACP. They did that on school time and take fifty cents or whatever for an NAACP membership, and that's not true today. It gave a sense of belonging to something that was going on in the country and the advocate organization of the NAACP. The teachers made a conscious effort for us to know our history in terms of where we came from, in terms of our struggle, and that's not necessarily true today. They would go back to their alma maters. The school

> that they had gone to and graduated, seeking scholarships for their students. They joined the so-called African American student and teachers association, and unfortunately because of the circumstances of segregation, those things were abolished and they ended up developing caucuses within the larger structure. When they had their own structure and stuff they set the policies and direction and the parameters in terms of they wanted to pursue as an association, and that was not true when they became a part of the larger body. The government body you know they had the caucuses, and I don't know if that still exists, even the caucuses. I think that might have disappeared, too. And that's the other interesting thing, I saw all kinds of people who looked like me in the classroom. Now, in the future, students are seldom going to see somebody that looked like them in the public school system.

Eddie's story is one of loss and betrayal, although to say that black students in contemporary schools in East Tennessee will not see "people that look like them" is not entirely factual. In a 2003 news report, Austin-East High School was still listed as ninety-three percent African American (KNS August 21, 2003). His choice to frame his narrative in such a way then was to reiterate the perceived loss of community, not the actual racial make-up of present schools. He told the story of the best teachers leaving as a story of loss by force, through plunder, that the district removed the highest performing teachers and placed them in white schools to continue an imbalanced educational system. Harold recalled the story differently:

> We knew those were white schools over there and probably our parents talk about that they have better equipment and that kind of thing, but there's nobody yearning to go to Fulton or go to West High until the opportunity came along. The first thing they did was have summer school at West High and some of us went to summer school, which was our first integrated situation. Then when they fully integrated, some students did transfer to East High School. Some of us elected to stay at Austin High School. There was no one running from Austin High School for better things. One of the things that was most devastating to the Austin High School system was when they dispersed our teachers, when the teachers went. The teachers went because they saw it, some of them were told to go, but they also saw it as an opportunity to show their expertise and their equalness as educators. They took that on as another one of those things as being better than, not just as good as their white teacher counterparts, that they were just as prepared, better prepared. I think they saw that as a means of furthering the understanding of equality, and they came from a generation that was more

> deprived than our generation was. I think that seemed to be one of the things that was most devastating to the Austin High School system, the disbursement of some very fine teachers.

Harold's story then is one of the teachers leaving to prove their worth and the worth of the education a black school was capable of providing. It was loss through voluntary participation. Rather than being "taken" by the school board, black teachers moved on from Austin to prove that they were just as capable as white teachers in educating Knoxville's students.

Both of these men look back on the city's integration effort for the loss of some of the school's highest quality teachers. As I have already discussed in this chapter, because those teachers were regarded as the leaders of the school community and the African American community, their loss from the school created a loss in community. But to identify the actor responsible for that loss is to locate the sources of power controlling the lives of students and teachers in a segregated school. Eddie expressed sadness over the loss of teachers and the programs they offered students phased out after they were taken to white schools during integration, which places power in the hands of the bureaucratic administrators responsible for desegregating schools. Harold's narrative, rather than making the teachers helpless actors in the changing educational landscape, gave his instructors the agency to leave the school for opportunities to continue the process of uplifting the race through example. Foucault (2004) recognizes that no particular body actually exists from its source of power, in this case the school board did not have power before it was created. Power exists through the negotiation of it through bodies of state regulation and those it regulates. The departure or removal of teachers from Austin High was part of this negotiation between those imposing a flawed integration and those navigating that system to pursue equal treatment. The narratives of those competing actors

vying for autonomy or authority within the bureaucracy reflect the continued negotiation for power, even in their (re)telling.

For Leroy, the schools and town desegregating created a loss even more intense than just the loss of exceptional teachers. For him, the very livelihood of the black community deteriorated:

> I thought it was great at first, I think a lot of people did. But we lost a lot of the black businesses because you could eat anywhere you wanted to go, you could do this and you could that, you could go to the schools and everything like that, and now a lot of your black colleges had gone out because they didn't have the support like they did back then when you couldn't go anywhere else. And now a lot of the black colleges, HBCs we call them, a lot of them have gone out of business because you don't hardly have any establishments in the community like my son owns a restaurant over here, but I don't know of any other black restaurant in this area. And like in other areas, like in East Knoxville, they got two or three establishments, but usually you could go anywhere in the community. The barber shops and the beauty shops, people go different places now, so you don't have that sense of community and family anymore in those communities, so I think that was a detriment to the black establishments and businesses. You know, it took me a long time after integration to figure out what had happened. I thought it was one of the best things that could have happened to us at the time, but before integration, the black community is where camaraderie, fellowship, family life, everything that you needed was in the community as far as the shops and the grocery stores, the beauticians, the morticians, they were all in the community because we couldn't go outside of the black race.

Leroy used this story to tie community into power through freedom of movement and economic independence. The closing of black businesses and HBCUs represented to him the metaphoric dissemination of his own community. Most importantly, he thought the idea of integration seemed like a great idea at the time. Harold admitted that, while not everyone was beating down the door to escape Austin, students and teachers left with the higher goal of proving their equality. These stories of community loss, in their consideration decades later, revealed the hegemonic discourse of legal desegregation policy. By using the language of opportunity and

racial equality, those disfranchised by Jim Crow acquiesce to what essentially amounted to a legal half-measure that left them with only a negligible amount of new freedom while losing the feeling of community to which they had inscribed the very basis of their identity. Because community provided at least the language of resistance for the participants in this study, while they lived in a system that neither did nor intended to grant them a measure of power, the loss of community in their narratives is perhaps the point at which we can identify the most significant loss in the contestation of power.

To end this chapter, I will briefly present some of the ideas expressed by the participants about their notions of education for African American students in contemporary schools. While the scope of this project so far has been primarily historical, a look at this component of their narratives reveals three useful dynamics in the study of communities historically. First, the participants very much consider themselves still committed to the communities they created while in school, as is evidenced in their efforts to continually celebrate that education, and linked to that school community because of its close connection to race and the struggle against racism. Second, the participants have also separated themselves from contemporary students generationally, showing the complex ways that time itself can be used in the process of including and excluding members of a community. And finally, these stories show the various and contradictory ways the participants have taken up the challenge of race since their education, using contemporary students to decide if the community has failed the project of resistance or if the project itself is still designed to fail the community. These reflections indicate the final layer presented in this study of the process by which community, identity and power are (re)created in the daily act of memory and (re)telling.

