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THE DESEGREGATION OF CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL: THEN AND NOW

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Valerie Marie Hulett Herd
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband

Jeffrey Brian Herd

and to my parents

Lester and Frankie Hulett

for their love, support, and, above all, patience.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the turmoil and violence surrounding the 1956 desegregation of Clinton High School in Clinton, Tennessee and the subsequent bombing of the school in 1958. I draw from sociological theories in political economy, status politics, and social movements. By examining historic events occurring in the U.S. as well as Clinton, Tennessee prior to 1956, the impact of social and economic conditions is established thus explaining the social movements and countermovements that arose. This study incorporates media reports as well as interviews conducted with fifteen individuals who had lived in the Clinton area during the time of the integration and witnessed the conflict. The countermovement against integration is explained as a result of racist ideology, perceived threats to economic and social status, as well as threats concerning the control of the socialization of white children. A new concept, the integration hypothesis, is proposed. This hypothesis combines status politics and political economic theory into one concept for the purpose of analyzing racially based social conflict as well as social movements and countermovements.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the pre-dawn hours of October 5, 1958, the citizens of Clinton, Tennessee were shaken from their sleep as the sound of multiple explosions ripped through the town. Emerging from their homes, Clintonites soon discovered that the high school had been leveled by a series of dynamite blasts. The casual observer may have been bewildered as to why anyone would do such a thing, but Clinton citizens understood all too well the meaning behind this violent act; racial sentiments. The explosion punctuated eight years of strife. In 1950, five black students filed suit against the Anderson County School Board, claiming the out-of-county schools, to which they were being bussed 40 miles a day, did not meet the county's obligation to furnish equal facilities for education. In 1955, they won their case in District Court which ruled that Anderson County schools were to desegregate. As a result, protest and violence erupted, culminating in the destruction of the high school. What events led to this incident? What is the condition of race relationships in Clinton nearly forty years later?

Sociologists strive to increase our understanding of social behavior; we ask questions of how humankind will behave when faced with varying situations and stimuli. By studying the events in Clinton during the 1950's, our knowledge of social behavior is enhanced. We can then begin to predict how individuals will react when a given stimulus is present; in this case, the intermixing of races. With this information in hand, we can better deal with the current racial issues.

To begin to understand the events occurring in Clinton, it is imperative that this situation be analyzed in its historical context. Beginning at the end of the civil war, this study reviews the political and social events leading up to the end of legal segregation in 1954. Particular attention is paid to the contributions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) legal actions which culminated in the Supreme Court's decision on the case Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka. To provide more depth of understanding, the events are analyzed through the concepts of political economy and status. Political economic conditions during this period and their relationship to the status of black Americans are of special importance in this study. Understanding these conditions sets the stage for the subsequent events that took place in Clinton.

Following the historical analysis of conditions prior to the 1950's, the events occurring in Clinton, Tennessee are closely examined. Actions taken by participants of events are studied through the perspective of status politics and countermovement theory. The perspective of status politics, or politics of lifestyle concerns, is useful in explaining the motivations behind participants' behavior and provides an explanation of the emergence of the countermovement against integration. Countermovement theory is useful in explaining tactics and strategies employed to resist integration.

Now that nearly forty years have passed, what are the racial conditions in Clinton today? To answer this question, in depth interviews with current Clinton citizens, who were residents of the city during the crisis, have been conducted. The interviews were designed

with two purposes in mind: to clarify attitudes towards events of that time and to measure changes in attitudes and race relations between then and now.

The importance of the findings of this study is evident. Efforts to desegregate schools with racial or ethnic students in the majority continue today. For instance, in 1991, in Knoxville, Tennessee, (located 15 miles south of Clinton) local courts ordered city school officials to racially balance its schools; in June of 1993, the state of Connecticut established a law to prevent racially divided schools. As recently as the spring of 1995, race related clashes were reported occurring between students in Clinton High School.

The Clinton integration crisis has never been fully analyzed from a sociological perspective. It is the intention of this study to suggest how the integration of the races affects the community. The analysis addresses these questions: What were the underlying causes of the integration crisis? Did the crisis emerge out of racial prejudices or were they due to the emergence of a countermovement as a backlash to civil rights victories? How have black/white relations changed in Clinton since 1956? To what degree has racial intermixing changed? What role did political and economic conditions play in the events of 1956 through 1958? What can be learned from the study of the Clinton desegregation crisis that can be applied in solving today's racially oriented issues?

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Status politics is a major concept employed to explain the explosive events of the desegregation crisis at Clinton High School. To support this framework, a historical review of the nation's political economy that maintains the black working class, is provided. These analytical tools aid in recreating the political economic climate of that period to understand the countermovement that emerged as a result of integration.

Political Economics

The term, "political economy" tends to be used ambiguously throughout the field of sociology, therefore, it becomes imperative to define its meaning for this particular study.

The basic concepts behind the idea of a political economic perspective have their roots in Marxist theory. Often referred to as the father of the conflict perspective, Karl Marx was one of the first to argue that society functions as a result of competition for scarce resources and that its structure is a result of and determined by its economic system. The economy of a particular society and society itself are, according to Marx, so intricately intertwined that it is nearly impossible to separate one from the other; that is society from its economic machine. Therefore, in order to understand the motivating forces behind members of society, it is imperative to understand the society's economic mode and the relationship of a society's members to a particular economy. Sociologist C. Wright Mills sums up these propositions more clearly:

> "Political, religious and legal institutions as well as the ideas, the images, the ideologies by means of which men understand the world in which they live, their place within it, and themselves - all these are reflections of the economic basis of society." (Mills, 1993, p. 91)

With this basic proposition in mind, the plight of the black American in history can be more clearly understood.

Though the end of the Civil War was supposed to mean an official end to slavery, it merely marked a change in the legal and social oppression of blacks. The nation's economy, particularly that in the South, was undergirded by the maintenance of blacks in low-paying menial jobs. Justified by false racial beliefs, blacks were forced into the lowest positions of the social and economic scale and thus effectively marginalized in America. Myrdal refers to the consistent exploitation of blacks as "the vicious cycle": being disadvantaged from birth, blacks were forced into the lowest positions of a caste like system maintained through cultural and institutional traditions (Myrdal, 1944). Morris refers to this oppression as a "tripartite system of domination", a three-dimensional strategy of economic, political, and personal domination over blacks (Morris, 1984). The white-dominated political system of the U.S. was preserved by establishing legal sanctions for the discrimination of minorities, such as the infamous Jim Crow laws of the south, and "constitutionally supported" segregation of the races.

Despite the legal and social barriers, black leaders believed the American political system, the democratic system was applicable in fighting racial oppression (Marable, 1991). Beginning early in the

twentieth century, a war was waged in the nation's courts to destroy the political infrastructure of inequality. Led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, suits were brought demanding the equal wages and facilities for the races.

The movement towards black/white equality was met with mass resistance. The very idea of not only threatened deeply held beliefs on the evil consequences of racial intermixing but threatened the economic stability of cities and towns across the nation, particularly those of the South. Although several black leaders of this time were self proclaimed communists and socialists, others were implied to have anti-American ideals. Thus, the segregationists strategically interlinked black leaders with the stigma of holding communist or socialist goals which threatened the very fabric of the nation's economic system. The mood of the country was that of mass paranoia and fear. Despite the obstacles, blacks triumphed in 1954 with the Supreme Court's decision to end segregation. The stage was set for mass protest and violence as school systems across the country began to desegregate.

Status Politics

The concept of status politics is a useful tool in understanding the perceived threat of racial intermixing. The idea of status politics (or interest politics) was first introduced by Hofstadter and Lipset in their analysis of right-wing political organizations of the McCarthy era. Upon the analysis of polls conducted during the period, a strong correlation is established between socioeconomic status and support for the anti-communism campaign led by McCarthy; supporters of McCarthy tended to be on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale. Hofstadter

and Lipset employ the concept of status politics to indicate that individuals, frustrated from a perceived threat to, or, the displacement of their status, will act politically (Hofstadter, 1955, Lipset and Raab, 1978). Gusfield employs the concept in explaining the American Temperance Movement. Symbolically, the American Temperance Movement was a drive to abolish alcoholic beverages, however, the true motivating forces behind the movement was an attempt to maintain the country's moral and Christian state. Gusfield suggests status politics can be employed as a mobilizing tactic when conflict arises from perceived status loss (Gusfield, 1963). The antipornography campaigns of the 1970s have been analyzed within this same framework by Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976). More recent studies have incorporated this concept, for instance, radicalism resulting in groups desiring to maintain or improve their status is the focus of Westby and Braungart's research into student politics (1970) and Christian morality movements by Cable (1984). Page and Clelland incorporate status politics in their analysis of controversy over the content of textbooks. However, rejecting assumptions made in the literature that groups will engage in status politics as a symbolic, irrational, response to imaginary threats to status, Page and Clelland propose the term "status politics" be replaced with "politics of lifestyle concern" (Page and Clelland, 1975, 1978). Page and Clelland assert that groups will engage in politics of life style concerns as a rational (and not simply symbolic) response to legitimate threats to status (Clelland and Guess, 1975, Page and Clelland, 1978).

Movements

Sociological research in social movements is relatively new. Social movement theory can be traced back to its roots in collective behavior theory. Collective behavior theory attempts to explain the collective actions taken within a crowd or groups. Advanced through the research of individuals such as Gustave Le Bon, Robert Park, and Herbert Blumer, collective behavior theory tends to stress a certain amount of irrationality surrounding collective action and social movements (Miller, 1985). The 1960's marked a period of civil unrest and protest. Recognizing that collective behavior was not necessarily irrational or spontaneous, scholars began to concentrate on the structural components of movements, thus developing several social movement theories explaining collective action as rational. Several accepted models emerged to prominence emphasizing either the macrostructural or the microstructural focus. For example, mass society theory appears, on the surface, to have a macrostructural focus, however, the understanding of the personal psychological aspects of a movement (microstructural) are taken into consideration. Developed by Kornhauser, mass society theory proposes that social movements attract individuals who feel isolated and/or insignificant within the masses of large complex, societies, therefore, social movements are more personal than political. Relative deprivation theory, as the name suggests, proposes that social movements will emerge as a reaction to the perception of being disadvantage or deprived in obtaining socially desirable goals. This theory stresses the tendency for individuals to evaluate themselves in relations to others thus, they may view themselves as deprived relative to others.

