

FROM FORGOTTEN TO REMEMBERED: THE LONG PROCESS OF SCHOOL
DESEGREGATION IN CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA AND PRINCE
EDWARD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Dwana Leah Waugh

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Approved by:

Dr. Peter Filene

Dr. Heather Williams

Dr. Kenneth Janken

Dr. Timothy Marr

Dr. William Chafe

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ABSTRACT

DWANA WAUGH: *From Forgotten to Remembered: The Long Process of School Desegregation in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia*
(Under the direction of Dr. Peter Filene)

This dissertation chronicles the history of two black high schools in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia, during the desegregation process. Both local communities represent important case studies for examining the long and complicated history of school desegregation. While Chapel Hill school officials' reluctant compliance to school desegregation resulted in few black students in predominately white schools a decade after the *Brown* ruling, Prince Edward County leaders' defiant refusal to accept *any* desegregation of the public schools resulted in wide-scale closure of the school system for five years. In the late 1960s, the two school systems caved in to pressure from the local public and the federal government to desegregate their public schools in appreciable numbers. In the ensuing years, the process of desegregation culminated in shutting down black schools or erasing the heritage and traditions of black schools in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County.

By the late twentieth century, blacks demanded their local communities preserve the legacies of their closed black high schools. Using oral histories and archival sources, I examine how people's memories of desegregation reveal the dynamics of power and race in their local communities. Through interrogating black schoolhouses as "sites of memory," my dissertation argues that southern blacks' activism is both representative of a constant set of racial negotiations over educational power and control and symbolic of a

larger movement for racial equity and social justice. The process of school desegregation offered blacks a new language in which to articulate their resistance to inequitable social structures. The commemorative process of refashioning black schools, once sites of black protest and community loss, provides blacks a way in which to ground their frustrations with the contemporary school system and carve out public space in their communities.

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visits to a variety of archives. I appreciate the helpfulness of the archivists at the Southern Historical Collection and North Carolina Collection in Wilson Library at UNC. Their wide-ranging knowledge of any subject related to the South, and especially to black education is astounding and inspiring. A special thank you to Laura Clark Brown, who in my first years in my graduate program, showed me the ins and outs of the Southern and introduced me to brilliant people who make the Collections run smoothly every day. I also need to thank Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools' and Prince Edward County Public Schools' superintendent secretaries for opening the vast collections to school board minutes. I expressly acknowledge the kindness and cooperation of Jane M. Lee of PECPS who made the research process easy and enjoyable to a long-distance traveler. Thanks goes out to Lydia Williams, archivist of Longwood University's special collections. She went out of her way to assist me in my research, to identify important documents, and introduced me to key actors in the Prince Edward County school closings. She even allowed me to print as a guest patron, which is no small thing for a struggling researcher. In addition, I thank the archivists at the Virginia Historical Society, North Carolina State Archive, Duke University's Special Collections, Library of Virginia, and Virginia State University. I cannot overlook the time, openness, and hospitality of those I interviewed for this project in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County. That you shared a piece of your lives with me, even after being asked so many times by other researchers, is deeply, deeply appreciated. I hope I have done your voices justice.

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He provided me with the courage to embark on the process, the supportive parachute in the form of colleagues, friends, and family, and the path to a safe landing.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
BSM	Black Student Movement
CHW	<i>Chapel Hill Weekly</i>
DNE	Division of Negro Education
COB	Committee for Open Business
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
ECIA	Education Consolidation and Improvement Act
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary School Act
FH	<i>Farmville Herald</i>
GEB	General Education Board
GT	Gifted and Talented
HEW	Health, Education, and Welfare
H-SC	Hampden-Sydney College
MEFCW	Martha E. Forrester Council of Women
NCCN	North Carolina Central College for Negroes
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCTA	North Carolina Teacher Association
OCTS	Orange County Training School
PECCA	Prince Edward County Christian Association
PECPS	Prince Edward County Public Schools
SBOE	State Board of Education

SILS	School Improvement Leagues
SOHP	Southern Oral History Program
SOQ	Standards of Quality and Objectives
SPI	Superintendent of Public Instruction
SPU	Student Peace Union
TAG	Talented and Gifted
UNC	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
VCHR	Virginia Council on Human Relations
VSC	Virginia State College
VTa	Virginia Teacher Association

INTRODUCTION

REMEMBERING DESEGREGATION

“I think the Heart of Virginia is clearly changing and I think Virginia once again has an opportunity to reclaim its destiny to lead this nation, particularly in terms of racial reconciliation.” Moton Museum is the “point of rallying...not just for Virginia, but for the nation.”¹

Former Virginia State Attorney General, Mark Early

“One of the things to amaze me when I went to Chapel Hill High. I no longer had to worry about paper, and pencils, and supplies. All I had to do was to go to the supply room and get anything that I wanted. That wasn’t true at Lincoln.”²

R.D. Smith, Former teacher at Lincoln High School

“Now the [black] community is banding together again—this time to save the Moton School as a memorial to the desegregation struggle.”³

Vera Allen, president of the Martha E. Forrester Council of Women

On the 60th anniversary of the Robert Russa (R.R.) Moton High School student walk-out, Prince Edward County white and black residents came to terms with the town’s dark legacy of racism. In 1951, a group of black high school students staged a strike

¹ Ken Woodley, “The Rainbow...Before Me,” *Farmville Herald*, April 25, 2001.

² Judith Van Wyk, *Journey Into Integration*, videocassette, directed by Judith van Wyk, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2002.

³ Mary Beth Joachim, “A Symbol of Black Pride: Virginians Try to Save School that Segregation Shutdown.” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 2, 1995, N3.

against their inadequately funded and overcrowded school conditions, demanding the all-white school board take notice and improve their high school. The school board, instead, resisted. In what became one of the five communities that comprised the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Prince Edward County white leaders passionately fought to preserve segregated education. By decade's end, *Brown's* desegregation ruling prompted local whites to cut funding to the public school system and to erect a new publicly-funded private segregated school system. The school, Prince Edward Academy, opened its doors to white students in 1959; and in the same year, the public schools closed their doors to black students. The doors remained closed to black students for five years, as the Academy's student membership thrived. Sixty years later, local blacks and whites together celebrated the walk-out as one of the "few historical events that have helped shape American culture" and have helped to bring about "healing and reconciliation" to the county.⁴

In Chapel Hill, the story of public desegregation's impact on black students lacked the drama of Prince Edward County but was no less poignant. In 1966, school board officials presided over the desegregation of the town's last segregated high school. Black Lincoln High School students were reassigned to the desegregated Chapel Hill High. During the process, much of Lincoln High's artifacts were discarded and many black teachers and administrators either lost their jobs or were relegated to lower prestige positions in the newly integrated school system. In 2001, University of North Carolina professor and historian Jacquelyn Hall designed an undergraduate and graduate oral

⁴ Johns-Griffin Day," Robert Russa Moton Museum, Darlington Heights and Farmville, Virginia, April 17, 2011, <http://www.motonmuseum.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/EricGriffin-sermon-unfinished-business.pdf>, (accessed December 8, 2011). The former quotation comes from Ruth Murphy, the principal of the former Prince Edward Academy (now Fuqua Academy) and the latter quotation comes from Eric Griffin's sermon entitled "Unfinished Business." Griffin is Rev. L. Francis Griffin's son.

history course to capture black and white Chapel Hill students' experiences of school desegregation.⁵ The resulting stories uncovered a muddled narrative, largely defined by race. While whites typically told positive stories of social friendships, blacks recounted haunted memories of community loss. Lincoln had served as a cocoon, but without the nurture and guidance of its teachers, one student remarked, "I ended up coming out as a butterfly with weakened wings. I didn't have enough room to fly when I went to an all-white school."⁶

In Prince Edward County, the process of desegregation followed a long, arduous path. As the white community "massively resisted" desegregating public schools, black students lost access to public schools for five years. The reverberations of the school closing period continue to affect blacks economically and socially. How then did black and white residents come to form a positive image from this dark past? How did the process of desegregation come to be remembered as a story of reconciliation and healing? On the other hand, Chapel Hill's progressive educational policies did not shut down public schools. Yet, the black students still expressed sorrow for the closing of Lincoln High. What does the narrative of loss uncover about contemporary race relations in the community? In both communities, how does the process of school desegregation illustrate the potency and power race beyond the classroom?

⁵ Jacquelyn Hall's oral history course entitled, *Desegregation & The Inner Life of Chapel Hill Schools*, focused on the experiences of Lincoln High School teachers and students. Hall's students collaborated with a host of scholars and fellow students who examined race and education: UNC professor Della Pollock who taught an undergraduate oral history and performance-based communication course, along with her students and local documentarian Bob Gilgor who created an exhibit on Lincoln High School students for the Chapel Hill Museum. The collection of interviews conducted for this course are part of the Southern Oral History Program's *Listening for a Change* series housed in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁶ Keith Edwards, interview by Bob Gilgor, December 14, 2000, K-0542, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina.

The evaluation of the success or failure of *Brown* has long been an obsession of school desegregation scholars. Early scholars, such as Richard Kluger and Mark Tushnet, celebrated the court ruling as a defining and progressive moment in the nation's history. The ruling, they argued, served to bring about social justice for blacks. They emphasized the power of laws and organizations in dismantling segregated public schooling, citing desegregation's social and educational advantages.⁷ But in recent decades, scholars have begun to highlight the failures of public schools' racial experiment.⁸ By the 1980s and 1990s, debates about school choice, neighborhood schools, racially-based student reassignments, and uneven standardized testing scores occurring across the nation led to a spate of scholarship on the limitations of desegregation. Largely politically conservative, these scholars argued that *Brown* perverted justice by negatively affecting white students' educational outcomes. Critics asserted that racial desegregation did not fix racial inequalities within schools, but only served to exacerbate them, pointing to the barriers of using legal strategies in producing educational equity.⁹

⁷ For laudatory accounts of *Brown*, see Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977). Kluger takes a long view in examining the legal road to *Brown*. Mark Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Jack Bass, *Unlikely Heroes: The Dramatic Story of the Southern Judges of the Fifth Circuit Who Translated the Supreme Court's Brown Decision into a Revolution for Equality* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981); and Gary Orfield, *Reconstruction of Southern Education: The Schools and the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1969).

⁸ For critical assessments of *Brown's* success, Raymond Wolters, *The Burden of Brown: Thirty Years of School Desegregation* (Memphis: University of Tennessee Press, 1984); J. Harvie Wilkinson III, *The Supreme Court from Brown to Bakke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); and David Armor, *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995).

⁹ Such conservative scholars critical of race-based, socially engineered school policies include Armor, *Forced Justice*; Wolters, *The Burden of Brown*; and Raymond Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2008). For other conservative approaches, see also Lino A. Graglia, *Disaster by Decree: Supreme Court Decisions on Race and the Schools* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1976), J. Harvie Wilkinson III, *The Supreme Court from Brown to Bakke*

While this continued to leave the inferiority of black schools unquestioned, a new industry of scholarship identified successful stories of segregated education. David Cecelski, Vanessa Siddle Walker, and Barbara Shircliffe have argued that blacks fought to preserve their all-black schools, associating “the best of that segregated world” with a culture of caring teachers and legacy of black power.¹⁰ Much of this work focused on local case studies to turn a piercing eye to black activism and the roots of grassroots organization.

With anniversaries of *Brown* on the horizon, the school desegregation literature looked to memory to reconstruct the ultimate mission of the court’s original ruling. Unlike previous scholarship, historians of memory suggested that *Brown* had multiple implications and interpretations. Building upon the work of segregation studies, much of this burgeoning literature involves local case studies.¹¹ They also engage with the Long

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), and David Armor, *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995). Wolters, Graglia, and Wilkinson portray school integration as a failed policy that resulted from judicial overreaching, rather than judicial hesitation in the face of southern resistance. While immensely technical, David Armor, on the contrary, took a more neutral stand providing social scientific evidence of school desegregation’s impact on black and white students. Nevertheless, Armor’s findings suggest that school desegregation was an unsuccessful effort.

¹⁰ David Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Constance Curry, *Silver Rights* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1996); and Barbara Shircliffe, *The Best of that World: Historically Black High Schools and the Crisis of Desegregation in a Southern Metropolis* (Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc., 2006). Shircliffe identifies the nostalgia of segregated education with blacks’ frustrations with the contemporary school system.

¹¹ Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004) and Jack Dougherty, “From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History,” *Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (September 1999): 712-723. Amy Stuart Wells, *Both Sides Now: The Story of School Desegregation’s Graduates* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2009).

Civil Rights Movement, seeking to connect movements across time.¹² My work seeks to contribute to this field of scholarship.

By looking too narrowly at *Brown*, we fail to see the longevity of struggles, distilling success from one moment or one educational policy. The process of desegregation exposes the ways in which power and race have intersected over time. Rather than weigh in on the achievements or disadvantages of school desegregation, my project seeks to examine the ways in which desegregation shaped blacks' sense of power and influenced their views of social justice using the lens of memory. Because of the process of desegregation, southern blacks' memories of what was lost have remained hard to forget. It is the remembering of the best aspects of the segregated schools—caring and nurturing teachers and community control—that has enabled blacks to preserve their racial identity and autonomy during a period when African American are beginning to lose their neighborhoods to revitalization efforts. I argue that by placing historical memory at the center of school desegregation narratives we better understand the nature of race and social and political power in the South.

Prince Edward County, Virginia, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, offer an effective contrast in which to examine the dynamics of race, politics, and power over time. They are particularly useful for three reasons: *place, policy, and commemorative processes*. First, during the period of my study, Prince Edward and Chapel Hill represent small communities with one single race high school for whites and blacks. In these communities—rooted in a history of racial hierarchies and racial etiquette—we are able

¹² Jacquelyn Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233-1263. In her article, Hall argues that the civil rights movement was a series of social movements including feminist, economic, labor, racial, and other social concerns.

to view the interconnectivity of race and culture more clearly. Both towns are home to state colleges and universities. As the colleges provided employment to blacks, it is important to see the ways in which labor intersected with political activism. Moreover, the extension of local colleges into historically black neighborhoods point to conflicts between race, power, and culture.

Second, the ideological stances of Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill greatly differed. Prince Edward County favored an intransigent, explicitly massively resistant approach to the *Brown* ruling. Virginia's resulting plan for desegregation, known as the Stanley (and later Perrow) Plan, gave rise to massive resistance. Designed to prevent desegregation from occurring in any school system across the state, the Plan included insidious legal devices to ensure an outright defiance of the Supreme Court holding. Prince Edward white political leaders manipulated the state's constitutional absence of a system of public schools and exercised the Plan's provision of tuition vouchers to sustain segregated education. Instead of gradually desegregating its student body, white school officials elected to close the public schools, a decision that persisted for five years. On the other hand, Chapel Hill endorsed a seemingly moderate approach to desegregating its public schools. The Pearsall Plan, North Carolina's strategy for school desegregation, offered local school districts a choice in desegregating their students. By providing a "local option" clause, the Plan circumvented federal oversight that stubborn southern states like Virginia had to endure. Chapel Hill politicians stalled efforts to desegregate their public schools. Consequently, the Pearsall Plan implicitly and subtly avoided making significant strides in integrating black and white children. While Prince Edward and Chapel Hill espoused oppositional ideologies, both resulted in white racism and anti-

desegregation stances. Moreover, by the 1980s conservative federal policies forced the public schools in both communities to implement similar color-blind educational policies. By examining Chapel Hill's and Prince Edward's educational policies, we are able to view how interactions between race and power interacted across time to affect educational policies.

Third, the commemorative efforts of Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County demonstrate the influence of race and education on southern politics. The differences in desegregation affected how students remembered the process. In Chapel Hill, the lack of extremism failed to garner public attention; and when watched at all, the town was praised for its moderation. As a result, many local whites "forgot" the connection with the past. By the late 1990s, however, blacks who witnessed the increasing encroachment on their land by the University saw the loss of their cultural institutions. While whites recount desegregation as a narrative of progress, blacks view it more dismally. In Prince Edward, the county's massive resistance attracted international attention. White county residents were unable to avoid the costs of the desegregation plan. Blacks emerged from the narrative as victims, unjustly harmed by white racism. The memories, therefore, of desegregation project a dissimilar narrative than Chapel Hillians'. To Prince Edward blacks, the story of desegregation is one of resilience, in persistently seeking educational opportunities. Commemorating R.R. Moton Museum, in contrast, allowed whites to assuage their guilt for the era of school closings in Prince Edward. However, Chapel Hill whites approved of their role in the conversion of Lincoln High into the school administration building, relishing in their progressivism. Unlike many southern

communities which closed and demolished their segregated black schools, Chapel Hill retained Lincoln as a functioning space, central to school operations.

My project, “From Forgotten to Remembered: The Long Process of School Desegregation in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia” traces the educational experiences of black students in segregated and desegregated public schools through the lenses of two black schools—Lincoln High and R.R. Moton--in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia. By examining the development, demise, and reconfiguration of the black schools, we are able to witness the sheer determination blacks had to obtain quality education and better representation within their communities. I argue that through the process of desegregation, blacks gained a greater political voice but lost some educational control within public schools. It was through the commemoration efforts of the black schoolhouses that blacks found a means of regaining some measure of control over public school decisions.

The discussions surrounding the reuse of formerly single-race school buildings provoked a host of questions about racial justice and contemporary educational practices. Political debates spanned the spectrum from student reassignments to the appropriate funding levels for public integrated school systems. Indeed local communities across the nation have begun to examine the importance of school busing for racial diversity, students’ assignment to particular schools, and the levels of federal and state funds to be distributed to public school systems.¹³ These negotiations over what constitutes school

¹³ In 1992, the Supreme Court presided over *Freeman v. Pitts* 503 U.S. 467 which removed federal oversight for school districts compliant with school desegregation efforts. This case opened the door to a series of court cases that eliminated race and income as factors in school decisions. In *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* 551 U.S. 701 (2007), the Supreme Court ruled that assigning students to schools for the racial integration purposes was unconstitutional. The reassignment of Wake County, North Carolina public school students faces many heated debates over the implied resegregation of its schools. In 1995, *Missouri v. Jenkins* 515 U.S. 70 raised the question of whether

equity have provoked a backward glance at the merits of school desegregation and race-based educational decisions. In a period of economic cutbacks, formerly existing school buildings—segregated or desegregated—emerge as usable spaces. Yet the fate of former segregated black schools has not been divorced from racially-centered memories. School buildings are invested with meaning by those who attended, worked in, and sent their children to the schools. Deciding the fate of these sites of memory undoubtedly forces participants to come to terms with what is of value to their community.

The value often emerges in its curricular choices. In the course of writing this dissertation, I have been amazed by how important curriculum is in the development of school policies and the ways in which its practitioners see themselves. In light of a desegregated school system, where blacks and whites had to discover how to work with each other, curriculum determined what is essential to learn. The administrators' and policy-makers' decision of what to include or omit is the essence of what is remembered and forgotten.

However, even the curricular decisions do not explain all the factors that undergird public education. The heartbeat of the school resides in the students who attend classes (and even those who do not). It beats in the parents who desire an education and an opportunity better than they were afforded. It drums in the teachers and administrators seeking to meet the goals of their community. The private conversations

resource equalization through increased funding for remedial education programs and teacher pay was constitutional. In a split decision, the Supreme Court ruled in the negative. In 2001, Congress enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which established performance standards for the nation's students. Public schools that "underperformed" (or did not reach the performance benchmarks) were penalized with reduced federal funding. Recently, states such as New Jersey have voted to divest millions of funds from public schools in favor of charter, parochial, and/or private schools.

between students, among teachers and parents, and other myriad combinations point to the value given to education.

Using oral histories and archival sources, I examine how the process of desegregation reveals the ever-changing dynamics of power and control over educational decision-making among political leaders, community members, teachers, students, and educational leaders. Oral history interviews offer an analysis of the ways in which individual recollections differ from and draw on collective stories. It is, in fact, through these negotiations over memory that “this very push and pull [of history and memory]” reveal the weight of race and power.¹⁴ My project explores how black high schools formed a site of memory around which very powerful conversations about educational equity and community control took (and continue to take) place. Local school board records, newspapers, and manuscript collections provide the larger context within which school desegregation emerged and show how the public constructed its memories of school desegregation in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County. All of these sources demonstrate change over time and permit me to study the tensions between the political elites and the grassroots movers and shakers who forced racial and educational change within their communities over several decades.

This project is organized chronologically and thematically. The chronological framework illuminates the consistent and persistent resistance of local actors over time, while the thematic outline uncovers critical educational policies. Taken together, the long view of school desegregation will show the existing inequities of current public schools as well as the continuous resistance of local actors. The first chapter studies the

¹⁴Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” in Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press: New York, 1996), 289.

emergence of black public schools, including R.R. Moton High and Lincoln High. Chapters two and three explore the role state governments played in maintaining or destroying segregated education. The final two chapters reveal the impact of race on curricular and extracurricular educational policies.

In the first chapter, I examine how southern blacks worked to obtain and sustain a system of advanced public education, embodying the important social and political role of public education for southern blacks. In this chapter, I argue that black schoolhouses offered blacks ways to create new political terrain within Jim Crow society, by first appealing to whites' economic self-interest. But as blacks gained more autonomy in day-to-day school affairs, they pointed to the hypocrisy of "separate but equal." Their call upon American democracy through education ensured their place as first-class citizens in the South and culminated with a mission to equalize black and white educational opportunities in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The second chapter explores how *Brown* served as a catalyst to mobilize white segregationists and to embolden blacks in Virginia and North Carolina. Far from possessing a monolithic political orientation, southern whites and blacks did realize the political and social utility in presenting a united public front. For whites, the preservation of a segregated way of life became the primary political aim in the immediate post-*Brown* period. Segregation ensured whites would maintain control over southern politics. For blacks, the implementation of desegregation emerged as the chief goal. Desegregation brought the promise of increased political power and economic opportunities. To these ends, both races mounted an emotional, legal and ideological campaign to support their approaches.

In the third chapter, I argue that college students used their institutions as a springboard for social change in the late 1950s and 1960s. The University of North Carolina (UNC), North Carolina College for Negroes (NCCN) in North Carolina and Longwood College, Hampden-Sydney College (H-SC), and Virginia State College (VSC) in Virginia offered safe space for students to test out new ideas, especially in a rapidly changing America. However, college officials acted as agents of the state, which criticized direct-action student protests. Despite the resistance of college administrators to endorse the “radicalism” of student demonstrators, they often served as a supportive force against racial segregation. Yet their support and school policies often stopped short of making measurable racial change. Hence Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County colleges and universities simultaneously perpetuated and dismantled segregated education. Student protesters, however, relentlessly railed against segregation and pushed for more racial empowerment.

The fourth chapter investigates questions over how school decisions would be made, and by whom, during the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, calling into question the roles of power and choice in a time of a changing racial landscape across the South. This chapter explores how blacks tapped into the larger struggle for greater political power and control over their children’s schools and within their communities. I argue that these struggles took place in school decisions and especially over curricular and personnel choices. The direction of courses and placement of students carried much weight on the future direction of their children’s place within their larger communities.

The fifth chapter analyzes how the duality of race-centered education and color-blind academic policies coincided with a rise of conservative federal and state policies,

which led to a heightened focus on academic standards. This educational reprioritization began to lessen blacks' ability to critique unequal resource allocation on the basis of race. Instead, federal and state politicians initiated an effective "blame game" where people, not structural inequities, became the culprits for an inferior public school system. The increased push for teacher and student accountability, in effect, limited substantive conversations about racial and economic inequalities.

In the end, remembering desegregation is a profoundly political action. While the process of desegregation tells of the vibrancy and fervor of the movement through policies and actions, the memories of desegregation uncover reflective stories deeply connected to the present. As southern communities began to change racially and economically, blacks' and whites' stake in how the public remembered desegregation and black education took on heightened political importance. In light of contemporary educational struggles, desegregation memories illuminate policies which worked or failed. As a prism through which to view the past, remembering desegregation allows individuals to meet the past on their own terms while reaching to the present.

CHAPTER 1

BLACK SCHOOLHOUSES

“The extent to which such higher education has been successful in leading the Negro to think, which above all is the chief purpose of education, has merely made him more of a malcontent when he can sense the drift of things and appreciate the impossibility of success envisioning conditions as they really are.”¹⁵

Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro*

“Finally, it remains to be noted that the whole group life of Farmville Negroes is pervaded by a peculiar hopefulness on the part of the people themselves. No one of them doubts in the least but that one day black people will have all rights they are now striving for, and that the Negro will be recognized among the earth's great peoples. Perhaps this simple faith is, of all products of emancipation, the one of the greatest social and economic value.”¹⁶

W.E.B. DuBois, “The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study”

“Lincoln [High] was just like electricity. The school was so vibrant and had so much, it's just kind of hard to explain it, but it was so alive. And it used to just beat like a drum. And it connected with everybody in the community...It was a drumbeat that became the heartbeat of the black community because that's what everybody centered around. ...Lincoln prepared you for life. For what you were going to have to face in life.”¹⁷

Keith Edwards, former Lincoln High student

In 1939, the editor of the *Journal of Negro Education* sent out a call for articles for a special edition on the “Present and Future Position of the Negro in the American

¹⁵ Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro* reprint (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990), 31.

¹⁶ W.E.B. DuBois, “The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study,” *Bulletin of the Department of Labor* 14 (January 1898):1-38, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=DubFarm.xml&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=all>, (accessed October 14, 2010), 38.

¹⁷ Keith Edwards, interview by Bob Gilgor, December 14, 2000, K-541, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 7-8.

Social Order.” Scholars from a variety of academic disciplines replied and evaluated the political and social standing of black Americans. In his article, sociologist Edward B. Reuther wrote that “the period since Emancipation is one of blind fumbling for a new basis of racial accommodation,” as blacks had haphazardly tried to discover how to navigate the new racial waters in the post-Civil War America.¹⁸ This was particularly true of rural southern communities, where the abolition of slavery had left blacks and whites with uncertain, and uneasy, relationships.¹⁹ Often, southern blacks relied on the former racial hierarchy of slave-master in which they had to accommodate to whites’ self-interest. Exacerbated by their political disenfranchisement, blacks, Reuther argued, fortified an accommodationist construction of race relations. In his article for publication, DuBois dismissed Reuther’s staid posture toward the nation’s race relations. Instead, he conveyed a more progressive outlook for black Americans’ future. DuBois predicted that through increased education, blacks would engage in “world democracy” and would definitively assume “their rightful place according to their knowledge and power.”²⁰

Racial politics dominated the field of public education in the post-Emancipation period. During the era of Reconstruction, newly freed blacks had built a coalition with northern Republican politicians to provide a system of state-sponsored education. As a consequence, by the 1870s many southern states had revamped their state constitutions to

¹⁸ E.B. Reuter, “Why the Presence of the Negro Constitutes a Problem in the American Social Order,” *Journal of Negro Education* 8, no. 3 (July 1939): 291-298, see 294. Reuter came from the renowned University of Chicago School of Sociology.

¹⁹ In this chapter, I refer to Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County as rural communities because both places had small population densities, and significant agricultural farming. This rural designation also allowed Chapel Hill and Prince Edward to seek the aid of the Rosenwald Fund—a philanthropic organization that partially financed southern black rural education—in erecting African American secondary schoolhouses.

²⁰ W.E.B. DuBois, “The Position of the Negro in the American Social Order: Where Do We Go From Here?” *Journal of Negro Education* 8, no. 3 (July 1939): 551-570, see 570.

provide for a free public education system for black and white children.²¹ By the late nineteenth century, however, a pitched political battle between Republicans and southern white Democrats threatened to significantly deplete funding for black schools.²² Many southern whites feared the economic repercussions of black public education. By the turn-of-the-century, the *Farmville Herald* opined that, “When [blacks] learn to spell dog and cat, they throw away the hoe.”²³ Further, in 1904, a Virginian landowner questioned, “If we educate the Negro out of being a laborer, who is going to take his place?”²⁴ Southern white legislatures also worried that black education might incite a racial

²¹ For scholarship on Reconstruction era politics and black education, see William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic, 1865-1877* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907) and Edgar Knight, *The Influence of Reconstruction on Education in the South* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1913). These scholars composed the Dunning School, which viewed Reconstruction as a destructive, northern-led policy on the South. Influenced by the Dunning School, Henry Swint’s study of Reconstruction-era black education portrayed the mission and goals of northern white teachers as racially polarizing. See Henry Swint, *The Northern Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* (New York: Octagon Books, 1941, reprint 1967). The result of this scholarship cast southern blacks as passive recipients of a northern-driven, northern-agitate, and state-funded system of public education. Revisionist scholars of Reconstruction rejected the Dunning School by pointing to the positive social impact of post-Civil War era federal policies. For more on this outlook, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988).

²² Educational historians have examined the relationships between northerners, southern whites, and southern blacks in erecting southern schools. See Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen’s Education, 1862–1875* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980) and Robert C. Morris, *Reading, Writing, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861–1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Both Butchart and Morris explored the motivations and goals of northern teachers, as well northern religious and secular associations. They uncover competing visions of black education among northern and southern actors, often politically motivated. Jacqueline Jones also examined the set of tense relationships between northern whites (women) and southern blacks over the control of black schools. See, Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press 1980). Differing from her peers, Jones gave blacks more agency in determining their educational fate in her study.

²³ James Anderson’s, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), as quoted on 97. See also Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 138.

²⁴ As quoted in Adam Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 96. See also, *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, May 29, 1904.

rebellion, as blacks would press for more political rights. As a result, southern governments appropriated small amounts of funding to black schools.

In addition to self-support, the fate of southern blacks and their schools often depended on blacks' cooperation with southern and northern whites. In the politically repressive South, blacks learned to navigate the rough waters of white supremacy. As southern legislatures disenfranchised black voters, they also diminished a reliance on taxes to finance black public schools. Black southerners habitually found resources to fund their own schools, or to supplement the public schools that did exist.²⁵ They also used their labor as a bargaining wedge. Black sharecroppers stipulated that provisions for black education be provided as a condition for their labor.²⁶ Southern blacks turned to northern philanthropists, many with whom they had built past coalitions.²⁷ Taking note of rural blacks' diminished educational opportunities, northern white philanthropists pledged support for black education in the spirit of social progressivism. Subsequently,

²⁵ For more on the educational agency of newly freed blacks, see James Anderson's, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Heather Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005). Anderson and Williams extended the work of Jacqueline Jones to demonstrate how African Americans worked tirelessly to create and maintain black schools.

²⁶ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 56. Often, these schools were permitted on the tenant's land as a one-room schoolhouse. Nevertheless, the inclusion of education into blacks' labor contracts illustrated the agency in their education.

²⁷ Keeping with earlier works on northern philanthropy in the American South, Eric A. Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr., 's, *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1999) presented complementary picture of southern resistance of northern racial ideas. The authors built upon the work of Jones, *Soldiers of Light*; Butchart, *Northern Schools*; and Morris, *Reading, "Riting, and Reconstruction* by arguing that southern whites viewed northern benefactors of black education as introducing "dangerous" racial ideas of social equality. See also, James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, where he asserted that northern philanthropists applied racist notions to their perceptions of African American education as preparation for servitude. As a counter narrative to James Anderson's seminal work, Anderson and Moss offered a positive view of northern philanthropists as goodwill ambassadors who attempted to disband racial inequality in the spirit of antebellum abolitionists. Hilary Green's dissertation called this period "Educational Reconstruction," a time in which constant interregional and interracial negotiations occurred to bring out black education. See Hilary Green, "Educational Reconstruction: African American Education in the Urban South, 1865-1890" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of North Carolina, 2011).

the financial assistance of white northern philanthropists initiated the creation of many black school buildings throughout the rural South.

The increased number of black schoolhouses in Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill propelled local blacks to lay claim to their democratic rights, taking DuBois' prognosis to heart. They worked to shift power dynamics from white control to black control by becoming first-class citizens. With access to equivalent material services and conditions to whites, Prince Edward and Chapel Hill blacks believed they would enjoy equal educational, labor, and social opportunities. The development and expansion of black education, in particular, held the key to this increased power by offering the hope for economic and social transformation. Economically, Prince Edward and Chapel Hill blacks used education to deepen their vocational training and elevate the skills of black laborers, providing access to higher-paying work. Socially, Prince Edward and Chapel Hill black schoolhouses came to represent vital cultural institutions within the black community, uniting local blacks. Black education served as a vitally important cause around which blacks could rally. Moreover, the emergence of black schools created a new occupational genre of professional, middle-class black teachers and administrators. In Jim Crow schools, this new class of black educators made the primary decisions in black schools, cooperated with white school leaders, and ultimately became the visible spokespeople for the black community. With their elevated status, black educators stood poised to instruct the black populace *and* to intercede for a stronger commitment to democratic principles.