Eddie acknowledged that the presence the school still played in his life could not be found when looking at the way it draws together black students in Knoxville now:

> You'll find that there is I guess a radius of two years in between, so there's a five-year span where I know everybody that probably went to Austin High School. Two years behind me and two years in front of me. And it gave me, you know, I knew people in the African American community. And that's not true now. You know the kids come here now and they don't know each other. They're so spread out, you know, at West High School, East High School or Austin East High School and other schools throughout the county. So African Americans are dispersed, but a vast majority of them, I think, are still at Austin-East High School, and there's still very few whites that attend the school. But again, the friendship still exists for that five-year span. It exists with friends even beyond that because everybody went to the same high school and a lot of those people still come here to the Beck Center because their classmates here, we've enlisted that in coordinating the 130th reunion of Austin High School. So, I guess the last time they had this, about 1400 people showed up. I guess in terms of recycling materials, that's probably close to 3000 people that you touch. But again, the friendship is close here. It's interesting people come in terms of the closeness still exists.

Eddie's story certainly reflected that same dependence on community and on the loss of community for future generations. The narrative also captured the final point I wish to make about the construction of community for the participants in this study. Community, as described by these four men, existed temporally, stretching across time but also isolating generations from one another. The enormous turn-out at the Austin High reunion is a testament to the temporal commitments built around specific times and specific places. However, for these participants, belonging to a community in time also allowed them to dislocate themselves from younger generations, to 'other' those that came after them for failing to properly live up to the the promise guaranteed them by the hard work of their forebears. As David shared in thinking about the hardships he faced in comparison to younger generations:

> We didn't have those crutches in those days that young people have today. Sociology books tell them that if you come from a one-parent home, you're at

> risk. If you don't eat breakfast in the morning, your brain doesn't function right. We never heard any of that garbage, so we weren't handicapped by it. We didn't have a crutch like I didn't eat breakfast this morning. A teacher would rap your knuckles blue if you came in talking that nonsense. I think it made us a better people, not having to deal with all that nonsense they deal with today.

Sharing stories of later generations' crutches and failures provided a means for these participants to gauge their own struggles against power in the Age of Jim Crow and the legacy their successes left behind to be taken up by their children and grandchildren. Two competing stories illustrated this point. The first came from Leroy:

> I guess one of the things, looking back at what we had and where we are now, I think a lot of times we forget where we have come from. I'm not so sure if that's good or if it's been good for my race of people. I think integration overall has been good, but I think we lost something in it of what we had. I'm talking about community pride now. Community camaraderie, especially the black businesses, entrepreneurship, very seldom in these areas do you see black establishments. Whereas you go to other places and you see it, like Atlanta, but here, we didn't have as many blacks in this area as the other areas in Tennessee and that might have been one of the reasons, but I still see empathy for some of the things that I went through when I was a young man. I still see it prevalent today, although every opportunity is open that there never was to my parents or my foreparents. Since we were the first group to integrate, I think a lot of us accomplish much, but our children and our children's children, I don't see them taking advantage of what's before them. That bothers me. We came out of an era that was difficult to excel and to become what you really wanted to become and now they have every opportunity whatsoever and it seems to me like they're squandering it. Not all, but even in your graduate courses at colleges and universities, one of the things my daughter talks about in the PhD program, you hardly ever see any black males. I've been doing the prison ministry for twenty years. It's full of them. It amazes me how the government continues to build these great lucrative prisons with great lucrative salaries and stuff like that, like this new prison in Morgan County. I think it's about seventy, seventy-five percent African American. I call that the new slavery, institutionalization. You see guys eighteen to thirty-five, life sentences of thirty, forty years. You'll be spending the money on that, but preventive stuff you don't spend the money on. We lost a lot because of a lot of them are locked up and have children. Who's raising the children? Women. That old cliché, a mama can love a child to death, but it takes a father to make a man out of him. I think that's one of the things we're missing now in the African American community. When I was growing up, even in the projects, your dad was there. He guided you and he was the disciplinarian. Women do a good job

> raising children, but a man, a boy is going to look for a man. And wherever he finds him, to show him some love, he's going to gravitate toward him, whether it's the dope man or anybody else. I think we've been hurt a lot in the past by the man keeping his foot on our necks, but when you have an opportunity, you need to get up and do something. We can still use that old cliché, when the white man won't let me excel, you won't let yourself excel. James Brown again, "I don't want nobody to give me nothing. Just open up the door. I'll get it myself." That's what I taught my kids. All you are owed is an equal opportunity. It's up to you to make out of it what you want to. I believe we should have the equal opportunity. That's one of the things that integration did. It gave us better or equal opportunity. And that's all I felt like we were due, and you take it and run with it from there.

Before discussing Leroy's ideas, I would like to present another version of race politics, provided by David:

> Well, [discrimination] hasn't gone away and never will. I went up to Carter High School and talked to kids about the Civil Rights Movement because I was very much involved in it as a student at Knoxville College, and I showed them pictures of people being put in jail and that kind of thing. One of the students in the class said, 'well, nothing has changed.' And I though, gosh, she's fourteen and fifteen years old and I didn't challenge it because I didn't want to put her on Front Street in front of her class. So I saw her later, she was working at a cashier in one of the supermarkets, and I said, 'in class that one day, what did you mean? Were you talking about students or teachers when you said nothing had changed?' She said both. And I thought about it. I was talking to my barber at the barber shop, things in general because he likes to go out and party and he's in his early thirties. He said, 'when I go out West to one of these clubs, I have to show three or four pieces of ID, the white guys just breeze right on through. If I wear my Bugs Bunny t-shirt, they say you can't wear that.' I thought, here I'm getting from a teenager in high school who feels it, and my barber, when the hell is it going to change? Then I deduced, it's not going to change. In the Sixties when we had all those marches and we knocked down the laws that said blacks and whites couldn't eat in the same places and see the same movies and stay in the same hotels and all that, then the Voting Rights Act came along giving people the right to vote and whatever. The laws had changed but until attitudes and minds change, we still have that problem. And if you have older people at home giving young people bad signals at home about people because of their race, it's never going to go away because it gets passed on from generation to generation. And if it's not black you're zeroing in on, it's Hispanics you're zeroing in on. If it's not them, you're zeroing in on gay people, you're zeroing in on women, they shouldn't be paid the same, they shouldn't be preaching from the pulpit, they should stay in the kitchen barefoot and pregnant. It will never end. Never.

