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African American Oral Histories of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Public Schools During the Early Days of Desegregation, 1955 – 1967

Lorena B. Whipple
University of Tennessee - Knoxville, lwhipple@utk.edu

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Lorena B. Whipple entitled "African American Oral Histories of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Public Schools During the Early Days of Desegregation, 1955 – 1967." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Cynthia G. Fleming, Diana Moyer, Jeannine R. Studer

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

African American Oral Histories of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Public Schools During the Early Days of Desegregation, 1955–1967

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lorena B. Whipple

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Dedication

My Dissertation is dedicated to my husband

Donald Curtis Whipple

for his steadfast unwavering commitment to our marriage, me and our children Vida Renee, Eric Armon, Alys Nicole; granddaughter Kailyn Renee; son-in-law Adam. You complete me.

My dissertation is also dedicated to my mother, Shirley Ellen Cunningham (Brown) Jackson for instilling in me a love of learning. Thank you. I love you all immensely.

This dissertation happened because seven African American griot trailblazers gifted me their time and their stories: Ms. Ann, Mr. Archie, Ms. Cassandra, Mr. Fred, Ms. Helen, Mr. L. C., and Mr. Willie Jr. Thank you so very much.

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In Memoriam

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ABSTRACT

Many traditional historical texts of the United States are missing the voiced presence of African Americans. Existing historical texts concerning desegregation in the South, and particularly in Tennessee, are missing African Americans' experienced perspectives during racial desegregation in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The intention of this dissertation is to use oral history as a methodology to document the memories of seven African Americans who participated in the racial desegregation of Oak Ridge, Tennessee public schools. Critical race theory is the interpretive lens used to analyze the interviews. The oral historical accounts contained in this study suggest African Americans have a unique perspective that enhances existing historical accounts. Oak Ridge maintains a unique place in U.S. history. It was both the home of one of the United States government's secret site for the Manhattan Project which led to the country's World War II victory, as well as the first public school system in the state of Tennessee to racially desegregate in 1955. After May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court pronouncement that racially segregated public schools were inherently unequal, Oak Ridge public schools voluntarily complied and racially desegregated Robertsville Junior High and Oak Ridge High Schools. The resulting action required the transfer of all seventh through twelfth grade African American students from Oak Ridge's all "Colored" Scarboro School. The remaining enrollment of African American elementary school students continued until after the second-wave of racial desegregation laws took effect after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The complex history of African Americans in the United States and in particular within public education, positions this study within the realm of contingencies that re-scripts the United

States's historical narrative as well as the historical narrative of African Americans in Oak Ridge public schools.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My goal in this dissertation is to use oral history methodology to acknowledge seven African American[1] students who participated in the early days of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, public schools' racial desegregation. Their eyewitness narrated accounts can broaden our historical understanding of racial desegregation in the Oak Ridge public schools. The study begins to reconstruct a historical time for which African American first person accounts do not exist. History is always partial and, therefore, always incomplete (Perks & Thomson, 1998). But as Paul Thompson (1988; 1998) suggests, historians have a social purpose to fill in the gaps, particularly where minorities or marginalized groups are not represented. This study therefore joins existing accounts of Oak Ridge public school's racial desegregation. This chapter will describe the events that led to my decision to interview former African American students who attended Oak Ridge public schools, background to oral history within the qualitative research paradigm and the researcher, historically situating U. S. public education, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and African American education in Oak Ridge.

[1] African American will be cited interchangeably with Afro-American, Black, Colored, Negro, People of Color, marginalized group, minority group, minority culture, or The Other based on the scholars whose work inform my study and their respective usages, names and identities used in the context of this time period.

My doctoral program classes and my position as a middle school professional school counselor heavily influenced my research. My intention was for the narrators of this oral history to tell their stories as they experienced racial desegregation by responding to an interview guide. The interview guide focused on their memories of racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools and how this historic event affected her or his: (1) academic/educational, (2) cultural, (3) social, and (4) life experiences as a result of attending the first racially desegregated public school in the state of Tennessee.

Background for the Study

Racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools is the educational experience for which this oral history study will focus. Oral history accounts produce storied narratives (Ritchie, 2003; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). The term narrative has many meanings across disciplines but is most often linked with story or metaphor for a story (Atkinson, 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Riessman & Speedy, 2007). According to John Dewey (1916, 1966), a philosopher of education, narrative inquiry is a research methodology that inextricably intertwines education, experience, and life. Following Dewey, narrative inquiry is positioned as a methodology well-suited to help understand educational experiences (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Narayan, 1991). Narratives can also be applied as a pedagogical practice to teach history to help students to think critically (Blyler & Perkins, 1999; Cardillichio & Fields, 1997; Cronon, 1992; Epstein, 2009; Olwell, 1999).

Closer to my job as a middle school counselor, I recognize that the onset of adolescence begins during the middle school years of a student's education (NMSA, 2003; Steinberg,

2003). Adolescent students are at the cusp of changing from concrete thinkers to grasping abstract ideas and concepts like race, slavery, freedom, justice, and constitutional rights (Olwell, 1999). Adolescents have a static notion of time and have difficulty grasping the historical notion of cause and effect, or the relationship of constructing reality from historical events (Shemilt, 1987). Narratives invite students to think critically (Makler, 1991). Paolo Freire (1970, 2008), a philosopher of education and an advocate of critical pedagogy, proposes that developers of educational pedagogies begin with recognition of the reality of humankind. The student-teacher relationship is fundamentally narratives between human characters. To engage students in critical thinking requires a presentation of reality that is fluid, dynamic, decompartmentalized, and unpredictable (p. 70). Freire further suggests educational pedagogies can transform thinking and learning by connecting to human realities, rather than a banking system pedagogy. A banking system educational approach leads teachers to deposit dates, times, meaningless lists of names, places, and endless chronologies into the brains of students and then withdraws this unprocessed information via objective testing (p. 72). The social studies teachers at the middle school where I work use the former methods to foster critical thinking in students versus the latter banking system approach. I show both methods to illuminate the point that even with ideal pedagogical methods; social studies in particular American history classes are difficult terrain for African American students who are still formulating their identities especially at the middle level (Carter and Goodwin, 1994; Epstein, 2009; Helms, 1990). Carter G.Woodson (1933, 2000), an African American historian reveals in his book, *Mis-education of the Negro,* that stories from the past can provide pedagogical insights to the present. Therefore, personal narratives of African Americans using oral history methodology can present a unique interpretive framework-web

of knowledge to explain historical actors and events that benefit all students (Epstein, 2009; Wertsch, 2000; 2002).

School Counselor Coupled with a Serendipitous Event

Early in my middle school counseling career African American students approached me asking whether they could change classes and drop their social studies courses. Searching for alternate solutions to their request to drop, no longer enroll in a required class, I found the students were particularly challenged to process historical information. While sitting in their social studies classes, the students found that African Americans were mainly typecast as former slaves or members of primitive groups of Africans were portrayed negatively as savages, which was their only claim to relevancy in social history (Epstein, 2009). As an African American, I also found this troubling. The students's angst toward American history classes together with a serendipitous event, were foundational to my decision for this study.

The groundwork was laid several years ago when I serendipitously read a randomly placed manuscript that was a launching point that drew me to this research focusing on racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools. I had just started a new job as an Oak Ridge public schools' Professional School Counselor (PSC) (ASCA, 2004; ASCA, 2012; Coleman, 2008; Studer, 2005). Scavenging my new office reading, wiping, sneezing, and tossing, I finally sat down at my desk and opened one of the drawers to read some files lying inside. Lying on top of the files was a manuscript that caught my attention because the title was related to the integration or desegregation Oak Ridge, Tennessee public schools (manuscript is now lost and I don't remember the author's name). I suspect the

retired school counselor I was replacing intentionally placed the manuscript in the desk drawer. The counselor was aware an African American had been newly hired. The manuscript described Oak Ridge African American students' resistance to racially desegregated schools. With a renewed surge of energy, I devoured every word in that manuscript. As a displaced urban African American northerner, race-based topics like integration, desegregation, and segregation signaled mental pandemonium, as I recalled reading books and watching movies that presented images of violent crowds spewing racist remarks at Black students walking like foot soldiers into a combat zone blocking entry into an educational institution. Within my ever evolving identity as an African American transplanted to the southern U.S., I had developed an admiration for the tenacious spirit of African Americans in the southern U. S. where, in spite of their unequal treatment and jurisprudence that supported these inequities, they held an iconoclastic appeal for me (Helms, 1990). While reading, I searched the manuscript for visible perspectives from the students impacted by racial desegregation, but their perspectives were not contained in that manuscript. Later research revealed Oak Ridge was the first public school system in the state of Tennessee to racially desegregate African American junior and senior high school students in 1955. However, the manuscript I found detailed Oak Ridge public schools' second-wave of racial desegregation that included the elementary schools in the fall of 1967.

After reading the manuscript, I gave it to the school librarian who agreed to place it in a school history file located in a large five-drawer file cabinet in the school library. A few years later, I asked the librarian for the manuscript. I remember the name of the author

was female, and the narrative's externalized language suggested the author was not African American. Regretfully, the librarian didn't remember our conversation or an agreement to file the manuscript. By that time, many items in the library had been purged. If the manuscript was still in existence there were two places it might be, within the files that were not purged, now contained in one half-filled drawer in the library office, or the Oak Ridge Public Library (ORPL), where all of the school's historical information had been sent. I looked in the office file drawer but it wasn't there. Still hopeful I would find the manuscript at the ORPL; I made a trip and asked the library archivist if I could look in the box of items sent from my school. The ORPL archivist searched through the box but didn't find the manuscript.

Years have passed, but the lost manuscript has had a significant impact on my research agenda. Subsequent research through books, computer searches, dissertations, local museums, local yearbooks, local and national archives, master's thesis, microfiche, and newspaper articles did not reveal the first person accounts of the students impacted by the racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools (Adamson, 1946-2003; Drews, 2007; Graham, 1967; Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Overholt, 1987; Peelle & Tucker, 1960; Reynolds, Thernstrom, Gaziano, Heriot, Kirsanow, Melendez, Taylor, Jr., Yaki, 2008; Salvatore, Martin, Ruiz, Sullivan, Sitkoff, 2000; Smith, 2007; Sparrow, 1980; Westcott, 2005). I remember a stand out feature of the manuscript was how the author repeatedly used the words, "Black resistance" and "Blacks were resistant to integration." The words resistant and resistance were imprinted on my memory, and lingered in my thoughts long after I had parted with the manuscript. I find it interesting how small things can influence

the research questions we pursue. Because, I didn't know at that time, what appeared to be a document randomly placed in my desk drawer would eventually have such influence on my future and foreshadowed my dissertation topic. Although the author was quite vocal in her description of the Black students, it contrasted a cacophony of silence as I searched for the voices of those African Americans. There was a metaphorical veil covering the personal perspectives of the African American students whose voices were hidden (Stepto, 1991). Were they resistant to integration? If so, why? What were their thoughts, feelings, and emotions as they entered their new schools, schools that earlier, they were legally prohibited from attending because they were Black?

Subsequently, the students' discomfort in their history classes along with the serendipitous manuscript prompted my search for African American voices of Oak Ridge public schools' racial desegregation. Oral history research provides me an opportunity to give local African American students a historical legacy that includes people who look like them (Mariner, 2010). Therefore, this oral history as Thompson (1988) suggests, has a social purpose, that is to have the potential power to weave African American perspectives into the local history of racial desegregation, by revealing the oral eyewitness accounts of some of the African American students in Oak Ridge, who might be members of the inaugural class of desegregation and/or the students' families (Farrar, 1995; Haley, 1976; 1998).

The oral histories contained in this study were constructed from six recorded face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview. The interview questions were generated after researching historical texts, the work of oral history scholars, local artifacts, museums, local archives, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee Special Collections archives,

databases, and photographs. Still, African American voices were missing. Because this study has taken several years to complete, I recently read an anecdotal short essay revealing a young Black person's experience growing up in Oak Ridge and viewed a recent museum exhibit about the Scarboro Community (Steele, 1981; Weaver, 2011). However, as a large overall body of research, this oral history dissertation can also serve to reconcile an historical void that includes more extensive perspectives and experiences of African American students currently missing from the Oak Ridge public schools' historical memory.

Positionality

"*I have relatives in Chicago. Many times I spent my summers sometimes visiting, but I always returned to Oak Ridge in time to go to school."* LCG, Oral Narrator

Oral history is within the research paradigm classification, qualitative research. The researcher in qualitative research is the research instrument, the primary instrument of data collection (Merriam, 1998). Denzin & Lincoln (2005) further suggest that the interview and interpretive analysis, also called the research gaze, is filtered through the researcher's language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. These factors are considered in reading qualitative research and are referred to as the researcher's positionality (Milner, 2007). As a qualitative researcher, I endeavor to be transparent by revealing the cultural, historical, and political influences that effect me along with my language background, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. Benhabib (1992), a political science and philosophy scholar is credited with feminist work that would suggest this as my situatedness (pp. 93–94), when and where I enter the research landscape (Giddings, 2001). Qualitative research scholars suggest the researcher and the

researched are interactive in the research process, and oral historian, Michael Frisch (1990) points to shared authority between the researcher and oral narrator. My positionality and how I am situated, is based on a broader sociological context, that affected my dissertation topic methodology and my analytical tools. Overall my positionality sets up my methodological decisions and is inscribed with the scholars whose work influences my dissertation.

I racially/ethnically position myself as an African American female professional school counselor informed by cultural studies scholars. Race is salient in this dissertation and is threaded throughout. Construction of my racial identity embraces African culture, American culture, and African American culture. My parents had six children. I am the second child and the first female. My family has lived in the mid-western city of Chicago, Illinois, for three generations, where I grew up. My maternal grandmother was born in central Ohio and grew up in various places around the Midwest, and my maternal grandfather was born and grew up in central Indiana. When my paternal great- grandparents moved north, they closed off any memories of the South (Wilkerson, 2011). One set of my paternal great-grandparents moved to Chicago in the late 1800's from Mississippi and the other set moved to Chicago from Louisiana in 1903. Neither of my great-grandparents told stories about living in the South.

Days and evenings spent listening to stories and storytelling initially exposed me to oral history. It was like listening to an African griot[2.] I received both history lessons and life lessons.

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2 A griot (pronounced gree-oh), are West African trained historians, whose memory traces the history of a village and surrounding villages as far back as eight generations or more. A West African village griot provides connections between cultural and historical pasts to the present. The griot's ability to remember was one of the only ways early histories got passed along. Training started no earlier than the age of fifty to sixty years old (Brandon; 2004; Haley, 1974).

Romberger's (1986) oral history article, *"Aunt Sophie always said…"* touts the elders who talk and teach. Sitting on the front porch was a staple, but talking about life before living in Chicago was never discussed. Many of my friends spent part of their summer vacations visiting their southern relatives. I found it interesting that one of the narrators I interviewed visited Chicago as part of his summer vacation. But the South remained an unexplored culture for me until a neighbor encouraged me to visit her alma mater, Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee. Later I decided to attend Knoxville College, where I met my husband, married, and made a permanent move to the South.

I approach this study as a middle-aged female and for reasons that are unclear to me; I was sheltered from the Civil Rights movement, although The Movement stretched across the U. S.. My values align with several feminist philosophers and social justice scholars (Collins, 2000; Edelman, 1995; 1999; hooks, 1981, 1989; Lorde, 1984; Thayer-Bacon, 2000). I continually work at overcoming the daily tensions that confront me because I choose to remain married, the mother of three grown children, grandmother of one, graduate student, and professional middle-school counselor in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

My values were formed in a racially and socioeconomically diverse urban neighborhood of blue-collar city service workers, steel mill workers, teachers, lawyers, and small-business owners. The majority of families were two-parent households, although my parents eventually divorced. Both of my parents and my maternal grandparents attended college in the Midwest. My maternal and paternal extended families lived within walking distance of my house. We were very close and their love and influence continue to affect my life.

My parents attended racially integrated schools in the same community where I grew up. My education began in a private Episcopalian school. While I was in seventh grade, my family experienced financial devastation. My parents valued education, so they sent my younger sister and me to a socioeconomically affluent public school. I rode three different city buses to school until high school graduation. I learned from my family's financial hardship that socioeconomic status could affect your education—sometimes positively, but oftentimes negatively. I'm thankful for the positive influence my parents' decision had on my life—sending me to a public school with vast resources, teachers who demanded excellence from students, and rich with racial, religious, and socioeconomic diversity. Recent high-school reunion statistics revealed that 85% of our graduating class earned college degrees, and a large percentage earned advanced and professional degrees[3].

Political discussions were a family staple. Reading was the key to having a voice in these discussions (Marshall & Arvay, 1999). Although my parents promoted reading, my mother censored my reading. My older brother's reading was not censored. I resented and rebelled against this supervision of my mind. However, I believe being censored planted the seeds of resistance to domination and nurtured my sense of social activism and advocacy (Giddings, 2001; hooks, 1989). My early life experiences formed my sense of family and community and were factors that continued to influence me as a professional school counselor and in my decision to conduct a culturally based oral history dissertation (Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Lee, 2001). Reflecting upon pivotal events that have influenced my life includes

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3 2005 South Shore High School Class Reunion statistics.

my permanent move to the southern U.S.. I had been sheltered or oblivious naiveté from overt racism until I moved to the South.

My racial identity was transformed, shaped by my re-location to the south (Helms, 1990). An embarrassing and emotionally draining incident awakened me from a naïve slumber to realize that I was considered a marginalized double minority, Black and female. I still am not able to understand why human beings would develop laws that discriminated against children based on race, a socially constructed fiction (Haney-Lopez, 2000). Nor do I understand laws that withhold the equality of education for all students. That emotional incident foregrounds my desire to help students to succeed, especially marginalized students (Cox & Lee, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Recent statistical data generated from *No Child Left Behind* (2001) are alarming (Coleman, 2008; Hilliard, 1990; McMillan, 2004; Studer & Sommers, 2000). The achievement gap between African American students and White students creates cognitive dissonance (USDOE, 2004). I earned my undergraduate degree at a historically Black college where everyone aspired to academic excellence (Siddle Walker, 1996). I believe my greatest cognitive dissonance occurred when I read that randomly placed manuscript, serendipitously found, in my desk when I began working in the Oak Ridge Schools. Based on my limited understanding and experience of desegregation, I was captivated as I read that Black families in Oak Ridge were resistant to desegregation, as stated by the author. I have attempted to understand the unfair treatment of students throughout my professional career, and I have also attempted through my profession to challenge injustice in education (Lee, 2001). My greatest school counselor success has been when I sit down to talk one-on-one with students and exercise as Noddings (1984)

purports an "ethic of care through face-to-face communication (Hamilton & Shopes, 2008; Mitchell & Rafferty, 2005; Tucker, Smith-Adcock, & Trepal, 2011)." The seeds for this study were planted as a result of multiple events, but started with that manuscript.

Significant Factors

Throughout my dissertation, it was important to me to link cultural practices like storytelling and the oral traditions of Africa and the African diaspora. Also scholars Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, (1986) and their seminal work regarding *voice* in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) will be included. *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) is a product of early feminist work. *Voice* will be used as a metaphor describing one's point of view and how one makes meaning out of one's thoughts and reveals those meanings with words. Similarly, oral history records the thoughts of narrators describing specific times and events. Paul Thompson (1998) refers to the idea of voice as a metaphor in his work. The voices if the oral narrators in this study will be shaped by factors such as time, place, and race. Storytelling is a pedagogical approach I use in my professional school counseling practice and throughout this oral history study (Stiles & Kottman, 1990). Storytelling and the voice metaphor interwoven with the African and African American oral traditions will be visible throughout.

Sankofa and the African American Griot

"In Africa when an old man dies…a library burns…" Amadou Hampâté Bâ (1925).

Two West African cultural connections are threaded throughout this oral history of racial desegregation. They are the West Africa Akan Adinkra symbol of sankofa and the African griot (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Haley, 1973; Ki-Zerbo, 1969; Temple, 2010). Sankofa comes from the Akan people, an ethnic group native to Ghana in West Africa (Temple, 2010). Sankofa is an Akan Adrinkra symbol of a bird looking backward but moving forward carrying an egg of the future in its mouth:  . The translations of sankofa include: "it is not taboo to go back to fetch what you have forgotten:" "go back and fetch it"; "return to your past;"and "it is not taboo to go back and retrieve what you have forgotten or lost and carrying it into the future" (p. 127). A. K. Quarcoo (1994), a translator of Adinkra symbols, expands on this translation: "learn from the past; pick up the gems of the past; the past is not all shameful and the future may be profitably built on aspects of the past (p. 17).

The second cultural connection is the African griot (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Haley, 1976; 1998; Ki-Zerbo, 1969). The African griot learns the craft of village historian starting around fifty years old. The amazing memory of an African griot can orally document genealogies of as many as eight generations within each of their village families and as many as four to six surrounding villages (Haley, 1976; 1998). The use of memory to construct the history of an African village positions African griots as valuable historians. Like the sankofa bird, the oral narrators in this study will be like African griots, who will look back to the past in order to build

a historical text that can be used to document the future, African American students' experiences of Oak Ridge School racial desegregation.

Another Serendipitous Event

One day while traveling in my car, listening to a local radio station, I heard a segment of a program entitled StoryCorps®. An African American grandfather was telling his grandson his-story of racial segregation and Bloody Sunday when he crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama.[4] He considered himself the family griot (historian), and his grandson had oral proof documenting that 1965 historic event. The name of that segment was entitled "The Right to be Counted." Oral history methodology would help me account for the voices of the Oak Ridge African American students that were missing from the manuscript I had read earlier and missing from other historical texts documenting Oak Ridge public schools' racial desegregation.

Oral history is a method of research producing a text from recorded interviews and memoirs that document the historical past of a significant event[s] from people who have firsthand knowledge, and then analyzing their memories (Abrams, 2010; Janesick, 2010; Ritchie, 2003; Yow, 2005). Oral history brings recognition to substantial groups of people who had been ignored and challenges accepted judgments and assumptions of written historical texts. Much of the textual documentation of history presents the past as stories of conquest from the perspective of the victors themselves (Thompson, 1988; 1998). The precarious history of African Americans

[4] Story Corps® January 21, 2008.

invites me, as an African American, to seek research to challenge accepted historical judgments and assumptions about African Americans. This research partially accomplishes this goal.

Crossing Disciplines

Professional school counseling and cultural studies scholars guided my choice for an oral history dissertation and inform the basis for my work (ASCA, 2012; Nelson, Triechler, and Grossberg, 1992; Studer, 2005). Professional school counseling (PSC) scholars inform school counseling professionals of productive ways of working toward student success. Professional school counseling is interactive and interpersonal. Cultural studies is multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and anti-disciplinary, and, therefore, draws from a wide range of scholars, including history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and education to name a few, along with various feminist and critical theorists and multiculturalist scholars (Maton & Wright, 2002; Nelson, Triechler, Grossberg, 1992) Oral history is also multi-disciplinary (Ritchie, 2003). All of these elements influenced my doctoral program work, and, therefore, an interdisciplinary approach framed this dissertation. At the heart of this study and the scholars who informed this study is the proclivity toward interpersonal and interactive scholarship. Oral historians, professional school counselors, and cultural studies critics skillfully integrate a wide range of scholars and disciplines.

Historical Perspectives

African American scholars note three epistemological phases witnessed in African American history (Harding, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 2009). These are: (1) Negro history as a discourse that demonstrates African American contributions to the previously unchallenged

master-narrative perspective of Europeans; (2) Black history as a separate and distinct history of experiences studied in opposition to the master narrative[5] of American history; and (3) Black studies that reveal how the study of history is too limited to capture the robustness of black experiences. This study touches on all three African American historical phases. Included are voices omitted by master narrative of Oak Ridge desegregation. Secondly, as in phase two, this oral history lends itself to the separate and distinct African American experiences of Blacks who participated in desegregating Oak Ridge public schools. Finally, as in phase three, this oral history will be an explication of African American experiences in desegregated Oak Ridge public schools.

Education in the United States of America

"Most of our mothers and the women were domestic workers, maids what have you"

"Neither of my parents had much of an education. Education was withheld from them here in south where most of us came from to Oak Ridge"

Oak Ridge Oral Narrators

Public education in the U.S. originally mirrored European educational systems (Altenbaugh, 2003; Zinn, 1980). Democracy and the idea of equal educational opportunities were unique in the U.S. versus the European systems. The U.S. as a democracy believed in an informed, educated electorate. One avenue to an educated electorate is through the U.S.'s free

5 The master narrative is Euro-centered agreed upon version of historical knowledge that supports White Anglo males as superior and responsible for good and "others" non Europeans to a place of inferiority and relative invisibility, promoting an ideology of White supremacy (hooks, 2013; Swartz, 1992; Tillman, 2009).

public education system. The influences of political and governmental forces on American educational practices in communities have continued to be a major thread throughout U.S. history. Educational institutions in the U.S. have historically marginalized certain groups. The word "all" in conversations about U.S. educational opportunities means all special and privileged groups. African Americans and Native Americans[6] have been historically marginalized or excluded. According to U.S. President Thomas Jefferson, a public education advocate, it was impossible for freedom and ignorance to co-exist, and in order for our society to remain free; it could not afford to be ignorant (Anderson, 1988). However, in his pursuit of free public education, Jefferson did not make any provisions for females, Blacks, Native Americans, or Latinos[7], and other ethnic minorities were excluded.

African American Education in the United States

Since the ship the *White Lion*, first brought one of the earlier documented cargoes of Africans to American land as indentured servants in 1619, African Americans have continually sought to elevate themselves through education (Anderson, 1988; Salvatore, Martin, Ruiz, Sullivan, Sitkoff, 2000). The physical bondage imposed on U. S. Black slaves has been loosed,

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6Native Americans used in this study will include natives identified as First Nations and Indians.

7 Latina/o will include Mexican, Chicano, Mexican Americans, and are to be included as members of minority groups unless specifically stated.

but an ideological reluctance to fully embrace educational equality for African Americans seem to linger (Boles, 1984; Kozol, 1991; 2005; Thum, 1975; West, 2001; Woodson, 1933, 2000; Woodson, 1968). New England Puritans, a religious sect, believed that reading the Bible was important for all people, including Africans in the Americas (Altenbaugh, 2003). As early as 1764, a Puritan minister named John Eliot started a school for African slaves to teach them how to read the Bible. Phillis Wheatley, an African American slave in the New England colonies, was educated by her mistress and became a poet as early as 1773 (Carretta 2001; Mobley, 1988; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). In the southern U.S., plagued with the legacy of slavery and where education was illegal and forbidden, Black people transgressed laws in their pursuit of equality through education and literacy (Anderson, 1988; Thum, 1975). The U.S. public educational system has been continually problematic for African Americans (DuBois, 1903, 2003). History has recorded continual challenges for equal educational access and educational opportunities for African Americans.

Public Education in Tennessee

"My family was from a town in West Tennessee." HFG, Oral Narrator.

"My family was from a small town in East Tennessee, slightly north of here."

CAO, Oral Narrator

Tennessee is divided into three grand divisions—the eastern grand division borders the states as far east as Virginia and North Carolina; the middle grand division borders the states of Kentucky Alabama, Georgia and into the western grand division, that includes the states of

Arkansas, Missouri and Mississippi (See Appendix Map 1). These three divisions within the state were evident as far back as the U.S. Civil War when confederate soldiers from eastern Tennessee, fighting against the U.S. union armies, defected rather than fight on behalf of the South and slavery. The red clay and rocky terrain of the east limited agricultural farming and was more conducive to horses, meat cows, pigs, and small vegetable plots for families. Slaves were not needed in eastern Tennessee. Traveling slightly south and westward to middle Tennessee, and further west and south to Tennessee's western division, Black slaves were needed to cultivate the agricultural economy. In the southern U. S., slaves were the most economically lucrative commodities (Graham, 1967).

The state of Tennessee had a rudimentary public education system that did not function very effectively. Public education existed mainly on paper (Fleming, 1977).Wealthy White landowners sent their children to schools in the north or hired private tutors, and poor White families who were mostly illiterate, saw little value in public education (p. 22). Whether children were from poor White families or landowner elite, education in the state of Tennessee began racially segregated. As early as 1867, Tennessee laws required separate schools for Blacks and Whites. Public schools struggled to maintain students, therefore state officials provided limited funding for public education, which was distributed proportionately based on the number of students who attended schools (p. 22). Taxation and funding sources were not equally distributed. The "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) legalized racial inequalities through legalized segregation and separation in U.S. public facilities until the U.S.

Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*[8] decision in 1954 (Johnson, 2002). A review of the related literature contained in Chapter 2 of this study, will highlight additional reactions to the *Brown* decision across Tennessee.

By 1955, the beginning time period of my study, educational opportunities for Blacks in Tennessee in racially segregated schools were still limited by funding and resources (Lewis, 1966; Hassan, 1999). In 1954, *Brown* v. *Board* was touted as the panacea for past racial educational inequalities. The *Brown* decision was to be transformational for African Americans' pursuit of equal treatment under the law as their constitutionally recognized right (Bell, 1995; *Brown*, 1954). Verbal assaults and White opposition to *Brown* was immediate. The U. S. Supreme Court had listened to the *Brown* litigation team for six months. The country had been poised to hear the U.S. Supreme Court decision that was to be delivered by the Chief Justice of the Court, Earl Warren at one o' clock on the afternoon of May 17, 1954. After the decision was read in favor of the *Brown* litigation team, Mississippi Congressman John Bell Williams is credited with calling that day, "Black Monday" denouncing the *Brown* decision (Graham, 1967). Knoxville, Tennessee was the closest city to Oak Ridge that published a major newspaper from across the state. The May 18, 1954, *Knoxville Journal* newspaper known to editorially represent strong Republican conservative ideas, surprised readers with an editorial that said in reference to the *Brown* decision, "…No citizen fitted by character and intelligence to sit as a Justice of the

Supreme Court, and sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States could have decided this question other than the way it was decided." (p. 32).

[8]Hereafter, *Brown v. Board of Education* of *Topeka, Kansas*, will be noted as *Brown* or *Brown* v. *Board*.

The implementation of *Brown* became the purview of the states. Many states deferred implementation to local school boards. Tennessee's governor Frank Clement deferred racial desegregation in Tennessee public schools to local school boards also giving sole responsibility of implementation to them (Byrne, 2005; Patterson, 2001). Many parts of the South wanted nothing to do with desegregated schools. By the spring of 1956, Richard Kluger (1977) noted 101 southern congressmen had issued the Southern Manifesto, denouncing the *Brown* decision and asked for southern congressmen to sign on (p. 752). Three Southern Senators refused to sign, Lyndon Johnson and Estes Kefauver of Texas and Senator Al Gore, Sr. of Tennessee. However, by the time the Southern Manifesto had circulated, Oak Ridge public schools had already desegregated, and were in compliance with the U. S. law barring racial segregation of U.S. public schools.

We have moved from a historical perspective of public education in the U.S. to public education in Tennessee, laying the foundation for seven African American narratives of racial desegregation in public schools in Oak Ridge. Prior to the *Brown* decision, public schools in the U.S., Tennessee, and Oak Ridge were segregated by legal jurisprudence. Each story in this study of racial desegregation weaves together and illuminates shared experiences that contribute to a larger historical conversation of desegregation and integration. The narrators in this study can further our understanding of desegregation, but we need to contextualize their experience by taking a closer historical tour of Oak Ridge (Westcott, 2005).

Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Oak Ridge, Tennessee, began as a city with a high level of U.S. government control. Oak Ridge, Tennessee, has been called a model city (Adamson, 1946–2003; Gosling, 2005). When first constructed in 1942, Oak Ridge was nicknamed "the Secret City" (Drews, 2007; Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Overholt, 1987). Oak Ridge's nickname "the Secret City" continues today (ORPHA, 2009). Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was earmarked as one of three highly classified secret atomic energy construction locations built in response to the December 7, 1941, attack on the United States Pacific military facilities at Pearl Harbor. The U.S. responded to this attack by entering World War II as part of the Allied forces against Europe's Axis forces of Hitler and Mussolini. There was a process before the culminating event that placed Oak Ridge in the history books. It began before World War II, but not too long.

Displaced Farmers

> *"Long before I learned the universal turn of atoms, I heard the spirit's song that binds us all as one…My Cherokee left me no sign except…hair and cheek...strength and peace."*
>
> -Marilou Awiakta[9]

Before pioneers plowed the land that would eventually become the city of Oak Ridge, the Cherokee Indians lived in the Bear Creek Valley protected by Blackoak, Chestnut, East Fork,

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9 *Abiding Appalachia: Where Mountain and Atom Meet.* Blacksburg, VA: Pocahontas Press Inc.

Haw and Pine Ridges. By 1857 Cherokee Indians moving westward left land where White families built small farms that became the quiet atmosphere known as the Wheat community. Adjacent to the Wheat community, the Norris Dam was constructed in 1933. Norris Dam was one of the largest hydroelectric power generators in the southeastern portion of the U.S. Starting in December 1941; the usually quiet Wheat community sensed an unusual amount of activity. It seems that overnight dressed-up strangers in suits and ties appeared in this usually quiet town. These strangers were seen driving around, then stop their cars, measure the land, refer to maps, and review the land areas. At the east end of the community, the railroad at Elza had started building spur lines branching off the main track (Irwin, 1987). By March 1942 bulldozers arrived, and suddenly families found evacuation notices nailed to the front door of their houses. Soon all residents living on the 59,000 acres, which was to become Oak Ridge, Tennessee, were court-ordered to relocate, and landowners were given non-negotiable purchase prices by the U.S. government for their land (Daniel, 1987; Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Kaufman, 1987). Most of the displaced landowners moved to nearby towns Clinton, which was also in Anderson County, Knoxville adjacent to Oak Ridge in Knox County and other surrounding communities. Consequently local resentment toward Oak Ridge started early as a result of this forced relocation (Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Overholt, 1987). The Oak Ridge facility, or reservation, as it is called by local residents, was constructed and surrounded by barbed-wire security fencing and military guard stations posted at all entrances to the town. The Oak Ridge project recruited engineers, scientists, and military personnel to work on the government's secret project. Many new residents were transplanted mainly from the north and eastern U.S. cities and Europe (Groves, 1962; Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Overholt, 1987). The initial infrastructure was now in place. Oak Ridge began developing residential housing in the shape of a maze where movement

was challenging from one place to another within the confines of the city that was full of twists, turns, and dead-end streets.

Housing

All housing in Oak Ridge was at a premium. Workers had to apply for most housing and wait for approval or availability. One's level of importance to the government project determined the size of the home assigned to a family. For example, General Groves, the commander of the project, and his administrative staff were assigned the largest, most comfortable homes and the highest quality of home conveniences available at the time (Johnson & Jackson, 1981). The Army Corps of Engineers needed space to construct the secret facility. Most residents lived in army barracks; dormitories; alphabetically named homes, such as A-, B-, C-, D-, E-, and F-frames; victory cottages; Cemesto houses; and small, pre-fabricated, one-room homes called hutments (See Appendix Housing Pictures). The U.S. government had a mission. Government personnel constructing Oak Ridge were members of an elite military Army Corps of Engineers, which understood that construction begins with placing the commanding officers and administrative personnel first at the top, and, therefore, Oak Ridge constructed a top-down military-like city and a military-social perspective.

In Oak Ridge, the U.S. government's plans for launching the U.S. into the modern nuclear age appeared to weigh more in favor of the government's plan than concerns of human equality. This theme is threaded throughout Oak Ridge's story (Groves, 1962; Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Present, 1985; Robinson, 1950). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers never appeared to aim for an egalitarian social order in Oak Ridge. Instead it chose to follow the

accepted pattern of Tennessee and the U.S. military, which was racially segregated housing, racially segregated public facilities, and racially segregated schools. I re-visit desegregation in the U.S. military in Chapter 2, and the direct connection critical race theorists (CRT) make to the U.S. decision to racially desegregate in order to repair the United States' international reputation related to human rights for all of its citizens after World War II and entry into the Cold War.

African American "Negroes" Recruited to Oak Ridge

"We rode into Oak Ridge at night by bus. When the bus rolled over the top of the overlook ridge and descended onto Oak Ridge, all I saw was bright lights everywhere!

It looked like we had arrived in New York City!" HFG and HLH, Oral Narrators

Similar to E. L. Doctorow's book and the subsequent Broadway musical *Ragtime*, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in 1942 "there were no Negroes" (Doctorow, 1975)[10.] Later African Americans were recruited as custodians, domestic workers, and a few skilled laborers. The majority of Black workers had moved from the states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Virginia, and other communities in Tennessee (Johnson & Jackson, 1981). Higher-than-average wages at that time attracted African American workers to Oak Ridge. Average wages in the region for unskilled labor was $0.40 per hour. Oak Ridge offered $0.58 per hour (Peelle & Tucker, 1960). Equal wages were earned for equal jobs whether female or male. A few African American women helped lay railroad

[10] E. L. Doctorow's novel *Ragtime* is a work of historical fiction set in 1906 highlighting the influx of immigrants to New York City and the class differences between an affluent family, immigrants, and a Negro nanny and her confident Negro lover.

tracks and earned the same wages as males doing the same job. But housing and the social order of Oak Ridge mirrored most places in the southern U.S..

All African Americans recruited to work in Oak Ridge were assigned to live in the "Colored" hutment area (Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Westcott, 2005) (See Appendix Picture 3). African American women and men lived separately. Married couples were sometimes separated from each other, living in one-room fourteen-by-fourteen square-foot hutments with no indoor plumbing, no foundation, one door, a wooden shutter for a window, and a coal stove in the middle of the floor (See Appendix Figure 4). The "Colored" hutment area had one central bathroom for twenty-four to thirty-six families. White hutments were also built for single males. The White hutment area was dismantled after the war, and White male workers who continued to live in Oak Ridge moved to better housing. White females and White married couples lived in flat tops or cemesto houses, based on what was available and what a family could afford, but White females did not live in hutment housing (See Appendix Figure 2 & 5). The "Colored" hutments remained. Oak Ridge chose to conform to the practice of most places in the Southern U.S.; therefore, African Americans recruited to work in Oak Ridge were relegated to segregated housing and were prohibited from using any public facilities.

A critical element of the Oak Ridge Manhattan Project was secrecy. Project officials did not want to draw attention to Oak Ridge by constructing a city that was conspicuous or different from the racially segregated traditions of the South (Johnson & Jackson, 1981). Housing, comfort, and social change paled in comparison to the overriding importance of the Manhattan Project. As a side note, to challenge, I challenge the claim

that favors the overriding need of protecting the secret project. The shroud of secrecy positioned Oak Ridge with the opportunity to be a truly "model" city to fight on the home front for human equality in addition to the fight for victory during World War II. A controversial report from a military management officer in charge of housing to a higher military official reported an attempt to equalize housing for Blacks and non Blacks, but Blacks "chose" to be confined within their own community of hutments rather than the structurally better housing of non-Blacks (Johnson & Jackson, 1981, p. 111). By the time the housing and infrastructure was in place, Oak Ridge officials did not institute an egalitarian community, but they abided by the southern Jim Crow laws subordinating Blacks to substandard hutment housing, lower-paying jobs, and segregated educational facilities (Kelly, 2004; Lau, 2004; Mack, 1999). I was told by a friend, Dr. J. Watson, that some of the Oak Ridge officials intentionally recruited their custodians and janitorial workers who could not read fearing literate Blacks might understand the government's secret messages, notes, and drawings while cleaning inside the highly classified security facilities, and, therefore, compromise the confidential nature of the project.[11] Later an acquaintance, D. Sheard unaware of the information that I had been told, revealed that her grandparents Black custodians at the Oak Ridge plant told her they risked losing their jobs if the Oak Ridge officials knew they could read.[12] Two of the oral narrators also corroborated this information. This communication suggests suspicions existed that there

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11 Personal communication February 3, 2008 at African American Read In, Haley Farm, Clinton, Tennessee.

12 Personal communication, D. Sheard, April 4, 2009 at conference, Townsend, Tennessee.

were Oak Ridge plant recruiters who exercised this practice, but I did not find clear evidence written in any of the research materials I read (Dougherty, 1999; Ritchie, 2003).

Oak Ridge was a city designed with contrasts and contradictions. It was a city constructed like a military facility where demarcations were evident between the ranked military officials, non-military workers, and the racial social order of the South. Yet, the military like Oak Ridge Schools was one of the first systems to racially desegregate. No one in the city of Oak Ridge was allowed to discuss her or his job. Violators were escorted out of town (Robinson, 1950; Sparrow, 1980). On August 7, 1945, an atomic bomb was detonated on the Japanese city of Hiroshima and a few days later, Nagasaki. Finally the residents of Oak Ridge learned the purpose of their work, and "the Secret City" added another nickname to its credit, "The Atomic City."

Education in Oak Ridge, Tennessee

By 1943, the Oak Ridge scientists with families and children who had arrived began to demand an excellent progressive educational system (Overholt, 1987; Smith, 2007). The Oak Ridge nuclear weapons facility was the U. S. government's central focus. This suggests the military did not want to divest its focus by adding the operation of a public school system. Therefore, a U. S. Army official traveled from Oak Ridge to Teachers College at Columbia University to offer the superintendent of Oak Ridge public schools' job to Dr A. H. Blankenship. Dr. Blankenship accepted the responsibility to oversee and develop the Oak Ridge public school system that would be as part of the

Anderson County public schools[13] (Blankenship & Kidd, 1949). Oak Ridge officials recruited Dr. A. H. Blankenship, a renowned educational administrator from Massachusetts. Dr. Blankenship was expected to design a school system based on the most progressive educational practices at that time (Smith, 2007). Dr. Blankenship was also charged with recruiting teachers and counselors who had stellar teaching credentials and could pass a rigorous interviewing process. Most teachers recruited earned advanced degrees in education. However, initially, in the Oak Ridge public schools, "there were no Negroes" (Doctorow, 1975; Smith, 2007).

Later in 1946, several years after the all-White Oak Ridge public school system had been established; Dr. Blankenship recruited two African American educators. The Officers were recruited for the purpose of starting a school for the African American children of Oak Ridge (Blankenship & Kidd, 1948, 1949; Smith, 2007; Weaver, 2011).Mrs. Arizona Officer was the principal, and her husband, William Officer, taught and coached. Their wages were the same as the non-Black teachers and principals in the all-White Oak Ridge public schools. Prior to opening Scarboro School for African American students of Oak Ridge, school-age children were bused to Clinton, Tennessee. Scarboro School was structurally built according to the building materials' codes and regulations for all Oak Ridge city buildings. Scarboro School was initially located in one of the Manhattan Project's research buildings. A few years later, the building became the University of Tennessee's agricultural studies building. So, the all-Colored school

13 Many times U.S. military bases will operate their own school systems. However, since Oak Ride was not a military base but a town built by the Army Corps of Engineers to house both enlisted and non-military workers hired to build nuclear weapons facility, a public school system was developed. This suggests the military officials foresaw a time in the future where they would no longer be needed in Oak Ridge and they along with their families would eventually move.

was moved into Gamble Valley Elementary School near the Black housing section of Oak Ridge (See Appendix Figure 6). The name Scarboro School was retained. Initially after eighth grade, African American students had nowhere to attend school. Buses were not provided after eighth grade and there were not enough teachers recruited who were willing to be scrutinized because of Oak Ridge's stringent security requirements to teach at Scarboro School. Later, ninth grade was added. For a while Scarboro high school students were allowed to attend Clinton's segregated all-Colored school and later they attended a segregated all-Colored school in Knoxville, Tennessee Austin High School (Booker, 2011). Austin High School still exists today as Austin-East High School. Later in 1950, the Black high school students returned to attend Scarboro School through high school graduation until 1955, when Oak Ridge public schools desegregated and all junior and senior high school African American students were required to follow the new law that stated separate is inherently unequal.

The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), located in Washington, D. C. managed the Oak Ridge site starting in 1949, but the Oak Ridge public schools were legally part of the Anderson County public school system. Superintendent of Oak Ridge public schools, Mr. Hilary D. Parker requested a plan of action from the AEC City Manager, F. C. Peitzsch, in light of the May 17, 1954 Supreme Court decision. AEC representative Peitzsch submitted a plan to Superintendent Parker dated June 10, 1954 confirming that Oak Ridge public schools would develop an implementation plan to desegregate its public schools. By January, 1955, a letter to the newly selected Oak Ridge public school Superintendent Mr. Bertis Capehart stated that implementation of racially desegregated Oak Ridge public schools as the law of the land, was moving too slowly,

and by the opening of the 1955-1956 school year, Oak Ridge public junior and senior high schools would racially desegregate.

Approximately eighty-two Black junior and senior high school students in Oak Ridge began the 1955–1956 school years at Robertsville Junior High School or Oak Ridge Senior High School (Peelle, 1960). (See Appendix Figure 7).

> *I had lots of opportunities available after I graduated from college, but I came back home to Oak Ridge and gave back through community leadership. Oak Ridge people had nurtured me and provided me lots of opportunities other Black people I know didn't have."*
>
> WG, Jr., Oral Narrator

Five of the narrators is this study began the 1955 school year at newly desegregated Oak Ridge public schools of Robertsville Junior High School and Oak Ridge High School. Scarboro School became a first through sixth-grade school and no longer had seventh through twelfth grades, forcing all Oak Ridge African American students to attend Robertsville Junior High School or Oak Ridge High School. Almost sixty years have passed since racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools. Other historical accounts of racial desegregation across the South allowed African American students to choose whether to attend desegregated schools or remain in the segregated all-Black schools (Glasgow, 2009). This was not an option in Oak Ridge after September, 1955. All Oak Ridge elementary schools remained racially segregated until 1967. In 1965, Oak Ridge Superintendent Davidson wrote a grant asking for funding to fully integrate Black and White elementary schools (Davidson, 1965). The grant requested funding for in-service training for teachers to "reverse the trends of poor communication skills and low achievement test scores in all academic areas for the African American children at Scarboro

Elementary" (p. 3). All Oak Ridge Elementary Schools desegregated during the 1967 school year, which included Scarboro School. However, before the school year opened in 1967, Scarboro School burned along with all archival information, and was never rebuilt. The manuscript I referred to previously described the Black families' resistance to this second wave of Oak Ridge public schools' racial desegregation. What had the initial Black students experienced that led Black families to prefer to remain segregated at the elementary school level?

The seven African American former Oak Ridge public school students interviewed provide a new history a new opportunity to see the evidence currently not in the public historical record. They can sankofa, look back but move forward so African American students like those at the middle school where I work will have eyewitness historical accounts of people who look like them (Mariner, 2010).

The city of Oak Ridge began in secret, like a hidden transcript where it was against the law to discuss one's job (Scott, 1990). From 1942 to the present, Oak Ridge maintains its unique place in history as a secret city built by the U.S. government, but its history related to racial desegregation of its public schools is only a partial story. This study will help reconstruct and unveil untold stories of a specific time in Oak Ridge history. This is an oral history of those early days of racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. African American voices will join the historical conversation of Oak Ridge public schools and dialogue with the past (Drews, 2007; Groves, 1962; Stepto, 1991; Whitman, 2004).

Explanation of the Chapters

There are five chapters in this study. Chapter 1 began by laying out the rationale for the study, connecting narrative inquiry to oral history, qualitative research, Africa, and African Americans. My positionality revealed when, where, and how I entered the study and the variables that significantly affected my decision to conduct this study (Giddings, 2001). Next was a summary of how my positionality influenced my rationale for an oral history dissertation, using connections to the African concepts of sankofa and the griot. As stated earlier, Africa, American, and African American connections are interspersed throughout the study. I also presented a historical overview of African American history because all of the narrators in this study are African American. Overviews of the history of public education in the U.S., the history of public education in Tennessee, and the history of Oak Ridge were provided to position the narrators from a historical perspective within public education in Oak Ridge and racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools. This concludes an overview of Chapter 1 showing that race history was threaded throughout each historical overview, since critical race theory (CRT) is my analytical lens for the oral narratives that reconstruct a historical time period of Oak Ridge's racial desegregation using oral history methodology. Usage of formalized terms and definitions peculiar to this study are defined at the time of usage in the text.

Chapter 2 is a review of the related literature. My initial challenge was to search the literature for oral histories using critical race theory (CRT) as the analytical lens for making a claim that the narrators I interview, and the resulting oral history, should be included in the historical texts of Oak Ridge. The literature satisfying both of these criteria was scant, and, therefore, might suggest a different approach to the topic. This is further discussed in Chapter 2.

Next I looked at the literature related to segregation–desegregation and CRT. I seldom use the term "integration" because the research literature adopts a more contemporary language and I believe the word makes my argument susceptible to accusations of presentism, which, in any case, might be difficult to avoid (Aldridge, 2003). The research related to segregation–desegregation is dense and too massive to tackle in this dissertation. There were difficult decisions to make regarding what information to include and what to save for another study. An overview of the history of critical race theory (CRT) and a review of CRT literature in education is included. I address my membership as an African American conducting research within my community of color. Counseling scholars and feminist scholars examine research within one's community of race and gender, code-switching, colonizer-colonized, and insider-outsider debates (Aldridge, 2003; hooks, 2009; Huang & Coker, 2010; Villenas, 1996). Lastly I touch on resistance since resistant and resistances were words that captured my attention while reading the lost manuscript.

Chapter 3 is the methodology section the "nuts and bolts" of my research. The strengths of oral history research, with memory at the core, and my steps in the process of conducting an oral history dissertation, are covered in Chapter 3. This chapter reveals my three basic research questions looking at the academic, cultural, and social experiences of the oral narrators and how I position this study within one of the four oral history paradigmatic transformations (Kuhn; 1962; Thompson 1988). Linda Shopes (2001; 2002) expounds on the idea that oral history can have a social purpose, and this study has the potential to serve a social purpose. The chapter also provides the "roadmap" of oral history research. I reveal how I obtained the names of the narrators, how I contacted them, the essence of the interviews, and how I performed member

claim checks, of their interviews after they were transcribed by an outside transcriber. Finally in Chapter 3, I tackle what is anecdotally named "the elephant in the living room," using Chandler's (2005), "Oral History Across Generations: Age, Generational Identity…,"reveals the challenges of conducting oral history across generations and across races; McKenna's (2003) article, "Sisterhood: Explaining the Power Relations in the Collection of Oral History", when she interviewed Roman Catholic nuns and a re-visitation of her past. Chandler points to the balance of power and respect in the relationship between narrators and the interviewer; and Borland's (1991), "That's Not What I Said…," an oral history interview she conducted with her grandmother. A discussion ensues in Borland's article about shared authority in oral histories (Frisch, 1990). These examples of oral history were informative and helped me to conduct this study using oral history methodology.

Chapter 4 is dense. Chapter 4 has two parts and presents the oral stories with a section for each coterie of narrators. Racial desegregation is examined through the lens of critical race theory by analyzing whether a racialized discourse can share a place in an oral history text with education as a backdrop. Part one contains five oral accounts from the African American inaugural class of racially desegregated Oak Ridge schools. Part two reveals the experiences of two narrators who provide a glimpse of the racially desegregated Oak Ridge public schools five years later as compared to the first five. Part two is unique because I use a CRT counter voice as the interviewer.

I attempted to remain true to the purpose of my interview questions which were to listen to and record their educational, cultural, and social experiences during their days of attending desegregated schools. I asked each narrator to compare their experiences in both segregated and

desegregated Oak Ridge public schools. Because my study focuses on desegregated schools, I limited the number of questions pertaining to segregated Oak Ridge public schools. I have also threaded short phrases and excerpts from their interviews throughout the study. A copy of the Interview Guide is in the Appendix along with other forms.

Chapter Five is my conclusion. I argue for the social purpose of oral history, which, like the symbolic Akan Adinkra symbol sankofa, looks back and "grabs the gems" of the past while moving forward. Lastly, a discussion of future research and different approaches that might have been considered is included. The Appendix in addition to the interview guide and related forms is a map of the state of Tennessee, pictures, references, and lastly my personal vita.

Chapter 2

Review of the Related Literature

I got all kinds of letters from great basketball players who played on segregated Black high school teams, who told me they admired "me", because I was lucky enough to be the first Black player in this area to play on an integrated basketball team…they admired me?

HFG, Oral Narrator

I didn't realize how many people looked up to me because I was the first captain of an integrated basketball team…I just always did my best and didn't realize how many people watched me and would pretend to be me when they played basketball..I was so shocked when I found that out! But of course I'm so HONORED and at the same time HUMBLED.

WG Jr., Oral Narrator

This chapter will provide the background literature to this study. The related literature will also provide an analytical filter to hear African American voices and see desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools through the eyes of the students who were there. The significance of this study as stated earlier is to provide an African American perspective of Oak Ridge Schools' racial desegregation. According to law professor Derrick Bell (2004), racial desegregation in public education as a result of the U. S. Supreme Court ruling of *Brown* was equivalent to the Holy Grail of racial justice and when fully enforced was set to actuate educational opportunities for African Americans (p.3). An African American perspective of Oak Ridge School's desegregation enlarges our historical understanding by contributing new perspectives from eyewitnesses. This chapter will begin to prepare the entry of the oral narrators through the related research on the topics of segregation; desegregation; judicial rulings pre-*Brown;* a way of looking at resistance; tenets of CRT, tenets of CRT in education; and CRT scholars' use of voice.

Scholars across disciplines like sociology, critical theorists, education, and legal studies help me frame my argument and therefore are presented in my review of the related literature.

Segregation

I already knew that I wouldn't be allowed to go on the senior picnic because it was held at a state park…Blacks weren't allowed to go to the state park where the ORHS seniors had their senior picnic. CAO, Oral Narrator

Historical and Political Influences in Education

The history of racial segregation and desegregation in education is strongly connected to political actors and the legal court system. To be self-governing and to provide the right for citizens to own property rights were important considerations when the U.S. Constitution (1787) was made the supreme governing law of the country. The geographical and economic diversity of the land that would be a part of the U.S. government was parturient to political compromises that shaped the writing of the U. S. Constitution. The South had a dense population of Black slaves but fewer Whites than in the densely populated northern region. If the Black slaves were included as citizens, then the White people of the south would be outnumbered forcing the possible retrenchment of economic rights of Whites. So a political and economic compromise emerged allowing southern White slaveholders to count Black slaves as property for tax purposes and in an effort to equalize White representation in U.S. governmental affairs. However, Blacks were only calculated as three-fifths in determining property rights. African Americans therefore without being counted fully were denied full citizenship. Several amendments to

the U.S. Constitution changed the status of Blacks in the U. S., the 13th Amendment [14] (1865), 14th Amendment[15] (1868), and 15th Amendment (1870).[16] At the ballot box and in courtrooms, our tripartite government has dictated the rights to its citizens. The U. S.'s three-part governing bodies are the executive branch, the President; judicial branch, the Supreme Court; and the legislative branch, Senators and the House of Representatives. Separation of students in education based on race and the subsequent desegregation of students has a historical legacy in the U.S. governing system. The U.S. Supreme Court and the justices, who preside, judge whether the actions of the President and Congress are within the boundaries of the U. S. Constitution. This highest judicial branch is a lifetime position appointed by the democratically elected sitting executive branch, the U.S. President whenever a vacancy occurs then ratified by a majority vote from the U.S. Senate. The U.S. Presidents and Congress are elected through the process of voting by the people of the U.S. who are legalized citizens.

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[14] The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery and involuntary servitude.