Through the lenses of two black public high schools—Moton High and Lincoln High—in Prince Edward County, Virginia and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, I examine

how southern rural blacks worked to obtain and sustain a system of advanced public education, embodying the important social and political role of public education for southern blacks. In this chapter, I argue that black schoolhouses offered blacks ways to create new political terrain within Jim Crow society, by first appealing to whites' economic self-interest. But as blacks gained more autonomy in day-to-day school affairs, they pointed to the hypocrisy of "separate but equal." Their call upon American democracy through education promised them status as first-class citizens in the South and culminated with a mission to equalize black and white educational opportunities in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the local economic and social dynamics of Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill could not have been more different. Prince Edward relied heavily on tobacco as a major source of income.²⁸ The high consumer demand for this cash crop correlated to a high planter demand for a steady labor force. As a result, Prince Edward represented an economically stratified black population, ranging from poor sharecroppers to middle-class entrepreneurs. Most blacks worked alongside whites on farms, eking out at lower-class economic existence. In 1897, historian W.E.B. DuBois conducted a Department of Labor federally-commissioned study of black life in Farmville, the county seat of Prince Edward County. He noted that only one out of nine black families qualified as low-income.²⁹ In Chapel Hill, on the

²⁸ DuBois, "The Negroes of Farmville," 1-2. Farmville produced seven-eighths of the state's tobacco.

²⁹ Ibid., 29. DuBois found that of the 262 local black families in Farmville, "about 29 live in poverty which less than suffices for ordinary comfort, 128 are in moderate circumstances, 63 are comfortable, and 42 well-to do according to the standard of the town." There were several black entrepreneurs, including seven grocers, five barbers, two blacksmiths, a wheelwright, a silversmith, four

other hand, few blacks owned their own businesses. Instead, the majority of black Chapel Hillians worked at the University of North Carolina as domestic laborers or cooks at a low rate of pay. Moreover, Chapel Hill, unlike Prince Edward, also had a reputation for being progressive. Home to the nation's first public postsecondary institution, the University of North Carolina was the lifeblood of the town. UNC had a broadminded, forward-thinking philosophy. Ever on the cusp of the changing world, the University weathered the battles of the Civil War to become more inclusive of more whites of all economic classes and admitted female applicants in the late 1800s and early 1900s. UNC, to serve as the heart of the state, was to set the pace of social change in the South.

Within the first twenty years of the twentieth century, the two communities witnessed similar demographic trends. Prince Edward had nearly the reverse racial composition of Orange County, as blacks outnumbered whites. Yet as rural southern districts, both communities reflected national migratory trends in the early twentieth century.³⁰ In Orange County, North Carolina, the black population experienced a significant decline between the years of 1900 to 1910, while Prince Edward County's black population decreased by eleven percent in the same time frame.³¹ By 1920, Prince Edward and Orange County had lost nearly twenty percent of the black population to

shoemakers, a furniture repairman, three contractors, a laundryman, a jailor, whip maker, wood merchant, a baker, a hotelier, cabinetmakers, coopers and plasterers.

³⁰ For more on the trends of the Great Migration and other black migrations, see James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); and St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, reprint (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); On African American migrations to the American West, See Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).

³¹ See Tables 1.1, and 1.2.

cities and northern areas in search of jobs.³² Formally educating blacks became a means of retaining necessary black labor. As W.E. B. DuBois shrewdly noted in his assessment of black education, “What was needed, then, was that the Negro first should be made the intelligent laborer, the trained farmer, the skilled artisan of the South” to ensure white southerners a “trained reliable laboring class.”³³

The socioeconomic climate of Prince Edward and Chapel Hill had effectively produced all the right ingredients for the emergence of black schools. The relative wealth and the necessary labor of Prince Edward County blacks drove them to demand more, and better, educational facilities within the county. Likewise the limited economic opportunities and pay offered to Chapel Hill blacks led them to seek improved pay and educational opportunities outside their community by 1910. The town’s progressive impulse, along with the economic realities of fewer black laborers, compelled white town leaders to develop an educational system for local blacks. Whether out of the desire to retain black laborers or to train better workers, the stage was set for the necessity of black schools.

³² See Table 1.3

³³ W.E. B. DuBois, “Looking Back and Forward on Black Education,” Southern Education Foundation, http://www.sefatl.org/1916_6.asp?ref=sef, p. 2, (accessed December 20, 2010). DuBois’ assessment of black education can also be found in Herbert Aptheker’s *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques 1906-1960* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press) 1973, 61-74.

Table 1.1³⁴

1900 U.S. Census Returns for Prince Edward County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina.

	Prince Edward County, Virginia	Percentage of Total Population
White	1,615	37%
Black	2,752	63%
Mulatto	1	<1%
Not Recorded*	4	<1%
Total Population	4,372	100%
	Orange County, North Carolina	Percentage of Total Population
White	2,417	62%
Black	1,447	37%
Mulatto	3	<1%
Not Recorded*	7	<1%
Total Population	3,874	100%

³⁴ Heritage Quest, U.S. Census Returns for Prince Edward County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/search/advanced>, (accessed April 18, 2010). The information listed for these individuals is non-descriptive in terms of race, gender, and often names.

Table 1.2³⁵

1910 U.S. Census Returns for Prince Edward County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina.

	Prince Edward County, Virginia	Percentage of Total Population
White	1,589	39%
Black	1,652	41%
Mulatto	798	20%
Not Recorded*	2	<1%
Total Population	4,041	100%
	Orange County, North Carolina	Percentage of Total Population
White	2,592	68%
Black	1,008	26%
Mulatto	243	6%
Not Recorded*	0	0%
Total Population	3,843	100%

³⁵ Heritage Quest, U.S. Census Returns for Prince Edward County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/search/advanced>, (accessed April 18, 2010). The information listed for these individuals is non-descriptive in terms of race, gender, and often names. The increase in the numbers of mulattoes may exist for numerous reasons. The U.S. Census enumerators varied in their methods; some recorded those with darker complexions as “black,” while others noted the variations of color as racially distinctive. Also, in 1910, the federal government employed more black census takers who likely noted greater racial and color differences than the previous white enumerators, resulting in higher numbers of mulatto populations in Prince Edward County and Orange County. For more information on the rationale behind racial classifications of federal censuses, see Jennifer L. Hochschild and Brenna L. Mitchell, “Racial Reorganization and the United States Census 1850-1930: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race,” *Studies in American Political Development* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 59-96.

Table 1.3³⁶

1920 U.S. Census Returns for Prince Edward County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina.

	Prince Edward County, Virginia	Percentage of Total Population
White	1,891	45%
Black	1,872	44%
Mulatto	451	11%
Not Recorded*	1	<1%
Japanese	--	--
Total Population	4,215	100%
	Orange County, North Carolina	Percentage of Total Population
White	3,168	69%
Black	1,026	22%
Mulatto	402	9%
Not Recorded*	1	<1%
Japanese	2	<1%
Total Population		

The endurance of southern black schools strongly relied on accommodating local whites. Virginia native and prominent black spokesman Booker T. Washington urged local blacks to ingratiate themselves to the white community to garner financial assistance in creating black schoolhouses and gaining school improvements. By persuading whites that black education was “a help and not a hindrance,” blacks could

³⁶ Heritage Quest, U.S. Census Returns for Prince Edward County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/search/advanced>, (accessed April 18, 2010). The information listed for these individuals is non-descriptive in terms of race, gender, and often names.

obtain access to school buildings and materials for which to teach young black children.³⁷

Blacks, Washington reasoned, should shoulder the responsibility of convincing white local leaders of black students' needs as those in need of greatest assistance. Washington urged blacks to:

Try to know the people, know the sheriff, the county clerk, the police officers, the local judge, and the county superintendent...Show them what you are doing, that you need their support, and nine times out of ten you will get it.³⁸

To Washington, there was little relevance applied to teaching classical liberal curriculum.³⁹ Instead, teachers had to show whites that "education mean[t] something."⁴⁰ Meaningful education demanded that teachers instruct their students in practical vocational lessons. Washington stressed the philosophy of industrial training, contending that blacks needed to learn fundamental life skills and effective work habits to better

³⁷ Booker T. Washington, "Southern Negro Rural Schools and Teachers," *Southern Workman* 38, no. 426 (August 1909): 426-429, see 429.

³⁸ Ibid., 428.

³⁹ The early divide between the classical liberal model and the industrial (Hampton-Tuskegee) model for black education emerged as African American leaders contemplated the most effective strategies for black social and economic mobility. Typically depicted as a philosophical fight between Tuskegee Institute president Booker T. Washington and Atlanta University professor W.E.B. DuBois, the debate over which curricular strategy served as the appropriate course of action for black education raged during the late 1890s and throughout the early twentieth century. Washington championed industrial training (with a focus on agriculture, manual labor, and normal schools) as the key to winning the support of southern whites. In the 1895 Atlanta Exposition, Washington urged southern blacks to live peacefully with and work diligently for southern whites in order to receive improvements in economic status and educational conditions. In his 1901 autobiography, he further concluded that "no race can prosper till it learns there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." DuBois, in contrast, advocated that blacks receive the same classical liberal curriculum training as whites. After the disenfranchisement of southern blacks in the late 1890s and the rise in white-on-black violence, DuBois viewed classical liberal education (i.e., classics, arts, and humanities) as the solution for African American political liberation. For his critique of Washington, see W.E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903). For interpretations this curricular difference in black education, see August Meir, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1963, reprint 2003), 85-99; James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 33-78; David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993).; and Mark Bauerlein, "Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois: The Origins of a Bitter Intellectual Battle," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* no. 46 (Winter 2004/2005): 106-114.

⁴⁰ Washington, "Southern Negro Rural Schools," 429.

improve their conditions. In one story, Washington conveyed the futility of the sole pursuit of academic knowledge without knowledge of the black community's environment:

I saw a teacher a few days ago, a big strapping fellow, who had gone out in the country to teach, but stayed only a few days because he said he could not get enough to eat. What is education for? There was rich land all around the schoolhouse, land to be had for the asking, where he could have raised vegetables, chickens, fruit--and that big, so-called educated man left because he could not get enough to eat! What was he doing in the schoolhouse? He was having the boys and girls study about the suspension bridge over the Hudson River. Teach the children to earn their living. Articulate school-teaching with the life of the people and you will find that they will stand by you. Go out into the country and plant yourselves, and you will have the support of the colored people and soon that of the white people, if they see you are using your education to make other people happy. It will make them stand by you, support you, and respect you.⁴¹

The rhetoric espoused by Washington earned the respect of white leaders, especially northern philanthropists, seeking an outlet for patronage. In 1907, Booker T. Washington and Dr. Hollis B. Frissell, president of Hampton Institute, petitioned Anna T. Jeanes for financial aid for secondary black education. Jeanes, a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker donor, had sponsored the industrial training programs at Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes in previous years. Finding Washington's cooperative approach with whites appealing, Jeanes elected to fund the education for "little rural Negro schools."⁴² Within the same year, she donated \$1 million to fund "The Negro Rural School Fund, Inc." (or Jeanes Fund), which spread industrial training programs across the rural South.

In addition to the Jeanes Fund, other white philanthropic foundations sought to improve rural southern education for blacks. John D. Rockefeller's \$1 million

⁴¹ Ibid., 429.

⁴² John Malcus Ellison, "Negro Organizations and Leadership in Relation to Rural Life in Virginia," *Virginia Polytechnic Institute Bulletin* 290 (May 1933): 62.

endowment created the General Education Board (GEB), with the monies primarily funding school building maintenance, construction, and teacher supervision.⁴³ Sears and Roebuck founder Julius Rosenwald, the eponymous creator of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, subsidized over four million dollars for school building programs across the rural South.

The establishment of these educational funds prompted greater collaboration among northern benefactors, southern whites, and blacks. Philanthropists wanted to set up a self-sustaining system public education, initially sponsored by philanthropic efforts but ultimately financed by local white school boards. To achieve this, many of the educational funding agencies demanded the active participation of white school communities as an integral part of its funding policies. Southern whites, in need of a more efficient black labor force, recognized the need for improved and higher numbers of black schools. That southern whites would receive the financial assistance of major philanthropic groups hastened their approval of erecting new black school buildings. Their participation also yielded southern whites local curricular control over the schools' direction. Largely based on an industrial education model, black schools would remain the training ground for becoming more effective agricultural laborers. Blacks too contributed to the collaborative educational endeavor. Philanthropic agencies stipulated that blacks chip in monies for their own education.

The first large-scale fund impacting rural Virginia and North Carolina counties was the Slater Fund. Established in 1882, the philanthropic organization donated money secondary schools for blacks across the South by initiating its "county training school"

⁴³ Raymond Fosdick, *Adventure in Giving: The Story of the General Education Board, a Foundation Established by John D. Rockefeller* (New York City, New York: Harper & Row), 1962.

movement. An abundance of Slater Fund monies went to North Carolina and Virginia. In 1915 and 1916, an average of \$965 was given to thirteen other southern states, while North Carolina received \$3,800 and Virginia received \$2,000 respectively.⁴⁴ Using Slater Fund monies to fund training school construction, North Carolina county leaders, for example, erected over forty-three county training schools between 1914 and 1929.⁴⁵

The Slater Fund revolved around vocational education with the hope “to establish a type of Negro school in the county which shall serve as a model with respect to physical plant and equipment, teaching force, course of study, and plan of operation” and “to give industrial training, laying particular emphasis upon subjects pertaining to the home and farm.”⁴⁶ Math centered on farm math or that to be used in industries. English centered on books “bearing on current topics, especially in the world of industries.”⁴⁷ The goal of the Fund was to “give a working knowledge of the “3 Rs,” to give manual dexterity, economic value in the home.”⁴⁸ The goal for the higher grades was vocational. Girls learned to be dutiful homemakers and boys learned to work on farms.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ See Table 1.4.

⁴⁵ Edward E. Redclay, *County Training Schools and Public Secondary Education for Negroes in the South* (Washington, D.C.: John F. Slater Fund, 1935), the statistics on North Carolina are found on 40.

⁴⁶ Slater Fund, *A Suggested Course of Study* (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell Company, 1917), 11-12. See also, Redclay, *County Training Schools*, 35.

⁴⁷ Slater Fund, *A Suggested Course*, 15.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13. See Figure 1.1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Table 1.4⁵⁰

Disbursements Made to Public Negro Secondary Schools in North Carolina through the John F. Slater Fund, 1911-1933

Year	North Carolina	Virginia	Total southern states*
1911-1912	---	---	\$2,000
1912-1913	---	---	\$2,000
1913-1914	---	\$500	\$4,000
1914-1915	\$1,500	\$500	\$8,090.26
1915-1916	\$3,800	\$2,000	\$18,350
1916-1917	\$3,980	\$2,610	\$19,760
1917-1918	\$4,760	\$2,974	\$27,190
1918-1919	\$7,594	\$4,397	\$39,038
1919-1920	\$9,500	\$7,499	\$52,893
1920-1921	\$8,700	\$10,600	\$62,400
1921-1922	\$7,100	\$9,800	\$62,050
1922-1923	\$8,200	\$9,750	\$66,800
1923-1924	\$7,250	\$10,050	\$72,900
1924-1925	\$8,000	\$10,100	\$75,600
1925-1926	\$12,750	\$14,250	\$102,275
1926-1927	\$13,250	\$14,650	\$110,800
1927-1928	\$12,500	\$14,400	\$106,475

⁵⁰ Data from Edward Redclay, *County Training Schools*, 167-68. The list of southern states include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

1928-1929	\$15,000	\$16,300	\$149,868.95
1929-1930	\$13075	\$14,181	\$130,523.91
1930-1931	\$11,375	\$12,250	\$111,893.46
1931-1932	\$8,500	\$9,500	\$88,825
1932-1933	\$6,800	\$8,500	\$75,280
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$163,634</i>	<i>\$175,831</i>	<i>\$1,389,112.58</i>

However, character development and patriotism were not to be ignored. Slater Fund trustees urged teachers not to “neglect to teach race history and respect for the best men the Negro race has produced.”⁵¹ Focusing on acceptable members of the black race, would instill good moral character into black students. Sixth and seventh graders were encouraged to read Booker T. Washington’s autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, and combine it “with a study of the leading facts of American History and their causes” and to focus on the progress blacks have made since the Civil War.⁵² In addition to daily flag raising, music organic to the United States was encouraged as well: “Plantation melodies should not be neglected. They furnish a wealth of material peculiar to the Negro people and the only original music America has produced. Teach the children to appreciate them and to sing them well.”⁵³

The Slater Fund required black schools to become part of the public school system and for black leaders to contribute \$500 towards black education. This two-pronged directive served to ensure local white participation in black education and to

⁵¹ Slater Fund, *A Suggested Course*, 33.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 37.

compel local black self-help endeavors. Southern counties or states had to raise \$750 from taxes or other public state or county funds as a minimal prerequisite for Slater Fund involvement.

Figure 1.1

Sample schedule for students Teachers' Daily Program (Grades 6-10)⁵⁴

	Principal's Program	Boys' Industrial Teacher	Girls' Industrial Teacher
8:30-8:40		Opening Exercises	
8:40-9:10	8 th Arithmetic	10 th Science	6 th Arithmetic
9:10-9:40	9 th Arithmetic	10 th Science	7 ^h Arithmetic
9:40-10:10	10 th Mathematics	Industry—6 th and 7 th boys	Industry—6 th and 7 th girls
10:10-10:20		Recess	
10:20-10:50	8 th English		
10:50-11:20	9 th English		
11:20-12:00	10 th English	5 th grade gardening—boys and girls	11:20—7 th Composition and Grammar 12:00—6 th Composition and Grammar
12:00-1:00		Noon Recess	
1:00-1:25	8 th Physiology	Shop—5 th boys	Industries—5 th girls
1:25-1:50			
1:50-2:20	8 th and 9 th History or Civics	2:00-2:30 Sanitation or Recess	Commercial Geography—7 th
2:20-2:30			
2:30-3:00	6 th Geography	Farm and Shop—8 th and 9 th boys	Industries—8 th and 9 th girls
3:00-3:30	7 th History		
3:30-4:00	6 th and 7 th Reading		

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Like the Slater Fund, the Rosenwald Fund also required the active involvement of black and white communities throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Blacks had to raise funds to be matched by the Rosenwald Fund and local white school leaders had to agree to operate the newly-erected black schoolhouses as part of the counties' public school program. As a Rosenwald Fund official wrote, the Fund was not to construct a chain of black schoolhouses, but to establish "a community enterprise in cooperation between citizens and officials, white and colored."⁵⁵ To this end, Julius Rosenwald only agreed to donate one-third of building costs if strong financial and social commitment existed for black education from local southern white governments and black parents and community leaders. Each rural school community had to guarantee to equip a minimum of two acres of land for the school building and agree to furnish and maintain these schools after they were built. North Carolina blacks contributed \$100,000 each year "out of their own pockets as voluntary contributions toward building of schools."⁵⁶ By 1920, the Rosenwald Fund gave \$287,000 and the state and counties gave \$1,000,000. In Prince Edward County, the Fund helped build three schools—Mercy

⁵⁵ Thomas Hanchett, "Saving the South's Rosenwald Schools," <http://www.rosenwaldplans.org/history.html>, (accessed March 13, 2011). See also, Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2006). Hoffschwelle examines the fate of Rosenwald Schools that, she argues, served as exemplars for school architecture and design, as community institutions and partnerships, and as a means of formalizing a state education program that, finally, would include black children.

⁵⁶ "Negro School Finals," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, April 16, 1925, 4. Between 1918 to 1925, 600 black schools were built in North Carolina.

Seat, Leigh's Mountain School, and Farmville Training School—costing a total of \$47,875. Prince Edward blacks raised \$4,530, while the county amassed \$39,845.⁵⁷

Although philanthropic funding agencies gave white school leaders ultimate authority over black schools, they also provided blacks with a more accountable state system of education. School buildings aided by the Rosenwald Fund became the property of the public school systems in the rural South. As much as possible, white school boards retained the final approval of hiring teachers and others affiliated with the school system. When the Jeanes Fund established the new position of State Agent of Negro Rural Schools in 1910 in Virginia and in 1913 in North Carolina, white males were always appointed to the directorial positions. Jackson Davis served as Virginia's State Agent, travelling across the state to inspect rural black schools. By 1921, North Carolina blacks' increasing pressure for state support of black education led the North Carolina General Assembly to formally create the Division of Negro Education within the State Department of Public Instruction, appointing Nathan Newbold as director. Despite the apparent control whites had over black schoolhouses, the Rosenwald Fund enacted policies which gave blacks a foothold in acquiring better goods and services from their local communities. Calling for the completion of school building within six months, the Rosenwald Fund ensured that whites could not dawdle in raising funds if local

⁵⁷ "National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheets Appendix One: Rosenwald School Plans," http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Brunswick/NR_RosenwaldSchoolMPD_part2_text.pdf, 160, (accessed November 12, 2010). See also, Rosenwald Schools, "National Register of Historic Places, Continuation Sheets," http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/MultipleCounty/NR_RosenwaldSchoolMPD_part2_text.pdf, 43, 45, and 160, (accessed November 12, 2010).

communities took advantage of the Fund's support.⁵⁸ It stipulated a longer school term (a minimum of five months) for black students and outfitted each school with material resources such as "two sanitary toilets and the building equipped with desks, blackboards, and heaters," considered the markers of a good *white* rural school of its day.⁵⁹

Perhaps the most vital product of the Rosenwald Fund and other such philanthropic efforts was the creation of a black professional class. With the emergence of new schoolhouses came the need for school teachers and administrators to run the day-to-day affairs of the schools. The white State Agents in North Carolina and Virginia had typically selected veteran black teachers to assist them in supervising black school programs, yielding much esteem and higher pay among blacks in the community. With the Jeanes Fund, black women primarily occupied these administrative positions. Longtime Virginia educator Estelle Randolph held the first Jeanes Supervising Industrial Teacher in the nation. In North Carolina, three blacks assumed positions in the DNE: George Davis (supervisor of Rosenwald buildings), Annie W. Holland (supervisor of elementary schools), and William A. Robinson (supervisor of high schools). Rural supervisors cultivated relationships between the home and the schools, learning the students intimately and providing white state educational leaders with insights into the most effective ways to educate black students.⁶⁰ Many of these black educational leaders maintained their state jobs for at least ten years. The longevity of their jobs developed the

⁵⁸ The Rosenwald Fund's policies also demanded constant monetary support from the black community as well, setting off a perennial cycle of fundraising.

⁵⁹"Rosenwald Schools," 43, 45, 160. For an overview of the origins and requirements of the Rosenwald Fund, see Scott McCormick, "The Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Journal of Negro Education* 3, no. 4 (October 1934): 605-626.

⁶⁰ Ellison, "Negro Organizations," 62. See also, John H. Dillard, *Selected Writings, Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund*, (Washington, D.C.: John Slater Fund, 1932).

positions into careers; they also created an institutional legacy of black authority in state matters.

Against the backdrop of an emerging international war, African Americans gained a stronger voice in demanding whites' support for black schools. President Woodrow Wilson's interventionist cries of "making the world safe for democracy" took on intensified meaning for blacks. Blacks fighting in Europe "where [the American] flag has been assailed and [black soldiers] crimsoned it with their blood" believed in the promise of democracy abroad and at home.⁶¹ While black soldiers fought for democracy on foreign soil, African Americans on the home front struggled to have the tenets of democracy applied at home. They pushed for a more prominent role in local decision-making, particularly in education. Schools represented a critical institution in helping to shift blacks' status from second-class to first-class citizenship. African Americans' efforts worked to some degree. White *Farmville Herald* owner James L. Hart wrote in the editorial column, "Out of the many thousand negroes who went to war, many could not even write a letter home to mother, such little schooling they had in a public way [was] a shame on enlightened America."⁶² To reduce black illiteracy, southern whites made greater efforts to improve access to better education through longer school terms. The democratic impulse highlighted by the war, in turn, made education for African Americans no longer an option but a public need. World War I had helped to loosen whites' mindsets but empowered blacks to push for more and more educational change.

⁶¹ As quoted from Kara Miles Turner, "'It Is Not at Present a Very Successful School:': Prince Edward County and the Black Educational Struggle, 1865-1995 (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University 2001). See also "Colored Troops Leave Here," *Farmville Herald*, June 21, 1918, 6. James L. Hart purchased the *Farmville Herald* in 1893 and ran the paper until his death in 1921. In 1921, J. Barrye Wall, Sr. took over ownership of the *Farmville Herald*, which remains in his family to the present day.

⁶² Ibid. "Welcome Reception to Colored Troops," *Farmville Herald*, September 5, 1919, 7.

However, blacks knew the limits to their demands. Careful not to push too far, many black leaders stopped short of demanding total social and economic equality within public schools. They continued to depend on the goodwill of white leaders to improve education. As North Carolina Supervisor of Rosenwald Buildings, George Davis, contended, his “attitude in all [his] work has been conciliatory—not truckling, if you please—but an attitude of patient waiting and persistent working.”⁶³ While “waiting” for whites’ assistance, black educational leaders and parents busily worked to raise funds for black schools.

In the wake of the postwar disillusionment and violence, southern blacks called for improved education by manipulating the growing social concerns among southern whites. Playing to the fears of a growing sense of delinquency after WWI, black educational leaders advocated for black high schools. North Carolina Rosenwald Inspector of High Schools William A. Robinson warned white school leaders that black schools offered a brilliant tactic to prevent immorality. Arguing for the important need for black high schools, Robinson suggested that the established and organized education of black youth would ward off a “social cesspool of ignorance, disease and crime, and social problems of all kinds.”⁶⁴ If the state funded higher grades, it could avoid the social unrest that plagued urban areas. Black schools would also serve as the gatekeeper of respectability. Under the mantle of high school education, blacks obtained access to higher grade levels and educational opportunities, while whites retained the appearance of social control.

⁶³ James Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 222.

⁶⁴ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 202-204.

Blacks employed a variety of self-help strategies, namely fundraising efforts, in order to demonstrate their determined investment in education to whites and worthiness for first-class citizenship. In 1924, Chapel Hill black parents and students engaged in a focused and determined effort to secure funding for black schools through local churches and schools. After a paltry sum of fifteen dollars was raised during a church offering to finance a new tenth grade class, community leader Bill McDade lectured Chapel Hill blacks about the price of quality education. He demanded another pass of the offering basket and asked, “Is \$15 the value you put on educating children? That is sad, sad. I’m gonna ask Brother [Ben] Boothe to lead us in another song and we’ll see if you can do better.”⁶⁵ After another pass of the basket, the amount was nearly tripled. In the fall of 1924, students from all existing grade level created a fund to help with the costs of the newly opened Orange County Training School (OCTS). Students in grades one through eleven contributed a total of \$85, no insignificant feat as a typical annual teacher’s salary ranged from \$35 to \$40.⁶⁶ As a result of these efforts, southern white educational leaders insisted that “the success of [black] undertakings has revealed the resources of community effort [as] a most valuable element in their own training for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ “New Building for Colored Children,” *Chapel Hill News*, September 19, 1923.

⁶⁶ “Negro Children’s Rally,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, December 18, 1924, 4. (1st graders gave \$9.20, 2nd graders gave \$6.20, 3rd graders gave \$8.45, 4th and 5th graders gave \$19.45, 6th and 7th graders gave \$13.25, 8th graders gave \$19.25, 9th graders gave \$9.00, 10th graders gave \$7.00, and 11th graders gave \$4.00). See also, Charles Edward Burrell, *A History of Prince Edward County, Virginia from Its Formation in 1753 to the Present* (Richmond, Virginia: The Williams Company, 1922), 309.

⁶⁷ Jackson Davis, *Building a Rural Civilization: I. County Training Schools II. Supervising Industrial Teachers* (Hampton, Virginia: General Education Board, 1920), 11.

Self-help efforts defined black education in the decade following WWI. A variety of predominately middle-class-oriented black groups emerged to push for educational improvements and development.⁶⁸ School improvement leagues (SILs), the forerunners to Parent-Teacher Associations, frequently met to discuss the development of black school buildings, as well as to raise monies for new schools. SILs worked to improve the physical, financial, and educational aspects of black education. In Chapel Hill, black members of the SIL raised \$241 within a week to “make a start on clearing the ground” for the new high school.”⁶⁹ Local civic groups, such as Chapel Hill’s Negro Civic Club, served as an intermediary between the black community and the white town government. Formed in 1927 by eight prominent black men, the Negro Civic Club members maintained ties to town leaders.⁷⁰ Founding member Adolphus D. (A.D.) Clark maintained that the Club was “the only group here that had any power or any energy to go down and report the necessary things the Negroes needed here in Chapel Hill.”⁷¹ State teacher associations emerged with the intent of improving black educational curriculum across the state. Both the North Carolina Teachers Association (NCTA) and the Virginia Teachers Association (VTA) pushed for equalized high school curriculum. In 1924, for

⁶⁸ By middle-class, I seek to engage with the notion of clubwomen and men during the 1910s and 1920s that espoused middle-class sensibilities, even if they did not represent the middle-class financially. For more on this scholarship, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Church, 1880-1920*,” (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁶⁹ “Colored School Meeting,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 8, 1923, 2. See also, Ellison, “Negro Organizations,” 1-39.

⁷⁰ John K. Chapman, “Black Freedom Movement and the University of North Carolina, 1793-1960” (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 242. Three were janitors at UNC—Clark, Eugene White and Charles Craig. Walter Hackney was a barber, Hubert Robinson was Frank Porter Graham’s chauffeur. Rev. J.S. Miller and Rev. J.S. Holt were ministers and Charles Maddox was a waiter at UNC.

⁷¹ Restricted interview of A.D. Clark, undated, in the Duke Oral History Program, Manuscripts Collection, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, as quoted in Chapman, 242.

instance, the NCTA placed “a larger and more liberal support of High Schools... [with] curricula similar in content in the High Schools of both races” as priority number one.⁷²

The teacher associations, in particular, served as the voice for black education, working to create a professional image of quality black teachers, and elevate the status of black education as vital to the state’s agenda. The VTA had six goals: research Negro education, professionalize teachers and elevate teachers’ status, recruit quality teachers, develop lecturers for meetings, establish vocational guidance to guide students into their chosen careers earlier and quicker, and cope with educational issues in the state. Each county within Virginia worked toward achieving the six goals. With a large rural-based membership, the appeal for the VTA rested in the materials it could offer.⁷³ The VTA maintained a circulating library of industrial teachers’ books and provided speakers for educational meetings, assets to rural districts with minimal school budgets.⁷⁴ Because of its commitment to legitimizing black education, VTA membership increased by 900% from 1923 to 1932.

Even as the VTA pushed for the respectability of black teachers, it was a local woman’s group that mobilized the black community in producing marketable change for black schools. The Martha E. Forrester Council of Women (MEFCW) formed on April 6, 1920, in Prince Edward County. Named after longtime black educator Martha E.

⁷² Sarah Thuesen, “Classes of Citizenship: The Culture and Politics of Black Public Education in North Carolina, 1919-1960” (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2003), 123. See also Minutes of the 44th Annual Session of the North Carolina Negro Teachers’ Association, Held in Wilmington, North Carolina, November 26-28, 1924, copy of minutes located in the North Carolina Collection. By 1931, Chapel Hill’s black high school teachers boasted 100 percent membership in the North Carolina Teacher’s Association, a number that remained consistent throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

⁷³ Seventy-five percent of Virginia Teacher Association members came from rural districts. Ellison, “Negro Organizations,” 19.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Forrester, the MEFCW sought to embody excellence in education. The group was composed of seventeen women seeking “to furnish systematic help for the uplift of the Negroes in our community [and] to improve educational advantages for the Negroes of this community....” through cooperative efforts with the white community.⁷⁵ Of most importance to the MEFCW was extending the school term, providing bus transportation, and locating space for a four-year high school. In 1920, Prince Edward school trustee officials had promised to find a site for a new industrial school. But by 1921, they had changed the school’s location and stalled construction efforts. Growing frustrated with the rate of progress, Martha E. Forrester and her compatriots attended a school board meeting in May 1921 to question the pace of the officials. When told that the black community would need to raise at least \$5,000 before the school board would fund the new school, Forrester pledged the MEFCW to give \$1,000.⁷⁶ Like Chapel Hill black leaders, she called on the black community to provide mutual assistance. Forrester mailed letters to black groups and individual families, and petitioned local churches to appeal to blacks’ pride in their hometown. In a fundraising letter, Forrester wrote: “Knowing the interest you manifest in your hometown, we know nothing would please you better than to have a school, with all modern conveniences for our boys and girls, like the boys and girls of other places.”⁷⁷ Not only petitioning the black community, the MEFCW made its presence known to white school leaders. Members attended school board meetings and

⁷⁵ Martha E. Forrester Council of Women, “Charter Plaque,” Moton Museum, Farmville, Virginia, October 2008.