> Because somebody always has to have somebody to look down on. It will never end. Never. That's what our society's built on.

Leroy and David articulated in these two lengthy accounts the two competing notions of race and society in the United States. The neo-liberal agenda of individual responsibility gives way to racial idealism, the principle that equality can be achieved, however incrementally, through progressive laws and individual motivation and choice to resist an oppressive system (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). However, racial realists would argue that racism is permanent, and the power invested in the othering of those with darker skin has only become (and will continue to become) more complex and ensconced in our society. Elimination of racism is not the goal. The work of race lies in the daily and perpetual acts of resistance (Bell, 1992). Within these two stories, this dialogue over race exists in two ways. First, while both Leroy and David disagree over who holds the responsibility for subsequent generations challenges to rise above systemic subjugation, they do acknowledge that the work of race is still important, that racism is far from over in their own lives and in the lives of any other generation. Second, their disagreement indicates that the debate on race still exists, even within disfranchised groups. They both believed strongly in the possibility of educational uplift and the rejection of Jim Crow in the 1960s, but lived experience beyond the years of high school cause divergent impressions of the racial project still ahead.

Critical race theorists have also argued since the 1970s that legal measures meant to eradicate racism from society have only really reduced the more overt subjugation of targeted groups, in the case of Jim Crow things like separate water fountains and hotels. The laws passed to equalize race have left in place legal protections around more subtle forms of racism on the individual and even institutional levels (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). The neo-liberal belief in

laws that protect equal opportunity is largely a white racial project, one that falls somewhere between the rejection of race equality on the right and the call to group rights of the disfranchised on the left, a progressive celebration of individuality (Winant, 2001).

One of the key concepts in critical race theory is the notion of *interest convergence*, a tactical choice by targeted groups to pursue and achieve necessary rights by tying them into the needs of the dominant group, for instance the process by which school districts in the South integrated systems simply because the cost of maintaining a two-school system made local taxes for whites too high (Cecelski, 1994; Taylor, 1999; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Community constructions, I would argue, carry the possibility of the opposite effect, in which a targeted group embraces their faith in one particular notion of community, in this case the neo-liberal nation-state, that continues to be located within systems of power that perpetually deny them equitable access to its privileges. In looking back at David's story of the hope of the Movement in the 1960s, or Eddie's letter to America, or Leroy's long story of the push for equal opportunity, the discourse of neo-liberalism pervades, re-framing the project of equity for the participants in the stagnant hope for unqualified access to the imagined community of national citizenship.

David and Leroy reflected back on their time as teenagers and young adults to provide two competing narratives for how the neo-liberal quest of equal citizenship continues to make and define the communities to which these men belong. In positing the permanence of racism evident in the lack of progress after knocking down the barriers of Jim Crow, David reasserted the community of oppression to which he belonged with the people in his daily community, his barber and local students with whom he interacts. Leroy, however, held strong to the principle of equal opportunity, using the evidence of incarcerated black youths to other generations

younger than his own for failing to seize the benefits he and his peers, a temporal community, provided from their efforts. The concern he shared for the prisoners he encountered during his ministry sessions also revealed that he still felt linked in the same way as David to the community of race. Lived experience for these two participants radically affected their impressions of the work still to be done for racial justice, and their choices to identify the system or the victim as responsible for continued inequity shows the complex layers of community formation, where inclusion and exclusion can happen simultaneously. These two seemingly contradictory narratives at least provide a sense that the participants and the stories they shared capture continued creation of community, including younger generations by sharing with them a need for racial equality while 'othering' them because of the measures taken to attain it.

Conclusion

Across the last two chapters of data, I have attempted to show the complex relationship between community, identity and power in segregated school in East Tennessee during part of the tenure of Jim Crow. I have argued that both blacks and whites met the material forms of race and geography with constructions of community situated in layers of power, and the very notion of community at once empowered and oppressed African Americans in East Tennessee by giving them the tools to push back against discrimination while maintaining a bureaucratic system that perpetuated it. These constructions of community stretched across time and space, and the tellings and re-tellings gathered by the participants in this study indicated the commitments they had to continually creating communities and speaking back to the racial order. In the final chapter of this work, I will discuss the implications of the research I have presented here, both

for the continued study educational history and the ways we frame notions of community in the larger umbrella of education research.

Chapter Five
Reflections and Implications

The participants in this study spent much of their time re-telling the stories of their education and their lives growing up in the Jim Crow South as the process of building and knowing a community. That community, in their narratives, held tightly across time and geography, even though the community they described was isolated onto itself in a specific moment of time and place. While this was happening, white supremacist groups and ineffectual bureaucratic measures worked to ensure that the schoolhouses in East Tennessee would change only nominally, failing to actually integrate the races and continuing to keep separate spaces for white and black students as the standard. Calling upon the ideas of community for their own political justifications of the system in place, these groups utilized similar language of sameness of purpose and identity the participants used for inspiration and uplift to sustain a discriminatory system of *de facto* segregation. For these reasons, I have presented an example across the last four chapters that community will always be situated in a specific context of power, intersecting with identities like race, gender, sexuality, class and others and the geographies in which it is constructed.

In this final chapter, I hope to make assertions about the value of the research I have presented here. I will begin by discussing some of the implications my research methodology can contribute for the study of education history. My attempt will be to show that this study and the ways in which I have chosen to ask certain questions and provide certain answers have added

to our historical understanding of the topic of segregated schools while producing new ways to look into the past for understanding public education. This section will end with a general discussion of how producing new knowledge in this way fits into a larger discussion of the value of education history as an educational foundation. Then, I will move on to analyze some of the general strengths and weaknesses of the research study I have produced to make assertions toward implications for future research on communities in the field of education. To end, I will return to the very place I started this work, my own life, leaving a final analysis of myself in regards to the research as a parting thought on my role in studying a segregated community.