[15] The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave all naturalized citizens, (person born in the U.S) citizenship. This meant all citizens were then guaranteed the right of due process and could therefore obtain legal council to redress grievances. The 14th amendment also contained an Equal Protection Clause (EPC) used in the arguments for *Brown* that required each state and local governance to provide equal protection to its citizens and therefore could not deprive any citizen the pursuit of life liberty and property without due process of the law to ensure fairness.

[16] The 15th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution prohibits the federal and state governments from denying a citizen the right to vote based on race or color, or previous condition of servitude.

Early Requests for Desegregation

One of the earliest law cases concerning race and public schooling litigating for school desegregation was *Roberts v Boston* [17](1849). Prior to the *Roberts* case, the City of Boston had maintained separate schools for local African Americans since 1820. However by 1849, five-year-old Sarah Roberts had to walk past five elementary schools to attend Smith School, an all-Negro school in the city of Boston described as small, rundown, defaced, neglected, and poorly equipped (Kluger, 1977). Sarah's father hired Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts Senator to petition the City of Boston, asking for permission to allow his daughter Sarah, to attend one of the all-White schools, closer to her home. Sumner argued the *Roberts* case before Chief Justice of the Massachusetts' Supreme Court Lemuel Shaw. Later, Justice Henry Brown would use Judge Shaw's argument in favor of the City of Boston, when he wrote the deciding opinion in *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896)[18] The *Plessy v Ferguson* ruling institutionalized the "separate but equal" doctrine and racial segregation remained a U.S. law until *Brown* (1954). Justice Brown also added separate schools, theaters, and railway carriages to his decision (p. 83). By the time of the *Plessy* ruling, race had become a socially constructed attitude in the U.S. in which African Americans and Native Americans were portrayed as inferior races compared to White.[19]

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[14] Hereafter called *Roberts v Boston*; or *Roberts.*

[18] Hereafter Plessy v Ferguson or Plssy.

[19] Latina/o, Hispanic , Mexican people were White until 1970 in *Cisneros v Corpus Christi Independent School District* (1970), when Latinos were ruled as a minority group along with African Americans and Native Americans (Valverde, 2004).

Therefore laws, the U. S. Constitution, educational opportunities, landownership, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were the sole property of Whites only.

Political Foregrounding to Brown

After the *Plessy* decision, White supremacy was an accepted racial norm in the U.S (hooks, 2013). Many U. S. Presidents and sitting U. S. Senators have impacted U. S. Supreme Court decisions like *Plessy* because the U. S. President appoints and the U. S. Senate approves Supreme Court Justices.[20] President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), a member of the Democratic Party and the longest sitting U. S. President, appointed eight U. S. Supreme Court Justices in concert with a majority of Democrats in the U. S. Senate. It was FDR who authorized the Manhattan Project in 1941 that launched the construction of Oak Ridge. During FDR's presidency, the U.S. was faced with an international paradox as perceived by their allies overseas. Insurgent Russians and communist aggression were a threat abroad. Within U.S. borders, African American soldiers were not treated equal under U.S. laws yet were allowed to risk their lives on behalf of the U.S. whose laws discriminated against them because of their race. In the midst of this threat, FDR died in office in April 1945. His Vice President Harry Truman, also a democrat, succeeded him as President. Truman's Executive *Order 9701* four months later ended World War II when bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan (Groves, 1962). Three years later, in July, 1948, Truman ordered racial desegregation of the armed forces. Four years later, World War II commander and highly decorated general Dwight D. Eisenhower, a member of the Republican Party, became U.S.

20 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States_by_judicial_appointments

President, two years before the *Brown* ruling that he had the executive responsibility to pronounce.

In 1953, one year before the *Brown* decision, President Eisenhower and a newly elected Republican Party majority approved Earl Warren as the Chief Justice to the U.S. Supreme Court. Eight sitting justices at that time had all been appointed by FDR and a Democratic Party majority in the U. S. Senate, The U.S. Supreme Court Justices and their respective states were: Hugo Black (Alabama); Stanley Reed (Kentucky); Felix Frankfurter (Massachusetts); William O. Douglas (Connecticut); Robert Jackson (Pennsylvania;) Harold Burton (Ohio); Thomas Clark (Texas); and Sherman Minton (Indiana). Three justices were from the northeastern U.S., three were southerners, two were Midwesterners, and the chief justices from the western state of California were the sitting justices who decided the fate of school desegregation in the U.S. For six months, these nine men heard arguments from the attorneys representing the legal defense team of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the landmark cases that together came to be called *Brown v Board of Education* (1954).

I started this section stating that the historical precedence of racial segregation and desegregation in public education has been filtered through the political zeitgeist, the dominant school of thought of the times and also the legal system. Both segregation and desegregation have been established as symbolic motifs of race in America. The color line and de jure de facto segregation had been chiseled into U.S. laws. However, the clandestine operations in Oak Ridge did not insulate Oak Ridge from legal battles related to race in and around the southern U.S.

Segregation in Oak Ridge

Like the schools, segregated public facilities in Oak Ridge were established by law. However, there is a saying, "the children shall lead them."21 In spite of laws aimed at keeping the races separate, Oak Ridge youth played together on all the baseball fields whether the ball field was in the all-Black Scarboro community or outside Scarboro in the all-White communities. The ball fields and the hospital were the few if not the only places in Oak Ridge where race did not matter. In addition to the schools, Oak Ridge buses, churches, golf course, housing, Laundromat, movie theaters, public library, restaurants, many shops and even the public sidewalks imposed separation of the races. Blacks were expected to step off the sidewalk when passing a White person. Oak Ridge was the city without a jail with homes with doors that didn't lock so there were no door keys or even door bells (Present, 1985).

Blacks and Whites Against Segregation

However, many of the White Northerners who had been hired to work on the Manhattan Project and who had re-located to Oak Ridge complained about the substandard living conditions of the Colored people living in Oak Ridge. The response from the army personnel in charge was always, "…our job was to get the city functioning with as little friction as possible; not to embark on a sociological experiment…the war work was the first priority…the South was racially segregated and Oak Ridge is part of the South." (Present, 1985, p. 35). But, White youth walked to the all-Black Gamble Valley community to play ball on the Scarboro ball fields with

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21 Quoted from the Christian Bible found in the book of Isaiah 11:6.

Black kids. If daylight was still available after playing on one ball field, then all the ball players both Black and White would walk to the different White only communities and played ball. Oak Ridge started as a secret city enclosed behind barbed wire fences, where community heroes from World War II resided; and an intellectual community that complied in the strictest sense to the law. Thelma Present (1985), in her letters to the famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead wrote about Oak Ridge's segregated schools, " I talked to two Black women who had moved to Oak Ridge in the early days of the city…they weren't allowed to go into Oak Ridge for school. They were bused from the Colored Hutments past the elementary schools of Oak Ridge to a makeshift school." (p. 42). She sent the following words from one of the Black women to Margaret Mead:

> *Scarboro was actually a lovely school where we were well-educated with only three or four children in each classroom, so we got lots of attention. The principal Mrs. Officer, had been educated at Columbia University in New York. Since Oak Ridge was very secretive, they only hired high-quality teachers like Mrs. Officer. When you're born Black in the South, racial segregation is a way of life. After we fought against the Japanese and the Germans and won; these same people were allowed to come to Oak Ridge and use the public libraries, go into any store in Oak Ridge, and even live in the white communities. America embraced these people who were our enemies at one time but put their foot in my face. I had been taught the Preamble, the Gettysburg Address, and the Pledge of Allegiance, but I felt like a stepchild, worse than Cinderella, a Sleeping Beauty, whose Prince Charming still had not come and awakened me yet"* (pp. 38-39).

There were other Whites who were disturbed by segregation in Oak Ridge, according to Present (1985). A White woman from Southern California remarked, "the Federal

Government tried so hard to do things right, but really overdid their segregation efforts. East Tennessee was not the Deep South, so they could have gotten away with milder policies related to desegregation." (p. 44). She went on to say she believed Oak Ridge appeared to try to rectify their segregation policies and talked about desegregation sooner than most school systems. She was proud that eventually the schools were desegregated. In 1953, Waldo Cohn, an Oak Ridge Town Councilman proposed racially desegregating Oak Ridge public schools. Opposition mounted against Cohn and a recall election almost dismissed Cohn, but he held onto his councilman's seat. When the time for his re-election came, he did not run again for the off. Even as far north as Chicago, Illinois, the *Chicago Defender* [22] criticized segregation and the treatment of Blacks in Oak Ridge. For example, the famous writer and journalist, Langston Hughes called Oak Ridge, a Negro Ghetto.[23] Another *Chicago Defender* writer stated that Oak Ridge Negroes live in modern "Hoovervilles", at the Atom City[24] although they are named "Colored Hutments." Hoovervilles were shanty towns and huts built around the U.S. with the onset of the Great Depression[25] while Herbert Hoover was the U. S. President.

Separate but equal public facilities established by the *Plessy* decision back in 1896, remained the law in the U. S. as well as in Tennessee. Then, in December, 1953, several

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22 *Chicago Defender* was a Chicago-based, Black-owned newspaper, promoting Black news stories.

23 *Chicago Defender*, November 5, 1949; page 6; Column 6.

24 *Chicago Defender*, January 5, 1946; page 1; Column 3.

25 The Great Depression: October 29, 1929 to the mid 1940's.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression.

hundred miles east of Oak Ridge, the U.S. Supreme Court Justices were seated in Washington, DC, listening to arguments from the NAACP legal team on behalf of court cases against public school districts throughout the U. S: *Bolling v Sharpe* (Washington, DC); *Briggs v. Elliott* (Clarendon County, South Carolina); *Brown v Board of Education* (Topeka, Kansas); *Davis v Prince Edward County* (Eastern District of the Commonwealth of Virginia); and *Gebhart v Belton* (New Castle County, Delaware). The plaintiffs were seeking educational equality under the law (14th Amendment and Equal Protection Clause), on behalf of their children. Their children attended schools similar to the school described in the Sarah Roberts case in 1849. Separate was not equal. Parents had continually appealed to every court level available. Finally, in the winter of December of 1953, the NAACP began arguing on behalf of Negro children in public schools. The five court cases were grouped together and became known as, *Brown v Board of Education* (1954).

Desegregation and the *Brown* Decision

David Patterson (2001), a journalist reveals an anecdotal incident related to Chief Justice Earl Warren prior to the *Brown* decision. Chief Justice Warren had decided he needed a break from the hours of litigation against racially segregated public schools (p. xiii). After visiting Civil War sites in the nearby Commonwealth of Virginia, his Black chauffeur dropped him off at a local hotel for the night before heading back to Washington the next day. The following morning when his chauffeur picked him up, Justice Warren was shocked to find out that his Black chauffeur had slept in his car all night because there were no public facilities that would accommodate him (p. xiii).

Evidence Presented During the Brown Hearing

During the *Brown* arguments social scientists Kenneth and Mamie Clark presented research data that suggested segregated schooling diminished educational opportunities for Black children and therefore yielded permanent psychological damage to Black children. The Clarks used dolls in their research. The results were that in a laboratory setting, every time a Black child was given the choice between White dolls or Black dolls, Black children favored White dolls. The attorneys on both sides saw the experiment as soft-science and therefore were suspicious of the findings. One of the attorneys for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Robert Carter had enlisted the Clarks. Since Carter was a highly regarded defense attorney, the NAACP teams of lawyers, including Thurgood Marshall, believed and were hopeful that the experiment would convince the high court justices (Bell, 2004). Their defense proved successful and the Supreme Court ruled in their favor. As a side-note, Thurgood Marshall eventually became the first Black Justice to be appointed to the U. S. Supreme Court, by U. S. President Lyndon Johnson, a member of the Democratic Party in 1967.

The Brown Ruling Revealed

When Chief Justice Earl Warren read the *Brown* opinion, America realized the U. S. legal system had overturned racial segregation in U. S. public schools. Separate public schools were inherently unequal and unconstitutional. Bell (2004) stated he believed the *Brow*n decision was equivalent to the Holy Grail[26] of racial justice. Racial discrimination would be

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[26] The sacred chalice held by Jesus Christ during the *Last Supper* is considered a European myth that started during the medieval era (Hardon, 1985).

eliminated in public schools and therefore in all aspects of Black life (p. 5). *Brown* angered many White people, but gave Black people a renewed hope in their country (2004). In Tennessee, responses to *Brown* were similar to most southern U. S. states.

Reactions to Brown

Davis Graham, a Nashville, Tennessee news journalist in his book *Crisis in Print* (1967) focuses on the responses to the events surrounding school desegregation as it appeared in Tennessee newspaper editorials. He posed the question, "How did the Tennessee press respond to the epochal *Brown v Board* decision of 1954?" (p. 3). Newspaper editorials in the eastern division, like the *Knoxville Journal* and the *Knoxville Sentinel* usually catering to more conservative views, published editorials in favor of the *Brown* decision. The other four major newspapers, the *Chattanooga Times*, the *Nashville Banner,* and the *Memphis News-Press* and *Commercial Appeal* all published editorials expressing favorable responses to *Brown,* but encouraged caution and time to study before any changes were implemented (Graham, 1967).

Nashville, Tennessee parochial schools, Father Ryan for males and Cathedral High school for females desegregated in 1954. George Redd (1955) Dean at Fisk University in Nashville points to Oak Ridge's public school plans for racial desegregation, while commending both Oak Ridge and the Nashville schools for pursuing racial desegregation.

Comparing Oak Ridge's Public School Desegregation

I have contextualized the national and state of Tennessee's response to the *Brown* decision. I have also revealed Oak Ridge as a place of racial paradoxes, two cities within one governing body determined by one's race. However, after the *Brown* ruling Oak Ridge was willing to partially comply with the law. Oak Ridge is not noted as a place that modeled the intended response to *Brown,* but instead remained the "Secret City", best known for the making of the atomic bomb. Oak Ridge is a city lauded for the scientific experiment that dropped the atomic bomb, but is not known for complying with the social experiment of racially desegregating its schools. Therefore, I juxtapose Oak Ridge with three more well known school districts that racially desegregated after Oak Ridge, yet have garnered national attention as a result of racial desegregation of their schools.

Omissions and Exclusions

Oak Ridge's public histories record the racial desegregation of the Oak Ridge public schools, yet paradoxically Oak Ridge schools did not earn national attention as the first schools in Tennessee to desegregate in 1955. One example of the public omission of Oak Ridge is a 1999 U.S. Department of the Interior study commissioned to the National Park Service to identify U.S. public school systems that had successfully desegregated (Salvatore, Martin, Ruiz, Sullivan, Sitkoff, 2000). Oak Ridge was excluded from the National Park study, although the Oak Ridge community embraced partial racial desegregation of its public schools, as evidenced from the oral history interviews I have collected. In addition to the omission of Oak Ridge in the National Park study is the Tennessee Advisory Committee to

the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which released a report on school desegregation in Tennessee (Reynolds, Thermstrom, Gaziano, Heriot, Kirsanow, Melendez, Taylor, & Yaki, 2008). The Oak Ridge Schools desegregated without a local or state court order other than the *Brown* ruling, so Oak Ridge was identified simply as "N/A," meaning not court ordered, and no explanation followed. Future studies by the Tennessee Advisory Committee might consider including information about how Oak Ridge achieved racially desegregated schools without a court mandate.

Nearby Clinton public schools in Clinton, Tennessee, racially desegregated their public schools in 1956, a year after Oak Ridge, and earned national attention as a result of highly publicized local White resistance (Anderson, 1966; McDaniel, 2007). Further south, Ruby Bridges' experience as the lone first-grader to racially desegregate a previously all-White elementary school in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1960, earned national attention, including a book and a movie about Ruby Bridges' experience (Bridges, 1999; *Disney*, 1998). Another historical account of racial desegregation included as landmark cases of White resistance to racial desegregation rather than the peaceful desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools is Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Central High School attempted to racially desegregate in 1957 with national attention given to the notably recognized African American participants, "The Little Rock Nine." These African American students were at the center of Central High School's desegregation efforts. I have read two published books, *Warriors Don't Cry* and *Elizabeth and Hazel*, about the desegregation of Central High School and "The Little Rock Nine" (Beals, 1994; Margolick, 2011). All of the public schools named above are located in the southern U.S., and all racially desegregated their public schools after Oak Ridge, yet Oak

Ridge's civil obedience has remained relatively hidden from national exposure (Adams & DeBlack, 1994).

Even within the local public history of Oak Ridge, personal accounts revealed by the African American students who desegregated Oak Ridge public schools are missing (Adamson, 1955; Drews, 2007; Johnson & Jackson, 1981; Overholt, 1987; Sparrow, 1980; Sterling, 1958; Westcott, 2005). Years after the Oak Ridge public junior high school, Robertsville Junior High, and the only senior high school, Oak Ridge Senior High desegregated, the Regional Appalachian Center of the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge published a book entitled, *These are our voices*: *The Story of Oak Ridge, 1942– 1970* (Overholt, 1987), hereafter referred to as *These are Our Voices*. Contained within the pages of *These are Our Voices*, are sixty-six chapters by contributors connected to Oak Ridge's history. *These are Our Voices* include many details of the history of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The book is well-known by longtime Oak Ridge, Tennessee, residents with whom I have discussed my interest in the history of the desegregation of Oak Ridge Public Schools. There is a chapter in *These are Our Voices* entitled "The Integration of Oak Ridge High School," contributed by a White ninth-grade female, who was also attending Oak Ridge High School for the first time in September 1955 (Plant, 1987). The student wrote about her ambivalence relevant to racial integration, coupled with the normal apprehension involved in starting high school. However, the sixty-six chapters that make up the book do not include the storied presence of African American students but reflect the absence of the voices of the African American students who desegregated Oak Ridge High School (Fine, 2002).

The information I have laid out so far is an effort to build an argument for a place for African American students using oral history methodology to weave their voices related to racial

desegregation into existing historical accounts of Oak Ridge public schools (Thompson, 1988). This oral history begins to resolve the absence of representation of African American voices and will begin to repair the omission of their experiences and reconstructs existing public evidence (Adamson, 1955; Drews, 2007; Johnson and Jackson, 1981; Overholt, 1987; Smith, 2007; Sparrow, 1980; Sterling, 1958; Westcott, 2005).

Another Reference to the Lost Manuscript

Earlier, I stated the author of the lost manuscript referred to African American students' perceived resistance to racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. Therefore, I will review the literature based on the scholars who inform my study as it relates to resistance. James C. Scott (1985; 1990; 1998), a political sociologist, provides comprehensive research that supplies examples from around the world of resistance by less anonymous historical actors that appear only as statistics or conscriptions (p. 29). In Scott's study he relies on Eugene Genovese's (1974) comprehensive study of slave culture and Lawrence Levine's (1977) work on Black consciousness to provide a view that supports my study as sit relates to African American Blacks. Scott's study suggests when subordinate groups are confronted with coercion and control by a dominant group, where the subordinate group has no voice in decisions that impact them, then the subordinate group members respond to these acts of coercion and control with innocuous acts of resistance. These acts of resistance escape detection by the dominant group and therefore go unpunished. I present Scott's work here to help recognize resistance within the narrator's stories of racial desegregation, a law that was designed to change over two centuries of raced laws in the U. S. as well as in U.S. public schools.

Resistance

James Scott (1985) conducted a two- year study of Malaysian peasant farmers. According to Scott, forms of resistance by minority groups, fall well short of outright defiance and therefore are invisible to the controlling, ruling, or dominant group members who look for collective complicity. In a 1990 work, Scott calls these acts "an art," arts of resistance. His stream of thought based on his research suggests that minority groups produce hidden transcripts, a language, or discourse lived outwardly and visible only to members of the minority group. Based on his research of peasant farmers, Scott identified that resistance has a disguised response to domination that might be: passive resistance, passive non compliance, subtle sabotage, evasion, and deception in order to nibble away to extinction changes in programs and laws by a dominant group for which a minority group had no voice in the decision. Scott cites examples of U.S. forms of Black resistance as far back as slavery.

Black Slave Resistance

Scott points to Eugene Genovese's (1974), comprehensive study of slavery, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* and Lawrence Levine's (1977) work, *Black Culture and Black consciousness.* In Genovese's work, resistance was symbolic yet performative, but always existed as a subculture hidden from slaveholders. Black people refused to succumb to total submission and control. Black resistance facilitated forms of resistance during slavery. There were few exceptions or rare occasions when the 'curtain was parted" when a slave had too much to drink and spew insults to a White slave master or overseer that under sober conditions would yield the slave a public whipping. A form of resistance the slaves of the

antebellum south in Genovese's study controlled was through religious activities. For example a slave might act out during their religious services, their own form of the Old Testament by claiming liberation of the slaves similar to liberation of the Hebrew people and the acts of Moses (p. 329). Genovese points to Negro slaves who maintained a language that defied White vernacular, but was never so inflammatory as to arouse battles they could not win. Slaves learned within their quarters, according to Genovese to develop a strategy of patience to keep them alive and healthy. It was a strategy of survival. Negro slaves in the U.S. followed their African prototype by following codes that said yes to life in this new world.

The slave quarters were always hidden from the dominant White culture. Almost all forms of resistance were developed out of sight of the dominant master. For example, after a slave whipping or lashing on a cotton plantation, the amount of cotton picked and gathered the following day might be significantly reduced. When slaves were questioned they might respond by showing extreme angst and worry about her or his friend who had been beaten and therefore their worry reduced their ability to concentrate, therefore she or he cannot work as productively. Further mistreatment of a slave would further slow production of the cotton. This form of resistance was most effective closest to the time of year when the cotton had to be harvested and sold at the market.

Black Codes as a Form of Resistance

Slave codes found in quilt patterns were used to signal dates, and times, and safe pathways to freedom during the days of the Underground Railroad.[27] Words of songs and even rhythms of foot stomping perceived as dancing, but in fact were coded with messages known only to the subordinate culture. Also a legal code of paternalism was an ideological weapon of resistance to try to preserve slave families together. Paternalism in the slave quarters appeared to Whites that a certain person was the 'unelected" leader that kept slaves in line. Whites looked to these "leaders of the slaves" to interpret their rules to the other slaves within the slave quarters. This ideology of paternalism of the slave leaders made them a valuable resource for the slave overseers, when in fact an overseer was supplying the slave leader with information that could be used to resist the rules they were expected to impose or provide information that supported more suitable times to plan an escape from slavery.

Scott (1990) also connects Levine's (1977) work on more contemporary Black resistance by pointing to the "art of subtlety" as a weapon of the weak, called the "dozens" or "dirty dozens" (p. 358). This is a form of resistance where two or more people (usually males) challenge each other to learn to maintain emotional control while being ridiculed. Visibly losing control of one's emotions also has the potential to result in severely negative consequences. Retaliation for losing one's composure can be unpleasant.

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[27] The Underground Railroad was a sophisticated network of signs and symbols hidden from Negro slave holders and their slave overseers. Negro slaves learned the language of the Underground Railroad system in slave quarters hidden and unknown except to slaves. Negro slaves escaped slavery to free northern states or Canada traveling by mostly by foot. The success of the Underground Railroad was one of the most effective forms of resistance. Jacqueline Tobin and Raymond Tobard's (1999) work, *Hidden in Plain View,* provides an extensive understanding of the language of quilts used by slaves to escape slavery.

Group Resistance

Resistance is usually conducted in small groups according to Scott, and is developed to thwart surveillance and detection. Scott (1990) points to folk culture developed to counteract hegemonic practices. Scott also troubles Gramsci's (Gramsci and Buttgieg, 2011) notion of "hegemony." Scott suggests that hegemony is the unconscious willingness and the quiescence of a subordinate group to willingly follow a dominant group's rules and authority (Scott, 1990, p. 71). Scott points to the hidden performative acts of resistance that negates hegemony. Hegemony is visible according to Scott only when power relations and coercion are openly challenged by forms of openly visible resistance. He further shows how power and control are arbitrary, mostly just ideological and attitudinal, thin and fragile, or as Audre Lorde suggests (1984) narrow because of the concept of human agency, the power of human beings to willingly act. Hannah Arendt (1999), points to subjectivity which she describes as the social side of power and industry, the human condition. The hidden transcript of resistance can be a successful approach according to Audre Lorde (1984) who states "the master's tools will never dismantle the masters' house" (p.110). This means that the weapons of the weak are different than those of the dominant culture. Another study could more closely review this side of Scott's argument.

Black Vernacular as a Form of Resistance

Black vernacular is a form of oral discourse that highlights both dreams and revolutionary politics that resists White imposed evaluations of appropriate or "proper" speech (p. 201). Oral discourse becomes a weapon of the less empowered people. Oral discourse is like an

infrapolitics of resistance. Geneva Smitherman (1977, 1986; 2000), has done extensive interpretive work related to Black language patterns and Black oral discourse.

Understanding Resistance as it Relates to this Study

Based on the performative acts of resistance just laid out, resistance in public schools might be performed through intentional class tardies, absences, destruction of property, and rule breaking. The author of the manuscript I referred to earlier, who appeared to be non-African American, would have to have been closely connected in time and space to be able to identify or make a claim to the public performance that African American students and parents were resistant to desegregation. Scott's claim of a hidden transcript suggest a code, language, discourse, a form of communication revealed to members of the minority group or allies of the minority group. Scott reveals how resistance looks in Malaysia among peasant farmers and translates resistance to U.S. as well as in the U.S..

Oak Ridge Resistance

Oak Ridge was designed with symbolic forms of hierarchal domination visible by way of the quality of housing, with the best housing going to the chiefs, commanders, and scientific intellectuals of the operation of Oak Ridge and their families (Johnson & Jackson, 1981). All school personnel like all wage earners in Oak Ridge, earned equal pay for equal work (Blankenship & Kidd, 1949). Juxtaposing public facilities and housing in Oak Ridge, and the all-Colored school Scarboro and the all-Whites schools, suggests the two schools were not equal. Truth claims, as Scott (1990) purports, might only be authenticated in studies like this one where the narrators identify the forms of resistance through an oral discourse.

So far in this review of the related literature, I've addressed how the *Brown* decision was anchored in U. S. courts. I then looked at how historical texts have overlooked Oak Ridge's racial desegregation but have instead focused on Oak Ridge as a scientific community that designed the atomic bomb dropped on Japan during World War II. Then I reviewed resistance based on James Scott's two-year research in Southeast Asia. Scott points to a intragroup hidden transcript that is performative yet undetectable except by members of less powerful groups of people. Next, I will review critical race theory (CRT) which is my theoretical lens to analyze African American voiced experiences of the narrators from the early days of Oak Ridge's racial desegregation.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

The Insider/Outsider Dilemma

Critiques of research conducted within groups who share the same race, ethnicity, gender, or religions, presents a researcher with an insider and outsider research dilemma. Robert Innes (2009), a member of the Plains Cree Cowessess First Nation points to the 1960's when African American scholars led this argument suggesting that members of a particular group should research their own group (p. 442). This would suggest that Muslims only study Muslims, Hispanic Americans only study Hispanic Americans, women only study women, and on so on. Indigenous, within group research suggests Innes, can pose questions that challenge preconceived notions of their communities and expand knowledge. Non-Indigenous researchers can ignore, silence, and diminish important perspectives. Critics of insider research suggest the insider's closeness to their communities leads to biased findings. Innes further contends that

insider research provides First Nations community like his, the opportunity to exert influence on issues that concern a wider academic audience, broadening the research scholarly community that include both insider and outsider scholarship.

Merton (1972), a sociologist, suggested when native groups are only studying native groups, it leads to fragmented research that becomes solipsistic. Solipsism suggests one group can only know and understand one's own group which in effect "others" non-groups. Based on this argument feminists would advocate for women only research related to women's issues, and native cultures would only research native cultures. Merton further suggests that this exclusionary practice of Whites only studying Whites, Blacks only studying Blacks, and men only studying men, begins to exclude men from understanding women, and White women from understanding Black women, and so on. This diminishes critical perspectives and less understanding of subgroups. The research community becomes sub-communities of insider/outsider scholars.

A Perspective of the Insider/Outsider Debate

Sofia Villenas (1996) addresses the tensions when minority university-sanctioned researchers study their "native" groups. It is also what Scott (1985), calls the human dilemma of the professional outsider (p. xx).Villenas positions herself with a shared identity of colonizer/colonized. The word "colonizer," as Villenas uses the term, refers to the takeover from Mexico (colonized) by the United States government (colonizers). Villenas' family was native Latin Americans. Villenas is a U.S. citizen and has always lived in the U.S., working at a U.S. university, where she identifies as Chicano. She was born in the U.S. and has native family roots

are Latin American Villenas points to a feeling of being disingenuous inauthentic when conducting university-led research. Villenas' feeling are what Anzaldua's (1990) refers to as *la mestiza*, border crossing colonized, Chicano, however as a researcher, a colonizer. This looks similar to what the Black community describes as "code-switching", acting Black, talking Black around Black people, later changing one's speech and Black vernacular to appeal to Whites when in the company of Whites.

I also contend with the tensions of researching people that I share racial/ethnic identities with, and I recognize how I have code-switched—that is, talking in what I believe to be acceptable Black vernacular around African Americans, but switching to my "university voice" around non-African American university friends and attempting to negotiate different social borders. In qualitative research, the researcher identifies one's position, described previously as positionality, and, therefore, I might expect the same tension Villenas infers. The researcher potentially "'others" the researched subjects. bell hooks (1990) and Derrick Aldridge both African American scholars, cautions that in researching marginalized groups (in this study African Americans) without acknowledging one's positionality, re-inscribes marginalization and "otherness" to the people we research. In this study, it is important to tread cautiously, rather than further objectify the missing voices related to racial desegregation.

Looking closer at desegregation which is a race-based law, I will further expound on the overriding principles, tenets of critical race their (CRT). CRT as my analytical tool positions race at the center of this study's oral narratives. CRT is the filter that acknowledges the ideological complexity of race that confronted Oak Ridge Schools associated with desegregation. Cornel West (1993, 2001) contends (and I agree), race matters in the U. S.. CRT can supply the

scholarship that emboldens the voices behind the veil. U.S. law according to CRT scholars purports that laws are just, because justice is colorblind, when in fact it is not.

Critical Race Theory from the Beginning

The origins of CRT were formulated by legal scholars and activists in the mid-1970s as a result of legal challenges to civil rights setbacks, many of these challenges emanated from the *Brown* decision (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Early legal scholars realized new theories and were needed combat the more subtle forms of racism festering around the U.S. These groundbreaking scholars include: Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Harris, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda and Patricia Williams, who were joined by Asian and Latina/o scholars, Neil Gotanda, Eric Yamamoto, Richard Delgado, Kevin Johnson, Margaret Mantoya, Juan Perea, and Francisco Valdes, and Indian scholar Robert Williams.

Derrick Bell (1987; 1992; 2004), wrote several of the early books related to CRT. Bell in his book, *And We Are Not saved: The elusive quest for racial justice*; uses storytelling and narrative to analyze how the *Brown* decision affected the education of African American children in public schools. Bell reveals the legal realities related to the *Brown* litigation. His 1992 book, Faces *at the Bottom of the Well* continues his narrative style of writing. The book is a cultural critique to suggest there has been little progress for African American civil rights since the *Brown* decision and brings in the voices of CRT allies, like Erika, a female, gun-toting Caucasian Civil Rights advocate who disturbs Bell's respite in the rural woods of Oregon where she lives. Overall CRT scholars argue for the permanence of racism in U.S. ideological practice. These ideological practices undermine *Brown* and other progressive civil rights actions.

A Closer Look at Critical Race Theory Scholarship

CRT is both a theory and a methodology. The theoretical underpinnings of CRT confronts social policies and practices like desegregation and suggests a scholarship well-suited for my study of desegregation. As an analytical framework, CRT contends that racism in America is natural and permanently etched in the social and cultural practices of American society (Bell, 1992). In 1896, when the *Plessy* ruling of racially separate but equal was enacted, U.S. Supreme Court Judge Harlan, the lone dissenting judge, wrote his opinion suggesting a race-blind American judicial system. This idea meant that all men were viewed as humans under the law; therefore, all humans received equal protection under the law as indicated by the Equal Protection Clause (EPC) in the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, CRT scholars suggest a race-blind society couches racism through laws that undo previous civil rights progress. A race-blind society contends that equality is a reality for all U.S. citizens, and, therefore, race should not be a consideration but merit only. Scholars of CRT suggest that laws based on merit only privilege Whites as the holders of cultural capital, and, therefore, non-Whites are culturally deficient within the framework of meritocracy. CRT scholars also suggest that meritocracy is a fallacy because meritocracy indicates the distribution of benefits achieved by merit is fair and equal and in our capitalistic society that is not true (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This next section addresses various tenets of CRT to lay the foundation to analyze the seven narrator's experiences of desegregated Oak Ridge public schools.

Tenets of Critical Race Theory

Racial Realism and Material Determinism

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) suggest that there are "idealists" who contend that discrimination and racism are matters of ideology or mental categories revealed in discourses. Race is recognized as a social construction and lacks scientific biological facts. So if the overriding discourse is changed, through words, attitudes, and images, then unconscious feelings toward a minority group, or racism and discrimination are undone.

On the other hand, CRT scholars acknowledge race consciousness is real. Racism is more tangible than changing attitudes. Racism is a racial hierarchy that determines who gets privilege and status, and tangible benefits, such as better jobs, better schools, and the best real estate opportunities. Members of the privileged group hide behind suggestions that slavery was in the past and no longer exists. Native cultures, such as Native Americans, Africans, and Latina/os pioneered mathematics, medicine, and astronomy before Europeans. CRT scholars are racial realists. Racism is permanent. Privilege and status is determined hierarchically, based on one's race.

Casting our understanding of CRT wider, Latina/o CRT scholar's voices weigh in on tenets of CRT related to material determinism. Material determinism as a tenet of CRT suggests that colonizers or conquerors demonize those who have been subjected to exploitation, such as the ranchers in Mexican territory. The overriding discourse suggested that Mexican ranchers and farmers were inferior and were unable to understand the steps needed for progress; therefore, their land was taken over in the name of progress. Scholars of CRT suggest a careful look at

history and circumstances whereby one group exploited another group. This exploitation was rationalized as progress and what was best in the name of progress. But at whose expense is progress? And who decides what progress means? The answer to who determines progress suggests another tenet of CRT—interest convergence and the reason for *Brown.*

Interest Convergence

Mary Dudziak (2009), a legal historian, traced the historical significance of the *Brown* decision after Derrick Bell was harshly criticized for writing a *Harvard Law Review* (1980) article suggesting that the ruling in *Brown* would have occurred regardless of the civil rights attorney's evidence argued in the case. Dudziak's research supporting Bell's contention found historical evidence for Bell's article. Dudziak traced an Alabama court case that proved Bell's point.

The Rationale that Led to CRT Interest Convergence

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) assert that shortly before the 1954 *Brown* decision, a state Supreme Court in Alabama had upheld a Marion, Alabama, court ruling that convicted a Negro handyman of stealing $1.95 from an elderly White woman and sentenced him to die in 1953. But this news was not contained in just the small town of Marion, Alabama. New reports traveled. What appeared to be a small town isolated occurrence was captured several miles north of Marion, Alabama in Des Moines, Iowa. The Des Moines newspaper picked up the news story and before long protests against the decision had erupted not only in Marion, Alabama but also as far away as London, England.

Across the ocean, in 1953, the U.S. Secretary of State, John Dulles, was in Europe looking for allies and support for the U.S.'s Cold War aggression from Russia. Dulles efforts to garner U.S. allies were handicapped when the story of the Alabama Negro handyman emerged. Embarrassed, Dulles was forced to respond to human rights violations in the U.S. against the U.S.'s Negro citizens based on criticism from the European media. News wires around the world started carrying stories of human rights violations against U. S. Negros, highlighting the Emmett Till murder, lynchings in the southern U. S. states, racist southern sheriffs, and poor economic conditions for Negroes in the south. Leery Europeans and Third World countries suggested that support of the U.S. against Russia in light of the U.S. national problem of racism toward U. S. Negroes, may not be a good decision.

The evidence from Dudziak's research supported Bell's contention, by tracing the trail from the U.S. government's intervention overturning the Alabama court's decision to exonerate the Negro handyman to the *Brown* decision within a year after U.S. Secretary Dulles' embarrassing incident in Europe. The U. S. proclaimed that racism was a regional problem confined to the south and a problem the U.S. would change in the name of democracy (Dudziak, 2009, p. 93). Additionally a social science experiment from 1939 was brought in as evidence during the *Brown* trial from Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark. The Clark's experiment suggested that segregation scarred and hurt Negro children psychologically (Kluger, 1977).

Bell contended that the *Brown* decision was a matter of *interest convergence*. Interest convergence suggests that the American legal system rules in favor of civil rights legislation if the legislation advances, or is in the self-interest, of Whites. Bell's *Harvard Law Review* article, coupled with Dudziak's archival support, did not disparage in any way the tenacious litigating

efforts of the NAACP legal team. Equally valiant efforts had not moved judgments on behalf of Negro Americans prior to the *Brown* decision. Scholars of CRT have continued to trace civil rights laws proving interest convergence in judgments ruled on behalf of African American civil rights. Bell's analysis of the *Brown* decision leads to another tenet of CRT—revisionist history.

Revisionist History

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) illuminate historical evidence from minority perspectives. This is one of the reasons why a colorblind society disadvantages racial minorities. Dominant cultural historical records are written illuminating the wonderful advances "given" to minorities. However this same trail of thinking suggests that laws passed to ameliorate historical injustices have not helped minorities but have only compromised and diminished the rights of the majority culture.

Following this thinking, in order for the U.S. to mirror the just laws of the U.S. Constitution, the laws should be evenly distributed, providing equality for all people. Scholars of CRT position these arguments as a result of the actual experiences of minorities. Minority experiences of discrimination look minor and insignificant, and CRT scholars label these experiences micro-aggressions. Micro-aggressions are incidents experienced by minorities that do not appear in the news or are not evident to the majority culture. For example, in school settings, a Hispanic student passes a group of White students, who make loud comments about illegal status as the Hispanic student walks by. Also teachers often do not acknowledge Black students in classrooms despite flailing hand-waving, suggesting the student has a "correct" response to a teacher's question, but the teacher ignores Black students. The teacher would

defend these actions by submitting that he or she does not see color and that in the teacher's eyes, everyone is the same. The teacher is colorblind. This might be labeled racial bullying. One of the students I mentioned earlier who wanted to drop his history class complained one of his classmates teased him taunting the Black students because he used to be one of the White boys' slaves.

Colorblindness

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) points to colorblindness, another area where CRT scholars disagree with the terminology. Colorblindness is a discourse that suggests a neutral principle, indicating that the U.S. Constitution is a racially neutral document. That is to say laws render equality of opportunity, as in the case of *Brown*, but they do not guarantee equality of results, as in the states' successful maneuverings to appeal and resist enactment of *Brown.* In other words, the decision is equal educational opportunity for Blacks, but it is also a refusal to force implementation and compliance of the *Brown* decision at the state and local school board levels. Two more foundations of CRT will be discussed—structural determinism and emphatic fallacy.

Structural Determinism

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) purports that structural determinism is based on the idea of cultural capital. The example CRT scholars provide is based on the example that Eskimos have twenty-six words for different kinds of snow. Any iteration of racism renders racism. Intentional racism, unintentional racism, unconscious racism, and institutional racism are all racism. Regardless of the linguistic qualifier placed in front of the word racism, there is no hierarchy to

racism. Racism has an equal effect. Scholars of CRT emphasize the perspective of the people who experience racism, usually minorities. A personal example is appropriate at this point.

Several years ago, another counselor and I wrote a letter to the state highlighting the cultural bias of a writing assessment. Students in each of our schools were required to take a standardized writing assessment responding to a prompt about U.S. zoo animals. We both had students in our respective schools who did not know what a zoo was nor the animals in a zoo. Of course we could not explain the question or help them, according to the state security rules that we had to follow. So we wrote a letter addressing the culturally biased assessment, both of us aware of the negative repercussions of low test scores if students scored poorly. Words are powerful. The emphatic fallacy is another example.

Emphatic Fallacy

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) reveals how subtle hate words or hates speech a tenet of CRT- emphatic fallacy. These words are similarly used in the micro-aggression example discussed previously. Words like coon, cat cookers, Sambos, rappers, sisters—these stereotypes have been scripted into the American psyche. If a minority were to respond, his or her appeals might be disregarded with claims of being overly sensitive, having an erroneous perception of the intention of the words, or being emphatically incorrect that the words were aimed at any particular racial/ethnic group.

Scholars of CRT suggest that majority culture group members cannot grasp the world of non- Whites. Few have experienced what DuBois suggests as “double consciousness,” living in two different realities or streams of consciousness. Bell (1987, 1992) negotiates awareness of the

realities of the experiences of minorities through narrative storytelling. Scholars of CRT suggest that storytelling and narratives counter silence and gives voice to minority cultures in the form of a narrative. Face to face conflict is difficult. However, a story is easier to be entreated rather than potential to antagonize someone through direct confrontation.

CRT Storytelling and Counter-storytelling

James Baldwin, an African-American writer and activist, suggests that if we do not record African American historical actors, then we miss the evidence of things not seen (Baldwin, 1985, 1995). James Scott (1990) suggests hidden transcripts unrevealed within marginalized social groups and cultures can contribute to a clearer understanding of a social phenomenon. Desegregation is a social phenomenon, and when this phenomenon is revealed through a narrative lens like storytelling and counter-storytelling[28] by African American narrators, their voices become more accessible to the public.

Storytelling is a form of psychological self-preservation for marginalized groups. Storytelling is a way of naming one's reality for out groups to describe experiential knowledge of racism. The power of a story advanced in CRT scholarship, suggests the voices of CRT scholars can provide a compatible analytical lens for the seven oral histories in my study. Since the early CRT scholars (now called "CRiTs"), other streams of CRT groups have developed. Now there are FemCriTs, AsianCRiTs, Latino CRiTs, and LGBT CRitTs, to name a few. By the

[28] Counter-storytelling is a CRT method that uses narratives that counter, expose, analyze, and challenge majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-storytelling reveal stories of people whose experiences are ignored or are not often told (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, 2009).

mid 1990s, CRT scholars began looking closer at education and the experiences of African Americans and other minority groups' marginalization in educational settings. Next I will provide an overview of CRT in Education.

Critical Race Theory of Education

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) and Edward Taylor (2009) provide the seminal work for CRT in education from a minority perspective. As discussed previously CRT originated in legal studies, which suggests a theoretical fit with desegregation as a legal pronouncement. Pivoting off of Bell's claim that racism is permanent, CRT scholars, specifically in education, suggest the oppressive nature of racism has wearied minorities, allowing complacency to stealthily undo steps toward equal education for minorities.

Kozol (1991) is also credited with looking at CRT in public education. Pointing to issues of re-segregation and retrenchment, particularly seen in urban school districts, Kozol and other CRT scholars have collaboratively addressed public education. Scholars of CRT in education focus on social policies that affect unequal treatment in American schools. Criticized as an ivory-tower elite movement, CRT scholars focus on educational issues and direct advocacy work at the Boards of Education, Commissioners of Education, and Directors of educational curriculum levels. Scholars of CRT in education remind critics that this is still America, and racism is permanent.

Racial categories used in the U.S. population census moves beyond race as a biologically constructed genotype to categories based on phenotype, a feature based solely on observable characteristics (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lee, 1993). Each racial category lacks clear distinctions

of what fits in a category. Ladson-Billings (2009) posits these categories are designed to reveal who is White and who is not. For example, cultural, political, and socio-economic shifts forced Mexican Americans out of the White category over time (Haney-Lopez, 1995). Whether race is considered biologically driven or a sociological construct, there are shortcomings. Both hide the reality that the U. S. is a racialized society and race impacts public education. Toni Morrison (1992) reminds us that race is always present. Race is normalized in relation to the position one's race is ranked as compared to Whiteness. CRT attempts to promote a dialogue around race to advance a conversation on race in education. These conversations expose the permutations that mask racist practices in education. Racism is permanent, racism is normal not aberrant in American society (Delgado, 1995). By normalizing racism, school curriculum can become more innovative. Students can think critically by critiquing and challenging racialized assumptions like the master narrative surrounding the *Brown* decision. The *Brown* decision can be conceptualized analytically from an international perspective. The U.S. was grappling with the threat of Russian Communism, at home was a fragile economy coupled with attempts to transform the south from an Agrarian society to a more industrialized economy, and also to make implementers of the law accountable for developing an equitable educational system. By masking racism, *Brown* is just one family petitioning for equal educational opportunity for one little Black girl. In reality *Brown w*as multiple families all bundled into one; segregation is bad; and desegregation is bad because it gives the appearance of disadvantaging one race over another.

Derrick Bell (1992) tells a real life story of a much older Black neighbor in rural Mississippi who took regular walks from her home to the main part of town, to protest unfair treatment of Black people. Police officials arrested her many times, but her arrests only fueled

her visits to town. One day Derrick Bell asked her why she continually went to the courthouse picketing and protesting knowing most of the time she would be arrested? She responded that she refused to go away. If she stopped going up to the courthouse, the White law enforcement officers and the local legal system would begin to think their unfair treatment of Blacks in Mississippi was okay and therefore there'd be no need to change anything. Lastly she said "I'm an old woman. I can't speak for everyone, but… I just love getting the chance to harass White folks" (p.xii). Bell's example is an example of what James Scott (1985), identifies as a weapon of the weak, a form of silent resistance. Educational progress would be difficult to achieve without challenging dominant groups. Resistance can occur without violence, but might be like Bell's neighbor in Mississippi, a form that makes those in power uncomfortable. CRT helps to provide a tool to deconstruct oral narratives of racial desegregation.

Scholars using CRT in education reexamine "race" and the fact that race is not a fixed term. Race is socially constructed, is fluid, de-centered social meaning that is continually shaped by political resources (Calmore, 1992). Hayman (1995) posits that CRT relies on the perspective and context of the story in assessing truth claims (Parker and Lynn, 2009). CRT scholars reject texts that establish objectives truths and universal meanings. Hayman further states: justice is not theoretical…justice is informed and realized in lived experiences..social justice is continuous (Hayman, 1995). Scholars using CRT address racial patterns of exclusion in education. Most analysis in education prefer to focus on class and gender rather than race, culture, language, and immigrant status which further marginalizes racialized discourses that prove to be culturally inappropriate (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano and Villalpando, 1998; Stanfield, 1999). By focusing on school

failure the voices of people of color are devalued without exploring how students of color make sense of their lived realities inside schools (Pizarro, 1998 cited in Parker & Lynn, 2009). Struggles contained within the stories of people of color as addressed by White European researchers fail to honestly examine how power impacted their lived experiences (Foster, 1994). Yvonna Lincoln (1995) discusses criteria for judging claims by addressing positionality of the researcher or the researcher's standpoint judgment, as well as the researcher's ability to meet validity standards of voice, and who speaks for whom.

From here the metaphor *voice* in CRT will be expanded as part of the supporting framework to this study.

Voice in Critical Race Theory

CRT scholars use parables, chronicles, stories, counter stories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories to help name the reality of living as a person of color in America (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Like race, CRT scholars suggest reality is socially constructed; a vehicle for self-preservation for "outgroups". The exchanging of stories within outgroups from teller to teller help overcome the dyconscious way of viewing the one- is- the-reality-for- all view of the world (Delgado, 1989; King, 1992). Science and history renders the voices of dispossessed, marginalized outgroup members mute (Ladson-Billings, 2009). CRT responds to this silence by focusing on the term *voice*, to empower the recipients of racial injustice. Delgado (1990) argues that people of color can experientially name their reality of racism with experiential knowledge. Voice provides a framework for warrantability in scholarship involving people of color. Truths, according to Delgado (1991) and Matsuda

(1989), only exist for people of color who have experienced a given socially constructed reality, like racism. A way of counter-internalizing stereotypic images society has socially constructed in order to maintain dominance against people of color, communicating in one's own voice provides medicinal salve against racial oppression (Delgado, 1989).

History records and makes truth claims as if there is only one universal truth. These universal truth claims are based on the stories of the dominant culture, namely White Europeans. These socially constructed stories negate experiences that counter or are contrary to the maintenance and justification of White privilege and meritocracy. This study of African American personal experiences of racial desegregation filtered through CRT scholars can communicate and deepen our historical understanding of the narrator's academic, cultural, and social experiences in Oak Ridge public schools.

Summary of Related Literature

In this review of the related literature, I've looked at the historical, legal, political, and sociological implications of racial desegregation in public schools both from a broader, national perspective, as well as within Oak Ridge. The literature positions Blacks in America as legally separated from Whites based on the socially constructed reality of "race" that claims those people socially categorized as Whites, are the only superior race to the inferior races: Blacks, Native cultures, and Latina/o cultures. CRT scholars suggest critical analyses of the social construction of race, property rights, citizenship, and challenges normative categories. My use of CRT as an analytical lens is not to suggest a binary opposition to existing raced discourse, but as argued by Maxine Greene (1995), my intent is to open spaces

for multiple possibilities imagined when new perspectives are joined to the extant body of research on racial desegregation of public schools.

Anna Julia Cooper (1892, 1988) states: …"when a Black Woman enters a place, the whole world enters with her …she brings with her the dignity and whole-hearted zeal of the Negro race (p. 31). Next is Chapter 3, and my description of the methodology I employed in carrying out the research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The preliminary research began by conducting a literature review of my topic. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee (UTK) provided rich resources both through online topical searches, obtaining interlibrary loans, and meeting with the Research Librarian responsible for educational research, UTK Special Collections, Media sources and the availability of a multitude of library databases at UTK. Additional research was conducted by visiting the Oak Ridge Public Library (ORPL), viewing and reviewing volumes of microfiche containing information from the *Oak Ridger* newspaper and minutes from the Atomic Energy Commission (the local Oak Ridge School Board system of management did not start until 1959), and archival documents in the Oak Ridge Room at the ORPL, and the Center for Oak Ridge Oral History also housed at the ORPL. I visited the American Museum of Science & Energy, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Children's Museum of Oak Ridge, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Beck Cultural Center, Knoxville, Tennessee; The Green-McAdoo Museum, Clinton, Tennessee; The Langston Hughes Library at the Children's Defense Fund, Clinton, Tennessee; and The National Archives Southern Regional Center, Atlanta, Georgia. The main topics I searched were: African American education, African American history, critical race theory, desegregation, feminist oral history, feminist studies, memory, narrative inquiry, Oak Ridge, oral history, qualitative research studies, race, school counseling, Tennessee, and voice. I attended local festivals around Oak Ridge like the Secret City Festival, Scarboro Community Share Day, funerals,

and local Sunday church services. I also talked to anyone who would listen about my study. My archival journey is contained throughout the dissertation.

I divide the rest of this chapter into two parts. The first part lays out the theoretical foundations of oral history and oral history's value as a method of research and advocacy demonstrated by oral history's acceptance in academic, international, and social justice settings. From there I review memory starting by defining memory, then pointing to various memory studies, and finally looking at how memory impacts oral history. I follow this with an overview of oral historical methods including the interview process, transcribing the interview, author boundaries, analysis and interpretations of the interviews. That completes the first part. The last part of the chapter I lay out the detailed methods I employed starting with the process for obtaining narrators for the study, the interview itself along with the forms I used during the process, the equipment, along with some of the challenges I encountered. I begin the next section with an overview of oral history.

Oral History

Oral history extracts memories from past historically significant events by way of interviews that can be transcribed, then analyzed, and afterwards made available to the public (Ritchie, 2003). Memories of historically significant events can expand the historical knowledge base through the personal accounts of eyewitnesses. Oral history can be a significant source of history. The Interview Guide for this study appears in Appendix 1.

Oral historian Alessandro Portelli (1991) argues that oral history is not based on interviews of oral sources but people. The lived experiences of people revealed through oral history interviews build the foundation to oral histories (Thompson, 1988). Oral history thrusts ordinary people into history. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (1998) point to historical research that contributes to history that is always partial. History is always in the making, and, therefore, a need exists to reduce the incompleteness of history. Oral history is not bland contemporary tourist view of the past, but oral history recognizes and even challenges the social system and the stories of people who are or were living, breathing human actors with dreams, emotions, and passions (Brown and Kelly, 2005; Makler, 1991; Perks and Thomson, 1998).

My research goal was to extract memories of attending Oak Ridge public schools both before as well as at the onset of racial desegregation. I used a semi-structured format based on the Interview Guide that pointed to three areas: academic/educational, cultural, and social experiences. Seven African American interviews re-visited the early days of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools that began Tuesday, September 6, 1955. There are multiple methodologies similar to oral history. However, some of the features of oral history that makes oral history attractive for my study is its permeability—the ability to cross disciplinary boundaries (Janesick, 2010; Perks and Thomson, 1998; Yow, 2005). Oral history crosses disciplines and crosses oceans by bringing in international scholars (Abrams, 2010; Tonkin, 1992). Oral history can be interactive and interdisciplinary (Abrams, 2010).

Linguistic scholars describe narratologies as the art of oral historians to combine narratives, the telling to an interviewer one's memory about lived experiences, sometimes

incoherently conveyed by the narrator, and then weaving the interview into a poetic for an academic audience (Grele, 1991). The challenges the oral narrators overcame, the tensions negotiated, and the boundless possibilities were promising evidential features that indicated to me oral history would be compatible to reconstruct missing historical sources of the racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools.

Several local public archives in Oak Ridge are sources of historical information about Oak Ridge and the people of Oak Ridge. There is a Center for Oak Ridge Oral History (COROH) that archives diverse local voices of Oak Ridge residents past and present. Oak Ridge also has public historical archives that tell the Oak Ridge story from its beginnings and its connection to U.S. government intelligence during World War II and the Manhattan Project (Robinson, 1950; Sparrow, 1980). The University of Tennessee's Special Collections has fifteen file boxes called the June Adamson Collection that documents historical facts and anecdotes related to Oak Ridge (1946-2003). Two local Oak Ridge museums, The American Museum of Science and Energy (AMSE) and the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge, both contain historical displays. The Oak Ridge public library houses "The Oak Ridge Room" with an abundance of historical information about Oak Ridge residents that includes stories and information about Oak Ridge African American residents and oral histories of Oak Ridge African Americans; and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) meeting notes. The AEC was the governing body in Oak Ridge after World War II until 1959. The AEC also included a Parents Advisory Council that was part of the governing body of Oak Ridge Schools. I gathered highlights of Oak Ridge public education minutes from the school officials contained in the book, *City Behind the Fence* (1981) and Ray Smith's (2007) newspaper series about Oak

Ridge Schools. A 268-page manuscript entitled, *An Adventure in Democratic Administration* (1949), written by the first Superintendent of Oak Ridge School's, is an in-depth history of Oak Ridge School that starts from the time Dr. Blankenship was recruited, to his arrival in Oak Ridge where he had no office, staff, staff support, school buildings, textbooks, curriculum guides, or an idea of how many school age children lived in Oak Ridge and their grade levels. The Tennessee Blue Books were helpful resources of particularly the demographic information. Locked in a bookcase near the research librarian's desk are volumes of the *Oak Log*, the yearbooks for Oak Ridge High School starting in 1950. The *Oak Log* yearbooks helped me obtain pictures and identify potential narrators for my dissertation research.