Another recently developed model, resource mobilization, incorporates the previous mentioned aspects of psychology and deprivation but also stresses the utilization of resources in explaining the emergence and success or failure of a movement. The "resources" of a social movement refer to monetary support, labor, offices, and communication facilities, all of which are necessary in bringing the ideology of a movement to public awareness (McAdams, McCarthy and Zald, 1988,). For example, the black civil rights movement of the 1960's relied heavily on the support of well-to-do whites to fill in the resource gaps and to provide a link to the white majority; the result was action by Congress to ensure black civil rights thus making the movement successful (Macionos, 1991,).

Social movements challenge the established institutions of a society and tend to naturally invite opposition. As a result, anti-movements or countermovements may emerge when a way of life is threatened. In an analysis of countermovements, Mottl presents a detailed clarification of countermovements as opposed to social movements (1980). Among the propositions presented, Mottl emphasizes several important distinctions of countermovements that can clearly be applied to the Clinton desegregation crisis. First, countermovements may be analyzed using the same theories as social movements. However, social movements tend to challenge groups higher up on the social scale, while countermovement groups are threatened by individuals below them on the social scale; i.e. social movements are attempts to gain higher status or social ranking and countermovements are seen as resistance to the perceived loss of status. Secondly, countermovements are typically reactionary movements. Participants in countermovements will develop

overall strategies of conduct based on the success of the social movement and the degree of social control exerted against them. More specifically, in order for a social movement to succeed, a group must be successful in gaining public sympathy through clearly defining its cause and goal. A countermovement will emerge as a reaction to the perceived success of a social movement. Lastly, countermovements tend to focus on a particular or individual threat. By doing so, the ideology of the countermovement is clearly defined (Mottl, 1980).

The political economic approach allows us to review the historical events prior to the desegregation of Clinton High School and search out clues that explain the political and emotional climate of the U.S. prior to integration. The social, political and economic domination of whites over blacks, an economic structure based on black labor, and the "red scare" or McCarthyism explain the elimination of de jure segregation and subsequent resistance to the intermixing of races. Social movement and countermovement theories are useful in explaining the actions of both desegregationists and segregationists. Status politics or politics of lifestyle concerns is a particularly useful conceptual tool in explaining the ideology of the countermovement emerging in resistance to integration and the nature of counter movement grievances.

With the use of political economic theory, social and countermovement theory and the concept of status politics, the following questions will be addressed: What were the political attitudes of Clinton citizens prior to the integration of the high school? What was the impact of political climate on events occurring in Clinton? How did whites/blacks perceive social conditions in Clinton prior to 1956? What

type of rhetoric fueled the protests over integration? Were the protests backed by a countermovement opposing integration? Were lifestyles "threatened" as a result of integration? How have racial attitudes towards changed since 1956?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Most data used in this study are historical. The two sources of data sources are archival resources, and in-depth personal interviews.

Archival Resources

The integration of schools was of great interest to the American public in the 1950's and was therefore headline news material. Although the incidence occurring in Clinton, Tennessee were not as well known to the nation as were other incidents during this decade (e.g. Little Rock Arkansas), the Clinton integration crisis did receive its fair share of media attention. To construct an account of events, I reviewed newspaper and television items relating to the issue. The Clinton News Courier provided the most consistent coverage of events concerning Clinton High School integration, beginning with the 1950 litigation brought against the school board by five black students. The newspaper provided a chronology of events and indicators of the emotional climate in Clinton through locally written news articles. As events in Clinton escalated in 1956, news items appeared in national papers such as the New York Times and the Washington Post. Eventually the situation gained the attention of Edward R. Morrow's See It Now program, a nationally broadcast television news series. Airing early in 1957, See It Now presented the Clinton integration crisis to the nation and incorporated interviews with key individuals on both sides of the issue of desegregation. The program offers a rare glimpse into the past and helps in the conceptualization of the impact of this event. Although newspaper accounts often included pictures of key individuals whose

names appeared in the archival sources repeatedly, See It Now presented the characters themselves, animated by their emotional attachment to a subject that affected them and those around them deeply.

Archival resources are invaluable in field research as a mechanism to achieve an accurate chronology. However, as in any source, there may be a bias in one direction or another and, as a result, may lead to erroneous deductions. The Clinton desegregation crisis was laden with emotion and this is reflected in all accounts of the situation found. To ensure the accuracy of the data, it is important that one source be collaborated by another. Data collected from various newspaper accounts was continuously cross-checked with each other to ensure corroboration and confidence in the facts. When several sources lead to the same facts, confidence in validity is increased (Babbie, 1986, Baker, 1988, Phillips, 1985).

Interviews

The interview technique of data gathering is particularly effective in dealing with emotionally laden issues. Conducting interviews provides several benefits. The interview technique can provide accurate interpretation of the subject's meanings. One on one interviews allow for the researcher to gauge whether the individual comprehends what is being asked and can clarify the question when they are not understood. Secondly, interviewers can make personal observations of respondents; race, age, lifestyle. Finally, the interviewer can delve deeply into the subject matter and clarify emotions by using probing questions to elicit more thorough responses (Babbie, 1986).

Interviews were conducted with fifteen individuals living around or in Clinton during the crisis. Using a technique referred to as the "snow-ball" sample (McCall-Simmons, 1969), the sampling process began with contacting individuals known to the researcher to have lived in Clinton through the period. Then, using their social networks, a list of potential interview candidates was obtained and utilized. The subjects/respondents represented a variety of backgrounds: teachers, students, news-reporters, businesspersons, and simply observers. Of the individuals interviewed, 13 were white and 3 were black. Thorough attempts were made to incorporate more blacks into this study, however, many potential black participants no longer lived in the area and/or declined to be interviewed.

An interview schedule was developed and utilized with each interview to ensure that pertinent questions were presented. Broad, open-ended questions were presented to allow for the discovery of the informant's association with the situation, their frame of reference, and the chronological order of their experiences. Using the "aikido technique" or open-ended questions as described by Babbie, the interviewer encouraged respondents to expand on comments which provided more detail concerning particular events (Babbie, 1986). See Appendix.

The interviews not only provide in-depth qualitative data, but allows the researcher to observe and record emotional reactions to the subject matter not otherwise obtainable with other techniques such as survey research (Babbie, 1986,). All the interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the respondent and later transcribed for analysis. Taping the interviews ensured that no vital information given

by the respondents were missed, however, the tape cassette recorder may that influenced subject's response to particularly sensitive issues. For instance, one white respondent implied having overall tolerant views towards blacks during the taped interview session, however, within the seconds of the end of the interview and the cassette recorder was turned off, the respondent commented through clenched teeth having an extreme dislike for interracial couples. Although this may appear to be a draw back in this study, the effectiveness of doing personal interviews is once again illustrated. By personally being there throughout all the interviews, I was able to make note of inconsistencies in subject's attitudes and opinions towards the issue and more accurately gauge true feelings.

Accuracy was dependent on the memories of interviewees to reconstruct events that happened forty years ago. Respondents were prone to hold more vivid memories of the violent moments than the less significant ones and often times were confused to the exact chronology of events. However, archival resources compensated for this disadvantage. Using the triangulation of methods allowed for cross-checking of interviews with archival resources thus revealing a clearer account of the situation and events (Corbin, 1990, Warner, 1988).

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A clearer understanding of the traumatic events occurring in 1956 in Clinton is obtainable through the analysis of historical events leading up to the 1950's. The previous century was marked with considerable political and social turbulence fueled by the enormous impact of domestic, as well as international, conflict. Interspersed during and between these periods were times when society attempted to readjust to its rapidly changing social and political environment. This century can be described with a multitude of contrasting characteristics: separation/assimilation, cooperation/competition and even jubilation/paranoia.

Pre-Civil War

Every child in the United States, at some time in his or her elementary school years, is taught the Declaration of Independence and is socialized to believe that this document ensures that every man is equal within the domain of the United States; the U.S. was founded on this principle. In actuality, from the beginning, the United States developed a socio-economic and political structure that is uniquely racist and capitalistic (Marable, 1990).

The first blacks entered this country in the shackles of slavery. Despite the promises of freedom and equality for which Europeans migrated west, the black man and woman were forcibly brought to the New World to provide much needed labor and thus had no legal standing, could own no property, and could not practice control over her or his life (Kluger, 1980,). With no legal protection, the slave was victimized by

a life of physical cruelties and hard manual labor. The slaves were not necessarily resigned to their fate. Slave revolts and protestations were documented as early as 1663. However, these attempts were always met by the slave master with extreme physical abuse and frequently death. Black slaves were not allowed to learn to read or write and were prohibited from congregating. By restricting the slave from the basic educational skills, the stereotype that the race, in general, was inferior and incapable of intellectual thought was perpetuated.

As the newly established United States developed, there was continuous conflict over the issue of slavery. The slave system of labor had become dominant mainly in the Southern states where the need for labor to tend enormous tracts of land was in high demand. Slave labor appeared to be the best solution for those settling in the Southern states. Those settling in the northern states, on the other hand, had developed a free-market economy. The issue of slavery arose every time a new territory applied for statehood. Neither free states or slave states were willing to allow the other to be dominant in the government. As a result, the Missouri Compromise was established in 1820. Under this Compromise, when a free state was admitted to the Union, a slave state was also admitted in an effort to maintain a balance of power. Thus the institution of slavery became firmly entrenched in the South (Brinkley, Current, Freidel, and Williams, 1991).

The North

To describe blacks living in the North as "free" is something of a misnomer. Though the ownership of one individual by another individual was prohibited, the "freedom" enjoyed by northern blacks had its limitations. Severe restrictions were established to regulate social interaction of blacks and to control economic resources. Northern Blacks were limited in occupational opportunities and were employed primarily in positions demanding strenuous labor or in personal service to whites.