Sites of Memory

The scope of this project has been interdisciplinary, attempting to find new ways of making meaning of historical events through processes like archival research and interviews, the basic tools in the education historian's kit (Butchart, 1986; Grosvenor, Lawn and Rousmaniere, 1999; Ritchie, 2003). The process that I hope to contribute, the process I have called historical ethnography, finds its value not so much in the basic methods of data collection but in the attempts I have made in (re)producing a story of the participants and their communities from the stories they themselves (re)produced. Historical ethnography, for this project, is not a methodology that develops particularly unique ways of collecting data. Instead, the contribution I wish to make to education history is to suggest unique ways of creating meaning through memory and allowing those sharing the memory the space to participate in that creation. As I move through this section, I will discuss the theory behind asking questions in the way I did for this story and the ways I believe it allowed me, as a postcritical researcher, to center the

participants voices in the study and to denote the importance of their specific (re)tellings of their owns lives.

I find Pierre Nora's (1989) notions of history and memory to be a useful source. I think it is worth sharing a section of his text around the differences between history and memory at length here before discussing:

> Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. Memory insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic – responsive to each avenue of conveyance or phenomenal screen, to every censorship or projection. History, because it is an intellectual and secular production, calls for analysis and criticism. Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again. Memory is blind to all but the group it binds...there are as many memories as there are groups, [and] memory is by nature multiple yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim on universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative. (pp. 8-9)

Nora argued that societies and groups build their *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory) in order to salvage claims to existence and lived moments against a rushing current of history that modernizes and seeks to sweep away that which is not declared essential to a society in a perpetual state of renewal and transformation. Although historical study officially distrusts the tenuous nature of memory in the pursuit of objective truth, individuals and those with whom they share a sense of belonging require processes by which those memories can provide for

them legitimation of their own identity.

Memory in the modern sense, according to Nora (1989), is an archival project, the warehousing of information that simply would be impossible for any group or individual to remember (p. 13). Even though the projects of memory and history seem to stand at odds with one another, in fact often conflict with one another as the extended quote above posits, the tasks that we set to memory now, museums, archives, performances, oral histories, are all the final submission of memory to the greater project of history. Within this process lies the possibilities for historical research, to recover memories of the past from the sources we have gathered so intently not to attain objective, generalizable facts of past events, but to practice recognition of the ways we choose to remember, the ways we choose to (re)tell, the ways we choose to declare ourselves.

Perhaps this happened in no greater instance while doing the research for this project than in looking at the yearbooks produced yearly by Austin High School while it was still a singular, segregated entity. If sites of memory are places of archival collection, then the yearbooks of Austin or any high school are designed to create memories of a particular academic year with the intent to promote and celebrate a time of academic success and nostalgic fondness. The yearbooks of Austin High point to particular teachers they wish to commemorate, teachers who "rendered every possible service in upholding the finest traditions and ideals of AHS" (Austin High Yearbook, 1957). The yearbook committee often prefaced the photo-account of the year's happenings by describing their presentation as "the most realistic form" of the year (ibid.), and often moved on to give vivid narratives of the graduating class arriving at the school as timid sophomores before blooming into capable, confident seniors ready to move into the

"real" world and contribute to society with "wholesome living and good citizenship" (Austin High Yearbook, 1958). These yearbooks are purposefully celebratory, intentionally positive because they exist to *remember the good*, as Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) would say. They do not focus on the scant resources or second-hand books and lab materials. They do not reflect upon industrial-education classes as preparing black students to maintain no higher than working-class status. The captions under the woodshop classes assert that a good vocation will allow Austin graduates to become "honest, self-reliant citizens" (Austin High Yearbook, 1961).

The yearbooks also allow space each year for the principal of the school to praise the progress of the year and make projections into the future for the new graduates and incoming underclassmen. The goal of education, according to Austin's principal, is "not only of furthering their growth intellectually, but also for maintaining and improving the social atmosphere, thereby creating an environment which will meet the needs of our students in a democratic society" (Austin High Yearbook, 1958). Each year, the principal's messages reflect that sense of community membership, academic excellence and civic responsibility found in the participant's interviews and discussed at length in Chapters Three and Four. What sets the yearbooks aside from the spoken (re)telling of stories gathered in interviews is their static nature as published words and images. They are sites of memory, but sites of memory crystallized in time by the very process of their creation. Studying yearbooks in doing research on community and education must take into account their celebratory function, as I have already asserted. But to look into a yearbook is also to look into a specific moment in the creation of self and group. Some objective evidence could be gleaned from their contents, for instance student and teacher names, programs offered or athletic and social events. These documents are more useful though

for their role in the process of the making of community through remembering, sites of memory that explore the immediate past and declare from the memories found there that the students and teachers of Austin High are unified and prepared for society and the future.

Like these yearbooks, the stories gathered by the participants in this study should be considered sites of memory, moments in specific times and specific places in which they were asked to recall and readily (re)constructed memories of other specific times and specific places. The historical ethnography I have completed here with a postcritical orientation looked at the participants stories not as a fact-finding process, or even as a more general elevating of the recollections of a previously underrepresented group, as has been a long project of social history. Instead, this historical ethnography searched for understanding of the interactions of groups in the past and the power (re)produced in those interaction by privileging the actual process of memory as that which gives us our most intimate contact with those interactions. The contact was intimate because, in the process of remembering, that bond to memory and remembering was opened and renewed. The participants once again came to a site of memory in which they were interacting across time with those same structures of power, those same groups that gave them hope or took from them opportunity. The stories they shared provided abundant historical data that can be used for multiple purposes in multiple other studies. But here, in the process I am advocating, those stories gathered and shared in this work created an opportunity to understand the complex ways our histories of specific moments, especially concrete moments like schooling, are (re)made and (re)created with every (re)telling.