Additional Books and Textual Resources

A few of the historical texts about the history of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, included references to the desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools, such as, a doctoral dissertation entitled: *The Pursuit of Community Journalism in a Segregated Tennessee Town, 1949 – 1969* (Drews, 2007): *City behind the fence* (Johnson & Jackson, 1981); *These Are Our Voices* (Overholt, 1987); *A History of Segregation in Oak Ridge, 1943-1960* (Peelle & Tucker, 1960; and *An Historical Sketch of Oak Ridge Schools* (Smith, 2007). Also, the Center of Oak Ridge Oral History (COROH) housed in the Oak Ridge Public Library (ORPL) has archived nine-plus oral histories; however, as of my last visit to COROH, none of these nine-plus oral histories or the above-mentioned historical texts includes the voices of African American students. Therefore, the addition of African American oral sources to Oak Ridge's historical transcripts would create a new primary source of information about Oak Ridge, which also

makes oral history a pragmatic methodology that can resolve a crisis of African American representation in Oak Ridge's racial desegregation historical sources.

This oral history dissertation begins to reconstruct the history of desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools, through the first-person accounts of seven African Americans that are absent from the above-mentioned historical records and information about Oak Ridge. Their place in Tennessee history is also unique. Five of the narrators hold a distinguished position as the first African Americans to desegregate public schools statewide (Reynolds, Thernstrom, Gaziano, Heriot, Kirsanow, Melendez, Taylor, Jr., Yaki, 2008). Within the above-mentioned historical texts, African American students are referenced, talked about, have nameless pictures, but their words and therefore their thoughts about racial desegregation are missing. This dissertation begins to unveil historical memories from African American students who talk about their experiences behind the walls of Robertsville Junior High and Oak Ridge High Schools (Stepto, 1991).

Four Paradigms of Oral History

Alistair Thomson (2007) identifies four paradigm transformational developments in oral history. Thomson outlines oral history through an international lens, but his critical look at oral history is worth noting before moving to the oral history documents that inform this dissertation. The factors Thomson points to have influenced oral historians' proliferation of practices evolving internationally, and they have also affected U.S. oral history practices. Since Thomson frames his argument around paradigms, he points to Thomas Kuhn (1962), noted for popularizing the concept of paradigms, who was an oral historian of American

science (Doel, 2003). Loosely defined, the paradigm is a scientific theory that explains certain phenomena (Kuhn, 1962; Purtill, 1967). This idea suggests that over time, when a theory or theories within a scientific paradigm can no longer explain new phenomena the paradigm is no longer useful, so a new paradigm is created. This is commonly known as a paradigmatic shift.

The four oral history paradigm transformations Thomson outlines are: (1) memory as a source of people's history, then later in the 1970s; (2) a development that was a transgressive move from rigid historical practice toward demonstrating that all history, like memory, is subjective because one cannot dismiss the human element intrinsic to historical research, this approach was broadened to; (3) the historian as interviewer and analyst approaches oral history through a more interdisciplinary lens to include cultural studies, literary studies, psychology, linguistics, communication, and narrative studies, and more recently; (4) the international or digital revolution that fostered an international dialogue transforming the way oral historians obtained information, like conducting virtual interviews, and used other sophisticated means of digitizing, indexing, and cataloguing oral histories. This dissertation using oral history more closely aligns with the third paradigm transformation of oral history. Interdisciplinary oral history scholars have developed oral histories using critical analysis, which I do also.

Criticisms of Oral History Methods

Nineteenth and early twentieth-century positivist historians advocated a strict reliance on written documents (Thomson, 2007). Paul Thompson (1988; 1998) in *The Voice of the*

Past, reveals early twentieth-century positivist historians believed that without documents, there is no history and there is no substitute for documents (p. 46-47). History was created at that time from artifacts in a detached objective manner, producing an edifice of truth (Novick, 1988; 1991). This, according to Ritchie (2003), opens historians to criticism of methodological bias in writing history, and what constituted historical evidence (p. 21). Positivist historians later accepted that written evidence was biased and, therefore, evaluated written evidence based on verifiability: trustworthy, credible, true or false; and reliability: whether something is proven consistently or inconsistently (Ritchie, 2003). This method of conducting oral history took into account the historian's identity that was embedded in the interpretation by the interviewer of the historiographical evidence (Thomson, Frisch, & Hamilton, 1994). However, positivist historians suggested oral sources were only reliable as historical evidence in real time co-produced at the time the questions in an interview were written into a historical narrative (ibid, p. 36). Philosopher of language, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981), assertion that memory is a dialogic formation of knowledge produced in a narrative relationship between two speakers, meaning it is both social and historical. Yow (2004) summarizes oral history methods as historical actions where an interviewer links a narrator's experience to a larger historical matrix, that is then interpreted through a decision-making process referring to that historical event surrounding a personal experience revealing a historical action (p. 13). Oral history is a historical performance generated from interaction between an interviewer and a narrator. Oral history is not new but in fact has a history that goes as far back as 3000 years ago to the Zhou Dynasty in China, predating the historical positivist's regime (Ritchie, 2003).

Memory

"*…well that was a long time ago, so I can't remember a whole lot, but I remember that I didn't like it…*" DAKL, Oral Narrator

What is memory? Memory is strongly connected to remembering. The medical field has increased studies with National Science Foundation funding of memory for research in areas such as Alzheimer's disease to address the neuroscience of memory (Janesick, 2010). At the core of memory is the act of remembering, or recalling experiences. A dictionary of philosophy describes memory as past experiences often involving images (Honderich, 2005). Philosophers go on to say that in order to be able to recall an image, we had to have experienced it, or the experience is attached to some sort of image, regardless that both the memory and the recalling of the experience are probably inaccurate and incomplete (ibid. p. 584). Lebow (2008) suggests that discussions of memory in historical scholarly literature and popular media have experienced a memory boom with growing interest in the subject.

For this dissertation, I searched "memory" in JSTOR, and 214,507 records were generated; an ERIC search on "memory" resulted in 20,360 records; an ERIC search of "survivor memory" resulted in 60; and "memory in oral history" generated 50,606 records. With memory at the core of oral history, I chose four articles from *The Oral History Reader* (Perks & Thomson, 1998) to help me understand what memory looks like in oral history by: Trevor Lummis, Alessandro Portelli, Mark Roseman, Linda Shopes, and other oral historians as noted in the text.

What sets oral history apart from other historical texts, according to oral historian Portelli (1998), is the unique quality of identity mediated through memory and remembering. Thomson (1990, 1998) shows memory as a process we draw on in order to articulate our experience and to seek social acceptance. Interpretation of the oral narrative becomes history. Lummis (1998) highlights how different and stratified the evidence becomes when memories are disaggregated and triangulated with each interview, and textual documents make a rich re-presentation. Shopes (1998) asserts that memory conceptualizes a phenomena studied and provides answers to difficult questions if mediated through multiple listening and understanding of the culture interviewed. Chandler (2005) cautions interviewers to be attentive listeners in her study entitled "Oral History Across Generations." Chandler's article reveals how novice student oral historians interviewing adults who did not share racial/ethnic identity or a generational peer group set the narrators up to respond according to erroneous assumptions about the intent and presumed stereotypes of the researcher. What she found was the narrators had adjusted their responses to portray assumptions about the narrator that were not part of the interview guide. This required open dialogue and shared understanding to open up spaces for a final product that would be representative of her experiences. Chandler's article reveals the tensions that can emerge based on different interpretations of the same event.

Oral History is Collaborative

Oral history is the result of collaboration between interviewer and narrator. The oral history itself is constructed and not remembered (Norrick, 2005). Questions about whether the goal is to recall or remember past events require close attentiveness from the listener as noted

earlier by Chandler (2005). Sometimes in the middle of the narrator's remembering, the person asks the interviewer to help with recall—"What's that name?" Usually, of course, the interviewer doesn't t know the name the narrator has requested in spite of persistence from the narrator for help, as if to generate a collaboration with the memory. Oral historians Lummis (1987), Portelli (1991), and Pillemer (2000) suggest the existence of doubtful memories, the clarity of some memories, and that some memories are not vivid. Oring and Grele (1987), and McMahan and Rogers (1994), caution oral historians on the process of remembering in oral history interviews and the potentially negative effect the interviewer can have on the process. Therefore, oral historians are cautioned to focus on the words and language and how the recall is constructed (Norrick, 2005, p. 5). Gathering his argument from Tonkin (1992), Neisser (1986), and Bartlett (1932), argue that memory is constructed through the words used to describe a past event. The cognitive process of recalling during an oral history interview varies due to age, familiarity, and style of the interviewer, and Norrick (2005) contends this is different from other sorts of memory, like episodic, vivid, working memory discussed earlier (p. 7). Norrick concludes that the degree to which interviewers are concerned with explicitness and memory gaps, while other interviewers are focused on a coherent maybe even more entertaining story are part of the process between the interviewer and the narrator that construct the oral history. Names and places are susceptible to forgetfulness, but they cannot be recovered through ways of accessing general knowledge or cognitions. The final story does not necessarily have to hinge on exact words or the reproduction of exact names and dates. It is the product of the oral story that is most important. The product is my goal. The extraction of the oral narrator's memories from the early days of racial desegregation of

Oak Ridge public schools and an acceptable transcript mediated between myself and the narrators that meets university standards and criteria for scholarship is my ultimate goal.

Identities Revealed Through Oral History

The process of remembering is the construction of the narrator's identity. Errantes (2000) suggests oral history is a narrative representation of identity. Therefore, identity is practiced through the oral story based on retrieving memory (Friedman, 1981 in Errantes, p. 17). Portelli (1998) and Friedman (2005) describe oral history as a verbal performance generated from interviews about accounts from the past (p. 35). Fentress and Wickham (1992) point to the reliance on memory is what sets oral history apart. Memory is an active process of creation of meanings. Oral history has to answer to the claim that oral history offers unreliable historical sources as compared to written, text-documented history. Contrary to written historical texts, oral history is created during the interview, and, therefore, is immediate. Allison (1998) goes on to say that oral testimony and the interpretive experience is an active process through which the narrator creates meaningful stories from the past. I return to the previous statements in this text regarding the importance of considering the interviewer in the process of the emerging narrative because it is mediated and, therefore, becomes distorted without acknowledging the interviewer's part in the creation of their narrative.

Borland (1991) offers a creative study based on interviewing her grandmother. Borland reveals how agitated her grandmother was after reading Borland's interpretation of the interview. Borland creatively names this study, "That's Not What I Said." Interpretive authority can be problematic in oral history along with textual authority. Whose story? Whose

research? Who owns textual authority remembering that oral history is mediated in the context of remembering (Errantes, 2000). In Borland's research she realized that she had taken authorial privilege away from her grandmother, Bea. Borland and her grandmother Bea had reviewed the text. Bea however did not understand why she was misrepresented in the final version. Borland had added a feminist theoretical lens to her grandmother's memory. Bea believed a feminist theoretical lens distorted the memories she had shared with her granddaughter. Borland had never talked about the theoretical lens she intended to use to analyze to her grandmother's memories. From her experiences, Borland reveals how a researcher/interviewer/historian can strip the oral narrator of 'her or his" story. Feminist scholars resolve this dilemma of "hijacking a memory" (Gluck & Patai, 1991; Patai, 1987; Yow, 2005).

Borland (1991) restructured her interpretation after discussing her theoretical lens and reconstructed the narrative with her grandmother's words in concert with a feminist language. Borland had in fact conveyed her grandmother's words accurately. However, the feminist label is what Bea refused. The study goes on to show that if Borland meant that her grandmother believed that women have the right to live their lives regardless of what society says, Bea accepted that, but she refused to be tied to any label associated with feminism. By the time of the final published story Bea's oral narrative remained intact, mediated through feminist oral history methodology, or as Frisch (1990) suggests, "shared authority." This suggests that in my dissertation, I cannot presume, as in Chandler's piece coupled with Borland's, that the oral narrators will understand critical race theory, nor my beliefs about

desegregation simply because we share the same race. The final text will have to be mediated through subsequent meetings during the write up phase of my dissertation.

In Conclusion Oral History Is…

I have highlighted the importance of memory in oral history research and memory research describing memory from a scientific perspective as well as how memory is mediated through the interview process as revelations of the narrator's identity and how this impacts the analysis and final write up of the interview. The process of oral history research is a collaborative-shared-mediated endeavor. The interview is critical to gaining access to the lived experiences of the narrator. The interview focuses on the narrator however the interviewer is a critical part of the process from the time of the initial request for the interview, the interviewer's sense of interest, engagement, and respect for the narrator, all the way to the final published product. The interviewer takes into consideration the narrator's age, racial/ethnic identity, and cultural norms in relation to these same particularities of the interviewer. Doing oral history research has its challenges both seen and unseen (Milner, 2007; Ritchie, 2003). I will now move into the particularities of the dissertation and describe the oral history research methods of my dissertation.

Where and How I Entered – My Methods

Searching the Archives

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee's Hodges Library provided my initial resources. The online databases accessible through the internet, books, Special

Collection files, Interlibrary loan support that helped me obtain books and archival information the library did not have onsite, digital archives, and a convenient system for renewal of books were all helpful as I developed references and an archival collection that would be informative and supportive as I moved forward. As I stated earlier, I visited the National Archives' Southern Region facility in Atlanta, Georgia and looked through all seven boxes of the Oak Ridge, Tennessee files. My visit to the National Archives was one of the highlights of my research. I visited the National Archives much later in the research process. I was told the National Archives maintained an Oak Ridge file. The Oak Ridge archives housed original documents one of which was a memorandum from the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) dated January, 1954 telling Oak Ridge School officials to desegregate. The Oak Ridge archives at the National Archives housed numerous listings of weekly memoranda, but I did not find an actual memorandum or letter I had hoped to find.

I searched local archives also like The Beck Cultural Center in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Beck Cultural Center is an African American museum with books, brochures, and newspaper clippings that focus on local and some state and national African American history. I had already read the books contained in the library. I didn't find a lot of information about Oak Ridge. I met Mr. Robert Booker, a local African American history icon who told me he is the new Director of the Center. He also told me the center didn't have a lot of information about African Americans from Oak Ridge, except that they used to attend school in Knoxville prior to desegregation. He admitted the center had quite a bit of information about Clinton's desegregation and since they were both in Anderson County, I might be able to find something about Oak Ridge. I didn't pursue information about Clinton. However, he

told me he would be interested in placing a copy of my dissertation at the Belk Cultural Center. I felt honored that he suggested placing my dissertation at the Beck Cultural Center. I searched the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge (CMOR), American Museum of Science and Energy (AMSE), along with other places I've already mentioned. So far I have reviewed my investigation of archival data. At this point I have identified four narrators to participate. However, I interviewed seven former Oak Ridge students. I will now review how my study grew from four narrators' to seven who were included in this study.

Every year the formerly all-Black Scarboro community of Oak Ridge has a one-day event called Scarboro Share Day. I attended that event when I began my research of the Black community of Oak Ridge. I had initially decided that I wanted my dissertation to be a historical research study focusing on the Black population of Oak Ridge. However, after attending Scarboro Share Day and seeing a fairly extensive archival collection from African Americans who were born in Oak Ridge or lived in Oak Ridge most of their lives, so I changed my dissertation and decided to only focus on schools, since that's my area of expertise. I live in Oak Ridge but not in the densely populated community of Black residents called Scarboro, or "The Valley." Scarboro Share Day was held at the Scarboro Community Center, and I believed that event would be an important event to my research so I attended the one-day event. The Scarboro Community Center is located on Carver Avenue, which lies between Wilberforce and Benedict, the major residential streets in the Scarboro community. All streets in the Scarboro community are named after Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). All seven narrators have lived in the Scarboro community. Currently three live in "The Valley", two live adjacent to "The Valley", another lives in Oak Ridge

outside of Scarboro and one narrator lives in California. The streets the narrators live on are Benedict (HBCU in Columbia, South Carolina) which his off of Bennett (HBCU in Greensboro, North Carolina); ; Dillard Avenue (Dillard University, an HBCU in New Orleans, Louisiana); Spelman (HBCU in Atlanta, Georgia); Tuskegee Avenue (HBCU in Tuskegee, Alabama); and Wilberforce (HBCU in Wilberforce, Ohio, and the college my father attended).

While I was at the Scarboro Share Day, two ladies, Rose and Valerie had two tables full of pictures and artifacts of Scarboro residents and the community. I was impressed with their historical collection that had obviously taken years to accumulate. I talked to each one of them, and they each talked excitedly about each item and the personal stories attached to most of them. Their stories included Valerie's mother's graduation picture and Rose's parents' wedding Bible. It was very informative, and included helpful artifacts for my dissertation. Since that time Rose's display appeared at the American Museum of Science and Energy. I did not include either woman in my study because they are both too young to participate as oral narrators since I had narrowed my research to a much earlier time period when both of them were either toddlers or not born.

IRB Approval

According to most of the books, journals, and Internet guides pertaining to oral history research, IRBs were not required for oral history studies. However, the University of Tennessee (UTK) required that all research sanctioned under UTK dissertation guidelines supersede any public requirements for oral history exemptions. I developed an interview

guide (Appendix 1), a contact information form (Appendix 2), and an Informed Consent form (Appendix 3); an oral history gifting form (Appendix 5), All of these items had to be attached to my IRB approval. I obtained all of these forms from the following: Donald Ritchie's book (2003), *Doing Oral History*; Valerie Janesick's book (2010), *Oral History for the Qualitative Researcher*; and checked Internet sources to ensure I had every form that I would need. I added a Transcriber's Confidentiality form (Appendix 6) that I developed myself, as well as an Artifact form (Appendix 7). I also developed a Research Log (Appendix 8), that I submitted with my IRB.

Snowball Sampling

The narrators were obtained through snowball sampling methods. Like a snowball, snowball sampling begins with a small sample. I started with one person, Cassandra. Then from her, my narrator pool grew. I also made copies of Black student pictures in the *Oak Log*, the ORHS yearbook, focusing only on the yearbooks between 1956 through 1959. Although desegregation began in September of 1955, the yearbooks are dated in the spring semester of a school year, which was 1956. I found this out after I experienced significant angst while looking through the 1955 *Oak L*og and not seeing any Black students. I thought I had misread the dates of Oak Ridge school's desegregation. I talked to the ORPL research librarian who explained how ORHS yearbooks were published in the spring of the school year. In addition to being an Oak Ridge native, Cassandra, was also a former Oak Ridge Schools colleague of mine and as stated earlier was willing to help me with my study as well as help me gain access to narrators. I had interviewed her earlier while conducting an ethnographic research project on Black residents of Oak Ridge for one of my ethnographic research doctoral classes

so I already had her contact information. Cassandra talked about the early days of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge as well as her experience in the all-Black segregated Scarboro School. She also provided the name of another person whom she said would be a valuable resource, Willie Golden. Cassandra believed Willie would be my best source. She didn't have Willie's contact information, but told me I would be able to find his contact information in the telephone directory. Cassandra admired Willie's community activism as an elected Oak Ridge official. By the time my interview with Cassandra ended, I realized that she was younger than my intended population and, therefore, was not a member of the inaugural class of desegregation. However I wanted Cassandra's interview to be a part of my study. She was a retired history teacher who had lived in Oak Ridge since she was five years old, graduated from Oak Ridge High School, and returned to Oak Ridge after college to teach for over thirty years—she was an excellent resource. So I broadened my research study to include her as well as Willie, and cast my net wider. Willie is older than Cassandra but was not a member of the 1955 inaugural desegregation class of Oak Ridge public schools. Willie suggested I contact Fred, who was also a basketball player like him. He told me where he lived and that I could look him up in the telephone directory. Fred became my third interview and the first member of the 1955 inaugural class.

I became concerned that any other names I might be given would not fit into the years I set for my dissertation. I returned to the ORPL again and asked for a Robertsville Junior High yearbook, but 1979 was the earliest year available. I called Sylvia, whose father had been interviewed for a newspaper article in the *Oak Ridger* newspaper several years earlier. Although, her father was now deceased, I thought maybe her mother might be able to

recognize pictures from the yearbook. Sylvia's father was pictured in the 1958 ORHS yearbook. Sylvia looked through copies of the yearbook pictures and saw her mother also. She called her on the telephone and after almost two hours we had identified twenty-one people who still lived in the area whom I might potentially interview. Ann had a remarkable memory for names. She told me who was living, who had died, who she had dated, and who no longer lived in Oak Ridge. She even knew where most of them lived. Particularly interesting during my interview with Ann, she kept telling me she did not remember much, but she provided me detailed explanations of events and people during this telephone conversation. This will be discussed in more detail during my analysis.

Keanna, a former student told me her aunt might be a candidate. I now had three additional potential narrators in addition to Cassandra and Willie…Fred, Ann, and Keanna's aunt. Later I found out Keanna's aunt was too young, but she told me one of her church members Helen would fit into the years I needed. I knew Helen because she had been a substitute teacher at the school where I worked, so I felt comfortable setting up an interview with her. I had to attend Monday night tutoring at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Oak Ridge in order to talk to Helen because no one had her telephone number. I gave Helen a copy of my Informed Consent form that included an explanation of my study; I obtained her telephone number and address, and told her I would contact her in a few days to set up an interview. She agreed to participate. Fred, who was the third person I interviewed, told me after his interview that if I wanted a good study I must talk to L.C. Fred told me L.C. was a "talker" and he could give me plenty of material. Fred's assertion about L. C. was correct. So through snowball sampling I was able to get Cassandra who suggested Willie; Willie

suggested Fred; Fred suggested L.C.; Sylvia suggested her mother Ann; and Keanna's aunt suggested Helen; for a total of six narrators.

I obtained each narrator's contact information by looking them up in the phone directory, doing a "Google" search, finding them at church (like Helen) or directly from the person who made the suggestion. L. C. told me that I had to interview his friend that lived in California, Archie Lee. L. C. told me I MUST interview Archie. L. C. gave me Archie's telephone number. Archie according to L.C. was one of his best friends and had a great memory, but he lived in California. I called Archie to ask for his address and that initial call became the interview. I tried to explain that I needed to go through the Informed Consent process and get his signature, and he graciously agreed to do, but he told me if I want the interview, he was ready to talk. So I interviewed Archie via telephone, which turned out to be my longest interview.

Equipment

I found several oral history "how to" books and a journal article about Duke University's inaugural oral history methodology program that one of my dissertation committee member's Dr. C. G. Fleming was one of the original nine participants. These resources were Willa Baum's (1977/1991), *Transcribing and Editing Oral History* Valerie Janesick's (2010) *Oral History for the Qualitative Researcher;* Alphine Jefferson's (1984), Echoes from the South: The History and Methodology of the Duke Oral History Program, 1972-1982; Donald Ritchie's (2003) *Doing Oral History,* and Valerie Yow's 2005), *Recording Oral History*. All the books had indices that explained equipment I needed. Both

discussed the advantages of digital versus cassette recording; video equipment considerations; additional microphones; a notepad; and backup for every piece of equipment, including back-up batteries. I also set up a digital "cloud" to use to download my interviews and e-mail them to the transcriber, Anita. A cloud is a digital storage space more massive in space than I would need in a lifetime, even if I live to be 1,000 years old. My personal computer and printer scanner were also helpful.

Preparation

I set up each interview two weeks in advance by calling each potential narrator. I had obtained their telephone numbers and addresses in advance either through the local telephone directory, from a narrator who had referred another narrator, or off the internet. I mailed copies of the Informed Consent form to each potential narrator. I called one week in advance to confirm the date and called again a day or two in advance once again confirm the date. Preparation was essential. I reviewed my interview guide an hour before each interview and made sure I had plenty of time and gasoline.

Completing the Interviews

I was not sure if the narrators would be comfortable with a stranger coming to their home. Johnny, from Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church offered me the use of their annex. Each time I set up an interview, I gave the potential narrator a choice. I explained that I needed to be in a quiet place because I would be using digital recorders that were highly sensitive and picked up a broad spectrum of sound as well as a digital video recorder if I was given permission by them to use the video recorder. I interviewed Cassandra, L. C. and Willie

at their homes. Fred, Helen, and Ann were interviewed at the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church annex. Cassandra, Fred, Helen, and Ann agreed to be videotaped. L. C. and Willie did not want to be videotaped, and Archie could not be videotaped via the telephone Videotaping was an option included on the Informed Consent form.

The Unexpected

I called Archie to set up our interview. He had been expecting me to call. When I called him, he started talking right away. I told him that I had expected to set up the interview not complete the interview. Then Archie made a valid point. He was ready to talk and if I wanted an interview, then it would be a good idea to talk while the narrator feels like talking. I had to grab a new digital recorder that I had bought and only taken out of the box a few minutes before I called Archie. I put the recorder up to the speaker of my telephone and interviewed him via the speakerphone. However, the digital recorder did not have a transfer port. The recorder was designed for taking notes and playing the recorder back. It was not intended for transcription. Lesson learned. My "cloud" could not be used. This was a problem, and the transcriber was not able to download the interview and as I stated previously, this was the longest interview. My only option was to hand-deliver the recorder to the transcriber.

Interview Notes

After each interview, I completed interview reactions and notes. These were helpful when I began analyzing each interview. Although each interview was unique, I thought I

would remember every detail. I am thankful that I took interview notes and continually made notes reflecting on my research and their words.

Member Check

I paid an independent transcription service to transcribe my interviews. After each interview was transcribed, I copied each interview on regular white copy paper and mailed printed copies to the narrators' homes along with a letter (Appendix 8) thanking them for their interview and asking to talk to each one of them again in about two weeks. The interview transcripts were dense (each averaged about 30 pages double–spaced), and I wanted to provide them plenty of time to go over their interview. Closer to the deadline, I called to set up a time to go over the transcripts within the next two or three days. Everyone stated they felt the interviews had fairly represented their experiences except Archie. The transcriber had to listen to the tape and many parts were not clear, so Archie had to clarify many points. He was complimentary on my interview skills, but he was disappointed in my transcription and my inability to properly record his words.

Now Their Stories Are Ready to be Told and the Rest of the Story

Like General Groves (1962) book, *Now it Can Be Told*, the groundwork for this research has been presented to cultivate the memories of seven oral narrators. Oak Ridge was built in secret. After the war ended, many jobs ended also so residents left Oak Ridge. Since that time many of the pre-fabricated homes, cottages, apartment complexes, and hutments have been torn down and replaced with single family dwellings or more contemporary apartments. Prior to completing the secret Manhattan Project, mobile trailer homes were also

driven in, to house families. Since that time the mobile homes and trailers have been removed and Oak Ridge has a city ordinance restricting and forbidding any mobile homes or trailers within the city limits. Oak Ridge's population changed from a town of approximately 75,000 residents to an average of 29,000 residents. Oak Ridge has maintained approximately 29,000 residents since the 1950's. Several African American families left Oak Ridge after World War II. Most of the African American residents, who left Oak Ridge after the war, later returned because of the attractive wages. African Americans were not able to find salaries comparable to the salaries they had earned in Oak Ridge. General Groves and many members of his administrative staff left Oak Ridge and returned to Washington, DC and other cities in the northeast U.S. and Europe, where they had lived prior to World War II. Approximately 15 years after World War II ended, General Groves (1962) wrote a book revealing many of the Oak Ridge operations that he had to maintain as top secret until after World War II ended. As U.S. President Harry Truman told the American people, World War II was a war that ended all wars. General Groves titled his book *Now it Can be Told.*

At this point I have set up the background information introducing the oral narrators and the context of their lives. I have analyzed oral history, explained my methodology, revealed my positionality, and discussed the idea of sankofa, and the African griot, I have also introduced the concepts of critical race theory and voice. In Chapter 4, each narrator has an individual section. I have given each narrator a name or a phrase based on prevailing themes that reflect my reactions to the interviews. I included pictures of the narrators I took at the time of our interview (Archie emailed me a recent picture his daughter took of him), and their

yearbook graduation picture .In Chapter 4, I unveil the narrators' voices. *Living their stories, telling their truths* (Franklin, 1995).

Chapter 4

Oral Histories and Analysis

I'm a trailblazer? I guess I am. I just never really thought of myself as a trailblazer."

~Oak Ridge African American Oral Narrator~

Part One

Framework for This Chapter

This chapter reveals the experiences and stories of seven African American students who attended Oak Ridge, Tennessee public schools during the early days of racial desegregation, 1955 to 1967. The chapter is laid out in two parts. Part One introduces biographical information of all seven oral historians, with pictures taken the day of their interviews, and a picture I copied from their high school yearbooks. I placed in italics, notes from their interviews that were memorable, alongside their biographical information. Oak Ridge like most public schools in the segregated south, maintained a separate all Black school grades one through twelve (See Figure 7 in Appendix). Part One includes each narrator's memories of their academic/educational, cultural, and social experiences while attending the all Black Scarboro School. The rest of Part One separates the oral histories and the analyses gleaned from the five African American trailblazers who were members of the inaugural 1955 class of racial desegregation, Ann, Helen, L.C., Fred, and Archie. Part Two are the oral histories of two African American trailblazers who began their experiences of attending racially desegregated school five years after the initial

implementation of desegregated schools, Willie Jr. and Cassandra. The nuances of oral recall were evident as I listened to the oral narrators who were the *first* to enter racially desegregated schools and the narrators who entered five years later. It was also important to me not to reinscribe the *first's* repudiated position, overlooked in the historical context of implementing racially desegregated public schools in the state of Tennessee. Each interview concludes with musings and gems of wisdom the trailblazers chose as part of "having their say" (Delany, Delany, and Hearth, 1993).

All seven African American trailblazers lay out their memories of attending Scarboro School, Robertsville (RJHS) and/or Oak Ridge High School (ORHS). Most of my analysis of their memories of racial desegregation will point to tenets of critical race theory (CRT). CRT can render a transdisciplinary perspective to guide research to challenge ahistoricism and unidisciplnary focus in both historical and contemporary contexts (Solórzano & Yosso, 2009). CRT scholars will use storytelling methods for oral narrators to name their reality by revealing their memories helped by the subjective metaphor of *voice.* Storytelling narrative empowers people of color by providing counter stories that challenge a dominant discourse (Calmore, 1992; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado & Crenshaw, 1993; Witherell & Noddings, 1991)). There is a dominant discourse in schools that situates history so that stories of "out groups" like African Americans and other non-White people are told in relation to the reality of the dominant group. This means the dominant group holds the superior position as the only natural story of historical experiences (Delgado, 1989).

The analysis of each of the seven interviews will explore tenets of CRT that include: 1) recognition that racism is endemic not aberrant in American life; 2) skepticism toward claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy; 3) challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analyses of the law as it relates to people of color. CRT scholars suggest and presume that racism has contributed to group advantages and disadvantages in contemporary American life; 4) CRT insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing laws and our society; 5) recognition of the interdisciplinarity of CRT; and 6) CRT analyses reveal disparities in an effort to explain oppressive laws with a goal toward understanding and eliminating oppression based on exposure of existing oppressions (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). CRT analyses will help us hear the identity of the narrator's voiced stories of desegregation.

Derrick Bell (1987), one of the founding CRT scholars, reminds us that Black people in America have inherited the historical legacy of African American slavery. Black slaves provide a historical endowment with hidden transcripts of resistance to their bondage that have been passed to future generations through their songs, coded language, collective communities, and cultural aesthetics from slave communities. Slave songs gave warnings, conveyed important information, as well as uplifted one's soul and fortified the spirit. The African American voices contained within this chapter responded to interview prompts and then they were able to read the text and listen to their own voices as they re-read their transcribed stories. There were two overriding responses: 1) there was a sense of "giving back" to the community they were raised by leaving a legacy of their experiences;

and 2) I sensed a burden had been lifted because they were finally recognized, no longer silenced. In the past Clinton had garnered most of the local attention surrounding desegregation. Their stories of attending desegregated schools during the early years were previously hidden but are finally revealed within the context of this dissertation. Their voices also pay tribute to our African American inheritance through the African Adrinka symbolic practice of sankofa. Their *voices* return to the past, gather gems contained in memory and recall, and laid at the feet of our present day public school learners a culturally laden communiqué for the benefit of moving forward, sankofa.

I import voices of scholars in my analysis whose work addresses race, education, culture, and society. I also address nostalgia in this chapter. Scholars suggest nostalgia can romanticize austere educational circumstances in segregated all-Black schools attenuating their memories of limited educational resources, dilapidated school buildings and outdated textbooks, while elevating the intangible benefits of the school's familial environment, community and parent involvement in schools, and soft skills taught as part of the school curriculum (Shircliffe, 2001; Siddle Walker, 1996; 2001).

Several educators and community members reportedly made a positive impact on these African American trailblazers. I named this group the 'Protons", an anecdotal way of merging the human component with science that is emblematic of Oak Ridge as the "Atomic City." Protons are the positive charges within an atom. The Protons are people considered champions of education, either at the Scarboro School, Scarboro community, Robertsville, or Oak Ridge High School.

In Part Two, oral narrators, Willie, Jr. and Cassandra reveal their memories that start five years after the initial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. I chose to separate their oral histories to differentiate the two time periods of racial desegregation first in 1955 and then five years after implementation. Separating the oral histories in two parts also provides a more natural flow to the text. Part Two also uses tenets of CRT as my analytical lens. I structure the analysis in Part Two differently, because I advance the CRT method of counter-storytelling. I selected the name *Antha Waye* (code for "Another Way") as the voice who converses with Willie, Jr. and Cassandra (Bell, 1987; 1992). My analysis is embedded in *Antha Waye*'s conversation-interview with Willie Jr. and Cassandra.

According to Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso (2009), counter-storytelling privileges the stories of the experiences of people who have been marginalized, and silenced, and whose stories have not been told. Counter-storytelling centralizes the experiences of people of color. Counter-storytelling challenges traditional research paradigms and can strengthen the voices of people of color by focusing on telling the experiences of people of color that draws attention to a different way or as laid out here, another way (p. 135). Audre Lorde (1984) exercised counter-storytelling in her "Letter to Mary Daly,*"* suggesting that Mary Daly silenced African American females when Daly (1979) wrote '*Gyn/Ecology*. Counter-storytelling can be created by using unearthed sources of data. Willie Jr. and Cassandra's interviews are unearthed sources that have not been previously sought. The counter-story provides a "dismantling of the masters house with new tools, since the master's house cannot be dismantled using the master's tools (Lorde, 1984). The dominant storied narrative is the traditional master's tool to explain, the counter-story suggests a new tool.

Historian Michael Frisch (1990) asserts there is a responsibility oral historian's exercise of shared authority. Part Two demonstrates the shared authority between me the interviewer and researcher in agreement with the narrators. I use the name *Antha Waye* as an alternate voice similar to Derrick Bell (1987; 1992) utilizes in his writings. *Geneva Crenshaw* is the CRT counter-voice Bell positions to deconstruct dominant cultural practices. The structure analysis who is *Antha Way* is in conversation with the narrators. This approach is a unique way of merging CRT counter-storytelling and oral history.

The Integrity of the Text

Most of the interviews are written in the narrator's exact words. Some of the texts were modified using standard American English language for clarification, but the intent and integrity of the statements were respected and the meaning was not changed, because this study is a social construction of meaning related to a historic event—not a discursive analysis of language, word order or word usage. I have also added brackets [ ] to words or meanings for clarity, or I included the transcriber's brackets noting [laughter], [long sigh], or [an emotion] the transcriber used and that many times I maintained. Black vernacular identifies a sense of collectiveness and therefore pronouns are not always clear if the narrator is talking about herself or himself individually and instead will use "we", "us", and "you" interchangeably (Smitherman, 1977; 1986; 2000). The discursive notation, ellipses (…) are noted within each interview and throughout the text. The use of ellipses emphasizes that memory and recall do not flow freely, but point to the asymmetry of human conversations that include hesitating mid-sentence, silences, and interruptions in one's stream of thought to name a few.

Voices of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge begin to emerge as each narrator introduces her or his story using her or his own words. Oral history memories will construct the identity of African Americans in Oak Ridge public schools during the initial phase of racial desegregation (Portelli, 1998; Gluck and Patai, 2010; Thompson, 1998; Yow, 2005).

Introductions

Oak Ridge, Tennessee began as a secret city, a legacy that has may have veiled it story of public schools racial desegregation. However, this study begins to uncover part of Oak Ridge's history of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools as the narrator's interviews begin with introductions of each. The seven oral narrators in alphabetical order using their last names are: Lawrence Charles (L.C.) Gipson, Willie Golden Jr., Henry "Fred" Guinn, Helen Louise Hill, Archie Lee, Dorothy "Ann" Kirk Lewis, and Cassandra Osborne. On September 6, 1955, the first day of Oak Ridge schools' racial desegregation, Ann and Helen began seventh grade at Robertsville Junior High. L.C. started ninth-grade at Oak Ridge High School. Fred was a senior, and Archie was a junior. Willie started sixth-grade at Robertsville Junior High in 1960, and Cassandra started sixth grade in 1961.

L.C. Gipson's Biographical Background


"Scarboro School was a family affair; everybody was on the same page— the teachers, your parents, the community, everybody. You were given leadership

opportunities and you were taught how to survive, how to be respectful, and to always do our best…"

L.C. greeted me at the door of his home. He lives in the Scarboro Community of Oak Ridge. L. C. graciously welcomed me into his life by giving me a tour. I also met his wife sitting in the den, which is next to a room I labeled as his "Four Walls of Fame." This is a room full of pictures and mementos of his family he proudly displayed while his wife smiled and listened. Throughout his house, he has pictures of himself and his family. L.C. and his wife have three adult children, two males and a female. L.C. displayed lots of pride when he talked about his family.

After the tour L.C. chose his dining room table for the interview. He was organized and prepared with a folder of information that he felt I would need to tell the story of the racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. I was happy that L.C. could fit me into his packed schedule. He described his life as very busy these days with community work, gardening, and landscaping both at his house as well as around the Scarboro Community, including the Scarboro Community sign and its surrounding landscape. Recently he added the Scarboro Cemetery to his landscaping duties. His grandchildren are active in various sports programs and he tries to attend all of their sports activities. I explained the concept of an African griot and that he was the historian—an African American griot whom I needed to complete my study about the desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools.

L.C. I was born September 19, 1940, to Cornelius and Susie Mae in Lexington, Mississippi. I lived in Lexington, Mississippi, from birth to eight and a half. Early in life my

mother and father divorced. My mother moved to Memphis and my father moved to Chicago. I visited my mother often in Memphis because Memphis wasn't that far from Lexington. I lived with my grandmother, Susie Mae Wyatt. She had her own farm in Lexington. She was not a sharecropper or what have you; she had her own farm. Everybody came from someplace else to Oak Ridge because there wasn't an Oak Ridge before '42, '43. I moved to Oak Ridge shortly before my ninth birthday and had my ninth birthday in Oak Ridge. I have four sisters still living and one brother still living. I've lost two sisters and two brothers. I'm the oldest of the Gipson clan. When I moved to Oak Ridge, I lived with my aunt and uncle, Johnny Mack and Louise Williams, who was my mother's sister. We lived on Houston Avenue in a flat-top house with a wooden stove, wooden sidewalks, and my uncle worked at one of the women's housing places.… My uncle also worked at the Alexander Hotel. The majority of women during that time period did domestic work. I remember cars coming into the community to pick up mothers and whomever and bring them back later in the day. That was just normal for that time period. If you were Black and lived in Oak Ridge at that time, you lived in the Scarboro community.

Willie Golden Jr.'s Biographical Background

"I was in sixth grade for three years starting my fourth-grade year at Scarboro. I was grouped according to my academic level, and since I could do sixth-

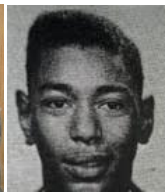
grade work in fourth grade, I studied with the sixth-grade students…and in fifth grade I also studied with sixth grade…"

Willie was very polished. His interview was the second of my seven interviews. I spoke with him in his home where he and his wife, a public school teacher, reside. He returned to Oak Ridge after earning a college degree at Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). He served in the U.S. Army, and after he returned to Oak Ridge, he served on the Oak Ridge City Council, as Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, and with Probation Extension for Anderson County.

Willie is retired but continues to be very active within the Oak Ridge community as well as his church, Oak Valley Baptist Church. He was a standout player in basketball throughout his school career. Willie and his wife have one adult son and live in a community adjacent to Scarboro. He was reserved and felt self-conscious talking about his life despite the stardom he experienced as an athlete. Whenever I talked about my research interest, almost everyone stated that I needed to talk to Willie Golden, Jr.

Willie: *My family moved to Oak Ridge in 1950 from Cullman, Alabama, and lived on Fisk Avenue. I was two years old. My parents were Willie and Martha Golden. I have one brother, Johnny, and two sisters, Patricia and Lavonne. My parents were successful without "plant" money and made it available for all of us to go to college, although I had a basketball scholarship…*

Fred Guinn's Biographical Background

"When I graduated from Oak Ridge High School, my father wouldn't let me work in the plant with him and my brother. I wanted to work in the plant and make good money, but he wouldn't let me…"

I interviewed Fred at the Mt Zion Missionary Baptist Church extension. Fred was early and was sitting inside the building in the room Mr. Fairs had designated for my interviews by the time I arrived. Fred was born January 21, 1937. He was a senior at Oak Ridge High School during the first year of desegregation and graduated the first year of desegregated schools in the Class of 1956. I saw Fred's picture in the 1956 ORHS yearbook, the *Oak Log*. His picture, along with another Black basketball team member's picture, was separate from the basketball team's pictures. Neither of the Black basketball players had their names listed underneath their basketball team's yearbook pictures. During the initial stages of desegregation, the ORHS sports coaches had to get permission from the competing schools before Black athletes were allowed to play. Fred remembers one basketball game clearly almost sixty years later. "I remember even to this day, a White woman in a red polka-dot dress who was allowed to shout the "N" word at me throughout an entire game."

Fred: Me and my sister-in-law moved to Oak Ridge in November 1949 from Savannah, Tennessee.… My father's name was Charlie Guinn, and my mother's name was Molly

Guinn. I have three sisters—Mary Hill, Georgia Guinn, and Gwendolyn Guinn. I had one brother, Charlie Junior. My father was up here working and my brother was here first, and his wife came in November 1949, so I jumped in the car to help her with their child. I was probably close to 13 years old at the time. Then two of my sisters came, and my mother came in January with my baby sister. I used to go see my mother every day when she was living. If I didn't stop to see her, she'd call me up and say, "What have I done to you?" [Laughing].… I got here to Oak Ridge at night and I came over that overlook, and I could see nothing but bright lights.… I had never seen that many lights and I thought I was in New York City! Then I got up the next morning and I looked around and said what? Am I in the same place? Oak Ridge didn't look the same as it did the night before. All I saw was dirt.… We lived on Bethune Circle[29].… In 1960 I went into the Army [laughing], got married and went on.… I didn't go to college when I graduated from Oak Ridge High School.… All my buddies had graduated a year before me. They all had jobs and cars, so I went and got me a job [laughing]. I wanted a car… So I got a job at the Oak Ridge hospital. I worked two jobs. I also worked at…Union Carbide and worked at the hospital at night.

29 Bethune-Cookman College is an HBCU in Daytona Beach, FL.

Helen's Biographical Background

  *"My daddy explained to me, 'Honey, in the eyes of a child, things look so big, you know, but when you're grown, you understand better.' ... I learned something from that episode…kids need their parents to put things in perspective for them…"*

I interviewed Helen at the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church Sunday School room. Helen arrived in an African-print dress and matching headdress. Helen smiled and displayed a happy disposition throughout the interview. As she looked around the interview room, she told me how special the room was to her. She had taught Vacation Bible School in that room and showed me the attendance chart still on the wall after almost eight years. Helen and her husband attend Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church.

Helen's family moved to Oak Ridge in 1952 from Charleston, Mississippi. Her parents were Alex Hill, Jr. [died 1982] and Henrietta Hill [died 1980]. Her family left behind a home in Mississippi where relatives continue to live even today. Helen's mother always told her that she was her mother's seventh child. Helen has three adult male children. She is married.

Helen: …Let's see there's Louella, then James, then there was Maxine, and then there

was Robert, Mabel Jean, Thomas Haven, Nathaniel, Gloria, Butch, and Mary Ruth, I believe. Did I get eleven? I'm the seventh child. My mother told me that I was the seventh child, so we tried to figure out where…where was I because we counted

down—Louella and I know we had an older sister who died as a baby before Louella. But then there was two in between Maxine, and one of the babies died before Mabel, I believe some kind of way. Anyway, I was supposed to have been the seventh child, we haven't been able to figure that out yet. [Laughing]… The oldest child, she died from fire [in Mississippi]. You know how they had those stoves and her dress caught fire.... My daddy was looking for a better life. My daddy called it sharecropping or something, and my daddy made a crop that year, and a man took all the money, and that made my daddy mad. So my cousin's daddy told my daddy get him out of Mississippi because he was afraid my daddy was going to do something. So that's how we got here. He came first, and then we came about four or five months later. We had relatives here.… We came to Oak Ridge on a bus, across the hill from Oliver Springs at night. And if you're on that hill, you see lights everywhere. As a ten-year-old kid, oh, I was not in Mississippi, no lights, you know.… It was just a different world for me, and I thought I was coming to the city when I saw all those lights and they said we were in Oak Ridge! And then things changed when I woke up the next morning. "Okay, where are all the lights now?" [Laughing]… I wasn't awestruck as I was when I came over that hill on that bus, thinking I was coming to a great big city when it was night. When the morning came, the daytime came—it wasn't a big city [laughing]. But it still was better than Mississippi to me. My daddy…he was a construction worker. He worked at all the plants—Y-12, K-25, X-10.… He was a hard worker. My family moved here, and we lived on Spelman Avenue. We later moved to Dillard Avenue.

Ann's Biographical Background


"I don't remember my parents trying to explain desegregation. The decision was made, we were going to go to desegregated schools, and that was the way things were going to be, so our parents taught us to respect them and people who are in authority and to do what we're told…"

I interviewed Ann at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church Sunday School extension. Ann does not attend Mt. Zion Church. Ann was very reserved, and I had to adjust the volume on the recorder to ensure that I had captured all of her words. Ann's family moved to Oak Ridge from Opelika, Alabama. Ann admitted many times during the interview that she didn't remember a lot about desegregation.

I found that interesting because about a month before the interview, Ann's daughter stopped by my office after I told her I had copied some old *Oak Log* yearbooks and found pictures of her father in the yearbook. Sylvia, Ann's daughter, called Ann from my office. Ann provided personal knowledge and memories about almost every Black person in the old yearbook pictures as Sylvia would name someone from the yearbook pictures I had copied.

By the end of this interview, I realized that attending racially desegregated schools had been traumatic for Ann. But it was also evident that Ann had found her voice and presented what I have entitled her "graduation speech." As she spoke, I encouraged her to

continue talking because she sounded as if she were giving the 1962 Oak Ridge High School Commencement speech. Ann's speech is located toward the end of her oral memory narrative.

Ann was married to one of the first African Americans (Jim Lewis) to graduate from Oak Ridge High School. Ann and Jim divorced and he has since died. They had two children who are now adults—one female (Sylvia who I named earlier) and one male. Ann lives in "The Valley."

Ann: …My family moved to Oak Ridge in 1950. When we first moved to Oak Ridge, we didn't have a home of our own, so we lived with some distant relatives that were already here over on the street that's still in this community, on South Dillard. Later we got a house of our own, also on Dillard. My father's name was Willie B. Kirk, and my mother's name was Addie Kirk. I had one sister and four brothers. My sister's name is Eloise. My brothers' names are Willie Frank, Roy James, Jimmie Andrew, and Randy Flakes.

Archie Lee's Biographical Background

"The Oak Ridge High School National Honor Society members were sent acceptance letters to enroll as part of the freshman class at the University of

Tennessee, Knoxville. But when I went over there to enroll, the registrar looked at me and said I could not enroll and told me why…I was a Negro."

Archie's interview was a telephone interview using a digital recorder held up to the speaker of my cell phone. Archie lives in Los Angeles, California. Archie's friend L.C. (another narrator in this study) insisted that I interview Archie if I truly wanted to grasp the realities of Oak Ridge schools' racial desegregation. Archie's interview was my longest interview at two hours and 23 minutes. Archie required very little prompting from me. His responses were thorough, and he made sure he answered my questions as best as he could from his memory.

Archie: …I grew up in a place called Shiloh, Mississippi, about sixty miles south of Memphis, Tennessee. I went from first grade to eighth grade in a segregated two-room shack. There were two teachers for eight grades.… At that school when one teacher was teaching a different grade, then you sat quietly and listened.… I listened to everything going on in every grade. In the fifth grade, I could do seventh-grade work.… I grew up with my grandparents from the time I was six until I turned 15… My mom and dad had gone on to Oak Ridge for better opportunities.… In 1951, my grandmother died, and then in 1953 my grandfather had a stroke, and they brought him to Oak Ridge…he died at Oak Ridge hospital.… When they took my grandfather to Oak Ridge in 1953, I went along and stayed with my aunt and uncle, who were already in Oak Ridge.... My mother had gone back to Mississippi when my grandmother got sick and later married Ray Williams.… I happened to be one of those kids that lived without a father.… My father passed away, I think, four years ago.…

The first time I met him I was 64, 65 years old.… We both lived within about 12 miles of each other.

Cassandra Osborne's Biographical Background

  *"Before I started school, I knew how to read and write…nothing was integrated as far as education…. My mother was working, so I would go to school with my older sister when I was four years old, and that sort of served as babysitting services…. My dad came in from work one day, and I was holding the newspaper…. He said, 'Well, what are you doing?'…. I said, 'I'm reading,' and I started reading it to him…. He told my mother 'Well, she can read!"*

Several years ago, Cassandra was one of the first people I contacted about the lost manuscript and my interest in this study. She has been invaluable throughout this process. She and I were colleagues in the Oak Ridge public schools before she retired. She lives on the east end of Oak Ridge.

Recently she told me that Scarboro School burned down in 1967 and was never rebuilt. That same year Oak Ridge schools fully desegregated, which included all the elementary schools and the other Oak Ridge middle school, where I work as a professional school counselor. I interviewed Cassandra in her home.

She travels extensively, and her home tastefully displayed the memories of her travels. Cassandra was very hospitable and kind throughout this process as well as during our interview. Although I experienced two equipment problems, Cassandra was very understanding. Her memories were not interrupted nor did she appear distracted.

Cassandra: …My parents were Anderson and Martha Osborne.… My oldest sibling is Olivia; I was the second child. One sibling's deceased—Janice Osborne…. After Janice, my other sisters include Jaquetta, Pauletta, Tonia, and one brother, Clark.… I was seven years old when we moved to Oak Ridge in 1956… Before moving to Oak Ridge we lived in LaFollette, Tennessee, where I was born.… The only place that African Americans really were allowed to live was in the Scarboro neighborhood, and we resided on Fisk30 Avenue.… Later my dad purchased a home on South Benedict Avenue.

The Scarboro School

Mrs. Arizona Officer, Principal of Scarboro School, was a member of an Oak Ridge School committee that wrote a report entitled "Oak Ridge Schools, Buildings Survey (1952)." The purpose of the committee was to assess the physical condition of the Oak Ridge schools. The report stated the following about the all-Colored Scarboro School:

> Scarboro School has good roads but no sidewalks to approach the school. This is a traffic hazard. There is no fencing. The site was marked inadequate in relation to landscaping,

30 Fisk University is an HBCU located in Nashville, Tennessee. W.E.B.DuBois graduated from Fisk.

borderline as to accessibility. The building is a one-story rectangular building with four sides; the north wing, west wing, east wing, and south wing. The floors are concrete slabs on earth fill and the walls are concrete block. All doors and windows are wood. There is a heating problem because of considerable heat loss due to deteriorating walls and extended wings the heating unit must heat several wings of the building. Doors, roof, panel hardware and other items are safety hazards existing in the building. The wiring needs examination and replacement of conduits. The school program itself was criticized because of lack of storage space for books and for the lack of a better furnished reading room. There is some criticism in administrative arrangements which are further handicapped because of the number of wings which require greater supervision. This building is a Negro school. It enrolls 163 pupils, of which 33 are high school. The high school was established with this small number with consent of the Tennessee State Department of Education because of objection of the Negro citizens to transporting Negro students to schools in Knoxville. As to the educational program, it has problems of a small high school which makes a comparatively limited curriculum. Requests of individual students for courses not normally included in such a small size high school have been supplemented with the volunteer services of white teachers and scientists who have attempted to meet every request made for study. (p. 91). (*See pictures of Scarboro School in Pictures).*

A fire destroyed Scarboro School's records, pictures, and archival documents. Therefore, other information was limited or no longer exists.

Next I will evaluate the narrators' perspectives of Scarboro School, the first all-Black school in Oak Ridge. Each narrator's accounts were divided into six categories: (1) relationships; (2) academic/ educational; (3) extracurricular activities; (4)

cultural/community; (5) social experiences; and (6) superlatives of the people who championed education in the Scarboro community. The narrators seemed to really enjoy talking about their memories while attending Scarboro School and stated they were thankful to include their memories of Scarboro School in this study.

Oral Narrators Describe Scarboro School

"Scarboro was where Oak Valley [Baptist Church] is? Oak Valley has a [pause] shed-like building over there? It's sitting where the school used to be…. Oak Ridge Oral Narrators

Various memories of Scarboro School are described below by the narrators. The elementary and the high school was on this side [indicating], and the elementary is on that side [indicating], and then the gym was right in between there…we had a playground right in front of the school. Scarboro was an awesome school…we were taught to respect the elders, respect young ladies… respect can get you a long ways…and that's ingrained in me now.… I have fond memories—I'll never forget my first-grade teacher at Scarboro because she made sure that we learned our timetables. That's where I came out of my shyness. I had to get up to the board and write. Two times one is two. I thought I was going to pass out the first time I did it. Miss Pickett, that was my last teacher at Scarboro, she was awesome. I was always a shy kid. She said, 'Girl, can you talk?' She told me I had to express myself and don't be afraid to try new things. She was instrumental in making me have confidence in myself, you know, and she said that if you want to, you can do anything you want to do. That's what Miss Pickett used to tell us girls. She used to take us

to her house, and we'd spend the night. She lived on University Avenue in Knoxville, and her husband owned the drugstore. They'd take us here and there. They'd take us kids that didn't have much and didn't get to do much. Mr. George Walker, he influenced us a lot, making sure that we would try and have confidence in yourself. Mr. Walker was a male figure that kind of inspired us kids. I can't remember what he taught because he was over at the high school, so I never did get him as a teacher, and he was always somewhere telling us something about life. Mr. Scott, he's another one…he influenced my life telling me that you go A, B, then C. You got to keep to the straight and the narrow, and do what's necessary to get from point A to point B. We used to have a basketball team, and we had fun, fun, fun, fun going here, there.... We went to Austin High School one time…we went to Rockwood…. We could whoop everybody except Rockwood…we'd go to Austin-East and we'd lose because if we won, we'd get a whoopin'; they'd rock the bus…those were the good ol' days…nobody ever got hurt or anything like that. Mr. Scott, he used to run the community center and he told us, 'Whatever you do, just do your best…and we'd say, and 'The referees cheat.' Mr. Scott said, 'One thing they can't do is take the ball out the hoop.' In other words, you put it in the hoop, you make your points—you don't need to worry about the referees. So don't be putting nothing on the referee; you do your job. And that's the kind of stuff the grownups at Scarboro would tell us all down through the years.… As far as education, we had quality teachers.… We have people that came from Scarboro who are doctors, scientists, doctors, lawyers…like my sister—she's 74.… We had the capacity to learn and we wanted to learn.… Teachers at Scarboro had a bond with the kids to teach you those things that your mom and dad would teach you when you're away from home. Somebody will tell you, 'No, that's not right.' Sometimes people just let you do stuff. They

don't want to muddy the waters…. But those teachers at Scarboro, they all told you 'No, that's not right, don't do that because this is going to happen to you, or that's going to happen to you'…that's a heart thing, you know."