Though there were a few exceptions, free blacks were not allowed to participate in government or to vote. For example, in Pennsylvania, black suffrage was permitted, but, by 1838, a state constitutional amendment was put into place prohibiting blacks from voting (Brinkley, Current, Friedal, and Williams, 1991).

Industrialization of the North began slowly after the War of 1812 and had considerable momentum by the 1830's. Both the industry oriented Northeast and the agriculturally oriented Northwest were committed to a free labor economy and considered the slave economy of the South colonial and obsolete.

The South

The period of industrialization may have arrived in the North, however, the South remained essentially rural and agriculturally based, with little to no industrial activity. By 1860, the South was deeply entrenched in the plantation system and was dependent on slave labor. Southern white farmers were enjoying the enormous profits from the production of rice, sugar, tobacco and especially cotton; all of which

was supplied by slave labor. Income derived from these crops was regularly reinvested into slaves. Thus, by 1860, the threats of abolition, represented to the plantation owners, a loss of 4 million slaves and 3 billion dollars in investments (Kluger, 1977, Brinkley, Current, Freidel and Williams, 1986, Marable, 1990).

The South's commitment to slavery was socially, as well as economically, motivated. The Southern plantation system had developed a rich and idealistic culture. Despising the fast-paced, industrialized culture of the North, Southerner aristocrats viewed their culture as one based on chivalry, grace and leisure. Despite this utopian, if not mythical, ideology, the businessman of the South was no less ambitious than those in the North. The black slave represented to the Southern plantation owner the physical embodiment of their power and a beloved way of life (Kluger, 1975).

The War Between the States

The generally held view that the Civil War conflict was over the immorality of slavery is not completely accurate. The moral question encompassing the issue of slavery was, of course, prominent. However, it served more as a symbolic rallying device rather than a direct motivational factor. The underlying cause was the conflict over a national economic and labor system. The South was convinced that Northern businessmen were bent on the destruction of the Southern economy in order to dominate the market place, whereas the North had concluded that Southern planters were arrogant and demanded unfair considerations at the expense of the Northern economy. Because of the commitment to king cotton and its refusal to diversify into other

markets, the South had to expand into new territories to fuel its economic machine. As tensions mounted through the 1850's, the South began making threats that if they were not allowed to expand, it would depart from the Union. The North, committed to a national free-labor economy, was not about to allow the expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories nor would it tolerate the secession of the South (Kluger, 1975). By 1861, the Union began to unravel as Southern states seceded and the Civil War began.

Whereas it is evident that many whites believed slavery to be an abomination, there was still the general belief that blacks were an inferior race, lacking in intellectual capabilities when compared to whites. Though Abraham Lincoln has been heralded as the emancipator of blacks, he was elected to the presidency on the platform that did not necessitate the end of slavery; he believed blacks would always be inferior to whites. He did proclaim, however, his belief in the prevention of the spread of slavery (Kluger, 1977). Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, nearly a year and a half into the Civil War. This edict officially invited all freed black men from the South to join the Union army. However, it excluded those slave states still loyal to the Union. Slavery was not officially abolished until the Thirteenth Amendment went into effect in 1865.

The battle between the North and the South finally ended four years after it begun, on April 9, 1865. The North was victorious in preserving the Union. However, as a result, the South was in ruins and had to be rebuilt, and 4 million freed blacks were in need of protection and incorporation as citizens.

Reconstruction

Released from the bonds of slavery, the period of Reconstruction, 1865 through 1877, gave some hope to black Americans that there would finally be the opportunity to pursue a state equal to that of white Americans. Efforts were made in Congress to assimilate blacks into white society through measures such as the Civil Rights acts, the Reconstruction Acts and the Fourteenth Amendment. Such acts were designed to officially establish blacks as citizens with the same rights as enjoyed by whites such as suffrage and representation in government. Blacks in the South began to enjoy political representation in local, state and federal government despite the contempt of whites. For Southern whites, blacks represented the epitome of all the destruction and humiliation that was suffered during and after the war; a reminder of the enormous financial and social loss at the hands of the Union. For southern white farmers, observing blacks' participation in social and political roles formally reserved for whites was like rubbing salt into an open wound.

The period of attempted assimilation of black Americans came to an end in 1877. Up to this time, the South was continuously reminded of their defeat, not only by the devastation around them, but also Union troops which had remained in the South to oversee reconstruction, to enforce compliance of the rules of the Union and to protect blacks. In what has become known as the Compromise of 1877, Southern Democrats agreed to support republican presidential candidate Rutherford B. Hayes in exchange for the removal of all remaining Union troops in the South. Hayes was elected and the troops were withdrawn thus leaving blacks in

the hands of their former owners. This essentially created a hands-off policy by the government and gave the South free reign to establish legal segregation and political disinfrachisement (Hornsby, 1973).

One by one the congressional acts and constitutional amendments established to ensure black suffrage were stripped of their effectiveness via Supreme Court decisions which supported segregation of the races. For instance, in the civil rights cases of 1883, the Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment did not apply to private organizations, only to state governments. Therefore railroads, theaters, and hotels could legally practice segregation.

Institutional Separatism

The end of Reconstruction marked the beginning of institutional segregation. The United States entered a period, beginning around 1877, where blacks were legally ostracized from white society. Though the most predominant acts of discrimination were seen in the South, blacks nationwide suffered under a system established and maintained to keep them in a subservient position to whites.

Out of frustration with the discrimination and poverty of the South, the first wave of black migration began in 1879. In hopes of finding better social and economic conditions blacks began to move west only to find more hostility from whites and Indians.

Meanwhile, conditions for blacks remaining in the South further deteriorated (Hornsby, 1973). Farming was still the primary economic basis and most of the land was still owned by whites. As a result, blacks were forced back into working for whites as paid labor or working as tenant farmers or sharecroppers.

Known as "Jim Crow" laws, elaborate legal measures were taken throughout the South to force blacks into a caste-like system regimenting social and political order. For instance, in Mississippi, in 1890, a state constitutional amendment was adopted requiring literacy testing and a two-dollar poll tax, a measure that disenfranchised blacks and many poor whites (Marable, 1990, Hornsby, 1973). Attempts in Congress to outlaw segregation were successfully squashed. By 1896, Jim Crowism was endorsed by the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson which declared separate but equal facilities for blacks and whites to be constitutional thus, discrimination was officially sanctioned by law.

Essentially ostracized by the government, black Americans responded to their position with four distinct reactions: acceptance, aggression, avoidance, assimilation (Vander-Zanden, 1972). Blacks that accepted their condition viewed the fight for equality as futile and adopted a survival strategy out of a sense of resignation; this attitude was particularly characteristic of blacks living in the South. Opposite of acceptance was aggression. Blacks responding with aggression protested their plight and rebelled against Jim Crow, however such actions were often detrimental, particularly to those blacks living in the South. The avoidance response was characterized by withdrawal; i.e a retreat into the slums and avoiding or escaping the hostility of whites. Opposite of avoidance was assimilation. Blacks adapting an assimilation strategy sought to blend in as much as possible with the dominant white class, however, physical characteristics made this strategy difficult (Vander-Zanden, 1972).

In dealing with the legal and social oppression early in the twentieth century, black activists were divided into two camps with opposite ideologies: assimulationism or separatism.

Assimulationist ideology, characterized by attitudes of aggression and assimilation, centered around the applicability of democracy to the black fight for racial equality. In other words, assimulationists believed that black Americans could achieve racial equality through the existing system. Unlike other racially or ethnically distinct groups such as Italians Polish or Irish, blacks had been effectively ostracized in America; a simple physical characteristic, skin color, made black Americans highly visible and easily avoidable thus allowing negative stereotypes to flourish from lack of social interaction. Black and white intellectuals understood that the segregation of the races fostered prejudice and discrimination and began a movement to destroy it. Spear-headed by W.E.B. DuBois, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, organized in 1910, adopted resolutions calling for aggressive action to end racial discrimination in the U.S. (Hornsby, 1973, Kluger, 1977, Marable, 1990,).

Separatist ideology, characterized by attitudes of acceptance and avoidance, was the cultivation and maintenance of a distinctly different race. Emerging out of the Black Nationalism movement led by Marcus Garvey in 1920, separatists rejected the NAACP's strategy of trying to obtain equality via the existing system. Garvey, preaching black pride and racial purity began a "Back to Africa" movement that recruited thousands of followers (Vander Zanden, 1972). NAACP leaders were disturbed by this movement. They viewed Garveyism as a "...triumph of

Negro despair rather than an uprising of black pride" (Kluger, 1977). Garvey-type separatism and the "Back to Africa" movement came to an abrupt end in 1923 with the incarceration of Garvey for mail fraud and the NAACP emerged as the leading voice against social and racial oppression. However, the threads of Garveyism and separatism was incorporated into the ideology fueling the Black Muslim movement arising in the early 1930's (Marable, 1990).

The NAACP and Assimulationism

The NAACP opened its attack on segregation and discrimination in schools in 1933. Despite a few set-backs, major strides were made in local and state courtrooms equalizing facilities and teacher salaries. However, it was not until the NAACP established the Legal and Educational Defense Fund in 1939 that waged all out war against segregation and discrimination. Spearheaded by Charles H. Houston and led by Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP consolidated some of the nations best lawyers in its fight against inequality sanctioned by law. Gradually, through the efforts of these counselors, "the Fund" as it was known began to destroy the foundations of discrimination through victories in the U.S. Supreme Court (Hornsby, 1973, Kluger, 1975, Marable, 1990). By focusing on the "equal" clause in the "separate but equal" policy established in Plessy v. Ferguson, the Fund began demanding and winning equal facilities cases for blacks.

The end of World War II marked the beginning of social and political change that would impact black and white relations for decades. The end of one war brought yet another; the Cold War. The U.S. became submerged in anti-communist campaigns fueling a national

sense of paranoia against change and reform which would reverberate for years to come. During this same period, the U.S. witnessed an avalanche of segregation cases being tried across the nation. As more and more black Americans began to rebel against the system, the NAACP had the advantage of being selective as to which of would be taken to the Supreme Court in its ultimate battle to end segregation. Five cases were eventually selected: Briggs v. Elliot, out of South Carolina; Benton v. Gebhart and Bulah v. Gebhart, both from Delaware; Boling v. Sharp, Washington D.C.; Davis v. County School Board for Prince Edward County, Virginia; Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas.