This process of creation and re-creation is what Nora (1989) calls *duty memory.* He wrote, “it is upon the individual and upon the individual alone that the constraint of memory

weighs insistently as well as imperceptibly…when memory is no longer everywhere, it will not be anywhere unless one takes the responsibility to recapture it through individual means" (p. 16). In this interpretation, individuals construct specific memories of their lives and their interactions with others precisely to legitimate their own experience through the process of story and recording memory. The participants in this study showed a commitment to remembering their lives, their education and school, and their community in a specific way. Throughout this work, I have provided their stories in the context of the historical data of East Tennessee's segregation and desegregation efforts to highlight the duty these participants had to a memory of will and resistance to the power dynamic of Jim Crow. Their stories were tales of defiance, narratives of success despite that power structure. To tell that story, to (re)create defiance in the telling, allowed each participant in his own way to engage race and racism, to continue the duty of their community to hold strong against the system that already set them up with two strikes.

I suggest the duty to remember through story and memory, then, is similar to the duty to remember through academic research. As a white researcher looking into the experiences of targeted populations, I had particular duties in creating my own history of this topic. My attempt was to maintain a duty to the population through my postcritical position. It was imperative in this research that I did not assume an authoritative voice in creating this history in order to create space for autonomy for the participant's stories and to avoid objectifying their lives as a "case" of something. These four men provided their narratives for reasons of their own, and my attempt in centering their stories is to assert their right to in telling the version of the past that they wish to have remembered.

Still, as an educational researcher in Cultural Studies, I have a duty to identify and

critique the various creations of power present in schools, as well. I sought to use this study to critique the creation of power and identity in the separation of races in public schools, and my own duties were to that academic commitment. These two agendas are not mutually exclusive. I believe I was able to maintain the tenor of the stories the participants wished to tell while disrupting the metanarrative of "community" as an *a priori* ideal and critiquing the power dynamics of educational spaces before and during interpretation. But as part of the reflexive process, I have to be able to acknowledge that I had just as much invested in the telling of this story as did the participants themselves. Reflexivity requires admission and investigation of our own intellectual and disciplinary commitments.

As for disciplinary commitments, my hope is that this work will contribute to the ways we seek to research topics in the history of schools in the United States. I have attempted to provide a new set of questions to be asked around what is possible and what is necessary in researching schools and their pasts. Because schools, or more specifically our time in schools, stands as a set of interactions and moments in a definitive context, we can understand those interactions and especially the power dynamics being contested over identities and spaces by looking at the ways we choose to remember and reclaim the stories of those times. This approach is not for every study of education history. The lack of archival record or access to participants (keeping in mind that the resource of human subjects depletes with the passing of generations) prohibits my methodology from being transplantable on any topic in the history of schools. It is an approach that can be reproduced in other areas of education history that do not necessarily need to be as contentious as Jim Crow segregation. Historians like Carl Kaestle (1983) and David Tyack (1974) have argued already that schools are sites of contest for

competing ideologies, and my study supports this claim as I showed evidence that the schools of East Tennessee became sites for the battle over the racial order of the area. I add to that understanding that the contest for ideology in schools does not just happen in the process of schooling. It continues in the process of remembering at the level of those who experienced it. I hope my study is an example of how to research that process.

This work may be able to help engage the ongoing debate over the value of history in the more general field of education foundations. Many historians of education have already spoken up on the topic, pointing to the precarious position education history retains as neither residing within the discipline of history proper or directly relateable to the standards-obsessed practices in schools of education. Donato and Lazerson (2000) added to the discussion of the awkward middle-ground inhabited by education historians by pointing out the difficulty for those trained in the more concrete discipline of history to keep up with a field of education research that is increasingly interdisciplinary and collaborative (p. 4). The greatest challenge facing educational historians today, often producing work for other education professionals and teaching in classes filled with mostly future teachers of educational researcher, is to remain relevant (p. 5). In that search for relevance for the field of education, the historian runs the risk of committing the cardinal sin of historical research, presentism, or the misinterpretation of the past by holding it to contemporary standards or to use it to resolve contemporary issues (Dougherty, 2000).

The charge of presentism is not new to historians, and those who research across subjects face it when researching topics from the Civil War to abortion rights. When researching an ongoing institution like public education, the historical field suffers from continually submitting to the expectation that the past resides only in the past. "Is there any reason," Hayden White

(1966) asks, "why we ought to study things under the aspect of their past-ness rather than under the aspect of their present-ness, which is the aspect under which everything offers itself for contemplation immediately?" (p. 132). To study history in this way, to assume that all change and all "progress" comes from mythic imaginings of past events only stands to reinscribe the *status quo* as legitimate and natural. Education histories that seek to write against presentism in the name of rigor reduce history to the process of collecting "known" information from the past to objectively report as narrative (White, 1987; Fendler, 2008). Without troubling the *creation of knowledge* through the historical process, embracing presentism as a feature of studying how ideas are created and sustained, education historians run the risk of accepting knowledge, and by extension education and its manufacture of knowledge, as objective, outside the social. Education histories such as these may be able to critique power in public education, but they will never be able to dismantle it because they have already adopted a methodological approach that justifies that theory of knowledge that sustains power in public schools already (Fendler, 2008, p. 683).

Cognizant of the challenge of presentism and falling on either side of its epistemological dilemma, education historians have approached work in the field and its value as a foundation in different ways. Richard Aldrich (2003) established three duties for the education historian, duties to the people of the past, duties to the people of the present, and duties to the search for truth. In this way, the role of the education historian is not entirely different from the role of the historian proper. Historians have long since been engaged with research of the past and claims to truths about prior events, and the study of education history should follow the same path. Its justification as a field needs to go no further than the justification of the study of history writ

large. Other historians have watched their field drop in status in Colleges of Education, sometimes being absorbed into the broader curriculum of "foundations," and spoken back to suggest that we continue to advocate for its use as a unique set of questions available for education practitioners to engage and critique their field (Kliebard, 1995; Christou, 2009). Education historians need not be concerned with allowing their field to project into the future to appease policy makers. Instead, they need to continue to support the value that history can provide ways of understanding that are uniquely historical. As Theodore Christou (2009) argued, "history is not in the business of predicting change, but it does demonstrate that change is inevitable" (p. 569).

The work I have presented here seeks to provide another set of questions and possibilities for critique that these education historians advocated. My work was not meant to engage policy in a direct sense, although as I will discuss shortly that I believe there is value in considering the resegregation of schools in my work. I also do not shy away from charges of presentism in my approach. Like Michel Foucault (1972), I argue that statements and stories need not be studied other than for their exact creation at the moment they are created. Education history can still actively critique the structure of public education without suggesting specific policy measures to make it more equitable. That critique, though, must be couched in research that disrupts the assumption of knowledge while uncovering and presenting data of past events. Historians of education must seek new methodologies that reflexively engage the process of making ideas, both in the discourses of the archival material found and stories collected and in the role of the researcher in imposing specific meanings in a particular way through the process of researching and writing. This reflexivity was one of the critical principles guiding my study

throughout.