Relationships

Additional memories. "Scarboro School was close-knit, first through twelfth grades. Everybody knew everybody…we walked to school together, we walked home together, and you interfaced with each other during those walks…you played; you went to each other's house…the close church and the family atmosphere.… I was fairly decent at math…I remember the seventh and eighth graders…we would go down to the third or fourth grade and tutor the kids in the math they were taking…. We didn't have changing of classes for each of the subject matters like you had at ORHS… At Scarboro it was just the caring…the teachers…they worked with us… You got to know them; they knew us on a personal basis, and you knew your classmates…you cared for your classmates…you passed on to each grade with the same people third grade through high school or whatever… I had the same friends at Scarboro through the eighth grade…all parents cared for you.… Maybe there'd be a little fistfight on the way back down here or what have you, but a grown up, say like a Mrs. Golden, could see us fighting…she lived on Fisk, and her husband would get a hold of me.… And when I got home, some way news traveled so fast that when I got home, my aunt and uncle was waiting on me, and they would proceed to finish laying a hand on me. That was before we had gotten a telephone, but some way they would find out what I had done wrong.… I will say I was a better math student than

anything…I love math and always have.… As a matter of fact…in seventh grade or eighth grade, there was one math problem (we all had the same books, they got passed down from one year to the next year). I remember that I solved the problem, and on gym day where everybody went down in the gym, I got honored for being the only one that solved the math problem. Mr. Ralph Martin, Mr. Fred Brown, and Mr. Robert Officer were people who were really special.

Fred reported: "Oh, yeah, everybody all the teachers were serious about education.… Ms. Pickett was one of them, she was a straight shooter…if things came up with the girls and everything, she didn't bite her tongue…she'd just tell you what was what [laughing]. She was in the elementary school—everybody was crazy about her. Ms. Harper…she was a good teacher, and Miss Teasley was a good teacher—she taught Home Ec. Mr. Martin…he was English and a history teacher. Mr. Brown was a history teacher—everybody was crazy about Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown, he was something else [laughing]. Every day you had to say Bible verses…nobody could say the same ones; everybody had to say a different Bible verse…so that made you go and find a Bible verse that nobody else would have [laughing]. One day I was playing around while everybody was saying their Bible verses, and he told me to get out of his class…I told him I was just playing. Mr. Brown said he called the shots in his class, and he told me to get out of his class. I told him I would leave when I got ready and when I wanted to. Anyway as I was taking my time walking out the door of the classroom, I could see Mr. Brown grab a flowerpot, and I started running to the door. Mr. Brown threw that flowerpot, and that flowerpot hit the back of the door [laughing].… One day some boys were fighting in the bathroom, and somebody went and got Mr. Brown, and Mr. Brown said, 'I

know how to break up a fight.' He broke the fight up for sure [laughing]…. Mr. Brown didn't coach any school teams, but he coached a church team. He talked about Coach Leonard at Austin all the time. [Austin, now named Austin-East High School, was an all-Black school in Knoxville. Students from Clinton and Oak Ridge attended Austin High School before desegregation and before Scarboro in Oak Ridge became a first through twelfth grade school.] Coach Leonard took his basketball teams to Alcoa [Hall High School, all-Black school] and beat them, and then took his boys to LaFollette [LaFollette Colored High School, all-Black school] and won there, both teams on the same night. That's how good his teams were at Austin. Everybody on Coach Leonard's teams was *good*. We played them but we *never* beat Coach Leonard's teams. Nobody beat Austin. They went up to Pearl [Nashville, Tennessee, all-Black school) and Riverside or Howard. [Riverside and Howard were the two all-Black schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee]. Well…except Howard. Howard High School was a big deal! They had their own bus with the name of the school printed on the side!

Archie stated: "I started Scarboro School in the ninth grade...I was a straight-A student.... In tenth grade, I was president of the sophomore class…all the students at Scarboro had a close relationship with the teachers…all the teachers were Black and cared about the Black students.… Everything was great at Scarboro School, you know, teachers caring, but they didn't have a strong background in literature at Scarboro School, and it cost me the National Merit Scholarship at Oak Ridge High School."

The narrators described their Scarboro School days in the following ways: family affair; close-knit; family atmosphere; teachers had a bond with the kids; teachers reached out; school was like your Mom and Dad; you knew your teachers cared; the teachers were loving

and caring people interested in you achieving; talking to you to help you do the right thing…it's a "heart thing." Siddle Walker's (1996) work, *Their Highest Potential*, is a historiography of her high school in North Carolina She attended de jure de facto segregated schools. She describes similar memories of the home away from home experiences.

As I listened to the narrators talk about their experiences at Scarboro School, I wrote in my research notes that the narrators appeared to enjoy remembering Scarboro School. There appeared to be a sense of peace and comfort in returning home after a hard day of work. It was obvious that remembering Scarboro was described similar to Siddle Walker's (2001) account of the all-Black school was an extension of home. I knew there was a lot of work ahead to do, so this was a pleasant way to begin the task of reconstructing the past and move forward.

Nel Noddings (1984) and Buber (1958) suggest, that care and love are qualities within the teacher-student relationship that supports learning. The narrators remembered Scarboro as a school where the teachers cared**:** "all the teachers were Black and cared about the Black students.… Everything was great at Scarboro School, you know, teachers caring…" Noddings' care theory points to a reciprocal relationship between students and teachers when caring exists in school classrooms. Caring is a continuous action aimed at survival through a nurturing relationship. Teachers are caring when classrooms are aesthetically receptive to learning, such as orderliness, colorful, and conditions where students feel welcome, place students feel they belong-like home. The narrators reported "Scarboro School had a home-like atmosphere." Teachers showed they cared when they taught life skills "and" math, English, history, health or physical education. Teachers showed care when they attend to students'

differentiated abilities to process information being delivered. Reciprocally students demonstrate "care" when they allow themselves to be cared for by understanding math, English, history, health, and physical education as life lessons for survival.

Interestingly in reviewing Oak Ridge schools' archival data, the schools reported graduation rates from 1946 to 1956 in terms of "survival trends." 31 Column headings in the report showed "student trends to survival," or what we call graduation or high school completion rates today. This language implied that if students didn't graduate, they didn't survive.

Returning to the discussion of a reciprocal relationship evident at Scarboro School, one narrator remembers she was told: "you do this and this will happen, or you do that and that will happen." Caring—like life itself—has causes and effects. Caring teachers are like parents teaching life skills. The narrators remembered that their experiences at Scarboro School were synchronized with their parents and home life. Buber (1958) weighs in, implying the teacher-student relationship is a product of love. He describes love between teachers and students as an I/thou relationship of giving and receiving that engages learning at a deep level (Metcalfe and Game, 2007). The narrators remembered they "loved" their teachers. It was also reported that "everybody loved Ms. Picket…everybody loved Mr. Brown, and Mr. Martin, Mr. Officer, Mr. Walker, and Ms. Teasley." Their memories of Scarboro School as a place of caring and love suggest that it was a place like home. Their memories also suggest the homes where these students lived mirrored school. Homes aren't always a place of

31 Oak Ridge School District Trends and Analysis, 1957.

happiness. Homes aren't always close-knit. I suggest the oral narrators were describing their own personal homes. Their personal voices revealed everybody knew everybody and teachers were like "Mom and Dad." Home is where we are disciplined when we make mistakes.

Corporal punishment was remembered as a disciplinary tool at Scarboro School. Strict disciplinary practices de jure de facto segregated schools have been reported in other accounts (DeBlack and Adams, 1994; Siddle Walker, 1996; Willink, 2009). Fred had a flowerpot thrown at him. Fred also remembers a teacher grabbing a thick piece of mahogany wood to successfully break up a fight. Willink (2009) reported an anecdote of a grandfather disciplining his granddaughter for misbehaving at school by threatening to cut off her head (p. 26). The granddaughter had seen her grandfather cut off the heads of chickens, so she knew he was capable of cutting off her head. She never misbehaved at school again.

Discipline was different in African American segregated schools. Teachers and administrators had autonomy to levy corporal punishment without fear of negative reprisal. Narrators in Willink's (2009) oral history lamented the end of corporal punishment in the schools, attributing discipline problems in schools and communities today as a result of the end of segregated schools' effective disciplinary practices. Ironically when schools racially desegregated, African American parents decided they didn't like or trust teachers at integrated schools to discipline their children using the once-liberal practice of corporal punishment. It might be implied the legacy of enslaved Black people who were subjected to corporal punishment to enforce submission and obedience was remembered by Black parents in desegregated school settings. Therefore non-Black school personnel were mistrusted to mete out corporal punishment because they were not perceived as caring for the Black students.

Like slavery, parents in Willink's study were suspicious of the non-Black teacher's motives and intentions.

Other themes pertaining to relationships were: parent involvement in the affairs of the school; everyone was a friend to everyone; students had the same friendships throughout school; close knit; bonding with other students; friendships and respect. These are the most poignant memories of Scarboro School. All of the narrators reported having a high regard for teachers, and teachers mutually cared about the students.

Memories of negative relationships at Scarboro School were not reported by any of the narrators. Interestingly, Fred's memory of Mr. Brown throwing a flowerpot at him was attributed to the strength of Mr. Brown's character of caring, rigid discipline, and an expectation that students complete the task of saying a Bible verse or a student would not be able to participate in the class assignment. The narrators' memories of their relationships at Scarboro correspond to other studies in the all-Black de jure de facto segregated schools (Ashmore, 1954; Siddle Walker, 1993; 1996). Future studies might consider looking at gender differentials between female recollections while attending Scarboro School versus male recollections. For example, in archival documents of Oak Ridge Schools, Mrs. Officer, the principal of Scarboro School, was listed as a member of the Oak Ridge Schools Building Committee in a report (ORS, 1952). After perusing the report numerous times, I could not find anything that recognized her presence or contribution to the committee, such as "Mrs. Officer reported…Mrs. Officer suggested…, or Mrs. Officer said…" Anna Julia Cooper (1892/1988) lamented the silent absence of Black people especially women in racially desegregated schools.

This reminds me of my personal epiphany when I realized that I was a double minority—Black and female. Is this a precursor to the experiences of silence or invisibility of the narrators while attending racially desegregated Oak Ridge schools? Silence and invisibility will be replaced here with historical African American voices of desegregated Oak Ridge public schools. So there are many more memories to explore.

Academic/Educational Memories at Scarboro School

The narrators were asked to recall their academic memories related specifically to their education. Scarboro School was a family affair, but the ultimate purpose was for students to learn. Fultz (1995) and Fairclough (2007) suggest that teachers and school administrators in the African-American segregated schools defined the schools and shouldered the hopes and expectations of their race in spite of grave handicaps. Black teachers, according to Foster (1997), were responsible for the educational infrastructure of the school: curriculum content, scope and sequence, and the resources and materials needed to accomplish it.

When African-American students transferred to all-White schools as a result of desegregation, they were reportedly poorly prepared, and their academic achievement levels lagged behind their White counterparts (Ashmore, 1954; Davidson, 1965; Fairclough, 2007; Siddle Walker, 1996). L.C. mentions: “we all had the same books passed down,” which lends itself to the limited funding at Scarboro School versus the all-White schools in Oak Ridge.

All teachers in the Oak Ridge Schools were paid equivalent salaries based on their educational attainment levels, however, per-capita student spending limited funding because

there were fewer students at Scarboro compared to all of the White schools in Oak Ridge (AEC Budget, 1949-1955). Archival records show that Scarboro's funding was similar to Oak Ridge's elementary budget expenditures, although Scarboro was a first through twelfth grade school. Oak Ridge schools' financial archives are laid out alphabetically or by building grade levels, so there isn't the appearance that Oak Ridge operated a dual school system by separating Scarboro from the other schools in the district (See Examples). Some of the archives had the word "colored" in parentheses or penciled in to show that Scarboro was the school for the colored. One budget report did not list Scarboro at all; it simply listed the year at the top of the report and "White only" in parentheses. I searched for a separate budget sheet of expenditures similar to the one showing "white only," but I did not find one (See Example).

Based on per-student funding formulae, resources for Scarboro's high school were based on the 30 to 40 high-school students enrolled. Archival data indicate that attempts were made to honor requests from Scarboro School for additional resources in the form of volunteer teachers and supplies found within the district. Historically the City of Oak Ridge has a legacy of being self-sufficient since its inception as a secret governmental facility, so that legacy appears to have continued within Oak Ridge public schools (Johnson and Jackson, 1987; Overholt, 1987). The denial of funding requests for materials and resources to support segregated African American schools in the south has been a historical legacy de jure de facto segregated schools (Altenbaugh, 2002; Anderson, 1988; Fairclough, 2007; Fleming, 1977; Fultz, 1995; Kluger, 1977; Siddle Walker, 1996; Urban and Wagoner, Jr., 2004). This implies

that future studies of Oak Ridge schools might include an oral interview with a Scarboro School teacher with knowledge of funding requests.

Helen and Ann remember teachers making sure students learned and emphasized learning, and the narrators suggest students remembered being encouraged to continue to improve. The narrators did not question teacher qualifications or the teachers' ability to prepare students for success (survival). Additional academic-related memories cited were: we didn't have changing of classes for each of the subject matters like you had at ORHS…they [teachers] worked with us…"gym day," an academic awards-type program to recognize academic achievements.

They also remember good math students, earning straight A's, the structure of classes for grade levels one through twelve, the school's location in the community and within walking distance, reciting Bible verses, and the scarcity of literature that Archie attributed to his failure to become a National Merit Scholar. L.C. cites that science labs were available at Oak Ridge High School, but Scarboro School did not have science labs. Ann and Helen did not talk about science labs at Robertsville, although I have firsthand knowledge that Oak Ridge middle schools have science labs. In addition a building committee report cited problems at the school with the reading room and space for books.

Studies by Ashmore (1954) and Siddle Walker (1996; 2000) reveal that parents and students trusted the teachers' ability to ensure students learned content knowledge needed to progress from grade level to grade level. If students had not learned the content of the lesson presented, students were required to stay after school. Studies suggest that Black teachers in

segregated schools did not allow a student to progress until learning had occurred, which included collaborative learning strategies (Ashmore, 1954; Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Siddle Walker, 1996). The narrators recall helping students in the lower grades learn.

Positive memories of their academic experiences were recalled at Scarboro School. Overall the narrators expressed an air of confidence that they were learning. Memories of Scarboro School did not indicate the narrators believed their education was substandard or inferior. The next theme to consider is extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular Activities at Scarboro School

Some of Helen's most poignant memories were the extracurricular activities at Scarboro on the playground. None of the other narrators really focused on the extracurricular activities at Scarboro School. I suggest this points to the close relationship the Scarboro Community Center and Mr. Scott the director of the Scarboro Center had with Scarboro School. The school and the community center were closely tied together. Stuckey (1987) reveals that many of the qualities of slave culture are seen in all-Black communities' de jure de facto segregation, like Scarboro. Demarcations were not prevalent and the lines were blurred between home, school, and church. Siddle Walker's (1996) study of her segregated school experiences in North Carolina also show how Black life was woven together within a school and a community. Next I will discuss how the narrators remembered the community, which I merge with the categories of culture and church.

Culture, Community, Church

Oral accounts and historiographies have lauded the multiple roles the schools and teachers provided as leaders in the Black community (Anderson, 1988; Fairclough, 2007; Lance, 1952; Siddle Walker, 1996; Thum, 1975; Willink, 2009). The Oak Ridge Scarboro community, churches, and school were also inextricably connected. For example Mr. Brown required students to say a Bible verse every day. This suggests a level of trust that the school was a place entrusted with teaching acceptable religious practices. This also points to several historical facts: the Puritan religious leaders were forerunners of U. S. education in pursuit of teaching people to read the Bible (Altenbaugh, 2003), earlier Black "native school" began in churches (Anderson, 1988, p. 7), and the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution separating church and state, that at its basic premise suggests the U.S. does not demand religion to its citizens, but citizens have the right to choose.[32] The oral narrators corroborate other scholars who inform us that rudiments of slave culture like spiritual worship have been carried forward to segregated schools in the south—where African American teachers, church, and community have been compelling influences and factors that help define African American life (Glasgow, 2009; Siddle Walker, 1996; Stuckey, 1987; Willink, 2009).

Fultz (1995) records examples of dilapidated school buildings in disrepair, and that teachers, along with the help of the community, cleared away overgrown brush. Support was ongoing, students and teachers, with the help of the racially segregated community, performed additional duties, such as custodial work, carpentry, and landscaping. DuBois describes

32 The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution… "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…"

similar experiences at his first teaching job in a backwoods area near Lebanon, Tennessee (1903/2003). Scarboro School had the fewest number of maintenance workers assigned to them, although other Oak Ridge schools with less square footage had more maintenance workers than Scarboro.[33]

Cultural Capital

Now I would like to examine the intersection of race, culture, and language. Scholars inform us that in addition to synergy experienced in racially segregated communities and schools, Black students gained cultural capital (Apple, 1996; Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2005; Delpit, 1995, 2006; Smitherman, 1977, 1986; 2000; Willink, 2009). Bourdieu (1986), the French anthropologist, sociologist, and philosopher credited with defining cultural capital, suggests that cultural capital is gained from cultural resources that yield success. Carter (2005) informs us de jure de facto schools were a source of Black cultural capital, where cultural knowledge was transmitted by Black teachers who understood and translated to Black students the culture of power levied by the White dominant culture. Mr. Scott, Director of the Scarboro Community Center, told the narrator Helen not to complain but perform, so success is uncontested and unquestionable: "put the basketball through the basketball hoop" to make sure people can't take things from you.

Cultural capital can also be transmitted in the form of soft skills defined as non-cognitive skills, such as interpersonal communication; for example, proper eye contact,

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33 A report of an Oak Ridge Schools building survey submitted to ORS' Superintendent, Mr. W. G. Fordyce by Messrs. Tyson and Stone of the Austin Company, April 17, 1952.

smiles, handshakes, and other appropriately accepted manners are culturally defined (Kirshenman & Neckerman (1991) cited in Carter, 2005).34 The narrator Fred reported that Ms. Picket taught the girls "what they needed to know [laugh]." The narrators were taught to look down when they addressed white people; and if a White person walked on the sidewalk near a Black person, the Black person had to step off the sidewalk and give the White person full use of the sidewalk. Schools, along with the segregated communities, taught culturally accepted soft skills (respect, non-direct eye contact, moving off the sidewalk when passing a White person on the street) of the dominant discourse.

Mr. Scott stood out as one of the protons, a champion on behalf of the oral narrators. He taught them about sports and about life. The narrators reported that they could go to Mr. Scott and ask him anything, and he would tell them exactly what they needed to know and what to do. It was evident the narrators trusted Mr. Scott and their teachers. This suggests that the community and school were a source of Black cultural capital. Tacit knowledge is also a product of cultural capital.

Delpit (1995/2006) informs us that tacit knowledge is intimately tied to cultural capital. Tacit knowledge is only available to people immersed in a culture and is transmitted through language communication. Heath (1983/2009) compared communication norms between White families and Black families and exposed two very different ways of communicating. Carter (2005) also addresses language patterns between Blacks and Whites in the transmission of cultural capital. Smitherman (1977, 1986; 2000) highlights nuances of the

[34] Carter, P. L. (2005). *Keepin' it real: School success beyond Black and White.* New York: Oxford University Press. p. 92 and 204.

Black vernacular compared to other languages in the U. S.. Carter further informs us that in the area of discipline, the manner of giving directions differs between Black teachers and White teachers. When Black students have White teachers, White teachers perceive the interactions between some Black students and White teachers as aggressive or disrespectful. This might account for today's high number of discipline referrals of Black students in integrated schools versus White students, and points to language as conceivably a barrier between White teachers and Black students. Based on the notion of language as cultural capital, racial desegregation attenuated Black cultural capital. African American griot Ann repeatedly said "…I didn't understand what they were saying….there were things at the racially desegregated schools I just didn't understand…I would sit there and listen, but I didn't understand…" Willie Jr. relayed a memory of three Black students and two White girls standing in the hallways one day talking before school. Two of the Black males were given a discipline referral for talking to the White girls. He wasn't given a referral he believes because the vice principal didn't want to compromise a win for the ORHS basketball team if Willie became ineligible to play basketball due to a school discipline referral.

Cultural Capital and Métis

Scott (1985; 1998), reveals a connection between tacit knowledge and a concept called métis. Métis—named after the Greek goddess of wisdom, skill or craft—is embedded knowledge gained from immersion in a local culture. Métis is an acquired knowledge. Scott suggests it is the "hidden transcript" of the politically weak, or a subordinate group, within a culture (1990). It is a behavior or action that demonstrates a keen or savant acquisition of

knowledge. Métis requires indigenous engagement and continual exposure to learning the redundant signals of a skill.

Reading this comparison might suggest that Black students require Black teachers. But as Ladson-Billings (1994) suggests, the achievement gap in education between Blacks and Whites since desegregation partially lies in the loss of tacit knowledge. I contend that métis is married to tacit knowledge through prolonged engagement in a culture. I also suggest that métis knowledge is acquired when other factors, such as trust, caring, love, suitable resources, and a common language, work together to build cultural capital.

Black students attending desegregated schools lost Black cultural capital. This is not to say that métis cannot be obtained. I am suggesting that métis is a hidden transcript that is obscure to non-members of a culture. For example, the dominant culture controls the curriculum in most U.S. schools and uses standardized tests as one of the ways to determine knowledge acquisition. Standardized tests are based on the cultural language of the discourse that is unavailable to non-Whites. So if cultural capital is transmitted through language discourse, and the discourse is esoteric in that it cannot be understood except by the culture by which it is transmitted, then any tacit knowledge, cultural capital, métis, becomes unattainable to non-members. In the context of this study, cultural capital in its esoteric form becomes autonomous, independent, dissimilar, conceivably alien and exasperating to non-members. Subsequent reading of the narrator's memories point to a cultural collision between the narrator's attempts to understand and assimilate the language of the curriculum, acceptable soft skills in an integrated setting, and the search for the "push" and family atmosphere of the desegregated school.

CRT scholars suggest that as long as Black culture remains invisible and schools suggest we follow a colorblind curriculum—which is colorblind to cultural differentials—Black students will have difficulty developing métis, and cultural capital will be limited to the dominant culture because that's who controls the curriculum. Colorblindness disconnects the dominant culture from Black culture, suggesting that Black culture has limited to no value in schools. Black culture is inaccessible to the dominant culture because it is perceived as inferior. New educational methods and techniques might "scotch tape" this schism, but until color clarity, racial differences, and the diversity of cultures are infused into the curriculum, minimal change can be expected. Today, there are trends outside of education like fashion, music, and sports where boundaries blur, not necessarily due to colorblindness, but possibly a result of cultural blending because of the World Wide Web.

Paolo Freire (1970/2000) helps illustrate one last point. Learning or the acquisition of knowledge is culture-bound, and Freire points to a banking-system approach to educating non-Whites. Information, called dialogue, according to Freire, is disseminated in a classroom for the purpose of building knowledge and skills. The discourse or language, as Freire points out, is delivered like a bank-deposit system. The information disseminated is transmitted in a foreign language. Foreign currency is deposited. The dominant discourse in schools is the language of Whites who expect evidence of knowledge to be retrieved—cashed out—without an appropriate means of exchange from foreign-language currency to native-language currency. Reading this might be exasperating to "English language natives," but if one visits the country of England, the subtle language differences are evident.

If as suggested earlier language is culture-bound and culture is transmitted first in the home and then within the cultural setting of an individual, then a native culture cannot "cash in" the foreign currency, then the exchange severs a trust so that what was deposited has limited value to the recipient—or in our example, the "holder of the account" the recipient (student) of the cultural deposit (content of a subject) resents the depositor (teacher) because the person has broken his or her trust by depositing information that is non-negotiable. Resistance ensues. Resistance becomes reciprocal.

The information (content) the depositor (teacher) presents to the account holder student) does not get processed, even with the best of intentions and pedagogical acumen. This can potentially set up a teacher to perceive the student's attitude as cavalier, sometimes revealed in the form of "acting out," and eventually the bank exchange can become contentious. The narrators memories of Scarboro School implies that in fact nostalgia, a yearning for the past that included the constructs of trust, love, caring, and an extension of their families in the form of "that push" were lost as they described their memories of Scarboro School as compared to their cultural experiences at RJHS and ORHS.

This section has reviewed our African American trailblazer's memories of Scarboro School pertaining to their academic, cultural-community-church experiences. I am not suggesting that the narrators were fearful or that caring did not exist when Oak Ridge Schools racially desegregated. I am pointing to the intersections of education, culture-community-church. As Martin Luther King, Jr. described, the Christian church at eleven o'clock on

Sunday morning is the most racially segregated time of the week.[35] I have attempted to present an argument that focuses on cultural capital, that was strategically available to White privileged students and distributed in minimal portions to non- White students. As several of the narrators reported, they thought they were rich; they had confidence in their teachers at Scarboro School. The curriculum they were taught positioned them to build métis—knowledge acquired through immersion and engagement transmitted through language and scholars suggest language is culturally bound (Delpit, 1996/2005; Heath, 1983; Smitherman, 1977). Next the narrators remember their social experiences while attending Scarboro School.

Social Experiences at Scarboro School

Social experiences occur within a group setting. Of course this means public school is a social experience in and of itself. I found it interesting that the narrators had different memories of their social experiences at Scarboro School. During the interview process, the social construction of their identities began to emerge.

L.C. focused on everybody going to school together and that everyone played together. Fred's social outlet was sports; the concept of team was highlighted. Mr. Brown, who seemed to be one of Fred's favorite teachers, was a strict disciplinarian. Discipline is critical to be a good athlete as well as successful in sports. Ann remembered playing at home and not socializing very much because she had a lot of responsibility. She recalled that unlike her sister, she was not allowed to leave the front yard. She revealed that she was very

35 "We must face the sad fact that at eleven o'clock on Sunday mornings when we stand to say, 'In Christ there is no East or West,' we stand in the most segregated hour of America." Quoted by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on March 31, 1968 (Carson, 2007).

introverted, although she really wanted to be extroverted. Many of Helen's memories were related to social activities, such as playing ball, competing against different schools, multiple memories of dialogue between her and adults, and the life lessons she was taught. Archie remembered his thirst for knowledge, and his social experiences were based on gaining access to knowledge through whatever schooling and after-school recreational sports were available to him. Finally I will discuss the superlatives—the people who stood out as champions of the narrators' school experiences at Scarboro School.

The superlatives are those who I previously labeled the "Protons." They were people who had a positive influence on the lives of the narrators in this study: Mr. Brown; Ms. Chilcote (White teacher), Mr. and Mrs. Golden; Ms. Harper; Mr. Martin; Scarboro Principal, Mrs. Officer; Scarboro High School Teacher, Mr. Officer; Ms. Pickett; Mr. Scott (named by all of the narrators); Ms. Kathleen Stephens; Ms. Teasley; Mr. Walker; and Mr. Paul White. There appears to have been an investment by reported members of the Scarboro community in the lives of the Black children at Scarboro School. It has been suggested that nostalgia masked the educational improvements and opportunities accessible when schools were desegregated (Siddle Walker, 1996; 2000; Shircliffe, 2001). The narrator's memories will be compared to these scholars who examined nostalgia and the Black segregated school experiences.

Nostalgia

Shircliffe (2001) responds to the criticism of nostalgia—an over-romanticism that distorts historical facts about Black segregated schools due to overemphasizing caring

teachers and a loving school atmosphere at the expense of limited resources and the limited qualifications of teachers. Nostalgia, according to Shircliffe, is homesickness, yearning for the past, and recall of the past no longer available (p. 59). Shircliffe uses oral history to address nostalgia with the historical example of the Black community's response, in Tampa, Florida, to the city's closing of two neighborhood all-Black schools, Blake and Middleton.

Shircliffe (2001) suggests that the African American community in Tampa responded to the closing of their "beloved" schools by demonstrating educational gains and the economic benefits to the area. The parents in Shircliffe's study advocated on behalf of the two schools by demonstrating the schools' successes attributed to good attendance, exemplary high school completion rates, and college completion for graduates of Blake and Middleton high schools. The study further suggests that it was nostalgia that drove the Black community's successful response by retracting the school board's closing of the two schools.

Nostalgia, at the intersection of human agency, drove the Black community to prove to the local school board that closing Blake and Middleton—two neighborhood schools that benefited the Black community—would have a deleterious effect on the city of Tampa both economically and educationally. Human agency is the freedom to choose one's actions, the intelligence to distinguish between bad, good, better, and best, and the capacity to recover from mistakes (Alexander, 2005, Taylor, 1985). Human beings are agents, representatives of their own beliefs, desires, and actions. In Shircliffe's study, after the closure of two community schools, the Black community's nostalgia for the two closed

schools sought ways to contest their closing. This nostalgia appeared in the form of energies expended in time and effort that led to successfully proposal to re-open one of one schools after renovations were made, and a new school opened in the community.

In addition to human agency combined with nostalgia using oral historical methods, CRT scholars weigh in with a tenet of CRT called "interest convergence." Interest convergence states that Blacks stand to gain only when it advances the interests of Whites. The nostalgic Black community of Tampa developed strategies congruent with White interests. But I choose to respond to the nostalgia criticism more applicable to my study by returning to an earlier discussion of the Akan African idea of sankofa.

Sankofa re-visits the past in order to move forward. Sankofa allows the narrators in this study to re-visit the past in order for the history of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools to move forward, casting the historical net wider than the one that currently exists. Shircliffe (2001) positions nostalgia as a positive force to energize human agents to act in order to accomplish a goal. Similarly two of the oral narrators in this study, Willie and Cassandra, returned to the Oak Ridge community after graduating from college in order to move forward with their professional lives. I suggest that sankofa (returning to the past, picking up the good pieces that one takes to construct the future), at the intersection of human agency (the freedom to act on one's behalf), positions the narrators in this study to effectively reconstruct existing historical voices in Oak Ridge.

The seven narrators have been introduced, and they have revealed many details of their lives in Oak Ridge. Jawaharlal Nehru, former prime minister of India, visited the

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) hydroelectric power site located about ten miles from Oak Ridge in Norris, Tennessee. Langston Hughes, a social critic of segregation, suggested in a newspaper article of the *Chicago Defender* that Nehru take a true picture of the American people of color by going to Oak Ridge to see the "White Only" and "Colored Only" signs. Hughes lamented, "Will the government require Nehru, a person of color, to comply with southern Jim Crow laws.[36] I think of Nehru reading the biographical information of the seven narrators. Nehru is quoted as saying, "Life is like a deck of cards…the hand you are dealt is determinism, but how you play the hand is free will."[37] The voices of Oak Ridge racial desegregation will proceed to play the hand they were dealt.

From Racial Segregation to Racial Desegregation

I have positioned the oral narrators' de jure de facto segregated schools. Now I consider their school experiences that began on Tuesday September 6, 1955. On this day Oak Ridge public schools changed from a segregated public school system to a system with racially desegregated junior and senior high schools. Sixteen months earlier, the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision pronounced racially segregated schools were inherently unequal.

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36 *Chicago Defender Newspaper. A newspaper of the Negro Community. 05 November 1949.*

37 Suggests maybe an anecdote attributed to Nehru that I could not find in his writings. www.philosoblog.com.

Responses to *Brown* were mixed but mostly ignored by southern state governors (Anderson, Byrne, Cox, and Matthews 2004; Bell, 1980; Graham, 1967; Irons, 2004; Kluger, 1977; Lau, 2004). In Tennessee, Governor Clement directed local school boards to develop individualized local plans to desegregate. In Oak Ridge Wally Cohn, a member of the Oak Ridge AEC Council, decided not to run for re-election after he was subjected to harsh criticism and threats of violence for proposing to racially desegregate Oak Ridge public schools a year earlier in 1953 (Johnson and Jackson, 1981; Smith, 2007). The superintendence of Oak Ridge Schools changed between May, 1954 and September, 1955 from Mr. Larry Parker to Dr. Bertis Capehart. The local Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)—the governing body of Oak Ridge—made plans to study racial desegregation in Oak Ridge schools, but implementation was several months away. Eight months later, the AEC decided that racial desegregation in Oak Ridge was moving too slowly. A letter was sent from AEC in Washington, DC Council to racially desegregate schools at the beginning of the 1955 school year. Dr. Bertis Capehart, the recently hired Superintendent of Oak Ridge Schools, accepted responsibility for implementing racial desegregation. Four months later the U.S. Supreme court once again reminded public schools that racially desegregated schools was the law, *Brown II* (1955) was pronounced, and states were directed to racially desegregate public schools "with all deliberate speed" (Johnson, 2002).

Four months after the *Brown II* decision, Oak Ridge public schools were racially desegregated. Dr. Capehart directed Robertsville Junior High principal George Bond and Oak Ridge High School principal Tom Dunigan, along with the Oak Ridge Schools' Parents Advisory Council and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), to train all teachers,

guidance counselors, custodians, and staff to follow five rules: (1) to neither favor nor discriminate against any student on the basis of race or color; (2) to adhere to the established school policy of firm districting and reject any transfer requests; (3) to continue hiring and promoting teachers on the basis of merit only; (4) to accept and encourage the participation of all students on athletic teams, but not to force Oak Ridge's Negro players upon any team; and (5) to handle individually any social problems that might result from desegregation.

The oral narrators reported they remember hearing about *Brown* but were unclear the extent *Brown* affected them:

> L. C. reported: I knew about the *Brown* thing, but whether it was ever discussed in the community here? I'd say probably not…as I stated earlier [pause], it was pretty much like survival in the Black community here—we had become accustomed to survive because we're all in the same pot together….
>
> Helen stated: I didn't know a thing about *Brown*—all I knew is that this going to be our last year at Scarboro… You know, it was a decision that was made, and prior to us doing that, I don't remember hearing a lot about it. But I do know that we were informed that we would be leaving the Scarboro School…going, you know, to the other schools….
>
> Ann said: My parents didn't try to explain it. The decision was made. It was what was going to be that way, so usually you'd have to do whatever people in authority say.

And I don't remember them talking a whole lot about it. I'm sure they had meetings and I'm sure my parents went.

African American Trailblazers in Oak Ridge Schools

The "Firsts"

On the first day of the 1955 school year in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, school buses rolled into the Scarboro Community to carry the first African American students to the first public school system to racially desegregate in the state of Tennessee. At the first school stop, approximately forty-two African American students entered Robertsville Junior High. Buses proceeded from Robertsville one-half mile down Robertsville Road to transport approximately forty more African American students, who were the first high-school students to racially desegregate Oak Ridge High School. Fred Guinn, one of the narrators in this study, along with Shirlee Hawkins (not interviewed), Roy White (not interviewed), and Bill Wilson (not interviewed) would end the school year as the first African American students to graduate from a desegregated Tennessee public school. Fred Brown was the first African American teacher at Oak Ridge High School and the only African American teacher transferred from Scarboro School to ORHS.

Scarboro would remain open as a first through sixth grade elementary school. It appears that Scarboro School has not been credited for being the first all-Black segregated public school in the state of Tennessee to participate in fully desegregating all seventh through twelfth grade students. Oak Ridge public schools were public school leaders by taking the administrative steps to transfer seventh through twelfth grade students to

previously all-White Oak Ridge junior and senior high schools. A transition plan, usually developed by school counselors used to support students when they change from one school to the next school was not evident.

Experiences of African American students during the early days of Oak Ridge's racial desegregation have only been revealed through archival data. Now it is time to shift Oak Ridge's historic gaze from the observers of Oak Ridge Schools' racial desegregation to the African American students themselves who metaphorically *voice* their experiences within the context of this study.

Black and White Students Experience Desegregation

The year before Oak Ridge public schools desegregated, a select group of African American tenth-grade students from Scarboro School and Oak Ridge High School participated in a two-week exchange experience in preparation for desegregation. Teachers and administrators did not participate. Archie Lee, one of the narrators in this study, was among the students who attended Oak Ridge High School during that two-week period. One day toward the end of the two weeks, while walking through the ORHS gym, Archie found an interesting item. He recalled the following incident during his interview:

> I guess the White students had taken a poll. I showed this paper to my Negro friends. I didn't show it to my White friends. Anyway written on this paper at the top it had:
>
> "What do you think about Negros [sic] coming to Oak Ridge High School?"

> They had different things written on it like: "They stink"…"Now we are really going to have a good football team"…"They have a right to a good school"…"I see no reason for integration"…"They are just as good as Whites and deserve equal education just the same as Whites"…" It don't make me no never mind"…
>
> [Archie continued] There were very few negative ones and it made me feel good, even before the school integrated. So that, you know, that was one of the things that occurred before the school even integrated…

Oak Ridge schools appeared to have meticulously sought a seamless path toward racial desegregation (Adamson, 1952–1966; Overholt, 1987; Peelle and Tucker, 1960; Smith, 2007). The remainder of this chapter includes the following subsections: the first day entering a racially desegregated school; academic and educational experiences; extracurricular activities; cultural and community experiences; social experiences; most memorable experiences; and final thoughts. After telling their story of racial desegregation, the narrators in the spirit of the Akan Adrinka symbol sankofa, looked back then offered their gems of wisdom, an egg-embryo in its mouth, looking forward to the future.

The First Day of Racial Desegregation in Oak Ridge

Two Communities Merge Peacefully

On the morning of September 6, 1955, inside the homes of the Scarboro community, there might have been gospel songs playing on the radio, such as "This Little Light of Mine" followed by Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers singing "Be With Me Jesus." Other

Scarboro homes might have preferred the sounds of doo-wop sung by The Platters, such as "The Great Pretender" and "Only You." African Americans were forbidden to go to movie theaters in Oak Ridge, but for the few who ventured to downtown Knoxville during their summer break, they might have seen the movie *Revenge of the Creature* from the balcony of the Gem Theater. Administrators and teachers at Scarboro I suspect were excited and hopeful about the new school year. They had the responsibility to teach Black students in Oak Ridge. These students climbed onto school buses that September morning headed to Robertsville Junior High School (RJHS) and Oak Ridge High School (ORHS).

Outside the Scarboro community, White junior and senior high school students and their families might have listened to Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock Around the Clock," popularized by the recent summer movie with Audie Murphy entitled *To Hell and Back*. White teachers might have shivered, thinking about the teacher-themed movie *Blackboard Jungle* with Glenn Ford. Two different worlds have been socially constructed, one White one Black. Two racially different worlds are about to come together to comply with the U. S. Supreme Court pronouncement of desegregated public schools.

Explicit directives were sent to all Oak Ridge school personnel from the Oak Ridge school administrators. One of the directives stated that all students would be treated fairly regardless of their race (Peelle and Tucker 1960). School personnel were participating in an educational directive for which there was no prior example, no template to which they could refer. Naturally White school personnel were ambivalent but determined to continue to carry out the curriculum contained in the Oak Ridge schools' educational template

"Adventure in Democratic Administration"—the curriculum and protocol for education in Oak Ridge schools (Blankenship and Kidd, 1948).

I will begin discussing the African-American desegregation experience with the two junior high school students Helen Hill and Ann Lewis.

Helen Louise Hill, African American Griot/Trailblazer

"My mom believed if you take a school out of the neighborhood, the neighborhood was going down. So my Mom didn't like the idea of me going to school outside our neighborhood. She thought if you have a school, you can walk to rather than ride a bus, then attend the school you can walk to. She believed little children didn't need to ride a bus. It didn't make sense to my Mom, and she didn't like this whole idea of changing schools. My Daddy, well…I never heard him say anything about me going to Robertsville instead of Scarboro. See two of my sisters graduated from Scarboro. Well one of my sisters graduated, and Maxine went back to Mississippi and my brother left, but my oldest sister graduated from Scarboro. Well, I can't remember all the details. I just know my Mom didn't like me going to Robertsville.

"We didn't have any problems at Robertsville. Once we went through the door of the school, it was like we were at home. When we returned to Scarboro, people would look at me and think I would change and be uppity because we were going to the White school,

where they had a lot more stuff than Scarboro. People thought we would consider ourselves upper class. There were about three Black families who really pushed their kids to go to the White school. They really wanted their kids to go to the White school. I don't know if they had a choice or not, but seemed like they thought the Black kids were behind and they talked about it like, 'Yeah, this needs to happen. The Black kids need to go to the school where they can get a better education.' But, you know when we first heard about it, it seemed like it was a scary thing…but really everything went so smoothly and it seemed like they were overly nice to us at Robertsville, you know what I mean? The White teachers at Robertsville wanted to involve us in this or that and told me to go and try out for cheerleader! A teacher told me, 'You're going to be secretary of the class.' I said, 'I don't know what to do.' The teacher said, 'I'll teach you.' The teacher was right! The teacher taught me what to do to be secretary of the class! Everybody really tried to make us feel welcome.

"Mr. George Bond, the principal, was an awesome man! He was very nice. My time at Robertsville was very happy, so happy. I didn't have any issues. If you did what you're supposed to do and be where you're supposed to be, everything went smoothly. My first teacher at Robertsville, Mrs. Stuart—she was a sweet lady. She used to take us—me and my friend Lois Holmes—to her house in Knoxville. She lived by Karns High school in Knoxville. But we had a ball. Ms. Stuart had some curling irons, some electric curling irons. Me and Lois, we were shocked. We didn't know White people used electric curling irons, and so we had a ball just seeing that! I realized we are not all that different. Lord, no. I didn't know how to do my own hair. We always had our hair plaited up."

Academic Educational Experiences (Helen)

"I was an average student. I could have done better, you know, but I picked the easiest stuff. But what I did do, I did well. When I left Scarboro, I put it in my mind that I'm going to do the best that I could, and be the best I can be, and do what I needed to be the best, you know. It was instilled in us—we needed an education. It was pounded in us—you've got to get an education—since we were little and that never changed. I always wanted my diploma. No matter what happened, I wanted my diploma. Also we were told we should go further than just a high school diploma, and it didn't change. I had a goal. I wanted my diploma because I was taught you can't get a job if you don't have an education. You can't do anything if you don't have an education. So I wanted my diploma.

"I don't know anything about the counselors at Robertsville. I don't remember my counselor's name. Robertsville was effective in really working to help us feel welcome. I can't remember different levels of classes. I don't think they had but one level for each subject back then like they do now [tracking]. I remember everybody had an equal chance to do whatever is necessary. Now if there were higher classes, I didn't know anything about it. As I moved up in grades, I knew I could take algebra, math or whatever. That's when I started taking easy classes. You know what I mean? The teachers thought I needed to take algebra, geometry, what have you, rather than taking the easy stuff. My parents didn't know I was taking the easier classes. My Mom had an eighth-grade education, and my Dad had a ninth-grade education. That's as far as they got, so they didn't know anything about taking this class if you want to do this, or taking that class in order to do that, you know? So I did my own thing, as far as that goes. Counselors now…they tell you

your options. They say: if you want to be this, then you need to take this and you need to take that, so you just do what they suggest. So I said I want to take just math instead of algebra, geometry, or whatever. I didn't get that lecture saying what I needed to take, so I just chose the easiest thing. All I remember about a counselor is you fill out the papers that kids fill out. There was a checklist for each subject. I don't remember anyone telling me I needed to do this or do that. I can't remember.

"Relationships between teachers and students were good. As far as my parents, I don't remember my Mom ever going to talk to the teacher or even the principal. They probably didn't know each other. I had a funny thing happen with a teacher at Oak Ridge High School [laughing]. I had a history teacher. I loved him. He was a top-notch teacher. His name was Mr. Clinton. He couldn't say Negro. He said Ne-grish. So we had a good relationship, so I felt comfortable talking to Mr. Clinton. I remember saying to Mr. Clinton, 'Mr. Clinton, come here. I'm going to teach you how to say Ne-gro.' So I said, 'You got to cut that other word out!' [Laughing] So I said, 'Mr. Clinton, Ne-gro.' He said, 'Ne-grish.' I said, 'Mr. Clinton, you can't say this to me?' He said, 'I'm saying it!' I said, 'No, Mr. Clinton, you're still saying Ne-grish.' I said, 'Mr. Clinton, Ne-gro.' He said, 'Ne-ee-grish.' [Laughing] When I was at my high school graduation, I went and hugged Mr. Clinton, and I said, 'Mr. Clinton, Ne-gro.' He said, 'Ne- [pause] -grish.' [Laughing] So there we were…me and Mr. Clinton [laughing]. I was teaching the teacher. He talked the way he was trained to talk, and he couldn't change it. He couldn't get it out of him. I wasn't mad at Mr. Clinton at all. We laughed together. All of us Black kids laughed at Mr. Clinton. But Mr. Clinton was no slacker. Mr. Clinton was an excellent history teacher. He

was so good! You remembered those facts and things that he told you about history. He would tell stories and he gave you everything about history! He was a great teacher.

"I don't remember getting any awards. I don't remember any of my friends getting any rewards. So I can't really remember an awards assembly? I don't remember a thing about rewards. I know I always wanted my diploma and that didn't change. I do remember my older sister influencing me. She had the biggest impact on my life. She made sure I completed my homework. She made sure I did what I needed to do."

Cultural Connections (Helen)

I don't remember any pictures around Robertsville related to our culture. We didn't have bulletin boards with picture of Black people—I don't remember that. But I believe if you're going to learn about different things, you can't be all cooped up together! I mean, if you go to your own Black church all the time, shouldn't you go to another church to see what they do? I do. I go and just see. When I was going to Roane State, we had a class that we had go to visit another church, and I went over to St. Stephen's. I enjoyed that Episcopalian church so much because it was different! You know, I had never seen anything like St. Stephen's service! I want my kids to know everything there is to know and to learn about different people and to learn different cultures. I want White people to learn our culture, too."

Social Experiences (Helen)

"Socially? All the students, White and Black, stayed in our respective groups. The White kids were in their group, and we were in our group. As long as I can remember, everything stayed like that. We would speak and say 'Hi' to each other. In gym we'd play ball together and sort of mingle. But we were always in separate social groups—the Black group and the White group—we were always separate. Recently I saw a White lady and she said, 'Hey, hello, I was in your gym class!' She knew me, but I'd forgotten her and that was embarrassing…I couldn't remember her. No matter how much I tried to remember, I couldn't remember her. But that's because that was just the way things were at the time. Everyone hung out in their own group, your Black group or the White group. That's the way it was. [Laughing] I remember even in the cafeteria, we sat in our own group. There was only about ten of us and we had different classes. There usually wasn't but two of us in the same class. So even in class, you hung out with your buddy. I guess they fixed it like that, so you could have at least one of your friends in your class. Lois was in my class, so she became my best friend. Eloise Mitchell was my girlfriend, too. You know Eloise—she has all those children and grandchildren—all those Mitchells. Yes, Eloise, she loves her family and her family loves her. Her house stays full, I'm telling you! She goes to my church, so I see her all the time. I had another friend, Frank Kirk. He passed away about two years ago. I had other friends, but they left Oak Ridge. I'm trying to think of other people who were my friends. Mary goes to my church, but she's too young to have been in my class."

Impact of Desegregation (Helen)

"I heard people say, 'Why are the Scarboro kids the only kids that had to go to a different school? Why don't those other kids come over here?' But it never happened. Later when Oak Ridge was close to bringing White kids to Scarboro School, Scarboro burned down. I remember the fire people were on strike, so the school burned down. I don't remember exactly when Scarboro burned down. Anyway everybody had to go to the White schools. Let me see…I don't want to tell you the wrong thing. But I don't remember exactly where all the Black kids went to school. I remember all the Black middle school junior high had to go to Robertsville. Nobody went to Jefferson [the only other middle school] at that time. I can't even remember when they did start going to Jefferson. All the Black kids only went to Robertsville. They had a strange way of breaking down which elementary school kids went to when they finally integrated all the schools in Oak Ridge, including the elementary schools. It seems if you lived on Spelman [a street in the all-Black Scarboro community], kids attended Woodland Elementary. If you lived on Dillard, then kids went to Willow Brook Elementary. Well, I'm not sure how it was broken down. What I'm saying is no one knows why the White kids never went to Scarboro School. But at Robertsville, it wasn't as scary as I thought. Everything went good."

Extracurricular Activities at Robertsville (Helen)

"My mom went to PTA meetings. They had some classes for some people to finish school, but I don't remember either of my parents going to school at night to graduate. We had basketball teams and cheerleaders. I wasn't one of them. We would go to ballgames at

Robertsville. We had fun! I sang in the school choir. I continued to sing in the choir at Oak Ridge High School. See back in the day, we didn't have girls' basketball teams. I don't know when they opened up basketball teams for girls to play ball. As long as I was in school, it was always boys' basketball, I believe.

"We had dances. Dances were fun! We used to go to those and they called them sock hops. We had a good time. We usually stayed in the corner somewhere trying to dance. Teachers were everywhere, so you really couldn't two-step. So we used to do [singing] 'you put your right foot in, you take your right foot out…and you shake it all about. You do da da dee da da, do the hokey pokey.' We did those kinds of big group dances. We didn't do any other kind of dance the White kids would do, but we would do the hokey pokey dance together when they played that song, but that's all."

Racial Climate after Desegregation (Helen)

"The racial climate was fine. If they didn't bother us, we wouldn't bother them…and if somebody call us a nigger, it was just too bad for them because some of the guys got 'them. Oh, yes! Girls didn't fight. But the boys…they made sure if somebody called you a nigger, that was not acceptable. We didn't like it when they would call you names like that. But that didn't happen much. You weren't called names much. Everything was usually calm. It wasn't like Clinton. We never had any incidents like Clinton. I didn't have any experiences where teachers discriminated against you because of your race."

Personal Thoughts about Desegregation versus Segregation (Helen)

"Desegregation was good for everybody, Black and White. People became acclimated to each other…people together. I think if Blacks and Whites hadn't gotten along back then, we'd still be mad at each other and desegregation wouldn't have worked. Black people wouldn't know White people, and White people wouldn't know Black people. Desegregation helped us learn different cultures. I think desegregation was a good thing. Time changes people. So desegregation was a good thing for Black kids and for White kids and for everybody! White people learned we're not no monkeys. You know what I mean? The White kids had things told to them about us that weren't true. We had things told to us about the White kids that weren't true. We learned we are all human. Desegregation helped us find that out. Yep! You know what I mean?

"As far as education for Black people and whether we gained as a result of desegregation, that's a hard question. I'm not sure Black people benefited. We had quality teachers at Scarboro. We have people that came from Scarboro who are doctors, scientists, and lawyers like my sister. Black people had the capacity to learn and we wanted to learn. When we were slaves, White people tried to keep us from learning but we wanted to learn. I believe White people gained the most, you know? White people learned different stuff about Black people. So to me, desegregation made White people gain the most."

Graduation (Helen)

"I remember graduating from Oak Ridge High School! My graduation was one of the happiest times. I have to thank my parents, though. My parents didn't have an

education. I mean they went to eighth grade, ninth grade—that's it. My parents had twelve, fifteen children, and all of us—every one of us—graduated from high school because my parents made sure we knew how important it was to get an education, so we could be successful in life. So that's what we strived for. That's what we strived for because we knew our parents wouldn't tell us no story about those things, they wouldn't lie to us. They always told us the right thing to do and so we did it. I can remember my parents saying to us, 'We want better for you guys. We want you live to be better, so you need your education.' So all of us kids—that what we tried to do, and that's what we did. See back in the day, kids listened to their parents. We felt our parents knew what they were talking about, so we listened to them. They did know, yes they did, uh-huh.

"If I wanted something, I went for it no matter how hard things got. Well, let me go back and tell you this. I graduated in 1964 from Oak Ridge High School. I had gotten married. I had my three boys, and I hadn't gotten my high school diploma. I was determined to get my high school diploma! Oak Ridge High School was right here. I wanted my diploma because I remembered my parents told me I needed my education. So I went back to school. I went back to Oak Ridge High School. I remember they let me come on back to school because all I had left was a year and about three months in order to graduate. I decided *I'm getting my diploma!* My husband and I had gone our separate ways, you know. After Oak Ridge High School accepted me back, there wasn't anything going to stop me. So I remember in 1964, with my daddy standing there at the fence and my three little boys standing at that fence with him, I walked across that stage a proud woman because that's what I wanted. After I got my high school diploma, I enrolled in

Roane State Community College. It was hard; it was so hard because by that time I had gotten a divorce. But I thought *huh!* I'm getting my degree from Roane State. It took me eight years to get my associate's degree. Eight years. But I wanted it, and I was determined I was going to get it, and I did. So if I want something and its right here, I'm going to go for it, and I'm going to get it, and that's my fulfillment. My Mama always said, 'Whatever you strive for, go until you get it.' So that's what I do even now [laughing]. It doesn't matter if it was desegregation or segregation—education was in my heart! I was supposed to graduate from Oak Ridge High School in 1961. But I hung in there! Yes, I did."

Final Words (Helen)

"Well, let me think…is there something I need to say before we end this interview? Hmm…no [laughter]. This has been a good experience. I didn't know I could talk so much. I can't remember anything I planned to say. Because I think I told you everything, just about, I wanted to say, but there was something I was going to expound on, but I can't remember what it was. But this has been good. So you say I'm a trailblazer? I think that's awesome myself. I never even thought about it before. When Ms. Sue was telling me Ms. Whipple said I was the first one that went to Robertsville! It had never ever crossed my mind about me being one of the first to desegregate Oak Ridge Schools [laughing].

"Well if I have to say something, it's that Oak Ridge Schools is a top-notch educational system. I want to pass that down, because the kids deserve it. Oak Ridge schools are excellent schools and always have been. Lots of people are gone and don't live here in Oak

Ridge anymore. They come back and wonder why I didn't leave Oak Ridge? I said, 'I'm not going to a big city! I don't like big cities. I love Oak Ridge [laughing]…that's right.'"

Analysis of Helen's Interview

Helen was comfortable in her social setting made up of African American students. All African American junior high school students were also new to a desegregated school setting. Her social group seemed to have been African American peers in her classes. Helen purports, she was friendly to everyone but preferred her African American peer group.

Tatum (1997) points to the onset of pubescence to signify when Black adolescents usher in a time of identity-formation by asking, who am I? This is intensified in an integrated setting because the world has identified Black youth to be different, outside the standard of Whiteness. Shared messages of "racially different" are the salient messages for Black youth. Informed by William Cross's (1991) research, "Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity," Tatum (1997) pointed to the utility of Cross's model to understand why adolescents of color within integrated settings were more likely to engage in exploration of their racial or ethnic identity conjointly with their peers—other adolescents of color. Cross (1991) identifies Black- youth attraction to other Black youths as the psychology of "nigresence," or the psychology of becoming Black framed within five stages (Cross, 1991; Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki & Alexander, 1995; Tatum, 1997). Tatum (1997) expounds on Cross' (1991) purported stages, which are:

1) pre-encounter: the stage where Black youth absorb the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture—the superiority of Whiteness—which is better, and the inferiority of Blackness;

2) encounter: the stage precipitated by an event or a series of events that forces Black adolescents to acknowledge their race and being a targeted group for institutionalized racism, cued by an environment lacking Black cultural sensitivities;

3) immersion/emersion: the stage characterized by a strong desire to surround oneself with symbols of one's racial identity through exploration of one's history, culture, and the support of same-race peer groups;

4) internalization; and

5) internalization-commitment: results from the immersion/emersion stage. Black identity formation is described as a sense of security about one's identity, and relationships can be willingly developed across racial boundaries.

Helen's narration suggests that she was experiencing Cross's "encounter stage" in her identity formation. All of the teachers were nice at Robertsville, according to Helen, but the Black students encountered an environment very different from Scarboro. Although it did not appear the Black students at Robertsville were overtly ostracized, the messages that they were different were clear.