⁷⁶ Turner, ““It Is Not at Present,”” 120-121. See also, Prince Edward County School Trustee Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, February 27, 1920; July 19, 1920; and July 22, 1921.

⁷⁷ Martha E. Forrester and Kate Wiley, Fundraising Letter of May 22, 1922, Moton Museum, Farmville, Virginia, October 2008.

pressured officials to hold a referendum on a school bond. Finally, in 1926, Prince Edward passed a \$65,000 school bond, with \$30,000 creating a new black school.⁷⁸

Throughout the late 1910s and 1920s, Chapel Hill African Americans witnessed a “golden age” in black education. This educational renaissance brought about the construction of secondary black schools and the extension of school terms through the collaboration between local blacks and white educational leaders. In Chapel Hill, blacks had long self-supported secondary education for their children. From 1898 to 1912, prominent black minister Rev. Louis H. Hackney operated a single-story graded elementary school for black and a two-story graded secondary school from 1912 to 1916. As privately-run schools, Hackney depended on a small amount of tuition from African American parents and benevolent aid from local black and white agencies. Unfortunately the monies from these endeavors resulted in grossly underfunded schools.⁷⁹ Hackney, along with Chapel Hill black parents, realized the need to establish a school which could demand funding from local educational leaders. African Americans drew upon the Rosenwald Fund’s commitment to erect black public schools; they pressured local white school officials to permit the building of the black Orange County Training School (OCTS) in 1916. OCTS housed grades one through eleven, representing one of three schools in the county that included the eleventh grade—the other two were white schools.⁸⁰ By 1920, black leaders pushed the county for funding to allow OCTS to run on

⁷⁸ *Farmville Herald*, June 11, 1926.

⁷⁹ Leloudis, *Schooling*. Edwin Caldwell, Jr., “History of Lincoln High School,” unpublished essay, June 1973; James Vickers, *Chapel Hill: An Illustrated History* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Barclay Publishers, 1985). Rev. Hackney pastored Rock Hill Baptist Church, later known as First Baptist Church. His school, Hackney’s Industrial and Education Institute, was often referred to as “Hack’s High School”.

⁸⁰ Caldwell, “Lincoln High School.” OCTS added twelfth grade in 1948.

an eight-month school term, in contrast to most black schools in the state which ran on a six-month school term. Unfortunately, in 1922, the school burned down. In 1923, parent and civic groups relentlessly pressured city school officials to fund the rebuilding of its school. Students held programs and rallies to raise funds. The black PTA pooled their resources to collect \$241 within a week to “make a start on clearing the ground for the new building.”⁸¹ Black resident Henry Strowd donated 6.5 acres of his land for the school. The land provided “ample room not only for a playground and practice work in gardening, but for the future expansion of the building.”⁸² The new school was completed by October 1, 1924, due to “the leading negro citizens of Chapel Hill [who] have been active in raising money for equipment and other school necessities.”⁸³ Built to hold 400 students in a one-story building, OCTS also had nine classrooms and a central auditorium.⁸⁴

Typically, local districts assumed the financial responsibility for their schools though the use of property taxes, but North Carolina used a different strategy for funding. This often resulted in disparate schools across the state. To address the disparity and to establish uniform state schools, the North Carolina legislature set up an “equalizing fund” to supplement local counties’ property taxes in 1921. The General Assembly appropriated \$3,250,000 to the fund, more than doubling what was in the existing coffers.⁸⁵ By 1925,

⁸¹ “Colored School Meeting,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 8, 1923, 2.

⁸² “Negro School to be Up by Oct. 1,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, July 3, 1924, 1.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1-2.

⁸⁵ F.W. Morrison, “What the State Legislature Did for the Public Schools,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 25, 1927, 4.

the General Assembly had appropriated \$1,500,000.⁸⁶ North Carolina governor O. Max Gardner appointed an Educational Commission “to study the support of public education in the State and to study the equalizing fund in particular” in 1925.⁸⁷ The equalizing fund called for the creation of a state Board of Education charged with assessing appropriate property tax values.⁸⁸ By 1927, the state legislature debated whether to mandate an eight-month school term. Some delegates argued that “if [such a mandate was] provided for the white child, it would also have to be provided for the negro, and that since the negro would make use of it he would therefore not produce big enough crops to justify his employment as a tenant cropper.”⁸⁹

Although Chapel Hill’s dual school system retained similar school terms, funding for black schools remained precarious. OCTS kept its eight-month school term, but in 1929 the county turned the control of its school systems over to Chapel Hill. Since 1909, Chapel Hill had supported its white schools through local monies. The break with the county had offered Chapel Hill school leaders more local control over its resources and curriculum. Since Chapel Hill’s property taxes were higher than much of the rest of Orange County, city leaders opted to concentrate its money on their own children. Twenty years later, the county relinquished the cost of running OCTS to the city. Chapel Hill met the funding level provided by the county, but resolved to discontinue funding an eighth-month school term for OCTS. Instead, city politicians committed to financing only the state’s minimum six-month school term. As a result, blacks had to discover

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ The North Carolina Board of Education was comprised of the Lieutenant Governor and ten members appointed by the governor, one from each congressional district.

⁸⁹ Morrison, “What the State Legislature,” 4.

additional monies to retain the longer school term, which proved challenging in the dire economic times. Additionally, the reduction in city funds created a heavy burden on African Americans to cover the salaries of OCTS teachers. In a special election in 1930, blacks voted to tax themselves a separate fee to cover the cost of education. This double taxation—the first through property taxes and the second through a separate fee—revealed the strong dedication blacks had to their children’s education.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, in Prince Edward County, blacks’ strong financial and material contributions helped black self-help efforts reach new heights. Between 1925 and 1929, Prince Edward County constructed three schools: Leigh’s Mountain School, Mercy Seat School, and Farmville Training School.⁹¹ Black educational groups steadily petitioned the local school board to extend the school term and to add higher grades. In February 1924, black leaders requested the addition of the eighth grade. When school officials told the black leaders that they would need to assume the extra costs associated with renting additional space for the new class, black educational leaders agreed to pay the \$100 for the property rental.⁹² In May 1929, Prince Edward County black groups returned to the school board to request the inclusion of tenth grade for sixteen black students. The school board asked the parents to raise \$800 toward the cost of the teacher to be paid in two installments.⁹³ Black parents and educational leaders decided to collect eighteen

⁹⁰ “The Eight-Months School Term,” *North Carolina Teachers Record* (January 1933): 12. While 954 white schools had tax funded eighth month school terms, only 143 such schools existed for whites and blacks. See also Caldwell, “Lincoln High School.”

⁹¹ “National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheets,” 160.

⁹² Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, February 1924, June 19, 1924, and August 11, 1924.

⁹³ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, May 28, 1929.

dollars from each of the county's forty-five teachers.⁹⁴ The following year, blacks petitioned for an eleventh grade class. Rather than the \$800 fee accorded for additional classes, the school board lowered the cost to \$650 due to the effects of the stock market crash.⁹⁵ Blacks' interest in education remained high. Black leaders called for a fundraising meeting for the eleventh grade class at one of the leading black churches in the county, First Baptist. In an article in the local paper, leaders lectured that "the entire colored population of Prince Edward County should be vitally interested in this matter. Therefore you are earnestly requested to be present."⁹⁶ Despite the economic depression, blacks had obtained all the funds to have a full high school curriculum.⁹⁷

At the end of the 1920s, the advent of the Great Depression especially threatened to halt some of the successful strides made in black education. The economic loss filtered down to many local school districts nationwide. The decreased funding was less pronounced in the rural South. In areas such as Prince Edward County, local community members relied heavily on subsistence farming, which minimized the damage leveled in urban areas more dependent on major industries. Nonetheless the effects of the Depression did come to affect rural school systems. Across Virginia, two-thirds of its school systems experienced a reduction in school terms, teachers, and funding.⁹⁸ Already

⁹⁴ "Colored Citizens Raising \$800 Fund," *Farmville Herald*, July 5, 1929.

⁹⁵ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, June 24, 1930.

⁹⁶ Annie R. Walker, "Colored News," *Farmville Herald*, July 18, 1930.

⁹⁷ It was not until 1945 that Prince Edward County added twelfth grade to its high school program.

⁹⁸ Ronald L. Heinemann, "The Great Depression in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, (accessed November 19, 2010), Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.
http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Great_Depression_in_Virginia.

used to fewer resources than white schools, the Depression era cuts deeply impacted black schools.⁹⁹

North Carolina, on the other hand, fared a little better. Division of Negro Education director Nathan Newbold argued that despite the Depression, even “prospects for improving the colored schools seem to be encouraging.”¹⁰⁰ In 1931, the North Carolina General Assembly had allocated funds to support a six-month school term for most of the state’s black and white schools. In 1933, the legislature mandated an eight-month school term, supported by state funding. Burgeoning numbers of black professional educators continued to flourish during the nation’s economic depression. The increasing numbers of black teachers and administrators signaled the significance of black education to state officials, as localities and the state legislature provided funding for the positions. The emphasis on black education created a new and respectable job of black teachers who had control over black schools. Out of the new black schools came new leadership in the form of the school teacher and the school principal.

Table 1.5

Number of High School Teachers in North Carolina¹⁰¹

Year	White	Negro
1929-30	1,138	536
1934-35	3,776	687
1939-40	5,229	1,112
1944-45	4,140	1,037

⁹⁹ Nathan C. Newbold, “North Carolina in Reverse Gear (?),” *North Carolina Teacher’s Record* 1 (March 1930): 3-4, esp. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. See also Guy B. Johnson, “The Negro and the Depression in North Carolina,” *Social Forces* 12, no. 1(October 1933): 103-115.

¹⁰¹ *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina to the Governor for the Scholastic Years, 1946-1947 and 1947-1948* (Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina Department of Instruction, 1917), 17.

1945-46	4,145	1,037
1946-47	4,667	1,164
1947-48	4,765	4,193

Number of Principals in North Carolina¹⁰²

Year	White	Negro
1929-30	108	13
1934-35	658	116
1939-40	705	163
1944-45	718	193
1945-46	714	203
1946-47	706	199
1947-48	698	206

The ranks of black professional educator groups grew noticeably during this period. The numbers of Virginia black teacher unions had witnessed dramatic increases in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, all of Orange County Training School teachers and principal joined and remained members of the North Carolina Teachers' Association. The high membership of teacher union groups created a powerful faction of black educational professionals that could lobby state officials for better resources and better pay.

Table 1.6

The membership of the Virginia State Teachers' Association:¹⁰³

Year	Number of members
1923-1924	300
1924-1925	850
1925-1926	1102
1926-1927	1813
1927-1928	2659
1928-1929	2686
1929-1930	2967
1930-1931	3029
1931-1932	2995

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ellison, "Negro Organizations," 19.

In June 1934, North Carolina Governor John C. B. Ehringhaus appointed a 100-person biracial commission to study black education. The commission found that “the principle of equal pay for equal training and equal service” was vitally important.¹⁰⁴ They called for the pay differentials to “be reduced to approximately 50 percent in 1935” and for a gradual decrease of the pay differences within five years.¹⁰⁵ Succeeding governor Clyde Hoey continued the interest in equalizing the pay by appointing a state congressional commission, which pledged to reduce pay differentials by 1939-40.¹⁰⁶ Black teacher associations argued that although they met the same teaching requirements as white teachers, they often incurred greater living expenses than white teachers and received less pay. More importantly, the essence of American democracy demanded pay equity.¹⁰⁷ Citing goodwill interracial cooperation of black and white North Carolinians, black Association members felt the state would effectively “lead the way in solving this problem.”¹⁰⁸ The fact that the state legislature appropriated \$500,000 to reduce the pay differences offered the promise of North Carolina equalizing teacher salaries.¹⁰⁹

Many of these changes took root throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. The federal government’s New Deal policies increased its involvement in public education. Much like the Rosenwald Fund’s objectives, the introduction of federal assistance

¹⁰⁴ Dean James T. Taylor, “Presentation of the Plea of the Negro Teachers Association to the Joint Appropriations Committee,” *North Carolina Teachers Record* 15 no. 2(March 1943): 3. Taylor was the chair of the committee on legislation.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 9. See also *Charlotte Observer*, February 11, 1943, 10. The estimate of eliminating pay differences was twice the amount (\$1,000,000).

required the cooperation with state and local governments. The aid of federal funding provided the fuel for blacks to call upon their state and local governments for greater public services and greater equality.

Chapel Hill black groups applied for Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds to erect a community center for local black children. Concerned blacks donated \$1,500 for five acres of land in the northwestern section of town for a baseball field and a playground. Many offered their labor though masonry and carpentry to erect the community center.¹¹⁰ Modeling a triangulated system similar to that imposed by earlier philanthropic groups, the bond between the black community, local city politicians, and the federal government grew deeply entangled. Chapel Hill board of aldermen established a Recreation Commission to run the center, blacks donated their time and services, and the federal government provided \$12,300. The Center would serve as a day nursery for working mothers, a meeting space for organizations, office space for the county's black nurse, and social space for black students.¹¹¹

Unlike Chapel Hill blacks, the Prince Edward black community had to rely on federal instead of state funds for their schools' survival. They appealed for New Deal monies to construct or repair existing black schools in Prince Edward.¹¹² Farmville Training School was bursting at its seams. Designed to house 325 students in 1927, by 1936 the school had 469 students. Dr. N. P. Miller, school improvement league president of the Farmville Training School, wrote to Prince Edward County's representative to the

¹¹⁰ President O.K.'s WPA Grant for Negroes' Center," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 15, 1940.

¹¹¹ "Appeal for the Negro Community Center Will be Made at the Middle of Month; Cooperation of All Citizens Asked," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, April 4, 1941.

¹¹² Turner, "It Is at Present," 126. See also, N.P. Miller to Patrick Drewry, November 20, 1936, Public Works Administration, Project Files, Reel 1.

General Assembly in November 1936 to request the release of Public Works Administration (PWA) funds to build a new school house. In 1938, the PWA financed forty-five percent of the cost of a new black school. Given a short timeline, the school, Robert Russa (R.R.) Moton High, had to be completed within nine months from the start of construction.¹¹³ Construction on Moton started on September 29, 1938, and was completed on October 4, 1939. Dedication ceremonies were held in December.¹¹⁴ With a capacity of 180 students, Moton High opened to 167 students in its first year. The ability of Prince Edward blacks to call upon the federal government for services yielded a sense of political power in a largely disenfranchised environment.

Despite this increased political power, however, Prince Edward and Chapel Hill black teachers and administrators deferred to and reinforced existing norms for respectable white society. Conformity to behavioral, academic, and physical appearances was critical for black educators. It played upon white politicians' and school leaders' goodwill. It gave credence to whites that blacks indeed desired education. Black educational leaders declared that blacks "as a race [would] not enjoy the progress and happiness that is possible until we shall learn and recognize these great principles: 1) A high regard and respect for religion and good morals; 2) respect for law and order; 3) self-control, fellowship and race pride," aspects of respectable and civilized people.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid., 127. Assistant Administrator H. A. Gray to County School Board, July 22, 1938, Public Works Administration, Project Files, Reel 1. Robert Russa Moton grew up close to Prince Edward County where he developed close relationships with wealthy whites who later helped to fund his college education. These connections, along with his working relationship with Booker T. Washington, influenced Moton's belief in gradual racial improvements. Upon Washington's death, Moton served as the second president of Tuskegee Institute after Booker T. Washington.

¹¹⁴ "Colored News," *Farmville Herald*, December 8, 1939.

¹¹⁵ "Condemn Dancing," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 14, 1924, 1.

Conformity to notions of respectability also suggested that blacks were entitled to the same services and educational resources afforded whites.

These strict conformist standards were led by the school leader—the principal. Principals were appointed and hired by white school boards in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County. Chapel Hill hired Harold Holmes to run OCTS, where he remained until 1944. During his tenure, OCTS faculty ranked first in the training of secondary schools in the state.¹¹⁶ Adopting high academic standards for black teachers gave an air of respectability to black schools during an era of Jim Crow. Prince Edward County principal, M. Boyd Jones “was *the* principal...he was the principal with a principle. Or a principal with principles.”¹¹⁷ As one former student recounted, Jones eliminated idle time for students, telling them there was “No such thing as a free period. You get in the library and take advantage of it.”¹¹⁸ He insisted on the obedience of firm standards. A sense of “pride in the profession” demanded the hiring of qualified and exacting teachers who would replicate the principal’s ideology.¹¹⁹

Principals’ employment of teachers gave them wide control over teachers’ behavior. Teachers had to obey the principal or risk losing their jobs. Although teachers were given some latitude in instructing their students, the principal retained great authority over the school program. Consequently conflict between principals and teachers

¹¹⁶ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, December 5, 2000, December 5, 2000, K-532, Tape 7 of 7, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 18.

¹¹⁷ Rev. Samuel Williams, interview by Dwana Waugh, March 10, 2010, in Farmville, Virginia. In the author’s possession.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Edwin Caldwell interview, 17.

often emerged in the clashing of wills. Often the conflict arose over issues of academic freedom and higher pay.¹²⁰ Other times conflict developed based on strong-willed personalities. In Chapel Hill, incoming OCTS principal Charles A. McDougle gained a reputation for being hard-nosed with recalcitrant teachers. In 1954, Robert O. Kornegay, OCTS sports coach and teacher, failed to adhere to a proper code of conduct around his students and coworkers. McDougle deemed his behavior as “very unethical” for “his use of profane language as reported by reliable sources and other forms of abuse in practices and games has created so much fear in the boys that athletics do not attract our boys as usual.” As a result, McDougle failed to recommend Kornegay for rehire.¹²¹ Given the limited job opportunities within Jim Crow society, black teachers had an even greater need to observe black school administrators’ rules.

Conformity filtered from administrators’ tight-fisted control over teachers to administrators’ and teachers’ firm authority over students. McDougle set strict standards for social conduct, especially for boys. Teachers who caught boys in compromising positions were sent to the principal’s office, where they were given the task of “wash[ing] windows or sweep[ing] the floors.”¹²² Older trouble-making students shoveled coal for the heaters in the winter and younger students got licks on the hand with a strap. As one

¹²⁰ Z. S. Hargrove, Jr., “Problems Teachers Have with Principals,” *North Carolina Teachers Record* (March 1943): 6. Hargrove responded to an article written a few years prior entitled “Problems Principals Have with Teachers.” He was a French and history teacher at all-black Douglas High School in Lawndale, North Carolina. Hargrove described “dictatorial” principals that failed to consult teachers in purchasing school supplies. In one case, he recalled a principal who extorted travel money from two prospective teachers as a bribe.

¹²¹ Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 5, 1954. Kornegay appealed his firing before the school board. Over the next two months however, school officials ruled his behavior as unacceptable and backed McDougle’s judgment.

¹²² Alice Battle, interview by Bob Gilgor, February 20, 2001 and February 22, 2001, K-523 and K-524, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 29.

student recalled, McDougle “had a barber’s razor strap which was leather, you know, and you get hit in the hand with one of those things. He didn’t give you but ten, man, but you couldn’t take it.”¹²³ He also insisted on timeliness: “[Mr. McDougle] was a strong disciplinarian. He would be at every door, it seemed to me like, when you came in. School started at 8:30 a.m., I think, and if you got here at 8:35 a.m. he would tell you that ‘You’re too late for the day and too early for tomorrow.’ It seemed like he would be on every door.”¹²⁴ For principals and teachers, structure and discipline bred good student character.

Nothing escaped scrutiny in black segregated schools. Black students served as the best representatives of the community. Everything had to be seen as acceptable, even down to trimmed nails. OCTS band teacher, Mr. Jasper “Mug” Bell, ensured that students looked respectable during band shows by cultivating a sense of image-consciousness among his students. As Bell’s former student Willie Bradshaw reminisced,

I can remember one day we were going out onto the field to practice, the marching band, and at this point we were without a drum major. He had put me in that position of leading the band, but just before we started each day he would go over the plans for the day. While we were standing there talking, he happened to look down at my nails and he stopped talking about the plans for the day to tell me that he thought I should spend more time trimming my nails and keeping them clean and that sort of thing. At first I was angry, but then afterwards I thought his interest was not just in me leading the band but also as a whole person. He gave me a real lesson on taking care of myself. I think with that kind of person it brings the best out in you, his interest.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Edwin Caldwell interview, 3.

¹²⁴ Clyde Perry, interview by Bob Gilgor, February 15, 2001, K-558, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

¹²⁵ Shirley Bradshaw, interview by Bob Gilgor, March 29, 2001, K-526, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 23.

The expectations established for the high school band did not diminish over the years. By the late 1950s, new band director, Clyde Egerton, mandated conformity among band students. He was “a stickler for uniformity. You had the white boots, the white socks, your uniform, your necktie, the white shirt.”¹²⁶ While Chapel Hill High wore tennis shoes to band meets, Egerton emphasized neatness and uniformity was a marker of distinction as “proper.”

The success of a compliant student body rested greatly on the significance of high school extracurricular activities. Even through a name change and a new location, black students maintained their fidelity to the cultural institution of the high school.¹²⁷ The new school, Lincoln High, retained the same extracurricular activities as OCTS, namely sports and music; part of Lincoln High’s prestige relied on the sports teams and the marching band. Whites and blacks in Chapel Hill attended Lincoln High football games, especially during homecoming and Christmas parades. And teachers used a solid athletic program to reduce “a lot of problems otherwise that you would have” among high school students.¹²⁸ For students, sports and the band offered a place to socialize and demonstrate

¹²⁶ Delaine Norwood, interview by Bob Gilgor, February 8, 2001, K-555, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 17.

¹²⁷ In 1948, OCTS students argued that that the “training school” denotation failed to portray the academic rigor of the school. They voted to change the name of the school building from Orange County Training School to Lincoln High, in honor of the Great Emancipator Abraham Lincoln and persuaded school board officials to rename the school. Three years later, the school board oversaw the erection of a new brick black high school, splitting students from grades one to six in the former OCTS school building (known as Northside Elementary) and from grades seven to twelve in the newly built Lincoln High. For more information on the history of black Chapel Hill schools, see Caldwell, “History of Lincoln High” and Michael McElreath. “The Cost of Opportunity: School Desegregation and Changing Race Relations in the Triangle since World War II,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2002).

¹²⁸ Willie Bradshaw, interview by Bob Gilgor, February 23, 2001, K-527, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 11.

excellence. White parent Mary Scroggs noted that “everyone knew they did a good show. They were good to watch and they were good to hear.”¹²⁹

Extracurricular activities also helped to sustain the black community socially and academically. Blacks still engaged in a lot of self-support, despite greater funding by the federal, state, and local governments. Still under the thumb of Jim Crow society, black schools continued to receive lower local funding and fewer resources than their white counterparts.¹³⁰ While Chapel Hill High had a budget for sports equipment and school activity buses, Lincoln High teachers and students had to finance these resources. Much of the monies came from fundraisers. Students learned valuable public speaking skills through weekly assemblies in which classes of students took turns performing a play or reading poetry.¹³¹ Homecoming and high school prom offered each class a means of raising money to purchase a needed item for the school, creating a competition among the classes for who could raise the highest amount of money.¹³²

Extracurricular activities not only served a practical financial purpose but also met the emotional needs of students. They elevated students’ self-value. Lincoln’s

¹²⁹ Mary Scroggs, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 8, 2001, K-561, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 46. Mary Scroggs would later serve on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school board during the height of the school desegregation decisions.

¹³⁰ Out of the 1946 to 1947 school board’s capital outlay budget, white schools received nearly 3.5 times the amount of the budget for black schools. See Charles Henry Tietjen, “A Survey of Negro Education in Orange County, North Carolina,” (M.A. thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1948), 112.

¹³¹ Esther McCauley, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 25, 2001, K-553, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 9.

¹³² Ibid., 10. See also, “School Contest Funds Allocated,” *Lincoln Echo* 18, no.2, December 13, 1949 and “Lincoln Gets Bus,” *Lincoln Echo* 22, no. 1, November 1953. School functions not only covered school costs but partially funded the black public health nurse, Nurse Compton.

football and basketball teams won numerous state championships throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as did Lincoln High's marching band. Lincoln was known for having stellar athletes and musicians. Black student Keith Edwards boasted of the band:

You never saw such high-steppin', everybody so proud. And you could look all up and down the line in the street, blacks and whites alike. They were so proud, these were *our* kids...They represented all of us because they came from us.¹³³

The pride of excelling made band students the stars of their community. Band member Sheila Florence asserted that being associated with the award-winning Lincoln High band symbolized success:

You'd go to be seen, that was the thing, being seen in the band. Then also we played for parades and your friends could see you marching down the street in the parade. You felt important, you felt like you were somebody, when you were in the band.¹³⁴

Black teachers taught students how to navigate within segregated society by cultivating confidence in their abilities. Longtime OCTS teacher, Minnie D. Turner was well-received by students due to her reputation as a stern yet caring teacher.¹³⁵ As former student Hilliard Caldwell recounted: "Ms. Minnie was so strict. When I would do a paper it would come back so red that it would just make you ashamed and she'd say, 'I want this paper done over again. I know young man you can do better.' You'd take the paper home that night and you'd sit there and you'd spend many hours redoing that paper."¹³⁶

¹³³ Edwards interview, 8-9.

¹³⁴ Sheila Florence, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 20, 2001, K-0544, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 17.

¹³⁵ Minnie D. Turner was voted as Lincoln High's favorite teacher according to a teacher superlative fundraiser as recorded in the November 1953 edition of the *Lincoln Echo*.

¹³⁶ Hilliard Caldwell, interview by Bob Gilgor, October 24, 2000, K-533, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 18.

By insisting that students produce exceptional work, teachers sought to instill a sense of pride in student's abilities. In a segregated community, students needed to believe in themselves in a society that viewed blacks as inferior. As former student Edwin Caldwell recalled, black teachers "gave us a philosophy of life, and they taught us ethics. I felt they taught me to be a critical thinker. And I know that they taught me to believe in myself. [They] instilled a pride in us that made us believe there was nothing we could not do."¹³⁷

Moving within the confines of Jim Crow southern society, black teachers' and administrators' emphasis on self-worth allowed them to employ a black-centered curriculum. Rather than follow the training school curriculum model or a liberal arts program, black teachers often found covert or explicit ways of taking ownership over the curriculum. Nationally blacks began to question the merits of upholding white curriculum (industrial education) as the standard-bearer for blacks. At Moton High, students learned domestic science and vocational skills, as well as a liberal arts curriculum. Black scholars came to argue that "the study of Negro history inspire[d] the Negro youths, who with equal pride and enthusiasm proclaim[ed] the virtues of their progenitors and their contributions to the present civilization."¹³⁸ Moton teacher Arthur Jordan embodied the celebratory history of blacks' accomplishments. He opened class with old Negro spirituals. As former student Rev. Samuel Williams recollected, "Every day black history

¹³⁷ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, December 5, 2000, K-532, Supplemental Materials to Interviews, December 5, 2000 in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 2.

¹³⁸ N.C. Crosby, "Developing Leadership Through History," *North Carolina Teachers Record* (January 1934): 7-8. See also James Hugo Johnston, "The History Teacher and the Changing Curriculum," *Journal of Negro History* 22, no.1 (January 1937): 44-49, see 44. Johnston was a professor at Virginia State University.

was taught in one way or another. ... He used to put up the names of all people, George Washington Carver, Mary McLeod Bethune, Benjamin Banneker, P.B.S Pinchback, all these people. He used to mention that to us...Every day he taught black history.”¹³⁹

Often these lessons trained students to assert their power in the midst of segregation. Williams recalled the impact of Mr. Jordan’s instruction on realizing the power blacks could have in a white-dominated society. While attending an assembly in the third or fourth grade, Williams recalled the powerful impact Mr. Jordan’s simple refusal to defer to the county’s white superintendent Thomas J. McIlwaine had on his confidence. Blacks could demand reciprocal treatment even in the Jim Crow South:

When white folk came to school, Lord we had to *shine*. “America the Beautiful,” “God Bless America,” “Star-Spangled Banner”. You see we didn’t sing that stuff in Jordan’s class. We sang “Go Down Moses” and “Jacob’s Ladder”, “Steal Away.” So McIlwaine was a small man, bald head. Carried a big stick, but wasn’t domineering--. Big psychological stick....One day we had this assembly in the auditorium and we had four French doors. Two on this side. Two on that side. They’re still there. At the conclusion of the assembly, we’re walking out and I look at people like this today. Everybody walks out on the same side. ..Mr. Jordan noticed that everybody was walking out on the same side. So he yelled over to the teacher, “Mrs. So-and-So, open that other door so that the students may pass out freely.” She said, “Mr. McIlwaine said one of these doors should be closed at all times.” *He* said, I don’t care if Mr. Hacklawaine said it. I said open the door.” When he said Hacklawaine, I believed every student in the auditorium laughed at it except me. And I watched that teacher, Dwana. I swear I did. After he said that, she stepped over there and opened that door. And when she opened it. She opened two doors: She opened that physical door and a mental door in my mind. And I haven’t stopped thinking since. Because the first thing I thought about, I didn’t know a black man could go against a white man’s word like that. Especially Mr. McIlwaine. And that started the wheels turning in my head ever since.

Black teachers and parent groups replicated the lessons they taught black children. Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, blacks applied pressure to local school boards for improved school services and resources. In 1944, Prince Edward’s PTA president, John Lancaster, called upon the school board to erect a larger school facility. Though Moton

¹³⁹ Williams interview.

had been built five years earlier, the numbers of students far exceeded the school's capacity. The Moton PTA petitioned for better recreational facility, better vocational programs, more competent (and male) teachers, reduced class size, firm teaching assignments, equalized pay, and bus transportation. School officials, including Superintendent McIlwaine insisted that the effects of the war hampered any construction efforts and seriously constrained the county board's budget. By the war's end however, blacks continued to apply pressure to school officials to relieve the overcrowded schools. In May 1947, the school board received a \$50,000 state appropriation to build onto the existing Moton High, but the local government refused to pass a bond to cover additional expenses.¹⁴⁰ However, the county government relented after repeated requests were made by the Moton PTA to remedy the school's overcrowding. By 1948 the government allocated enough funds to erect three tarpaper shacks.¹⁴¹

The postwar South illustrated the importance of an educated black populace and the need for first-class citizenship. Blacks were less willing to accept full responsibility for improving black education. Their control over their own schools, along with the increased reliance on state and local financial obligations, had energized black leaders to demand greater materials for black schools. Some black veterans returned to high school to complete their degrees. Radicalized by the war and the quest for victory at home and abroad, these veteran-students' changed outlook rubbed off on other high school

¹⁴⁰ Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools: Prince Edward County, 1951-1964* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 17.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

students.¹⁴² Some veterans also participated in local PTAs. Rev. L. Francis Griffin, pastor of Prince Edward's First Baptist, had served in the 758th Tank Battalion during WWII. Soon after his return to the county in 1949, he assumed the presidency of the Moton PTA. The tarpaper shacks only served to buy a little more time until a permanent new school was needed. Griffin intensified the parent group's demands for a new school by calling for the regular attendance of school board meetings and insisting on helping the school board locate the land for a new school.

The heightened persistence of Prince Edward blacks increased the white county school board's reluctance to making major changes to the black schools. Prior to the war, local blacks had made demands, but they operated within the acceptable patterns of racial negotiations. That is, blacks made their request and worked vigorously to prove to white school officials that they deserved assistance. After the war, however, blacks pushed for school reforms with a new urgency and unwillingness to take sole responsibility for black education. School board members, aware that blacks would not accept empty promises, attempted to accommodate their request for a new school. In the spring of 1950, the Moton PTA offered its assistance in locating a site for a new black high school.¹⁴³ School officials accepted.¹⁴⁴ Land was identified soon thereafter, but the cost required the passage of a school bond. Prince Edward school board chair Maurice Large argued that school officials were diligently attempting to secure a site on which to build a new black high school. However, school officials' diligence had to negotiate with white racism

¹⁴²John A. Stokes, "Davis v. Prince Edward County, Farmville, Virginia," UVA Newsmakers, produced by Rob Smith (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Newsmakers Video, 2006), <http://www.virginia.edu/uvanewsmakers/archive14.html#stokes>, (accessed April 12, 2009).

¹⁴³Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 21.

¹⁴⁴Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, August 8, 1950.

rampant in the county. Large asserted that, “a lot of people here would have yelled loud and long if we tried to float a bond issue just to build a ‘nigger’ schools—that’s what it would be regarded as.”¹⁴⁵ To circumvent existing racial beliefs, the school board had to promise improvements to white schools as well, which took more time. Time, though, was running against black students more than 400 students crammed into a school built to house 180 students.