The historical ethnography I have presented gave a critique of community constructions and the ways power is negotiated over those constructions using the schools as sites of contest. My methodology attempted to show that this contest can be situated and researched historically, but it should also be understood as reproduced in the remembering of those who lived through it. Christou (2009) also posited that "doing history may lead to new and dynamic conceptions of lived experience and contexts, but it is, like all bodies of knowledge, rendered meaningless unless we see that it is inherently wedded to actual, lived human activity and experience" (p. 579). By doing the work that I have done in this study, my goal was to follow this charge and present an interdisciplinary, historical study that could contribute a set of questions around community, space, identity and power to guide other and future historians and education researchers toward new projects that may supplement or refine the narratives I have presented. Because my study argues that power through community is (re)produced in lived interactions and constructions outside of institutional systems of control, then the study of that process historically and the potential critiques it can produce are a more necessary mission of education history than producing work with policy implications in mind.

Implications for Future Research

I originally began this study almost two years ago as part of a course in ethnographic methods. At the time, I was hoping to gain some background information on Austin High School to supplement what I thought would be a larger study on the desegregation of Clinton High School and its eventual destruction. While meeting Eddie in the pilot study process for this

course and seeing the scope of the data available on Austin alone, the project took on a life of its own. I decided to focus entirely on Austin and the notions of community shared by Eddie and the archival rememberings of the school I found in yearbooks and retrospectives. I set out to seek answers to a few questions: 1) what did community look like to the former students of Austin High School and what markers did they use to define it?, 2) in what ways did these students create identities of themselves and others while going to school in this segregated system?, and 3) what understanding did the students of Austin have of the system of segregation in their area?

In terms of the making of community, Chapters Three and Four suggested that the participants in this study understood community in multiple, layered and sometimes contradictory ways. Re-presenting their stories in ethnopoetic form was an attempt to recognize the complexity of those creations. From stories and data collected, I posited that community to these participants was primarily constructed across the material markers of race and geographic space. Interestingly, most of the participants understood what it meant to belong to a community through race and sameness of idea or purpose, "common ground," as was the most common vernacular. However, each of the participants defined what was not in their community, how they knew what did not belong, based almost exclusively on geographic markers. In fact, the participants often described the physical commitment of the body required in traversing these geographic formations of community. Sometimes that meant knowing the difference between other black neighborhoods and where friends or potential dates were located. Other times, that awareness of liminal space more necessarily came from the need to maintain safety and personal security.

Sense of community was not solely borne out of the participants creation though. Each of them spoke at length of the role of teachers in their lives in helping them feel like they belonged to a caring, protective community. Not only were these teachers pillars of the community for helping assist parents in caring for the children after school, sometimes even carrying them home or allowing them in their own homes, they instilled a community notion based on the need for education in the lessons they imparted in the classroom. The participants in this study understood they belonged to a community of struggle as they learned almost daily that they had been relegated to second-class citizenship because of the color of their skin, and they could only succeed by excelling beyond the educational levels of their white counterparts. The participants relied upon a constructed notion of community, certainly, but that construction based on race and geography often was necessary to act as a force for protection, support and uplift against an oppressive system.

The participants in this study, or more generally the African American population in East Tennessee, were not the only actors constructing notions of community in the period studied. Whites in the area called upon the ideal of community publicly, as well. This notion of community was commonly geographic, as well, used to demarcate areas within cities that belonged to particular races and to celebrate the harmony that such separation afforded citizens, both black and white. Geography was also called upon by whites to propagate fear of siege, the assumption that their community was being overtaken by outside forces. Sometimes this geography was schools and neighborhoods, as the public debate over integration indicated. That interpretation spread to more general levels, also, as whites in East Tennessee often expressed that their way of life was under attack by Northern business interests, Communists, or racist

agitators from the Deep South. Community, to these whites, became something to protect from encroachment rather than the very source of protection itself, as it was commonly described as a feature of the black community by the participants.

Still, not all community construction was oppositional. Whites and blacks in East Tennessee often took up the same community identities to define the understanding of their world. The identity of nationality pervaded the discourses of East Tennesseeans throughout the research. Nationality, or nation-ness, at once represented a unifying identity for many people in the area and the hopeful rhetoric to which the participants could turn to bolster their resilience against Jim Crow segregation, an unjust contradiction to the promise of democratic citizenship. Coupled with national identity commonly was a sense of commitment to the liberal ethic, the notion that a protection of individual rights would provide the necessary access for the freedom of opportunity that could, in effect, lead to race equality. In Chapter Four, I discussed some of the ways Critical Race Theory provides a critique of liberalism, that equal opportunity typically only serves the dominant group by masking the more subtle forms of societal oppression. But to the participants in this study and the discourse around segregation in the archival data, belief in the liberal ideal of individual opportunity was nonetheless ubiquitous.

Community, then, was constructed across multiple layers that sustained oppression while it was used to push back against it. The participants drew from a sense of community to struggle against oppression and simultaneously adopted membership in other communities that existed through the perpetuation of the inequities that burdened their lives. Even when turning toward creations of community that were meant to create security against racial violence or instill a sense of belonging and purpose to rise against racial inequity, the participants competed with

dominant community discourses that continued to cast them as the 'other,' as outside the normal, white standard. From identifying these competing discourses of community, I come back to my initial assertion at the start of this dissertation that as a social construction, community must be understood in the specific context in which it is created. Community research must begin by recognizing that the making of community is always already situated in dynamics of power, layered and contested between and within groups at the level of daily interaction and discourse.