Helen was allowed to take easier classes although she was informed of more rigorous classes. She reportedly preferred taking classes with African American peers. The

small number of African Americans made it difficult to have more than one or two African American students in her classes. She said she was excited to board a school bus every afternoon on the return ride from Robertsville to the Scarboro community. The residents of Scarboro community were her true social group and friends. Cross asserts there's a level of comfort Black students have because of a perceived sense of shared identity. Helen looked for people who looked like her in the cafeteria or in a classroom with another Black student—whoever he or she was—that's who became her friend at Robertsville. Helen suggested a level of comfort among her Black peers and used time in the cafeteria as a social opportunity—to be together where Blacks were allowed to live their culture in an environment that did not provide images of her race or ethnicity. The same was true in gym classes when the students danced. The Black students moved to a corner to dance the way they wanted to dance, which was different than the way White students danced. Race didn't hold her back from being nice to everybody. Helen admits immersing herself into her social life, and losing focus on the importance of education. She was an "early leaver" of high school, or as Oak Ridge Schools describes, she did not survive high school, and, therefore, did not graduate with the class she entered high school with as a ninth-grade student (Report: Oak Ridge Schools Trends, 1952, p. 13). But Helen evaluated her life in the midst of single parenting after raising three children and remembered her purpose. Helen recalled what her parents had told her about the importance of an education. Helen looked at her older sister—whom she admired, whom had graduated from high school and attended college—and she remembered her personal goal of graduating from high school.

So Helen returned to Oak Ridge High School as a divorced mother of three children and graduated. Graduations at Oak Ridge High School are held outdoors on the football field. Helen's graduation day memory of seeing her "Daddy" standing at the fence with her three boys was clear to me because I have attended Oak Ridge High School graduations. Helen is a person whose cup is always full or at least half-full.

Dorothy "Ann" Kirk Lewis Griot/Trailblazer

"The teachers that I had in elementary school…they wanted us to learn and be good students, so we could make something of ourselves as we grew older…you know, that was a process starting at the beginning and continuing to improve to do better and excel…not pushed…. They showed a concern and they held you to a high standard for doing the best that you could do, but they didn't necessarily push…all the teachers that I had were good teachers and loving and caring people and interested in you achieving and getting an education.… There was a big difference, without a doubt, between Scarboro and Robertsville. I don't really remember how I felt. I know I did not like it. I know I wasn't excited to go back to school. After integration I always dreaded school because it wasn't pleasant—it wasn't something that I looked forward to. Riding the bus for the first time was no big deal. My parents had an automobile, and we used to go and get out as a family and go places, so I saw everything there was to see because Oak Ridge [laughing] is not all that big. The students [White] didn't want us [Blacks] there. The students [White]…they didn't accept us [Blacks]. They didn't accept anything about us. I mean…that was my

experience. You know they didn't want us there, and I felt like I was in a place where I wasn't wanted. I didn't feel comfortable at all at school. I didn't want to go to Robertsville. Well…but not so much at Oak Ridge High School. Because after we'd been going to school together for a few years, the Black students and the White students— it got better by the time I went to Oak Ridge High School. But I still felt out of place and in a place where I wasn't accepted or wanted. I didn't enjoy school. But the teachers were good.

"In the White school a lot of new things were presented in class that I had not encountered. My teachers at Robertsville were interested in you and wanted to know you as a person. I guess so they could better relate to you and become connected. In class the teachers were talking about things I had never heard of before. So I felt inadequate. It wasn't a good feeling not to know at least some of the things that were presented to you. But I never had to deal with teachers going on to the next lesson before I got it. I got it and learned what was taught. I was always ready to move on without any problems. Before going to Robertsville, I never had to deal with studying. Ms. Hale was a good teacher in my opinion. The principal had very thick eyebrows. He was a short man. I don't remember an assistant principal. There were counselors, but I never had the occasion to talk to a counselor. But I know they had counselors. I remember at Oak Ridge High School, Ms. Anna Sebret—she was a librarian. I used to work half a day in the library, and then go to school. Ms. Sebret, the librarian, was very interested in me as a student. She told me I had a lot of potential, and I would make a good librarian. She encouraged me and would compliment my work and my dress or whatever. I remember my gym teacher was very nice."

Accelerated Classes and Academic Awards (Ann)

"My daughter was in accelerated classes when she was in school. Her experience as a student was different than mine. I'm not sure they had all the accelerated classes in place back then. But if they did have accelerated classes, not many of the Black kids took advantage of something like that or participated in those things because we [pause] were lacking in some things, generally speaking. Like I said before, there were some things that were presented to me or brought before me that I had never heard of before. So it made you feel [pause]—the way we've always been taught made us less or not equal to the White kids, you know, because it seemed like we were below them in our learning abilities from the way we were taught. In some cases, I don't think it was just the perception we were below…we were because we weren't given the same opportunities at Scarboro we needed [pause] to improve or to learn. So if we weren't given the same opportunities, then of course we couldn't know or learn the same, we just couldn't. Think now if the teaching and our whole experience at Scarboro School wasn't at the same level as the White students were getting, then we weren't going to be up there where they were. They were given opportunities better than we were given. The quality of their education— whether it was textbooks or whatever—we didn't have the quality level of educational opportunities. The Black kids never had a high quality of education, so we were behind. I don't remember having that opportunity to be on the honor roll." [At this point I shift the questioning to talk about cultural experiences].

Cultural Connections at Desegregated Schools (Ann)

"The White students weren't culturally sensitive. But the teachers were."

Social Experiences (Ann)

"I remember catching the bus near where I lived. The bus would come around and pick children up close to where they lived. Once we all got on the bus, there was a [laughing] busload of children and all the Black children were socializing together on the bus. But when I got off that bus, there were a lot of the students that…[voice level increases] well, we got [pause] jeers and name-calling and that sort of thing, and they just treated us like they just didn't like the idea of us being there. They didn't accept us! They didn't embrace us!!! Now not all of the students were like that. I'm not speaking of all of them. Because I acquired several White friends that I really come to like, and they embraced me and made me feel welcome, but it wasn't that way as a whole.

[Thoughtfully] "Growing up, I wasn't allowed to socialize or be with other kids. I was kept very isolated or close at home. I never learned to be sociable and to express myself. I think it's something that you learn. Play is an important part of growing up. I never learned how to relate to others. Whenever there's conflict, I never learned how to work it out. We played. My sister and brothers—we played, but we played in our yard. Just with…each other [laughing]. I wasn't allowed go out and be with other kids and go places. So that's one of the things that's a problem that I have today because of not being able to play with other kids. I never learned to be sociable and socialize. I would just be by myself, not with other people.

“My brothers and sister—they’re not like me. I guess because I was the oldest. My Mom was always gone, so I had to take her place and be there for my brothers and sister. They did pretty much whatever they wanted to do. They didn’t have to stay around the house like I did. I had to look after them and to be the caretaker and take care of them. That’s what I’m trying to say. As a child there wasn’t a lot of excitement for me.

“I don’t really know why that was that way. When I would see my White friends out in the community, we didn’t talk or speak or act like we knew each other. So that told me I wasn’t really fully accepted [sighs]. I don’t know why it was that way. But it wasn’t often that I would come in contact with the students outside of being on the school campus, or out in the community or wherever. I’ve rarely come in contact with them, other than just at school. But I made some White friends. There’s one girl, Janice, and also there was Faye Enzore and Pat Jenkins. There were two girls named Pat.

“I only went to two of the class reunions. We just recently had one last year. We had the 50th Oak Ridge High School class reunion, and it’s the last one that we’re ever going to have. So that was the only times that I was with all my classmates. But from time to time I run into someone. Sometimes I’d be out shopping, and I’d run into one of my White classmates that I went to school with.”

Personal Impact of Desegregation (Ann)

"Well, Oak Ridge desegregation wasn't as violent to the extent that Clinton had violence.

Clinton had a lot of chaos and violence and stuff like that going on, but there were [voice rising with emphasis] negative things that went on in Oak Ridge, too. Hurtful things went on and that people experienced individually. Like me—I was very frightened. I mean there were days that I went to school I was so frightened because they jeered at us and called us names! I know everybody's different, but at that age it was hard for me to deal with. I mean being a child and having to experience negative kinds of things…it was frightening and not pleasant at all. From watching television and seeing what was going on in other places where they had integrated places, and there was a lot of violence and stuff like that, I expected it to be like that here, but it wasn't, though. I expected it to be a lot worse than what it actually was. I thought maybe it would be the same here as it was in other places. So I was surprised.

"The good part of desegregation, I'm sure, is that I got a lot that I probably would not have gotten—as far as my education—if I had kept going to Scarboro School. Attending Oak Ridge Schools broadened my outlook on life. I wondered many times what my life would be like if I had not gone to Oak Ridge School or if they had not integrated the schools. I've wondered what kind of an individual I would be, or what my life would be like today, because I really think I'm different. I don't know who I became because there was so much over here at the all-White school and not so much over there at the Black school, so I'm not a total rounded individual. One of the biggest problems I have is

expressing myself, my thoughts. I can't put it into words. I attribute that to the fact that I never learned to express my thoughts. You know, the words just don't come out the way I'm thinking or feeling. I can't express it through my speaking. I never experienced being in plays or giving speeches."

Community and School Connection after School Desegregation (Ann)

"Well the home and school had to connect [laughing]. When I came home from school, I did what most other students would do, and that would be my homework [laughing]. We had to get our homework done then do whatever we had to do to get ready for the next day. My parents were not involved in PTA and didn't have to go up to school—to Robertsville or Oak Ridge High School. My mother worked in the evenings, and my father—he would go to work and then he would go with my mother a lot of the time. She did dry cleaning, and she had a van that she would go around and pick up dry cleaning and take it to be cleaned, and she would deliver it when it was ready. So she was away from home a lot. She worked a lot, so we always had nice things—nice clothes and shoes [laughing]. It was probably on my parents' part that they didn't go to the school. But back then, you better do what you've been told to do by your parents or else."

Extracurricular Activities (Ann)

"I have never liked Oak Ridge. My mom and dad would not let me leave. I *asked* to go back to Alabama—to go back, you know, where I came from—to go to school, and they would not let me go. They wanted to keep the family together. Well, extracurricular?

Equal? I think both ways—I think it balanced out. I had the same opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities as everybody, but I didn't."

Desegregation and the Racial Climate (Ann)

[Clearing throat] "Just every day…the kids being…just the feeling of not being accepted, and [pause] I guess because that's all I can remember—just having the feeling of not being a part of the school and being accepted, and just relaxing and being carefree and enjoying school. I mean it wasn't like that for me. Happy times? I can't think of a lot because for me, school was all about just learning, studying. I don't remember any really happy times other than just [pause]—I can't remember any. But there were more opportunities if you were Black, but if somebody didn't take advantage of it and make something good from it, it's your fault. No matter what somebody said to you."

Personal Thoughts About Desegregation Versus Segregation (Ann)

"You know, I ask myself that question—if I thought desegregation was a good idea…and in some ways, it was good. But in many ways, I think it was not all that great because I think a lot of kids…well, I only speak for myself—I lost my identity back then. I felt before they integrated the schools, it was more like I had more self-worth. I looked at myself differently in a different way. But once school integrated and being in a place where you're not wanted, it made me feel less of an individual. It made you feel like I didn't measure up. But being in Scarboro, going to school in Scarboro, I felt more like I belonged. I knew who I was. I knew what you wanted to do in life. I just felt at ease and comfortable, no adverse situations. I just felt more at peace, and I felt safe, and being a loving environment. After they integrated the

schools, like I said, I was afraid and [pause] I felt like I wasn't wanted. I was someplace that I didn't belong or was not wanted. And I couldn't get used to it. I just could not feel at ease and relaxed enough to concentrate and [pause] get the most I could out of school. I never recovered. No, because it affects me to this day. I don't have self-esteem and I can't express myself. I've got all this stuff bottled up inside of me and I think it all, or a lot of it comes from back then when I was so afraid and so out of place, I just couldn't be my real self."

[*I told her that she was quite a lady and so brave to be open, honest, and courageous to share her honest feelings with me. I also told Ms. Lewis that her revelation of her experience exuded confidence in this interview*.]

"Well, thank you. You know, that's one of my downfalls—I'm not confident; I can't express myself. And I don't fit in when there's a lot of White people. I don't relate well with people. I don't fit in when there is a crowd, you know. I'm withdrawn and all that—I think—stems from when I was in school. I do wish so much to be outgoing! I do! I do! I think that it makes my life miserable because I'm not that way. It's what I want to be, but I can't be that way. So that's who I am [laughing]."

Graduation (Ann)

"Oh, graduation! That was a happy time. I was glad to be graduating. Yes! 1961. I graduated in 1961."

Final Thoughts (Ann)

"Well, if we lost anything with desegregation, it's because of us. You know what I'm saying? The only thing I can say is that [pause] if my life has impacted the Civil Rights Movement. I [pause] give appreciation to the people who have sacrificed so much, and who made it possible for me and the ones that have come after me to have the opportunity to become whatever they want to, to be whoever they want to, to excel and to let the world know that we are as capable as any other race of people. You know, it's not about being Black. It's who you are up here [indicating the mind] and here [indicating] in your heart. You can excel, you can accomplish anything your heart desires, if you just have to apply yourself. You have to know what you want and go after it, and not let anybody or anything stop you. And once you do that, nobody can keep you from achieving whatever it is you want to."

[*I told her that I want her to give her 1961 graduation speech now*.]

"Huh? [pause] "You know, I'm not good at expressing myself. But what bothers me is the young folk today—they don't appreciate or they don't know what so many people have sacrificed so much for them, in order for them to have what they have, but they don't seem to appreciate it. The difference is [pause]—well, take my mom for instance. She was a hard-working woman, and it was understood, I mean, that you—*you're going to school; you're going to make something of yourself*, you know. And it was what I always wanted for me. That was always my goal. I mean that's what I looked forward to doing. I knew that when I got out of high school, I knew I was going to college. I mean that's what I wanted to do. It was understood in our family that for all of us children—that we were going to school for a

reason [laughing]. And that was to better yourself, you know, to get an education. That's the only way that you can improve your life is to get an education. I mean that was [pause]—that was always, you know…

"I just wish in some way that [pause] children or students can [pause] be motivated or shown that without a shadow of a doubt that education is very important. They have to apply themselves. You have to prepare yourself for your life. You just can't haphazardly go through and not doing anything and it's not something that's easy. You have to work hard to achieve what's great. You just can't mess your life up by not doing anything with what God has given you. You have to use your talents and your brain, and you have to have a plan. You have to. Nobody's going to give you anything. I mean don't look for anybody to give you anything. You get out there and work for what you need for yourself.

"I'm not good at saying what I feel, but I just hate it so bad when I see our young people today. I just [sighs] it's such a waste. They don't really understand or know. All this crazy stuff that's going on today—they don't need to pay attention to none of that. It amazes me all the kind of stuff that's allowed. When I was growing up [laughing], a lot of stuff that you see today, that could not have happened. Children, students, so much junk, and so much junk! [pause] Just right there—everywhere you look. You can't get around it. But they need to realize—I wish it was something that could open their eyes, so they could see that so much is all about nothing. It's nothing.

"But, by the grace of God, my two kids could have been like a lot of other kids that have been in trouble, and had so many bad things happen, but I'm so thankful. I know that I'm

blessed to have two children who have never given me not one minute of trouble! Well, that's one good thing I can say from my life. I'm thankful for my children.

"I'm not going to say anything else [pause]. [Softly] Your life is what you make it. But sometimes people wait, and it's too late when they finally see the light [laughing]. And I'm still learning. You know, you never stop learning [pause]. I hope I helped you."

Analysis of Ann's Oral History

It is difficult to know how a researcher's questions will connect to the narrator. Initially my interview questions were not indicative of Ann's experiences. There appeared to be a disconnect between Ann's school experiences post-de jure de facto segregated Scarboro School and the interview questions I asked. The interview questions did not capture her experiences. For example, extracurricular activities, awards, playing with friends, or anything other than studying and working. Ann was purpose-driven. Every action was directed toward the purpose of going to school and getting an education, so she could have a better life.

My initial questions were inauthentic to Ann's desegregated school experience. Ann found her authentic voice when she bravely stepped outside my frame of questioning. My queries conflicted with her experiences. She authenticated her experiences in her own voice (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986). Words spoken in her own voice created a more fluid interview. For example, she didn't remember extracurricular activities because she had responsibilities at home. After school she had homework to complete and extra studying to do in order to understand all the new information presented to her that she had not been exposed

to previously. Then she had to cook, take care of the house, and help her younger siblings. Ann was the oldest child, so she had younger siblings who needed care. Her parents didn't attend PTA meetings because they worked a lot, so their children could have a better life. Ann didn't play with friends after school because she had responsibilities at home. Ann was not allowed outside of her yard, so she only played with her siblings, however her siblings had the freedom to leave the yard and house and play with friends. Ann understood her parents' expectations that she was required to go to school because her parents told her she had to go to school to be successful so a child respects her parents so she could have a better life. While attending desegregated schools, Ann found the teachers were nice but the kids were mean, and Ann was afraid to go to school. Ann reportedly hated school and asked her parents if she could go "home" to Alabama, where they originally lived and where she apparently had good memories. But her parents wanted to keep the family together in Oak Ridge. When Ann authenticated her story and opposed the "alien" script I read to her, she took ownership of her story. She translated her story and was able to construct her authentic experience attending desegregated Oak Ridge Schools—in her own voice (Gilligan, 1982).

hooks (1989) points to the epistemological benefits of voice for women of color. For a woman of color to become aware of her voice, the process of education for "critical consciousness" begins. Critical consciousness is the transformative, liberating process in feminist circles of defying fear and speaking thoughts that validate who we are and the varied dimensions of our unique, distinct lives. Critical consciousness is a female rite of passage that defies oppressive stereotypes of females as a common species with common experiences. Critical consciousness transforms females from a de-centered object to a voiced subject. As

objects, women are voiceless. As subjects, we speak for our powerful selves (Anzuldua, 1987; Lorde, 1978; 1984). In my interview with Ann, the scripted interview questions did not represent her school experiences. However, when Ann took ownership of her story and placed her authentic story at the center of the interview as the subject—not the object—of my questions the interview became more fluid and she was able to express herself in her own voice.

Specific Thoughts about the African American Female Trailblazers

Two women of color have claimed their distinct voices. I deliberately analyzed each interview from different critical perspectives to allow each one of their voices to be authentic. My goal was to resist stereotypes, so each woman created her own distinct voice within the interview. However, I had to leave my scripted interview before their voices could be revealed. Feminist scholars help my analysis.

Etter-Lewis (1991) offers a unique perspective with regard to researching African American women reclaiming their lives through oral narrative texts. Oral narrative centralizes a unique perspective of African-American women claiming self in narrative texts. Historically Western thought suggests the White male norm as the standard canon of Western ideas for judging and making claims about everyone's life experiences (Sommers, 1988). The White male standard is identified with a single voice as the center, or self, as a model for "all" life experiences. The expectation is that a single male voice has the power and authority to represent others, regardless of race or gender. Initially, when I asked "scripted" questions about their experiences I was talking from a White male lens. For example words from my

interview guide like your "extracurricular activities" or "your cultural experiences" didn't resonate for these African American females in 1955 through 1961 or 1964. But when I used words like "Tell me about you…" When I personalized the interview by speaking words that told them I want to see and hear from 'you" not a generalized "your" one speaks for all perspective. Had I not changed the interview to a more personal approach then I would have transgressed the very script this oral history was designed to remove from behind the silenced veil that has existed until now. When interview scripts are based on generalizations, then women are objectified and otherered As a result, views of self that differ from this norm are judged to be deviant or deficient. Neither can Helen and Ann's interviews be considered generalizable for "all" African American females. Their voices belong to each one individually.

White middle-class females condemned White male patriarchy and attempted to establish the White female middle class as normative to all women. This shifts the female experiences of White middle-class females to the center and is, therefore, problematic to the distinct experiences of women of color—or as in this study, African American women of color. To take White female experiences and generalize, or make their experiences the norm for all females, ignores women of color. Therefore it presents another set of problems (hooks, 1981; 1984; Lorde, 1984). The experiences of African American women in America are characterized at the intersections of race, gender, and social class with language, history, and culture (Etter-Lewis, 1991). Images of self cannot be generalized or judged by values and experiences that are male, White, or middle class. African American women's experiences are constructed from multiple layers that lie within the culturally relevant experiences of African

Americans. Therefore race, community, gender, family structure, socioeconomic class, and histories cannot be masked or generalized even between narrators. No one speaks for all African American females who desegregated Robertsville Junior High School in 1955. A life is more than race. Each narratology of Helen and Ann told their stories as each woman experienced desegregated Oak Ridge Schools. Their stories are multi-layered at the intersectionality of systems (Crenshaw, 1991). As Etter-Lewis (1991) informs us, a life is claimed in oral narrative at the intersections of race, gender, social class, language, history, and culture.

bell hooks (1984) also reveals the tensions and distinction between African American female voices and White females when research is generalized through a "one female speaks for all females" filter. hooks problematizes the invisibility of African American women's experience when seen through a White female lens pointing to Betty Friedan's (1963), "Feminist Mystique." Earlier, hooks (1981) titled her book "Ain't I a Woman" pointing to Sojourner Truth's historical reference to her biological female-ness by proclaiming "see ain't I a women." Ann exercised her agency and rescued my interview of her from objectifying African American females. Lorde (1984) in her "Letter to Mary Daly" provides a similar argument.

Last Words about Helen and Ann

Helen and Ann's stories reflect their individually separate experiences. Their experiences are not mirrors of each other, but they do have some similarities. Both are among the first seventh-grade African-American females to attend Robertsville Junior High School. Both

remember being treated fairly by all of the nice White teachers at Robertsville. Both are equally situated as trailblazers because they represent African-American women who entered Robertsville for the first time.

Yet each voice is distinct. To be fair, we must allow each narrator to claim her unique stories. Several inner scripts play out in each of their lives, such as a sense of responsibility to school; complying with their parents' expectations and examples of hard work; and the dynamics of family constellation, meaning Ann's sense of responsibility as the oldest female to remain home and watch over her siblings juxtaposed to Helen's more social activities and spending time away from home with her friends (Steelman, Powell, Werum, and Carter, 2002). Ms. Sebret saw good qualities in Ann and posited being a librarian as a career goal for her.

Helen was treated specially by Ms. Stuart, who treated Helen and her friend Lois to a sleepover. Helen shared her time with her teacher with her friend Lois. Ann's special time with a teacher was one-on-one time with Ms. Sebret. Other similarities include recognition of the educational expectations that were more rigorous at Robertsville Junior High School and Oak Ridge High School than Scarboro. Both students had Black friends and White friends. They both took different routes to obtaining high school diplomas. Both narrators were driven by aspirations for their futures—seeing education as the anchor and pole star to reach their goals. Both ladies yearn for the younger generation today to focus on the importance of education in order to have a better life.

A historical perspective of African American experiences in desegregated Oak Ridge junior high schools through oral narratives remains partial, as all history is partial truth (Thompson, 1998). African American trailblazers have begun to reconstruct Oak Ridge's history of school desegregation. The next group of African American trailblazers includes three students who began their desegregation experiences at Oak Ridge High School. Interestingly, both narratologies of the junior high school experience were African-American females. All of the high school narratologies are African American males.

Lawrence "L.C." Charles Gipson, African American Griot/ Trailblazer

"I started ORHS shortly before my fifteenth birthday, so I would have been fourteen. The school bus came by and all the Black kids got on the bus, and we would leave the valley and go to Robertsville, and the Robertsville kids got off, and the bus continued on to the high school. The bus pulled up in front of the school, we got off and found our classes. You know, thinking back, I cannot recall having any fear or being depressed about where I was going. We didn't get a dry run. We went in and signed up for classes. There might have been apprehension because you're going to an unknown. I was going to high school. Also I was going from a setting where I was in the unanimous majority, and now I'm greatly in the minority.

"You know, to be truthful, I think it is just human nature that I had some jitters and apprehensions about a new experience. I've always been one of those to just size up the

situation, do what I can to the best of my ability, and fit in and try not to make too many waves. Coming from one teacher all the way through who are all Black in an all-Black neighborhood community, and now I'm thrust over into a different-type setting where it's all new—it probably was a shock. When I first went to Oak Ridge High School, it was business as usual. Everything was really peaceful. I do not recall any of the teachers being cruel, being [pause] spiteful to me. But when school was out, you got on the school bus and you came home to Scarboro.

"During the school days there were little fights you would expect to take place with an 1,800 student body. Sometimes you walked off the bus, and some of the White students may be lined up because we'd always get off back then and walk across the bridge catwalk coming out of the parking lot, and they'd be lined up along there and you'd have to walk past, and somebody would say something after we passed by them. I think one time somebody painted something on the window, but that was the only time something major happened.

"I lived in Mississippi, so you knew how to respect White people and how to survive and do what was needed to see the next day. So you take that same training to Oak Ridge High School and do what is needed to further your education, so you could get to the next phase in your life. I admire people that came up before me and survived as a race under the conditions that we, as a race of people, have survived. It's no wonder that we have high blood pressure and some other stuff that we have. We had to be so strong, I think, as a race of people [pause]…we have gotten some of our race killed because we went out and did something that probably should have been done all along.

"I probably shouldn't be saying that, but we as Black people suppressed so much. We have been discriminated so much for no reason. It's like what you had to do when you go into town…you'd get off the sidewalk, off the street and let them [White people] go by; you don't make that eye contact; you look down, the whole nine yards. So you know, it was the same going from Scarboro—a Black school, all-Black community—and now you're going to the high school, so it's the same thing—not that you've got your tail between your legs, but still you do what is needed to get to the next day. Like I said, you do not go in there with a chip on your shoulder and react to every little thing that probably should be reacted to. Does it make it right? No, it did not. Was it the best environment and climate for the betterment of your education? No. [Pause] But you move on.

"I remember Clinton was going to Linden School down here in Oak Ridge because they bombed Clinton school. I remember going to school and the Clinton bus drove by, taking Clinton students down to Linden School here in Oak Ridge. But when they did the film about Clinton coming to Oak Ridge…the Black students in Oak Ridge…we didn't get a footnote or anything in there or what have you. I've never seen the *Clinton 12* (2007) series, the documentary (McDaniel, 2007). I know most of those Clinton 12 guys. We used to go to Clinton because it was the closest town to Oak Ridge. We'd go over there and play with them, fight with them, or what have you. I knew Maurice that died back here recently. But I've never gone to the museum. I may go take my grandkids. But for myself, I've never been. I'm proud of them, though.

"There was no one at the high school who I felt supported the Black students. I can't speak for the other students—you have to ask them. However, I didn't have any problem with the

teachers. They were all pretty liberal. I guess they knew that they could not do what was being done at some of the other schools because a lot of them had ties to the plant—their husbands may have worked there or somebody else, so if they got crazy, they knew they'd probably lose a lot and maybe even be gone! Oak Ridge plants required security, so there was a no playing around-type thing. So that's my thinking on why things went down so nice at the school.

"I do remember someone really helping me—Mrs. Isadora Sharper. Mrs. Sharper was very, very high on education because she tried to get me to go to KC [Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee, an HBCU where I earned my undergraduate degree]. I chose not to do it. Also, now that I think of it, I remember my algebra teacher, Miss Davis—she was real liberal, a real sweetheart of a person. I didn't have time to be nurtured with Miss Davis, my algebra teacher. Like Scarboro School, there was closeness and everybody cared.

"Then you go to the high school, and it's a different setting and I understand that. It's like going to college. They don't care. They read the roll every day—either you're here or you're not…they aren't going out looking for you. Larry's not here today, oh well. I felt like I was nurtured at Scarboro School. It was the same at Roane State—they didn't have time to nurture you because it's a business and each class period, a new group came through. You ask a question, you grasp—if you don't, there is no one who has time to explain it to you.

"I really, really, really missed going from Scarboro segregated school to an integrated school, and the closeness of Scarboro and the caring. That's one thing I really regret to this day about integration. I went to the high school, and you may go all year and have no more

than one or two classes with a Black student in your class. Not that you needed a Black in your class, but you could go all day long at the high school and not hardly see anybody Black."

Academic Achievement Awards at ORHS (L. C.)

"I don't recall any academic achievements. I was the first one in my family to graduate from high school, so I wanted to make sure I stayed the course and did the things that I had to do in four years and earn enough credits to graduate. I didn't want to do anything to disgrace or bring shame to my aunt and uncle because my uncle ended up being an associate pastor, and he was kind of the high religious-type person and a very strict disciplinarian. But I didn't want to bring any shame on him or my aunt."

African American Cultural and Community Connections to ORHS (L. C.)

"There was no Black History Month or Black history infused into the curriculum to make people [students] aware of what had really transpired in history. As a matter of fact, there's no way in a 28-day period in February to do a decent job and teach Black history. My kids, my grandkids, and great-grandkids are not being told what really happened in the past. It's not in the class schoolbooks. It wasn't in the schoolbooks when I went to school, and it still isn't in the school books now. It's not in any classes in any school. If you don't know your history, it can soon repeat itself.

"Kids need to be made aware of everyone who took part in the history of this country. I tell my grandkids and my great-grandkids and make they are aware of what took place because of

the color of our skin. Everybody Black here in Scarboro—we were all just surviving. For example, if we had something and the people next door didn't have it, we'd share. We all shared things with each other, and our doors were never locked. Scarboro community was like one big family because everybody was pretty much in the same boat. We felt rich together, although we were confined right here in Scarboro. Oak Ridge High School and being outside of Scarboro didn't give you that feeling.

"When some people got televisions in the community, we'd go look over each other's shoulders, trying to see sporting events. The telephone was a party line. We'd have to hang up when somebody wanted to make a call. We didn't get the feeling we were missing anything. Everybody was in the same pot of stew, and each house was the same pot of stew but in a different location."

Extracurricular Activities (L. C.)

"I didn't play sports because I wouldn't be able to play if I did make the team. My first year at ORHS, I went out for the baseball team. I was pretty good at baseball, and I was one of the last ones to get cut, and good thing I did because I couldn't have played anyway—I'd have just been on the team.

"I went out for the basketball team, and I ended up getting cut. Jim Lewis and I were the last two to get cut. There would be a list in the gym. They wouldn't tell you to your face you've been cut, they posted a list. Just like your grades, they posted your grades after school. Anyway if I had made the team, and I would have to give up my time, and I'd have to get a ride after practice back to the Scarboro community.

“Robert Berry, he was a friend who could give me a ride. Fred Guinn and Robert Berry made the team, but they were not playing. They were practicing, but they weren’t playing in the games. Fred Guinn was the first Black on our basketball team. But Fred only played when he was given permission to play. Even at home, he had to get permission. They went out of town and did not play. I was looking through some things, and here’s Robert Berry [indicating], who was in my class, but he did not graduate. He lived in a house right back here. [Indicating] He was a tall fellow. At the time, he was about 6' 4" or 6' 5" and a good athlete. He was on the team, but he didn’t play. Okay, now, this is the same team that went to Lake City or somewhere, and won the championship. Do you see Berry in that? He didn’t play. Now he is on the team, and they go to Lake City to play in the tournament [pause]…they tell him, ‘you can’t play.’ So you had your so-called athletes that were White because Blacks couldn’t play sports. You could be on the team, but you couldn’t play.

“Later Blacks played at ORHS in all the games. I think Mr. Leroy White was the first. I may be wrong; I think he was the first Black to play, and he was a good-sized kid and quite good. Matter of fact, he could have been a great player at UT [University of Tennessee], but then his father died. I wasn’t aware of it, but we had a conversation one time and we were talking, and he said he could have been the first Black baseball or even football player at UT, but he chose not to do it.

“Wallace was the first one in basketball at UT and Les McClain. Les McClain was the first Black player at UT in football. But they [UT coaches and sports team recruiters] asked Leroy to come over and play on the team, but he turned it down. He said he regrets it to this day. Les

has an engineering degree, and he's doing quite well for himself. Matter of fact, his son ended up playing in the NFL [National Football League]."

Social Life at ORHS (L. C.)

"I had a lot of White friends. Like Jack—to this day, we're good friends. Sylvia Brinkman and Skippy Brinkman—we were classmates in the same class. Larry Richardson— we're still good friends. But they didn't come over to my house, and I've never been in their house. This is '55 through mid-'59. We were so isolated in Scarboro. I didn't hang out with my new friends that I've met during the course of the day at ORHS…it didn't happen. After school you're back in the community, a segregated community.

"Their families may have been liberal, but if you tried to go to their house, then their next-door neighbor didn't want you near, so you didn't put yourself in that situation. So I did not go to any houses of my White friends. They had their dances and sock hops, but we couldn't go. You couldn't go down to the restaurant and have an ice cream soda or a Coke after school with them. It was forbidden. You were forbidden to go to the Wildcat Den. We couldn't go to the swimming pool. You can't go to the playhouse because, you know, you're forbidden. I caddied at Oak Ridge Country Club. I used to go down there then I would walk back home from the country club. I caddied with some of the guys and we sat down there and we'd talk; we were acquaintances, but as far as being what I call a real friend, it was a pseudo thing."

"I don't have any bitterness, but I still feel like I would love to have been able to have a class reunion and feel good attending a class reunion, and talk to someone who was in ninth, tenth, eleventh grade with me about what we did at the high school. So to this day, I have not

attended a reunion. I served on the Hall of Fame Committee together with Jackie Pope, who was a football star in high school. Even today Jackie and I are good friends. Sylvia and Jackie are always begging me and emailing me, 'You coming to the reunion this year?' I will probably never go. I don't feel like I can go over there. I don't need to go over there to the reunion and have them talking about what 'we' did back in '55, '58, and '59. You did it, but I did not.

"I may be wrong for approaching it that way, but to thyself be true. Why would I give up two or three hours and $50, or whatever, to go hear my good friends talk about what 'they' did back then? They did it, but I didn't. I was not allowed to do the same things and go to the same places. We were at ORHS at the same time, but we didn't do things together. I don't put myself in situations like that."

"May I be completely honest? I was going through looking at an article some young lady wrote about our class—the class of '59. I was reading it this morning, and it was interesting to see that she doesn't really talk about the ORHS class of '59 that was my class and the first class to go all the way through integration at ORHS. That's a great achievement for our class. She talked about how many doctors came out of our class, and she put one little hint in—one little line there someplace in there that there was a few Blacks that kind of contributed to the class and didn't have any problems.

"But she's speaking of her experience, you know, like we're talking now. Her perspective on the class—the great class of '59—she said we were a good class, but it's a different experience than I had—not because I didn't become a doctor or engineer or what have you,

but [prolonged pause]…there's another story. She was there and she told her story. Not the great story of the Blacks who were successful in desegregating and graduated the first class all the way through ORHS. Our story wasn't important, but it was the most *important* class achievement.

"So what did me—the Black kid—do for social activities? I was always running with guys who were a bit older than me because they could drive, and I couldn't and didn't have a car, and we would go to Knoxville to the swimming pool across from the college. It was an all-Black swimming pool. So there would be eight or nine of us in one vehicle. Back then you could do that. Gas was twenty cents, or whatever it was, a gallon. We would ride over there, swim, then get in the car and drive back to Oak Ridge. Sometimes we'd find an old swimming hole to get in, wade around, and swim in the water or what have you. We had one boy, Jesse, almost drowned there. But anyway, that's all you had.

"Also as far as maybe problems between Blacks and Whites…well, you had the so-called jocks at ORHS like your football players and your basketball players. They were muscular and would try you, but we held our own and we let them know that if there's going to be a fight, then they would be up for a 'real' fight. The Black kids—we were in most of the fights. Quite often the fights were in the gym classes. Once I was in the locker room by myself, and a bunch of White boys tried to start a fight with me…well [laughing], you had to know how to take care of yourself. Nowadays people would probably be in jail if they fought the way you had to fight back then, but that's just the way it was at a different time."

Graduation (L. C.)

"When I graduated from Oak Ridge High School, I was the first one in my family to graduate from high school because my sister, two years older than me, she got married when she was young and did not finish high school. I had achieved high school graduation, and I said *I'm going to get me a job*, which I did. As I said earlier, Ms. Sharper, she talked to me about applications and things and that I needed to get into KC. I said no. I regretted it later on that I did not take her up on that.

"In my graduating class, there was 350 who graduated. Not that many began with me in ninth grade, but these were the ones that actually walked and got the diploma. So you know, there's always a dropout. There were only four Blacks in my graduating class—two boys and two girls. Jim Lewis, the one you saw—the newspaper article that I did on the school thing— Jimmy died about two, three or four years ago. Roberta Hawkins—she died several years back also. The only survivors are me and Alma Carter. Alma Carter is still in Oak Ridge.

"So there were two boys and two girls who were Black in my graduating class. Now there was more in '55 when we started in ninth grade—at least 20 in the eighth-grade class at Scarboro. But when school started in the fall, everybody did not go to the high school for various reasons. Gene Wright's family moved to Alcoa. There were several other families that moved for whatever the reason—may have been a job, maybe they just didn't want to integrate. When we got to graduation day in May of '59, four of us [African-American students] were there."

Thoughts about Desegregation versus Segregated Schools (L. C.)

"I regret integration because we had a good school and a good climate at Scarboro. I know we had more opportunities with desegregation than what we were getting, but I thought [pause] they should have kept Scarboro School open for Black kids. They should have upgraded Scarboro, put better teachers in there, and put better subject matter in there.

"We didn't have chemistry labs at Scarboro. I was a good math student, but we didn't have anybody to teach algebra or plane geometry. When we got to ORHS, I took Algebra I as a ninth-grader, and some of the students in my ninth-grade class probably had algebra in the seventh or eighth grade before they got to ORHS. So one thing that desegregation did was [pause]…exposed us to more classes. I guess better teaching and things. But I really liked and missed that closeness that I had growing up, coming from a segregated Mississippi, segregated Oak Ridge—then go to desegregated schools with 1,700 White students and a handful of Blacks, and trying to find my place and make sure you don't do anything that causes trouble.

"You know, thinking back, I cannot recall having any fear or being depressed where I was going to. We didn't get a dry run, as I recall. We went in and signed up for classes. Then the first day of school, the bus pulled up in front of the school, we got off, and found our classes. I don't recall having any apprehension because you're going to an unknown. Going to high school and now you're going to a setting whereas you were in unanimous majority, and now you're greatly in the minority. You're going to have a different teacher, what, five

times—coming from one teacher all the way through, all Black. All Black neighbors, all-Black community, and now you're thrust into a different-type setting where it's all new.

"But to be truthful, I think it's just human nature that I had some jitters and apprehensions about a new experience. I've always been one of those to just size up the situation, and go ahead and do what I can to the best of my ability and fit in, and try not to make too many waves. Business as usual. But I totally believe they knew they could not be out there with picket signs and raising holy get-up 'cause they would be identified, their security clearance would be yanked, and then their job would be gone. So everything was really calm.

"In the course of time, little fights and things you expect to take place—a handful of Blacks entering a student body of 1,800. That had never existed before. We just never have any major problem. We didn't have any demonstrations. Sometime we would get off the bus, and some of the White students may be lined up because we'd always get off near the bridge where the bus would put us out there. We'd walk across a little catwalk there and they'd be lined there, and you'd have to walk past. No signs and picketing. I think somebody painted something in one of the windows but nothing major. But I do feel like it was because of the plant and you had to have your security clearance, so there was no playing around.

"We just didn't have any trouble like Clinton, where somebody bombed the school; we still had our little things that students have on a daily basis that we had to deal with. At ORHS, we [Black students] still had those students [White students] who would push your

buttons when you're walking down the hall and when you are at your locker—where they'd be sneaky and try to push your buttons, so it wasn't easy for us to retaliate and do something that was going to bring the police in and get us kicked out of school, et cetera. So we had our little fistfights, you know, every once in a while. But you had little fistfights at the Black school. But it was nothing that was major. But…you knew you were still being tested."

L.C.'s Career after ORHS

"After I graduated, I worked at Oak Ridge Hospital for one year in the dietary department. I started working in the cafeteria serving lunch and breakfast. Then I started at the plant in '63 and thought I had died and gone to heaven because of all the money I started making! I was just 23 years old, and I started in the biology division. I was hired into the germ-free research group. The guy that hired me is Don Robie, and to this day he and I are still good friends.

"When I hired in, there were two Blacks in the group, me and Bennett Woods. I was the first Black in the biology division to be moved into a supervisor position. I worked hard and I always went the extra mile in whatever job assignment he gave me to do. Although I still did not have my degree, I could talk with anyone no matter what level of education they had—I could talk one-on-one with the mathematicians and explain an analysis of an experiment.

"I eventually started taking a couple of classes here and there. I started out at UT just taking some night classes. I would take two—never did get any credits to amount to anything. Finally I thought, *I'm going to finish for real this time*, and I did. It took me seven years to get an associate's degree, but I got it. In 1985 I was 45 years old, and Pat Summit was the speaker

at my graduation. My wife said one day, “Did you know Pat Summit was the speaker at your graduation?” [Laughing] I said, “No, Mrs. Gipson, I was just happy to get out of school.” [Laughing] It took me seven years. But I stuck to it. [I took a picture of his graduation program, located in the back]. Then the last 15 years, I moved on to the procurement department. I headed up the procurement department and did all the buying and service contracts—the whole nine yards—and retired doing that.”

Final Thoughts (L. C.)

“We’ve got parents today who don’t care about education. Like I said earlier, most of the mothers in this community when I was young—they were not educated, but they saw the need for education. I’ve had my achievements. I didn’t get a Ph.D. or doctor’s professional degree. But I won’t stand for someone putting me down, intentionally calling me names.

“I spoke to you and told you at some point we need to do away with the Black History Month. We need to do year-round Black history education. In some way it’s kind of sad to see not only what I went through—being the first freshman during the first year of integration—but what my aunt and uncle—people brought up in this community—went through while I was still at Scarboro. When I was still down in Mississippi, I think of the things we had to endure. Not only did we not have the right to vote, but we did not have the right to get a better education, to be exposed to it, to have the opportunity to do any of those things to make a better life for yourself.

“Today students are not taking advantage of their education. Kids today do not take advantage of the opportunities for a good education that has been granted to them. Education

was not available to my family in Mississippi. But my parents, grandparents, and even myself endured, went through, and took advantage of the opportunities we had. Charter schools and all these other little programs steal monies away from public schools, so public schools don't have adequate funding. It's so sad."

Lori: *We talked about some good things about desegregation. We've talked about some things that weren't so good. And you've given me just a wealth of information. But is there anything else that maybe I've missed or that you want to make sure that you say?*

"I know things can change. Like I'm in good health now, and I could wake up in the morning and say, 'Well, what the hell—I've had a good ride [laughing].' I was a Black man in America who survived."

Analysis of L.C.'s Oral History

L.C., an African-American griot, offers his voice as a counter-story—through the lens of CRT—to the "master narrative." L.C.'s narratology, which reveals his refusal to attend ORHS class reunions, reminded me of Frederick Douglass' (Stepto, 1991) July 5th speech in Rochester, New York, entitled "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro." This speech commemorated Independence Day, 1852. In this speech, Douglass acknowledged that he was not included in the Independence Day celebration of White Americans because he was not free: "What, to an American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him more than any other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim…" (p. 31).

However L.C. has been the most featured of the narrators in this study in newspaper articles about Oak Ridge desegregation. Most recently these articles include the February 11, 2009 article in the Knoxville News Sentinel and the February 16, 2009 Oak Ridger newspaper that included pictures of Fred Guinn (a griot included in this study) and Jim Lewis (deceased). L.C. refuses to participate in the "master narrative" by attending his class reunions. He claims the reunions are for Whites and what they did—he didn't do those things, so he doesn't allow himself to pay money and listen to their stories as if they belonged to him as well.

A CRT perspective centers race in this analysis. Race-based analysis centralizes the stories of people of color at the intersectionality of oppression. It is what CRT scholars deem the "master narrative"—majoritarian narratives that bundle past experiences into presuppositions and shared stories that carry layers of assumptions that majoritarian point of reference belong to everyone (Solórzano and Yosso, 2009).

L.C. does not buy into these assumptions. He talks about a classmate who wrote about his graduating class in a recent newspaper article and never mentioned that they were the first desegregated class of ORHS to start as freshman and carry through to graduation. He did not like the fact that his story and his claim to fame were dismissed, and this further corroborates his reason for not attending high school reunions. Majoritarian stories—whether told by people of color, women, or majoritarian culture—are never questioned, according to Higginbotham (1992). Majoritarian accounts are the "natural" stories of everyday living. L.C. challenges the majoritarian narrative by stating that their stories do not tell his story or experience at ORHS.

L.C. was interviewed over a year ago as part of the Center for Oak Ridge Oral History (COROH) collection, which included oral stories from long-time Oak Ridge African-Americans. The interviewer focused on L.C.'s career as an Oak Ridge African-American working in the biology division of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the recent discovery of the Scarboro cemetery near Oak Valley Baptist Church, where he works to maintain the landscaping properties of the cemetery. The interview did not discuss, nor did L.C. talk about, his place in Oak Ridge history as a member of the inaugural class of ORHS desegregation from 1955 to 1959. But L.C. has earned other coverage of desegregation.

In the February 2009 issue of the Knoxville News Sentinel, L.C. is featured in an article entitled "Before Clinton, before Little Rock, there was Oak Ridge." The author, Bob Fowler, interviewed L.C. and highlighted him as one of the 35 students who started school at ORHS in September 1955. The article was written for a majoritarian audience, touting how nice everyone was and how fairly the African-American students were treated. L.C. didn't discuss that he wasn't allowed to go to the Wildcat Den or play golf on the Oak Ridge golf course; that he didn't have equal access to the swimming pool; nor was he pushed to achieve in mathematics, a subject in which he excelled. Standard majoritarian stories allow negative stereotypes to be maintained about people of color.

The master narrative about Oak Ridge versus Clinton is maintained in that the "government" controlled Oak Ridge, which is the reason there was no violence in Oak Ridge but there was in Clinton. This gives the impression that due to social control by the U.S. government, Oak Ridge was peaceful and White people did not defy desegregation

because it could cost them their jobs. It dismisses the intentions of the Black population to strive for better educational opportunities and the involvement of parents to see to it that their children attended school ready to learn.

Repeating the master narrative silences the lived experiences of people of color by focusing on the goodness of the Whites and the passivity of the Blacks. L.C. refuses to participate in what he suspects will be the extolling of the master narrative at the reunion events, reinforcing desegregation as the transition from the poor, inferior, Black, segregated school to the great, resource-rich, highly intelligent teachers in the all-White school. The master majoritarian story tells us that all Black neighborhoods are bad neighborhoods with bad schools whose students perform poorly. It links everything bad to people of color and everything good to Whites (Solórzano & Yosso, 2009). By not confronting the majoritarian story, desegregated educational practices appear neutral and objective, which silences non-majoritarian culture. Stock stereotype prevail that rely on covertly linking people of color, and in some cases, women, to inferiority. The White middle to upper-middle class appears to embody what is good.

However as Solorzano and Yosso (2009; 2001) suggest, when we do not speak, our feelings and emotions remain bundled inside. Voiced stories can serve to build community among other members of the community of silence. Voices coming out of silence can place the wisdom of African-American experiences at the center by providing context and understanding, ideally transforming established beliefs about people at the margins of society.

The voices of African-American griots can build community. African-American griots like L.C. open new windows of understanding. His story teaches other African-Americans that during the early days of desegregation, they were not alone in their experience. His narration helps reconstruct the history of Oak Ridge public school desegregation into a richer historical account grounded in real-life experiences of desegregation. His story is data contextualized in the social situation of desegregation.

L.C.'s story generates knowledge by ameliorating conditions of inferiority by addressing how African-Americans experienced and responded to the U.S. educational system. L.C. was a successful scientist who earned a comfortable living. He was able to complete his college degree as well as pay for his children to earn college degrees. L.C.' story challenges biological and cultural deficit stories.

The fact that L.C.'s story is missing from the voices of desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools centers around race and, therefore, centralizes racism because his story has not been told until now. My shared, marginalized-group membership with L.C. helps re-position the discussion of Oak Ridge desegregation to a site of possibility (hooks, 1990). As Gloria Anzaldua (1990) suggests, counter-stories broaden and transform the space of possibility solely occupied by White men and women to include people of color. L.C.'s story is a response to Anzaldua's findings (1990). L.C.'s account of the past helps other voices of desegregation transform the historical discounting of African-Americans during desegregation of Oak Ridge Schools.

Henry "Fred" Guinn, African American Griot/Trailblazer

The Beginning of Oak Ridge School Desegregation

"I was only at Oak Ridge High School one year and then I graduated. At first I thought, *I'm not going to ORHS!* But I did go because I had to—there wasn't any place else for me to go to school in Oak Ridge. People were serious about making sure we were treated right. So there was no trouble for us. We'd go up to the Scarboro Center, and Mr. Scott would ask us if we had any problems or anything, or Mr. Paul White would see us somewhere. He'd ask, 'You all having any problems over there?' We'd say no. Mr. White said, 'If you do have problems, let us know.' But they just didn't mess with us over there at ORHS.

"I know I've seen the pictures from that school in Arkansas, and those girls—they'd walk in behind the Black kids and kick their ankles. We didn't have anything like that. People were serious about making sure we were treated right. The only problem that we had was the first day of school. We'd come off the hill off the turnpike and walked down the field there; on the cafeteria wall it said, 'Go home, nigger.' That was the first day at Oak Ridge High School. I arrived at 7:00 in the morning because I had a 7:30 gym class. But when the rest of the students got there, the walls were clean, windows cleaned—everything. We never had anything else like that no more [laughing].

"The principal was good at Oak Ridge High School. The assistant principal—he was okay, kind of mean. I heard he was kind of racist. But he wasn't that way with me. It might be because he was up in age, and everybody assumed that he was from the old way. Mr. Armstrong, Coach Armstrong, was a football coach. One of the boys got into it. You know how boys are— we'd have little scuffles—and one boy pulled a knife way up there in the A building, the main building. [Laughing.] Jack Armstrong came down and grabbed that boy's arm [demonstrating]. 'Give me that knife! Now *everybody* go to class.' That was it. [Laughing]. But a knife, if you were in school today...woo! You're liable to get a whole year and not get to go to school for a year!"

Relationships between Black Students and White Students (Fred)

"We had a good relationship—that is, between the Blacks and Whites at ORHS. My parents were afraid we were going to get hurt! They found this fellow in government that runs the place, and he assured my parents nobody was going to touch us. The year before desegregation, Scarboro junior class students and ORHS junior class students switched schools, so some of us already knew each other. Also we played ball right here in Scarboro all summer long with each other, so again we already knew each other. We got along with the students from ORHS because some of them had come over to Scarboro the year before and sat in classes.

"Mr. Brown was the only teacher who went to ORHS from Scarboro, and he was given the worst kids in the school in his classes. But they were crazy about him. Because Mr. Brown—he was crazy himself [laughing]. He could hang with them. He told his students they had five

minutes to get to class, and if they weren't sitting down when the bell rang, he closed the door. You had better be on time in Mr. Brown's class. My parents had a good relationship with my teachers at Oak Ridge High School. My parents got along with my teachers at Scarboro High School, too. Everybody got along good.

Memories (Fred)

"I was on the basketball team, and we were all friendly to each other. Dr. Art Diamond's son, after a game, he'd come up to me and say, 'You played a good game,' or something like that. Matter of fact, he wrote me a letter about two years ago and told me what it meant to watch me play. Perry Wallace, he's a university professor—he was one of the best basketball players in the state back then. Perry Wallace [Tennessee Basketball Hall of Fame, played for Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee], he played for Pearl [a high school in Nashville]. He wrote and told me what it meant to watch me play basketball in high school because he couldn't play on an integrated team at Pearl. I've seen other boys from the team around here in Oak Ridge, and we all talk when we see each other.

"The ORHS basketball coach was Coach Ben Martin. Coach Martin was a good coach. Teams in upper east Tennessee and Virginia said they wouldn't play Oak Ridge if Oak Ridge 'brings those…'—I'm not going to tell you what they said. But anyway, Coach Martin told those schools if they won't play against us, then Oak Ridge isn't going to play those schools. So then they changed and said he could bring us. But later he couldn't trust how the White people would act, so he didn't take us. Other teams in Knoxville wouldn't play us. Also schools in surrounding counties wouldn't play us."

The Ways of Black and White Folks (Fred)

"People in Oak Ridge stood up for our rights as Black people. Nobody was going to come in here and mess with us and run over us. Like one night, we were at a place in Oak Ridge owned by a man—real big man—in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), and he told us we couldn't come in his place. He talked a pretty big game. Well, five or six White guys with us—they went down and told him to come outside and say that in front of everybody, including us Black boys. Well, the man threatened to come outside, and my friends said 'come out' and 'we'd all be out here waiting for you.' My friends told him to talk in front of all of us, including us Black kids. He never came out. Blacks and Whites played ball together. We played on every ball field around Oak Ridge. We could go anywhere we wanted in Oak Ridge and we did! We would feel safe anywhere we went. It wasn't like that where I lived in West Tennessee.

"In West Tennessee, I used to go pick up our pastor and walk him by this field, and if we met White people walking, we had to go down in the field, move over, and let them pass by. Same thing [laughing] on the sidewalk—you'd get over and let them pass by, you know. But one day my brother and first cousin from over in Selmer, Tennessee (you know it's about ten miles from Savannah, Tennessee, where I came from)—so my first cousin and my brother were out there in the field digging a gas pipe, and here comes some pretty Black girls.

So my cousin Leroy said he's going to say something to those girls because they were Black. Well they were light-skinned and those White men in charge thought they were White girls, so they told my cousin that if he wanted to keep his job, he'd better keep his mouths

closed! Well my cousin was out there digging ditches, and he and my brother thought *you don't know what those White men might do to them*, thinking those girls were White when they are Black. So they never went back [laughing], so they didn't go back to work anymore. They couldn't take any chances in West Tennessee.

Fred Talks about Life at ORHS and Oak Ridge

"I guess we all kind of stuck together, the juniors and seniors. So my best friends were J.C. and Clarence Faulkins. Both of them are dead now. We were all running buddies. They were seniors and I was a junior, but we'd always be together. J.C., he was just about blind, born blind. He had those thick, double-lens glasses. We'd be out there playing ball and he'd drop his glasses while we were playing ball, and he'd be feeling around on the floor, patting the floor, trying to find his glasses, and we'd tell him 'Boy, get up from there! And we'd have to help him find his glasses!' [Laughing.]

"He was up here in Oak Ridge from Atlanta not too long ago visiting his cousin on Benedict. He asked me to go get Clarence for him and bring him over to see him, and we'd all get together. So I went to get Clarence, but he just had had surgery and was cut from way down here [indicating] to way up to here [indicating], so Clarence couldn't come. But Clarence asked me—he said, 'Will you do something for me?' I said, 'What?' He said, 'When I get well, drive me down to Atlanta to see J.C.?' I said, 'Sure, yeah, we'll go down there." But we never went. Both of them have died. I really looked up to both of them. They were seniors and I was a junior, but they were my real good friends, and I really listened to them when they told me things because they were a grade older, you know?"

Academic/Educational Experiences at Oak Ridge High School (Fred)

"I liked all my teachers at Oak Ridge High School, like Mr. Clinton, and Ms. Marsh— she was from somewhere around here—she was a math teacher; and Mr. Elam, he taught social studies. They went overboard to make sure nobody mistreated us. I don't know, maybe it was because their jobs depended on it [laughing]."