As the PTA confronted the school board, students applied their teachers’ lessons on conformity, punctuality, and discipline prepared students for this unprecedented student strike. In the fall of 1950, a small group of Moton High students began to discuss how to effect change with the school. Spearheaded by Barbara Johns, a quiet, unassuming junior, the group grew to twenty students by the spring of 1951. Known as the “Manhattan Project,” for the group’s secrecy and for the great importance of the cause, the group sought to discover a remedy for the funding disparities of Jim Crow schools.¹⁴⁶ While the value of the county’s seven white schools stood at \$1.2 million dollars, the value of Prince Edward’s fifteen black schoolhouses amounted to \$330,000.¹⁴⁷ The glaring funding gap between black and white schools extended to the unequal funding of school facilities, equipment, and teacher pay as well. According to one student participant, John Stokes, the students planned to capture the attention of the entire student body during a school assembly. Then, they would force the county’s superintendent to meet with them and hear their grievances.

¹⁴⁵ Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 17.

¹⁴⁶ John A. Stokes *Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown, and Me: A Memoir*, (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008), 54.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 14-26. See also Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

On April 23, 1951, the students' plan began to unfold and a strike for improved school resources ensued. Of the 477 enrolled Moton students, 450 took to the streets of downtown Farmville carrying placards calling for a new school building on par with the local white schoolhouses. At John's urging, the students refused to return to school until white school officials remedied the problems with black schools in the county. They remained out of school for two weeks.

The student strike created space for discussions on blacks' best path to educational equity. Immediately after the strike, the students called upon the state NAACP to help obtain a new high school. Three days after the strike, NAACP's executive secretary Lester Banks met with the students and parents at Moton High. There he argued that a new school and equal resources would not bring about true equality "if it were built brick for brick, cement for cement."¹⁴⁸ Giving a sermon entitled "The Prophecy of Equalization," Rev. Griffin echoed Banks' sentiments. As he looked ruefully across the youth in his congregation, he excoriated "how the rotten system of the Southland will twist them into warped personalities, cringing cowards, unable to cope with the society into which they were unwillingly thrown and which they have a God-given right to enjoy." Making equalization an issue of first-class citizenship, Griffin vowed to "to die rather than let these [black] children down."¹⁴⁹

More conservative blacks, however, resisted the plea for integration. Former Moton High principal Joseph B. Pervall insisted that "if [black students] wanted to go in

¹⁴⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 25, 1957 and *Richmond News Leader*, April 27, 1951.

¹⁴⁹ *Richmond Afro-American*, July 28, 1951.

for a new school I would help them, but not integration.”¹⁵⁰ Fred Reid also opposed participation in a lawsuit. At the mass meeting on April 26, Reid called for a moderate approach of appointing twenty leaders among the community that would meet the school board with prayer and a willingness to compromise for equal resources.¹⁵¹ Seen as representatives from the African American community by whites, many of these conservative advocates hoped to retain the favor of the county’s white politicians. They adhered to Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of racial accommodation, fearing that pushing their white “friends” too hard might end in racial violence or job recrimination. Before the packed meeting on May 3, 1951, the equalization proponents stood their ground against the non-segregationist advocates. Joseph Pervall charged NAACP attorney Spottswood Robinson with exploiting Moton students to be used as guinea pigs to test whether they found a school willing to go to the Supreme Court. Robinson countered Pervall’s statement by asking the audience whether they wanted non-segregated schools. His question was met with thunderous applause.¹⁵²

Oliver Hill’s expertise on the matters of race and education was tailor-made for this case. As a NAACP attorney, Oliver Hill traveled throughout Virginia’s rural counties seeking appropriate districts to build cases for the NAACP salary equalization legal efforts in the early 1940s. After his experiences with the teacher pay cases, Hill learned that “we might get a new building but we still ended up with inferior facilities.”¹⁵³ Simply

¹⁵⁰ Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 55.

¹⁵¹ Frank Reid, editorial, *Farmville Herald*, April 27, 1951.

¹⁵² Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 59. *Richmond Afro-American*, May 12, 1951. The resounding support for integration (or non-segregation) was quite profound.

¹⁵³ Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 45.

equalizing resources had the ability to fluctuate at any given time out of the control of black parents and students' hands and into the control of white school boards and state political leaders. Hill came to advocate integration because the doctrine of "separate but equal" had proven inaccurate and required too much accommodation by blacks. With integration, however, black children could finally have access to the materials that had long been out of reach.

A majority of Prince Edward County blacks joined the decision to push for integration instead of equalization. To them, equalization resulted in no change; blacks students were left with unequally funded and poorly resourced schools. On the other hand, black integration advocates insisted that desegregation forced some change to come to black schools. Requiring an end to segregated education, local African Americans believed that desegregation offered the promise of equal pay, resources, and schools. The negotiations within Jim Crow had stalled. Black leaders grew tired of raising funds and of the sharp disparities between white and black schools. Wanting a more permanent federal intervention, these striking students made a careful vote to join their case with four others—Clarendon County, South Carolina, Topeka, Kansas, Washington, D.C., and Wilmington, Delaware.¹⁵⁴

In the months after the case, Prince Edward County whites implemented an arsenal of intimidation and stall tactics, none effective in stopping the progression to desegregation. The school board took its time approving the contracts of Moton High

¹⁵⁴ Two hundred black students and parents signed the suit that became *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, 249 F.2d 462 (1951). Remarkably, blacks remained steadfast in their position, despite a cross burning in the black community. See, "Cross Burning in Farmville Kept Close Secret," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 19, 1951, 6. While unreported in the local press, the *Baltimore Afro-American* covered the story. Moreover, although J. Barrye Wall published the names of the case's litigants in the *Farmville Herald*, blacks refused to back down.

students, while the other county school teachers had received their reappointments a month before.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, any requests made by blacks were routinely denied after the strike. When Moton teachers requested the board appropriate monies to include hot water in the washrooms, the board refused. The board also demanded Moton pay toward the school's operating expenses, previously covered by local funds. After these threats failed, the school board began erecting a new high school for which the black community had clamored in the late 1940s. In 1953, the school moved R.R. Moton to the outskirts of the county. The new brick building was acclaimed as the one of the premier high schools in Virginia. But the school officials' efforts came too late to stem the tide of educational reform. County black litigants continued their march to *Brown*.

In an editorial in the Lincoln High student paper, student Barbara Burnette spoke of the great significance of the recent *Brown v. Board of Education* case and on the future of Jim Crow schools:

Integration of public schools will give us equality in schools, better facilities, and opportunities to acquire better knowledge. This is our chance, our opportunity to step forward and prove to the world that the Negro is capable as any human being. Yes girls and boys, it is left up to us to take advantage of this great issue. Let us be glad that it happened and prove it by striving for perfection, thus pushing further open the door of equality for our people."¹⁵⁶

No longer relegated to the segregated black schoolhouse, *Brown* signaled an open door for blacks to gain new economic and political prospects. School integration offered a promise for equal opportunity regardless of students' racial backgrounds. Blacks would be given a fair chance to experience an education with equal resources, adequate

¹⁵⁵ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, May 8, 1951. All the teachers were rehired except the principal M. Boyd Jones and his wife for their supposed organization and instigation of the student strikers.

¹⁵⁶ Barbara Burnette, "The Editor Speaks," *Lincoln Echo* 23, no. 1, October 1954.

materials, and in equally funded buildings. Desegregation offered blacks, as Burnette best articulated, “the door to equality for our people.”

Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill African Americans shared similar journeys to obtain publicly financed high school education for black children. The assistance of northern philanthropists created a nexus of power between the northern benefactors, city school officials, and local blacks. But often blacks assumed positions with less power and influence in the educational bureaucracy. Blacks often relied on white paternalism, adopting deferential attitudes to gain monetary support for their schools. But by accommodating to whites, blacks did gain new schools. With the new schools, blacks obtained access to new economic and political opportunities as school officials and leaders. The prestige of the teaching and administration positions gave Prince Edward and Chapel Hill blacks an increased sense of power which they wield to bring about greater resources for black schools. Moreover, war had mobilized the blacks in both communities to be more forceful and ultimately less reliant on the goodwill of southern whites.

But to be sure, blacks’ increased politicization in the era of Jim Crow era created heightened tensions with white leaders. Although Chapel Hill’s progressivism advocated for the necessity of black education, black public schools remained woefully underfunded in comparison to white schools.¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, Prince Edward lacked a similar progressive ethos; instead, county whites embraced white paternalism. When blacks operated out of the appropriate channels of behavior and made forceful demands for better funded public education, the county’s whites became more intransigent and

¹⁵⁷ It was not until the NAACP salary equalization lawsuits that North Carolina black teachers’ salaries equalized, or sometimes exceeded those of the state’s white teachers.

reactionary in their posture to blacks. Interestingly, the educational bureaucracies that formed black public education and established hierarchies for black power would be the same system to undermine blacks' efforts to desegregate the public schools. Afraid that blacks' increased demands would alter the racial power dynamics in the public school system, Prince Edward and Chapel Hill white school officials set out to protect their positions at all costs. This racial struggle over educational control would define the immediate era after *Brown*.

CHAPTER 2

THE PUBLIC FACE TO DESEGREGATION, 1954-1959

“The people of North Carolina know the value of the public school. They also know the value of a social structure in which two distinct races can live together as separate groups, each proud of its own contribution to that society and recognizing its dependence on the other group. They are determined, if possible, to educate all the children of the state. They are determined to maintain their society as it now exists with separate and distinct racial groups in the North Carolina community.”

From the North Carolina General Assembly Manifesto, August 1955

*“The choice is not between segregation and integration; it is between some integration and total integration.... [If we resist all integration], it is a foregone conclusion that the winner will be total integration, or that the schools will be closed.... Token integration... will save the state and save the schools.... This is moderation.”*¹⁵⁸

North Carolina State Judge Braxton Craven, April 1960

*“To hell with the calm approach. Let us join up with [Governor Herman] Talmadge.”*¹⁵⁹
M.R. Lee, Letter to Governor Thomas B. Stanley, May 25, 1954

*“We insist that this issue is much more than who goes to school with whom. It's a matter of state rights. We believe that, if the Supreme Court or the federal government can come down into Virginia and other states and tell us how to conduct our schools, that we are departing a long way from the original idea of states' rights, state sovereignty, and individual liberties.”*¹⁶⁰

Robert Crawford, Defender of State Sovereignty, August 1956

¹⁵⁸ Braxton Craven, “Legal and Moral Aspects of Lunch Counter Protests,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, April 28, 1960, 1B.

¹⁵⁹ M.R. Lee, Courtland, Letter to Governor Thomas B. Stanley, Richmond. May 25, 1954. Office of the Governor, Thomas B. Stanley Papers, http://www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/brown/telegram_lee.htm, (accessed December 22, 2011). Courtland, Virginia, like Prince Edward County, had higher numbers of black residents than white. The sentiments express by Lee reflect the sentiments of whites who lived in black belt regions, as well as impatience with moderation.

¹⁶⁰ William G. Thomas, III, Television News of the Civil Rights Era, 1950-1970 (Roanoke, Virginia: WDBJ Television), http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/civilrightstv/wdbj/transcripts/WDBJ1_12-trans.html, (accessed December 23, 2011). Interview with Robert Crawford, transcript, August 1956.

In his 1949 path-breaking and oft-quoted work, political scientist V.O. Key's *Southern Politics in State and Nation* assessed the contemporary political stances of southern states. He concluded that race and a strong one-party political system composed integral components of the South's political identity. Key praised Virginia and North Carolina in particular for their sense of civility. Just as Virginia political elites seemed to shun "rabble-rousing and Negro baiting," North Carolina politicians appeared to "accept new ideas [and a] sense of community responsibility toward the Negro."¹⁶¹ White paternalism, Key noted, undergirded the sister states' commitment to civility. It also implied that race relations relied on the deferential posturing of African Americans in exchange for the goodwill efforts of whites.

In five years, Key's assessment would be tested in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Key had not counted on, or considered, the unwillingness of southern blacks to remain committed to white paternalism.¹⁶² Blacks increasingly realized the value of protesting unfair racially discriminatory practices. In the postwar years especially, African Americans mounted an assault on segregated education in order to access equal educational opportunities, which culminated in the *Brown* case. The Supreme Court ruling that "segregation has no place in public education," placing race squarely in the

¹⁶¹ V.O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 26, 211. By "rabble-rousing," Key implied that Virginian white political elites eschewed violence in accomplishing their political goals.

¹⁶² For more on the scholarship of a culture of white civility and paternalism, see William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Davison M. Douglas, *Reading, Writing, and Race: The Desegregation of Charlotte Schools*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); and J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow, Virginia* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

center of Virginia's and North Carolina's educational politics.¹⁶³ Due to the intensified activism of the states' blacks, white politicians in Virginia and North Carolina questioned their commitment to civility and white paternalism. Each state's leaders produced a different solution and response to the desegregation ruling. Virginia white elites felt threatened at the prospect of losing political and economic power and developed a reactionary response to school desegregation.¹⁶⁴ They launched an openly defiant, massively resistant charge to maintain racial segregation. North Carolina white leaders, on the contrast, felt more threatened at the thought of increased federal supervision and established a "moderate" approach to desegregating its public schools.¹⁶⁵ They carefully

¹⁶³ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483(1954).

¹⁶⁴ For what is considered the definitive account of white massive resistance, Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South during the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969). Much of the work on massive resistance focused on the agency and role of southern white politicians. See Robbins L. Gates, *The Makings of Massive Resistance: Virginia's Politics of Public School Desegregation, 1954-1956* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of Chapel Hill Press, 1964); Benjamin Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: P. Smith, 1969); and James W. Ely, Jr., *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia: The Byrd Organization and the Politics of Massive Resistance* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976). Nearly fifteen years old, the set of essays by Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis explored the impact of white Commonwealth moderates. The essays exposed southern whites' intent to preserve segregation, even as they sought to maintain open public schools. Refer to Lassiter and Lewis eds., *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998). Influenced by the "movement of movement's" scholarship, George Lewis's analysis of massive resistance examined the multiple roots of massive resistance, which manifested in anti-desegregation and anti-communist battles. See Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Robert C. Smith's first-hand account of Prince Edward County's grassroots movement to preserve segregation remains the most thorough narrative of the Prince Edward's white resistance to Brown. See Smith, *They Closed Their Schools: Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1951-1964* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965). The most recent treatments extend Smith's narrative and examine African Americans' counter-resistance to a system of deeply entrenched segregation. See Terence Hicks and Abul Pitre, eds., *The Educational Lockout of African Americans in Prince Edward County, Virginia (1959-1964): Personal Accounts and Reflections* (Landham, Maryland: The University Press of America, 2010); Jill Titus, *Brown's Battleground: Students, Segregationists, and the Struggle for Justice in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012) and Christopher Bonastia, *Southern Stalemate: Five Years Without Public Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁵ Much of the scholarship on North Carolina moderation lies buried in larger studies of the Tarheel state. Exclusive examinations of the concept of moderation, however, are examined exhaustively in William Chafe's *Civilities and Civil Rights*. Chafe labeled North Carolina politicians' moderation the

fabricated an image of progressivism to present a public face of racial tolerance in order to limit black's critique of segregation. Both neighboring states used aspects of Key's analysis to their advantage: Virginian politicians exploited the state's absence of racial violence and North Carolinian politicians recognized the utility of presenting an image of moderation, all for the sake of defending segregation. The dialectic between black assertiveness and white resistance marked the immediate years after *Brown* in Virginia and North Carolina.

In this chapter, I assert that *Brown* was a catalyst to mobilize white segregationists and to embolden blacks in Virginia and North Carolina. While no members of the race supported the same goals, southern whites and blacks did realize the political and social utility in presenting a united public front.¹⁶⁶ For whites, the preservation of a segregated

"progressive mystique," a term to describe how Tarheel political leaders used civil race relations and compliance with federal laws to mask their true intent to avoid racial desegregation. Legal scholar Davison M. Douglas also explored the ideological concept of North Carolina moderation; see, Douglas, "Rhetoric of Moderation: Desegregating the South in the Decade after Brown," *Northwestern Law Review* 89 (1994): 92-139. Douglas built on Chafe's central argument that North Carolina moderation was a clever ploy to preserve segregation. He examined politicians' rhetorical uses of moderation, namely to avoid federal intervention and to boost industry. For a more recent account of southern moderation, see Andes Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown v. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁶ It is true that not all whites supported segregation, nor did all blacks endorse desegregation. However, it is also true that many blacks, particularly in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County, viewed desegregation as the better solution to underfunded and under-resourced schools. Likewise many local whites feared the academic and social repercussions of attending school with black children. Studies of moderate white s in the face of strong white supremacy have emerged in the past two decades. For a contemporary autobiographical account of racial moderation, see Sarah Patton Boyle, *The Desegregated Heart: A Virginian's Stand in Time of Transition* (New York: Morrow, 1962). Boyle a repentant white racial paternalist came to protest for school desegregation. See Alexander Leidholdt, *Standing before the Shouting Mob: Lenoir Chambers and Virginia's Massive Resistance to Public-School Integration* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1997) for another account of racial moderation in the era of Virginia's massive resistance. Chambers, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the Norfolk-based *Virginian Pilot*, printed anti-extremist and anti-Byrd editorials. Both Boyle and Chambers helped to place chinks in the armor of southern segregation, their dissenting voices did not bring about wholesale, or even timely, change. The overwhelming tide of racial separation proved too strong. Segregation remained the preferred social policy in Virginia throughout much of the 1950s and 1960s. For an account of a white racial moderate in Chapel Hill, see the oral accounts of Charles Jones. He was a Presbyterian minister who cooperated and collaborated with black civil rights groups. Charles M. Jones, interview by Joseph A. Herzenberg, B-0041, November 8, 1976, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the

way of life became the primary political aim in the immediate post-*Brown* period. Segregation ensured whites would maintain control over southern politics. For blacks, the implementation of desegregation emerged as the chief goal. Desegregation brought the promise of increased political power and economic opportunities to African Americans. To these ends, both races mounted an emotional, legal and ideological campaign to support their approaches.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, white Democratic leaders had maintained a stronghold over southern state politics through a firm one-party system. In the late 1800s, white Democrats in North Carolina and Virginia preyed on the fears of “Negro rule” tied to potent memories of federal Reconstruction and effectively eliminated political dissent in their respective states with disenfranchisement. Without the ability to vote, southern blacks lost all chance at important local offices, which were the most active sites of early twentieth-century government in the South. White Democrats seized control of state legislatures and passed Jim Crow laws instituting segregation in public spaces. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and constitutional amendments to prohibit black voter registration especially impacted local government positions.¹⁶⁷

Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Charles M. Jones, interview by John Egerton, A-0335, July 21, 1990, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹⁶⁷ A vast scholarship has emerged around the rise of the Jim Crow South, see C. Van Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1957); Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, eds. *Jumpin’ Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For an understanding of Virginian and North Carolinian white supremacist campaigns, see J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow, Virginia* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and David Cecelski and Timothy Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The

In the mid-1950s, *Brown* resurrected memories of a federal, pro-black activism in the minds of southern whites. Initially, in the immediate post-*Brown* years, southern whites simply assumed that the Supreme Court had made a mistake. But as federal courts began to rule favorably for racial change in southern communities, Virginian and North Carolinian whites realized the case would topple their state's existing racial order. Whites in both states, steeped in a long past of unwelcome federal intervention—from Reconstruction to the Tennessee Valley Authority—viewed the Court's action as another assault on state and local autonomy. They then launched a rhetorical counterattack against the federal government as “tyrannical.” The two states' one-party dominance further helped foment a powerful resistance to an activist federal government. The legacy of Reconstruction had made public education a major battleground over which whites staked their claims to the preservation of the “southern way of life.” Nowhere was the singular white acceptance of racial segregation seen more noticeably than in Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr.'s Virginia.

Virginia's senior segregationist senator Byrd set Virginia's course in his reaction to the *Brown* ruling. Although Byrd warned Virginians that *Brown* would “bring implications and dangers of the greatest consequence,” he recognized the need to “wait-and-see” the real implications of the decision on the South.¹⁶⁸ Growing up in post-Reconstruction Virginia, Byrd was exposed to the perils of poverty and the ideology of

University of North Carolina Press, 1998). For the historiography of the “Lost Cause” movement which allowed southern whites to reconcile their military defeat with reuniting with the Union, see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2001); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

¹⁶⁸ “Reactions to Brown,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 18, 1954.

the Lost Cause, which shaped his unwavering dedication to the philosophies of fiscal responsibility, states' rights, and white supremacy. When Byrd began his career as a United States senator in 1933, he transformed his childhood beliefs into a pro-segregation, pro-state government political stance. By 1955, Byrd's appointment to the Senate Finance Committee chairmanship allowed him to exercise broad control over the extent of federal legislation. Using his influence over federal budgets, Byrd pushed his conservative and segregationist political agenda. He wielded his power by cherry-picking state candidates. As fellow Virginia senator Willis A. Robertson reportedly noted, Virginia politicians were "afraid to move unless Byrd gave the "nod" to candidates."¹⁶⁹ Without Byrd's approval, no candidate had a chance at statewide office in Virginia. His "Byrd Organization," however, amassed its greatest strength in the Southside, where his financial strategies and white supremacist racial beliefs gained favor among whites in regions with higher black populations.¹⁷⁰ When he urged Governor Thomas Stanley, a Southside native, to study the school desegregation matter, Stanley acted. A commission

¹⁶⁹ J. Lindsay Almond, interview by Larry J. Hackman, February 7, 1968, John F. Kennedy Oral History Program, 18.

¹⁷⁰ Southside, Virginia refers to the south-central ("black-belt") region of the state. It has typically connoted rural-ness, marked by political and social conservatism. Earlier literature on Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr. connected his politics with massive resistance policies. See Gates L., *The Making of Massive Resistance* and Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*. In these studies, Byrd emerged as a powerful political figure capable of shaping state resistance to *Brown*. Later works move away from Byrd's political ascendancy to his political demise. For more on the downfall of the Byrd Machine, see J. Harvie Wilkinson, III, *Harry Byrd and the Changing Face of Virginia Politics, 1945-1966* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1968) and Ely, *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia*. While Wilkinson described Byrd as finding political expediency in massive resistance, Ely portrayed Byrd's defiant stance as genuinely dedicated to segregation. See, Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, 1995). They provided a solid overview of the political realignment in postwar Virginia, including the culmination of the Byrd Machine. A more recent work by Ronald L. Heinemann presented a biographical account of Byrd's life. See Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996).

staffed with large numbers of pro-segregationists set out to design a plan that would avoid desegregation altogether.

The clout of the Byrd Organization meshed nicely with Prince Edward whites' homespun racism in upholding segregation. With higher numbers of black than white residents, white politicians worried that racial integration would create a black power structure and would "inevitably result in racial intermarriage until a 'coffee-colored compromise.'"¹⁷¹ Local white elites vowed to prevent desegregation; they met in the fall of 1954 to create a public group that advocated for white segregationists. By the spring of 1955, the Supreme Court had issued *Brown II*, which continued its endorsement of desegregation but allowed southern school districts to control the pace of change.¹⁷² Despite the "deliberate speed" implied, Prince Edward whites remained uneasy with the federal mandate for racial integration. The months-long meetings among local segregationists culminated in an organized pro-segregation force known as the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, which had the ear of the governor and Byrd. In fact, the Defenders leadership included some of Byrd's greatest supporters and political allies: state representative Watkins Abbitt, state senator Garland Gray, Farmville business owner Robert Crawford, and *Farmville Herald* editor J. Barrye Wall.¹⁷³

North Carolina had no comparable political powerhouse titan to Byrd. Most Tarheel politicians did not seek to upset the state's established racial structure, which like that in Virginia clearly favored whites. Governor William Umstead admitted his

¹⁷¹ Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties Records, 1956-1963, "Special Bulletin to Our Membership, 1956," Accession 39469, Organization Records Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁷² *Brown v. Board of Education (better known as Brown II)*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955).

disappointment in the *Brown* ruling but called for a measured response. Reflecting the state's progressive image, he appointed a fifteen-member biracial committee to address the desegregation issue, under former General Assembly Speaker of the House, Thomas J. Pearsall's, leadership. When Umstead died in the fall of 1954, Lieutenant Governor Luther Hodges assumed his term and encouraged the Advisory Committee to find a strategy around desegregation.¹⁷⁴ In a public statement to the governor, W.W. Taylor, Jr. and Tom Ellis, staff members of the Pearsall Committee, revealed whites' trepidations of racial mixing.¹⁷⁵ They argued that public school desegregation jeopardized southern whites' racial identity through "racial intermarriage," by eventually assimilating "the Negro race...into white."¹⁷⁶

Chapel Hill segregationists legitimated segregation through similar white supremacist arguments. UNC professor Wesley Critz George provided a biological rationale against racial inter-mixing. In December 1954, George articulated his objections to school desegregation as weakening whites' identity and "destroying our civilization" by merging the below average "intellectual ability and creativeness" of blacks with the

¹⁷⁴ This Advisory Committee included three black members: Dr. F. D. Bluford (president of North Carolina A& T College), Dr. J.W. Seabrook (president of Fayetteville Teachers College), and Hazel Parker (a state employee from Edgecombe County). After the Committee's findings in 1955, the group disbanded. Hodges recruited new members, all-white, but that retained some of the same members of the Advisory Committee. This group was better known as the Pearsall Committee.

¹⁷⁵ At the time of the Committee, Tom Ellis was a young attorney. He later became the campaign manager for Senator Jesse Helms' 1972 presidential campaign as well as a founder of the conservative North Carolina Congressional Club.

¹⁷⁶ Robert Korstad, James Leloudis, and Billy E. Barnes, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 40.

superior mental abilities of whites.” Citing the ill-effects of miscegenation, he urged state politicians to uphold “the quality of our [white] race.”¹⁷⁷

Exploiting the angst over interracial and heterosocial relationships among men and women effectively manipulated racial tensions between the South’s white and black constituents.¹⁷⁸ In August 1955, this anxiety about racial intermixing reached a fevered pitch with the lynching of Emmett Till.¹⁷⁹ Till’s alleged flirting with a Mississippi white woman angered southern whites, and especially white males. The uncertainty of established racial behaviors had frightened white men into protecting the cause of white womanhood. Carrying the torch for segregated education not only bound white men to safeguarding the honor and security of women, but also connected white men across economic lines as protectors of the race. The specter of interracial sex, then, provided white segregationist politicians with a strong emotionally-charged argument against desegregated schools. As a result, white educational leaders could preserve Jim Crow

¹⁷⁷ Wesley C. George, letter to Mr. French, December 2, 1954, W.C. George Papers, 03822, folder 11, in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹⁷⁸ Studies of racial and sexual violence have explored the notions of white femininity. Historians have analyzed how white segregationists couched racial violence in concepts of protecting white womanhood. See Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmitt Till* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991); Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999). See Nancy Mac Lean, “The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Making of Reactionary Populism,” *Journal of American History* 78, no. 3 (December 1991): 917-948. MacLean aptly uses the term “heterosocial” in her explanation of “reactionary populism” in 1915 Atlanta. MacLean describes “reactionary populism” as an earlier example of resistant whites to changing social mores. For an innovative examination of the connections between sexualized racial violence and the civil rights movement, see Danielle L. McGuire, “‘It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped’: Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (December 2004): 906-931.

¹⁷⁹ Numerous international and national newspapers dramatized Emmett Till’s lynching and the acquittal of his killers. Over a four month span, the international and African American press ran stories of Till’s murder as a critique of southern racism.

schools. As Pearsall Committee member, Fred Helms, suggested “[I]f integration in public schools must come, [then] social functions and activities in public schools must go.”¹⁸⁰ The threat of race mixing also heightened and influenced blacks. Till’s gruesome murder underscored the danger of desegregation, especially to black boys. The fear of white retaliatory violence over challenging racial geographies, perceived or otherwise, made southern blacks more cautious in protesting segregated conditions.

But black southerners understood whites’ deployment of interracial sex as a political foil. Certainly white politicians’ agitation of racial tensions represented a very real fear for blacks. However, blacks recognized that interracial sex had long served as a characteristic of southern black-white relations. Speaking to the existing concerns of racial violence, the author of an anonymous letter to Virginia governor Stanley failed to enclose his/her name or location. The presumed black Virginian author wryly illustrated the duplicity behind sexualized and race-based justifications for segregated education, writing “you [white] folks started mixing with us over 300 years ago and a social problem in 1954?”¹⁸¹ As the writer implied, whites had engaged in interracial sex for centuries, but it emerged as a problem in the post-*Brown* political climate. Southern whites’ political uses of miscegenation successfully served as a dodge to avoid desegregation.

Blacks instead explored their own means of politicizing racially inflamed emotions. Using Till’s murder to make their case, southern blacks found allies through

¹⁸⁰ Letter of Fred B. Helms to Attorney General Harry McMullan, September 29, 1954, Box 58, Umstead Papers. North Carolina Council on Human Relations, “Human Relations Bulletin,” September 1955, Box 121, Folio 86, Frederick Alexander Papers.

¹⁸¹ Anonymous (black person) letter to Governor Thomas Stanley, Undated. Office of the Governor, Thomas B. Stanley Papers, http://www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/brown/unknown_corres.htm, (accessed December 8, 2011).

the black and international press. Till's mother chose to have her son's graphic, bloated corpse photographed by newspaper and television reporters. By doing so, she exposed the extremism and racial rigidity of white segregationists. She also illuminated the problems of racialized violence. The decision proved profitable in garnering international sympathy for blacks' plight for racial equality.¹⁸² Moreover, as blacks gained the moral high-ground in the battle for desegregation among international audiences, they became more resolute in fighting against Jim Crow schooling.

Seeking to consolidate the white vote, Tarheel and Commonwealth politicians turned to legal strategies to buttress their states' defense of segregation. Southern whites explored a constitutional argument to obtain the legal rightness of the segregation cause. By the spring of 1956, 101 southern Congressmen signed the Southern Manifesto. In an effort toward solidarity, federally elected Virginian and North Carolinian leaders expressed their opposition to racial desegregation. They argued that the Supreme Court had overstepped its constitutional bounds by infringing upon Tenth Amendment rights.

¹⁸²A growing body of scholarship on the relationship between the Cold War and Civil Rights examines the how ideology and political conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union affected the civil right movement, particularly in the South. These works paint a fuller picture of African Americans' struggle for freedom and their linkages to America's international status, including the impact of Cold War policies and decolonization efforts in Africa. See Mary Dudziak, *Cold War, Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Kevin M. Gaines, *African Americans in Ghana: Black Expatriates in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), and Jonathan Rosenberg, *How Far the Promised Land: World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World War to Vietnam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). While these works highlight the possibilities for racial progress, other works examine the limitations of that anti-communism produced on racial activism. For work on the negative impact of anti-communism on black civil rights' efforts, see Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for American Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Jeffrey Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); and George Lewis, *The White South and Red Menace: Segregation, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2004).

What *Brown* amounted to was an “unwarranted exercise of power by the Court, contrary to the Constitution,” that merely caused “chaos and confusion.”¹⁸³ Echoing the rhetoric of the Manifesto, North Carolina senator Sam Ervin defined *Brown* as less about race and more about “the tyranny” of the Court system.¹⁸⁴ To Ervin, the Constitution became a “worthless scrap of paper” due to the Supreme Court’s rulings where the “states and their citizens will become helpless subjects of a judicial oligarchy.”¹⁸⁵ The fear of a centralized federal government telling North Carolinians what to do reminded them of a Reconstruction era long ago. Keeping the Jim Crow system of racial relations intact allowed white politicians to remain in control of political decisions, including those involving education.

Despite the definitive stance of southern politicians, they had to appear compliant with federal court rulings. As mentioned earlier, *Brown II* had thrown its judicial weight behind the cause of desegregation. Although it lacked teeth, the ruling did cast a shadow of perpetual federal court oversight in southern communities. This meant that as white

¹⁸³ *Southern Manifesto*, 102 Congressional Record 4515-4516, 1956. See also, “Race Issue Helps Defeat 2 in House,” *New York Times*, May 28, 1956, 16. It must be noted that Orange County’s representative, Harold D. Cooley, refused to sign the Manifesto, suggesting that dissent was present in the wake of a white, anti-desegregationist South. Three other House of Representative members also refused to sign the anti-desegregation statement: Richard Chatham, Charles Deane, and Charles R. Jonas. Most of these four hailed from western regions of the state, known for their socially liberal political stances. Nevertheless, Deane and Chatham failed to secure re-election after their terms expired because of their refusal to sign the document. While these four represent some divergence from the segregationist sentiment rampant in North Carolina politics, it no means meant that segregation was not the politically preferred choice. In fact, the political defeat of Deane and Chatham imply that a tight coalition of pro-segregationist thought must prevail if they wanted to maintain their elective offices.