Brown v. the Board of Education, Topeka

The five cases incorporated in the Supreme Court case Brown v. the Board of Education Topeka represented the extreme unequal facilities blacks were forced to deal with at the hands of the dominant white class. The case of Briggs v. Elliot began in 1948 over the dispute of free bus service being supplied to white school children and not to blacks in Clarendon County, South Carolina. However it soon evolved into equal treatment for blacks in the areas of teacher's salaries, building and materials. As the case was fought and lost in the lower courts,the NAACP changed its tactics and demanded an injunction against the segregation of the races in U.S. District Court in Charleston South Carolina. In June of 1951, the plea was denied, however, the three judge panel ruled that equal facilities be supplied by the defendant for negro students in their district.

The two cases Belton v. Gebhart and Bulah v. Gebhart (heard in court simultaneously) were similar to the Briggs case, with the

exception of opposite outcomes. In March of 1951, Ethel Belton and Sarah Bulah, after their children were denied admittance to the newly built combination grade school and high school for white children, requested their children be allowed to admittance before Delaware Chancery Court Judge Collin Seitz. After hearing testimony, Judge Seitz visited both the facilities white children and black children. As a result, Seitz ruled, in March 1952, in favor of Belton and Bulah and order their children to be immediately admitted to the white school. Gebhart appealed the ruling in Delaware's Supreme Court, however, Judge Seitz's decision was upheld.

Frustrations arising from over-crowding and inadequate facilities led to the case of Boling v. Sharpe in Washington D.C. beginning in March of 1951. U.S. District Court Judge Walter M. Bastion ruled the plaintiffs failed to provide sufficient evidence to end segregation in the nation's capital. The outcome was similar for the case Brown v. the Board of Education, Topeka. Oliver Brown, disgusted over the dangerous trek his daughter was force to take daily to school, requested his daughters' admittance to the white school located in his neighborhood. In July of 1951, a three judge panel denied his request after finding the negro school and the white school to be comparable.

The case, Davis v. the County School Board of Prince Edward County, was actually spearheaded by the students of Molton High School in Prince Edward County, Virginia. The students had been attending classes for four years in tar paper buildings that had been set up as temporary measures to alleviate over crowding. Fed up with the inactions of their parents, the student council led a walk-out of the

student body and enlisted the aid of NAACP attorneys in an attempt to shoot down a state law requiring the segregation of schools in May of 1951. Despite the overwhelming evidence, a three judge panel denied the plaintiff's suit.

The End of Legal Segregation

The United States Supreme Court began three days of hearings on Brown V. Board of Education Topeka in December of 1952. NAACP lawyers presented evidence of the detrimental effects of segregation on the self-esteem and socialization of black children through the research of sociologists, psychologists and educators from across the nation. After six months of deliberations the Supreme Court unanimously voted to restore the five cases to the docket for rehearing, however, this time lawyers were instructed to focus their arguments on the Fourteenth amendment and its implications on segregation. On December 7, 1953 , the Supreme Court convened for three more days of hearings. Five months later, on May 17, 1954, the justices handed down their historical decision that the separate but equal doctrine was indeed discriminatory and unconstitutional (Kluger, 1975).

Thus the stage was set. Segregation was now legally abolished and blacks believed that equality of the races was obtainable in the United States. However, many whites were not ready for this monumental change. The nation was still feeling the effects of paranoia brought on by the red scare as school systems across the country began to integrate black students into white schools. The result was mass protest and violence as illustrated in the desegregation crisis of Clinton High School beginning in the fall 1956.

CHAPTER FIVE

RACE RELATIONS IN CLINTON

This chapter briefly examines the history of Anderson County from 1860 through the decade of 1950 and the events occurring during the integration crisis. This will incorporate media accounts with the interviews conducted with individuals who lived in Clinton during the crisis.

History of Anderson County

Anderson County encompasses 341 square miles in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains of eastern Tennessee. The county was officially recognized as a governmental unit by the state in 1801. In 1860 the population was approximately 7,500, including 392 blacks; of whom only 8 were freed. In 1861, Tennesseans voted on secession from the Union. Although Tennessee did secede, Anderson Countians voted overwhelmingly, 1,278 to 97, to remain in the Union. At the conclusion of the Civil War, approximately 600 slaves were free and most eventually found employment as laborers, farmers, or household servants (Brittain, 1960).

Several incidents of defiance of the law are recorded in Anderson County's history. One event involved the mining industry. Mining flourished after the Civil War, and was a major source of income for many Anderson Countians. Between 1865 and 1905, mining companies occasionally utilized convicts to work in mines. The utilization of convicts infringed on employment opportunities in the county and invoked strong feelings against external forces in the area. Often times, strikes would result by the resident miners.

One such occasion, known as the "Briceville War" occurred in 1891 when local miners captured the convicts and their guards and sent them to Knoxville by train. The Governor ordered the state militia to intervene and the convicts and guards were returned to Briceville. Three days later, however, 2000 armed Tennessee miners overpowered the militia and sent the militia, the convicts, and the guards back to Knoxville. Negotiations failed and the governor ordered in a regiment of troops to restore order. Armed conflict ensued and three miners were killed. The troops remained in the area for a year (Moore, 1923).

In 1933 the Tennessee Valley Authority took over 4,000 acres Anderson County's eastern section to construct Norris Dam. During construction, the area was under the government's complete control. The "Model Town" of Norris became one of the first planned communities established in the country that used the "greenbelt" principle. Norris became a showcase for visitors from around the world. Eventually, most of the property surrounding the dam was sold to private individuals (Stokely, 1981).

In 1942, the U.S. Government took control of an even larger section of Anderson County to build Oak Ridge as part of the Manhattan Project. Residents were ordered to leave their homes to make way for government construction of three plants to serve the war effort.

One resident recalls returning to the family farmhouse in the Robertsville area one day to find "The Declaration of Taking" tacked on the front door. The document stated that the United States of America had been given possession of the land in connection with the

establishment of the Kingston Demolition Range. They were to vacate the premises immediately (Black, 1992).

Within three years Anderson County's population tripled, the black population nearly doubling from 940 to 1,813. At the peak of wartime production, the Oak Ridge Reservation had nearly 80,000 residents. As with the Norris community, Oak Ridge became a "Model Community" after the war.

The community of Oak Ridge became a multi-cultural town as result of the infusion of educated individuals from diverse backgrounds. Clinton was left to adapt to these overwhelming changes. The differences between the two communities was reflected in their reactions to racial changes in the 50's. While anti-segregation issues were currently being hotly debated in the nation's courts and political institutions, Oak Ridge integrated its junior and senior high schools and the city's municipal swimming pool with only minor incidents (Holden et. al., 1956). Clinton's integration, however, was a different story.

Segregation in Clinton Prior to 1956

To better understand what happened later, it is important to describe how Clinton was before integration. The interviewer questioned individuals, who lived in Clinton during the 50's, about their attitudes towards the other race prior to 1956. All of the respondents inferred that black/white relationships were friendly. However, among whites, the degree of exposure to blacks varied between little or no interaction to daily interaction.

One white respondent reflected:

"There weren't any around where we lived. My father moved us up here from Arkansas to work in Oak Ridge and we just weren't around them."

Another recalled segregation in the community:

"We were never around black people -- you've got to bear in mind. At the Rich Theater, which was the only theater in town, there was two doors -- there was one for us and one for blacks and they had to sit in the balcony. They never came to our restaurants. We never had any dealing with them. One of the stupidest things when I look back, when I was playing ball. I guess when we were in 8th grade and we were playing Robertsville Junior High in Oak Ridge, and I was playing against a black kid and I had never been around a black kid and I rubbed up against him and he was sweaty and I was sweaty and it scared me to death because I had never been around a black person. I didn't know anything about them. We were never around black people and when this all started we were never around black people. We weren't around black people that went to our school."

One white respondent recalled the interaction:

"...The interaction between the [white] community and the black community was daily and continuous. They [blacks] worked throughout the community in various trades and occupations -- house work, housekeepers and so forth, and in trades of construction. We had interaction with the black kids without any particular problems."

A white laborer recalled:

> "...I was affiliated with blacks five days out of the week at my job."

Another white respondent who was student remembered:

> "We played out in the back yard -- basketball, softball. I had a lot of them [blacks] that were good friends."

Overall, the black respondents portrayed Clinton as a tranquil community:

> "Before they integrated the schools it was peaceful, we'd go to town, we'd play football with each other."

There was little exposure of one race to another because the citizens of Clinton considered their community to be a typical southern town in that the neighborhoods were segregated by race. All but one of the white respondents lived in all-white neighborhoods. The majority of Clinton's black citizens lived in the Folley Hill community along with a few white families.

As early as 1940, disgruntled black parents complained about their children's schooling. At the time, Tennessee schools were rated academically on a scale of A to D, with A being a superior rated. Some black parents were angered that their children were being bused twenty-four miles to attend a black school in LaFollette with a "Grade D" rating. They pressured the Anderson County School Board to provide equal educational facilities for their children but the board did not act.

In September 1950, five black students attempted to enroll in Clinton's all white, Grade A rated high school, by arriving along with the white students to register for the fall semester. Three respondents remembered the case. One recalled:

> "They [the five black students] went to the school down there. One boy did and I think he knew that he couldn't go to school there, but they had to have something to have a law suit on. And the principle told him he hadn't been notified to let the Negroes go to school there"

Another black respondent (a parent of one of the five) witnessed the occasion and recalled the reaction of Principal Brittain:

> "It surprised the principal and I could feel for him 'cause he had never faced anything like that. He didn't know what to do. He just looked at us."

The Anderson County School Board denied their applications, on the grounds that "separate but equal" facilities for blacks and whites was, at the time, supported by the Supreme Court. However, the board agreed to provide tuition and busing for black students to attend Austin High School, a grade A-1 school in Knoxville (Brittain, 1960).