Social Experiences (Fred)

"We already knew each other at ORHS because in the summertime, we'd leave the Scarboro Center and go over to one of the ball fields and have a softball game. We knew all the boys—they'd go up on our hillside and play up there. Then we'd go over to one of the other ball fields near their place and we'd play there. We'd probably go to three or four playgrounds in a day and play softball. But that's all we were doing—just keeping ourselves out of trouble. [Laughing.] I didn't have any problems. They wouldn't mess with our friends over there, and there probably weren't enough of our friends to mess with them. Now those sophomores—they had a little problem over there, but [laughing] they made their own problems."

Personal Impact of Desegregation (Fred)

"At Oak Ridge High School, I had a good group of teachers. They all looked after us and everything. But they were kind of elderly people, too, and they didn't want to lose their jobs. [Laughing.] I took Auto Mechanics at ORHS. We had to work on cars over by the swimming pool [the Oak Ridge swimming pool is across from ORHS on Robertsville Road]. Everyone

in the class had to walk back past the swimming pool to go to class. There were two sophomore girls walking past two White boys in cars. This one White boy took one look at those Black girls, and this White boy said, 'Guinn, I don't mean no harm.' I said, 'What do you mean, you don't?' He said, 'I just didn't know Black people were built that good.' I don't know what he thought Black people looked like other than good?" [Laughing.]

Community and School Connection after School Desegregation (Fred)

"The relationship between Oak Ridge community and Scarboro community was fine. My parents went to PTO meetings over there."

Extracurricular Activities (Fred)

"I played basketball over there in '56. We went over there in '55. It wasn't but two of us on the team then in '56. They took everybody who played at Scarboro on the team, but just two of us went out. But now they [Oak Ridge High School] puts more and more Blacks on the team, and at one time the girls' team at ORHS had all Black girls on the team." [Laughing.]

Personal Thoughts About Desegregation Versus Segregation (Fred)

"Desegregation was good back then. But things nowadays are different. Things are done differently now. Back then you didn't get expelled from school. You might get spanked on the hand and it's over. But now they want to kick you out of school. I can see some of the stuff that these kids do that they need kicking out of school. Their parents keep upholding junk they do. We need gun control. Parents take these kids to the firing range and let them learn to shoot

guns at targets not hunt animals. Then what do these kids do? They go shoot the schools up because they've already practiced shooting at targets that look like people!

But now today it's a different ballgame than it was back then. Some of it is racial, but some of it is from the teachers. Teachers don't keep in touch with the kids. When I was back in school, it was different than it is now. Back then if the teacher had something to say to you—to explain what you did wrong—she'd make you stand up in front of the whole class and explain to your face what you did wrong. Teachers can't talk to kids anymore or they get in trouble. But I don't think we need to go back to segregated schools. No.

"As far as race now, when I worked at the plant there was a restroom they had painted over, but the paint came through and it had said, 'White only.' They painted over that because you can't have that anymore. I think that's good because it shouldn't be separated 'White Only.' Everybody gained from desegregation. I don't think we lost anything. Blacks only gained from desegregation.

"You take the kids like I was talking about—Coach Leonard at Austin-East—if those boys had the chance back in 1955, '56, they'd be in the pros. They were that good! But they didn't have the opportunity because of segregation, so no Black could play. Bill Russell, Oscar Robertson, and Wilt Chamberlain—they were good. They were so good the White people couldn't keep them off those teams just because they were Black. They couldn't help but put them on the team!" [Laughing.]

Happiest Moments (Fred)

"Two of my happiest moments at Oak Ridge High School were being out there on the basketball court playing ball and my high school graduation. When I walked across that stage and they gave me my diploma, I was the happiest man in the world! There were about four-hundred graduates that year.

"After I graduated, I asked my dad to get me a job with him. He knew the union men from Knoxville, and I asked him to help me get a job at the plant. He told me 'No! I don't want you down there.' So a local lady got me a job at the hospital. But I wanted to go to the plant and work at K-25 (a building within the Oak Ridge nuclear reservation), like my father and brother"

Reflections (Fred)

"Well, overall, desegregation of Oak Ridge was peaceful. No problems but maybe one or two problems, when we had one or two of the Black boys who started dating White girls. But other than that, there weren't any problems. We got along very good. I've been invited back for reunions, but I don't ever go. My friend Archie Lee lives out in California; he said he was going over there. But I don't know if he went or not. Most of the people there are White boys and White girls. None of the Black people go over there [laughing].

"I remember The Platters being everybody's favorite singing group. There was James Brown and Little Richard. Oh that James Brown, he was something. One day he was performing at a park here [laughing], went upstairs onto the balcony, and he jumped all the

way from up on the balcony down to the stage and start dancing. That was like ’57, somewhere along in there. ’57, ’58! That James Brown was something. I remember some of my favorite things were watching Roadrunner cartoons and Dick Tracy—stuff like that. But stuff they have on TV now? I get sick looking at it. My cousin down in Savannah, Tennessee, used to call me ‘Bean’ because I liked eating beans so much [laughing].

“As far as being a trailblazer or part of the Civil Rights Movement? I say we should have gone over and helped Clinton out because we were so peaceful here, and over there they were acting up, turning the buses over and everything. They had to send the National Guard to Clinton. But what makes it so bad—I go to Clinton now and you see some old men who can’t hardly walk, and they have a snarl on their face and look at you to see if you going to look at them or move out of the way, and they can’t hardly walk themselves [laughing]. You know, it’s like they’re still back in the old days! They don’t want you to look at them!

But Blacks and Whites over at Clinton High School are together now. I see some of those boys from Clinton now or all the boys from Knoxville—I know them all—and they used to tell me they used to say ‘I wished I was you out there playing ball in Oak Ridge, playing together with White boys, too. I wished I was you!’ But they couldn’t because their school was segregated, and they couldn’t play ball except against segregated schools for a long time. But I’m telling you…anything I said today…well, if I said it, it’s true [laughing].”

Fred—a CRT Analysis

CRT scholars place race in the foreground by attempting to uncover that desegregation proposes to undo past racial injustices on White American terms, instantly improving social

conditions and eradicating racism in education for people of color (Parker and Lynn, 2009). Fred's story helps us see the desegregation of Oak Ridge schools through another set of eyes (Delgado, 1989 cited in Parker & Lynn, 2009). Real-life experiences from the past connect our understanding of the hierarchal relationships of power that protect the interests of White European-Americans over people of color that can be transformative to achieve justice (Matsuda, 1987; Parker and Lynn, 2009; Williams, 1991).

Fred's story documents the racism he experienced while playing basketball at the school. The coach maintained a basketball schedule where Fred's playing time was determined by the other school's decision. The interests of the White basketball players to continue to play overrode Fred's inability to play because he was Black. The ORHS coach could have changed the schedule to play against teams willing to play the best ORHS basketball players. The ORHS basketball coach was in a position to truly desegregate by playing against Black schools along with White schools that agreed to play ORHS.

The legacy of the segregationist-turned- integrationist coach at the University of Alabama, "Bear" Bryant, comes to mind. He realized after the dismal 1970 season that if he was going to continue to win, he needed to be able to recruit Black players to his Alabama football team. The 1971 season was known for Bryant's return to college football's winningest teams and for Alabama being one of the first schools in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) to recruit Black athletes. Coach Bear Bryant earned a national title two years after recruiting Black players.

CRT scholars recognize desegregation as an educational experiment that few were equipped to carry out. Fred's story further builds the case against desegregation as a panacea for past racial injustices because for the first time in an educational setting, he was discriminated against while playing basketball. While at Scarboro, he was able to play basketball because of his athletic ability. At ORHS his ability did not matter—only his race mattered (West, 1993/ 2001). Segregated Black basketball players lauded Fred because he played in an integrated setting that they were denied.

Fred's story is connected to Villenas, Deyhle, and Parker's (1999) account of social justice validity, which is an idea suggested by Deyhle and Swisher (1997) informed by their review of the literature on Native American and First Nations education. Deyhle and Swisher (1997) suggest that social justice validity challenges White supremacist actions that maintain discriminatory practices of inequitable opportunity in educational settings by neglecting minority rights—in this case, the right of Fred to be fully immersed into the ORHS basketball team based on his ability. Fred was further marginalized by sitting on the bench during a game, and he was not allowed to go to the game at all when the team played schools that would not play against ORHS if Black players were seen or played on the team.

It would be ten years before Willie Golden became the first African-American captain of the ORHS basketball team based on his ability. However Fred paved the way by breaking the color barrier in high school basketball in the state of Tennessee. Fred acknowledges in his oral history of desegregation that he received letters from Perry Wallace, who played for the all-Black Pearl High School in Nashville, Tennessee. Wallace eventually went on to become a Vanderbilt University basketball player and was inducted into the Vanderbilt University

Basketball Hall of Fame. Perry wrote to Fred and told him how much he admired Fred for being able to play on an integrated high school basketball team.

Fred's story breaks the precept of the dominance of success based on merit, equality, and objectivity—entrenched and unquestioningly accepted by the larger society—to legitimize narratives of racial discrimination against people of color. Fred had the athletic ability to play basketball, but he was not allowed to play based on the color of his skin—not because he wasn't capable. He was allowed to be a member of the ORHS basketball team, as long as he accepted that he would not be allowed to play in all of the games. Some might argue that this as a normal part of being on any athletic team. Team players aren't guaranteed to play in all of the games. This is true. But in Fred's situation, his playing time was conditional and based on the other team's willingness to play against a Black basketball player—not based on his capability to play basketball. The concept of CRT exposes—in Fred's own voice—the reality of ORHS' racial desegregation. Within Oak Ridge and outside of Oak Ridge, Fred experienced endemic racism.

Fred's White friends attempted to stand up against racism when they confronted the White storekeeper. Fred's White friends were color-conscious CRT followers even before CRT became a theory. Fred's White friends would be identified as 'allies' on behalf of people of color. Allies are members of the dominant culture considered to be anti-racist activists who are clearly identifiable as allies to people of color in the struggle against racism (Tatum, 2009).

Helms (1992), an African-American counselor and educational psychologist, offer a model for White racial-identity development. Helms' model recognizes that in U.S. society, racial group- membership identity will eventually occur. A White person becomes aware of his or her Whiteness, and through several developmental stages, accepts his or her socially constructed, historical and psychological view of Whiteness. White identity can be integrative and White can become willing allies. White allies swim against the tide of cultural and institutional racism (p. 87). In order to end racism in the U.S., allies against racism, such as Fred's White friends, are needed.

When Fred graduated from ORHS in May of 1956, he did not know that his participation in the inaugural class of Oak Ridge schools' racial desegregation and his being one of the first African-Americans to graduate from a desegregated public school in the state of Tennessee would be unacknowledged. Fred's matriculation at ORHS was a template for a peaceful response to racial school desegregation. However future racial desegregation of Tennessee public schools would garner all the notoriety. Clinton High School is noted as the first public high school in the state of Tennessee to graduate an African-American student, although his graduation was one year after Fred graduated in 1957. The White vitriolic responses to Clinton High School's racial desegregation activities occurred a year after Fred graduated. Future racial desegregation in public schools would be unlike the peaceful response to Oak Ridge schools' racial desegregation.

Archie Lee, African-American Griot/Trailblazer

"I designed a process…they were amazed and knew the process could get a patent...at Oak Ridge High School I learned engineering concepts…science came easy to me."

AL, Oral Narrator

"Now, the first day schools were open for integration, there was this long corridor that has glass that goes from the back entrance up to the main building. Well there were chalk marks that were on it that said the N-word, 'go home' and different things about 'we don't want you,' and that kind of stuff. So the Principal, Mr. Dunigan, came out and talked about it in an assembly that day. Mr. Dunigan said there will be nothing written on the corridor walls anymore. If there is, students will be suspended from school for the entire year. So that all went away, and nothing else ever happened again like that.

"There was a group of students against integration that would hang out in one little area as we entered the school, but there wasn't anything that they said or did anything. You know, perhaps after we walked past them, somebody might yell something out. But it wasn't total harassment—like they weren't throwing things at us, putting ink in our books, and that type thing. You know they always mention the Clinton students and all the Little Rock

students had to have protection, but you don't hear that about Oak Ridge desegregation. It was peaceful.

"There was a Black teacher who went and taught at Jefferson. There's none of that in the history books. When the schools were first integrated, only Robertsville and the high school were integrated in '55. It was like '62 or so before Jefferson had integrated students. That was because of the community Scarboro is separated. So Robertsville is closer and Jefferson is farther away, so those communities didn't integrate and neither did the elementary schools until the first year of high school—those schools stayed segregated until, I believe, in '61, '62, somewhere along there.

"I had six classes a year. I started school like at 8:00 in the morning, and I was there until after 3:30, so everything went fairly smooth with me. I don't recall having a major situation. I remember I was selected to the student council by my homeroom teacher. The first choice is the top student in the class. So that year it was a White boy, who was the top student, and then me. Well, he wasn't attending the meetings on a regular basis, so my homeroom teacher at that time was Mr. Karns, who was a machine shop teacher. I was in that class; he was my homeroom teacher and he taught machine shop. So he said, 'Well, you know, you're the leading student, so, you know, you should be councilman.' So I was selected Student Councilman."

Personal Impact of Desegregation (Archie)

"I was taking physics, and the physics and chemistry class went to Huntsville, Alabama, to some missile facility there. I was the only Black one on the bus. Coming back

we stopped at a restaurant. Everybody got off, went into the restaurant, everyone sat down at the table along with me, and they came over and told us they wouldn't serve me. Everybody said, 'Well if you won't serve him, you won't serve us,' so we left that restaurant. They all got up and walked out, and we went somewhere else.

There was one interesting incident in my senior courses. We had intramural gym activities in the class set up based on your last name. So if your last name was Aaron, A-a-r-o-n, you were number one, and the next alphabetical letter was B that was next, so that's the way they set you up in the gym. Depending on what your name was, then that what you had to do based on how your name fell by number. So starting with basketball, the first five numbers would play the second five; the next five would play the next five, that type thing. Then the next 11 played football against the second 11 for a total number of 22. So that's the way the intramurals were organized and held.

Well, at the end part of intramurals was time for intramural dancing, and there were four Black boys in the class at that time and two Black girls, so the first day the teacher—who was a coach—said, You two boys [Black boys], Jackson, and the other Black boys play records.' The next day it was the Black boys Lee and Graham. So we started wondering if he was going to rotate us, so we could dance. But the third day it was back to Jackson and, well, you know. So on the fourth day, he says, 'Gray and Graham, it's your turn to DJ. Well the boys said they weren't going to DJ, because they aren't just DJs. They said they were not going to play records that day. The coach said if they didn't DJ the records, they'd get a grade reduction. Well they refused to play records that day and told the coach they wanted to participate in intramural dance.

So he sent for two Black girls who were freshmen to dance with the Black boys [laughing]. Well we said we didn't want to dance with the two Black girls because they were freshmen! So we boycotted. We went and stood against the wall. When we went, a number of White students went and stood with us, too. Now here is a problem, okay? The gym teacher called Mr. Dunigan, the principal. So Mr. Dunigan came down with his strong southern accent and said, 'I hear you guys have a little problem down here. What's going on?' We told Mr. Dunigan we were done being the DJ's. We're not the DJ's, so we're not going to play. There were only two girls in the class at the time, and they wanted us to dance with freshmen, and we're not dancing with freshmen.

So Mr. Dunigan said, 'Well, I tell you what, we'll just have a vote on it." And it was voted that we would dance together. So Mr. Dunigan told us to fall in on our numbers like everybody else and dance. So that took care of the dance problem and the DJ problem. But the teachers said 'If this gets out in the newspaper, it will hurt integration all across the South that [Black students and White students] are dancing together.' I looked at the coach and said, 'If the schools are integrated, they're integrated— that's just the way integration works.

I was the first Black National Honor Society member in the southern United States. I was the first Black Student Council officer at ORHS and, therefore, in the State of Tennessee. Out of 356 students in the ORHS Class of 1957, I was in the top ten percent. One of my happiest moments is also one of my saddest moments. I took the National Merit Scholarship test and because I did well on everything but literature, I didn't get it. I did outstanding on the math, but I didn't do well on literature because there was no literature at

Scarboro. Nobody taught that kind of stuff, you know? So most of my classes at ORHS were science and mathematics. So it was a disappointment that I didn't win a National Merit Scholarship.

The University of Tennessee didn't know that there were Black students at ORHS. UT would get records from ORHS on the students that made good grades, who were in the National Honor Society. So I got an invitation from the University of Tennessee saying, 'We reviewed your grades. We'd like to have you enrolled at the University of Tennessee.' Okay. Nineteen miles away and I took my letter over there, and they said, 'Ah, we don't accept Black students as undergrads—only in the graduate school here.' Well listen to this, you have heard the stories of famous Black achievements by Black people who have achieved, but they were not in the National Honor Society. Adam Clayton Powell, Condoleezza Rice, the Little Rock Nine—not even the students at Clinton High School were in the National Honor Society.

Previous Coverage of Oak Ridge Desegregation (Archie)

Other people have published articles about Oak Ridge Schools' desegregation, but only a few of the students are covered. There were sixteen African American students in Oak Ridge High School in 1958 when someone covered it. *Tender Warriors* by Dorothy Sterling (1958) included pictures of me." [I was able to secure a copy through an interlibrary loan and copied pictures that included Archie]. A White girl reporter covered my history class and talked about my class discussion in a history class. The White reporter said:

A white girl in Ms. Esther Buchanan's history class talked about slave ships in the New World and Archie added a clearer understanding by telling the class that there was a slave uprising and several people were whipped and several were killed and the students laughed and whispered at Archie's additional knowledge about the subject. After school I introduced myself to Archie and walked home with him. His mother was a young lady born in Mississippi. Archie said he likes some of his teachers but he liked some of his teachers better than others. He felt the same way about his teachers at Scarboro School. He wants to be an engineer. Archie played Junior Baseball and basketball, and track. Coach Jack Armstrong told me earlier that the Negros [sic] seemed to be adjusting. Archie said he didn't find much difference between Oak Ridge High School and Scarboro School except more home work, but that's what I'm here for he said. Archie said he wasn't worried when he found out he was going to an integrated school and felt it was time that Negroes got a break. He said his mother told him to avoid any sort of trouble before school began. But I found students were friendlier that I thought they would be and she said she brought Archie up to behave so he would know how to act.

Whenever we want to be recognized as the first public school, they always say, "Oh they weren't a public school, and Oak Ridge was run by the government." But we were not a military base or a school for military brats. We were a part of the Anderson County Public School District. Everything was public. In sports we played the public schools.

But everyone wants to give Clinton credit as the first school in the State of Tennessee integrated in the south, and that is not really true. I feel that our story is squelched because of all the bronze statues and everything done for Clinton, and nobody wants to say, 'Well, it

really wasn't Clinton.' Even in the *Clinton 12* (2007) story, some of the Black students dropped out and didn't stay to graduate after the bombings and violence. Even the *Oak Ridger* newspaper featured a story about Bobby Cain being the first Black graduate and wrote an article about him. But no newspaper articles about us. Bobby graduated in 1957, but ORHS had Black students graduate in 1956. Bobby is a fine man; we knew each other well. But even the ORHS principal now, who is a Black guy, did not know that his high school was the first to desegregate. I guess because he graduated from Clinton High School. So there's lots of information out there about Clinton.

So after I graduated, I ended up going to Indiana Technical College in Fort Wayne, Indiana, which an accelerated school is getting a degree in three years. After 18 1/2 months, things got harder financially and I didn't make enough money, and my scholarship ran out, so I went back to Oak Ridge. I found a job at a clothing store. I can show you a receipt where I worked fifty-seven hours for thirty-five dollars and ten cents—sixty-five cents an hour!

Archie's Accelerated Classes/Academic Awards

Oak Ridge was rated in the 98th percentile of the schools in the nation. I won the B'nai B'rith scholarship. I was accepted at General Motors Institute. You went to school so many months and you worked so many months. But there is a situation where the upperclassmen got all the jobs locally, okay? So I had to look for work at home in the Oak Ridge area, and I would go to General Motors' dealerships and they'd say, Well, you can change oil and you can change tires,' and that type thing, and I told them I didn't think I wanted to do that for the rest of my life.

Archie's Social Experiences at Oak Ridge High School

There was a situation where one Black boy was dancing with a White girl, and that didn't go over well at that time. It was lunchtime and they played records and things. And there was a corner of the auditorium where students danced. So I guess these two decided to dance together and like I said, it didn't go over very well.

Then near the end of the first year, when they were preparing for prom and after-prom festivities, there were letters sent out to the White parents asking if they wanted their child to go to an integrated prom or integrated after-prom festivities. Most of them came back negative. They didn't want us there at the prom. There was a group of White parents from the school who came over to the Scarboro Community Center and presented us with proposals on what we should do. We will have your prom. The White prom will be at the Oak Terrace, which was a restaurant. We'll have the Negro prom at the Veterans Administration, which is right next door but a level above. The restaurant was down on the lower level.

I said, we don't want it if it's segregated. So one of them [White woman] said, Okay, what we'll do is we'll have yours in the Community Center, and we'll let the band play at the restaurant for the White students, then at 12:00 o'clock, we'll bring the band over to the Community Center in Scarboro.' We said no, that won't work. I said, 'Lady, we don't care if it's in the White House. If it's segregated, we don't want it.'

So the first year we didn't attend the prom and after-prom festivities. I remember in one of my classes, they were taking pictures by a photographer about integration. The

photographer asked two Caucasian girls, who were sitting in the front row, and me and a classmate named Joe West was sitting behind them, to act as if we were talking to each other. So the White girls are looking back, and we're looking forward, and I have a big grin on my face. Well, when the pictures came out, there were a number of parents that came out about that photo and threatened the principal's life. The teacher whose classroom we were in was so uncomfortable with the atmosphere, I believe at the end of the year the teacher decided to leave because of this problem.

Archie's Industrious Attitude Pays Off

I would have played on the high school team; if it wasn't segregated. One of my classmates did play, but the opposing team had the ability to determine whether you got to play or not. So it was a situation where if they didn't want to play against Blacks, they didn't play. I didn't think that was a situation that I wanted to participate in, so I played Junior League ball.

I had to have means of living, so I had a paper route. Oak Ridge had a newspaper. I delivered the newspaper, and I won two trips to Washington, D.C. One trip I took and the other I took the money instead for having the most new subscribers. I caddied at the golf course on weekends and mowed lawns whenever somebody needed the lawn mowed. Also I worked in a restaurant as a busboy at one time.

Friendships (Archie)

"This guy David and I had planned to room together at General Motors Institute. We were both accepted there. I kept in contact with David for many, many years, and all of a sudden I haven't been able to locate him. But I had many, many friends who were Caucasian that I keep in contact with. Larry Wyrick, who's in an industrial area, I think he runs an antique store out in an industrial area going towards Clinton. Pat Guilkey, she and I were in the National Honor Society together. One time I had a relative there in Oak Ridge who passed away, and they listed my name in the obituary, and I got a card from a group of women who have a meeting here on Tuesday, and I believe there were nine of them who had seen my name in the obituary and sent me a card saying they were sorry my relative had died. But when I go back to Oak Ridge, I meet a number of people who knew me and they say, 'Everybody knows Archie.' [Laughing.]

I talked to Larry Richardson and his wife four or five months ago. Jackie Pope, who was football captain—he and I are friends. Some of my friends have died. Also there were a set of twins I kept in touch with, Sonny Pruitt and his twin sister Sissy Pruitt. Sissy was one of the students who stood up and said, 'They have as much right as I have, and my brother has, or any of you have to have a prom with all of us.

Archie's High School Graduation

I had to talk to the guidance counselor because I wanted to join the Air Force Academy. To get into the Air Force Academy, a U.S. Congressional representative or assemblyman has to recommend you. I talked to my counselor and my counselor just said,

‘There is no way that you as a Black male will be recommended.’ So I didn’t get to go to the Air Force Academy.

Personal Thoughts about Desegregation versus Segregation

There’s NO WAY Black students could have any kind of equal opportunity in education without desegregation! Like now they’re trying to re-segregate the schools by invoking vouchers and charter schools and what have you, and as long as the communities stay separated, there’ll be segregation because we had a congressman out here that won a congressional seat by opposing busing, because they wanted to bus students from a minority neighborhood to a majority. Now, what I think they should do in a situation like that is either build new schools in the minority area or tear them down totally. So that you don’t have the reason to have a segregated school.

I believe in the forties when Scarboro School started, the high school students went to Knoxville. In the Black school, you’re only taught general math, general science—no music, none of that type stuff—then we go to Oak Ridge High and they have trigonometry, calculus, and those type courses; you don’t get those courses at Scarboro and the Black schools. You know, there was no algebra at Scarboro. So it’s a situation where somebody might say, ‘Wait a minute! I’m going to ORHS that has very difficult classes,’ and they decide to move to Knoxville or drop out. There were a number of students who may have gone to Knoxville for that reason, so they didn’t have to take hard classes, or maybe they just didn’t want to go to school with white people who didn’t like them anyway.

Musings about Archie's Professional Journey

Oak Ridge plants never considered the students from Scarboro of being worthy of working in the plants and things. When I graduated, there were very few people who worked in the plants who were Black. There were laborers, janitors, or lab technicians or lab aides. They'd clean up labs and that type things; maybe handle lumber and that type thing. Most of those people were from the Knoxville area.

So I'll tell you how I got into the field that I'm in. When I went back to Oak Ridge from Indiana, I got a job working at a clothing store making sixty-five cents an hour. Mr. Scott, who was my baseball coach and the director of the Community Center, called me one day. He asked, 'What are you doing now?' I said, 'Well, I'm working here at Grayson's clothing store. He says, A friend of mine is in human resources—at that time we called that employment services—over in the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies has a opening for someone in a temporary position. That job, I believe, paid sixty-five dollars a week, and he was interested in somebody relieving custodians, the postmen, whoever—those kinds of jobs. So I interviewed, and they hired me temporarily for a position doing relief-type work like that department that did construction, laying tile, that type thing.

In my first assignment asked me to look for some pipes coming out of the building…. They said, 'We know that they branch into two pipes, then split into a Y somewhere outside of the building.' I was told to get a shovel and pick, and 'go see if you can find where those pipes split at.' That was my first assignment. I worked in different

areas of the plant and tried to get a job as a presenter in the museum, but that wasn't happening. Although I knew everything to know about the museum.

So I was working one night, relieving, I believe, a custodian in one of the scientific buildings, after hours. There was a scientist that was working late. I had on my name tag saying 'Archie Lee,' and he saw my name tag and he said, do you know Jim Borden? I said, Yeah, Jim is one of my classmates. He said, Jim speaks very highly of you, and he says you're very intelligent. Then he asked, why are you doing this kind of work? I told him this is the best that I could find. This was maybe in June or July. He told me that at the first of the year he was opening a laboratory, and if I hadn't found anything better by then, get in touch with him.

So having the attitude that I have, not biting my tongue, there was a situation that arose later in the year where my supervisor was at a different building, and he brought my time card in at lunchtime, and it was during my break time, so I was reading the sports section. I didn't drink coffee, so the fifteen-minute break that we got, I would pick up the paper and read the sports section. He looked at me but didn't say anything. Later when it came time for them to let one of us go, my supervisor made the comment to me, Well, Lee, we're going to keep the other guy, and we're letting you go because the other guy doesn't read the newspaper on the job. I said, well, the only time you've seen me reading the newspaper was on my break. I don't read the newspaper on the job. Then he said, well, the problem is that most of the people in your department can't read the newspaper. So that's what they preferred—a Black person who couldn't read the newspaper. So I was the one to leave. I believe he, Mr. R. ended up being the manager of one of the buildings. There's a

road that split off where the old gate used to be. You can go out that way and you go into the plant area. You run into a red building at the end of that road where you turn either left or right. Well, I think he became manager of that building.

Now this is something you didn't ask me about, but I'm going to tell you. Okay, I worked in a group, and a guy hired me the first of the year. I worked there in a group called 'The Traveling Science Teachers.' What they did is they taught teachers to put on class experiments, so they could entice teenagers into science in high school. There usually were anywhere from thirteen to twenty teachers that came from all over the country and some foreign countries to take a thirteen-week course in science and experiment in science. I worked as a laboratory aide, distributed the materials that they needed to take back to their classrooms. They were issued all the equipment, chemical supplies, and that type thing.

"I did that until my supervisor, who was Dr. Joan Christy, decided that I was capable enough to handle the laboratory experiments, so I did the laboratory experiments. We were funded by the National Educational Endowment Society. They determined whether we would be able to continue the program and whether our contracts had to be renewed every year, so at the end of the year, you didn't know whether your contract was going be renewed or not. So they would always tell you to look for a position in case it wasn't renewed.

So there was an ad in the *Oak Ridger* newspaper looking for a technician at a company called Oak Ridge Technical Enterprise Corporation—ORTEC. ORTEC [now AMETEK] was a company with a group of about thirty scientists that worked in the plant.

They had discovered a nuclear detector, so they interviewed 22 of us, and they hired two of us—me and a White guy. Then they taught us how to make nuclear radiation detectors.

At ORTEC we were required to fabricate the detector and then test it. After a while, we decided that one of us would do the testing, and the other one would do the fabrication. So I did the testing. After about a year and a half or so, there came a problem—I found out the White guy and I were doing the same job, hired at the same time, but he was making one and a half times what I was making, and yet I was the one assigned to do extra work by taking the work home, okay? So I talked to the person I needed to address this issue, and he says, Well, I needed to train somebody' to do my job because supposedly I needed somebody to help me. But when I got that person trained, I was let go. They said it was a layoff.

So my next job is the job that brought me here to California. It was around the Christmas season I got a telephone call from the president of a company from here in California who said that he was in Washington, D.C., and would like to come down and interview me. So I was interviewed for a job here in California at my home in Oak Ridge. They paid my transportation out here, and within three months I had the laser device on the market. There were four people, two advisors, and one supervisor in laser construction. I worked in development on secret government contracts. I was the one doing all the work. The others weren't that involved. Most of the instructions I got was someone telling me about things like cryogenic freezing and I had to find out what that meant. The others were Ph.D.'s who told me what they wanted, but couldn't teach me what to do. So I had to teach myself how to assemble the lasers, test the laser and I improvised them to make them work

better. It was an important, secret government project I operated, but I don't have any credit for it whatsoever!

"So, now, this was '64. Then in '66 I left there and I went to the largest company in the state of California, which was McDonnell Douglas Aircraft at the time. My supervisor thought enough of me to take me along with him when he became the manager of the advanced electronics group. He moved me up from being a senior technician to an engineering scientist. I developed lasers—put in a proposal to manufacture semiconductor lasers, nuclear radiation detectors. I needed start-up money so I could start a company on my own. I went to the Small Business Administration, and they helped me get the money, but they had to have $25,000 of it to make sure it was a viable project—that lasers would work since this is when lasers first started before the phone and iPad or red and green lights on your telephone and television. That was 1968.

I continued my career in lasers for one of the five leading research institutions in the country. At McDonnell Douglas I worked with a person who worked as a consultant on a contract with us and was a professor for the laser department at Cal Tech. He would come out once a week and go over what I had done and also consulted with me. I did all the work, he wrote all the quantum mathematical equations and things of that nature and we published three papers together for scientific physics journals. Then I started working for him around '75, and in '77 I changed departments and he continued to work as a consultant for the group that I worked with. In 1980, he and two of his graduate students formed a company making this type of device I had proposed in 1968. I talked to him and told him that he was using my invention. I wouldn't agree to let him use it. Well I started

getting reprimanded and later dismissed. So I continued to work in the laser technology field and in 2002 the company I was working for was sold to Lucent Technology, and that was the end of my career [pause]…since that time I've been retired. I looked for a job for a number of years. Nobody would even bring me in for an interview, so I formed a hobby of collecting things, so now I'm called a collector [chuckle].

Final Memories of Oak Ridge and Oak Ridge High School (Archie)

Fred Guinn and his wife, Margaret, were in one of the first years of desegregation of ORHS graduating class—they graduated in '56. I'm not sure who else because [pause] the seniors didn't associate with the other classes. Ernestine Maddox has passed away. She passed away and her brother also passed away. Joe West left before he graduated. Joe West, I believe, is in San Francisco now. Lawrence Graham, who changed his name from Lawrence Graham to Achmed something. It's a Muslim name. I talked to him maybe four or five months ago. His name is Alajmisis, A-l-a-j-m-i-s-i-s. He has his doctorate degree. He has written some poems, I believe. He's published some poems and things like that. He's in South Carolina somewhere or Charlotte, I believe. Nobody knows. I believe his brother, Ron Graham, is still there in "The Valley." L.C. is still in the valley, who was at Oak Ridge High School at the beginning, and Fred, who's still in "The Valley." I believe Edith may have graduated from Scarboro.

So a number of students didn't feel that they were even capable of going through the stress or whatever, and a number of them dropped out. I know two students who moved to Knoxville from Oak Ridge, and I believe one of them passed—two sisters, Velma

Brown and another sister. Hazel Robinson is there in the city. She went to school the first year. One of my classmates won the National Science Fair two years in row—John Emmet. One of my classmates' father was one of the four people who knew what they were making when they made the atomic bomb. His name is Pollard. Neither is alive now, father nor son. The son was my classmate—got killed in an accident in his twenties. Also we had two schoolteachers—Lee Washington Butler was the first Black city councilman in Oak Ridge and Mr. Walker, who was one of the teachers there and, I believe, both of them have passed. I'm not sure.

ORHS was not an easy school [laughing] to attend. Although I might be considered bright, there were some students there who were much brighter than myself, like our class valedictorian—he got all A's his whole four school years—B.B. Forester. B.B. Forester's a medical doctor. Pat Guilkey was real smart. There was a girl—her name was Delores Hart—that was very, very smart. Jesse McClanahan, a Black classmate, went to Oak Ridge High. He ended up being a policeman in St. Louis, and there was a woman there by the name of Sue Hicks, and there was Mary Ruth Mahone.

"There was an article recently about her in the *Oak Ridger* within the last two years. A white student who graduated from ORHS, Katherine Elizabeth Jernigan, wrote a thesis entitled "Behind the Gates: An Integrated–Interracial Perspective of Black and White Youth Memories of Oak Ridge, Tennessee." She graduated from a South Carolina College. Oh and "Before Clinton or Little Rock, There Was Oak Ridge"—I think that's the title or heading of it, "Before Clinton or Little Rock…" There were also teachers in this section of the history. There was something about 'how ORTEC started' and who the first

employees were. They interviewed Dr. Harold Smith, who was the president of ORTEC. My name was mentioned as one of the original people. They did one on the baseball team that was in "The Valley" called the Bombers, Oak Ridge Bombers.

They had the Black baseball team, the Oak Ridge Bombers. Capshaw—his last name is Capshaw. There's mention of me in that. Some of the players turned out to be semi-pro players and never got the recognitions that they should have gotten and that type thing. Eugene Williams was one of the Hall of Famers. He passed away not too long ago. Robert Lee was the other, who is no relation to Archie Lee. In fact, his great-granddaughter is Nikki Caldwell. She was assistant coach at UT, coached at UCLA, and I believe she's now somewhere in Louisiana. Her grandfather or great-grandfather was the manager of the Bombers. But it's a very interesting story, not just because I'm in it, but because of the community and the people who were there in it. These people held jobs and on the weekends played baseball. That was our activity to get out of being enslaved in that little cubbyhole there in the valley. I believe there was a story done by Ms. Rose Weaver, and she did a story on somebody else.

I'm here to say that kids that don't have fathers are not bad kids. I had never met my father until a few years ago, and he lived a few blocks from me. So you can't say or have that excuse of not having a father that you have to turn out to be a gang member or what have you. Each person must choose the route that a person wants to go in life. I guess I've told you everything.

CRT Analysis of Archie's Interview

Cornel West (1993/2001) begins his book *Race Matters* with a quote from James Baldwin's (1963) book, *The Fire Next Time*. Part of this quote is as follows:

> In our time, as in every time, the impossible is the least that one can demand—and one is, after all, emboldened by the spectacle of human history in general, and the American Negro history in particular, for it testifies to nothing less than the perpetual achievement of the impossible…everything now, we must assume, is in our hands; we have no right to assume otherwise. If we—and now I mean the relatively conscious Whites and the relatively conscious Blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others—do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve a country, and change the history of the world…
>
> –James Baldwin

Archie calls himself a collector now. From talking to him, he seems to be on a mission to correct historical errors, especially related to Clinton High credited something he and his Black Oak Ridge High School classmates accomplished—recognition as the first school system in Tennessee to desegregate. He also considers Oak Ridge home because Oak Ridge is where he graduated from high school. He lived in Oak Ridge less time than he has lived in California or Mississippi, but Oak Ridge is home to him. He has relatives still living in Oak Ridge, and Oak Ridge has had the greatest effect on his life, starting with Oak Ridge High School.

Attending ORHS provided opportunities that he knew would not have been possible at the rural two-room school in Mississippi or at Scarboro School. During his interview, I

could hear his excitement about taking trigonometry, physics, and chemistry—classes not available at the all-Black high school. He credits his intellect, coupled with the equal opportunity afforded him as a student at ORHS, with his success as a scientist and an inventor. Archie didn't allow himself to be invisible as a minority student at ORHS. Throughout his academic life as well as his professional career, he appeared Afrocentric. As he stated in his interview, he was not one to let things slide or allow injustice to occur; he would stand up for himself as a Black person, such as concerning the prom, and the disc jockey incident. As he stated, "If we are integrated, we're integrated; we can't worry about what others might say or think." Archie's story of desegregation and his life after graduation brings me to the final application of CRT in education, which is W. E. B. DuBois' (1903/1953/1996/2003) idea of double-consciousness and Blackness as White property.

The notion of African-American double-consciousness is attributed to William Edward Burghardt DuBois, an African-American scholar. Double-consciousness, according to DuBois, suggests a mental conflict that exists for people of African descent in America (DuBois, 1903/2003; Eze, 2011; Moore, 2005). This mental conflict is described in the following manner:

> *It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in*

one dark body, whose strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (DuBois, 1903/2003, p. 5).

W. E. B. DuBois's doctoral dissertation was entitled The History of Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638 to 1870 (Eze, 2011). In DuBois' treatise, he reconstructed the earliest estimates of Africans brought into slavery in the United States and the processes by which Africans became American Negroes. DuBois wrestled with the tensions between the Declaration of Independence, which stated, "All men are created equal," and the slave status of the Negro. He continued his studies and eventually revealed the unlawful racism that justified the continuing slave trade in America and the institution of plantation slavery. DuBois continued to write in his multi-volume work, The Philadelphia Negroes, observing the identity crisis formed by slavery, then emancipation, and later the Black experience of racial segregation, in the U.S. defined subjectively by Whites who claimed superiority over the Black Negro (p. 885).

DuBois drew his notion of double-consciousness from multiple historical sources, such as late-1800 medical journals identifying a "Negro mental disease" of split consciousness (Eze, 2011, p. 887); Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American literary scholar, had also used the term double-consciousness to describe the conflict between the spiritual soul's pursuit of paradise and the progress of living everyday life (Mocombe, 2009). Emmanuel Eze brings in the voice of Goethe's Faust to describe double consciousness "two souls, alas reside within my breast (p. 889). Working with his mentor, William James, DuBois studied Hegel's metaphor of master and slave as it relates to a racial order versus Hume's empirical method used to explain that the "self" cannot yield an authentic racial

identity. DuBois' study of race in America left him with a divided self—a reflection of himself defined by people who say he is inferior, but yet within himself he knows he has much to offer.

DuBois realizes the American Negro will not be allowed to succeed. He noted two irreconcilable dilemmas of being a Negro, who has historically been a former slave (DuBois was not a slave, but historically the Negro was enslaved), with economic laws that maintain economic slavery and uneducated or poorly educated America citizens not yet given full rights as citizens. Moore (2005) summarizes DuBois' pragmatics of double-consciousness: it is a thought process of being Negro (i.e., Black) versus being an American (i.e., non Black)—to have a primitive cultural heritage stemming from Africa, yet to be educated by White people within a European culture that denigrates the Negro…this is a peculiar sense of twoness (p. 753). Carter Woodson (1933), founder of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History (ASALH) and the first editor of the Journal of Negro History, cogently stated:

> *The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards… p. xiii).*

Double-Consciousness Related to Archie's Story

Archie was comfortable being both Negro and American. When he was confronted with racism or discrimination, he risked the loss of social amenities, such as the prom; a grade reduction in the intramural dancing situation; and in several instances, jobs. At first glance it might seem that he was not in conflict because double-consciousness might appear to be only a silent mental struggle. However he had to struggle with double-consciousness in the sense of knowing that intellectually he was just as capable as, or even more capable than some of, the White people who had an advantage over him simply because he was not White. Archie's story is a story of living in a White-dominated and White-controlled society, established from the beginning in America, where laws were written stating non-White people were less than human. Archie's intellect could not supplant the superficial fact that he is African-American—a phenotype, not a biological or cognitive reality. This brings me to my last argument focusing on race in order to understand issues of inequality.

Race and Property

In order to fully understand this study focusing on race as it relates to Oak Ridge desegregation, we must look at the interweaving of race and property in U.S. schools. Bell (1987) points out that U.S. democracy, from its earliest years, was based on property rights. Bell (1987) further refers to Howard Zinn's (1980) documentation of the centrality of property, referring to John Winthrop. Winthrop stated the tribes of Indians who inhabited the land when he arrived did not have anything that legally granted them the

land and, therefore, the land was a vacuum, so he and his company could make the land legally theirs by marking the land and identifying the land, which became the property of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

Bell (1987) also examined the tensions between human rights and property rights when the Constitution was written and African slaves were present. The writers of the Constitution decided that the purpose of the government was to protect the rights of property owners. African slaves were written into the Constitution as property[38].

Property rights connected to individual human rights still have not been reconciled, even with numerous decades of civil rights gains. From the previously mentioned naturalized rights to property stripped from First Nations, to removal of Japanese-Americans to internment camps, to Africans as property, White America defines the parameters to possess and own property (Franklin, 1988; Ladson-Billing & Tate, 2006; Takaki, 1993). Education, and public education in particular, is equated to property values (Kozol, 1991). The higher the property values, the better the educational opportunities available at a school. Delgado (1990) reveals how the curriculum in schools represents a form of intellectual property. The quality of the curriculum is correlated to the property values surrounding the school.

This is all to say that slavery converted a race of people (Negroes) to be objects of property of White people, and, therefore, ultimately White people have the legal power and

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[38] Women and children were restricted from owning property in many cases, and were even treated like property.

possess the right to determine the laws of possession of property. Harris (1973) suggests that Whiteness is valuable property (p. 1721; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006). Whiteness becomes property with the right to use and enjoy, the right to reputation as status and to include and exclude, and the right to set parameters for the disposition of educational rights (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006, p. 22). Based on the argument just presented, desegregated schools—or even education for non- Whites—are at best borrowed, rented or on loan by the owners of the world.

African-American students have recorded their entry to Robertsville Junior High School and Oak Ridge Senior High School. Dr. Capehart, Superintendent of Schools, Robertsville principal, George Bond, and especially Oak Ridge principal, Tom Dunigan, demonstrated leadership and commitment to equal opportunity for African-Americans in racially desegregated schools. The students didn't talk about their parents' reaction to desegregation. There was a sense, as Ann had stated, "you were expected to obey authority and behave appropriately." Obedience and respect had been drilled into students by African-American parents and teachers at Scarboro School.

The narrators had a historian's view of racial desegregation at Clinton High School. Clinton's desegregation plan was implemented a year after desegregation in Oak Ridge. Clinton High School is located in a town adjacent to Oak Ridge in Clinton, Tennessee. Seivers (2002) and McDaniels (2007) inform us that Clinton High School experienced violence when it was court-ordered to racially desegregate. White outside agitators infiltrated the city of Clinton and were eventually jailed and imprisoned several years later. However during Clinton's racial unrest as a result of racial desegregation of Clinton High School, the

school was bombed and students were bused to an empty elementary school in Oak Ridge for the remainder of the school year.

Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, holds prominence in America's history. Both Clinton and Central suggest that it is difficult for racial desegregation to be peaceful when forced on White schools (Armour, 1995).

Clinton and Central high schools claim books, movies, documentaries, statues, and visits to see U.S. Presidents because they endured violence and hatred in pursuit of educational quality. History has not been as kind to Oak Ridge. Several narrators continue to lament the once-a-year local newspaper interviews with L.C. or Fred during February's Black History Month. L.C. revealed he can expect a call from the Knoxville News Sentinel or The Oak Ridger, who appear to be culturally sensitive, but by February 28th, the last day of the month, African Americans are invisible until next February.

One of a more lugubrious forms of African American exploitation was written by Ralph Ellison (1952), in his fictional account Invisible Man. Ellison's poignant example describes a Negro high-school valedictorian called to an exclusive, clandestine gathering of rich White people at a country estate. The young man nervously rehearses his graduation speech, which drew tears, joy, and pride from his mother, Negro classmates, and their families. After driving several miles outside of town, he arrives and is escorted to a holding room, where he envisions kings, queens, and other dignitaries from all over the world had probably stood in the same space. Finally he is escorted to a dressing area and told to strip before he is later escorted to center stage. In front of extremely bright lights

where he could hardly see, he was directed to fight other men in the arena in front of a crowd of spectators. Fight? His brain reeled. It seemed like he fought for hours. Drenched with blood and covered in bruises, he was finally released. Ellison offers a fictional account of the reality of Black intellectuals denigrated to becoming the object of a sporting event. Although Ellison's example is extreme, reveals a hidden transcript that Archie and I felt comfortable discussing during our subsequent conversations.

Fayetteville High School in Fayetteville, Arkansas, boasts that it was the first school to racially desegregate among southern U.S. states (Adams and DeBlack, 1994). It was peaceful; however Fayetteville High School's racial desegregation was a micro-experiment of racial desegregation that involved one school and only five African American students selected. Oak Ridge racially desegregated all junior and senior high school students peacefully. Successful desegregation of junior high students is seldom highlighted. There was no violence in Oak Ridge. Lacking sensationalism the media appears to favor an appetite to stereotype White resistance to African American equality. There has been little attention in documenting Oak Ridge's story of racial desegregation, except during the month of February. February has been designated Black History Month to celebrate African American accomplishments. African American accomplishments occur every day of the year, not just in February.

African American griots from Oak Ridge have told their stories from the first initial years of racial desegregation in their own words. Next, Part 2 of the stories of African Americans who desegregated Oak Ridge Schools represents racial desegregation five years later. Two interviews are contained in Part 2, Willie Golden, Jr. and Cassandra Osborne.

Part Two –Another Way

The next two interviews look at Oak Ridge public schools five years after the initial inception of racial desegregation. I draw from CRT scholar's use of the storied dialectic. The interviewer (me) is in conversation with the narrators. The analysis of the oral narrative is contained in the character, *Antha Waye* (Another Way).Willie Golden, Jr. is the first African American griot followed by Cassandra Osborne. Both were introduced in the first part of this chapter.

Willie Golden, Jr. African American Griot/Trailblazer

"…the Scarboro Community is a place of peace, and push, and heart, and love…I went to Alabama to college…I served in the military and travelled to places like Germany…I served in Desert Storm.. Scarboro will always be home…a place of peace…" WG, Jr African American *griot*

Antha Waye Hello, gosh, the music of Mahalia Jackson I hear in the back

ground is so moving.

Willie, Jr. Yes, I agree with the words of the song, *If I can help somebody*

as I travel along, then my living shall not be in vain. No –oo my living shall not be in vain…if I can help somebody as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vain-nn

[laughing]. God somehow blessed me and reached down and touched me! It was a blessing and the many prayers of the community that got me to the point where I am today. So I've tried to come back and give something back to the community.

Antha Waye You sound like a philosopher. Has your life made you more philosophical? You have been reflective yet positive in spite of the racial tensions you endured growing up during the early days of Oak Ridge Schools' desegregation. You've lived in Oak Ridge since you were two-years old. You're not bitter, but you are reflectively optimistic.

Willie, Jr. Uh-huh, [laughing] I do have a lot of history in my head, but I don't take a lot of time to think back. I like to look forward. When I'm asked to remember things from when I was a kid ... you know -- I had a happy childhood. [Laughing] I got everything that I needed. Living in Scarboro we had our rec facility and stuff, we had our youth groups. I mean, I had a happy childhood! [Laughing]. The Black community…well let me back up Scarboro was a school, but really the whole Scarboro community was involved in my life.-- That's what I tell young people, you just have to learn, learn to make good choices. I could have easily quit a number of times from playing sports and stuff. But it wasn't about "me" quitting… I cared about what was I doing to the community….none of it was about me, but I didn't want to let the community down…you know '"they" expect you to quit anyway… the whole community, uh-huh, yeah. Yeah. It was the whole community. Miss Smith down the street, if you was acting up or something, she'd straighten you up just the same way as Mr. Jones over here. The community raised you…we were pushed…the teachers and

the all the old people gave us that *umph.* We got that extra *umph* from the old people who used to tell us… "The only way you're going to get out of here is through education." I had a mother and a father, the traditional family, but I also had the community…if I messed up at school or anywhere…like if I got in trouble in the community, I hoped that I could get in trouble closer to home because every block away I'm gonna get scolded. [Laughing]. You know, you come to the next block [laughing] and -- you're gonna get another scolding---you come to the next one -- by the time I got home --I was wore out! [Laughing] My mother and father didn't have to do anything! That's why I say Hillary Clinton didn't start the idea of the village. We knew about the village raising kids way before she made that remark.

Antha Waye Interesting that you mention the history in your head and the concept of community-village originating in the Black community. Several scholars direct our historical gaze to the origins of Black communalism, a place of collective efforts resembling the African past. Collins (2000, 2008) points to the *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized racial segregation in housing, education, employment and public accommodations (p.60). The *Plessy* decision forced rigid boundaries between Black Americans and White Americans. Stuckey (1987) revisits an earlier period in African American history, when Africans were slaves in America. Stuckey suggests African slaves were "gifted" African *tribalism*, lingering in the minds of Africans prior to slavery. He points to the middle passage between Africa and the Americas when slaves from various African tribes like Yorubas, Akans, Ibos, and Angolans, and others forged their differences into becoming a single people.

Those earlier years of African slaves in the Americas served as a catalyst to black unity. This unity was universal among Blacks whether free, slave, North, or South. Black community culture was a place of folk memory, dancing, storytelling, campfires, laughter, and the obligation to respect one's spirituality (p.5). Reflected in the stories within African community slave culture were tenuous spaces where memories straddled between remembrances of a superior life when they were free contrasted with resentment, resistance, theft of their language, and unrest marked by their forced bondage (p. 7). This isn't the time to discuss the history of the Black community. However based on Collins and Stuckey it can be suggested the segregated Black community is a culturally symbolic institution. The Black community carries a history of Africans from various tribes who were transported to America; the social status of bond women and bond men not free women and free men were forced on them; and the laws enacted toward Black people by lawmakers and politicians were based on the social construction of race. Together these historical, social, political, and probably psychological factors established if only symbolically, a sustained existence of the Black community as a Black institution in the U.S.. The Black community, as suggested earlier by Stuckey, survived the generous gift of memory from African tribalism that lingered and survived the "forward passage." (p. 1). Collins points forward from slave culture to U.S. laws that forced the process of becoming a single people through de jure de facto segregation. Together I contend these influences forged a "collective culture" which defines many aspects of the Black community. Siddle Walker (1996) points to fluidity throughout the Black community between church, home, and school where education was organic.

Willie, Jr. Right, right! …and it's where I find peace, that is… in the Black community. I came from an integrated setting here in Oak Ridge and Oak Ridge High School. I went to a Black college, Stillman in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in the heart of Dixie [laughing]…but I had a peace being around Black people. Now I experienced culture shock going to school with all Black people. They were shocked too because I had played basketball on an integrated team! They were from places like Memphis, Mississippi and Alabama…places that were still segregated….I had to change how I dressed, my clothes [laughing]…when I went to Stillman. I couldn't wear yellow socks and a white cotton shirt [laughing]. I had to wear black socks then and Ban-Lon shirts that matched…my wife experienced culture shock when she came to Oak Ridge from Memphis. It was culture shock for her to go outside of Scarboro and not see any Black people! But like you said, the school was the community, the church was the Black community, the people, and everybody Black in Oak Ridge was the Black community. If you were Black and lived in Oak Ridge, you lived in Scarboro… the only Black community in Oak Ridge.

You asked me about integration…I think the thing that sticks in my mind was going to Scarboro Elementary School. I guess, you know, that was our home away from home and, of course, the love that the African American teachers showed the students and the discipline they gave us that made those positive influences in…in our life that helped us adjust to things outside of Scarboro. Scarboro back then was a Black elementary school. The Black educators there at Scarboro helped us develop and get adjusted to going to an integrated system. I think about the leadership that was

developed. They gave us leadership opportunities and pushed education among the students. I think of -- what's the word they use in education now, oh, gosh, when they mainstream kids? …anyway, I was just a kid and I spent three years in sixth grade because they placed you at your academic level--- depending on your academic level…when I was in fourth grade, I studied with the sixth grade students because my academic level was sixth grade [Laughing]… Then, of course, vice versa, maybe if a student wasn't strong academically, you might have studied a grade level below, trying to get you back up academically according to your age group.... nobody failed...those teachers would tell you that you cannot fail and they worked you and pushed you until you got it!...because they didn't let nobody fail! Uh-huh, uh-huh…like George Walker, he was one of the teachers there at Scarboro…and Miss Lavada Chisolm and Miss Ariel Ayers [Phonetic]. ..and Mr. Scott, William Scott at the rec center…collectively they all gave you that *umph* to build on [Laughing] …so when we got to Robertsville we had that background we could build on…but I really think it came from that close-knit community… those good, positive role models that kept pushing you forward. [Laughing]…Miss Ayers and Miss Chisolm are still living. Mr. Scott is not. Mr. Walker is not. Oh and Mr. Officer too, but he is not living either…again I think that good, basic background that we had at Scarboro and the Scarboro community gave us the foundation to equip us, I speak for myself, Scarboro equipped me with the things that was going to happen at Robertsville Junior High School, so it was no big thing going to junior high school..it was just progress…you know when you went to junior high school you went to Robertsville….in studying history and everything at Scarboro and moving on you heard about those history-

making events about desegregation…I guess there wasn't a real grasp about the *Brown* decision…but I guess there was knowledge of the decision that had been made….but it was culture shock coming out of an environment of twenty, thirty people that look like you [laughing] ...to all of a sudden you're the only one or maybe only one of two Black people that's in your class…you'd be glad when lunchtime came so you could see some of "us" in the cafeteria…we could breathe then [laughing]…we could get together in the cafeteria…but even with that there were some challenges… some of our teachers and White students couldn't understand how during the lunch hour we would get together…or sometimes we gathered in a spot in the hall because, hey, you're glad to see one another [laughing] another Black person –so some of them (referring to White students and teachers) really didn't understand -- why we want to get together and hang out like that -- that's a peace for us [laughing], you know. We haven't seen anybody that looks like you all day! So that's our peaceful time. The students couldn't understand and the teachers couldn't understand. They'd look at it as a negative, they'd say, "You Black students need to break up." We'd think to ourselves…(in our minds only of course) huh?..."We're not doing anything?"