¹⁸⁴ Charles Dunn, “Irving Carlyle Loses Bid,” *Durham Morning Herald*, June 1, 1956. Irving Carlyle was the initial choice for Senator, but after imploring North Carolinians to “obey the law” immediately after the *Brown* ruling, Governor Umstead appointed Sam Ervin to the senatorial position instead. Ervin’s bold statements and explicit disagreement with the ruling enhanced him as Umstead’s top pick.

¹⁸⁵ “Senator Ervin Backs System of Voluntary Segregation,” *Asheville Citizen Times*, March 19, 1956.

southerners initiated their rhetorical defense of state constitutional rights, they had to appear as though they attempted to desegregate their schools, *if* they wanted to avoid federal intervention. North Carolina's Advisory Committee on the study of desegregation, established by then-governor Umstead and overseen by governor Hodges, concluded that providing local school districts with the option to desegregate or not served as the best strategy in desegregating the public schools. The General Assembly adopted the Committee's findings as the Pupil Assignment Act in 1955.

North Carolina politicians employed a desegregation plan that incorporated enough obstacles to frustrate meaningful desegregation, while also embracing a states' rights argument. The Pupil Assignment Plan's option for choice represented a "good faith" measure to federal courts, but lacked the legal framework to ensure that choice would not bring about desegregation.¹⁸⁶ In late 1955, Governor Hodges appointed a seven-member, all-white, committee, headed again by Thomas Pearsall. The Pearsall Committee, composed of pro-segregationist forces, reached a consensus on the best plan for the state by 1956. The Committee expressed their desire for segregated schools: "The educational system of North Carolina has been built on the foundation stone of segregation of the races in the schools" which the committee argued the Supreme Court destroyed.¹⁸⁷ The plan advocated for a change in state constitutional provisions. Similar to the Pupil Assignment Plan, the Pearsall Plan insisted that localities, and not the federal government, should control educational decisions. However, unlike the previous state

¹⁸⁶ I will use "freedom of choice" and "local option" interchangeably throughout the chapter. Both terms refer to the discretionary rights of local school districts in choosing whether to desegregate its schools. When the term refers to parental choice, I will make the distinction.

¹⁸⁷ "Report of the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Education," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 1 (1956): 582, 585.

education plan, the Pearsall Committee established a legal basis for segregation: states' rights and local control. The plan also included state constitutional provisions allowing for private school tuition grants and local referendums so parents could choose the course of action. Giving local districts and parents a choice in their implementation of desegregation created a "safety valve" in that local districts had the "freedom of choice" in accepting the *Brown* ruling. The plan received widespread support by members of the General Assembly. The Plan was ingenious. It helped North Carolina school districts evade measurable desegregation through token efforts and it kept the public schools open. Recounting the success of the plan, Robert Giles, assistant to Luther Hodges, admitted that the real ingenuity lay in state officials' legal detachment as the educational authority.¹⁸⁸ In a government "for" and "by" the people, the fundamental right of parental control over their children's school assignments freed state officials from the weight of the federal government and from potential class action lawsuits.

To Hodges, the Pearsall Plan most effectively appealed to what white and black constituents wanted. He argued that "the people of North Carolina expect their General Assembly and their Governor to do everything legally possible to prevent their children from being forced to attend mixed schools against their wishes."¹⁸⁹ In a 1956 public opinion poll conducted for *Scientific American*, social scientists gauged white and black southerners' views on school desegregation. The poll revealed that while in 1942, 98 percent of white and black southerners had favored school segregation; by 1956, the

¹⁸⁸ Robert Giles, interview by Jay Jenkins, C-0063, September 10, 1987, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹⁸⁹ Luther Hodges, "Message to the Special Session of the General Assembly, July 23, 1956," Messages, Addresses and Public Papers, 33.

figure had decreased to 86 percent.¹⁹⁰ The marginal change in the acceptance of desegregation epitomized overwhelming denunciation of *Brown* by southerners, including by blacks. Moreover, the option to choose whether a child attended school with a child of another race made token desegregation efforts possible. Armed with this data, Hodges propagandized the separation of schools by race as what both races desired.

North Carolinian blacks resented Hodges' distortion of their educational desires and used their political votes to express their displeasure. After the General Assembly ratified the Pearsall Plan in July 1956, its representatives called for a statewide referendum. Although the plan had received a glowing endorsement from the North Carolina School Boards Association, State Association of County Commissioners, North Carolina Education Association, black constituents did not offer much approval.¹⁹¹ They deplored white leaders' duplicity in desegregation. The plan offered no real desegregation, only token measures, determined by white school officials. African Americans knew the Pearsall Plan provided them little choice in their children's school assignments; the choice would be made by whites instead. When the referendum went out on September 8, 1956, the *Raleigh News and Observer* noted that the election produced the largest turnout in the state's history. African American voters had especially arrived at the polls; significant anti-Pearsall Plan opposition emerged from a few precincts with

¹⁹⁰ Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley, "Attitudes toward Desegregation," *Scientific American* (December 1956): 36.

¹⁹¹ John E. Batchelor, "Rule of Law: North Carolina School Desegregation from *Brown* to *Swann*, 1954-1974," (Ph.D. dissertation., The University of North Carolina, 1992), 111-12. The black political opposition was not enough to defeat the referendum. In all of the state's 100 counties, however, the Pearsall Plan passed.

blacks constituting the majority population in large cities.¹⁹² Setting the strategy for desegregation mobilized blacks in supporting the abolition of segregated schools.

In Virginia, blacks also exercised legal channels in order to continue their fight for school desegregation. After *Brown*, the Supreme Court justices considered the most effective strategy to desegregate southern schools. In the resulting *Brown II*, the justices ordered school districts to abandon segregated education “with all deliberate speed.” But this ruling inadvertently permitted Prince Edward school officials’ escape from immediate action. In fact, on the day of the decision, Prince Edward County town leaders took immediate steps to remove local funds from the public school coffers.¹⁹³ Local blacks sought the assistance of the state NAACP’s Oliver Hill. Hill, the original attorney for the *Davis v. County Board of Education* case, charged the county leaders to accelerate its pace in abolishing Jim Crow schools. Hill used the force of the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund to sue for good faith efforts to desegregate. Viewing the NAACP as a menace to the southern way of life, Jim Crow politicians crafted a series of laws targeting barratry, or the enticing of litigation by people who would not otherwise sue. Clearly aimed at eliminating the legal activism of the NAACP, these anti-NAACP laws passed in the General Assembly on September 29, 1956. Undeterred, the state NAACP brought suit against the state’s attorney general Albertis Harrison, Jr.¹⁹⁴ NAACP attorneys argued that such laws violated their First Amendment rights. The case ultimately landed on the docket of the Supreme Court and resulted in a legal victory for the organization.

¹⁹² “Mixing the Races—from Top of ‘Powder Keg,’” *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 1985 [400th Anniversary Special Edition], 9.

¹⁹³ Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 116-120.

¹⁹⁴ Albertis Harrison, Jr. would later serve as Virginia governor from 1962-1966.

But just as the example of North Carolina state leaders indicated, Virginia politicians needed to consolidate southern white votes in favor of segregation in order to overpower southern blacks' counter-offense. In the months after the initial *Brown* case, Governor Thomas B. Stanley appointed a thirty-two-member, all-white, commission chaired by Southside state senator Garland Gray to review the *Brown* case. In November 1955, the Gray Commission presented its findings to the governor. Members recommended that local school districts create pupil placement boards and that state officials appropriate funds to provide tuition grants for students should the public schools integrate.¹⁹⁵ Surprisingly, the local choice of districts to desegregate appeared as moderate as North Carolina's Pupil Assignment Plan. But appearances were deceiving. The Gray Commission included the local option as a means of silencing any political moderates' concerns for federal intrusion in the state's educational systems. The Plan's architects, many deeply entrenched in segregation, saw the tuition grants as the structural backing for segregation to endure. But even the perceived moderation of the plan caused the state's more ardent segregationists to find the plan reprehensible. Senator Byrd and Governor Stanley demanded state legislators devise more drastic measures; leaders had to resist desegregation or face political defeat.¹⁹⁶ In a test of white political solidarity, the 1955 citywide Richmond elections demonstrated that candidates who wavered in their allegiance to segregation lost the election.¹⁹⁷ Hardline support for segregation, or massive

¹⁹⁵ "Text of the Gray Commission," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 19, 1955.

¹⁹⁶ Governor Stanley refused to endorse the Gray Commission's findings. Instead, he and other largely Southside segregationists, met secretly to develop a legal strategy to stop any desegregation.

¹⁹⁷ Fitzgerald M. Bemiss Papers, "Fitzgerald M. Bemiss Scrapbook—1955-1956," Mss1 B4252 b 1-108, Section 1, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Bemiss, a young politician made a name for himself as a strong supporter of massive resistance during the 1956 citywide campaigns in Richmond, Virginia.

resisters, ruled the day. The candidates who refused to compromise on the southern segregation became the most fervent leaders of the massive resistance movement and the state's decision-makers.¹⁹⁸ Perhaps the strongest example of racial consolidation is seen in Prince Edward County. After *Brown II*, Prince Edward Defenders organized a meeting to discuss the recent ruling. They created an alliance with the white Prince Edward County PTA, promising job security for teachers and school stability for parents, but above all, to accomplish these goals within segregated schools.¹⁹⁹

Massive resisters orchestrated legal changes to the state constitution in order to retain Jim Crow schools. Revising significant elements of the Gray Commission's findings, the state's Stanley Plan concocted a forcefully pro-segregation education plan. Resisters argued that education was a state, not a national, matter. As such, state governments espoused a states' rights argument, which gave legislators the authority to dismantle state laws regarding public education. At a special state constitutional convention held on January 9, 1956, Virginia Speaker of the House Blackburn "Blackie" Moore vowed to withhold state funds from public schools in the next academic term. Flouting the state's authority in matters of taxation in the face of federal control, Moore restored legal autonomy to states.²⁰⁰ Laying this foundation permitted massive resisters to alter its laws to suit the politicians' demands. As a result, the General Assembly

¹⁹⁸ George Moffett Cochran, "Virginia Facing Reality: The 1959 Perrow Commission" *Augusta Historical Bulletin* v. 42 (2006): 1-13, 4. Cochran served as a justice for the Virginia Supreme Court.

¹⁹⁹ See Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools*, 120-128. At this meeting, white segregationist leaders silenced dissent with the threat of social ostracism or job loss. Calling for a vote to maintain Jim Crow schools, the leaders asked all in opposed to stand. Only twenty white attendees stood, including the principal of all-white Farmville High; most described facing social isolation in stores, while others discussed the pressures that led to resigning from their jobs.

²⁰⁰ Defenders Records. Defenders viewed state's ability to levy taxes "a foundational principle of this government was built so that people cannot be force to tax themselves for a purpose to which they are opposed. NO court has ever claimed the right to violate this principle (emphasis theirs).

unanimously voted to amend Section 141 of the state constitution, which prohibited the use of public funds for private schools, and suggested that closed schools might be a viable educational option. They also voted to retain the language permitting the use of tuition grants as a way to provide children with private, segregated education if forced to desegregate by the federal courts. The Gray Commission's suggestion for local option was abandoned. In its place stood a meticulously designed educational plan that restored power to state legislatures. In 1956, Prince Edward County responded overwhelmingly in favor of a state referendum for private school tuition grants. Residents resoundingly supported the grants by a ratio of four to one (the statewide the ratio was two to one).²⁰¹

But to legitimate Jim Crow schools beyond a discussion of race, segregationists dictated the need for an ideological strategy. *Richmond Times-Dispatch* editor James Jackson Kilpatrick gave intellectual credibility to public school segregation. He turned desegregation into an issue of federal encroachment on states' rights rather than a black/white conflict. Harkening back to Virginia's revolutionary history, he couched interposition in a language of courage and moral responsibility. In February 1956, Virginia's state legislature passed the Interposition Resolution, charging whites "to take all appropriate measures honorably, legally and constitutionally available to us to resist this illegal encroachment upon our sovereign power." The Resolution further stated that "such a spineless and cowardly course would not only be unbecoming Virginia but would deprive the children of both races of public education in vast areas of this State."²⁰² In a

²⁰¹ Robert E. Baker, "Gray Commission Yields to Pressure, Backs Stanley's No-Integration Plan," *Washington Post*, August 23, 1956, 1; Robert E. Baker, "School Bills Go to Stanley," *Washington Post*, September 23, 1956; "Key Parts of Virginia School Bills," *Washington Post*, September 23, 1956; and Donald Baker, "Shame of a Nation," *Washington Post*, March 4, 2001.

²⁰² Defenders Records.

series of scathing editorials, Kilpatrick invoked the states' rights policies of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions. According to Kilpatrick, interposition was not "a matter of race or segregation; it is not even a matter of school...The transcendent issue is the encroachment of the Federal government, through judicial legislation, upon the reserved powers of all the States."²⁰³ Interposition was vital for Virginians to protect the legacy of great Virginian leaders like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. As a result, integration was sacrificed upon the altar of states' rights.

Using interposition, segregationists propagandized the dangers of desegregation in the southern press to gain broader support. Many southern newspapers had decided to boycott any coverage of civil rights. Virginia newspapers, such as the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and the *Farmville Herald*, either ignored examples of any white violence on blacks or failed to report black Virginians' attitudes toward state policies, unless they endorsed segregation.²⁰⁴ Instead, reporters and editors opined about the dangers of racial integration. Such omissions of alternate perspectives presented a monolithic white story. Moreover, even when some southern reporters voiced their objections to Virginia's reactionary extremism, their voices were muted.²⁰⁵ Or they were converted. *RTD* editor

²⁰³ James Kilpatrick, "Interposition: Yesterday and Today," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 2, 1956, 50.

²⁰⁴ One such example of white violence occurred in Virginia after the Moton student strike. None of Southside's newspapers covered the cross burning at Moton High in response to the students' activism. The story was, however, covered in the national black press. See, "Cross Burning in Farmville Kept Close Secret," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 19, 1951, 6.

²⁰⁵ In Virginia, *Norfolk-Journal and Guide* editor, Lenoir Chambers railed against massive resistance and the later governmental support of public school closings across the state. While Chambers received the national acclaim of the Pulitzer Prize, he was viewed as a moderate exception in his own state. For an overview of civil rights press coverage, see Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

Virginius Dabney, for example, came to abandon his liberal stances on southern race relations for more conservative segregationist views. In 1958, he confirmed his ideological switch in a *Life Magazine* article by justifying the cause of massive resistance. His argument undergirded notions of white solidarity, implying that whites needed to align against desegregation so the “welfare of white children [were] also not to be ignored.”²⁰⁶

The political ascendancy of A. Lindsay Almond symbolized the utility of interposition for Virginia segregationists. As Byrd’s handpicked choice for attorney general, Almond had litigated on behalf of the Prince Edward County school board in *Brown I*. By 1957, Almond decided to run for governor. Embroiled in the question over desegregation, Almond openly supported a massive resistance strategy for public schools. He conjured up imagery of Virginia’s status as a national leader. Calling for the state to honor its “historic commitment to southern conceptions of inviolable state sovereignty,” Almond solicited Virginian voters to demonstrate the Commonwealth’s unwavering dedication to segregation and serve as an example to the rest of the South.²⁰⁷ Successful in his gubernatorial bid, Almond proposed a three million dollar budget appropriation for private school tuition grants, offering \$250 a year tuition voucher to each student

²⁰⁶ Virginius Dabney, “Virginia’s ‘Peaceable, Honorable Stand,’” *Life Magazine*, September 22, 1958, 52-56, see 55. Dabney had received acclaim for his liberal stances on anti-lynching and anti-poll tax editorials in the 1930s and 1940s, and his anti-massive resistance editorials in the early 1950s. However, the after receiving pressure from the newspaper’s owner (David Tennant Bryan) to temper his criticism of massive resistance, Dabney relinquished his support of liberal causes and came to embrace segregation.

²⁰⁷ John N. Popham, “Virginia Sets the Pace for Southern Resistance,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1957, 213. Prior to state’s gubernatorial elections, Little Rock, Arkansas had tested the boundaries of federalism. Its governor Orval Faubus mobilized the state National Guard to prevent desegregation of Central High School; however, President Dwight Eisenhower demonstrated the federal government’s ultimate authority in public education.

withdrawing from the public school system in 1958.²⁰⁸ Proving that Virginia had the resolve to stay the course, Almond promised to close any public school which attempted integration. Almond's televised promise to close the public schools in Norfolk, Warren County, Charlottesville, and Arlington County reached fulfillment as the four districts closed their public schools in 1958-1959.

But black Virginians' use of federal litigation eroded the legal and ideological framework designed by the state's massive resisters. In reaction to the Stanley Plan's policies, blacks sought judicial remedy for the delay in desegregation. They brought suits to the state courts, and ultimately the federal district courts, seeking to test the constitutionality of tuition grants and school closings. On January 19, 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals ruled on the constitutionality of a state's right to alter its laws regarding public education.²⁰⁹ In a 5 to 2 vote, the justices argued that the use of tuition grants for private academies violated a free public school system "in that they remove from the public school system any schools in which pupils of the two races are mixed, and make no provision for their support and maintenance as a part of the system."²¹⁰ In a case decided on the same day, the U.S. district court declared that the school closing law violated petitioners' rights under the U.S. Constitution.²¹¹ The court ruled that schools must be opened in Norfolk, Charlottesville, Warren County, and Arlington County.

²⁰⁸ Cochran, "Virginia Facing Reality," 8.

²⁰⁹ *James v. Almond*, 170 F. Supp. 331(1959). The court concluded that the Stanley Plan's school closing violated students' Fourteenth Amendment rights to due process, but did not entirely dismiss the state's usage of tuition grants as illegal.

²¹⁰ *Harrison v. Day*, 200 Va. 439, 106 S.E.2d 636 (1959).

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

Almond began to retract his massively resistant words, realizing that the legal scaffolding that the legislature constructed amounted to a weakly-built house of resistance.

Instead, Almond set out to build a more structurally sound basis for segregation, while still appeasing federal courts. He appointed State Senator Mosby Perrow, Jr., along with four representatives from each of the Virginia's congressional areas, to a special commission on February 5, 1959. Given six weeks to devise a new strategy, the Perrow Commission worked feverishly to design a desegregation plan that called for little racial mixing of white and black children. Members found it difficult to divorce themselves from the legal and ideological doctrines of segregation that had worked so effectively years before. As a result, massive resistance strategies crept into the commission's findings. Continuing to endorse tuition vouchers, the Perrow Plan designers argued that most white politicians would prefer "to have no public schools than to have any mixed schools."²¹² Perhaps most influential was that members recognized the burden closed schools placed on their constituency, arguing that "a majority of the people of Virginia is unwilling to have the public schools abandoned."²¹³ To address these changing state trends, the Perrow Plan called for local option, a state pupil placement board, and compulsory attendance laws. The "freedom of choice," a replica of North Carolina's Pearsall Plan, won the support of most of the commission's members.

Cracks in the foundation of massive resistance splintered further with the Perrow Plan's completion on March 31, 1959. In his dissenting opinion of the plan, House of

²¹² Perrow Commission, "Education in Virginia: Report of the Commission on Education to the Governor of Virginia," Richmond, Virginia: Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Purchases and Supplies, 1959, 5, http://www.lib.odu.edu/specialcollections/schooldesegregation/n17diglib/fpwhite/005_001_014_001_ocr.pdf, (accessed January 14, 2012).

²¹³ Ibid.

Delegates member Curry Carter argued that “in [the plan’s] attempt to defeat integration [the plan]... concedes that some integration is inevitable; this I am unwilling to concede.”²¹⁴ But the desire for segregation was no match for the political practicality of the plan. What the Perrow Plan demonstrated was the ultimate defeat of massive resisters’ legal and ideological strategies to dodge desegregation. The plan also showed the success of blacks’ activism. The commission’s members feared continued federal oversight of the state’s schools. Although resisters hated to relinquish state-sanctioned segregation, the changing political climate gave them little choice. On April 13, 1959, the Assembly’s House Education Committee voted 9 to 8 to approve the recommendations.²¹⁵ When presented to both chambers of the General Assembly, legislators reluctantly approved the school plan.²¹⁶

Massive resisters nevertheless continued to evoke the interposition imagery to make segregation a noble cause. After the State Supreme Court ruling in January, State Board of Education member, William J. Story, Jr., called for endurance with the massive resistance strategy:

I should like to make it clear that I have not surrendered the fundamental principle that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. I do not admit that the Legislature of Virginia and the Government have a right to compromise this principle by a failure to state what appears to me to be true, that the decision of 1954 is null and void until such time as the Constitution is properly amended. When the Constitution is negated in Virginia under false doctrine, it is negated in every state. When the Governor and Legislature of Virginia surrender on constitutional principles, it has its effect everywhere. It

²¹⁴ Cochran, “Virginia Facing Reality,” 19.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-11. The House approved the Perrow Plan, 54 to 45 and the Senate voted in favor of the recommendations 20 to 19.

appears to me that a three-day session of the General Assembly is a rather hurried manner in which to liquidate the rights of the people of Virginia²¹⁷

State Senator Joseph Hutcheson of Lawrenceville, along with five other diehard segregationist senators, drafted a bill designed to hold off court-ordered desegregation. The emergency Hutcheson bill would have permitted only “efficient” (i.e., segregated) public schools to operate. After a 22-17 defeat of the Hutcheson bill, massive resisters refused to shift with the changing political times. Delegate Sam Pope of Southampton argued that, “This is one of the blackest days Virginia has faced since reconstruction ... It is inconceivable to me that this General Assembly can stand idly by while negro children are admitted to white schools [sic].” Delegate Carneal of Williamsburg called it a “day of infamy,” stating that “we have met the enemy and we are theirs—temporarily. We are theirs because we do not have the courage to throw down the gauntlet to the federal courts... I call upon all Virginians not to be dismayed. We have just begun to fight.”²¹⁸

Though statewide massive resistance collapsed, Prince Edward whites had not abandoned their commitment to segregation. In fact, Southside Defenders argued, massive resistance “hadn’t been tried.”²¹⁹ Since the passage of interposition, the county’s white officials had begun to funnel money from the Board of Supervisors’ budget and to solicit donations and supplies from like-minded segregationists in case federal court rulings prevented segregated schools. In May 1959, after the judicial blow to segregated education, white Prince Edward County School Foundation leaders moved forward with

²¹⁷ Defenders Records, William J. Story, Jr. Letter to Robert B. Crawford, “Massive Resistance Did Not Fail—It Was Never Tried!” February 6, 1959.

²¹⁸ “Political Reactions,” *Richmond News Leader*, January 29, 1959.

²¹⁹ Defenders Records.

their plans to open a segregated private academy. Within the span of four months, Prince Edward Academy received over \$200,000 in pledges, located appropriate school building sites, and hired teachers.²²⁰ By September 1959, the Prince Edward Academy opened.

Prince Edward County whites knew well the sociopolitical benefits to white racial solidarity and the effectiveness of black racial disunity. When the public schools had failed to open after three months into the 1959-60, Foundation officials appealed to blacks' desire for education. White leaders of the Prince Edward Foundation appealed to African American desires for education. They came up with the idea of a segregation, but open, school system known as Southside Schools, Inc. White leaders of the Prince Edward Foundation also tried to splinter black solidarity by enticing them to attend segregated private academies. In December 1959, officials placed an advertisement for the schools in the *Farmville Herald*. They only received one application.²²¹

Black Prince Edwardians knew the value of racial unity too. Most blacks held out hope that the public schools would reopen. In a census taken of black residents by county officials, all checked "yes" to the question whether they intended their children to attend public schools in the 1959-60 academic year.²²² Foundation leaders viewed Southside Schools, Inc. as an extension of an olive branch of formal education to local black parents; yet, they discovered that black ministers and NAACP leaders discouraged

²²⁰ Kitty Terjen, "Cradle of Resistance: Prince Edward County Today," *New South* (Summer 1973): 19. Initially, Prince Edward School Foundation leaders utilized white community buildings such as churches, stores, and homes. But by September, the bricks were being laid for the segregation academy.

²²¹ "Rejection of Southside Schools," *Farmville Herald*, December 29, 1959.

²²² Prince Edward County Public Schools, School Board Pupil Attendance Records, Farmville, Virginia, 1959-1964. The application came from the granddaughter of Bluitt Andrews. Andrews' application served more as a deep desire to have access to education than as an indictment of local black and NAACP activism. See also, Bluitt Andrews, "Negro Parents of Prince Edward—How Long?," *Farmville Herald*, December 11, 1959, 1B and "Applications for Negro Schools Now Needed for Plans," *Farmville Herald*, January 8, 1960, 1A, 5A.

attendance of the proposed private and segregated school. Instead of accepting Jim Crow education, black leaders urged parents and students to reject racial segregation despite the mental costs of no schooling. At a NAACP-sponsored Christmas rally for open desegregated public schools in 1959, Oliver Hill urged the nearly 2,000 black parents, teachers, and students to remember the ultimate sacrifice of Christ when determining the future of black education in the county. "All you will lose will be one or two years of Jim Crow education. But at the same time, in your leisure, you can gather more in basic education than you would get in five years of Jim Crow schools."²²³ Hill, like other blacks in the county, believed that whites could not maintain closed schools for long. Blacks resolved to support desegregation. But the closed county schools did force them to consider alternative educational programs.

Optimistic for reopened schools, Prince Edward County black leaders developed temporary educational options for black students. Reverend Griffin and Reverend A. I. Dunlap, local A.M.E. minister, worked to relocate sixty-one black high school junior and seniors to all-black Kittrell College in Henderson, North Carolina, reasoning that students who missed their last years of formal schooling might never return to obtain their diploma. As an African Methodist institution, Kittrell College accommodated the county's high school students with lowered tuition and academic housing. After the second sustained year of no formal education, Griffin realized programs were needed for black youth. As head of the Prince Edward County Christian Association (PECCA), Griffin used the organization to provide younger children some programs. PECCA sponsored a Winter Training Program, funded by civic, fraternal, and religious donations.

²²³ *Southern School News*, January 1960. See also, "2,000 Virginia Parents, Kids," *Jet*, January 14, 1960, 21-22.

The purpose of the program was to boost children's morale, and no formal courses were taught. Classes were held in an assortment of buildings—churches, homes, and lodges and most classes lasted only three hours per day.²²⁴ Children learned practical life skills and famous black accomplishments. Yet, with one adult for every twenty-five to thirty children, one child remarked that “[education] was mostly supervised play.”²²⁵

After a third year of sustained closed schools, Blacks developed programs with more of an academic focus. The black Virginia Teachers Association (VTA) established Summer Crash Programs in the summer of 1961 to offer county children remedial education. One hundred twenty-five licensed teachers descended on the county with the intent to “identify attrition in levels of intelligence, achievement, personality structure and community cohesion resulting from protracted litigation and subsequent school closings” and “to serve as a basis for selecting types of learning experiences which would narrow the gaps in intelligence and achievement levels of the children”²²⁶ Children went to school five days a week for four hours.²²⁷ Student volunteers also participated in instruction, particularly in the subjects of math and reading.

²²⁴ Robert Green, *The Educational Status of Negro Children in a District Without Public Schools*, (East Lansing, Michigan: Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, Michigan State University, 1964). See also, LaShawn Denise Harris, “Alternative Education for African-American Children in Prince Edward County, Virginia 1959-1964,” (M.A. thesis, Longwood University, May 1999).

²²⁵ Harris, “Alternative Education,” 49. See also Amy Tillerson-Brown, “‘Grassroots Schools’ and Training Centers in the Prospect District of Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1959-1964,” in Terence Hicks and Abul Pitre, editors, *The Educational Lockout of African Americans of Prince Edward County, Virginia (1959-1964): Personal Accounts and Reflections*, (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2010).

²²⁶ “Summer Crash Programs,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 10, 1961, 1.

²²⁷ Virginia Teacher Association Papers, # 1969-14, folder 880, container 61, Special Collections and Archives, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) offered a longer-standing program of student relocation. The AFSC placed forty-seven students in seven cities.²²⁸ Host families received temporary custody of relocated children. A committee in each cooperative town or city accepted communal responsibility for the child as well. Furthermore, AFSC covered all travel, relocation, and schooling costs. The selection process identified children aged eleven to fourteen years old and demanded that students initiate contact with AFSC officials.²²⁹

Using Prince Edward's dramatic school closing as a backdrop, local African Americans launched a sophisticated critique of American democracy. Kennell Jackson, a Moton graduate, recounted the lessons he had learned from Prince Edward black leader, Rev. Griffin. Griffin urged black students to persist in fighting segregation, reminding them that the fights against colonial injustice in places like India, and Gandhi," linked local blacks' struggles to a broader global fight.²³⁰ The decolonization of developing nations garnered the world's attention. As they struggled to gain freedom from political oppression, the international community watched and questioned which political ideologies would fill the vacuum of the new government—democracy or Communism? By linking local struggles with a broader fight for freedom and justice, Prince Edward blacks provided a ringing endorsement for democracy. The common struggle, rooted in

²²⁸ Helen Estes Baker, "Lessons from Prince Edward County," *Virginia Teachers' Association Bulletin* 42, no. 7 (April 1961): 111.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Kennell Jackson, Interview in *Farmville: An American Story*, DVD recording, (Farmville, Virginia: R.R. Moton Museum, 1999). For an understanding on transnational justice struggles, see Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Mary Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

injustice, played out on televisions worldwide. Able to illuminate Prince Edward County politicians’ misapplication of U.S. democracy, Oliver Hill summed up the only positive good that came from the school closings: “White people are afraid of the pitiless spotlight of public opinion on Prince Edward [and its school closing].”²³¹

Unlike the futility of their neighbors’ interposition arguments, Tarheel state leaders recognized the political and economic benefits of promoting an image of moderation. As a textile executive, Governor Hodges knew the need of attracting outside businesses to the South. Post-World War II deindustrialization and the mechanization of agriculture had led to a job decline in North Carolina. In order to provide employment to state residents, southern governments had to identify ways to attract potential industries to the South. Hodges applied his business acumen to an aggressive state program of economic development by creating statewide economic opportunities in 1959.²³² Scandals that drew federal attention to local school districts often repelled potential businesses.²³³ By publicizing North Carolina’s moderation, Hodges managed to

²³¹ *Southern School News*, January 1960.

²³² Luther H. Hodges Newspaper Clippings File, in the North Carolina Collection Reading Room in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hodges pioneered the creation of Research Triangle Park (RTP) in North Carolina to capitalize off the research talents of nearby local colleges, by tying to business. For scholarship on the politics of moderation, see James Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-90* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993). Cobb offers a compelling analysis of the economic shifts in the South. For discussions of North Carolina politicians’ economic uses of “moderation”, see Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*; Davison Douglas, *Reading, Writing, and Race: The Desegregation of Charlotte Schools* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995). For more scholarship on this trend, see also Elizabeth Jacoway and David R. Colburn, eds., *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982) and Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*.

²³³ In 1958, Arkansas received \$25 million in new plant contracts. North Carolina, in comparison, received over ten times that amount. A Tulane economist predicted that open defiance of the Supreme Court would cost cities millions of dollars per year as “publicity about schools closing would strongly deter new industrial or business development from outside the state,” Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Charlotte (January 1962, January 1963, August 1963) on file with the Frederick Douglass Alexander Papers, Box 114A-1, Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

encourage industrial growth in the state.²³⁴ By privileging of economic matters above the educational crisis, Hodges diminished the significance of race, or at least allowed white segregationists to delay desegregation a while longer.

Younger North Carolina blacks bristled at Hodges' myth of moderation. The claims of moderation, they thought, camouflaged the governor's true racial sentiments. The interaction between Hodges and black undergraduate students at A&T College in Greensboro illustrated the fallacy of North Carolina's rhetoric of moderation. During a visit to the College, Hodges resented the lack of respect the undergraduates had accorded him. Instead of standing when Hodges approached the podium, the students remained seated.²³⁵ To Hodges, the students reflected the ill-effects of desegregation; their behavior was marked by insolence and audacity. The students had a different perspective. Aggravated by Hodges' Freudian slips in pronunciations, the black undergraduates found little need to treat Hodges with deference. Students contended that Hodges' mispronunciation of Negro sounded an awful lot like "nigra," which betrayed the governor's authentic feelings toward the states' black residents.²³⁶ The perceptions of the actions on the part of Hodges and the students demonstrated that North Carolina's policy on moderation masked the governor's uneasiness with changing racial mores brought on by the desegregation ruling. A&T students' confrontation with established racial roles would also serve as a harbinger for the next decade's youthful activism.

²³⁴ Hodges Newspaper File.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ See "The A& T Affair," *Carolina Times*, November 12, 1955. For a recollection of this event nearly twenty years later, see Lewis Dowdy, interview by William Chafe, January 21, 1975, <http://library.uncg.edu/dp/crg/oralhistitem.aspx?i=636>, (accessed December 8, 2011). In these two accounts, a similar story surfaces that Hodges had transposed "nigra" "in place of "Negro". Instead of not standing, however, these versions suggest that the students began to boo the governor.