In December 1950, the same five black students, represented by lawyers from the NAACP, filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Anderson County School Board (McSwain v. Anderson County Board of Education). The law suit claimed that the arrangements did not meet the county's obligation to furnish <u>equal</u> facilities. But in April 1952, the District Court ruled that the School Board did in fact provide equal facilities. The plaintiffs appealed the decision to the U.S. Sixth

Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati. Although counsel for both parties prepared briefs to present before the Court of Appeals in June 1952, they agreed to await filing until the U.S. Supreme Court decided the Brown versus the Topeka Board of Education case (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

That historic decision was made on May 17, 1954 by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Justices unanimously ruled that segregation of the races actually creates inequality; therefore, the "separate but equal" doctrine was unconstitutional. As a result, the Sixth District Court reversed the decision in the McSwain case and sent it back to the District Court with instructions "for further proceedings upon authority and in accordance with the (U.S.) Supreme Court." (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

All the respondents recalled the Supreme Court ruling to end segregation but most were unsure about the timing. One of them said:

> "I remember them saying something about it, but I wasn't paying too much attention."

Most of the white respondents described Clinton residents' reactions to the ruling as relative indifference.

> "...There didn't seem to be much of a problem as far as we were concerned, my mother and father never showed any kind of discrimination or partiality one way or the other."

A white resident recalled:

> "It was all right by me, it didn't bother me."

Some recalled being concerned about the reaction of others:

> "I just wondered how those rednecks would react."

Only one respondent recalled clearly negative reaction to the verdict:

> "Most of the older folks -- my fathers age, they were real upset about it and then there were a lot of people that was just radical, that got real upset about it -- preachers and all."

Black respondents described their own positive reactions to the decision:

> "My response was that it was long overdue."

In May 1955, the Supreme Court placed primary responsibility for the integration of schools on local school authorities. The following August, the plaintiffs in the McSwain case requested a final judgment from the District Court in Knoxville requiring the complete and immediate desegregation of all public schools in the county. Countering the plaintiffs, Anderson County School Board officials requested a decree that limited desegregation to the high schools and that allowed a reasonable length of time to accomplish desegregation. The District Court ruled that, in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision, "no final decree is presently in order" and instructed the County School Board to proceed "with reasonable expedition" (*Clinton Courier News*, Sept. 22, 1955). Thus, having no legal recourse, the Anderson County School Board was forced to make formal plans to integrate the all-white Clinton High School.

On August 30, 1955, the Anderson County School Board began implementing the court's orders. The first step was to establish a committee composed of school officials and PTA members from both black and white county schools to formulate an integration plan. In October,

the school board officially adopted a resolution affirming its policy of abiding by District Court ruling, but they did not set a final date for integration. In December 1955, lawyers for the black students returned to District Court and requested a final date for integration. The Court ruled that integration must take place in all three county high schools beginning no later than the beginning of the fall term in 1956 (Brittain, 1960).

Desegregation: Clinton High School

Plans for integration of Clinton High School proceeded relatively smoothly through the months leading up to the beginning of the school year in August. An attempt to halt integration took the form of a petition that was circulated by the Anderson County Federation for a Constitutional Government, a group formed for the purpose of opposing integration. This measure was unsuccessful and caused no conflict.

Respondents' level of knowledge about integration plans depended on their level of involvement with the situation. When asked about their first memories of desegregation plans, seven white respondents replied "When the trouble started" or "When they started talking about it." Eight respondents, who were students, teachers, or parents of students at the time, recalled hearing of integration plans at the end of the 1955-56 school year. A respondent who was one of the first twelve blacks to attend the integrated high school recalled:

> "We was at Austin and they was telling us that they were going to integrate Clinton High School at the time, but we didn't think much about it. We thought it was just hearsay. We didn't believe it at the time."

When asked for their reactions to the integration plans, most white respondents reported feeling neutral on the subject. However, when questioned how most other Clintonites reacted to the plans, most white respondents believed that their neighbors were opposed to integration. One said:

> "I think the reaction was probably negative, but I am convinced in my mind that the near unanimous consensus was that they were going to obey the law."

The three black respondents, however, responded somewhat differently. According to one black respondent:

> "Some of the whites, whether they liked it or not, they didn't say nothing. A lot of the blacks liked it 'cause a lot of them had signed their name for that law suit."

The former black student responded:

> "We [the black students] didn't want to go to the all white school there. We wanted to go back to Austin. I was more comfortable around my race of people then I was around white kids. [But] we didn't have no choice. They wasn't going to send us back to Austin."

In May 1956, twelve black students pre-registered to attend the first court-ordered integrated school in the state of Tennessee (*Clinton News Courier*, 1976).

The week following registration was uneventful. It appeared that Clinton would integrate the high school relatively peacefully. However, this situation would soon change.

When asked at what point they first became aware of resistance towards integration, all respondents replied with comments such as "when the trouble started" or "When this fellow, Kasper, came to town."

John Kasper's name and participation in resistance to integration were repeated many times. A white respondent, who was a high school student at the time remembered the day John Kasper arrived in Clinton in August 1956. Stepping off the bus in a corduroy suit, he approached the respondent and his friends standing near the bus stop and asked them how they felt about the integration of the high school. The respondent recalled:

> "We didn't know what to think about it 'cause it was funny, ya know. We knew they were going to put blacks in high school but we didn't know they were going to have to go through court and all that..."

The majority of the respondents voiced negative memories of Kasper, referring to him as an "outsider" or "trouble maker":

> "John Kasper was a very inspirational speaker but he was just stupid, he was just ignorant and he was the type of man that would make you mad. He was always using 'Nigger this' and 'Nigger that' and that kind of stuff and it just repulsed me."

Kasper was the 26-year old executive secretary of a white supremacists group, the Seaboard White Citizens Council. Upon arriving in Clinton, Kasper immediately began to solicit participants for picket lines to protest desegregation. Displaying a photograph of a black man kissing a white woman, Kasper went from house to house and business to

business rallying support. Kasper's crusade against integration relied heavily on three concepts; communist plots, the intermixing of races and white supremacy. Kasper's rhetoric was aimed at anyone that appeared to be in support of integration. The following are examples.

Kasper's comments on the president:

> "The hollow pumpkin on a pole whose in the White House now, our president, is sworn enemies of the American public-- sworn enemies of the Constitution."

On the Supreme Court:

> "The basis of common law is the custom of the people and if it is the custom of the people to keep the races separate then the Supreme Court law doesn't mean anything. We know they're [Supreme Court] communist-- combined they make one of the most deadly, communistic, monsters we will ever know."

On white supremacy:

> "-- the men who stood face to face at Chickamauga [confederate soldiers], if they didn't have a principle to fight and die for, if they said 'we should just let this thing go one', every single one of us here tonight would be mulatto and not white-- every single one of us."
>
> "The argument simply does not hold that the majority of the people should turn over to a group of people only removed from slavery by a hundred years, only removed from the jungle by a few hundred years, turn over control of our entire civilization (See It Now, 1957)."

City officials, uneasy at the sentiment being promoted, met with Kasper the next day, Sunday, requesting that he leave town. Kasper refused. He was subsequently arrested for inciting to riot and for vagrancy. He was jailed to await trial on Tuesday (*Clinton News Courier*, 1976).

Monday, August 27, was the first day of the school year. The 12 black students and 715 white students attended classes at Clinton High School that morning with only a handful of segregationists there to protest. That afternoon an white elderly woman and a black student were attacked by the segregationists. Police later took a knife away from a black male student who was fighting with a white student.

Kasper was released from jail on Tuesday morning after the judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence to keep him. Picketing outside the school continued with a slight increase in the number of protesters, to about 25 in number. At noon Kasper demanded meeting with Principal Brittain in which he urged the principal to "kick the black students out of school." Brittain explained to the protesters that he was acting in accordance with a court order, but he offered to resign if 51 percent of the parents and students opposed him.

At 7:30 that evening, Kasper addressed a crowd of between 200 and 600 people from the court house steps. He vowed to fight the integration of Clinton High School for "however long it takes" (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

On Wednesday, August 29, about 125 protesters confronted the black and white students as they arrived at school. The number of protesters increased and police ordered them off school grounds, but they continued

to gather across the street. Inside, the students voted 614 to 0 for Brittain to remain as principal.

Later, black students were chased by segregationists, some of whom were arrested. Subsequently, some Clinton citizens filed a petition for an injunction that would restrain Kasper and others from interfering with integration. At 7:30 that night while Kasper was addressing a crowd of 800 in the town square, federal marshals served him with a temporary restraining order. Kasper urged the crowd to continue their work (Brittain, 1960, *Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

Thursday morning, August 30, segregationists outside the school numbered three to four hundred. Principal Brittain announced to the school that he had received a vote from parents of 447 to 6 to remain in office. A few blocks away in the court house, several citizens testified in support of an injunction to prohibit interference with integration. However, hearings were not concluded and Kasper was held in jail pending bond. That afternoon, several protesters were arrested.

Student, faculty, and staff attendance at the high school had dropped throughout the week. By Friday morning, student attendance was down from 614 to 446, including 10 of the 12 black students. The crowd outside the school, primarily white students, watched the cars bringing the black students to school.

On the same day, Kasper was found guilty of contempt and sentenced to one year in prison (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976). Despite Kasper's imprisonment, others continued to rally opposition to integration. Friday evening, August 31, Asa Carter, a leader of the Birmingham White Citizens Council, spoke to a crowd of 1,000. Carter denounced

integration, the Supreme Court, and the NAACP, and urged individuals to join their local White Citizens Council. White segregationists marched through the streets chanting "We want Kasper."

Rallied by Carter, some members of the segregationist crowd accosted several black tourists who drove through town, rocking their cars and smashing their windshields. Many of the marchers broke off the main group and marched to Mayor Lewallyn's house, threatening to dynamite it. Police made no arrests. Mayor Lewallyn unsuccessfully attempted to contact state officials and the governor by phone. The demonstrating continued late into the night. (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

Media coverage was intense throughout that first week. News of the protests and rallies spread quickly, bringing throngs of outsiders to participate or watch the activities. Several respondents hold vivid memories of that week's events. One white respondent recalled:

> "You had cars down here from Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Virginia -- you had more cars from out of state then we had in state. The hotel up here was filled with people that came here, not in peaceful form."