Antha Way in her book, *Why I Stayed*, Glasgow (2009), talks about having a choice whether to attend a desegregated high school or remain in the all-Black segregated school. She had a choice. Oak Ridge students didn't have a choice. Glasgow cites the some of the things you just mentioned that prompted her to not go to the desegregated school in her hometown. For example her Black high school principal told her about all the opportunities she would have available at the White high school. Later when

she made her decision to remain at the all Black school, he was happy she stayed because of the culture shock and mistreatment from the White students he suspected she would experience. She reflects how thankful she was to stay. The principal helped her progress to the next level and go to college, like the Scarboro Elementary teachers helped the student's progress to the next level. Glasgow's sister decided to attend the White high school, and their experiences were different. Her sister had more resources but as you say she didn't get that *umph* from teachers and staff, not to mention the discipline issues her sister had to contend with.

Derrick Bell (1987) wrote a book that contains several chapters he named as chronicles. In "The Chronicle of the Sacrificed Black School Children" Bell describes the change African American students experienced transferring from segregated to desegregated schools. Bell suggests African American parents feared black educational culture their children experienced at the all Black school, would be sacrificed. African American parents distrusted that desegregated schools would provide equal educational opportunities, although the resources at the White school were better than those at the Black school. Black students would become casualties of desegregation and academic standards for their children would be forgotten. The result of desegregation designed to improve educational opportunities for African American children would disappear. Desegregation forced parents to sacrifice their children to schools where parents had no voice in the decision-making process for their children and their children "were not saved" as a result of desegregation. According to Bell's chronicle, in the town's pursuit to equalize educational opportunities for Black

children, the Black children mysteriously disappeared and according to Bell, have never been found, nor were resources expended to search for them.

Did you have academic role models at RJHS or ORHS? Teachers who went out of their way to support you and give you that… *push*? Did you have that push to search for ways to achieve academically?

Willie, Jr. Academically? No, not really. You know? I didn't feel the teachers really gave me that little extra *umph*. I think it was those preconceived notions that anything Black was inferior…so I let myself be just that average type student. I could have competed academically. I didn't think the White teachers cared if I got good grades or not. So I didn't put forth the effort. Even after some of the teachers found out that I signed my scholarship to Stillman College, which was a Black college, I can remember one of the teachers saying, "Well, Willie, are you sure you really want to go there? You know, you've been in an integrated school system since seventh grade," da da da. And I'm like, "Yeah! I want to go to Stillman." [Laughing] "That's why I signed on the dotted line!" [Laughing]. I think they should have said, "Well, hey, congratulations on your scholarship, you know, I'm very proud of you." It goes back to that inferior notion that if it's a Black college its inferior is the way I took it….Well, also they had hoped that I'd be the first Black to play in the SEC. I remember when I went and made my visit to Stillman…it was just like the weight of the world just drifted off of me. I felt a peace. A peace…that I could be just a student, an average student without carrying the weight of the community… the weight of the world…It was just like a peace. A peace went over me [Laughing].

Antha Waye DuBois (1968) expresses similar reactions when he enrolled at Fiske in Nashville, Tennessee. He reportedly was in the midst of the most extraordinarily talented Colored minds at Fiske, like Erastus Cravath who believed in great possibilities for the African American race (p. 113). Also Lena Calhoun, more beautiful and talented than her great-niece, Lena Horne. William Morris was the first colored member of the Fiske faculty and whose ability matched any White person. Adam Spence was DuBois' Greek professor and scholar. DuBois' suggests his experience at Fiske and his skills of Greek, German, chemistry, physics and philosophy, positioned him to eventually sit under the tutelage of William James and George Palmer at Harvard (p.120).

So did you test into accelerated classes at RJHS or ORHS? Did they have them? What about leadership positions? Academic awards? Did the school counselor help you? School counselors were part of the administration back then?

Willie, Jr. No. Uh-huh…well, they had accelerated classes. No…No…well…wait… leadership awards? I was captain of the basketball team my ninth grade year…I was the first captain of an integrated team in the whole southeast! As far as the school counselor? I had very little contact with the counselor. When I signed my scholarship I did all the work myself …all my ACT testing….I think all the juniors had to take it. The eleventh grade class, I think we took it as a class. But I found that I needed the SAT to get into Stillman. I did all that paperwork and that stuff myself. The counselor didn't do any of the work. We had three or four different counselors. I can't even

remember my counselor. I don't remember any White teachers pushing me. My potential in their eyes was my basketball skills, not my academic skills.

Antha Waye Prudence Carter (2005), *Keepin' It Real,* points to the valuable connection in integrated settings between culture, identity, and academic success for Black and Latino minority groups. Carter asserts minority youth embrace normative values of academic success if they perceive that teachers and administrators accept the uniqueness of their culture (p. 157). Hidden messages by the gatekeepers of public education of inferior intelligence toward minority students undermine their desire to learn. When minority students in Carter's study recognized their potential success or failure was contingent on schools with rigid cultural norms that pointed to Whiteness as superior and minorities as inferior, then it pushed them to "Do what I need to do myself, otherwise the opportunity may never come" (p. 159). These students didn't believe as Fordham's (1993), "...loud Black girls" that academic success meant "acting White." Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) and Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) point to culturally relevant teaching of Black students that includes language skills, environment and high expectations that minority students do in fact have high achievement potential.

So we've talked about your academic and cultural experiences in both segregated and desegregated schools. Oak Ridge Schools had been racially desegregated for over five years. By the time you entered racially desegregated schools do you believe there was a level of acceptance, at least socially?

Willie, Jr. Sometimes, you know, as things got older and I guess -- how can I say this? The acceptance level of me maybe became higher because I had that athletic background they accepted. Then the White Mom and Dad would come see this little colored boy playing in the gym. So that acceptance level, to a point, was more accepting with time. So as I progressed through, I guess they realized I wasn't going anywhere [laughing], so I was going to be there. So you started developing some kind of acceptance. I was one of those crazy guys, when they finally integrated the swimming pool, I got my quarter and sometimes I'd be the only Black at the swimming pool. But to be totally accepted, I'm not really sure. I knew the time. I couldn't change it. But I was still going to be a happy kid. [Laughing] You know? I'm going to come back home to Scarboro and go to the rec center, hang out with the guys and stuff, and keep moving forward. ..that was the time.

I always had a question…Why didn't any Black students go to Jefferson? Why do we all have to go to Robertsville? Why don't we have a choice of which one to go to? I used to have some of those weird questions, whenever they'd talk about integration/desegregation, why is it always the Black school to get closed? If they would have been committed to the early days and kept the physical plant of that Black school up, the same way they're doing at the White school over here, why couldn't it have been reversed? Why couldn't some White students have come to a Black school? But it's always the Black school to get closed. And that was the first thing they'd say, the physical place is in such deterioration. Well, where have you been

spending this money [laughing]? So quite naturally it's going to be run down. So, like I say, sometimes I ask those weird questions at times. [Laughing]

Antha Waye Do you believe Blacks gained as a result of desegregation?

Willie, Jr. Integration hurt in some respects. I think about some of the leadership opportunities we lost because of integration…those leadership positions that we had in the all-Black school, those type of opportunities weren't necessarily available to us… we weren't captains of the safety patrol, we weren't student council presidents. Let's say you're in your home room, and there's thirty people in the room and they're electing your class officers, and there's only one or two African Americans in that homeroom, do you think a Black person is going to get elected? [Laughing] Not unless you're Joe Popular or Mr. Athlete or something. But I'm thinking that average child isn't really going to get elected. [Pause] I can't say it benefited Blacks, when I think about that that was the only thing you were exposed to and from that perspective think of that as being able look at it as a possible benefit.

Antha Waye The terms cultural critic scholars use are "invisibility" and "silence" the sine qua non of my dissertation (Bell, 1992; Delpit, 1988; Rist, 1978).

Willie Jr. If a person doesn't feel totally included at the school they go to, is that really a benefit? You can tell if you're included or not. Sometimes a Black person might want to get involved but because of the color of your skin didn't get involved. You know that nine times out of ten you're not going to be even a cheerleader, because

cheerleaders get elected by popular vote. During the time I was there you'd think there'd be at least one cheeleader. I do remember a racist vice principal at the school.

I mean, you had it on both sides. You had on the White side, they weren't going to accept Black students regardless of what they did. You had your own Black students on this side that wasn't going to accept White students for whatever they did. Sometimes you had confrontations and you know it was about race.

Willie Jr. You can't deny that. Sometimes it was just about guys being macho

and being guys. You know, we just going to fight. [Laughing] and that's just it. It had nothing to do with color, it just so happened if someone would tick me off I'd run and get some kids, and then there'd be a rumble…Now intramurals that was inclusive. Really sports was where they accepted a Black person… I remember a friend told me they were playing and saying stuff like...man, did you see when Willie did this and they'd say, okay while we play basketball I want to be Willie Golden….now here's a White person saying they are playing like he's me…or they'd say I'm Johnny Golden. You got White kids pretending to be you [Laughing]. Sports were scary too. I know some strong people were praying for me in Scarboro because some of those places, I was going to LaFollette and [laughing] to some of those places. You know, I shouldn't be sitting here now. ..I believe in the power of prayer, and I know there were a lot of people praying for me like against Clinton. I broke my hand hitting a guy upside the head.

Antha Way You had a fight getting out on the gym?

Willie Jr. I broke my hand Friday night, played ball Saturday, and went to the hospital that Sunday. I used to hate going some places. When I used to get the schedule and see when we were going to play certain schools I had to get mentally prepared…it started as soon as you got off the bus and you've got to walk through the crowd and all the name calling and spitting at you and throwing Cokes bottles on you…but they figured out I wasn't going anywhere… I was coming back...other places were Lenoir City, Bradley County…LaFollette and Campbell County…oh and now Lake City was really rough, and it was in Anderson like us - but they hadn't been exposed to any Black basketball players so it was a new experience for them….you were trying to block out for a rebound, so you get this little cheap elbow thrown at you…so I had to make two moves, one move to make my shot and the other move to try to protect myself to keep somebody from cutting my legs out from under me…you see the referees are looking, and they see it. You just hate going to play those games.

One time the team stopped in Carthage, Tennessee, at a little mom-and-pop store just to get Cokes. I knew we weren't going to get served when we pulled off…I said to the coach "Coach, why are you going to this mom-and-pop store knowing we're not getting served." ...the wife tried to get her husband to serve us…but he wouldn't…at least my senior year my brother played with me so I had some back up [laughing].

I've told you my stories as best as I can…like I say, it's hard living in the past...it's hard for me to talk about myself - because again I was just a child growing up happy…I had a happy household…I enjoyed being a child [laughing]…I didn't

realize I was a trailblazer…so that's the way I looked at segregation and desegregation…I had no problems …no problems….I was blessed…I'm still blessed.

Antha Way Thank you.

The next oral historian who will utilize the African Adrinka symbolic discourse of sankofa *is* Cassandra. Analysis of Cassandra's memories attending Oak Ridge public schools in the early days of desegregation follows the same format as Willie Golden Jr. As Cassandra reveals her memories, *Antha Waye* presents the analysis from Cassandra's interview.

Cassandra Osborne, African American Griot/Trailblazer

"My Dad was a philosopher in his own right…he told his children, always give 150% when it comes to your education…people might not like you, but they can't take away what you know…I got my love of reading from my Dad, he always had a book. Also my sister's teacher helped me…school was my babysitter…my mother had to work so she sent me to the segregated school with my sister…my older sister's teacher didn't know what to do with me, so she gave me a book …I learned to read when I was 4 years old."

Cassandra *"My sister Olivia and I would stand at the street waiting for the Mobile Library truck gets to us on Fisk Avenue? Reading about Elizabeth I of England reminds a little about myself--- reserved; I've always been a bookworm. I like to read about the*

West. The Oak Ridge Public Library sent lots of books in the truck for us to read since Black people can't go inside the public library building

Cassandra I escaped to faraway places by reading about people like Elizabeth I of England, Catherine the Great of Russia, and other strong women during our country's western expansion when native people were the dominant caregivers of the land. When I think of my education, I think of my Dad. He was a very wise man…you know parents are your first teachers and I agree with that when I think about my parents**. ..**I mean, I loved reading books about untamed, individualistic, make your own way, kind of way of living….high adventure.

When I was about five-years-old, I realized there was something different about me and my cousin based on a derogatory remark a lady made about us and our race. I knew it wasn't good…I began to realize there was a difference…as I encountered more occasions where I knew that I was being treated in a different manner….but it took me longer to realize it and internalize what was going on.

I remember when my sister and I would come home sometimes and if we were upset about something because we thought that we had been mistreated because of our race and color, we would tell our dad. We'd say, "Well, we didn't get to do this or we didn't get to do that, you know, and we would cite some reason that usually was race-related or something…And he told us, he said, "You know…all of your life you're going to have people that are not going to give you credit for the things you do or treat you the way that you want to be treated, and a great deal of it will be because of your

race…Now, you can either let those people win that are doing that to you, or you can forge ahead…you have to decide what you're going to do…because if you decide that they've won, then you've given up…and I don't think I've raised my girls to give up." [Laughing]. I'm thankful for my parents and the strong role models they were in my life. I've been blessed with many people along the way who have helped me and have influenced my life both in the segregated school and desegregated school.

Kathleen Stephens was sort of a role model to me. She spoke up and championed education for Blacks in Oak Ridge. She was one of the first African Americans to move out of Scarboro into an integrated neighborhood in Oak Ridge. So she was always someone -- she and her husband, Nelson Stephens both, were always speaking up and bringing to light what I considered to be, you know, the injustices that were going on strictly because of the color of our skin. In fact, we became good friends when I became an adult. She was in education, had taught for several years, and then she left education. Also, George Walker, he was a real champions of education…he was an ombudsman, a representative of the interests of Black people in Oak Ridge. He was also a teacher at Scarboro Elementary. When he knew I had received a contract at Oak Ridge High School and it was my first year teaching, he went out of his way to give me some advice…he said, "The main thing you want to do is go to Oak Ridge High School and do your job. You're not there to talk about your personal life or anything of that nature, you're there to do your job…you do the best job possible."…I've been blessed to have some good people in my life that cared

enough to go out of their way to give me good advice…Whenever we get together for a class reunion, everybody always mentions Mr. Walker.

Ray Foster was a history teacher at Robertsville…I think he was a teacher that stood out in a positive way for me at that time, he taught world history and world geography. I always had a love for reading about far-off places, and so he would always have map quizzes to see if students could locate a country on the map and all these other neat little projects that you could do…he was someone that stood out because I always saw him as someone simply wanting to teach kids… it wasn't, I'm teaching an African American kid, or any other race…He loved teaching kids, all kids. There was also a PE teacher I remember, and a Health teacher by the name of Margaret Gotchell who still lives in the community. She would go out of her way to transport students - I mean - she was just a wonderful person. So there were many people that were just outstanding individuals…I could not have gotten a better education than coming through the Oak Ridge Schools to be honest with you.

I had good counselors. I remember my counselor, Ms. St George Arnold… she was a good counselor…and another great counselor was Ms. JoAnn Thompson. Thompson is the person who helped me attend Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina…She saw me talking to the recruiter and she asked me if I was interested in going to college. She drove me down there to visit Warren Wilson to look over the campus. Warren Wilson is sort of like Berea College in Kentucky, a work-study college…students were from all over the world. I also received the Peter Banham Scholarship given on behalf of a classmate who had drowned earlier and I

applied for financial aid so that pretty much worked out good for me to get financial aid. Also, ORHS made sure all juniors and seniors took the ACT and SAT free at ORHS….an interesting thing about my time at Warren Wilson that I will always and forever remember. It's, um, uh, one of the really good events that has ever happened to me in my life, when I was in college…I still to this day, I don't know who did it .One day I was called to the business office, the financial aid office at

Warren Wilson...I went over there, and I was told that I had a check and I needed to endorse it…the check was face down. Well, naturally, I wanted to flip the check over because I wanted to see the amount and I wanted to see where the check came from….the lady said, "No, you can't turn the check up!".. she was very adamant… she had her hand on the check so I couldn't turn it over…I said I want to turn it over so I know who to thank. She said, "Well, no, you can't do that….the person, the donor that sent this to you doesn't want you to know who they are." The money sent to me was quite a substantial amount of money! I signed the check, and that check came like clockwork every semester…a check would come, and I would get a phone call, you know, or a little note in my mailbox there at school, to come to the business office to sign that check! It came the entire time I was at Warren Wilson!

Antha Waye Truly a deliberate random act of kindness!

Cassandra Yes! I kept trying to find out who it was…I went through my mind trying to think of who would give me money, you know, every semester…. there were just so many people but I never knew for a fact who might have been sending me money...it

might have been a staff member there at the college or it might be someone here in Oak Ridge…I just didn't know…I have never found out….you know, they wanted their identity kept secret….it was always confidential.

Antha Waye Your interview so far has been about relationships that have stood out most in your life. You make several points, the development of your epistemology, your ways of knowing; your connectedness as a knower; and how you connect your relationships to your identity that has been socially constructed. First, Barbara Thayer-Bacon (2003) argues for a relational epistemology that suggests we learn through our relationships with other people, starting for example with your mother/father relationship. Those familial relationships you have discussed so far were with your mother, father, and sister, and the teacher at the segregated school in LaFollette who was your teacher and babysitter. Relationships to others have provided you a rich curriculum of life and learning. You have been educated in a broad perspective based on the diverse cultures that have nurtured your life from your father to Kathleen and Nelson Stephens to Mr. Walker, to your counselors Ms. St George Arnold to Ms Thompson, to Ms. Gotchell, and to someone who sent you a substantial amount of money to pay for you to go to college. Thayer-Bacon also brings in the voice of John Dewey (1916) a philosopher of education. Dewey argues for transactional relationships that build knowledge. Humans as social agents have the ability to negotiate relationships. Social relationships are therefore interactive between a social agent and society as well as social agents and one's social surroundings, commonly known as one's community. One's community impacts how we define ourselves; however, the transactional relationship negotiated as

Dewey suggests means we as members of the community affect and define the community too (p. 82). A relational epistemology argues that one's voice is developed through the interactive negotiations of people in the community and that community interacts with the society as well. This is to say Cassandra; you brought a wealth of knowledge because you were/are a good student and the huge amount of knowledge you gathered through reading that you contributed socially to your relationships you developed teaching and your other social relations. Your way of knowing is a space you share, negotiated through the relationships you construct. Your way of coming to know what you know is your *voice.* The people you just talked about are a part of your voice, your identity.

Your *voice* reveals what you know and how you make meaning of your world that is socially constructed. Your *voice* reveals your way of knowing, or how you perceive your world. You describe people who have influenced your life. It was reciprocal; you influenced him or her also. Your *voice* is socially constructed as a result of your social surroundings. Your social surroundings included your early exposure to schools much broader than just your family. Your *voice* connects your subjective world to your surroundings. Together, those social actors who had a positive and negative impact, the context, place and space all form your *voice*, your way of knowing and you helped form her or his voice. Your *voice* describes a perusal of your experiences of both segregated and desegregated schools.

Cassandra Yes I understand about social construction, I taught history [chuckle].

Antha Way Sure. Scholars Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966, 1967), help us. Berger and Luckmann's study suggests our realities are socially constructed through our relationships and our social interactions. Neither of us became who we are in isolation. You became aware of being Black in a social setting when the lady at the store made a derogatory remark. Your reality from there was your conscious realization that something is different based on race. Although your race was accepted by members of your family, you knew early on that there were people who did not have a high opinion of people who looked liked you. Gandhi, for example, changed the negative stereotype of the *untouchables* when India was controlled by the British.

I'm not saying anything you don't already know. For example, in the early twentieth century, *untouchable*s were perceived in India similar to African Americans in the U.S. Gandhi became an active critic of Britain's treatment of India's untouchable class (Coolidge, 1971).

Cassandra Gandhi changed the dominant narrative of India's lower caste of people by re-naming the *untouchable*s, *harijans*, which means *children of god*. The (G)god Gandhi referred to was the Supreme Hindu (G)god, Vishnu. You contextualized race based on the subjectivity of your social relations. Your social connections formed how you made meaning out of your world that was socially constructed. You navigated your life, journeying through different social relationships; I suggest we are relationally constructed through our social experiences. You have identified your allies, those people who you choose to maintain in your socially constructed knapsack. You

changed the dominant narrative from "different being derogatory" to "different as a progressive term" that expresses success as a college graduate and teacher.

Cassandra I have packed "non-allies" into my proverbial knapsack also. I also remember acts of injustices in my head. Not just toxic words against me for being different because I'm Black, but toxic actions as well. One in particular occurred in a history class at ORHS. I've also loved history and adventure nurtured through books as well as by my history teacher at Robertsville, Mr. Foster. But, on the other hand, I had a negative experience with a teacher that I will never will forget because, like I said, I always had a love of history, and I remember when I was in high school, uh, you had to take American History, of course…and I was always very good at history because I just loved history. I think history's more than dates, but at that time, dates were so important and it just came easy for me. I kept up with my grades. I'd always write my grade in my notebook and see where I was and so forth. I remember I had written my little grades for quizzes, and we had to get up and do oral projects, speak in class, presentations, and I would write my grade down. So, based on what I had written in my notebook, I expected an A on my report card. Well, when I got my report card, I had a B+, so I went to the teacher and I asked the teacher, I said, uh, "I was just wondering"… because we were always taught to be very respectful… I said, "I was just wondering about my grade. I have a B+; I thought I might have an A." She said, "Well, a B+ is good, Cassandra." I said, "But I thought I had an A." She said, "Well, a B+ is good." I said, "But how did I get a B+?" Well, she never could explain how I got the B+, so I had my little notebook, and I said, "Well, I got an A on all the

quizzes, I got an A on …" and I showed her where I got A's on everything…I'm naming the A's because I was proud! I have always been a good student and tried to be a good person because I didn't want to risk disappointing my parents. It was important for me to earn A's in History. I never did get it changed or anything else, and I always resented it because I *knew* that I had an A, but I also began to realize that she could not bring herself to give an African American student an A. She believed the B+ was good enough for me. I always remembered that. I still carry that with me. She was one of the rare teachers when I remember the teachers that I had coming through the Oak Ridge Schools. I had some fantastic teachers….that was one of the only cases that I can remember of something like that happening. But all the teachers that I had, from guidance counselors to, just the entire staff within the Oak Ridge Schools, they were just wonderful to me and to other Black students. We never had problems with our teachers.

Antha Waye Gosh, I find that troubling. Patricia Hill Collins (2000, 2008) helps my response. Collins suggests each person is situated within a socially constructed reality based on one's group. Collins argues groups generate subjective realities. These subjective realities, or standpoints, use epistemological approaches that are distinct to a given group and therefore partial (p. 290). Truths can be broadened when shared with other groups. Merging a relational epistemology with distinct standpoints of marginalized groups broadens a group's perspective gaining an enlarged perspective of truth. You enlarged your perspective of truth through books. Larger perspectives gained through broadening relationships with other people or groups provide an

alternate epistemic challenge to the dominant narrative. Like Gandhi, words challenged the dominant narrative about subjugate marginalized groups forging potential alliances, or at least push to decenter the dominant narrative that subjugates one group compared to another. A relational epistemology builds connections that can strengthen distinct groups and argues for an enlarged standpoint or standpoint alliances.

Cassandra Well, I am going to compare segregated and desegregated schools**.** I don't want to be sitting on the fence about racial desegregation of schools but I see some positives and some negatives. I think the negative side was the reinforcement for Black students missing at the desegregated schools…that we were able to achieve and could achieve…we lost strong role models that had been African American teachers…I think in reflecting back, I think Black people, in general, were apprehensive, you know. But, at the same time, young people had this attitude, "Oh, this is going to be something different, you know." Some of us felt we had been thrown into an environment that was basically alien to us without a great deal of support to go along with it. Desegregation undermined the self-confidence of many students…there was an unwritten mental perception so to speak, that suggested to some of us that we were just there (attending school) only because the law required us to go to school… and many times whether it was true or not, often times we did not feel welcome because there were many activities we were not allowed to participate in at school. Well, for example, the senior trip comes to my mind.

Every year there was a senior trip to Big South Fork[39]. All the White seniors would hop on buses that would take them to Big South Fork. African American students were not allowed to go on the ORHS senior trip. We were given an alternate trip. African American students were not allowed to engage in certain activities and we knew that was setting us apart…. What made more of an impression on me was when I left Scarboro Elementary School, which was the segregated school, and went to Robertsville Junior High School. That was when I realized something had happened, and from talking …that's when I began to realize, there was going to be a difference in my life….I went to Robertsville beginning seventh grade….they did not prepare me to leave Scarboro Elementary and go to Robertsville. There was no preparation. When I think about it, it was traumatic to a large extent because there was no preparation. We were just thrown into the mix of students. Before I went to RJHS, I was used to being in a classroom with students the same color as me. My friends were in my classroom. We had gone from third grade through sixth grade together, and so when I went to Robertsville, I really expected to see a roomful of my friends that I had always gone through school with. I looked around and the only person of color in the room was me! I'm not sure if it was a deliberate effort but later on, I remember after school had started, I remember seeing at least one or two more African Americans that did come into that classroom. So I think, but I don't know, if it was a rethinking or what was going on but I remember that there were at least two more

39 Big South Fork is a State Park about 26 miles northeast of Oak Ridge.

African Americans in the classroom with me then. I was in the faster high achievers group. [Laughing]

Also, I was a rule follower …I didn't want to overstep the rules you know [laughing], plus, my father was a disciplinarian in his own right. I did not want to do anything where a teacher would ever have to contact my home and tell my father that I had misbehaved. I think I was more afraid of the school contacting him than what would have happened to me in school. [Laughing]

Antha Waye Interesting that you talk about discipline. Discipline within the African American community meant the use of corporal punishment (Fairclough, 2007; hooks, 1989; hooks, 2009). I heard an anecdote that suggested corporal punishment was one of those lingering cultural practices that stemmed from West African culture. [40] I suggest U. S. slavery corrupted African familial love, through slavery's abusive practices. Slave narratives like those of Frederick Douglass (1892, 1962) revealed how he was beaten because Mrs. Auld the wife of one of his slave master's had taught him to read, that was not an indication his slave master loved him or was encouraging him to read (p. 113). Instead, harsh punishment was inflicted on slaves as a deterrent to learning. This also might suggest corporal punishment was

[40] B. J. Thayer-Bacon told me about visiting Ghana and how the use of corporal punishment was indicative of love and care for a child, based on her interviews of adults in Ghana, after observing children caned in their classroom for failing a test. Her colleague H. Wright agreed, based on his experience in Senegal

outlawed because of its resemblance to the negative images of Black slave and slave master.

Discipline can look different based on the motive and intentions of the person meting out the discipline. This suggests discipline can be organic and relational based on cultural practices. Douglass's autobiography also shows how slaves were treated as property, bought and sold and separated from fathers and mothers. CRT scholars suggest that Whites have treated minorities as property and therefore have property rights that reify humans as objects. It might be worth pursuing a study to look at African cultural norms that have been corrupted. This study that I call sankofa honors our African roots living African American culture.

Cassandra I'm glad to be a part of this study. But returning to my thought concerning desegregation, I think the attitude among the adults about desegregation was, "This is going to be better for my kids. They're going to have more of an opportunity to do things." So they were supportive because they thought it would bring, you know, greater opportunities…if not for them, but for their children and future generations. So they were a little bit apprehensive …they were more supportive of improving education for their kids and that we finally have gotten the schools integrated and so forth. My Dad sent us to school with all the knowledge he could muster…he did not tolerate doing less than our best. I remember my dad's attitude was you always give a hundred and fifty percent at whatever you pursue. His attitude was that people may not like you, but they can't take away what you know…one of the things that he told us was, "Wherever you go, do your best… mind your own business, and you'll be okay." That was his attitude about

desegregation. He had limited education, and he wanted more for us. But I think he was also very apprehensive over the desegregation movement because he had daughters that were being sent into an environment that he was very apprehensive of what might – something might happen and in a sense he felt powerless to do something about it. I could sense he was apprehensive but he never said so but we could sense that he was very much apprehensive over us, you know, entering into a new realm of living and going to school. But I see positives as well.

Desegregation finally provided Black students with up-to-date equipment,

the latest textbooks that we had been denied, and having the technology, which was limited at that time, but better than we had at Scarboro.

Antha Waye Historian James Anderson (1988) notes at since slaves were freed, there

has been a fundamental belief among Black people in the value of a literate culture. Historians point to the efforts made to secure universal schooling for the former slaves and their children (p.5). Education was an act of resistance to the American slave culture that kept most Blacks illiterate and robbed them of their education. Efforts were made by newly freed Black slaves to educate themselves (p. 6). Before public schools, there were "native schools" located throughout the southern U.S. Almost five-hundred native schools began and were maintained in the hands of Blacks. The curriculum centered on the progressive contributions the colored race has made to the world. Educator Richard Wright (1913) points to the method of the alphabetic writing, majority of sciences, and that race differences are a matter of color, not of brain (p. 8).

Cassandra Yes based on my love of reading, my students and I have had many discussions about many of the things you're talking about. The curriculum in native schools showed the superiority of the colored race, not inferiority. This suggests Scarboro, as an all Black school, also offered similar positive aspects of Black superiority. Siddle Walker's (1996) historical work points to an interactive relationship and intricate ties between the school and community where she grew up during de jure de facto segregated schools. The school's principal expected his teachers to be involved members of the community to nurture a willing support from the parents toward the school. Mr. Dillard, the principal, modeled this relationship and could be seen walking and talking to members of the community. The interactive relationship served also to reduce suspicious tensions that could develop between the educated school personnel and the less educated community members.

Antha Way Yes, collective attitude was nurtured toward a shared goal that education was important and demanded a shared commitment from members of the community (Siddle Walker, 1996). Working together, with an attitude of shared goals, meant the needs of the school were met right there within the community. Other scholars looked to the collective attitude and support of the community as cultural capital that was available to the segregated school but became obscured as a result of racial desegregation of the school (Bell, 1987; Foster, 1997).

Cassandra Well, I think that I disagree with segregated schools. To be honest, I

think African Americans became more involved in the total community…more involved in activities going on throughout Oak Ridge. I think Oak Ridge was ahead of its time in many ways because of starting out as a federal government town.

We had always been involved in things like softball and things of that nature and few other activities. But I think desegregation of the schools helped the whole community become even more involved in activities. It wasn't unusual for the majority of the citizens of Oak Ridge to accept African Americans being in the organizations and so forth. Caucasians were the ones who came to the forefront pushing for inclusion. I believe that was a plus for Oak Ridge. I think the makeup of the town in 1942 didn't have the history of the South so that made it possible for Oak Ridge to move ahead in terms of desegregation. I think maybe the initial events of desegregation that took place in Oak Ridge came without the violence that took place in so many other areas of the South…that sometimes Oak Ridge was overlooked when you think of the bombing of Clinton High School and so forth or what went on in Little Rock, Arkansas. I think sometimes we're overshadowed because it was more Oak Ridge's makeup to comply with the law… it's just a mindset also because a lot of the people who moved to Oak Ridge were from integrated areas.

On the other hand, I don't recall a great deal of involvement in the

schools… in things like Parent Teacher (Student) Organizations (PTO/PTSO) because overwhelming numbers of parents had not finished high school, or had very limited education. Oak Ridge was a highly educated community and many of the Black parents

were so busy trying to earn a living that they just didn't have the time or energy to go to PTSO meetings or anything. But you also would have parents that, if it was something involving their kids, like a special night or something, you'd see those parents turning up in record numbers, you know, coming out…highly supportive. But it wasn't, "Let's go to a meeting each month." But any event that their kids were in, you would see the parents there.

I remember block meetings, not, PTSO per se, but I remember block meetings on the part of the school system from time to time where you would have school administrators that would actually come to Scarboro Community Center to have a meeting, and that was true of city officials as well. So I remember those as a kid, of having those types of meetings periodically.

I actually think there was more involvement at Scarboro School because of the segregated nature of the Oak Ridge community and the proximity of Scarboro School to the community that probably there may have been a little bit more involvement because of the proximity of the school and the teachers knowing each parent by name. The teachers knew something about each student in the school. So I think just that proximity, living in the same community as the school, contributed to a greater turnout, you know, of parents as a result of that than you did later on.

In a diverse area where you have to intermingle and understand another person, I think that would not have come about … on the other hand, it would have been nice, to have a school system that you went through where you knew your classmates much more and

you knew your teachers. I know students that have gone to historical Black colleges and universities, and they talk about that base that they have that strong base. At the time that I was in school, you did not have a lot of intermingling between Black and White students and it never was a great deal. You had some White students that intermingled more as far as friendship is what I'm saying… you have had maybe one or two White students that you would see and, you know, you were friends at school, but it didn't carry over to come over to my house or anything of that nature. But the intermingling of White students at school, that took place. We're going to be friends at school but we wouldn't hang out together after school. No, you didn't have that.

Like I said, I also don't think educational equality for Blacks and equal opportunities for Blacks could have been achieved without desegregation, only using secondhand equipment. But the sense to go forward in the world... I think that was lost…that is something that I think was lost with desegregation, in a sense, because we do not have that type of base anymore. But, on the other hand, I always see life in terms of the glass as half-filled [Laughing]. I look at the positives and I look at the negatives and I say, "Okay, let's see how we can make this work." So desegregation, I think, more opportunities were presented to Blacks, you know, Black Americans in many ways. I really do think there was a sincere effort in Oak Ridge to make desegregated schools work. I remember at one point there was a class offered on the high school level dealing with African studies… there was always an effort made to highlight the accomplishments of noted African Americans. So I really do think the school system did the best job that it could do, you know, in trying to ensure that African American students felt included in what was going on, that it was an

inclusive school….and it's not because I taught for many years within Oak Ridge, but I just think we had a school system that was very progressive, that was far ahead of its time.

I think as a result, African American students benefited, you know, from going through the school system because even now when I talk to some of my friends and they look back, they now realize what an opportunity they had. At the time, when you're going through something, you take it either for granted or you just dismiss it. But, they realize that they really had a tremendous education coming through Oak Ridge schools.

I think a negative was awards and things of that nature. In a negative manner, I probably missed out on certain awards that I might have gotten had I stayed at the segregated school….and I missed out on making the connection of really seeing the true importance of my own history very early in life. It wasn't until a little bit later in life that I began to read more about African American history and to take the pride in African American history, because I think with desegregation, it was never *my* story. It was always someone else's story that I read about in history books…I got to the point that I wanted to read my story and find out about my history and so forth.

I think desegregation, in a sense, overshadowed what probably would have taken place...I missed out and I still think that there is a glass ceiling in many ways, not just for women but my career…so being Black *and* a woman....there was a glass ceiling… in many ways around the country, you know. And so I can -- you know, I could see that as well. And I think, uh, being a Black female, I probably had greater opportunity sometimes than Black males, to be honest with you. But, um, I think there were certain things that could

have taken place that did not, and, uh, a great deal of it is really having an appreciation …you know, for my own history.

Antha Waye Thank you, yes. What do you think about the work of scholar Ellen Swartz (1992) who contends the official school curriculum, which has seen minimal changes in terms of addressing culturally relevant perspectives over the years, maintains a master script of Whiteness? Master scripting, as you saw in your work and according to Swartz silences the voices and perspectives of non-Whites. This suggests that the standard knowledge needed for students to know is based on representations of the dominant, White, empowered, upper-class, male perspective that delegitimizes "Other" perspectives (p. 341).

The master script presumes a standard knowledge as a homogenized "we" (Ladson-Billings, 2009). I suggest that the middle school students mentioned earlier in my study were possibly rebelling and resisting a master scripting when they asked me to change their schedules to rescue them from taking their required history classes. For example, the master script would have knowledge presented as facts that state things like "…we discovered America; …or …the U.S. Constitution was written to protect the rights of "all" of us Americans…or we came to America in search of a new life." The latter narrative dismisses the middle passage where mostly Dutch and English ships sailed to the Americas carrying African slaves poached from off the coasts of the continent of Africa. Even as I think of how knowledge was meted to me in public school, Ellis Island was the master script that represents immigrants who came to America in search of a better life leaving behind a lesser life in places like Ireland, Russia, and Italy for example. These immigrants

are presented historically as hard workers who were able to overcome the language and social barriers to gain a better socioeconomic status. This narrative also dismisses people from China and Japan who came to America early in its history, and First Nations who were always here, or Latina/o people in the southwest who were incorporated into the U.S. after the Mexican American War (1846-1848). Lastly, this script leaves "outgroups" like African Americans, First Nations, and Latina/os grappling in search of high achievers, intellectual sheroes and heroes who look like them (Fraser, 1994; Mariner, 2010).

Cassandra I think in a positive manner desegregation made me more aware that I wanted things to change for generations that would come after me. I also think in a more positive manner I made so many friends that I would not have made if it had not been for desegregation. The college I went to, thirty percent of the students came from overseas. It never has been to the point that I feel uncomfortable around any group, race, or cultural activity that I'm taking part in. I don't feel uncomfortable. I'm always the sort of the student I want to learn more…a lot of that came from going through Oak Ridge schools, of being thrown in with everyone, having the one high school, two middle schools. I mean, you were just thrown together. There was the kid that came from a well-to-do family, to the kid that was barely making it...or you were intermingling with students that had all different abilities, levels. When I went to college and I was thrown in with so many kids from overseas, it didn't seem that unnatural to me. I think desegregation really afforded me the opportunity to begin to see people as individuals. It's obvious when you're around someone you know is a person from a different race…people say they don't see skin color

but that's just not true. [Laughing] It's obvious. But you learn to just note it and you move on. I think going to Warren Wilson College taught me that.

Every month, we would have International Night and you would have all the different dishes of a particular country being prepared, and you would have the student telling you about their country and so forth. I would room with students from other countries and I just learned a great deal of how to get along and appreciate everyone.

I think a special note for me, overall, when I reflect back, of teaching for many years within the Oak Ridge schools and growing up in Oak Ridge and going through the school system, when I think back, I think the positives outweigh the negatives. When I look back on it, the things that I remember the most were positive experiences that took place for me….maybe I suppressed the negatives [laughing], but that's fine.

In 2012, I went to my forty-fifth high school reunion and that was the

largest turnout that they had for many years for the class of 1967 and we all want to go back and reconnect. Even now, if something happens to a classmate…several have passed away, from where we went to Scarboro Elementary, all of them always make a special point to try to get back and go to the funeral, or contact the family or whatever they can do, because we know we'll always have that connection to Scarboro.

Antha Way So all the Black kids are still sitting together at the class reunion like in

the cafeteria even as a result of desegregation [chuckle] (Tatum, 2003). Teaching White students about racism…the search for White allies and the restoration of hope

(Tatum, 2009)…I believe the search for allies and the restoration of hope is a good place to stop at this point in our discussion of racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. Any last words you want to say?

Cassandra I always think where I am today would not have been possible unless I'd had individuals willing to work with me….and so I will always be grateful for that.

Conclusion

The voices of seven African American students who desegregated Oak Ridge Schools during the early days is partially complete. They have revealed their academic, cultural, and social experiences during racial desegregation. African American griot Fred was one of the first African American in the state of Tennessee to graduate from a racially desegregated public high school. Archie discovered a unique laser technology application he attributes to Oak Ridge School's focus on math and science and the involvement of the science community of Oak Ridge in the Oak Ridge Schools. Ann deconstructed the master narrative so that she sees how she was able to teach her children to excel in their pursuit of higher education and did in fact excel. Helen stands as a trailblazer. L.C. finally "got his say.' Willie and Cassandra graduated from four-year colleges and returned to Oak Ridge as community servants, city councilman and teacher. History is always partial. However, this study documents the African American voices of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge, Tennessee public schools that is available to join existing records missing the perspectives of African American students.

Chapter 5 reviews several points; the positive and negative perceptions of racial desegregation in Oak Ridge; Oak Ridge's pursuit of racial desegregation; the process of implementing racially desegregated Oak Ridge public schools; what appeared to be overlooked; suggestions for future studies; and finally the Conclusion that reflects my personal experience completing this study.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Oral History Communicates Memories

The memories of attending Oak Ridge, Tennessee, public schools from seven African Americans between the years 1955 to 1967 have been revealed. They have gifted some of their school memories of entering the first racially desegregated public school buildings in the state of Tennessee, Oak Ridge High School and Robertsville Junior High. African American griots/trailblazers: Ann, Archie, Cassandra, Fred, Helen, L. C., and Willie, Jr. were asked about their academic/ educational, cultural, and social experiences attending Robertsville Junior High and Oak Ridge High Schools. They were asked whether they believed school desegregation benefited them academically/educationally, culturally, and socially. From their responses I sought to determine if they were resistant to desegregation.

Africa and African American Connections

Like the West African Akan Adinkra symbol sankofa, they were fearless to enter the tenuous uncertainty of memory, but were willing to be interviewed and make a contribution to research and scholarship. Zembylas and Bekerman (2008) and Willink (2009) argue that fearlessly visiting the past is liberating. When the past is remembered, we can realize the past does not have to determine who we are today. Thinking about the past is a time to gather memories to remove the boogeyman that might lurk invisibly in the

past, possibly withholding us from sharing the wisdom that we have learned from our past experiences. What historical truths have been revealed about racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools?

This chapter summarizes what was learned in the previous chapters followed by a discussion of the findings of the academic/educational, cultural, and social losses and gains the African American trailblazers experienced as a result of racially desegregated Oak Ridge public schools. I re-visit resistance and I suggest future studies to be considered, followed by my personal reflections and lastly a conclusion.

Highlights from Voices of the Past

Chapter Reviews

Chapter 1 contextualized the qualitative components of this study that set out to open up a research space using research methods prescribed by oral history. These methods required me to respectfully probe into the subjective memories of the African American students who desegregated Oak Ridge public schools during the initial stages of racial desegregation. My intent was to argue for a space that places their memories in the historical landscape of Oak Ridge School's racial desegregation archives. Alistair Thomson (2007) points to four paradigms of oral history. Two were advanced in this research. the second paradigm that recognizes the subjective component oral historians reveals during her or his analysis of an oral history. Another was Thomson's third paradigm of oral history, pointing to oral history's adaptability across disciplines such as

the scholars' voices from school counseling, to legal studies, cultural studies, linguistics, and historians.

Human functioning is complex, therefore Chapter 1 required me to practice the art of caring to support the narrator's memories. Like a remodeling task, I looked at what was present in terms of the history of racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools and set the stage for how the academic community would be different as a result of infusing African American voices of their school experiences as it relates to desegregation. I framed Oak Ridge in terms of the community and the African Americans who desegregated Oak Ridge public schools during the initial phases. I argue for mending the connection of Africa to African Americans to disrupt an assimilationist, racial narrative by pointing to the African symbolic use of sankofa and the African historian, called a griot, but infuse a more American name; I also called them trailblazers and then thread both throughout. Sankofa, looking back to pick up treasures from the past while continually moving forward carrying an egg embryo preparing to birth the future that includes these treasured past memories, is interwoven within these concluding remarks as the reader will see the narrators continually return and point to memories of Scarboro. Chapter 1 concludes by laying out the claim that the research community will be different because the experiences of those African American students who were once invisible to the historical archives of Oak Ridge who will be heard in subsequent chapters to follow.

Chapter 2 reviewed the related literature that would help frame and deconstruct the tenuous issues of race, desegregation, and the legal forces that affect race and desegregation in the form of school laws. I aimed to represent our shared native race as

human agents within the complex network of history, race, and politics. Critical race theory was the analytical lens, because race—as a social construct, not a biological reality—is the salient issue for African American racial desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools and the court litigation that legalized school desegregation. A goal advanced in the literature related to critical race theory (CRT) is to engage critical dialogue that advances social justice in order to see the world as it is, then take action to become architects of what the world can become.[41] Therefore, CRT brings in the voices of scholars as far back as Anna Julie Cooper (1892) and W. E. B. DuBois (1903) to more contemporary critical race scholars.

One part of recognizing humans as agents of free will is that social change like desegregation forces us to shift our trusted equilibrium of normalcy and engenders stress where we fight or flee. Whether we flee or fight, by nature we resist or lose the energy needed for social change. So Chapter 2 pointed to the literature that casts a light on resistance to see how the African American griots and trailblazers responded to racial desegregation that required them to change schools. Chapter 2 presented the related literature for the analysis in Chapter 4 and Chapter 3 laid out the perambulatory methods of this oral history study.

In Chapter 3, oral history scholars framed the labyrinth of details needed to conduct a principled investigation. I explained oral history methodology as research that

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[41] Robert Kennedy and George Bernard Shaw are cited for iterations of this phrase: "You see things and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not?" http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/5217.George_Bernard_Shaw

focuses on the African American trailblazer's memories. As detailed as possible, I lay out all the tools, preparation, and missteps I experienced in the process. In order to ask the narrators to entrust their memories to me, the University of Tennessee required me to maintain the integrity of my research by relying on the integrity expected when utilizing pre-approved investigative practices, namely an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Similar to the extensive preparation educational professionals devote to preparing for our classes of students, I communicated these details in Chapter 3 and also to the narrators to demonstrate that their memories were valuable to the investigation. After interviewing each narrator, their words were transcribed, then printed, copied, and critiqued by each narrator before being included in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 contains oral histories of seven African American griots/trailblazer's and their school experiences. Their memories are positioned to change the presumptive historical landscape of Oak Ridge's African American responses to racial desegregation and linked their memories to the existing historical perspectives of Oak Ridge's school desegregation. Chapter 4 also contains individual analyses of each trailblazer's memory. The analyses of their memories are the culmination of the ethical bartering or reciprocity that is the hallmark of qualitative research. Chapter 4 was the place where I, the researcher as the research instrument painfully massaged their thoughts through an analytical sieve that took months to digest, write, and represent to the university research community. I worked to ensure a dissertation that bears significance and passes the criteria for originality, authenticity, and trustworthiness. The narrators stepped out from behind the veil of obscurity as it relates to their courageous pursuit of educational opportunities

denied to their ancestors. They gave me their memories, and that was, is, and will forever be life changing.

Next, I discuss my findings as they relate to the historical actors that contributed to racial desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools. I also describe my perspective in terms of the gains and losses to the African American trailblazers that relate to their academic/ educational, cultural, and social experiences.

Gains as a Result of Racial Desegregation

The narrators reported that desegregation overall was a positive experience, and Oak Ridge African American students gained a better education as a result of desegregation. They gained access to more improved educational opportunities and educational resources at RJHS and ORHS. All narrators reported that Scarboro School had high scholastic standards, so none of them were strangers to working hard in school. The African American trailblazers reported they were capable of excelling and being academically successful. Archie and Cassandra focused on being high academic achievers. As noted in Archie's interview, he willingly corrected historical distortions or added African American facts that his history teacher left out. Archie reported his teachers and classmates, both White and Black, seemed to value his knowledge and participation whenever these discussions occurred. Also, Cassandra taught regular, Honors, and Advanced Placement American History at Oak Ridge High School for over thirty years. Her position as a classroom history teacher furnished her students, both Black and non-Black, with a broader perspective of the curriculum, one that included African Americans.

A few of the others reported they didn't have teachers who gave them an "extra push" along with expectations that they would achieve academically after they began attending desegregated schools. For example, L. C. reported that he was a good math student and earned a math award at Scarboro School; however, at ORHS many of his ninth-grade peers had already taken algebra before ninth- grade. He would have liked to take more advanced math classes, but he was not given the opportunity because he did not take algebra before ninth grade. L. C. became a biology research technician, and he needed the higher-level math classes he didn't take at ORHS. Therefore he had to teach himself in order to do his job.

Helen and Willie agreed that they were good students at Scarboro School, and reportedly could have worked harder once they started attending integrated schools. Both of them achieved post-secondary degrees. Ann explained that her schoolwork at RJHS was more difficult than at Scarboro School. The academic level was more rigorous, but she had learned from her teachers at Scarboro School and her parents the value of hard work and the stamina needed to stick with her school work until she mastered it and understood it. Ann reported positive gains from school desegregation, but to the detriment of her feelings of self-worth. However, after she had visited the negative aspects of her experience with desegregation during the interview, she revealed a significant increase in her level of confidence and became bolder with her words and ideas.

There was a similar change during L. C.'s interview. The interview began with L. C. sticking only with the facts, but when he, too, realized the benefits of desegregation and the educational opportunities he had as a result of attending ORHS to his professional

career, he visibly showed his appreciation for that opportunity. He ended the interview by making sure that I took away from the interview his appreciation for the teachers at ORHS for their pedagogical aptitude.

The teachers at RJHS and ORHS reportedly were “nice” and appeared to have high expectations. But some of the narrators appeared to have some reticence toward more rigorous academic classes. For example, Helen’s teacher told her she would help her if she took more challenging classes. Helen didn’t want to take difficult classes. She said she “decided to take the easier classes.”

I see in my profession as a school counselor that students will take easier classes in order to earn better grades. There is research that suggests that grades can become more important than learning or thinking. The importance of grades can be driven by parents, schools, or the students themselves as they look ahead to opportunities that appear viable based mostly on grades (Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987). Any suggestions about reasons why this appears to be the case would be purely speculative, and, therefore, suggest a review of the literature as it relates to African American student achievement in racially segregated schools measured against similar achievement levels of those students who transitioned to racially integrated schools in the early days of racial desegregation of public schools. Also, a future study that obtained oral interviews from students that focused mainly on phenomena like care, confidence, the use of Buber’s I/thou approach to education, motivation, relationships, vulnerability, or ego-strength of African American students in an integrated setting might be warranted. Fred accepted the cultural norm of the

day by stating “that’s just the way it was back then. I didn’t have any problems.” Fred reportedly felt accepted by his White peers at ORHS.

Oak Ridge High School yearbooks and newspaper articles in the *Oak Ridger* report partnerships between ORHS and the science community. Scientists and engineers from Oak Ridge National Lab, Y-12, K-25, Oak Ridge Associated University, and other supporting scientific organizations were involved in extending the ORHS curriculum with real-world experiences for the students. Real-world experiences enhance critical thinking and develop students’ skills of logic (Anyon, 1981; Kozol, 1991). Archie, Fred, and L. C. reported that Scarboro School didn’t have science labs nor the educational resources afforded them at ORHS. Archie, Fred, and L. C. believe access to science labs at ORHS contributed to their successful professional careers.

Losses as a Result of Racial Desegregation

Several scholars suggest the public school curricula can be esoteric and challenging to African American students in integrated classrooms (Collins, 2000/2009; Delpit, 1995/2006; Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Epstein, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 2009; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2009; Lorde, 1984; Tatum, 1997; Woodson, 1933). The oral narrators agreed desegregation provided broader curriculum offerings of literature, science and math. However, like the African American students who asked me to drop their history class, the narrators in this study had to contend with the hidden curriculum that promotes White as best and non-White as inferior. This can be a difficult space for students sitting in classrooms to navigate.

While the oral narrators contend they gained educational opportunities as a result of desegregation, they lost the cultural advantage of African American teachers who were able to contextualize the master script by including African Americans within their daily instruction (Fairclough, 2007; Stepto, 1991). Segregated Oak Ridge, African American teachers didn't have Sertima's (1976) book, *The African Presence in Ancient America: They Came Before Columbus*. They were likely aware of literature by Frederick Douglass (1892), Booker T. Washington (1901), Richard Wright (1940), W. E. B. DuBois (1903), and Phillis Wheatley (1986). Phillis Wheatley was a literary writer as early as 1770 (Carretta, 2001). Wheatley tried for many years during her lifetime to publish her writings, but no one would agree to publish her work. It would be many years after her death before someone agreed to publish her writing (p. iv).

Returning to CRT, Harris (1993) suggests that the curriculum taught in integrated public schools is a form of property rights. The dominant group has restrictive access to curriculum decisions because curriculum decisions are made by a restrictive group of people, and therefore belong to, a restrictive group (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 29). Therefore, as property, groups or people who are the privileged curators of the standard curriculum have a say in the curriculum decisions the rest of us are denied.

According to archival records, Oak Ridge Schools began as a school system that followed a system-wide curriculum developed and designed by Oak Ridge teachers (Blankenship & Kidd, 1949). Each year Oak Ridge teachers participated in two-month workshops during the summer, where they designed and developed the Oak Ridge curriculum for each respective grade level. By the time Scarboro School began in 1946,

“workshop,” as it was called, was already in place. Even today, workshop hours continue to be a common practice of Oak Ridge public schools. Every Wednesday, schools follow an abbreviated schedule. At the middle-school level, all classes are thirty minutes long versus fifty minutes on a normal-day schedule. Teachers are paid to review curriculum development and meet in professional learning communities after students have been released. Also, teachers are paid for eight hours of summer workshop time.

Siddle Walker (1996; 2000) and Shircliffe (2001) suggest that the segregated community drew from multiple resources to support the segregated school teachers and the segregated school curriculum. The trailblazers believed their teachers at Scarboro School would teach them whatever they needed to learn to “survive.” L. C. reported a learning environment at ORHS that ‘if you get it, fine, but if you don’t too bad we got to move on. I was lucky enough to get it.” Ann, Helen, L. C., and Willie, Jr reported that Scarboro School teachers wouldn’t allow students to fail. Students were in classes according to her or his academic level. If a student’s academic level was higher than her or his chronological age, then the student was placed in a higher class. If a student’s academic level was lower then a student would be in a lower class until the student caught up.

I’m ambivalent whether to state the next point as a loss or gain. Based on archival information Scarboro School teachers asked for additional resources needed to provide a higher standard of educational programming than the Oak Ridge school system provided to them. Reportedly, Scarboro’s principal, Mrs. Officer‘s requests were met in the form of volunteers or second-hand materials. For example, Scarboro didn’t have science labs, higher level math classes, foreign languages, or a strong literature program. The archival

data suggests community volunteers from local science labs were asked to supplement shortcomings of the curriculum through the use of volunteers. Scarboro students were exposed to science and an expanded curriculum, but didn't have the real-world experience available to ORHS students. Archie's ability to challenge historical distortions while sitting in a history class at ORHS, suggests Black history was taught at Scarboro School, but lost at RJHS and ORHS. So the African American trailblazers lost African American historical information, but gained an expanded science, math, and literature curriculum, that is until Cassandra started teaching and provided missing hisotircal text. A future study of Oak Ridge African American teachers might determine to what extent the teachers had control over the curriculum they taught in the segregated school. I have identified the esoteric school curriculum as a loss for African Americans griot/trailblazers in this study as a result of desegregation, but again with Cassandra's vast knowledge, students were able to gain a broader understanding of history, at least during her tenure and beyond at ORHS.

One of my tasks as a professional school counselor is to develop transition plans for new students. The two main transition plans I develop are for students who transition to our school from an alternative behavioral school setting to regular middle school, and to new students who have moved to our school from another school. The African American trailblazers reportedly were prepared by Scarboro community members, teachers, and parents to change from a segregated school to a desegregated school. The "Protons" reportedly told the students "if you do this, than that will happen and if you do that, then this will happen. They prepared us for life." Community meetings in the various White neighborhoods prior to desegregation were reported by the *Oak Ridger* newspaper. If there

was a meeting in ‘The Valley”, I was not able to find evidence of a meeting. Helen reported being greeted at the door when she entered RJHS, so there is evidence of someone welcoming the new students. It has been my experience that all of the school staff is expected to be in the hallways to greet students the first day.

Transition plans that I develop as a professional school counselor include a tour of the school, a detailed explanation of the curriculum, an opportunity to meet her or his grade level teachers, a school supply list, and a list of clubs and activities to help new students make an immediate connection to peer groups. These are the main areas that are included in a transition plan. The African American trailblazers did not appear to have had a transition plan to help them adjust to their new school.