The 1960 North Carolina gubernatorial primary campaign signaled a turning point in the state's defense of segregation. In the Democratic primary, two candidates--I. Beverley Lake, Sr. and Terry Sanford—centered their campaigns on the public school issue. Since *Brown*, Lake railed against desegregation, arguing that closed schools were better than mixed schools.²³⁷ He decided to run for governor, but his extremist position jeopardized the state's free and public system of schools. Lake's opponent, Terry Sanford, countered with support for token desegregation, concluding that open schools were the best schools. The debate intensified when Lake began to campaign with the slogan: "Vote for Beverley Lake and segregation will continue. Vote for Terry Sanford and the NAACP will control North Carolina schools and fill classrooms with black children."²³⁸ Sanford had learned the potency of race-baiting from his work with Frank Porter Graham's 1950 senate race.²³⁹ To counter Lake's accusations, Sanford suggested that "every time [Lake] opens his mouth he is building evidence which is going to be introduced in the Supreme Court to show bad faith on the part of North Carolina, in the event he is elected governor. And though we don't like it, the Supreme Court has the last

²³⁷ I. Beverly Lake, Sr., editorial, "Inciting the Extremists," *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 15, 1955, 4.

²³⁸ I. Beverly Lake, Sr., Newspaper Clippings Dealing with the Reaction in North Carolina to *Brown v. Board of Education*, in the North Carolina Collection Reading Room in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²³⁹ In 1950, Terry Sanford worked as a campaign assistant for the senate race of former UNC college president, Frank Porter Graham. Graham had embraced racial liberalism and progressive plans. Considered the favored candidate, he lost due to a racially charged smear campaign. His Democratic opponent, Willis Smith, exploited North Carolina's fears of interracial sex. Smith's campaign advisor, Jesse Helms, used a picture of Graham dancing with a black woman to discredit his campaign. It worked. Willis won the political race and Graham's campaign was dashed.

word. He is inviting the Supreme Court to step into North Carolina.”²⁴⁰ Because race remained a critical issue in the primary, Sanford shunned being labeled an integrationist.²⁴¹ Yet, as Sanford’s campaign focused on preventing federal intervention in state affairs, the issue of desegregation became less about race and more about states’ rights. Sanford’s effective strategizing helped to shift the minds of many Tarheel segregationists from rejection of integration to acceptance of gradual, token desegregation efforts.

Sanford’s political victory over Lake’s extremist views suggested a shifting tide toward some acceptance of racial mixing and the growing public disapproval of wholesale segregation. In his inauguration speech, Sanford asserted that he would use “massive intelligence” instead of “massive resistance.”²⁴² To achieve “quality education . . . the real issue is whether it is to carry forward its educational programs for all the people or whether . . . it is to divert funds from the public schools. . . If the South is to move forward to the ending of racial discrimination in education on account of race, then Mason-Dixon line will vanish.”²⁴³ By releasing its ties to racism and race-based educational policies, North Carolina’s concept of moderation promised to erase regional and racial lines. As such, all Americans would experience the freedom of and the opportunity for a quality public education. Veiled in a language of “quality,” Sanford laid

²⁴⁰ Terry Sanford, Newspaper Clippings Dealing with the Reaction in North Carolina to *Brown v. Board of Education*, in the North Carolina Collection Reading Room in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²⁴¹ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 104-105.

²⁴² Charles Dunn, “The Citizens Can Say He Put Schools First,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, May 21, 1961.

²⁴³ “Terry Sanford Keynote Address,” *New York Times*, January 15, 1961.

claim to the nation's foundational democratic rights. It is little wonder that *Time Magazine* called his inaugural speech "one of the most memorable instances of progressive southern leadership in recent history."²⁴⁴

Chapel Hill school officials seemed to embrace Sanford's charge wholeheartedly. Although previously denying many black students' transfer requests, the lawsuit of a ten-year-old black student, Stanley Vickers, forced school leaders to reconsider using race as a factor in student school assignments. Vickers' mother, Lattice Vickers, successfully sued the school board in 1960 for its refusal to use non-race based factors.²⁴⁵ Losing race as an element in reassignment decisions, school officials realized that progressive steps toward desegregation had to be incorporated into school policy. The fall 1960 school board election functioned as a referendum on school desegregation. In 1961, the Chapel Hill school board welcomed three new, pro-desegregation members. Exercising the Pearsall Plan's local option, school board officials adopted a geographic student assignment plan.²⁴⁶ Although initially restricted to first-grade students, the plan was quite progressive for its time. The school board eliminated color distinctions from its student transfer requests. Instead, using a student's race, the geographic plan ensured that "subject to limitations of space, applications for reassignments.... [were] based on

²⁴⁴ "Mandate for Moderation, *Time Magazine*, July 4, 1960.

²⁴⁵ *Stanley Boya Vickers, etc. v. Chapel Hill City Board of Education*, 196 F Supp. 97 101 (MDNC, 1961). In the case, Lattice Vickers argued that Stanley lived in closer proximity to the local white elementary school than the black elementary school. The Fourth District Court ruled that race-based school assignment violated Vickers' constitutional rights.

²⁴⁶ "Historic Integration Plan Adopted for Chapel Hill School District," July 6, 1961, *Chapel Hill Weekly*, 1. Chapel Hill became the first southern city desegregation without federal intervention by geographic versus racial assignment.

geographic proximity.”²⁴⁷ Due to the plan, the school board granted three of twelve student transfer requests by the fall of 1961. And for the first time in the state, Chapel Hill public schools had a black student in every school.²⁴⁸ By 1962, the Chapel Hill school board proudly declared that “desegregation no longer loomed as the major continuing problem of the Board;” the larger issue was “finances and space.”²⁴⁹

Unfortunately, Prince Edward County whites remained committed to segregated education. By Sanford’s inauguration, Prince Edward public schools had remained closed for a second year. As a father of five children, Rev. L. Francis Griffin had hoped, like the rest of the county’s blacks that the public schools would reopen soon. Instead of waiting for the schools to reopen, Griffin decided to send his children to public school in New Jersey in 1961. Facing criticism by white political leaders as a firebrand and agitator, Griffin often sought solace from the national press whose portrayal of the massively resistant county acquired sympathetic support. Yet, even the national media began to turn a critical eye on the black leader. In a *Saturday Evening Post* article, reporter Irv Goodman criticized Griffin as a “self-professed martyr” who failed “to practice what he preached”:

Griffin skips a few of the meetings himself. Last year he moved his wife and five children to New Jersey, where the children are going to public schools. Not even the NAACP lawyers, who were planning to use one of his children as a plaintiff in their court case, knew that the youngsters were no longer in Prince Edward.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, July 27, 1960.

²⁴⁸ *Civil Rights U.S.A.: Public Schools Southern States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1962, 77, http://www.crmvet.org/docs/ccr_62_southern_schools.pdf, (accessed December 22, 2011).

²⁴⁹ Richard Peters, “Chapel Hill Schools,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, May 3, 1962.

²⁵⁰ Irv Goodman, “Prince Edward Crisis,” *Saturday Evening Post*, April 29, 1961.

As a prominent minister and leader of the black community, Griffin served as the African Americans' public face for a "massive insistence" of desegregated schools. Although white community leaders had offered to finance a segregated black school in 1960, blacks agreed that closed schools surpassed Jim Crow schools. With the student lockout international news, it is likely that Goodman knew the impact his criticism would have. He implied that Griffin and other local African Americans were just as guilty as whites in using race to control the destiny of public schools.

The legal, emotional, and ideological machinations of white North Carolinians and Virginians had succeeded quite well in maintaining school segregation. Compared to Virginia's firm anti-desegregation stance, North Carolina's token desegregation appeared fairly racially progressive. Yet, in 1957, only twelve black students attended all-white schools, and no white students attended all-black schools.²⁵¹ The paltry numbers of accepted student transfer requests further ensured that Tarheel schools would remain mostly white and mostly separate.²⁵² North Carolina remained largely segregated.²⁵³ Virginia's massive resisters designed the legal apparatus to allow districts to close their schools if the need arose. And, Prince Edward's habit of fanning the flames of interracial sex ensured the county would bar the mixing of white students and black students. The

²⁵¹ "North Carolina Cities Assign 12 Negroes to Previously All-White Schools," *Southern School News*, August 1957, 3.

²⁵² North Carolina school districts denied transfer requests for a variety of reasons. In Chapel Hill, one black student's request was denied because he wanted to attend a white school, which defied the Supreme Court's alleged color-blind application of student assignments. See Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1955-1963. From 1956 to 1963, approximately twenty-four black parents petitioned to transfer their elementary or secondary child to an all-white school.

²⁵³ Southern Education Reporting Service, *Statistical Summary of School Segregation/Desegregation in the Southern and Border States* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Education Reporting Service, 1964-1965), 27, 29. On the tenth anniversary of *Brown v. Board*, only 0.5% of black North Carolina students attended white schools. The numbers were slightly higher, at 2.4%, for the rest of the South.

state's utter lack of desegregation for so long demonstrated that Jim Crow schools persisted.

On the other hand, the North Carolinian and Virginian blacks' protracted legal struggle had demonstrated their long-term commitment to desegregation, while blacks' ideological battles produced more immediate effects. Blacks effectively exploited America's anti-Communism to their advantage. The snapshots of school-less Prince Edward children, exported throughout the world, humanized and personalized black education as a critical civil rights issue. Prince Edward educational officials' literal chaining of public school buildings suggested that the democratic ideals of freedom and opportunity did not apply to non-whites, providing blacks with the moral high ground. Their illustrations of the hypocrisies of American democracy made the cause of desegregation socially and politically the just educational policy, Virginia and North Carolina blacks gained more progress through their use of legal strategies. The NAACP's exhaustive use of court appeals challenged southern segregation. In North Carolina and Virginia, legal cases demanded that state officials move with more "deliberate speed" in desegregating the public schools. But perhaps Prince Edward blacks best represented the long legal process to desegregate its schools. In Prince Edward, where local blacks resolved to stay in the fight longer to prove the political correctness of desegregation, and most importantly, reopen the public schools, local blacks petitioned local, state, and federal courts for judicial remedy. In *Eva Allen et. al*, along with *Griffin v. Prince Edward County Board of Education*, Prince Edward blacks contested the legal obstacles put in place to protect segregated education, such as tuition

grants.²⁵⁴ By the mid-1960s, both states' legal strategies pushed state officials to make measurable attempts at desegregating the public schools.²⁵⁵

Of course, these efforts would not eradicate racial problems in the South. Though space had presumably replaced race as the central problem of the Chapel Hill school board, it was clear that race remained a potent issue in school decisions. For instance, officials' geographic reassignments typically only applied to elementary ages and not older, secondary ages, revealing fears of pushing desegregation too far and too fast.²⁵⁶ Often, school officials placed the burden of desegregation on lower-income Carrboro whites whose schools were in closer proximity to black housing. Tensions between white and black parents over how to draw attendance zones would remain a vital, racially charged issue for school officials to consider.

Nonetheless, there was cause for hope that a new movement was afoot. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, as we have seen, blacks embraced new tactics to achieve their age-old hope for equity. Increasingly, blacks understood the power of their unity and the power of their vote. As Robert Nicks, the proprietor of a major black teen hangout, argued, "What's keeping it back is a lot of politicians, and I think the colored ought to

²⁵⁴ *Eva Allen, et. al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, Civil No. 1333. Decided April 14, 1964. See also *Eva Allen, et. al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, 249 4.2d 462. *Griffin v. Prince Edward County Board of Education*, In Virginia's U.S. district court, Judge Oren Lewis ruled that Prince Edward to reopen its schools, but he ignored the constitutionality of state tuition vouchers for private education. By 1964, the *Griffin* case forced the reopening of public schools by eliminating the state's tuition grants, which permitted the operation of segregated private schools at the detriment to the public school system.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Also refer to *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 402 U.S. 1 (1971), *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).

²⁵⁶ See the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1958-1965. Often Chapel Hill school board officials denied the transfer requests of black junior high or high school black students. School board records bear out the consistent rejection of older, school-aged black transfer petitions. For example, Charles Lee Bynum, Sheila Pearl Bynum, Ted Stone, and Percy Tuck Jr. all applied for reassignment and were denied.

band together and work together as a group.”²⁵⁷ Whites’ social cohesion around segregation was beginning to unravel, just as the momentum for a black grassroots movement for racial change intensified. Moderate whites who began to see the sticky problems of entrenched segregated schools came to support black efforts. The international scene made it increasingly impossible to adhere to such a strident position.

Perhaps, Lonita Terrell, a seventeen-year old Lincoln High student, best embodies the new spirit of change and consideration of one’s social and political place in southern communities. Terrell told a *Chapel Hill Weekly* reporter in 1960 that “If there isn’t integration soon I think we should take steps similar to those taken by the students at A & T and in Durham. After you’ve asked for something for such a long time and you don’t get it, sometimes you have to use force.” Terrell insisted that whether or not Chapel Hill black students should follow in the footsteps of the Greensboro, Raleigh, and Durham student protests, Lonita Terrell said white people should know “that we are not going to take anything away from them that belongs to them; only what belongs to us.”²⁵⁸ What belonged to blacks was access to better schools and opportunities, and increasingly the 1960s and direct action strategies held high promise for black high school and college students who demanded their communities commit to social justice.

²⁵⁷ *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 8, 1960, 6.

²⁵⁸ *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 15, 1960, 1-3.

CHAPTER 3

GIVING IT THE OLD COLLEGE TRY, 1959-1964

*You know, things have always been pretty good so that you haven't been able to get your dander up enough really to pull off something that was really fantastically good for the community. Two or three people might benefit, or a lot of people might benefit, but in terms of developing some sense of your own ability to deal with systems and things—we just hadn't come to that in Chapel Hill, because we've always had the liberal white people to take care of us. I always say that because I feel like we've been kind of raped by their liberalism.*²⁵⁹

Vivian Foushee, black Chapel Hill leader

*"Generation after generation, since the days of the American Revolution, Chapel Hill has been extremely productive of talent. As a state university, it is uniquely successful, and almost every phase of enlightenment and progress in the state, and to some extent in the South, can trace its birth to this small town."*²⁶⁰

John Ehle, Author, 1965

*"Every liberal movement, I think, in the state of North Carolina has been associated—there have been professors from the University of North Carolina associated with it."*²⁶¹

Floyd McKissick, Sr., one of the first black students in the UNC School of Law

²⁵⁹ Vivian Foushee, interview by Wendy Purifoy, June 4, 1974, in the Duke Oral History Program, Manuscripts Collection, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, restricted, as quoted in John K. Chapman, "Second Generation: Black Youth and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Chapel Hill, N.C., 1937-1963," (M.A. thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1995), 120-121.

²⁶⁰ John Ehle, *The Free Men* (Lewisville, North Carolina, Press 53, 2007), 96-97.

²⁶¹ Floyd McKissick, Sr., interview by Bruce Kalk, May 31, 1989, L-0040, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

The struggle for desegregation dared the nation to fulfill its democratic ideals. Southern black and white high school and college activists accepted the challenge. Their exposure to media images of civil rights activism deeply shaped their racial ideologies. Witnessing the great lengths southern segregationists took to prevent desegregation ignited their commitment to desegregation. Unlike southern politicians, these college students operated outside the traditional legal channels of legislatures and courts. With youthful exuberance, these students, instead, waged a public battle, taking their fight to the streets and college campuses.

Southern college campuses served as a perfect incubator for student activism.²⁶² Colleges' support of academic freedom aligned with democratic values and free speech. As bastions of intellectual curiosity, colleges functioned as safe places where students and professors were able to speak freely on college grounds. The vocally permissive environment encouraged students to investigate the limits of what constituted free speech. Students argued that their practice of direct action civil rights tactics, such as protest

²⁶² A number of historical studies of postwar student activism have covered a range of topics from civil rights protests, anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, and homosexual activism. I have chosen to highlight only a few of these sources here. For research on white civil rights activism at southern colleges, see Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964-1969* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). For excellent and detailed historical treatments of Chapel Hill student activism, see Ehle, *Free Men*; Chapman, "Second Generation," and John K. Chapman, "Black Freedom Movement and the University of North Carolina, 1793-1960," (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006). Examinations of Prince Edward students activism remains scant, but three studies deserve particular mention: Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools: Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1951-1964* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965). His study focused on the brave activism of Moton High student Barbara Johns. Kara Miles Turner analyzed the long struggle of local blacks for quality education in her dissertation, see Turner, "'It Is Not at Present a Very Successful School:'" Prince Edward County and the Black Educational Struggle, 1865-1995," (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001). Jill Titus described the 1960s African American student boycotts as part of their fight for public education. See Titus, "A Mission to a Mad County: Black Determination, White Resistance, and Educational Crisis in Prince Edward County, Virginia," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 2007).

marches, economic boycotts, and picketing, reflected a broader definition of intellectual freedom.

Southern secondary schools and college campuses represented the educational arm of the state. The relationship between the state and its public educational institutions was an old and long one. White schools received more state funding than black schools. The white schools—University of North Carolina Hampden-Sydney College, and Longwood College—emerged between the Revolutionary period and during the antebellum era, funded either under the auspices of the state or by generous donations by state leaders.²⁶³ In fact, many of the colleges' leadership maintained positions in the state legislature or state's Board of Education. The black schools—Virginia State College and North Carolina College for Negroes—arose after the Civil War, in response to the need for separate black schools of higher learning. Like the white colleges, black colleges nevertheless maintained a close connection with the state government and/or state leaders.

An examination of Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill secondary and postsecondary schools, therefore, offers a particularly insightful glimpse into the tensions between rhetoric and practice, or between state politics and school policies. The reactionary rhetoric of Prince Edward segregationists led to the closure of its public school system for five years. Supported by the state government, Virginia's college and

²⁶³ For more on the history of these institutions, see Erika Lindemann, "The Purposes of a University Education," Documenting the American South website, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/true/chapter/chp02-02/chp02-02.html>, (accessed November 11, 2011); Herbert Clarence Bradshaw, *From History of Prince Edward County, Virginia: From Its Earliest Settlements through Its Establishment in 1754 to Its Bicentennial Year*, (Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Press, Inc.), 1955; Eric Moyon, "Carolina's Campus and Community: The Historical Development of Town and Gown Relations in Twentieth Century North Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation University of Kentucky, 2004); and Chapman, "Black Freedom." The North Carolina legislature reluctantly appropriated state funds for the school after UNC president, William Davie, pressured leaders to see the value in a public institution that stressed "mental discipline, cultivated civic and moral virtues, developed character, and bestowed spiritual and social benefits."

universities had to toe a very narrow line between its academic freedom and its pro-segregationist stance. On the other hand, North Carolina favored a far more moderate approach to issues of desegregation. The state's racial moderation typically tolerated some civil rights protesters, so long as they operated within the avoided direct-action tactics. Considered the "beacon of intellectual liberalism," Chapel Hill, like the state, embraced progressive issues, on a cerebral level. Therefore, Tarheel leaders' rhetorical uses of moderation allowed colleges and universities a significant level of dissent, but often failed to back its public support by action.

As free agents of their states, college students held the state accountable. Colleges needed to tailor their policies to attract students and retain high enrollment numbers. Often, they tried to appeal to college students' desires in order to receive funding by the state. Though student activists were restricted to how much power they could wield, they used their status as educational "consumers" to persuade higher education institutions to push for greater desegregation within local communities. Students' causes, shaped largely by their interactions with local blacks, in turn applied another layer of pressure to the state: the black community.

In this chapter, I argue that college students used their institutions as a springboard for social change in the late 1950s and 1960s. The University of North Carolina (UNC), North Carolina College for Negroes (NCCN) in North Carolina and Longwood College, Hampden-Sydney College (H-SC), and Virginia State College (VSC) in Virginia offered safe space for students to test out new ideas, especially in a rapidly changing America. However, college officials acted as agents of the state, which criticized direct action student protests. Despite the resistance of college administrators to

endorse the “radicalism” of student demonstrators, they often served as a supportive force against racial segregation. Yet their support and school policies often stopped short of making measurable racial change. Hence Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County colleges and universities simultaneously perpetuated and dismantled segregated education. Student protesters, however, relentlessly railed against segregation and pushed for more racial empowerment.

Throughout the twentieth century, UNC emerged as the face of southern liberalism. Home to the nation’s first Institute for Research in Social Science, the University came to support the study of racial and social relations in the South. Howard Odum developed this center in 1924, four years after first arriving on campus. He, and his colleagues—Guy Johnson, Rupert Vance, Guion Johnson, and Arthur Raper—used the Institute, and its literary journal, *Social Forces*, to propagate groundbreaking knowledge on southern race relations. The work of the Institute and *Social Forces* presented the University as a leader in a liberal approach to race relations.

This sense of liberalism spread throughout Chapel Hill as well. In the 1930s, Louis Graves, the *Chapel Hill Weekly* editor, urged the school board to increase the school terms of the county’s black high school. This gesture, he wrote, “is more significant because in Chapel Hill is located the great University of North Carolina, making Chapel Hill an educational center and leader in one respect and entirely behind the whole state in the other.”²⁶⁴ The UNC presidency of Frank Porter Graham signaled a

²⁶⁴ “Fund for Negro School: Campaign Has Raised \$153 and Other Contributions Are Solicited,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 21, 1930.

more liberal environment. In the early 1940s, Graham allowed a desegregated concert of take place at Memorial Hall on campus.²⁶⁵

Moreover, the impact of the G.I. Bill created a ready and rising pool of students with which to engage these liberal ideas. During World War II, UNC's student enrollment numbers had dropped to 1,690 civilian students, nearly half the enrollment numbers of the 1930s. But by the fall of 1948, returning veterans registered for classes at UNC in record numbers. Of the 7,500 students who entered the University, 4,995 of them were recipients of the G.I. Bill.²⁶⁶ World War II had emboldened blacks to fight for greater rights, including education. As Floyd McKissick, Sr. argued, "You were a returning veteran. And some schools were letting blacks in that never had before... So there was a feeling in North Carolina, North Carolina would do some of these things without being forced to do it."²⁶⁷ Regrettably, this sentiment was false. The University decisively barred black applicants from enrollment in professional schools.²⁶⁸ In 1946, however, first-year student Allard Lowenstein wrote to a friend that a growing minority of the undergraduate population supported integrated education. In UNC's debating society, students deliberated over the merits of allowing blacks to enroll at the University. The students voted affirmatively for eliminating Jim Crow laws and desegregating the

²⁶⁵ Charles Jones, interview by Joseph Herzenberg, November 8, 1976, B-0041, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

²⁶⁶ *Population and Economy Chapel Hill North Carolina, April 1949* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Chapel Hill Town Planning Board, 1949), 21-22.

²⁶⁷ McKissick interview

²⁶⁸ Since the 1930s, black students applied for admission to UNC professional schools. In 1933, Thomas Hocutt applied to UNC's School of Pharmacy. The University rejected his application. He leveled a case against the University and lost; but, his defeat was not empty. The state appropriated more money to the existing black colleges to equalize course offering. Durham native, Pauli Murray famously applied in 1938 and was rejected, as was Floyd McKissick, Sr. in 1945. See McKissick, interview.

school. But Lowenstein admitted that “These ‘laws’ of course have no effect on anything, except as weathervanes.”²⁶⁹ While the climate had not changed to more favorable conditions for blacks to enroll, the temperature was rising on accepting racial change. In the early 1950s, the NAACP began to try cases in favor of desegregating UNC’s professional and undergraduate schools. Thurgood Marshall enlisted the assistance of five black students—Harvey Beech, J. Kenneth Lee, Floyd McKissick, Sr., James Walker, and James Lassiter—for a case against the UNC School of Law. The NAACP won the lawsuit and the students enrolled in 1951. Brothers LeRoy Frasier and Ralph Frasier, along with John Brandon, applied to UNC as undergraduates in 1954 and were rejected on the basis of race. However, the students used the *Brown* ruling to their advantage, arguing that the case barred race as a deciding factor in the field of public education. Their logic appealed to UNC officials and the three became the first black undergraduates in 1955.

An uneasy tension between the University and its liberal ideals defined the school’s desegregation process. Although white UNC students engaged in pranks and threats against the newly enrolled black students, some came to accept desegregated classrooms. McKissick recalled that by the end of the summer in 1951, a couple of students asked him to join a study group.²⁷⁰ Even the state government appealed to Chapel Hill’s liberal promise. At the June 1952 Commencement, Governor Kerr Scott

²⁶⁹ Letter from Al Lowenstein to a Friend, May 6, 1946, Allard Kenneth Lowenstein Papers #4340. In the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

²⁷⁰ McKissick interview. See also, Harvey Beech, interview by Anita Foye, September 25, 1996, J-0075, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina. Beech and Lee endured ostracism at sporting events and social functions.

delivered the keynote address for the first integrated class at the college. Harvey Beech recalled that Scott told the students:

Never in my life before have I ever seen so many intelligent people sitting in the dark. He said, times are changing, and it's changing here tonight, and you might as well get ready for it. A great change is happening here tonight. You can expect it to come. You might as well get out of the dark and get into the light.²⁷¹

The light was dawning on the campus, and the 1954 *Brown* ruling made it shine more brightly.

Even though North Carolina and Virginia took protracted steps toward desegregation, some more labored than others, their colleges seemed to acknowledge the death of Jim Crow secondary education. The Departments of Education at UNC and Longwood came to incorporate desegregation training in its courses. These teachers-in-training learned teacher empathy, classroom management techniques, and most of all, how to deal with black children.²⁷² Black colleges' Departments of Education did not need such cultural sensitivity training in how to adjust to black students. It is what they had always done. The North Carolina College for Negroes retained its curriculum for teaching black students, including developing effective classroom management tactics. NCCN graduate, Gwendolyn Chunn, described how student teachers were trained to "shape the desks in a "U" formation, not in straight rows [for teachers] to see

²⁷¹Beech interview.

²⁷² Gertrude Noar, *The Teacher and Integration* (Washington, D.C.), 1966, 7, in the North Carolina Fund Youth Educational Service (YES) Records #4710, in Folder 2501, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Unfortunately much of this sensitivity to black students reinforced racial stereotypes. Noar chastised teachers for being upset with the slow pace of black students' achievement: "What is there to hurry for in their lives, in their families? They are often tardy because there is no alarm clock and no adult has to get up to go to work—they are all unemployed." Nevertheless, Noar urged teachers to help ease the transition for black students: "Until there is no difference in quality and quantity of what you do for white and Negro pupils (as well as other minority group children), you will not have achieved integration in your classroom."

everything.”²⁷³ The stall in *Brown*’s implementation meant that future black teachers would likely continue to teach all-black students.

Moreover, aware of the limited chances that black teachers would teach white children, black colleges focused largely on preparing black children for integrated schools. This often included instilling a sense of self-confidence in students. Lincoln High drivers-education teacher, R.D. Smith, drilled the importance of assurance and a positive attitude into his students. Referring to the poem “Equipment,” Smith encouraged students to: “Figure it out for yourself, my lad, you’ve what the greatest of men have had: two arms, two legs, two feet and two eyes and a brain to use if you’d be wise. With this equipment everybody began, so start from the top and say ‘I can.’”²⁷⁴ He wrote “attitude” on the chalkboard every day and inspired students to “never say can’t,” a useful strategy in a desegregated school.²⁷⁵ Regardless of the different approaches between the white and black colleges, *Brown* proved that adjustments would have to be made.

At Longwood, the adjustments included where students were placed.²⁷⁶ Prince Edward County’s closure of the public school system between 1959 and 1964 left student teachers without a nearby practice area. In the college’s departure from the state and local governments’ massive resistant approach to public education, the Department of

²⁷³Gwendolyn Chunn, interview by Gerrelynn Patterson, July 17, 2004, U-0115, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina. Chunn started attending the North Carolina College for Negroes in the fall of 1960. She student taught at Hillside High, Durham’s all-black high school and rival to Lincoln High, in 1964.

²⁷⁴ R.D. Smith, interview by Bob Gilgor, November 13, 14, 2000, K-564, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 42.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ “Bulletin of Longwood: Alumni Issue,” Farmville, Virginia: Longwood University, 1957-1965.

Education did not send their student teachers to Prince Edward Academy. Instead, they went to outlying Virginia counties, such as Danville, Richmond, and Roanoke.

Longwood student teacher, Rebecca Clayton recalled how the College attempted to place students who were heavily involved in campus activities closer to the campus. Yet, they still had to go at least thirty miles from Farmville, which “was a real inconvenience” to students.²⁷⁷ After a couple years of teaching, Longwood officials sent evaluations to teaching graduates. Students requested that the education department create curriculum that incorporated effective desegregation strategies, including tactics for dealing with “slow learners,” developing discussion-based lessons, and more practical training.²⁷⁸

By the dawn of the 1960s, the inevitability of desegregation became clearer across North Carolina and Virginia colleges. On February 1, 1960, four A&T students walked up to a Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro and sat down. In violation of segregated laws, these students’ act of non-violent defiance quickly spread across the state and the South. By the end of the month, student sit-ins had spread to seven southern states. NCCN initiated sit-ins at downtown Durham locations on February 8.²⁷⁹ VSC began sit-in protests on February 20. The impact of these mass student movements drew media attention to the problem of segregation, which in turn made the likelihood of a

²⁷⁷ Rebecca Clayton, interview by Angela Hornsby, December 8, 1988, K-0132, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina. It should be noted that Hampden-Sydney did not, and does not, offer classes in education. Clayton’s memories of Prince Edward’s school closings illustrate the devastating impact race-based policies had on young children. Her experiences made her “more aware of how [blacks] felt” and how she should “interact” with black students, contrary to what state segregation officials implied.

²⁷⁸“Longwood College Teaching Evaluation and Follow-Up Class of 1970,” (Farmville, Virginia: Longwood College School of Education Office of Field Services, 1971), 6.

²⁷⁹ For a discussion of North Carolina Central’s support of college student activism, refer to Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 438. Also, George W. Reid, editor, *A History of North Carolina Central University: A Town and Gown Analysis* (Durham: North Carolina Central University, 1985), 70-71.

desegregated South increasingly more possible. Even at Kittrell College, Prince Edward students who travelled to attend the junior college engaged in protests. In the spring of 1960, senior Bob Hamlin had a gun pulled on him by the store owner of Overton Grocery. The owner accused Hamlin of stealing, which Hamlin denied. Within twenty-four hours, the displaced Prince Edward students and Kittrell students had organized a boycott. The loss of business compelled the store owner to apologize to Hamlin.²⁸⁰ The sit-in movement had mobilized these students who had no access to formal education within their hometown; and, the students' act of protest strengthened their resolve in the moral right of desegregation.

At UNC, the Greensboro sit-in movement efforts to desegregate public accommodations garnered the support of two-thirds of the mostly white student body. In late February 1960, the student legislature voted two-to-one to endorse desegregation.²⁸¹ The support of the predominately white UNC student body was fortuitous for Lincoln High protesters beginning their sit-in movement in Chapel Hill. The high school students called upon UNC students for assistance in targeting segregated businesses in downtown Chapel Hill. In early March 1960, high school and college students staged sit-ins in several businesses lining Chapel Hill's Franklin Street. The movement gradually came to include marches and boycotts. Lincoln students decided to boycott Longmeadow Dairy,

²⁸⁰ Hamlin interview. Hamlin explained the power of mass protest. The store owner begged him to call off the boycott, which did not occur. The student protesters remained restless, Hamlin recalled, until the store came under new ownership.

²⁸¹ Pappy Churchill and Paul Wehr, "Letter of Clarification," *Daily Tar Heel*, March 3, 1960, 2. Prior to the sit-in protests, local Chapel Hill merchants had pledged to abolish segregation *if* the students offered their support suddenly failed to desegregate their businesses. But when the students came out in support for desegregation, the merchants reneged on their deal.

owners of the Dairy Bar, with whom Lincoln had its milk contract.²⁸² On March 10, nearly half of Lincoln students had gathered in front of “Big John” Carswell’s Colonial Drugstore carrying placards.²⁸³ Perfectly poised on the border of the white and black communities in Chapel Hill, the Colonial Drugstore was a popular hangout for college students and a favorite after-church spot for blacks. But Carswell’s strict adherence to segregation frustrated Lincoln students who gave him consistent business. With the support of UNC students, Lincoln students gained a louder voice in the fight to desegregate local businesses.