Another white respondent recalled watching the protesters:

> "My father had an insurance agency right across from the court house, the second floor of the building, right across from where everything was happening. There wasn't much happening back then and we would pack a supper and we would go from our house down to Daddy's insurance agency and watch the riots."

One white respondent recalled the mayhem:

> "There was probably 500 people [segregationalists] out there, ranting and raving, rocking cars that had come through. This used to be Interstate 75, 25W. [The] main street here in Clinton was the main artery from Chicago to Washington, so cars come through with black people. They would rock it, hollering and going on."

A former white student recalled:

> "I watched 'cause there was a lot of police there and the Highway Patrol. They would let them [segregationists] go ahead and meet. They would let them go up to Folley Hill where all the blacks lived but, when the cars came through, they would just holler and jeer and everything."
>
> "[During] the Wednesday-Thursday time frame of that first week, there were rumors flying that the mob [segregationists] was going to come over and take over the football field in the middle of a football game and have a rally and burn a cross. They didn't. [We] played the game, we won it."

A white respondent whose husband was a member of the auxiliary police force recalled:

> "They attempted to burn a cross in the front of the house. I stopped that. I saw them coming with the cross and I went inside and waited on them to pass the house. They weren't going to put it in my yard and they didn't. There was a car without lights coming down the road so I had a gun

and I went in the house and I came back outside and I stood in front of the car and got the license plate [number]. I reported it to the police and later went in front of the Grand Jury but they didn't indict."

Saturday morning, September 1, city officials met and declared a state of emergency. They made a formal request to Governor Clement and state officials to restore law and order. An auxiliary police force was appointed in case help did not materialize.

That evening, a large crowd again gathered to hear pro-segregation speeches in the town square. By 8:00, auxiliary police received word that the crowd was planning to storm the court house to have a meeting inside. The auxiliary police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. As the crowd began to reform, the state Highway Patrol arrived.

Of all the events of the desegregation crisis, the arrival of the Tennessee Highway Patrol was the one event recalled by all of the respondents.

One white remembered:

"The most vivid recollection I have is the Highway Patrol coming in. They had red lights then and they came in a convoy of, it must have been, 50 patrol cars."

Another recalled the procession:

"They came in and circled the court house. They circled two or three times, the red lights going, the sirens going, and they must have gotten the biggest patrolmen, Highway Patrolmen, they could get, and they got out and they

had great big billy clubs and that was the first time I actually saw the mob scared."

One white respondent held vivid memories of Commissioner:

"The Highway Patrol Commissioner at that time was about 6 foot 8 and he was in the lead car and they pulled in at the Court House and he got all of that 6 foot 8 out of that patrol car and threw a big old, sawed-off double-barrel shot gun over his shoulder and he said 'Boys, it's all over.' And it was. The next morning, Sunday morning, the National Guard was here and we were under martial law."

The three black respondents did not personally witness either the rallies or the arrival of the Highway Patrol. This is understandable since it was highly dangerous for them to be in the area at that time. Their memories of that week concern escorting the black children to school, hearing occasional explosions, and seeing cross burnings and Klan visits to their neighborhood. One black respondent recalled:

"One morning after breakfast, my brother said 'Did you hear someone at the back door last night?' There was someone at the door the back door and at the windows and he said he got up and turned the front porch light on and then a car pulled up and whoever it was got in and pulled away."

At noon on Sunday, September 2,600 National Guardsmen arrived in Clinton to establish order. That evening a crowd, estimated at 3,000, formed to hear pro-segregation speeches. At one point, National Guardsmen rescued a black sailor who was attacked after getting off a bus in the town square. National Guardsmen were able to control the

crowd. The next day, officials under martial law, banned public speaking and congregating in the square. Guardsmen turned away from Clinton thousands of cars full of curious outsiders.

Attendance at Clinton High School reached an all time low of 266 students on Tuesday September 4. Nine of the twelve black students were absent. A white respondent who was a student at the time recalled an intensive weekend phone campaign discouraging attendance:

> "Someone was calling us at home and telling us not to come to school. They were calling my friends too. I'd ask my friends if they got calls too and they'd say 'Yeah, they called me and told me not to come to school or they'd set a bomb off at my house.' Stuff like that."

Other than the lower school attendance the turmoil of the previous week had waned. School attendance rose and, by Friday, the National Guard had reduced its forces to 250. To ensure calm, Clinton city officials set a curfew for individuals 21 years old or younger, banned all outdoor assemblies of 10 or more people, and announced the hiring of six additional police officers. By September 11, the National Guard had withdrawn and the Sheriff had deputized 150 men throughout the county to handle emergencies.

Freed on bail after two Clinton residents posted bond, Kasper was convicted of contempt of court on September 13 and sentenced a year in prison, but was released on bail pending an appeal. On September 24, he was indicted on new charges of sedition and inciting a riot. He was tried on charges in November. During the two-week trial, prosecutors argued that Kasper's inflammatory speeches had triggered the violence.

However, the defense maintained that rioting was not an outgrowth of Kasper's speeches but, rather, a reaction to the Auxiliary Police. After two weeks of testimony by 20 defense witnesses and 13 prosecution witnesses, the jury acquitted Kasper.

All of the respondents suggested that black-white relations were strained. A black respondent recalled:

> "The people that were nice to you before were nice to you then. There were some that, if looks could kill, we'd be dead. You had to go to the store. There was this one boy and girl and it seemed like every time we went to the store, they looked like they could choke us."

Kasper's acquittal spurred renewed opposition to integration. A former white student recalled:

> "We had a great time with them [the black students]. They were just like everybody else. We'd talk to them, but then I could be walking down the hall and I would see a white guy chasing a black guy down the hall with a knife. Or I could see a terrible fight going on where there was two or three black people being beaten by white people."

A former teacher described the tension at the school:

> "My husband got me a permit and I carried a gun. One day I was going out the back entrance and here a tremendous crowd of kids, probably freshmen, and they had this little colored boy right in the center of them. I thought 'I'm not going to tolerate this' and I said 'Get the hell out of my way!' I had a thermos bottle in my hand and I said 'You let

him go.' He didn't do it and I put my thermos bottle over this kid's head and took him to the office. You did what you had to do."

A former white student recalled:

"Some of them [white students] would really give the blacks a hard time, holler at them, throw things at them in the bathroom, and flush their heads in the commode, and beat up on them. Just a few would do that. I'd say one percent would. The blacks, they were scared."

A former black student recalled the harassment inside and outside of the school:

"When we came down here across the track and at the school, we met them then [the segregationists]. We were all nervous. We all had made up our minds that if they bothered us we were going to fight them. We were going to get an education or fight. You had kids in class heckling you all the time. You couldn't study. There were a few kids that said they were going to kill a few of the blacks and things like that. I figured if they bothered me I was going to fight anyway 'cause I would fight at the drop of a hat. I was mad when we went down there. They didn't want us down there and I didn't want to be down there."

A black respondent whose child was one of the black students enrolled, recalled a particularly tense day:

"I had to go to work and I went with my sister to take my little girl to school and when I came back, my mother said a white lady called her and told her to tell me to go back to school and pick up my daughter 'cause there was going to be trouble. They were going to beat them. She wouldn't tell Mama her name. So I went back [with my sister]. There were some [white] men approaching my sister's car. They didn't go to the car [but] they started towards the car like they were going to pull her out and beat her. She had the door locked. I had a new blue dress on and I was running back to my sister and I ran into a bush. I tore my dress. A man said, 'Did a white man do this?' And I said I ran into a bush. He was worried as I was because they had said they had a bomb in there or something. He said he didn't know my little girl but to leave her. He said she was safer in there than outside. I said I'm going to take her home because I have to go to work. I was going to take her home to mama. They had hand grenades and all..."

At the end of November the black twelve students stayed away from school for four days to avoid being harassed by white students who were members of Kasper's newly formed Youth Citizens Council.

All respondents but one indicated a distinct distaste for John Kasper. The exception had been a member of the Youth Citizens Council. She recalled the Council meetings with Kasper:

"He was real nice. He would start meetings off with prayer and sing folk songs. *I Gave My Love a Cherry That Had No Stone* -- songs like that. He was a good singer. And he would just talk about how things were happening up north. All these whites and blacks together. It was something we never heard of before. You never saw a white woman with a black man. They were in the closet like homosexuals."

Interviewer: "Were you shocked?"

"Yeah, I reckon I was. I was about sixteen years old."

In early November, when the black students returned to school they were escorted by a local white attorney, a white accountant, and Reverend Paul Turner, the white pastor of the First Baptist Church.

Later that morning, two white male teenagers entered the high school and attacked a white male student who refused to disclose a black student's location. The two teenagers then forced their way into the classroom of the principal's wife but fled at the approach of the Principal. At 11:45 a.m., Principal Brittain dismissed the students declaring that the high school would remain closed until he was sure that the students would have some protection (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

After the students were in school, Reverend Turner was attacked by a gang of three or four white men. The attack on Reverend Turner, a highly respected member of the community, was a shock to the people of Clinton. Although he was not seriously hurt, the violence served to shift underlying feelings about integration towards support. The news

of Reverend Turner's altercation with segregationists traveled quickly. Clinton citizens turned out in record numbers to register their vote in city municipal elections, which happened to be taking place on the same day. Several White Citizens Council members, who were on the ballot, were soundly defeated.

By the end of the day, U.S. Attorney General Brownell ordered the FBI to round up segregationist leaders and charge them with contempt of court (*Time*, 1956).

In December, a CBS network crew from the nationwide television program, See It Now, hosted by Edward R. Murrow, made a film depicting a community in the midst of integration. The program, titled "Clinton and the Law", was broadcast early in January. Within a few days of the airing, Clinton was flooded with letters from across the country praising those citizens for supporting a law "...in a period of adjustment to a situation that none of them liked" *(Clinton Courier News,* 1976). But tension at the school had taken its toll on the twelve black Clinton High School students. By February 1957, only seven enrolled remained.