Other losses identified were in the extracurricular activities and social categories where they lost opportunities for athletes to fully participate on their sports teams. If the competing school refused to allow Black players on their home turf, then the Black players became uniformed spectators. Opportunities for leadership roles were lost like student government, although Archie was on the student council at Scarboro and ORHS. Willie was captain of the ORHS basketball team his freshman year. Also, the senior trips were segregated. The White seniors traveled to Norris Damn State Park and the African American students traveled to Chattanooga to a local recreational venue. There were separate proms by the time the inaugural class members were juniors and senior in high school. However by the time Cassandra and Willie Jr. were juniors and seniors the proms were together.

One could argue the overriding importance of academic gains suggesting cultural and social losses were less important. However, I argue for public education as a student-centered comprehensive institution that prepares our citizens for productive responsible lives. Similar to Bronfenbrenner's system's model centered on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2004).

There was evidence of both gains and losses for the African American trailblazers as a result of racial desegregation. Overall there was a belief that the opportunity to attend racially desegregated schools provided tangible benefits of improved educational opportunities that were not available at Scarboro. Next, I will re-visit resistance to determine if there is evidence the African American trailblazers reported they were resistant to attending racially desegregated Oak Ridge schools.

Resistance Re-Visited

The African American griot/trailblazers I interviewed were not resistant to desegregation. They embraced desegregation. In my Review of the Related Literature, I deconstructed resistance, so I will address resistance more fully based on the oral narrators just heard.

Scott's (1985; 1990) research points to a form of resistance by subordinate groups that eventually erode changes imposed by the dominant group. According to Scott, forced compliance by those in power produces a reaction of opposition by the less powerful, the people who don't make the rules but are expected to follow the rules. Scott (1990) calls this space of opposition a "dissident subculture." Characteristics of this dissident subculture are: it

escapes surveillance, there are no leaders, organizational lists, or any elaborate forms compiled. It is surreptitious resistance that counters the powerful elites, eliminates detection and escapes notice. There is no need to cover one's tracks within this resistance culture because there is seldom a paper trail. Documentation and written texts are considered the purview of the powerful elites according to the dissident subculture. Resistance as a dissident subculture goes undetected. The dissident subculture, according to Scott, is obscure except to its members.

Since the art of resistance by dissidents slowly erodes changes imposed upon them. In time, like smoldering brush fire, the resistance movement erupts in mass defiance to the changes. The changes imposed on weaker populations by the State can become dismantled. The Civil Rights Movement is an example of sudden disruption because Black people and allies of Black people resisted laws of inequality and inferior schooling. In August 1963, the March on Washington amassed approximately a quarter of a million people both Black and allies of Black people. The March on Washington succeeded as a resistance movement whose surreptitious planning appeared to have been undetected. I was told a story about similar weapons used by the "weak" during the height of the Civil Rights movement from a civil rights activist in Georgia:

> "You know how Black folks always attended church a lot. White folks were glad to see us go to church, feeling the more God tells Black folks how to act right, the better the White world will be. But what they didn't see while we were in church singing songs and praying, we were also planning marches, and pickets, and sit-ins. The people resistant to equality for Black citizens thought Blacks folks were

only going to church! But what we were doing was undetectable. We were making plans to change our world in the form of a hidden transcript—mass resistance movements, sit-ins, protests, and mass marches."

Oak Ridge was a town where power and compliance was meted out through daily memoranda, written records, rules, and symbolic performances, such as naming streets in the all-Black area after Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) that identified if someone was Black or non-Black. Scott (1990) points to similar symbolic power displayed during May Day parades in Russia's Red Square. Communist leaders wore military apparel, carrying military weapons displaying their symbols of power.

In contrast, symbolic power visible only to African slaves (or their allies) in America were encoded in the words of the songs they sang, they made quilts coded with plans to escape to freedom, and developed slave codes between humans with different native languages, the Yorubas, Akans, Ibos, Angolans and other tribes, "armed" "equipped" with secret plans to resist and escape the change slavery imposed on their lives.

Scott also points to orality as a weapon of a dissident subculture (p. 200). Orality is spoken literacy spoken literature. Oral speech is inextricably tied to thoughts (Ong, 182/2002). Orality nurtures the counter-hegemonic discourse of subordinate groups. Orality was one of the first forms of documenting the past. Orality lived in oral cultures. Early evidence of oral history was the Zhou dynasty of China who collected sayings of the people for use by court historians (Ritchie, 2003). The Christian Bible points to 'God" in the beginning who spoke the world into being before Moses wrote it down (KJV, 1675).

Socrates spoke to his students using a dialectic method of argument to infuse critical thinking through the spoken word. The world learned Socrates way of knowing because Plato who wrote it down. Aristotle pointed to hands on learning through observation and memory. Child's play is an example, more contemporarily termed apprenticeships (Scott, 1914) the rules of child's play can be spontaneous, developed on the spot, observed and re-played day to day based on the previous day's memory of the rules. According to Donald Ritchie (2003) oral history are stories passed along in spoken form from generation to generations (p. 21). Alex Haley (1976), in the book *Roots* celebrates the African griot who helped him find his African ancestor Kunta Kinte.

Orality allows human actors to tell their dreams. Doris Green (1985) argues for a symbolic oral tradition of orality stemming from Africa in the form of dance, drums, pictures, sounds, humor, and language. Orality was a lived culture nurtured in American slave quarters and like sitting and listening to Langston Hughes' (1921, 1995) Aunt Sue's stories on front porches of African American homes or at the back yard barbecues on the Fourth of July in Chicago. Memories of the school day were shared during walks home from Scarboro School. This dissertation represents resistance through the oral histories revealed by seven African American trailblazers. Remember the definition of the African griot. The African griot was the local historian who was an elder of the African village. The African American griots revealed the names of the people who lived in "The Valley" and where they moved and the names of their children. Ann told me details of the lives of all the Black people Sylvia named from the *Oak Log* yearbooks. Ann told us where they

live now, who they married, and whether the person was still living. Cassandra and Archie recalled a recent Scarboro reunion was like a family reunion.

By highlighting an undetected Black culture of orality this oral history returned to the past gathered gems and moves forward, sankofa through African American griots/trailblazers and oral history of a community spanning a generation. African American griots/trailblazers resist invisibility that rendered their stories of racial desegregation benign where their claim of first to desegregate in the state of Tennessee has failed. Their oral histories resist stereotypes of Black educational deficits and powerlessness and have spoken their words that resist a discourse that defined who they were, and instead told us who they are.

It is unclear why the author in the manuscript suggested the Black families were resistant to desegregation. However I contend the African American griots/trailblazers in this study were not resistant students. They embraced racially degregated schools. I contend the racial desegregation and the African American griots/trailblazers in this study enhanced Oak Ridge public school. For example, academically Archie and Cassandra excelled. Athletically, Fred and Willie, Jr. were vital contributors to Oak Ridge high school basketball team Helen, Ann, and L.C. used their learning to become successful productive citizens in Oak Ridge. If this class was resistant to racial desegregation, according to Scott, Oak Ridge would have erupted into a re-segregated school system. Instead, almost sixty years later Oak Ridge Schools remain racially integrated. This study does not lend itself to address re-segregation. However, evidence revealed in the oral histories of seven African American griots/trailblazers they resisted segregation not desegregation. Segregation

forced their Oak Ridge ancestors to live in one-room hutments segregated from the larger community. Segregation forced them into “one” school building that was rife with love, and push, and Black history, but, lacking literature, science labs, foreign languages classes, and rigorous mathematics classes needed to compete as productive citizens in our industrialized high-tech society.

The African American griots/trailblazers were taught intangible skills at Scarboro that instilled skills to advocate for their place in an integrated school. Here are some of the ways they were taught to resist the deficits of racial segregation. Reportedly they were taught to push, to do their best, to get the best education possible so they could have a better life; they were taught to live and play so that nobody can take away their successes; they were taught not to quit because if you quit, then the people who are against you win; They were taught to go to work, do their jobs, don’t get caught up in talking about your personal life or gossip because that’s not what people hire you to do. These African American griots/trailblazers listened to their African American elders, remembered the gems of wisdom they were told, and lived their lives according to what they were told. From their oral stories I suggest these African American griots/trailblazers were similar to Geneva Smithermans (1977, 1986; 2000), talkin’ and testifyin’ and talking her or his Black language vernacular who were resistant to racial segregation not racially desegregated Oak Ridge public schools.

I suspect resistance to deficit stereotypes are not what the author pointed to. However their resistance to silencing their culture was symbolic and could be seen when all the Black kids sit together in the cafeteria (1997). According to the oral records of

African American griots/trailblazers sitting together in the cafeteria is a time of peace, a time to live one's culture, a time to speak her or his respective cultural language, and a time to resist alienation separated from people who look like "you." Their resistance also satisfies Scott's claim for a dissident subculture. There were no leaders, no minutes of their gatherings, no footsteps that could be traced, no paper trail, and no organizational lists. They just got together for a time of peace to erode the veil that hides minorities, to make African Americans visible.

The trails they blazed to attend racially desegregated schools have been overseen and maintained by each of the African American griots/trailblazers who continue to live and or visit Oak Ridge. Each has contributed to the progress of Oak Ridge Schools. They were resistant to racial segregation and reportedly viewed integration beneficial to them and to the African American students who followed them in Oak Ridge public schools.

Future Studies

As I concluded my dissertation, I thought, "What was not said?" or " What could have been done differently?" Then I remember, history is always partial. This is a beginning. Ann, Archie, Cassandra, Fred, Helen, L. C. and Willie, Jr. have what I believe to be a proud legacy of their tenure in Oak Ridge public schools. Their oral histories embrace Vincent Harding (1970) and Gloria Ladson-Billings' (2009) phases of African American history: (1) to challenge the master script that ignores minorities; (2) to reveal the unique, separate, and distinct historical experiences of African Americans; and (3) to capture the robustness of the Black experience in Oak Ridge public schools in her or his respective time and space. Further

studies might include memories from more African American students who were attending Oak Ridge Junior and Senior High Schools in 1955. Also, oral memory retrieval from African American teachers, parents, or community members still living could contribute to and broaden this historical account of Oak Ridge public schools' desegregation. Mr. Brown was the only teacher from Scarboro School who transferred to Oak Ridge High. He is now deceased. However, the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee (UTK), is constructing a dormitory in honor of his years teaching at UTK.

Future studies might also focus on the relationship between the African American community and Oak Ridge Schools. I did not focus my interview guide on the community itself, although there were community support people in place whom I named the Protons the people who were a positive force in the lives of the African American narrators. They were, I might add, the dissident subculture that continued to nurture the students long after desegregation had become the norm. Cassandra told me that when she began teaching at ORHS after graduating from college, one of the Protons told her that she didn't have to prove anything to anyone at ORHS. Her job was to teach and be the best teacher she could be. She was not to sit around and gossip, or try to be at the center of popularity among her peers. Cassandra said she remembered Mr. Scott's advice every day, for over thirty years of teaching history at ORHS.

Over the course of the few years I've worked and lived in Oak Ridge, African American parents have reported to me feeling disconnected and closed off from their child's education. It is not clear how to mend this apparent schism. It might be based on any of the interlocking systems of race, class, educational attainment of the parents, or

socioeconomic status. Also a closer look at the role the Black churches played in the desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools could broaden our understanding of school desegregation in Oak Ridge.

This was an oral history study, so other analytical lenses could be considered to present a more robust perspective of the narrator's experiences. One analytical tool that I propose would be a discursive analysis of the interviews. Because language is culturally-based, an analysis of the language patterns based on the oral texts might present a different perspective of the narrator's navigation of desegregation, based on how they communicated to their peers as well as teachers within the desegregated school (Delpit, 1995, 2006). Another consideration for future research would be to look at power; as Michel Foucault (1988) suggests, true transformation occurs through "free atmospheres" of deep criticism of existing practices (p. 155). In order to resist complacency in education, a space for critiquing race, school curricula, class, power, gender, and social status may be considered so the social construction of Oak Ridge Schools can be a "free atmosphere" for educational excellence to thrive.

Lastly, in looking at the future, I proposed to the narrators the possibility of holding a "First Class"[42] reception and recognition in 2015. This event would mark the sixtieth year since the first class of African Americans entered RJHS and ORHS and can serve to recognize their contribution as the first African Americans to desegregate Oak Ridge public schools. Whenever I have proposed this idea, each of the griots/trailblazers responds with a blank look.

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42 Alison Stewart (2013) is the author of *First Class: The legacy of Dunbar, America's first Black public high school.* Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.

I have no idea what their blank stares mean. So I don't know if the idea is something they aren't interested in pursuing. I remember that I'm an outsider so their plans might be obscure to me. If a reunion occurs maybe I will receive an invitation.

Final Reflections

This study desegregates existing historical accounts of Oak Ridge Schools' racial integration to include the personal accounts of seven African American narrators. I started this journey looking for African American perspectives of desegregation and to see if, in fact, African Americans were resistant to desegregation. I utilized three main sources: archival data, oral history interviews of seven students who experienced segregation and desegregation, and the resistance-based theoretical lens promoted by critical race theory scholars to filter the interviews. Since 2002, I have struggled to hear the voices of Oak Ridge African American students who walked into Robertsville Junior High School and Oak Ridge Senior High School almost sixty years ago.

> When I began my historical research, I had no idea that Oak Ridge African Americans were the forerunners of racial desegregation in public education. The African American students at the school where I worked were looking for people who looked like them and whom they could relate to other than as slaves, freed slaves, token inventors or add-ons within their classes of African American historical actors that showed up once a year in February. These students asked to be relieved from their feelings of inferiority in the foreign land known as American history. Finally, some of the missing voices are revealed (Loewen, 1995/2007).

This dissertation has begun the work for others to continue. A history of African Americans in the early days of Oak Ridge public schools is available to join other voices of Oak Ridge (Overholt, 1987; Smith, 2007). Seven African American narrators looked to the past and also look to the future. I truly hope the final product is acceptable to each of them and they are pleased with the way I have represented their lives. A plethora of studies related to racial desegregation of public schools, experiences of racially segregated schools, and information related to racial re-segregation have been, and are, hot topics flooding educational journals. However, the story of Oak Ridge public schools' racial desegregation stands as the first public school in the state of Tennessee to desegregate. Other than this study, it is uncertain if Oak Ridge will ever receive the notoriety Clinton High School and the *Clinton 12* have earned, even though Clinton desegregated a year after Oak Ridge based on a court order versus voluntary desegregation in Oak Ridge (McDaniel, 2007). The thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of these experiences have revealed how seven former students made sense of their experiences.

Oak Ridge School officials fight to maintain a school system of excellence, looking for a myriad of ways to fund excellence for all students. As a public school educator employed by Oak Ridge Schools, I see the daily strength of the teachers (and school counselors) who fight for students regardless of the demands placed by lawmakers, some who have never worked in public education. Public school educators resist compromising academic excellence, for the sake of increasing professional evaluations scores, if students aren't learning to think critically so they will be prepared for productive lives. The public school educators in my building want students to "survive."

Conclusion

I have attempted to open spaces in this dissertation to address a complex and personally emotional topic—the socially constructed tenuous subject of race and race laws in public schools. As CRT scholars suggest, race is permanent, not aberrant or abnormal. If my race is dismissed as an African American, then I am erased. If I am erased, then I become invisible, silent, and ineffective. If Derrick Bell's (1992) older friend in Mississippi had stayed home, rather than go to town and "harass White people," then she would have been invisible. She resisted the dominant discourse. Her resistance didn't occur by getting petitions signed or writing a book about her experiences, but instead, she lived her freedom to go where she wanted to go and say what she chose to say, regardless of the consequences. My task is to accept that racism is not a disability but is permanent, and then work to invent, as Fanon (1967) suggests, a place for the practice of freedom to think and live, and share, and hope. Paolo Freire (1970/2008), in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, suggests that social activism requires pursuing the ideal outside of one's self. This means I need to be inclusive, and have the audacity to form alliances with people who might not look or think like me, but who share the same willingness to pursue social equality (Obama, 2006). As a school counselor who advocates for social justice, I cannot afford to be silent (Lee, 1998; 2001). My pilgrimage is a collective pilgrimage for people to pursue freedom as an act that disrupts the master narrative, a narrative that penalizes children based on what they look like. No one has a God's-eye view of what is right. But by opening the space for building relational alliances with people with multiple languages and multiple religions, the pursuit of freedom is advanced.

Gandhi changed the discourse of the untouchable class in India when it was under British rule. Gandhi changed the name of his class of people to the *harijans*, meaning "children of God." I would rather be called a child of God than "untouchable." Imagine the confidence boost a name change brought about. School counseling was given a boost by a name change. We became "Professional" school counselors instead of guidance counselors or just school counselors. I am now a changed professional school counselor. I see new possibilities for the profession I love.

In their treatise, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1966, 1967) suggest dialectic between nature and society is a way of communicating opposing ideas. Their treatise points to the human ability to think and converse together for a higher calling. If we look to society as our source of self-identity, then we are in a constant struggle against domination and our calling from a place of subversion and subordination. If we look to nature, as defined by the "higher" stratum I choose to call God, then our pursuit for equality is contiguous. We become allies. I know that I certainly need allies and alliances for social justice. The purpose of an alliance is not to levy guilt onto one group or pity another group, but as Tatum (2009) suggests, alliances help us to abandon the socially constructed stratification of humans that overpowers the ability for humans to function fluidly and progress on behalf of social justice.

I am grateful to the scholars who practiced their freedom to write and whose voices were available for me to access for my dissertation. Most of all I am tremendously thankful to the African American griots/trailblazers that lived their stories and told their truths (Franklin, 1995). I conclude with the voice of Richard Wright (1944):

“I found that to tell the truth is the hardest thing on earth, harder than fighting in a war, harder than taking part in a revolution. If you try it you will find at times sweat will break upon you. You will find that even if you succeed in discounting the attitudes of others to you and your life, you will wrestle with yourself most of all, fight with yourself, for there will surge up in you a strong desire to alter the facts, to dress up your feelings. You’ll find that there are many things you don’t want to admit about yourself and others. As your record shapes itself, an awed wonder haunts you. And yet there is no more exciting adventure than trying to be honest in this way. The clean, strong feeling that sweeps you when you’ve done it makes you know that.”

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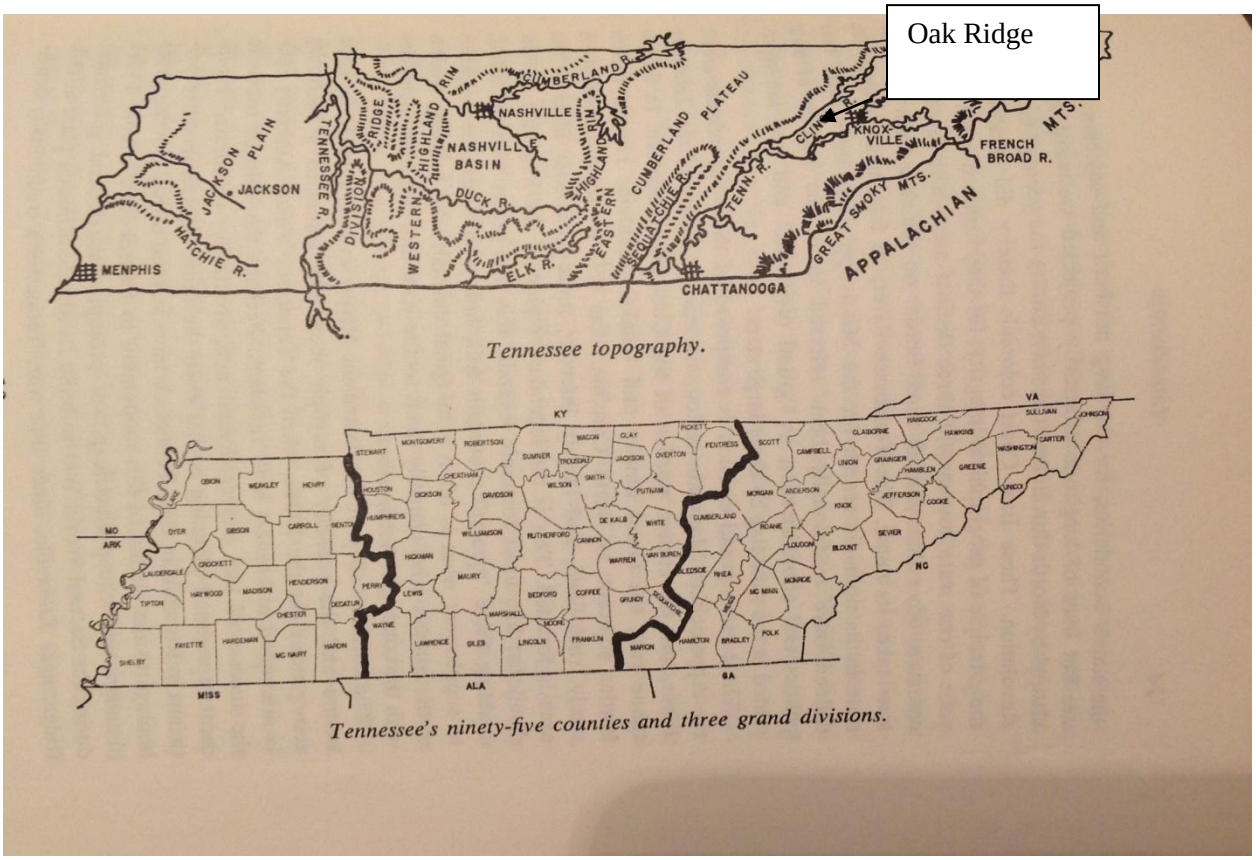
Appendix



Map of Tennessee

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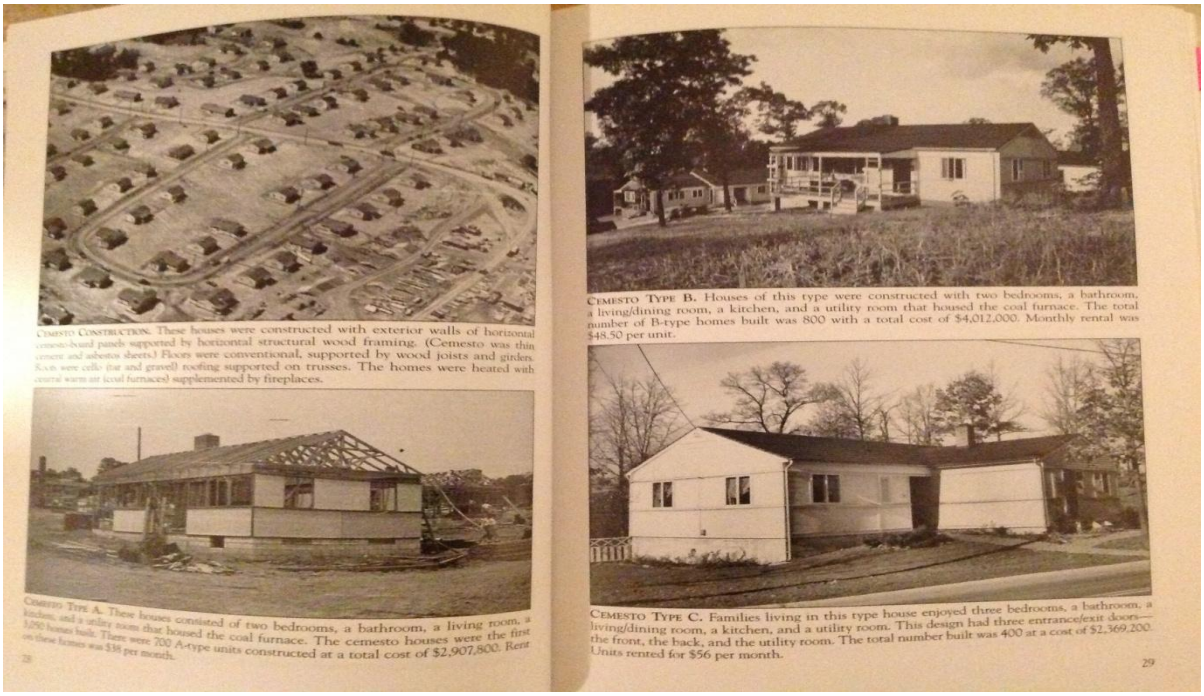

CEMESTO CONSTRUCTION. These houses were constructed with exterior walls of horizontal cemesto-board panels supported by horizontal structural wood framing. (Cemesto was thin cement and asbestos sheets.) Floors were conventional, supported by wood joists and girders. Roofs were cells- (tar and gravel) roofing supported on trusses. The homes were heated with central warm air (coal furnaces) supplemented by fireplaces.

CEMESTO TYPE A. These houses consisted of two bedrooms, a bathroom, a living room, a kitchen, and a utility room that housed the coal furnace. The cemesto houses were the first 3,050 homes built. There were 700 A-type units constructed at a total cost of $2,907,800. Rent on these homes was $38 per month.

28

CEMESTO TYPE B. Houses of this type were constructed with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a living/dining room, a kitchen, and a utility room that housed the coal furnace. The total number of B-type homes built was 800 with a total cost of $4,012,000. Monthly rental was $48.50 per unit.

CEMESTO TYPE C. Families living in this type house enjoyed three bedrooms, a bathroom, a living/dining room, a kitchen, and a utility room. This design had three entrance/exit doors—the front, the back, and the utility room. The total number built was 400 at a cost of $2,369,200. Units rented for $56 per month.

29

Figure 1

Oak Ridge, Tennessee Cemesto Housing Overview A, B, & C units circa 1944 (Westcott, 2005)

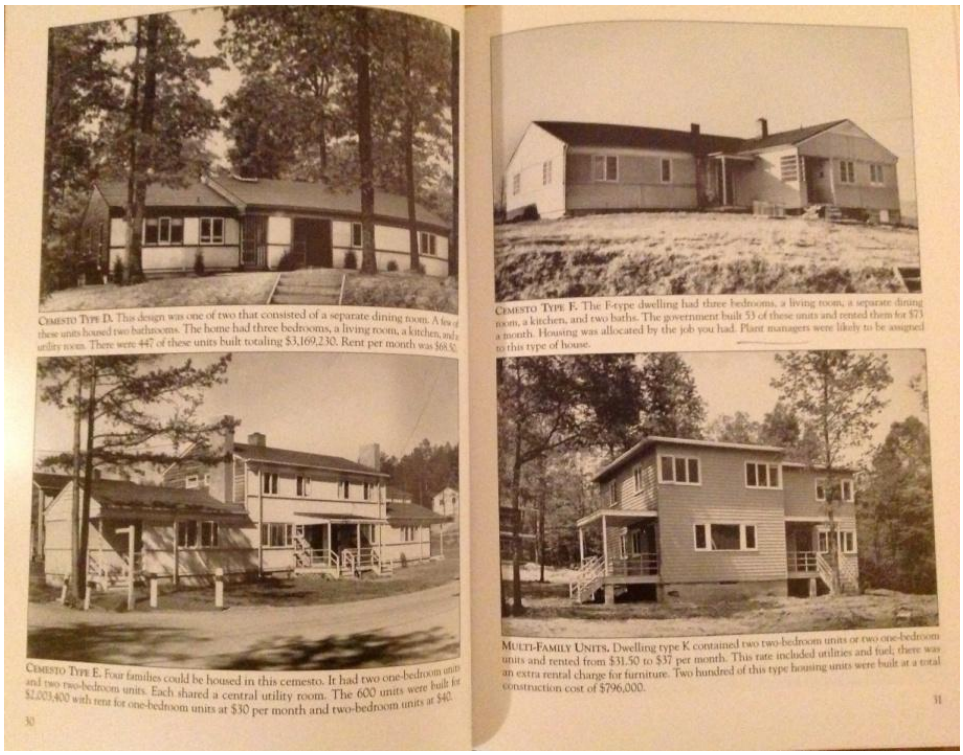

Figure 2

Oak Ridge, Tennessee Housing- cemestos D, E, F, & Multifamily dwelling, circa 1944

(Westcott, 2005)

LIFE IN THE BLACK VILLAGE. African American women socialize at the clothesline. This activity was an important part of their daily lives. Segregated living arrangements existed during the war years in Oak Ridge. Black workers were housed in hutments, with men and women separated by a fence.

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Figure 3

Oak Ridge, Tennessee Hutments, circa 1945

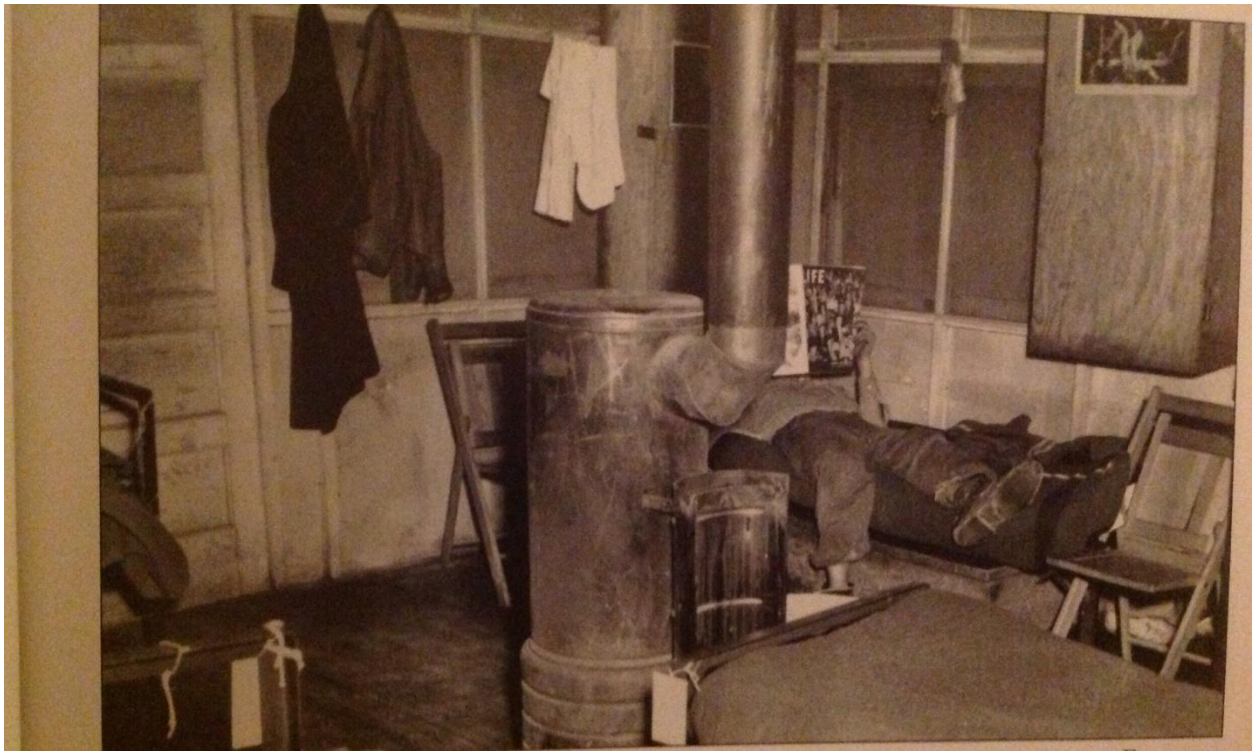


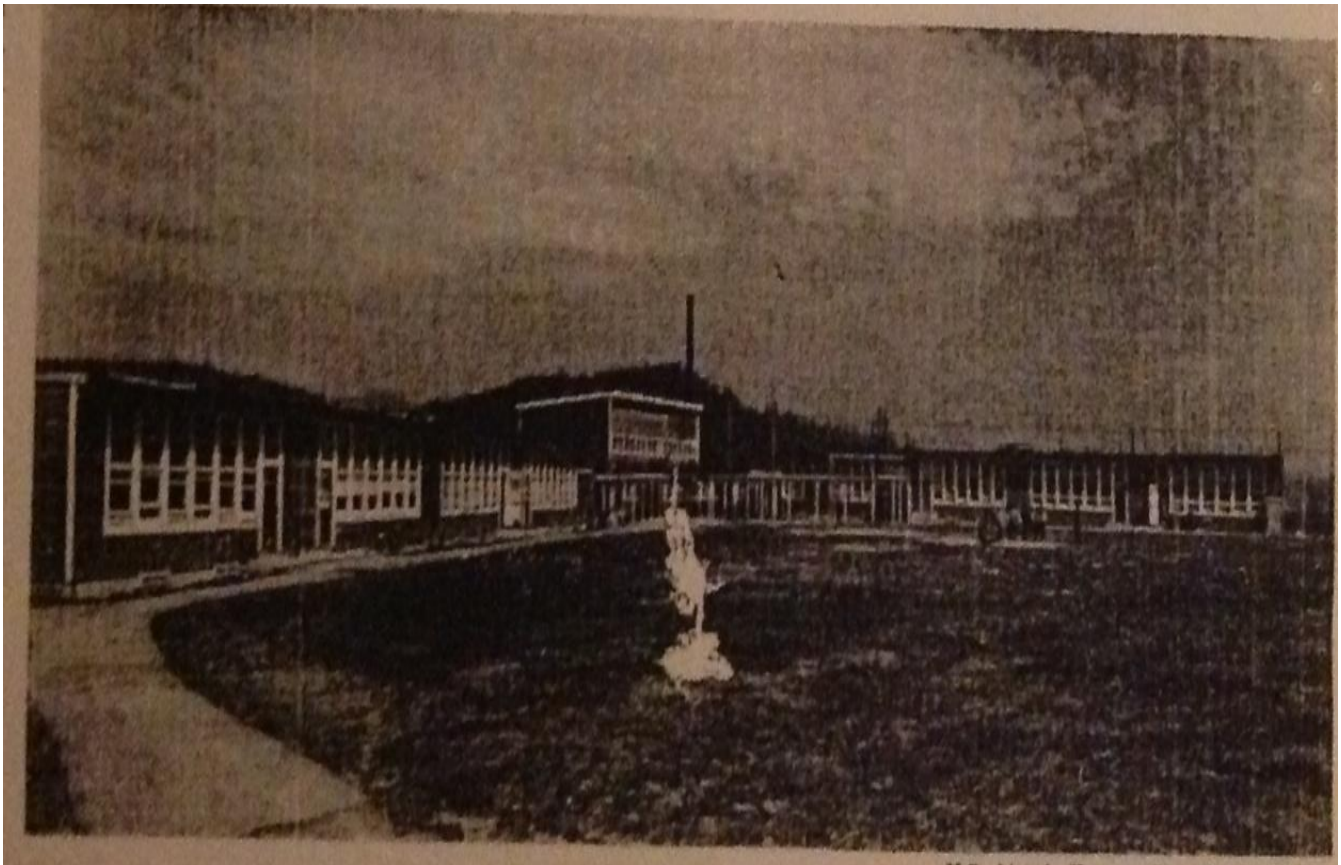
Figure 4

Inside a hutment living quarters for all Blacks and some male construction workers

DORMITORY FACILITIES. Residents of this type of housing had access to many amenities. Each dormitory had 2 recreation rooms, 38 double rooms, 65 single women's bedrooms, 73 men's bedrooms, 4 laundry and ironing rooms (women only), and 4 toilet and shower rooms. Separate dorms housed men and women. Below, a young lady has decorated her furnished dorm room with bright accessories.

Figure 5

Dormitory Living in Oak Ridge, Tennessee (Westcott, 2005)

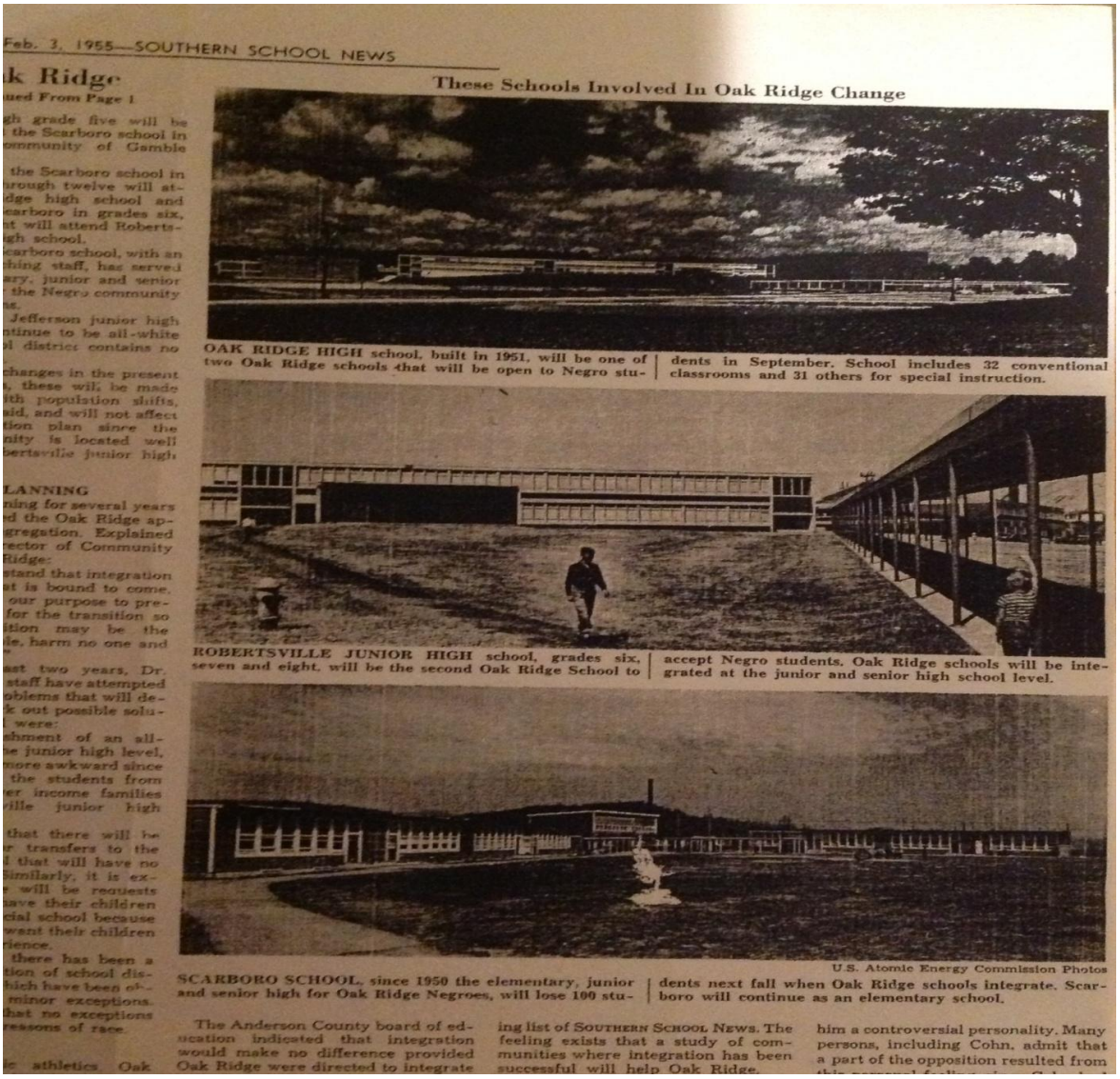


U.S. Atomic Energy Commission Photos

SCARBORO SCHOOL, since 1950 the elementary, junior and senior high for Oak Ridge Negroes, will lose 100 students next fall when Oak Ridge schools integrate. Scarboro will continue as an elementary school.

Figure 6

Scarboro School for Negro Students, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Reprinted from Southern Education News, February 3, 1955



Feb. 3, 1955—SOUTHERN SCHOOL NEWS

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ued From Page 1

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athletics Oak

These Schools Involved In Oak Ridge Change

OAK RIDGE HIGH school, built in 1951, will be one of two Oak Ridge schools that will be open to Negro students in September. School includes 32 conventional classrooms and 31 others for special instruction.

ROBERTSVILLE JUNIOR HIGH school, grades six, seven and eight, will be the second Oak Ridge School to accept Negro students. Oak Ridge schools will be integrated at the junior and senior high school level.

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission Photos

SCARBORO SCHOOL, since 1950 the elementary, junior and senior high for Oak Ridge Negroes, will lose 100 students next fall when Oak Ridge schools integrate. Scarboro will continue as an elementary school.

The Anderson County board of education indicated that integration would make no difference provided Oak Ridge were directed to integrate

ing list of SOUTHERN SCHOOL NEWS. The feeling exists that a study of communities where integration has been successful will help Oak Ridge.

him a controversial personality. Many persons, including Cohn, admit that a part of the opposition resulted from

Figure 7 *Southern School News*

Starting from top: Oak Ridge High School, Robertsville Junior High, & Scarboro School

Appendix 1

Interview guide

<u>Background/Family/Community</u>

1. What is your full name?
2. What year did your family move to Oak Ridge, (if not sure, approximately what year)?
3. Before moving to Oak Ridge, where did your family live (city and state)?
4. Thinking back to 1955, how old were you?

    a. How did you racially identify or what did you call yourself as far as your racial preference. In 1955, if someone told you to mark your racial identity what would you have marked, Black/African American/Negro/Person of Color/Colored?

5. Describe someone in the Black/African American community who you remember championed education for Blacks in Oak Ridge.
6. During this interview we will talk about the desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. There are three separate perspectives I'd like you to consider in our discussions, related to desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. These perspectives are you as a student participating in desegregation; your parents; and the Black community.

    a. First let's talk about you. Tell me your view of desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools?
    b. What were your parent's views about desegregating Oak Ridge public schools

        as it related to you attending?

    c. Did you have a sense of the Black community's views about desegregated Oak Ridge public schools?

Memories Related to Academic Experiences in Desegregated Schools

7. How would you describe yourself overall as a student then?
8. Describe the person who you believe had the most influence on your academic experiences?
9. Now returning to the subject of desegregation. When did you first learn or hear about the *Brown versus Board of Education* decision?
10. Did you decide to transfer as a result of Oak Ridge desegregating Robertsville and Oak Ridge High School, or did someone else make that decision for you?
11. What were your academic expectations relative to attending (Robertsville/Oak Ridge High School), grades earned; interactions with teachers?
12. Still talking about your academic expectations and experiences…How would you describe (Robertsville/ORHS) the school's overall effectiveness in addressing your needs as a newly transferred African American student at the school?

    a. Were you required to take any remedial courses? If so, what were they?
    b. Were you allowed to test into accelerated high achiever classes? If so, what were they?
    c. Did you receive any academic awards? If yes, what were they?
    d. Were there academic competitions available at that time for you to compete? If yes, what were they?

13. Have you talked about your most memorable academic experiences in desegregated schools or is there something you would like to add?

Memories Related to Cultural Experiences

14. Describe what you thought it would be like as an African American/Negro/Black/ Colored in a predominantly White school after attending an all-Black school initially..

a. Were your expectations correct?

15. Describe the connection or relationship the African American/Scarboro community had with Robertsville/ORHS?

    a. PTO/PTSO
    b. Fund-raisers
    c. Transportation to and from school
    d. Extracurricular activities with strong community support
    e. Dances
    f. Talent shows
    g. Pageants
    h. Food services, like cafeteria meals
    i. Courses or classes provided by the community not available during the school day;
    j. Any other connections you remember the community and the school working together?
    k. Any surprises?

16. Describe the racial climate/culture during the early days of desegregation in Oak Ridge public schools.
17. For this section African American culture will be defined to include:

    a. symbols (like pictures of famous African Americans on the bulletin boards, or in your textbooks; African American, music, artwork celebrations)
    b. Beliefs that you define as African American beliefs.
    c. African American values
    d. language, a kind of acceptable or normal way African American people behave or act.

18. Based on what I just described, how would you describe your African American cultural experiences within the desegregated school?

Memories of Social Experiences

19. Describe your social group you spent the majority of your time with at Robertsville/ORHS?
20. What about your extracurricular activities…Clubs; Academic teams; sports teams; yearbook; school newspaper, let's talk about your extracurricular activities.
21. What did you enjoy least about your social experiences at Robertsville/ORHS?
22. How would you describe the measures the desegregated school did to meet your social needs?
23. How would you describe the relationships between:

    a. teachers and Black students.
    b. teachers and your parents;
    c. principal and African American students
    d. principal and the parents.

24. How would you describe the relationship between the African American students and the White students?
25. Is there anyone who was White (or several people) you remember who made an extra effort to support you/show a special interest/be your friend?

Memories of the School Counselor

26. How did the counselor seek you out to help with the transition from segregated to desegregated schools?
27. What do you remember about the school counselor?

Memories of Goals you set for your Future/ Planning

28. Did you graduate from Oak Ridge High School?

29. Describe your sense of being a Black history-maker at the initial stages of the Civil Rights Movement?
30. Did someone show special interest in helping you attain your goals, while attending desegregated schools?

    a. Who else contributed to your future goals?

31. Tell me how desegregation impacted your life. Negatively? Positively?
32. Oak Ridge public schools have continued to be desegregated for over fifty years. What do you believe were the advantages of Oak Ridge school desegregation in 1955?
33. Is there anything I've missed you would like to say?

Appendix 2

Pre-Interview Worksheet

Date of contact_____

Name of Potential Participant_____

Address_____

_____

Phone#_____

Email_____

Talked to potential participant____ Left message_____

Follow – up required?____ Date scheduled for follow up_____

Follow – up required?____ Date scheduled for follow up_____

Script:

Hello, my name is Lori Whipple. How are you today? I'm not calling to sell anything. I would like for you to consider being a participant in an oral history project I am conducting for my dissertation research project. My oral history project will be an opportunity for you to describe your experiences as an African American pioneer discussing your personal story on the topic of Oak Ridge public school's desegregation that occurred back in 1955. There are no first person accounts in the historical archives of Oak Ridge, and I would like to make a contribution to these historical records by placing your story there. Currently there has been a lot of work about the history of the Scarboro Community, but not specific information about desegregation considering Oak Ridge was

the first public school in Tennessee to desegregate. I believe that was a historical event our children and other Oak Ridge residents would like to hear and read about. The Oak Ridge public library has an oral history collection and in June of this year, the K-25 plant donated several oral histories to the collection that included four African Americans who worked at K-25. But, again there is no documented record of your experiences as one of the first African Americans to desegregate Oak Ridge public schools.

What do you think? *(pause for response*).

We can meet face-to-face if you'd like to discuss my project to help you better understand the project as well as meet me. I will also mail you a description of my research study and my approval documentation from the University of Tennessee and call or meet with you in about a week to answer any questions you have, as well as to hopefully set up an interview date.

The location of the interview will be decided later if you agree to the interview. All locations must be able to offer uninterrupted time for the interviews.

As mentioned earlier, I will mail you a description of the study, my University of Tennessee permission form and a form that gives me permission from you for you to be interviewed; this is called an "Informed Consent". I will call you back, meet with you, or email if you prefer, in about a week.

Do you have any questions? If you think of anything or any questions or people who you think would like to participate before I call you back, please call me at (865)272-3527 or if you prefer email:lwhipple@utk.edu.

Thank you

Appendix 3

Informed Consent

Principal Researcher, Lorena "Lori" Whipple

TITLE: African American Oral Histories of Oak Ridge, Tennessee Public Schools,

Dunring the Early Days of Desegregation, 1955-1967

To (interviewee):

You have been chosen to participate in an oral history research project to obtain the personal stories of African American students who participated in the desegregation of Oak Ridge, Tennessee public schools that began in September of 1955.

The Oak Ridge public schools of Robertsville Junior High and Oak Ridge High School were the first schools in the State of Tennessee to desegregate on September 6, 1955. There are no published first person accounts by the African American students who participated in any of the Oak Ridge desegregation activities.

The purpose of this study is: **1)** to contribute to the completion of my doctoral research; **2)** to provide a missing part of Oak Ridge history through your personal story and other first person accounts of African American students who desegregated Oak Ridge public schools; **3)** there are educational benefits because your story will contribute to the body of knowledge about desegregation of U.S. public schools and the issues surrounding the United States' Civil Rights Movement; and also you will contribute to the Oak Ridge historical archives.

I will ask you about your memories from your experience of desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools.

The interviews will be audio and video-taped (*video-taping is optional*).

You have the right to refuse video-taping; however if you refuse to be audio-taped, then I will not be able to interview you for this study.

Also, your photograph will be taken to complement the final copy of the research study.

You will receive a final copy of my dissertation.

Your interview will be about 1 to 2 hours long.

You and I will be the only persons allowed in the interview room. You will be interviewed at least once, possibly more if I need additional information or clarification from the previous interview.

Each interview will be transcribed (possibly by an outside transcription service); verified by you for accuracy; and available for any editorial suggestions you might have.

All interview transcripts will be duplicated. I will work with the duplicate materials while processing the interviews. The original interviews will be kept in a separate locked file at the home of the researcher, then transported to the researcher's dissertation chair, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon who will maintain all materials under lock and key and which only Dr. Thayer-Bacon has access. After three years the original interview will be returned you.

You can "gift" the oral history printed text to the Center for Oral History of Oak Ridge (COROH), archived at the Oak Ridge public library (See *Oral History Gifting* sample form also enclosed)

There are no foreseeable risks to you and you may leave the study at any time.

You will be allowed to choose to use your given name or a fake name for the final write up ofthe study.

You can choose before the interviews begin or at the end of the interview, to be completely anonymous and all names will be changed for reasons of confidentiality or to maintain your true identity. All information will only be known by me and the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon.

Your participation in this research is totally voluntary. Refusal to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits.

There is no cost to participate in this study. You will receive a final copy of my dissertation.

The University of Tennessee Knoxville Institutional Review Board (IRB) may be contacted at phone number (865)974-7697. This IRB may request to see my research records of the study.

For questions about the research, contact me, Lori Whipple, locally at (865)272-3527 or by email at: lwhipple@utk.edu.

This Informed Consent must be intact in its entirety and signed in my (the principal researcher) presence before interviews. Two copies of the consent will maintain original signatures. *1)* your copy, and *2)* a copy will be maintained on file by me for a total of two copies with original signatures.

I _____ (print your name),

agree to participate in this oral history study of the desegregation of Oak Ridge public schools. I realize this information will be used for educational research purposes. I willfully agree as indicated by my signature below, I was not coerced, or forced to participate, nor was I offered a reward or money. Also, I understand I may withdraw from this study at any time.

I have read and understand the intent of this study described above.

Signed_____
Date_____

Name of the Researcher_____ (print name)

Signature of the researcher_____
Date_____

Appendix 4

SAMPLE Oral History GIFTING

(after three years from the interview, an interviewee might consider gifting her or his oral history transcript to an oral history repository. Below is a sample draft of a "Deed of Gift")

I, [name of interviewee] of [address of interviewee], herein permanently give, convey, and assign to [name of repository, archive, program, or individual], which has previously been in the possession of Lori Whipple and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, my interview (or oral memoir) consisting of an audio tape (video tape, if used) and transcript. In so doing I understand that my interview (or oral memoir) will be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published or broadcast in any medium that the [archive, program, individual] shall deem appropriate.

In making this gift I fully understand that I am conveying all legal title and literary property rights which I have or may be deemed to have in my interview (or oral memoir) as well as my rights, title and interest in any copyright which may be secured under the laws now or later in force and in effect in the United States of America. My conveyance of copyright encompasses the exclusive rights of: reproduction, distribution, preparation of derivative works, public performance, publicdisplay as well as all renewals and extensions.

I, [agent for the duly appointed representative of] accept the interview (or oral memoir) of [name of interviewee] for inclusion into the [archive or program].

_____ _____

[signature of donor] [signature of agent/representative]

_____

Appendix 5

Interview Transmittal Letter

Heading

Dear

Thank you! May I say first and foremost THANK YOU!

I have "lived" with your words and your interview responses; also I have gone to the Oak Ridge Public Library to check out facts and historical information, and reading archives at UT. Research is a time-consuming task in order to represent your words with the honor and respect they deserve. I felt this was needed to do justice to your Oak Ridge School experience.

Regarding your interview, I am using a qualitative research tool called Critical Race Theory. I chose this analysis because African American critical race theory scholars illuminate how many political decisions in education are race-based and that race is permanent within the very fabric of American life. The reason for desegregation was due to 'race".

I have attached a copy of your interview that I have sorted and re-wrote for easy readability to place into my dissertation. However, prior to this step of the process I want to insure I represent your words accurately as well as with events and dates.

Therefore, I would like to set up another face-to-face meeting. We can meet at Starbucks or go for dessert someplace to meet with you to review the text. We can read it together and you can make any corrections. I will call you to set up a convenient time.

Since I work, week-ends are my best time to talk. I know you are busy with your work. So I will work around whatever is convenient to you.

Again thank you for your time and energy. Your story is so very important. Thank you for the honor you have given me to tell your story.

Sincerely;

My email address:

Appendix 6

Transcriber's Confidentiality Statement

I _____ (print name), agree to transcribe digital audio interviews given to me by Lori Whipple, principal investigator,

dated_____ Interview ID#_____

I agree to maintain confidentiality and to respect the rights, privacy and dignity of the interviewees, contained in the interviews transcribed.

The following are guidelines:

1. Do not clean up wording or grammar.
2. Do not include false starts unless they add meaning.
3. Omit the interviewer's supportive sounds such as "I see," "Uh huh," and crutch words such as "you know", unless they add meaning or convey the flavor of the speech patterns. (Again, if the purpose is tape editing, retain these.)
4. Double space the typescript and provide adequate margins to leave room for editing.
5. Identify each speaker either by using their full last names, abbreviations, or by a clearly identified "Q" and "A".
6. Note the status of the tape. For example, indicate "interruption" "end of track" or "end of interview."
7. Begin each page of the typescript by identifying the speaker either by name (or by a "Q" or "A"), even if it is a continuation of the previous page.
8. Include both the interviewer's questions and the interviewee's answers.
9. Leave a blank space for a word or phrase that is unclear. The interviewer or interviewee may fill this in later.
10. If the spelling of a proper name is unclear, spell the name phonetically and indicate in parenthesis "phonetic"
11. Laughter and significant gestures may be indicated in brackets. (But do this sparingly.)

Signed_____

Date_____

Appendix 7

Interview Indexing Log

(Completed for each interview)

Date of interview_____

Interviewee's full name_____

Location of interview_____

Time Interview begins_____ Ending time_____

Recording format

Audio digital_____ Video digital_____

Audio cassette____ Video
Microcassette_____

Interview #_____ Log #_____

Borrowed materials log

Description_____

Borrowed material log #_____ Borrowed materials receipt given_____

Vita

Lorena “Lori” Brown Whipple is a native of Chicago, Illinois and a 1970 graduate of South High School. In 1974, Lori earned her Bachelor’s of Science degree in Biology from Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee. She and her husband Donald moved to Kingsport, Tennessee where Lori worked in a variety of jobs. A major portion of her time was devoted to volunteering for local non-profits while she and her husband raised three children, Vida, Eric, and Alys. Later, in 1993, Lori earned her Master’s in School Counseling degree from East Tennessee State University located in Johnson City, Tennessee. Also in 1993 Lori began working as a fulltime school counselor at Miller-Perry Elementary School in Kingsport, Tennessee. Two years later she moved to Dobyns-Bennett High school also in Kingsport where she was a school counselor until 2002. Lori began her current position as a middle school counselor at Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, Tennessee in the Fall of 2002. In 2006, she earned her Educational Specialist degree in School Counseling from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In December of 2013, Lori will earn her doctorate of philosophy degree in Learning Environments and Educational Studies. Her cognate is school counseling and her focus area of studies is social and philosophical foundations of education.