John Carswell resented the student protest of his business. Not to be outdone, Carswell took out a full-page advertisement in the local paper declaring his resolve to fight against desegregating his lunch counter: “We will not be Intimidated or Coerced by Certain Alphabetical Organizations or Committees under the Disguise of ‘Betterment of Certain Groups or Races.’” A copy of the advertisement hung in the front window of the store.²⁸⁴ As Lincoln protests continued well into the summer months, Carswell cited the students for trespassing. On July 26, 1960, the Chapel Hill police department arrested eleven male Lincoln High students and charged them with trespassing.²⁸⁵ The students

²⁸²“Young Chapel Hill Negroes Protest at Lunch Counters,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 3, 1960, 1, 4 and *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 10, 1960, 1.

²⁸³ “Sitdown Strikes Hit UNC,” *Daily Tar Heel*,” March 3, 1960, 1. See also the *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 3, 1960, 1.

²⁸⁴ Advertisement, *Chapel Hill Weekly*, June 12, 1963.

²⁸⁵ *Chapel Hill Weekly*, September 1, 1960, 2. The eleven students arrested were Clarence Merritt Jr., aged 17; Douglas Perry, aged 17; James Merritt, aged 16; Harold Foster, aged 18; Dave Mason Jr., aged 17; William Cureton, aged 18; Albert Williams, aged 16; Earl Geer, aged 16; John Farrington, aged 17; Thomas Mason, aged 15; and James Brittain, aged 15.

went before Judge William S. Stewart of the District Court who fined each student ten dollars plus court costs and gave them a thirty-day suspended jail sentence.²⁸⁶

Although many local white Chapel Hillians and UNC students supported desegregated public accommodations, there was a contingent that stridently opposed the public demonstrations. On the state level, Governor Luther Hodges encouraged college students to avoid participation in the sit-in movement. Using Cold War language, he called for “containment” of student protestors. The year of the student demonstrations was an election year. Democratic candidate Terry Sanford faced stiff competition from segregationist Democratic candidate I. Beverley Lake. Sanford’s endorsement of public education, and the presumed maintenance of desegregated schools, caused him to tread lightly in his reaction to the student protest movement. In order to avoid alienating white moderates, startled by the vastly growing public movement, Sanford concluded that the sit-ins amounted to rabble rousing. They weakened the image of a democratic U.S. and were therefore dangerous. The former dean of the UNC School of Business Administration, Thomas Carroll, felt the demonstrations smacked of incivility and ill-discipline. He argued that “if the Negro expects to succeed in his cause, he has got to conduct himself above reproach and he must be sure he is worthy of respect.”²⁸⁷

What this white resistance illuminated about student protests was the power of established racial geographies. Whites and blacks had a particular place in which to belong in southern society. Liberal Chapel Hill was no exception. When Jesse Strowd, a custodian at the Carolina Inn for nearly forty years, was fired, he wrote an editorial to the

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Dean Thomas Carroll, “Tension Apparently Eases in Lunch Counter Protests,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 24, 1960, 1.

Chapel Hill Weekly. In it, Strowd criticized Chapel Hill whites for failing to address black men and women as “‘Mrs.’ or ‘Mr.,’” but as “John or Lucy, or if they [were] an older person they [were] called Aunt or Uncle.” Yet, whites were addressed as “‘Mr.’ or ‘Mrs.’ ...no matter what crime they have committed.” Criticizing southern racial relationships, Strowd illustrated the fallacy of racial liberalism. He likened Chapel Hill liberals to the Ku Klux Klan. After hearing a KKK clansman say “anytime a Nigger comes to my back door with his hat in his hand and says ‘Yes sir’ and ‘No sir’ to me, I will give him anything he asks for. But if he comes to my front door I won’t give him a thing.” Like the KKK, Chapel Hill blacks felt they had to navigate the racially appropriate channels for any measure of dignity, and those channels rarely meant true equality.²⁸⁸

Even black Chapel Hillians, especially those of an older generation, struggled to redefine the level of racial propriety within the South. The town’s black ministers gave hesitant support to the student demonstrators initially. They refused to let the students use the church buildings for meetings for fear of ruffling too many of the town’s feathers. Rev. J.R. Manley of Chapel Hill’s First Baptist Church had recently been elected to a seat on the city’s school board. In hopes of maintaining peaceable relations with his white peers, Manley had to select his battles cautiously. The student protests which were irritating the town’s business elite took a backseat to the creation of school policy. But the largest obstacle to the students’ direct action protest tactics was fear. Parents feared

²⁸⁸ Jesse Robert Strowd, “Letter to the Editor,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, April 8, 1964. See also Chapman, “Black Freedom” for a fuller discussion of the understanding of racial geographies by local Chapel Hill blacks. Built in the center of UNC’s campus in 1924, the Carolina Inn served as a hotel for UNC alumni and university visitors.

what their children might face.²⁸⁹ They also feared losing their jobs. As the primary employer in Chapel Hill, UNC hired blacks for non-academic positions. As one of the city's few black police officers in the early 1960s, David Caldwell admitted that, "That's one thing I never say anything about or even think about [integration]. I just try to stay away from it altogether. You know, working down there with all the other men, it might cause hard feeling, and in my position I just can't afford to have anything to do with talking about segregation."²⁹⁰ Black parents worried about the impact the youthful protests might have on the maintenance of their jobs. Reflecting on his parents' courage, Lincoln High alum Fred Battle emphasized the major threat black activism had on blacks' job opportunities. He argued that his parents feared "their job might be in jeopardy if their son [was] out there demonstrating." White employers, on the other hand, manipulated the actions of their workers' children to keep racial order. Battle contends that highlighting student demonstrations was "one way of the white parents' protest--. How to get back at [their employees]--. Their son's participation or their children's participation in the demonstration."²⁹¹

For black colleges, the collegiate leadership had found the channels of segregation at times beneficial.²⁹² Frequently, public black land-grant colleges, such as Virginia State,

²⁸⁹Restricted interview of Hilliard Caldwell, June 4, 1974, in the Duke Oral History Program, Manuscripts Collection, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, as quoted in Chapman, "Second Generation," 135. Caldwell argued that "there were certain elements at the university, your low income employees. They are not to participate because their immediate supervisor was an old segregationist from out in Carrboro and out in the county. So your maids and janitors [and] those people who had semi-technical jobs back in those days dare not get involved."

²⁹⁰ *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 8, 1960, 6.

²⁹¹ Fred Battle, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 3, 2001, K-0525, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²⁹² The relationship of black colleges and university to the state often determined the administration's level of commitment to civil rights participation. For a detailed overview of the role of the

remained under the direct control of the state Board of Education. Virginia's governor appointed the VSC president until 1964.²⁹³ It was in the college president's economic best interest to appease the state's call for segregation, even if they supported desegregation personally. Since NNCN's establishment, its founder, James Shepard, sustained working relationships with white business leaders and state politicians. He lobbied for increased funding, especially after the state assumed ownership in 1923. While Shepard obtained legislative and business support, he refused to accept inferior treatment.²⁹⁴ That did not mean, however, that he had not learned how to navigate southern racial terrain by helping to maintain segregation. In 1933, Shepard intentionally withheld Thomas Hocutt's transcripts from his appeal to attend UNC. This costly misdeed damaged Hocutt's chance to enroll at UNC, but it brought a windfall to NCCN.

state in historically black institutions, see Joy Ann Williamson, "'This Has Been Quite a Year for Heads Falling: Institutional Autonomy in the Civil Rights Era," *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 554-576. See also, Joy Ann Williamson, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower: Black Colleges and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008) for a discussion of the tensions between black college activists and white state agents. For further information on the differences between state-funded and private black college student activism, see John Orbell, "Protest Participation among Southern Negro College Students," *American Political Science Review* 61 (June 1967): 446-456; Elton C. Harrison, "Student Unrest on the Black College Campus," *Journal of Negro Education* 41, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 113-120; and Joel Rosenthal, "Southern Black Student Activism: Assimilation vs. Nationalism," *Journal of Negro Education* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1975): 113-129. Adam Fairclough has examined the politics of African American college presidents in two recent works: refer to Fairclough, "The Black College Presidents Who Tried to Thwart the Racial Integration of Higher Education," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 55 (Spring 2007): 71-75 and Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

²⁹³ Edgar Toppin, *Loyal Sons and Daughters: Virginia State University 1882 to 1992* (Norfolk, Virginia: Pictorial Heritage Publishing Company, 1992), 81.

²⁹⁴ See John Hope Franklin, interview by John Egerton, July 27, 1990, A-0339, in the Southern Oral History Program (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina and Conrad O. Pearson, interview by Walter Weare, April 18, 1979, H-0218, in the Southern Oral History Program (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina. Both Franklin and Pearson recount how Shepard refused to shop in segregated stores and refused to appear "hat-in-hand" to white leaders.

By the end of the 1930s, the College's state appropriation increased six-fold.²⁹⁵

Preserving Jim Crow, it seemed, offered much needed aid to black colleges. Moreover, Shepard's looming presence on NCCN's campus and within Durham's black business center allowed him to use the school as a steady supplier of black business graduates. These graduates would help to build up the black elite leader class in Durham.

Regardless of the resistance to their protests, black youth and college students intensified their efforts to desegregate public schools and public accommodations. Unlike their parents' generation, student protesters were not afraid of losing jobs. In Prince Edward County, unschooled black children began to level protests against business leaders in hopes of applying enough pressure for them to restore the public school system. Some Longwood and H-SC students tutored local black schoolchildren. Through witnessing the devastation caused by a lack of formal education, they came to endorse desegregation. In Chapel Hill, student demonstrators participated in an alphabet soup of civil rights organizations. National civil rights groups, such as Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the NAACP, put on weekend workshops in Chapel Hill to train students in non-violent protests.²⁹⁶ Once momentum was gained in Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill, the student protest movement began to spread beyond the confines of the school walls into the streets. No crevice would be left untouched.

After the initial sit-in movements of 1960, Prince Edward black students had engaged in sustained protest efforts. The local NAACP had brought a series of court

²⁹⁵ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*: 363. The North Carolina General Assembly funded North Carolina College for Negroes \$23,000 in 1933-1934; but by 1939-1940, the legislature released \$128,000.

²⁹⁶ Fred Powledge, *Free at Last? The Civil Rights Movement and the People Who Made It* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little Brown), 1991, 214. Gordon Carey, the regional organizer for CORE, noted that while no other black participant described the assistance of civil rights groups, reporters fail to ask about outside help.

cases to the district courts; but by 1963, students were no longer content to follow legal channels for educational remedy solely. They took the law into their own hands. In the summer of 1963, the violence associated with Danville, Virginia, protests movements and the shockwaves they caused nationally spurred Prince Edward students to fight against Jim Crow education. Viewing demonstrations as the key to obtaining greater rights, protesters received non-violence training from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) participants of the Danville protests.²⁹⁷

In what became Prince Edward's Long Hot Summer, 1963 was the banner year for attempting to banish all aspects of segregation—from schools to restaurants and to churches. On Thursday July 25, 1963, blacks took their non-violent protests to downtown Farmville. Pledging to continue the marches, pickets, and boycotts, until schools reopened, black youth attempted to desegregate local businesses. By Friday, demonstrators had continued their protests and engaged in “sit-ins” at the College Shoppe, “stand-ins” at the segregated State Theater, and “try-ins” at department stores. With no arrests made, the protests continue the next day. By Saturday, the number of demonstrators swelled to one hundred twenty-five. The demonstrators passed out handbills urging black consumers to “Buy where you and your children will be treated with dignity and respect!!” and “DON'T BUY IN FARMVILLE!! BOYCOTT FOR FREEDOM!!” They also held placards declaring, “I have lost 4 years of education. WHY FIVE? (“Let's tell Russia about this).”²⁹⁸ But Saturday, the busiest shopping day for the

²⁹⁷Farmville *Herald*, July 19, 1963, 1B and *Washington Post*, August 3, 1963, C2. SNCC's involvement in the Danville movement appalled much of the nation. Images of children blasted with high-powered fire hoses until their clothes came off led many civil rights activists to declare Danville “the most dangerous site” of the Civil Right Movement.

²⁹⁸Henry McLaughlin, “First Protest March Staged by Negroes in Farmville,” *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, July 26, 1963, 2.

surrounding counties, drew unneeded attention and posed a threat to population control. Prince Edward police arrested ten demonstrators for loitering and blocking the sidewalk outside a luncheonette. The protestors immediately employed the tactics learned by SNCC activists; they went “limp” as they were arrested and jailed.²⁹⁹

On Sunday July 28, 1963, black demonstrators tried to incite a “pray-in” at the segregated white churches. All but one church denied blacks’ access. Rev. J. Samuel Williams led twenty-one protestors in song and prayer on the church steps, before they were arrested for violating a Virginia statute that made it illegal to “unlawfully and willfully interrupt and disturb a public worship service.”³⁰⁰ By Monday, the circuit court ordered eight neighboring counties to reserve space in their jails for Prince Edward County protestors.³⁰¹ Although the county had enough space to house the imprisoned protestors, county leadership wanted to intimidate the demonstrators to discontinue their direct action protests.

The County protest movement received little support by Longwood and H-SC administrators and faculty members. Much of the faculty, with few exceptions, kept a hands-off approach to the local school dilemma. Longwood professors had remained publically neutral on desegregation throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In a faculty survey, one-third of the faculty supported segregation, one-third opposed the school closings, and

²⁹⁹ “Virginia Negroes March in Protest,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1963, 7; Ben A. Franklin, “10 Negroes Seized in Farmville, VA,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1963, 47; *Farmville Herald*, July 28, 1963, 1; Ben A. Franklin, “More Jails Ready at Farmville, VA,” *New York Times*, July 30, 1963, 14; *Washington Post*, July 27, 1963, B2.

³⁰⁰ Ben A. Franklin, “VA Negroes Seized at Church,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1963, 10; *Farmville Herald*, July 30, 1963, 1. See also, Rev. Samuel Williams, interview by author, Farmville, Virginia, March 10, 2010.

³⁰¹ “More Jails,” 14.

one-third favored integration but were afraid to express their opinions. A sympathetic Longwood professor privately lamented that “the time is not yet ripe for the organization of open opposition.”³⁰²

The social ostracism and outright hostility by local segregationists prevented a moderating voice in the County. A group of white moderates, known as the “Bush League,” met secretly to design a plan to reopen the public schools. Less in favor of desegregation and more in favor of a functioning public school system, these white moderates spoke out against closing the schools during Board of Supervisor meetings. By 1960, the Bush Leaguers came to realize the futility of speaking against the segregationist power structure in Prince Edward after leading segregationists distributed the names of these “race traitors” throughout the County. They were subject to hostility from segregationists who did not conduct business with them.³⁰³ In the case of one moderate, his friends refused to sit with his family at their local segregated church.³⁰⁴ Virginia House of Delegates member Watkins M. Abbitt petitioned the State Superintendent of Instruction to dismiss one moderate professor. Abbitt expressed his amazement “that a State Department would keep State personnel in a community whose sentiments do not coincide with local sentiment.”³⁰⁵

³⁰² Edgar A. Schuler and Robert L. Green, eds., “A Southern Educator and School Integration: An Interview,” *Phylon*, 28, no. 1 (1st Quarter 1967): 28-40, esp. 36.

³⁰³ Robert C. Smith, *They Closed Their Schools: Prince Edward County, 1951-1964* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 175-184.

³⁰⁴ Schuler and Green, “A Southern Educator,” 28-40.

³⁰⁵ Watkins M. Abbitt letter to J. Barrye Wall, Box 5, February 1, 1961, in the Congressional Papers of Watkins M. Abbitt, University of Richmond. The professor, C. Gordon Moss was not terminated for his actions, which symbolized a change in Virginia’s segregated politics.

Nevertheless, one lone dissenting voice among college administrators remained in in Prince Edward. C. Gordon Moss, history professor and dean of Longwood College, had consistently opposed the school closings in public meetings, in letters to the editor of the *Farmville Herald*, and in speaking engagements around the state.³⁰⁶ His opposition to state policy attempted to undo Jim Crow educational policies in the County. In a letter to *The Farmville Herald*, Moss issued a plea to the white community to resume the public school system. Citing the burden of tuition costs on the un-schooled populations, he implored blacks not to cripple blacks for life. “With no embarrassment to any one, we can admit we have attempted the impossible, and simply resume public education.”³⁰⁷ As a member of the Virginia Council on Human Relations (VCHR), Moss met with county leaders and other state educational leaders to “network among local, state, and federal entities to discuss their individual roles in reopening the schools.”³⁰⁸ By the fall of 1962, the VCHR held a conference in which attendees argued that reopening the public schools seemed infeasible due to a “lack of funding and the [difficulty] of finding teachers.”³⁰⁹

The efforts of student protestors and white moderates coincided with federal support. The establishment of the temporary and federally-funded Free School offered a stop-gap for black children. By August 1963, the Free School teachers met. The superintendent, Neil V. Sullivan, faced difficulty staffing the program. VSC president,

³⁰⁶ Schuler and Green, “A Southern Educator,” 28-40. Moss demonstrated his endorsement of the public school system by using his son as a participant in the desegregation effort. He did not enroll his son, in the eighth grade in 1959, at Prince Edward Academy. Instead, he sent his son to a boarding school outside the state. In 1963, when the Free School opened, Moss enrolled his son, Richard, as one of the first white students.

³⁰⁷ *Farmville Herald*, August 28, 1962, 4A.

³⁰⁸ Brian E. Lee, “A Matter of National Concern: The Kennedy Administration and Prince Edward County, Virginia,” (M.A. thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2009), 130.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

and Free School Board of Trustees member, Robert P. Daniel, enticed eighteen Virginia State student-teachers to assist the program.³¹⁰ With a challenging task, the Free School set out to provide remedial education for over 1,500 students. Local college students lent their skills as after-school tutors. Some students taught a few classes in the ungraded classrooms. With the Board of Trustees headed by former governor and University of Virginia president, Colgate Darden, the Free School gained some legitimacy in white segregationist circles. But his place at the helm did not dampen their resolve to maintain segregated schooling, nor did it decrease their discontent with student protest movements.

Even though Prince Edward had disgraced the nation with its school closings, the student boycott movement was more appalling to local white business and political leaders. One store owner considered the protests as “the next thing to blackmail.”³¹¹ The state’s attorney labeled the demonstrations as “harassment of the citizens of Prince Edward County and the state of Virginia.”³¹² The protests had acquired federal attention, shamed that local leaders would choose segregation over educating black youth. With the promise of educational intervention, the demonstrations had achieved some success. However, local white leaders detested the direct action tactics of protesters as disorderly behavior. Hoping to avoid attracting further federal intervention in the “state matter” of public education, local white leaders resented having their hand forced by black activists.

³¹⁰ Neil V. Sullivan *Bound for Freedom: An Educator’s Adventures in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, 1965), 80-91.

³¹¹ Emanuel Weinberg letter to Watkins M. Abbitt, Box 5, in the Congressional Papers of Watkins M. Abbitt, University of Richmond. See also, Lee, “A Matter of National Concern,” 171. Weinberg owned a department store in downtown Farmville. Ironically, when the Free School opened, Weinberg made a sizeable donation to support the federal initiative during a time when most white merchants avoided any appearances of endorsing the desegregated Free School.

³¹² Frank Nat Watkins to Albertis Harrison, Jr., Box 5, July 30, 1963, in the Congressional Papers of Watkins M. Abbitt, University of Richmond.

They warned black leaders to cease-and-desist all civil rights demonstrations, arguing that they would form a “disruptive influence” on school.³¹³ J. Barrye Wall, *Farmville Herald* editor, painted the protests as the brainchild of Communist-inspired, outside agitators.

But the federal government thought otherwise. After receiving reports of the nation’s series of civil rights movements, Robert Kennedy regretted the path of white resistance in Farmville. On the hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, Kennedy noted that “with as much sadness as irony that outside of Africa south of the Sahara, the only places on earth known not to provide free public education are Communist China, North Vietnam, Sarawak [Borneo], British Honduras—and Prince Edward County.”³¹⁴ Prince Edward’s lack of a free and public formal education system gave the moral high ground to civil rights demonstrators. Segregationists, not the protesters, Kennedy argued, made the United States appear hypocritical by creating a totalitarian state marked by no education of its people and restrictions on free speech.

Prince Edward college students agreed. In a *Farmville Herald* editorial, a Hampden-Sydney student urged county leader to abandon its strict adherence to segregation. Until the leaders did, “Prince Edward County look[ed] senile, foolish, and backward in the frowning eyes of the nation.”³¹⁵ In 1963, a poll conducted for the Longwood student paper, *The Rotunda*, revealed that the female student body viewed segregation negatively. Designed to “determine the attitudes of Longwood students

³¹³ “Prince Edward Negro Students Win the Right to Join Picketing,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1963, 50.

³¹⁴ Robert F. Kennedy, “Kentucky Centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation speech,” Freedom Hall, Louisville, Kentucky, March 18, 1963.

³¹⁵ Burton G. Hurdle, Jr., “Prince Edward Deserves Slap,” *Farmville Herald*, March 26, 1963, 4A.

towards an educational problem,” the poll revealed that seventy-five percent of the student body expressed their approval of teaching desegregated classes and 67% felt an obligation to the unschooled children.³¹⁶ *The Rotunda*’s editor launched an attempt to compel her peers to get the State Theater to admit blacks. She wrote:

This space which usually contains the editorial is blank for two reasons:

- (1) The tone of the editorial which was to appear here was considered by the administration to be too antagonistic for publication.
- (2) The blank space is to remind us that an unsolved social problem exists and will continue to exist until we find a satisfactory solution to it. Such a solution can come about only through the combined efforts of the groups who have created it. May we be willing to put forth that effort.³¹⁷

The editorial raised the controversy meter but met the approval of Longwood president, Fred O. Wygal, signaling a thawing of segregationist tendencies by college faculty and administrators.³¹⁸

Meanwhile, in North Carolina, the student protest movement had also witnessed an upsurge since the 1960 sit-ins. In April 1960, SNCC was formed on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh. North Carolina College for Negroes student protesters continued their boycotts and sit-ins of segregated institutions throughout the 1960s. Over 600 NCCN protesters were arrested.³¹⁹ When student activist Quinton Baker entered NCCN in the fall of 1960, he immediately joined the student chapter of the NAACP. Throughout 1962 and 1963, Baker explains the students’ goal of desegregating Durham. “We had massive demonstrations downtown, we had boycotts of the stores and we were

³¹⁶ “Kennedy Draws Virginian Cheers,” *New York Times*, May 12, 1964, 27.

³¹⁷ Donna M. Humphlett, Editorial, *Rotunda*, October 16, 1963, 2. “Prince Edward, VA., Race Stand Is Questioned by Campus Editor,” *New York Times*, October 27, 1963, 65.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Anderson, *Durham County*, 438. Also, Reid, *A History of North Carolina Central*, 70-71.

having, we were doing mass rallies in the evening.”³²⁰ In Chapel Hill, national Southern Christian Leadership Conference leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke to the college and black communities in May 1960. He encouraged students to maintain their non-violent protests. Between 1961 and 1963, Lincoln High students contrasted the ironies of American democracy in the Cold War climate, Lincoln students marched carrying placards stating: “Krushchev Can Eat Here But We Can’t.”

Although Lincoln High students often spearheaded civil rights protests, some tensions emerged between college students and high school students. At the heart of the tensions lay the issues of maturity and commitment. College students debated the effectiveness of high school students, and high school students questioned the objectives of college undergraduates. In one gathering of student leadership at NCNN, the College student body president Robert Kornegay insisted that high school student participation in direct action tactics should be limited because “they are immature. If they go on a sit-down they may not even know why they’re there. But if you have a hand-picked group with a good leader it might be all right. We stress non-violence, but to some people this means violence.”³²¹ Kornegay may have been correct to some degree. Lincoln High students came to fisticuffs with white hecklers outside one heated demonstration site. To Lincoln students, their passions ran hot over the desegregation of public accommodations. Chapel Hill was their hometown, unlike many UNC students. It was where their families lived and where they invested their time, energy, and money.

³²⁰ Quinton Baker, interview by Chris McGinnis, February 23, 2002, K-0838, in the Southern Oral History Program (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³²¹ “Students Relate Experiences: Fellowship Discusses Sit-down Strikes,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 29, 1960, 2.

Desegregating public businesses symbolized first-class citizenship and a sense of belonging to these black teens. The University students, particularly whites, did not have a similar investment in the meaning of the protests.

Both groups of student activists came to realize that a broad coalition endorsing and embracing non-violence was the key to effective change in Chapel Hill. In a March 1960 pamphlet, UNC and Lincoln students accepted “picketers of any race, high school age and beyond, ONLY if they agree THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will they resort to violence.”³²² Non-violence allowed the student protesters to play to Chapel Hill’s liberal image. The newly formed UNC chapter of the NAACP called for an end of discrimination at the UNC Hospital and the Planetarium.³²³ Acting president Paul Dommermoth, a graduate student from Avoca, Pennsylvania, argued that “Chapel Hill has the reputation of being the threshold of liberalism. We can use this as a lever to accomplish our goals.”³²⁴ As one UNC professor cunningly noted, “Tonight we have violence in Birmingham, quiet in Chapel Hill. Perhaps a smattering of violence might be a good thing to shake up the last outpost of bigotry.”³²⁵ What undergirds this statement is not the tone of violence, but the liberal notion that peaceful protests should be met with reasonable responses. Students who engaged in non-violent protests should receive proper treatment due to their responsible actions.

³²² Records of the Office of Chancellor, William B. Aycock #40020, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³²³ “Racial Bars Charged at UNC Hospital and Planetarium,” *Durham Morning Herald*, November 22, 1961.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ “Perilously Ill-Advised Call to Violence,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, May 8, 1963.

The students sought the assistance of the CORE and the NAACP for training in non-violent tactics. Because CORE had a nearby office, Chapel Hill students called upon Floyd McKissick to send activists capable of training them in how to resist arrest and how to react to hecklers. McKissick, one of the first black graduates of UNC, headed the Durham CORE office. By 1963, he recruited the help of NCCN student, Quinton Baker to train Chapel Hill protestors' nonviolent demonstration tactics. Baker served as a member of the "NAACP Commandos," a group fifteen activists that went around the state to assist communities in non-violent demonstrations.³²⁶ CORE and NAACP came to put on workshops in Chapel Hill and worked at black churches for two consecutive Saturdays. They taught Lincoln students what the reaction of whites and the police would be and how to react.³²⁷

By the spring of 1963, the Chapel Hill student demonstrations were in full swing. A new civil rights UNC student organization, the Student Peace Union (SPU), formed in the spring of 1963. In its mission statement, the SPU called for "a society which will both peace and freedom, and which will suffer no individual or group to be exploited by another."³²⁸ Seeing the civil rights demonstrations as an extension of world peace, the

³²⁶ Quinton Baker, interview by Chris McGinnis, February 23, 2002, K-0838, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³²⁷ Powledge, *Free at Last?*, 214. Gordon Carey, the regional organizer for CORE, noted that while no other black participant described the assistance of civil rights groups, reporters fail to ask about outside help. For a detailed local study of Chapel Hill student activism, see Chapman, "Second Generation." and Marcellus Barksdale, "Civil Rights Organizations and the Indigenous Movement in Chapel Hill and North Carolina, 1960-1965," *Phylon* 47, no. 1 (October 1986): 29-42.

³²⁸ "A Resolution of the UNC Chapter of the Student Peace Union," March 17, 1963, in the Records of the Office of President William C. Friday Files #40009, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

small minority of its members joined the ranks of civil rights protesters, challenging the segregated public accommodations in downtown Chapel Hill.

Their protests did not succeed. In fact, they backfired. The SPU had initially protested Max Yarborough's eating establishment, the College Café for its segregated practices in April 1963. The crowd ballooned and the movement spread to other restaurants on Franklin Street throughout the spring. Rather than shut down the restaurant, SPU founding member and UNC graduate student Patrick Cusick argued the scrutiny boosted Yarborough's business. Cusick contends that "they sold out of food the first day with people breaking the picket line. The owner came out and thanked us for having the pickets and asked us to continue. Other restaurant owners asked us if we would transfer to their restaurants."³²⁹ Moreover there was a contingent of local residents who opposed the nuisance caused by public demonstrations. Another group opposed business proprietors' presumptive loss of authority in making business decisions: "It is a dangerous move when any government; local, state, or federal can tell any and every owner and operator of a business how he MUST operate that enterprise."³³⁰

In part, the SPU's protests failed because of its protest style. Ordinarily resistant to civil disobedience, Cusick came to rely on such tactics to overcome the racial complacency in Chapel Hill. In May 1963, Cusick proposed that members of the SPU combine forces with the anti-war Women's International League of Peace and Freedom in opposition to the annual Armed Forces Day ceremony in downtown Chapel Hill.

³²⁹ Patrick Cusick, interview by Pamela Dean, June 19, 1989, L-0043, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³³⁰ "Public Accommodations Ordinance is Rejected by Board of Aldermen," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, June 26, 1963.

Together, the two organizations decided to march during the celebration, holding peace symbols.³³¹ The march and signs created such a stir. A group of UNC students labeled the marchers Communists and national traitors due to their opposition to war. As a result, any efforts the SPU used to demonstrate for civil rights met resistance. UNC fraternities and the NROTC required pledges to break the picket lines because of the SPU's stance on the Vietnam War and its members' repeated presence in front of well-traveled student businesses.³³²

To gain some momentum from stalled desegregation movement, the SPU joined with members of the newly created student-led civil rights organizations. Harold Foster, Lincoln graduate and North Carolina Central undergraduate, had directed the Chapel Hill Council on Racial Equality since the early 1960 sit-ins.³³³ This group used picketing and negotiations to persuade local segregated businesses to desegregation. Though the town's leaders recognized the value of desegregation, no pressure was applied to segregated merchants to desegregate their businesses. By May 1963, Foster decided to form the Committee for Open Business (COB), with the purpose of negotiating with Chapel Hill political leaders, but if that failed to produce results, to engage in pickets and marches. With the energies of the SPU and the numbers of black student protest groups, the COB possessed the ability to practice consistent and sustained protests.

³³¹ Cusick interview.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ As a Lincoln High student, Harold Foster had led Lincoln students' protest of Jim Crow accommodations in 1960. While at North Carolina Central, Foster commuted to Durham from Chapel Hill. Continuing to live in Chapel Hill allowed Foster to maintain organizational ties with Lincoln's up-and-coming student leaders and with UNC student protestors.

Unfortunately the enlarged protests still did not materialize in measurable results. Although members of the COB maintained their demonstrations on a daily basis, it was not enough to shift the Board of Aldermen's stance on desegregation. The Aldermen put the question of the town's responsibility to desegregate local business to a vote. In a two-to-six decision, the Aldermen elected to reject an ordinance to desegregate public accommodations.³³⁴ The group's attempts to reinvigorate the civil rights protests had stalled yet again.

Taking lessons from the national civil rights movement, Chapel Hill student activists learned effective protest strategies. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom demonstrated the strength of inter-organizational alliances. In August 1963, members of national civil rights organizations converged on the Washington Monument to amass public and governmental support for a national civil rights bill.³³⁵ The success of the March demonstrated that cooperation among the civil rights groups for a common purpose produced results. In a public statement on the March, President John F. Kennedy pledged federal executive support for the goals of civil rights' organizers.³³⁶ The March's success toughened the resolve of Chapel Hill protesters. By the fall of 1963, many of COB's activists combined forces with members of the Chapel Hill Freedom Committee,

³³⁴ "Public Accommodations Ordinance is Rejected by Board of Aldermen," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, June 26, 1963. The Aldermen supported a wait-and-see approach to desegregation, which had proven ineffective, as few businesses voluntarily desegregated. The two who supported the ordinance were Hubert Robinson, the first black elected member, Adelaide Walters, a supporter of civil rights protests.

³³⁵ Representatives from the prominent civil rights organizations, including CORE, NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Students Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and the National Urban League were present.

³³⁶ John F. Kennedy, "Statement by the President on the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," August 28, 1963, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9383>, (accessed January 14, 2012).

creating a coalition of UNC faculty, students, and local black and white citizens.³³⁷

Employing grassroots organizing strategies, local protesters sought assistance from the bottom by cooperating with local student groups and from the top by continuing their relationship with CORE.

They, along with various other student civil rights organizations, met in the fall to discuss how to best bring about desegregated public accommodations. Protesters decided to issue an ultimatum to Chapel Hill town leaders: pass a bill desegregating public accommodation or activists would march from Durham to Chapel Hill. When Chapel Hill leaders refused to budge, activists honored their threat. On January 12, 1964, over one hundred college, high school, faculty and community activists marched twelve miles in the sleeting rain to compel Chapel Hill's town leaders to action. Confronted by continued inaction on town leaders' behalf, student protesters participated in "lay-ins." Still, Chapel Hill leaders failed to pass a public accommodations bill. On February 8, nearly 400 UNC students took turns interfering with UNC's passion—basketball. Demonstrators decided to "lay-in" the streets of downtown Chapel Hill to obstruct patrons from attending the UNC-Wake Forest basketball game. By March, two UNC and two Lincoln High students initiated a fast in downtown Chapel Hill to commemorate Holy Week. For an eight-day period, these students, and those who joined, chose to symbolize the "the daily sufferings of the Negro citizens of Chapel Hill."³³⁸ Still, the public accommodations bill had not passed.