I would like to add one final assertion based on the stories I collected from the participants regarding their notion of segregation as they (re)told it to me. First, the participants were intimately aware of the imposition of Jim Crow in their lives, and I have provided some evidence of the daily resistance in which they engaged to reclaim some autonomy against the discriminatory system. However, it must be noted that segregation as a system still dictated an absence of power in most aspects of their lives. When asked how he dealt with the constant restriction of a segregated Knoxville, David answered:

> The simple explanation is, what could you do about it? If you thought there was a state law that said black people could not eat in restaurants and not stay in the same hotels or movie houses, what were you going to do about it? It was the law and if you violated the law, you were arrested for disorderly conduct. It was just that simple. There were certain areas later on that people were worried about not getting into, not being able to play at the city golf course because our tax money was paying for that and there were no black golf courses. Of course we did have the black elementary and black junior high and black high schools, so our tax money was going for that. There was no real reason to complain about anything like that at the time. Why complain when there was nothing you could do about it?

I do not wish to take away the daily acts of resistance, the “hidden trascript” these participants identified in their stories, both in personal actions and in the kind of education they sought to steel themselves against racism in East Tennessee. It must be noted, though, that despite the

infrapoltics of defiance and resistance, these participants were acutely aware of living through a seemingly immovable racial order. This study is not a history of success against that system, but a presentation of the stories told by those who lived through it to show how permanent the struggle against it has been for them.

I will end this section by re-examining some of the strengths and weaknesses of this study now that it is complete and offer some considerations for future research. The main strength of this study came from the postcritical commitment to the research and the stories of the participants. I have already claimed that I took up this position in an attempt to mediate my voice as a (white) researcher with the voices of my (black) participants and try to center the latter. I did not, nor do I now, assert that I am able to remove my voice from this study entirely. Part of this process has been constant reflexivity in my role in creating this history. The strength of this study that comes from the postcritical approach lies in the way it allows me, as the education historian, to ask and answer historical questions. This study indicates that it is possible to do historical research in the field of education that reaches across time to interpret how schools remain a presence in those that attend and their continued (re)interpretation over time has specific consequences on the interpretation of the meaning of those students lives. Schools and the bodies that move through them are not isolated cases, bound by dates and names. Rather, they are organic institutions whose creation and meaning changes as often as the people who move through them. My study indicates that one potential project in the history of education is to explore all of the ways a school moves in and out of individual and community identities and how the duty to remember them in specific ways reflects a continued engagement in the politics of schooling. That is a different project than many education histories, which

typically look more like temporally and spatially bound case studies.

I believe the most identifiable weakness in this study comes from the marked lack of women in the population I studied. Women in this work only surface on the periphery, as teachers who inspired the participants in the classroom, mothers who pushed them to succeed in school or potential dates for whom they risked great personal harm to travel across town and visit. The nature of my snowball sampling led me to only male participants for the study, which I suppose shows the way community can be built around gender, as well. All of the participants remained in contact with women from their days at Austin, but their most readily available names were usually the men with whom they hung around as teenagers. There is much to be said for the role the women teachers played in the lives of these participants, as it is important to note the way women as teachers remained critical symbols of community support and care in their narratives. But because this study focuses primarily on the discourses of community within their stories, these women teachers will need to be explored in greater depth in a possible future study. It would have been possible, though, to expand this study by seeking out female participants to compare their experiences. Particularly, the discussion around traveling through the geography of segregation for dating and how the participants understood as adults what it meant to be parents and community advocates could have looked qualitatively different if relayed by women. Should this study be expanded in future research or replicated in another context, it could be well served to find more balance between male and female participants.

My hope is that this study will help to re-frame and reinterpret the importance of community building and power dynamics reproduced in those constructions, especially across notions of space and identity while researching segregation in American schooling. Since the

passage of *Brown* and the myriad local efforts to integrate schools through rezoning and busing, American schools have been gradually resegregating, culminating with the Supreme Court decision of *Parents v. Seattle* in 2007, which forbids any school district from using race as a distinguishing characteristic for the placement of students within the system. A large body of work has been published recently describing the process of resegregating and the harmful effects it has on educational performance and resource allocation (Street, 2005; Kozol, 2006; Gold, 2007). While these works have had a positive impact on education foundational studies, they do not focus on the critical dynamics of the *creation of power* produced by segregating the races into separate educational spaces. This is the contribution I hope my work can make, although again, I do not offer this dissertation as an attempt to influence specific policies for school reform.

Future studies could look at the segregation of races either historically or in contemporary education using the methodology I have proposed here. For instance, it could be possible to continue to research Austin High School as it became Austin-East High School, as it still exists in East Tennessee as an almost entirely segregated school. How have notions of community changed when the school changed nominally but hardly at all in racial make-up? Education historians could ask the same set of questions that I provided for Austin High while looking at other segregated schools in the South. It could also be interesting to apply those questions to the white schools in the area during Jim Crow segregation. What would it look like if I completed the same study talking to alumni of East High School, asking questions about community and their awareness of a segregated system having gone to an all-white school? Would their notions of community look at all similar? How would their differences affect my

interpretation of community and the power created in its construction? For those education researchers who deal with contemporary schools, my study offers considerations during the resegregation of schools that could help supplement the field of education foundations. How does community continue to manifest itself in the discourse around schools and the education public schools are able to offer? At the very least, all of these suggested research projects must keep in mind my central claim, that community is situated in contexts of power. From that, the question that any future project seeks to answer when looking at segregated spaces will be this: how does the separation of students based on any material identity (race, class, gender, sexuality or others) create or perpetuate discourses of community that sustains the dominance of certain groups over others in our public schools?

To Look Inside, Once More

With the resegregation of schools in mind, and now having finished all of the research and writing in the dissertation process, I think it would be most fitting to return to the beginning, to once again offer the reflexive analysis of my own positionality to assess the general claims I want to make about the process. I think again about Nora's (1989) concept of the sites of memory we cling to as social beings, hoping to fortify ourselves against oncoming transformations, attempts to remember, or more importantly to not forget, those versions of ourselves that reify the identities we perform in every moment. In my first telling of navigating a segregated, white high school, those things that stood out to me were moments or events, basketball games where cheerleaders cried to their parents begging to not have to enter "their school," crossings into the liminal spaces of someone else's turf. *My* sites of memory were

situated in time and chronology, no matter how ambiguous, to create order and declare that I existed through doing and remember doing. My participants sites of memory were located in relationships, in the people with whom they drew support and from whom they distanced themselves. To them, those places where they chose to reclaim and reassert the past were not in the specific events particular to their lives. Many of them moved on beyond high school to march in the Civil Rights Movement or coordinate protests but did not share those stories until asked. They reclaimed a legacy of memory through the social, declaring that they existed through relating and remembering those relations, across spaces and time.