In May 1957, a federal judge ordered jury trials for 16 individuals, including Kasper, who had been arrested by the FBI in December.

Of all the respondents interviewed, only four (all white) were unfamiliar with the investigation led by the FBI. But only half of the respondents were aware of the outcome of the trial. All three of the black respondents were at one time interviewed by the FBI. A white

respondent who was a student at the time recalled testifying in Federal court in Knoxville.

> "[They asked me] basically what I had seen John Kasper doing, which wasn't anything criminal as far as I could tell. That's what I thought. The only thing that I could figure that they may have got is -- charges of inciting a riot because he was speaking to students at rallies and had all this literature about blacks and whites."

In July after a two-week trial, Kasper and six others were convicted of conspiring to interfere with integration. Of the other ten defendants, five had charges against them dropped and four were acquitted. The six who were found guilty were eventually given probation. But Kasper was sentenced to 18 months in an integrated correctional facility in Tallahassee, Florida.

The following school year of 1957-58 proceeded quietly. Two black students were enrolled and attending Clinton High School. In November, the sheriff uncovered a plot to bomb the school. One person was convicted in February 1958 for the plot. Although minor incidents of racial conflict were reported at the school, the integration crisis appeared to be over.

The Bombing of Clinton High School

In the predawn hours of October 5, 1958, a series of explosions awakened the citizens of Clinton. Sometime during the night an estimated 75 to 100 sticks of dynamite had been strategically placed throughout the high school. Their detonation resulted in 16 of the 22 rooms being destroyed (*U.S. News and World Report*, 1958).

All of the respondents had vivid memories of the bombing of the high school and most could even recall where they were and what they were doing at the time of the explosion. A former white student recalled:

> "It was early in the morning. Our house was close to the high school and it knocked the windows out."

Another white respondent recalled:

> "It was early one Sunday morning and we were getting ready to go to church and we try to get there early. So it must have been something before eight o'clock because my mother and father lived just a few yards up the road from us. During the week before they had canned a lot of fruit and vegetables. Well, they already had one or two cans blow up. So all at once there was a big boom, the house shook, the windows rattled. Both my husband and my son were out in the yard and they said they even felt it in the ground. I said 'Well, I don't believe that all of granny's fruit blew up, that it would do that but something must have blown up.' We all thought it was up there. So we took time to go up there and see everything was all right."

One former white student recalled:

> "It was awful. It shook the house. We lived about a mile and a half from the high school. It shook everything. I thought 'They must be blowing up the hill.' When I got up, I went to Clinton to get the paper. I drove my brother's car and when I drove by there, everything, the

school, everything -- commodes was right out in the grass. Lockers and everything. The Highway Patrol was just coming in."

Despite the destruction of the school, within four days, classes resumed for the Clinton High School students. An unused school building in neighboring Oak Ridge was furbished and readied for the students. For the remainder of that school year and the following year, students were bussed daily to the temporary facilities 12 miles away.

There was mass public outcry against the bombing of the school. Contributions came from across the nation. Washington D.C. columnist, Drew Pearson adopted the cause and established a plan for nationwide fund raising, known as the "Buy a Brick for Peace" program. Contributions to the rebuilding project took the form of free labor pledged by the AFL-CIO; other companies and organizations pledged materials as well as finances. The fund raising culminated in a revival held in the gym of the old school building (the only part of the building unaffected by the bombing) at which the Reverend Billy Graham and Drew Pearson spoke (*Clinton Courier News*, 1976).

Immediately following the bombing, the FBI established an office on the main street in Clinton. Although a thorough investigation followed, no arrests were ever made in the bombing of Clinton High School. Two years after the bombing, in September 1960, Clinton High School students attended classes in their rebuilt school building in their own home town.

Clinton Today

Clinton High School remains integrated today, although there have been reports of racial altercations within the school and the community as recently as spring of 1995. In the interviews, subjects were questioned about awareness of racially motivated clashes since the integration and the bombing of the high school. Only half of the subjects responded said they were aware of racially motivated altercations; however, despite being probed, most were vague as to the nature of the problems. Responded one white:

> "It seems like there were some problems, but just what I don't recall."

During the period of September 1994 and January 1995 (when the interviews were conducted) media reports indicated that racial conflicts were occurring at the high school. One white respondent appraised the recent events as she heard them through her grandson.

> "He says they have conflicts there all the time. That there is one group of people, I don't remember what they call them -- anyway, they have the rebel flag on their cars and they dress in a certain way. You know them by the way they dress. Well, you have this group and then you have the young black people that are now days, the young blacks are angry. I think they think they've been mistreated and they just have an attitude. I see them. We go walking to the civic center and walk and we see them and walk by them and smile at them and speak to them and they sort of glare at you. I believe the young black generation is angry."

Another white respondent recalled:

> "Just here a while back, over on the [Folley] Hill, they sent the police over there and they were about to arrest a [black] boy. Here a while back, they had a fight at the high school and they said the gangs were going to gather up but nothing ever materialized, thank goodness. I can't understand what they're after."

The other eight respondents indicated that they were aware of racial conflict, although nothing in particular occurred in Clinton. None of the three black respondents indicated that they were aware of any racial conflict occurring since integration.

All of the subjects indicated that inter-racial conditions in Clinton are tranquil, much like the conditions prior to integration. However, when asked how, in general, relationships between blacks and whites have changed, the responses can only be characterized as "mixed". White responses ranged from a little change to a lot of change; however, most of them were fairly vague as to whether the "change" was positive or negative. The three black respondents indicated that black-white relationships are peaceful. Interaction between blacks and whites appear to have increased significantly. Except for one, all respondents, black and white, indicated that they had a "good friend" and worked regularly with individuals of the opposite race.

The degree of integration in the Clinton area has also appeared to have increased. Only five of the respondents indicated that they lived in an all-white neighborhood. All but one of the respondents indicated that there were no changes in their personal feelings or attitudes

towards the opposite race. The one individual who reported an attitude change had been a member of Kasper's White Youth Citizen's Council.

> "Well, I finally decided that they're people just like we are but if you asked me if I wanted one of my children to marry one, I'd say no."

When questioned on the impact of the integration crisis on Clinton today, the responses were, once again, mixed. Many of the subjects indicated that the impact was both positive and negative.

On subject responded:

> "A lot of people are more color conscious then they were before. I don't think feelings are as good today as they were before the whole thing. It's made everybody more sensitive. I don't know what we could have done not to it [the crisis]. This whole thing boiled up over night."

Another subject had this to say:

> "What John Kasper said would happen has happened. That children would be raised up from kindergarten and on with them and they would start marrying and having babies and on and on and that is exactly what has happened."

The three black respondents all indicated the impact of integration to be positive.

> "I think things are better. For the children anyway."

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The conflict in Clinton, Tennessee may appear to have been motivated by racial prejudice and, on a surface level, interpreted as a conflict between the prejudiced and the not-so-prejudiced; after all, Clinton was and still is a southern community with an ingrained belief system that stems back to antebellum times. However, analyzing the incident within the framework of political economy and status politics, a more complex understanding can be gained. Racist ideology was indeed present and a motivator to resistance in the desegregation of Clinton High School. There were, however, underlying, perhaps hidden influences on this crisis that occurred in the years prior to 1956. These influences took the form of government intervention in economic and political situations; incidents that were perceived as a threat to individuals' status, politically, economically and socially. The countermovement in August of 1956 was based on racist ideology and in opposition to the Civil Rights movement, although, was strongly influenced by repeated incidents of government intervention in the area.

Political economy theory reflects the need to understand the political and economic conditions within a society in order to understand the motivating forces behind particular members of society. According to C. Wright Mills, humankind's institutions, political, religious, legal etc., are intricately intertwined and impossible to separate (Mills, 1993). Therefore, for this study, it is imperative to review history for indicators of black/white competition for political, economic, and social dominance.

Political Economy Theory

The review of U.S. history revealed multiple examples of political economy theory. Prior to 1861, history records the struggles between whites of the north and south for economic and political equality, if not dominance. Because of the south's deep financial dependence on slavery and the north's commitment to a free-labor economy, the Civil War erupted, which, in turn, led to the political, economic, and social devastation of the south.

Where it is true there are many instances of blacks rebelling against the institution of slavery, clear cut examples of blacks competing with whites for political and economic equality do not surface until post Civil War history when blacks began to enjoy some, albeit unstable, legal standing. During the period of 1865 to 1877, American blacks received a brief taste of political and economic choice through congressional moves - i.e. the Civil Rights acts, the Reconstruction acts and the Fourteenth Amendment. However, whites successfully squashed the upward political and economic movement of blacks with the Compromise of 1877; the Compromise provided for the removal of Union troops from the southern states and effectively ensured all political power to be retained by whites. Thus the era of Jim Crow began.

Southern whites, particularly plantation owners, had suffered greatly in the war. Having lost much of their financial investments through the abolition of slavery, whites were not about to allow their former serfs any economic advantages. To ensure and maintain white dominance, Jim Crow laws were instituted; these laws were specifically designed to keep the blacks disenfranchised and out of the political

decision making process. The ultimate move in maintaining black inferiority came with constitutional support for the segregation of the races; the Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson concluded separate but equal facilities for whites to be supported by the constitution. By restricting black access to facilities enjoyed by more wealthy white, blacks were restricted from job opportunities and maintained in subservient positions. Thus, blacks were officially forced to the margins of American society.

Black opposition to this marginalization was slow but sure. Beginning in the earlier 1900's blacks began pushing back against their white dominators. Of the two opposition camps, assimulationists and separatists, assimulationists would prove most effective.

Separatists, lead by Marcus Garvey, stressed black pride and a "we don't need them" type of rhetoric which attracted thousands of followers. However, Garvey's political success in the "Back to Africa" movement abruptly ended at the hands of white federal officials in the 1920's for the crime of mail fraud.