I found myself wondering, what were those relations for me? While I was in school, in what ways did I define myself and my social belonging not in the events where I discovered the "other" but in the community I created through interacting? I choose to end by answering these questions by interpreting them in the way I believe I would have if asked as a child or teenager. My neighbors were white. My teachers were white. All my friends were white. When a black family would move into town, or more usually when a black student would join my class, it was an event. Most of the time a short-lived experiment for the rest of the class and me to get close to someone who looked like someone we *never* saw in class. "There's a new kid in our class," one girl would say. As if she could not possibly wait for the next sentence, it leaped out of her mouth. "He's black." Typically this student was gone before the end of the year. We never really learned why, just here one day, gone the next. As my personal hero Kurt Vonnegut would say, "and so it goes."

So, whiteness was assumed. Never really talked about. Never really ever brought up. Occasionally someone's clothes would be too baggy or their stereo would be too loud with Tupac

or Notorious B.I.G. They were acting black, we would say. But acting white? We were all acting white. We would not have ever said we were *acting* white, we just were white. That was the way you were supposed to act.

My community was safe. It *was* safe. The dangerous parts of town were somewhere else. Not in my town. I would ride my bike to school, maybe even walk to school. It was just down the road. The most dangerous part of my day was having to cross a busy highway to go see my friends. My wealthier friends. On the other side of the highway. That was how I knew how to differentiate, living in a working-class home in a town filled more and more every year with the wealthiest families in Central Illinois. Still, I had people around me I loved. I had people around me I could not stand. I had others around me that are so inconsequential to my life that they have come and gone, their faces now a whisper, an afterthought that can only be recalled by someone else mentioning them. Sometimes not even then. I would never have used the word community, probably because I belonged to the same one for so long that it was always assumed rather than celebrated. In thinking about the process of this research, I could not remember the first time I was cognizant of community as a definable entity that might influence my life. Maybe graduate school, which was the first time I ever lived outside of the geographic area in which I had spent the first twenty-two years of my life.

In the process of doing the research for this project, I watched my own high school reunion come and go (in the interest of not dating myself I will leave the specific anniversary year of the reunion out). I watched old friends and older friends share pictures on social networking sites. I saw considerations being made for parties and after parties, most of which revolved around assumptions for what everyone liked while we lived in the same town, not what

most of us might enjoy now. I caught up with and reminisced about dreams shared, teachers hated and moments forgotten with people with whom I now have absolutely nothing in common. But we still had one thing in common. We belonged to a specific community of students in a specific time and place in Central Illinois, and even for one season, that was enough to bring some of us to our own sites of memory.

That community happened by default, not of our own choosing but by the accident of our parents making their own choices that thrust us all into the same geographic proximity for anywhere between two and twelve years. In creating that space, though, in the social process of including and excluding, a community of lives was built regardless. I have argued throughout this work that community as a concept is constructed, and that I still claim to be a necessary consideration for future research. Yet, in that construction, it becomes real. For the 150 or so white, middle-class boys and girls who moved with me through my education, our community was real by our making. For the participants in this study, their community was real in its making and their (re)telling of it only reiterated that reality for them in that moment. Therefore, if our constructed communities become real by our defining them as real, then the power derived from the creation of community has very *real* consequences (Thomas, 1928). If my work only leaves one lasting idea on the reader, I hope it can be that.

Epilogue
A Closing Poem

To end, because I turned to the use of ethnopoetic re-presentations (Glesne, 2006) for the stories of the participants, I want to look at my own stories of my interaction with community and identity, to try to trouble my own narrative and reorder the complex layers of my understanding of myself in new ways of self-expression. By subjecting my words to the same process of re-presentation I practiced for the participants, I offer the final moment of recursive reflexivity between myself and the research as a reminder that this dissertation process has been one of my own becoming, as well.

Small
White
Safe
Middle-class suburb
A privileged enclave

dangerous
industrial
minorities
poverty
over there

Rejecting racism
Not expressing bigotry
I was not a racist

My teachers were white
My friends were white
There's a new kid in class
He's black
Here one day
Gone the next

And so it goes

Rejecting racism
Not expressing bigotry
I was not a racist

He was acting black
We were acting white
That was how you were supposed to act

The community was real
I would never use the word community
It was real
We made it real
        And that had consequences

Rejecting racism
Not expressing bigotry
I was not a racist

Appendix: Sample Interview Protocol

To start, please give me a brief description of your experiences at Austin High School.

How did you feel about the education you were receiving at Austin?

What do you remember about your teachers?

Are there any teachers you remember specifically?

What do you remember about your fellow students?

How active were you in these activities?

What kinds of activities were available for you in your school?

What was the school like as a community?

How active were you in the school community?

How active were you (or your peer group) in the Knoxville community?

How did the school interact within the Knoxville community?

When you talk about community, what does the word 'community' mean to you?

How do you know what belongs in the community?

How do you know when something doesn't belong to the community or you are no longer in your community?

How do you remember thinking about the white schools at the time?

How was segregation talked about within the schools/classrooms/etc.?

What was the response within the school when the *Brown* decision was announced?

How were teachers and students talking about the possibility of desegregation?

How did talk between teachers and students differ?

How do you remember race/segregation/desegregation being talked about in the public sphere? How did it change after the *Brown* decision (or did it at all)?

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CC – Clinton Courier
KJ – Knoxville Journal
KNS – Knoxville News Sentinel
OR – Oak Ridger
TNP – Tennessee Press

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Vita

Nicholas Mariner grew up in Central Illinois, where he also received his undergraduate education at Millikin University. While at Millikin, he studied Social Studies Secondary Education. He moved on after undergraduate study to a Master of Arts program in History at Eastern Illinois University. It was at Eastern that he developed an engagement with the possibilities of combining his love of history with his experience in and concern for education and schools in the United States. He enrolled in the Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations program at the University of Tennessee to continue to pursue his interest in history and education, hoping to use the study of both to engage discussions of equity and social justice. As a scholar, his main research interests are the history of education in the United States, the history of race, and issues surrounding school segregation and their eventual resegregation.