Assimilationists chose another avenue in which to pursue equality with whites. Assimilationists, represented by the NAACP organization, fought for equality at the very foundation of the nation's philosophy; the constitution. Beginning in 1933, NAACP challenged the "separate but equal" edict established 15 years before. Strategically, lawyers began to demand and receive equality in facilities for black students and teacher wages. Slowly and reluctantly the white dominated American court system was forced to make good the promise of equality. As blacks began to recognize the changes taking place, confidence began to build

resulting in a tremendous number of segregation cases flooding the nation's courts. Deftly, the NAACP selected its cases and challenged the Plessy v. Ferguson decision in the Supreme Court in 1951. By successfully demonstrating the "separate but equal" edict was unequal in and of itself, the legal segregation of the races was ended in May 1954.

Status Politics

The concept status politics or politics of lifestyle concern emphasizes society's need for control over personal status as well as socialization of off-spring; when a social condition or change is seen as infringing on this control, individuals or groups will rally to action. Thus the concept of status politics is vividly supported in the history of the U.S.

It can be demonstrated clearly that the threat to status was very much a motivating factor behind the Civil War; the south succeeded from the Union as a result of threat to the institution of slavery, the bread and butter of the south and, consequently, a lifestyle. The defeat of the Confederacy magnified this threat ten-fold. Economically and emotionally devastated, southern whites perceived their predicament as not being much better than that of blacks. However, the supportive, white dominated, political environment of 1880's, allowed whites to return and maintain blacks in a lower economic/lower status, subservient position - a position epitomized in 1896 by the "separate but equal" doctrine.

As blacks began to gain some legal standing through the first part of the twentieth century, whites began again to perceive a threat to status and lifestyle. Whites observed as blacks legal battles were

waged an won in the nation's courts through the 30's and 40's. Times were changing; it became evident to whites that blacks were becoming more aggressive in their pursuit for equality; a potential threat to political and economic dominance.

The end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War marked a period of anti-communistic paranoia in the United States and change was not something that was welcomed in an uneasy country. It was this negative atmosphere that greeted the Supreme Court Decision to end the "separate but equal" doctrine in 1954.

Countermovement Theory, Status Politics and the Desegregation of Clinton High School

The concept of status politics is particularly useful in understanding the reaction and the emergence of the countermovement to desegregation of Clinton High School. In the 30's, 40's and 50's, when the rest of the country was dealing with major change, no county in the U.S. was feeling it more than Anderson County, Tennessee.

Anderson County has had more than it's share of incidents of government intervention in local affairs and community living. Beginning with the Briceville Wars concerning free versus convict labor in 1891, occurrences of government intercession with perceived local or private concerns began when the Tennessee militia was ordered to intervene and enforce federal rulings in labor disputes. The magnitude of government control only escalated from this incident. In the 1930's, property surrounding Norris Lake was seized for the construction of Norris Dam; in 1942 an even larger portion of Anderson County was taken

by federal officials for the construction of the city of Oak Ridge as part of the war effort. In these two situations alone, where individuals were actually forced out of their homes, Anderson Countians were cooperative. The desegregation of Clinton High School was a different matter. The interviews with the 17 Clinton citizens who witnessed the conflict in 1956, indicated that the town of Clinton was considered by most to be a southern community. In this vein of thought, the town was segregated in the traditional lifestyle of the south, which allowed racial prejudice to perpetuated.

Data collected from the interviews indicated that, overall, there was a certain resignation to the integration of the high school prior to August, 1956 and all the individuals interviewed stated their first firm memories of resistance to integration began "when the trouble started" or "the outsiders came in". It took an "agent provocateur", John Kasper, to kindle and inflame the quiet, yet existing, racist, anti-integration sentiment thus creating a countermovement. Although it is clear that the protest and rallies were mostly lead by non-residents, the data collected indicates there was plenty of involvement of Clinton citizens; specifically the distribution of residents and non-residents remains unclear, therefore the "outsiders caused the trouble" rhetoric is not completely accurate. Clinton had certainly experienced its share of government intervention, however, never had their social life been so directly threatened. Fueled by ingrained racial prejudices, individuals opposing integration perceived a threat to the socialization of their children. The perception that Clinton teenagers would be forced to

intermingle the blacks on a daily basis was too much; thus the countermovement arose.

Outsider involvement in the protests occurring in Clinton can be clearly explained by the status politics perspective and countermovement theory. Clinton, Tennessee was considered representative of the traditional south, therefore, desegregation of the high school was symbolic or indicative times to come; if Clinton High School was allowed to integrate, the rest of the south would follow, thus the threat to the socialization of children was echoed throughout the southern states. The protests and violence surrounding the integration of the school was, to some extent, a countermovement. Countermovements emerge as a result of the success or victories obtained by a social movement; in this case the Civil Rights movement. In Clinton, Tennessee, the countermovement that emerged was certainly a reactionary movement, however, the targets of the movement were not so much aimed at counteracting Civil Rights victories. The target of the countermovement was more geared towards government mandates and were rallied on by racist sentiment.

As mentioned earlier, the countermovement emerging in Clinton in 1956 falls neatly into Mottl's clarification of a countermovement as opposed to a social movement. First Mottl (1980) states that countermovements challenge groups lower on the social scale; overwhelmingly blacks in Clinton, as well as the rest of the south, were lower on the social scale than white, however, racial sentiment can be viewed as a symbolic motivator; resistance to integration was aimed more directly at government mandates, thus in this case, the countermovement challenged groups higher and lower on the social scale. Second,

countermovements are reactionary movements; the countermovement in Clinton was clearly a reaction to the imminent integration of the school. The success of the Civil Rights movement was having full impact on the community. Lastly, Mottl points out that countermovements tend to focus on a particular or individual threat; in this case the threat was not only "evil consequences" of racial mixing, but the hidden agenda of the government. Anti-integration rhetoric suggested that integrating the races would end white dominance and result in a mulatto population; it was implied on multiple occasions that such notions could only be supported by anti-democratic, anti-American forces.

Integration Hypothesis

The historic data, as well as the interview data, clearly support both political economy theory and the concept of status politics in explaining events occurring in Clinton in 1956. As stated earlier, political economy theory is often utilized in explaining the political/economic motivations behind the actions of member of society. C. Wright Mills explained that all of societies institutions are so intricately intertwined and dependent on one another, it is impossible to separate the social from the political and economic; the same can be said for status. Individual status is highly dependent on one's relationship to the economy and political institutions; with higher status usually comes political and economic power. Therefore, it becomes useful to combine the two veins of thought into a single hypothesis: the integration hypothesis.

Suits filed by American blacks in the 30's, 40's and 50's were motivated on the desire for equal political and economic power. Whites

perceived not only a threat to political dominance but their status and their control over the socialization of children. This threat was not so much coming from the blacks, but from the government who was forcing whites to comply with laws designed to protect and ensure equality of the races. Thus, while white opposition to integration mobilized on the issue of race, the hidden influences were perceived threats to social and political status, fueled by rhetoric of communistic plots disguised as government support for the equality of races.

The crisis emerging out of the integration of Clinton High School is somewhat atypical of integration conflicts occurring in the 50's and 60's in the United States. Few other counties in the country have a history of government control and/or interference, therefore, Anderson County is somewhat unique. In many of the cases of conflict over school integration, resistance was lead by local and state political officials and/or elites as was the situation in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. In this case study, integration was supported by local and state officials; resistance to integration was clearly led by those with little or no political power. Therefore the theoretical framework used in this study may have its limitations when analyzing other integration conflicts. The combination of political economy theory and status politics into the integration hypothesis, however, may still be useful in providing a more rounded and complete analytical framework in explaining the emergence of resistance or countermovements as the result of school integration.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

Respondent Information:

Race_____

Age_____

Gender_____

Current Occupation_____

Education (# of Years)_____

Background Information in the 1950's

Occupation_____

Location of Residence_____

Interview

What were your feelings or attitudes towards blacks/whites in the 1950's?

Were there any blacks/whites living in your neighborhood in the 1950's?

When did you first become aware of action being taken to end the segregation of schools?

Were you aware of actions being taken by local blacks to enroll in Clinton prior to 1954?

What was your response to the U.S. Supreme Courts ruling to end segregation?

When did you first become aware of plans to integrate Clinton High School?

What do think was the general attitude towards integration by Clintonites?

What was the reactions to integration by your friends and family?

When did you first become aware of resistance to integration?

Did you attend/observe any organized rallies against integration?
If so, which ones?

Who led the resistance towards integration?

Who were the primary activist against integration?

Who were the primary activists for integration?

How did blacks/whites get along during integration?

How did the black/white students get along during integration?

Where you aware of the FBI's investigation into the crisis?
If so, when did you become aware of it?
Do you feel that it was warranted?

Were you familiar with the court hearings as a result of the FBI's investigation?
If so, did you agree or disagree with the outcome?

Do you remember the day of the bombing of the High School?
If so, what was your reaction to it?

Are you aware of any instances of racially motivated clashes since the bombing in your area?

How do blacks/whites get along today?

Are there any blacks/whites that you consider to be good friends?

Are there any blacks/whites living in your neighborhood?
If no, why do you think that is?

If no, how would you feel towards blacks/whites living in your neighborhood?

Have your feelings/attitudes towards blacks/whites change since the 1950's?
If yes, how?

In your opinion, has black/white relations changed since the integration crisis?
If yes, when do you think the change in attitude began?

Do you feel that integration had an impact on racial conditions today?

VITA

Valerie Hulett Herd was born in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on October 14, 1962. She attended public schools in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and graduated from the Oak Ridge High School in June, 1981. After completing several semesters at Roane State Community College in Harriman, Tennessee, she enter East Tennessee State University located in Johnson City, Tennessee in 1985 and pursued a degree in Communications, specializing in broadcast production. While at ETSU, she worked as a co-operative student at Tennessee Eastman Kodak in the audio/video production department. She graduated with a Bachelors of Science degree in 1989. In January, 1991, she began to pursue a Master's degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the field of Sociology. The Master of Arts degree was received in December, 1995.

Currently, she is working as an adjunct instructor for Roane State Community College in Harriman, Tennessee, teaching Sociology.