³³⁷ William D. Snider, *Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 269. James Vickers, *Chapel Hill: An Illustrated History* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Barclay Publishers, 1985), 177.

³³⁸ Leaflet, March 19, 1964, in the Joseph W. Straley Papers (#5252), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

Like some national civil rights groups, non-violent Chapel Hill activists willfully accepted the threat of white violence and arrests in order to turn the movement into a moral cause. In December 1963, student activists non-violently endured being doused with ammonia, kicked, struck with broom handles, and urinated upon by white segregationists.³³⁹ They also faced widespread arrests.³⁴⁰ Chapel Hill police arrested four Lincoln High and UNC student protestors—Christine Glover, Hope Van Riper, Charliese Cotton, and Patrick Cusick—and sentenced them to a thirty day jail term or a fifty dollar fine.³⁴¹ After their December arrest, the four arrested students released a statement that “the conscience of the community and the nation must be awakened to the task of eliminating segregation [which] is best done through individual sacrifice.”³⁴² Comparing their sacrifice to that of Jesus Christ, the students opted to “atone for the sins of others” instead of allowing the wickedness of segregation to remain unchallenged. They remained in jail, but were martyred for their cause.

Town and state leaders worried that the student protests would tarnish the state’s purported liberalism. Unlike the vocal recalcitrance of states in the Deep South, Chapel Hill toed a much more moderate line. The direct action demonstrations, however, drew undue attention to the town. As an editorial in the *Chapel Hill Weekly* argued:

³³⁹ James Farmer, “Campaign to Make Chapel Hill’s Tradition a Reality,” *CORE-lator*, February 1964. These violent acts were committed predominately by the owners of a local hang-out, the Rockpile.

³⁴⁰ By the end of December 1963, the Chapel Hill police had logged nearly seventy-five arrests of civil rights protestors, including students and faculty.

³⁴¹ “Judgment of the Superior Court,” December 12, 1963. In the Floyd McKissick Papers (#4930), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³⁴² “Why Four People Chose Jail,” December 1963, in the Floyd McKissick Papers (#4930), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

Chapel Hill is no Birmingham. But the efforts of some few agitators - and that word is used advisedly - who are now trying a sorry and unnecessary routine of violence there could bring Chapel Hill into the same disrepute which deservedly hit Birmingham and which could undeservedly hit Chapel Hill.³⁴³

North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford agreed with these sentiments, insisting it was “rather an unfortunate choice, to make Chapel Hill the symbol of this kind of resistance.”³⁴⁴ The demonstrators, therefore, appropriately warranted their arrests.

Despite the student protests, local politicians refused to endorse the protesters’ tactics.

From December 1963 to the spring 1964, the local and state legal system rang the death knell for direct action protests. At nearly every demonstration during this time period, arrests were made by the local police. By April, over 1,500 student and faculty demonstrators were arrested and over 200 of them sent to trial in Orange County. The judge, Raymond Mallard, despised the protest movement and its impact in radicalizing the state. Hoping to thwart further collegiate direct action protests, he identified fifteen of the movement’s college leaders; and, Mallard sentenced them to six-month prison terms plus fines. College administrators expelled these students.³⁴⁵ Unfortunately the arrests did drain the local movement of UNC student activists willing to risk their academic lives for civil rights. Joseph Straley wrote to Paul Newman requesting his participation in the Committee of Concerned Citizens to reinvigorate the movement on

³⁴³ *Chapel Hill Weekly*, January 15, 1964, 2B. See also, William H. Chafe, *Civil Rights and Civilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). Chafe introduced the idea of North Carolina’s “progressive mystique” to describe how a mask of southern gentility prevented North Carolinians of taking measurable steps toward racial change.

³⁴⁴ Terry Sanford, interview by Brent Glass, August 20 and 21, 1976, A-0328-2, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³⁴⁵ Governor Sanford ultimately commuted the demonstrators’ sentences and fines of fifteen protesters, but did not erase their convictions. During this time, college administrators were forced to comply with state laws. On June 26, 1963, the General Assembly passed the Speaker Ban law, which placed restrictions on demonstrators’ free speech.

UNC's campus. He argued that "students for the most part have been apathetic; the few who have been active on behalf of civil rights have gone all out."³⁴⁶

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the UNC student movement, UNC administrators supported the mission of desegregationists, in principle. J. Carlyle Sitterson, who had served as history department chair, assumed the chancellorship in 1966. He argued that the work of protest must not come from the top-down but the bottom up. Sitterson reasoned that it was inappropriate for a college leader to commit the school to a particular policy. Student unrest merely prevented the operation of college programs.³⁴⁷ After all, the purpose of colleges, UNC President William Friday asserted, was to keep the university open and maintain its programs.³⁴⁸ The cautious liberalism of these college officials revealed the challenges of southern liberalism. North Carolina governor, Robert Scott, asserted that "...for as long as I am governor, it will remain the central function of the teacher to teach, the central function of the student to learn."³⁴⁹

Liberalism lacked action. In the fall of 1968, Stokely Carmichael accepted an invitation to speak on the conditions of blacks in the fall of 1968. In his talk, Carmichael linked the black American struggle for freedom with similar global battles. He harangued against "the pitfalls of liberalism" by identifying three critical failures.³⁵⁰ First,

³⁴⁶ Straley Papers.

³⁴⁷ William C. Friday, interview by William Link, November 26, 1990, L0145, in the Southern Oral History Program, (#4007) in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ "Governor for 'Firmness' On Campuses," *Durham Herald Sun*, February 18, 1969.

³⁵⁰ Black Student Movement (BSM) Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

liberalism included people from a wide range of income levels, from the wealthy to the poor. Economic self-interest would prevent hearing the interests of poor people because the economic gap is too wide control. Second, liberalism supported the status quo by championing influence over power. Carmichael argued that this permitted liberals to make promises but fail to follow through with action. Third, liberalism precluded action. This allowed, Carmichael contended, conservatives to amass greater political power through their active policies in enforcing “law and order.” Quinton Baker agreed with Carmichael’s assessment, stating that “Chapel Hill for me was, a wine-sipping, cheese-eating, liberal community... That talked again about desegregation and believing in our cause, but disagreed with how we were doing things.”³⁵¹ On a collegiate level, despite UNC’s liberal stance, the University did not take affirmative action in enrolling many blacks in its programs or hiring any blacks for academic positions. In the fall 1967, 113 blacks were enrolled out of 13,352 students.³⁵² By the fall 1968, fewer than 0.5% of academic positions were black.

Perhaps the criticisms of parents, students, and the public had goaded the University into failing to take greater strides in desegregating its campus. While certainly a polarizing force, Jesse Helms’ WRAL-TV forum had directed the some of the state’s citizens’ attention to the need for greater discipline instead of greater integration. Helms derided UNC for allowing “arrogant students” to “strut and threaten. It will suit us just as

³⁵¹Baker interview.

³⁵² The black students who did enroll at predominately white colleges, such as UNC, felt pressure “to be the best prepared academically and the least radically inclined.” Junius A. Davis and Anne Borders-Patterson, “Black Students in Predominately North Carolina Colleges and Universities,” sponsored by the North Carolina State Board of Higher Education, Educational Testing Service Southeastern office and College Entrance Examination Board (Durham and Princeton, October 1971), 13, BSM Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

well if they continue to act like the jackals that they have proved themselves to be. If nothing else, they may serve as useful reminders to an apprehensive public that discipline is not in over-abundance on our campuses.”³⁵³ More conservative UNC students agreed with Helms’ assessment. In 1969, Grainger R. Barrett, president of the newly formed Hayakawa Society, said “the moderate students on this campus need an organization to speak their views.”³⁵⁴ Barrett had received approximately 400 signatures on petition to obtain a charter for the club. “Our organization is trying to make it clear that there are moderates on this campus and that they are in the majority and that they do have opinions even if they’re not active.”³⁵⁵

The middling position at UNC created space for even more radical student groups to emerge. In the fall of 1967, Preston Dobbins transferred to UNC from Chicago City College. There, he had engaged in the young Black Power Movement and had worked as a community organizer with educational programs. Dobbins sought to maintain his level of activism on campus but grew frustrated by the level of inactivity of the UNC chapter of the NAACP. The student activism that once focused on desegregation, now channeled toward a wide variety of student movements, lay dormant. But the small numbers of black students on the predominately white campus heightened awareness of their racial identity. As one student summed up his experiences on a predominately white campus, “I’ve become bitterer and blacker.”³⁵⁶ The result came in the mission to form a Black

³⁵³ Jesse Helms, WRAL-TV “Viewpoint,” Number 1306, March 4, 1966, in the North Carolina Collection, in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³⁵⁴ Tom Gooding, “Moderate Student Group to Oppose Radical Image,” *Daily Tar Heel* February 23, 1969, 1.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Davis and Borders-Patterson, “Black Students,” BSM Clippings.

Student Movement (BSM) organization with a purpose to increase the awareness and presence of blacks on campus. Chancellor Sitterson accepted the BSM as an approved student organization in the fall of 1967.

Within its first year, the BSM intended to quicken UNC officials' slow pace of desegregation. BSM presented a list of twenty-three demands to Chancellor Sitterson on December 11, 1968. They argued that "UNC is guilty of denying equal educational opportunities to minority group members of the local community, the state of North Carolina and the nation at large."³⁵⁷ The BSM called for a black-centered curriculum, increased recruitment of black students and faculty, and an activist role of UNC in the black community.³⁵⁸ Sitterson only conceded that BSM had a right to be recognized and that the practice of using white mediators to handle black problems be discontinued. The student leaders of the BSM pledged to "STOMPING DOWN and DEMANDING that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill IMMEDIATELY revise its operational policies." They challenged UNC officials to employ their administrative power "to make additions...and only additions, not 'changes'" to the BSM demands.³⁵⁹

Championing participatory democracy, the BSM also helped UNC foodworkers advocate for greater rights. The BSM called upon the college's leadership to use its influence in enhancing the labor rights of its workers. The food workers approached the

³⁵⁷ Reply by Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to a Set of Demands Presented to Him by the Black Student Movement, December 11, 1968. (reply Jan. 24, 1969), BSM Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³⁵⁸ "Chamberlain, Scott Ponder Joining BSM," *Greensboro Daily News*, February 19, 1969.

³⁵⁹ Reply by Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, BSM Clippings.

BSM because they could provide “assistance, support, and manpower” to the strike.³⁶⁰ In October 1968, the workers received help in composing a list of grievances to the “Employers of Lenoir Dining Hall.” The list included twenty-one suggestions to improve employer-employee relations. The BSM offered support and shared tactics for obtaining their better working conditions.

UNC dining hall workers had wanted job stability and increased labor rights. Their supervisor, George Prillaman, had forced workers to work split shifts, kept them on ninety-day probation as temporary workers, charged them for meals they did not eat and refused due process. The issues that irritated the Foodworkers the most were the lack of firm schedules, the absence of a full job description, the use of mandatory overtime, the low pay. With a majority black service staff and a majority white managerial staff, the workers also desired a black supervisor who could relate to their issues.³⁶¹ They sent their list of grievances to Prillaman, who ignored the complaints.

Overall the UNC administration did not respond affirmatively to all the BSM’s requests, or to their assistance of the Foodworkers. Six weeks after the BSM issued its list of demands, Chancellor Sitterson responded with a nineteen-page statement. He argued that the University could not provide unique treatment for any single race, color, or creed, as the group requested, but did agree to develop strategies for attracting black students to UNC.³⁶² Sitterson requested further evidence of the poor working conditions

³⁶⁰ Ashley Davis, interview by Russell Rymer, April 12, 1974, E-0062, in the Southern Oral History Program (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³⁶¹ Tony Lentz, “UNC Pine Room Sitdown Staged,” *Durham Morning Herald*, February 24, 1969, A. 1-2.

³⁶² Reply by Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, BSM Clippings.

of black campus workers. What resulted amounted to a stalemate: the University made a little effort to hasten desegregation, but much less effort to preserve desegregated gains by addressing the concerns of the campus' black communities. This position of neutrality would mark the Sitterson administration throughout further student demonstrations.

With the help of the BSM, the foodworkers engaged in a month-long direct action protest. After four months of being disregarded, Lenoir dining hall workers hatched a plan to force the dining hall management and the University to take notice. On February 23, 1969, the workers went to work as usual, but soon began to walk from behind their counters and sat at the cafeteria tables. The next day, half of the staff failed to report to work. The BSM sprang into action. Instead of picketing and distributing leaflets outside Lenoir Hall, they took over the dining halls—Lenoir, Chase and the Pine Room. They served students and practiced “slow-downs,” or sitting one person to a table, in order to limit the amount of business from being conducted as usual in the building.³⁶³ This “slow-down” process proved quite successful in hindering the food service’s business. Because students were assigned to tables at the dining hall, these slow-downs affected the total campus. Students were unable to eat if tables were not available. The BSM students and foodworkers established a soul food café in Manning Hall on campus to provide options for students.

The violence that arose from the strike led to its end. The sit-down protest of BSM students sparked violent confrontations between students and the student-activists. On March 4, 1969, a student threw a chair in frustration from not having access to dining hall food. BSM members responded by exchanging words and

³⁶³ Lentz, “UNC Pine Room.”

overturning tables and chairs.³⁶⁴ Lenoir closed for two days. It reopened under the National Guard sent by Governor Robert Scott. The BSM regrouped with the dining hall workers and maintained the makeshift dining facility in Manning Hall. In the following week, Governor Scott decided to send a decisive message that student protesters or striking laborers would not prohibit business on a state campus. To deliver this message clearly, Scott ordered the arrest of six students involved in the March 4 scuffle and he sent seventy-five state troopers to maintain patrol over the dining halls, ensuring the food service ran smoothly.³⁶⁵ Scott also ordered Manning Hall evacuated.³⁶⁶ The strike ended on March 21, 1969 after Governor Robert Scott met the workers' demands for a wage increase.

By May, a new campus food management system, SAGA, replaced Prillaman. SAGA had promised to comply with the workers' demands, but they ultimately replicated the same unstable working procedures Prillaman had employed. The University remained silent. By the fall of the year, the workers organized a chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union. By November, nearly all of the 275 full- and part-time dining hall workers went on strike again. UNC's administration attempted to take a neutral stance by allowing the workers and management resolve their

³⁶⁴ Davis interview. See also, Preston Dobbins, interview by Jacquelyn Hall, December 4, 1974, E-0063, in the Southern Oral History Program (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina.

³⁶⁵ Memorandum of Claiborne S. Jones, March 13, 1969, BSM Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. See also Davis and Dobbins interviews. The troopers remained on campus for five days. The students were fined and given a two-year suspended sentence.

³⁶⁶ "Statement on the Evacuation of Manning Hall, March 13, 1969, Box 25, in the Records of the Office of the President William C. Friday Files #40009, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

problems on their own. This time, however, a broad-based coalition of students and faculty across the state forced the University to take a stronger position. UNC promised to locate jobs for the workers.³⁶⁷

The imprint left by the Black Student Movement began to dismantle desegregation on UNC's campus. UNC actively supported black recruitment and black curriculum in the late 1960s. The Carolina Talent Search was formed in the fall of 1967 as "an independent group of students outside of the official recruitment organization of the University." It had become an official Student Government organization with appropriated student money. Student members, predominately black, visited high schools, identified prospective students and corresponded with individuals to encourage them to apply to UNC. The Talent Search asserted that "a great part of equal opportunity is equal access to and knowledge of the opportunity [and] the Talent Search seeks to work with any group that is interested in the extension of college opportunities."³⁶⁸ In 1968, thirty-seven black students were admitted but only twelve enrolled as freshmen.³⁶⁹

In 1969-1970, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions had accepted 142 black students out of the 180 applicants. Sixty-two black students entered in the fall of 1969.³⁷⁰ The relatively low numbers of black student enrollees alarmed UNC officials. They set out to actively seek qualified black applicants. From September 15, 1969 to mid-January 1970, UNC official Dean Dawson visited approximately 100 black schools, mostly in

³⁶⁷ Davis interview and Dobbins interview.

³⁶⁸ "Carolina Talent Search," 1969 *Yackety Yack*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 246.

³⁶⁹ BSM Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Twenty-nine students admitted the reason they turned down their acceptance letters was due to financial reasons.

eastern North Carolina. He spent two to three and one-half hours in each school talking to nearly forty black students. As a result of Dawson's efforts, the Admissions office anticipated nearly a fifty percent increase in black student applicants. UNC expected to accept nearly all of the 260 applications from black students, but without financial assistance they anticipated fewer than 75 would attend.³⁷¹

Active steps had to be taken in order to attract black students to white colleges. As one study demonstrated:

Simply telling the student that the [white college] system is open [to them] is not enough. Experience with secondary school desegregation has taught him that court removal of a legal barrier does not necessarily imply elimination of the traditional attendance patterns or mental blocks by minority youth. Students caught in a historical pattern of separate education without some special university program will simply continue to attend the Negro school.³⁷²

Project Uplift was an aggressive recruitment tactic by UNC targeted black high school juniors. Fifty juniors were chosen and a limited number for seniors to go to UNC for three to four days during each of the sixteen weeks of the fall and spring semesters. To qualify, the students had to have a minimum score of 800 on the SAT and be in the upper 2/3 of their class. They also had to cover their extraneous costs.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Ibid. UNC predicted they would likely admit between 200 to 250 students to the fall class of 1970.

³⁷² Kelly Alexander, Jr. and Jim Hornstein, "A Proposal to Encourage Minority Student to Attend the Several Divisions of the Consolidated University of North Carolina," January 1970, Project Hinton Clippings, Box4, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Unfortunately, the strategies used by white colleges relied on the assumption that black students were academically unprepared for academic rigor. Consequently, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) experienced a brain-drain, as historically white colleges and universities (HWCUs) sought out the best and brightest black high school students, leaving HBCUs with poorer and lower-achieving black students. This effort took a toll on public HBCU's finances, with schools often received fewer state dollars and attracted fewer grants.

³⁷³ Ibid.

But these affirmative steps led white colleges to question whether black students were up to the academic rigor of college at desegregated institutions. Academic departments questioned the philosophical issues of “fairness” versus “justice,” just as the nation engaged in debates over the merits of affirmative action policies. UNC professor H. Douglas Sessoms, chair of the Curriculum in Recreation Administration, expressed his support of Sitterson’s actions, or inactions as the case may be. In a letter, Sessoms wrote:

I feel the University would make a tragic mistake if it were to compromise on these matters from either feelings of guilt or “welfarism.” I believe we would do both the students and ourselves an injustice in acknowledging racial differences and interests. I thought we had done away with racism as a matter of policy but the recent action of some of our faculty and students would indicate they would prefer the reestablishment of racism...I do appreciate your unwillingness to single out one segment of our campus and offer it preferential treatment. Equal opportunity and justice must prevail; anything less is an indictment of our integrity and intelligence.³⁷⁴

UNC officials scoured various statistical data to observe whether black students had the aptitude to succeed in college. They scrutinized whether students’ Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and grade point averages (GPA) from high school were good predictors of college performance. Officials debated developing separate admissions requirements for black and white students.³⁷⁵

Because college administrations acted on the behalf of the state, they rarely were a force of change in overturning segregation in secondary public schools or in public accommodations. This bidding was often done at the hands of its students. In Chapel Hill

³⁷⁴ Letter from H. Douglas Sessoms to Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, February 3, 1969, BSM Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³⁷⁵ BSM Clippings, Box 1, in the Records of Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson, #40022, University Archives, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

and Farmville, students came of age during the direct-action, classic phase of the civil rights movement. Students' demonstrations caused upheaval to existing Jim Crow racial geographies and threatened to expose the hypocrisies of U.S. democracy. Using the town's rhetoric to their advantage, Chapel Hill blacks and UNC and NCCN students illuminated flaws in Chapel Hill's touted progressivism. In not-so-progressive Prince Edward County, college students witnessed white leaders' appalling commitment to segregation at the cost of no formal schooling for five years, which garnered national attention. While some Longwood and H-SC students sought ways to bring formal education to unschooled black children through acceptable protest channels, secondary and college-aged black students engaged in vocal protests. As colleges' administrative policies sought to reduce demonstrations, it was the protests of students and faculty that helped to dismantle segregated education. Though black colleges' very existence benefited from racial segregation, college administrators did want greater services that would be received only through desegregation. Their tacit support, along with NCCN and VSC students' activism, also toppled segregated strongholds. These experiences inspired many college students to push for the racial empowerment of disenfranchised groups. The desire for racial empowerment, particularly in the public schools, would mark the relationship between whites and blacks in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

WHOSE CURRICULUM IS IT ANYWAY? 1964-1983

*"The issue is equalization."*³⁷⁶

Willie Shepperson, R.R. Moton High School, 1969

*"We desegregated, we didn't integrate. We desegregated by bringing these black children, by closing their school, closing their way of life, absolutely destroying any semblance of what they were used to. And bringing them out to this white school with still the white school name, with still the white school song for basketball, football, school song, white song. You know, there wasn't any semblance of integration whatsoever! Nothing, nothing, nothing."*³⁷⁷

Barbara Lorie, Chapel Hill High English Teacher

*The issue is not the people versus the public schools...The issue is the **control of public schools**. The question is: Will public education be controlled by the people who pay for it, or by the federal courts, which under pressure of organized minorities threaten to dominate it?*³⁷⁸

J. Barrye Wall, Sr., editor of the *Farmville Herald*

In 1969, both Chapel Hill and Prince Edward high schools had erupted in racial unrest. Angered by school officials' exclusionary practices, black students and parents protested their decreasing voice and control over the decision-making processes at their schools. They protested the uneven balance of power in the hiring and firing of teachers,

³⁷⁶ Bill Sauder, "Prince Edward: Pride's Two Sides," *Richmond News Leader*, April 29, 1969, 7.

³⁷⁷ Barbara Lorie, interview by Melissa Froemming, February 26, 2001, K-0211, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 4.

³⁷⁸ J. Barrye Wall, "The True Story of Prince Edward County," *Farmville Herald*, August 14, 1964, 1B, 6B. Emphasis is Wall's.

curriculum choices, and placement of black school memorabilia. Taking their battle to school board meetings, classrooms, and school hallways, Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill black students and parents commanded the attention of school officials and white parents.

Chapel Hill and Prince Edward represent ideal communities for exploration. By the late 1960s, North Carolina's Pearsall Plan and Virginia's Perrow Plan had been ruled unconstitutional. In its aftermath, both communities' school leaders had to reinvent their desegregation plans to incorporate greater racial diversity in each school. Refusing to be omitted from educational policymaking decisions, local blacks insisted on equitable participation. With one high school in each community, Chapel Hill and Prince Edward provide a compelling look into the inner-dynamics of how race, choice, and power unfold.

Questions over how school decisions would be made, and by whom, would mark the subsequent years of school desegregation; and they would also call into question the roles of power and choice in during a period of racial unrest and political realignment occurring in the nation. This chapter will explore how blacks tapped into the larger struggle for greater political power and control over their children's schools and within their communities. I argue that these struggles took place in school decisions and especially over curricular and personnel choices. The direction of courses and placement of students carried much weight on the future direction of their children's place within their larger communities.

Much has been written on early twentieth century curriculum of black schools, but not much has been written on the curriculum of post-1960s schools. The curriculum

is a fertile ground to analyze the political milieu. For southern whites, changes to curriculum eased their fears of an inadequate desegregated school system for their children. For southern blacks, changes to the curriculum signaled a power shift in which they, not predominately white school boards, had control of the public schools.

While the desegregation of the public schools offered blacks greater opportunities and better school resources, it also seemed to signal the end of an era when blacks directly controlled how and what their children were taught. In 1966, measurable school desegregation occurred in Chapel Hill. Lincoln High closed as a secondary school, sending high school aged students to the newly built Chapel Hill High building. To many parents, the hope of integration promised brand-new textbooks, access to science equipment, and improved curricular choices. Sheila Florence, one of the first blacks to begin the high school desegregation process in 1965, captured the views that most black parents called the “white is right” syndrome. She recounted her mother’s enthusiasm for Florence to attend Chapel Hill High School, which influenced her decision to serve as a token black student:

Mama [said] “Well, I think you oughta go,” because of their education was so much better, that was one thing that was stressed upon. [She said] that we wouldn’t have the same books, [teachers] were teaching one thing at Lincoln, another thing at the white schools. And so I said, well, I’ll go.³⁷⁹

Yet, to black students, desegregation meant losing part of the prized Lincoln High heritage. Lincoln, known for its amazing marching band and championship-winning sports teams, would no longer serve as the center of young black social activity. Florence admits that the band made Lincoln students feel “like a somebody” in the black

³⁷⁹ Sheila Florence, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 20, 2000, K-0544, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 17.

community.³⁸⁰ Without Lincoln High's dominating presence, black students lost a sense of school pride and a sense of cultural belonging. The long-term detrimental effects of desegregation, it seemed, undercut its more immediate educational gains for blacks. Jim Crow education had provided black parents with a greater voice in the decisions about student discipline and teacher choices, and gave them a stronger presence in their children's schools.³⁸¹ Desegregation raised the question of how to blend black and white students' experiences under one school building. Unfortunately, this question rarely considered blacks' desires. In fact, the union of dual school systems often resulted in a decline of black control over educational decisions.

Lincoln High had represented an ethos heavily reliant on community support and collective action.³⁸² The school served as the center for social activities and cultivated a sense of family. Former Lincoln High student, Clementine Self, recounted how her

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 17.

³⁸¹ In 1967-68, the school board approved forty-one administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and coaches to work at Chapel Hill High. Only seven African Americans composed the staff. In 1964, Lincoln High had eighteen blacks on staff, including one black principal and two black guidance counselors. A majority of these educators lost their positions and had to seek work outside of Chapel Hill with the implementation of desegregation. Of the African Americans who kept employment with the school system, many were demoted. Former Lincoln principal C.A. McDougale became the assistant principal at CHHS; school board officials debated hiring coach William Peerman of the long-standing state champion "Mighty Tigers" Lincoln football team. In a contested school board vote, officials approved and appointed Peerman as assistant football coach at CHHS. The remaining five black positions were filled by veteran African American teachers: Gwendella C. Clemmons (business), Ruth D. Pope (home economics), Reginald D. Smith (shop), Alice Battle (French), and Vivian Edmonds (guidance).

³⁸² For scholarship on the culture of caring African American schools, see George Noblit, and Van Dempsey, "The Demise of Caring in an African American Community: One Consequence of School Desegregation," *The Urban Review* (1993) ; Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); George Noblit and Van Dempsey, *The Social Construction of Virtue: The Moral Life of School* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996); and Vivian G. Morris and Curtis L. Morris, *Creating Caring and Nurturing Educational Environments for African American Children* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey, 2000).

parents supported Lincoln High's football team, even though they did not have a child playing on it:

My father never had a son to play sports. My brother never played sports. But there's not one of my mother's nephews or my father's first cousins or any family member that my parents didn't go to every single football game. Home or away. They supported those guys just like they had a son out there playing.³⁸³

Lincoln's legacy and reputation preceded itself. Keith Edwards remembered how she desperately longed to attend Lincoln High:

Like I said, ever since probably about five years old I'd just dream and dream and dream about going to Lincoln because Lincoln was just like electricity. The school was so vibrant and had so much, it's just kind of hard to explain it, but it was so alive. And it used to just beat like a drum. And it connected with everybody in the community.³⁸⁴

Fred Battle, another former Lincoln High star football player, commented on the collective nature of Lincoln's Parent Teacher Association:

The PTA was one of the chief fundraisers for the school. Whatever was lacking—band uniforms, sometimes curtains for the stage, lines or stuff for the gym or score clock for the gym—the PTA was instrumental in providing those type of resources for us.... Whether it was plate selling or whatever, they would ask for contributions from their community. They managed to get the money some way. They were a driving force.³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Clementine Self, interview by Bob Gilgor, February 10, 2001, K-0562, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 18.

³⁸⁴ Keith Edwards, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 2, 2001, K-0542, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 7. Historians who have discussed the challenges of nostalgic memories, see Jack Dougherty, "From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (September 1999): 712-723 and Barbara Shircliffe, "'We Got the Best of That World': A Case for the Study of Nostalgia in the Oral History of School Segregation," *Oral History Review* 28, no. 2 (2001): 59-84.

³⁸⁵ Fred Battle, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 3, 2001, K-0525, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 7.

According to Clementine Self, racial insularity marked the closeness of the community. Sharp racial geographies defined the borders of local neighborhoods. Blacks knew their place—and they in turn formed an inward community. Keith Edwards explained that self-reliance embodied the black community:

Because we were in the black community and we felt, well, we were never really gonna leave the black community, and then we had our own schools, we had our own stores, our cafes, restaurants. We had transportation, which were-- We had cabs that ran, local cab companies that ran. And so we really had everything that we needed right here in the black community.³⁸⁶

But with desegregation came the loss of many black traditions and customs that Lincoln had cultivated for many years. Former Lincoln High student, Gloria Jeter, expressed her frustration with the losses wrought by integration:

Their theory was, or the B.S. they fed us was that they were going to merge the two schools. Well in my mind, when you merge two things you bring something from both and put them together. Well they forgot to do that. They brought the mascot, the colors, everything from Chapel Hill High School, nothing from Lincoln.³⁸⁷

Very few things from Lincoln were preserved, including faculty and staff. Black teachers lost their jobs or were demoted. The new, integrated educational system in Chapel Hill blotted out, as oral historian Barbara Shircliffe phrased it, the “best of that world,” or that segregated experience. Elizabeth Carter, former Lincoln student and school board member, described what it was like to watch Lincoln High principal Charles McDougle’s declining status at Chapel Hill High. Mr. McDougle, affectionately called “Mr. Mac,”

³⁸⁶ Keith Edwards, interview by Bob Gilgor, December 14, 2000, K-0541, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 5. Edwards was also a former Lincoln High School student who experienced the change to desegregated schools.

³⁸⁷ Gloria Jeter, interview by Bob Gilgor, December 23, 2000, K-0549, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 6.

represented an imposing figure that held each student accountable for their actions. Carter remarks that:

[Mr. Mac] demanded respect. And it became a point like he was more of the disciplinarian, he was the bad person at the integrated high school...I just gradually, as you watched him, I saw that the respect he received at Lincoln, he was not receiving it from others at Chapel Hill High. And I started to perceive this perhaps medium-height man begin to shrink. And that was my vision of him, that he no longer, even being, for a man, he was a short man, to see him not be as powerful as he was at Lincoln High.³⁸⁸

Sadly, black parental involvement in their children's school vanished along with Lincoln's school customs. By conflating the diminished presence of African American parents in desegregated with the high level of parental participation in segregated schools, Clementine Self explained why black parents disengaged from the formal process of making school decisions after desegregation:

The PTA meetings were business meetings. They discussed things that they would do for the school. They discussed budget items. But the parents were involved...I mean, the auditorium would be full. Parents were actively involved. And today, people talk about—and you see it, that African American parents aren't involved in the PTA. But I think, today, sometimes, parents feel that—feel rather intimidated. Because there's a certain little group of parents who are running everything and in charge of everything and the African American parents who don't feel like they're in the same social-economic class, don't want to be part of that group. They don't feel comfortable in that group and they don't feel welcome.³⁸⁹

Stella Nickerson, a member of the first desegregated graduating class of 1967, offered another explanation why many black parents stayed away from Chapel Hill High. She argued that black parents never had ownership over the desegregated school:

³⁸⁸ Elizabeth Carter, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 27, 2001, K-0535, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 13-14.

³⁸⁹ Self interview, 17-18.

The parents are really staying away. The majority of the teachers are white teachers—I don't think [black parents] feel as if that's a place they can go and be comfortable...They didn't have the [unclear] experience that we had to say that this was "our" school. They never had "our" school.³⁹⁰

Despite the decline of African American parental involvement, black students viewed their active involvement as a political act. Clementine Self made a deliberate choice to retain black cultural values. For her, desegregation was a way to have access to better resources and not to become whitened:

I was going for my education. I was really going to make a statement that I've integrated this school—or desegregated—it was never integrated—desegregated the school. That was my goal. I didn't need to go home with them [whites]. I didn't need to spend the night with them. I didn't even need to go out to dinner with them. That wasn't something I was looking for. I was happy in my own community. I didn't need that to be fulfilled.³⁹¹

Not all black students shared Self's thinking. Two sisters in the first wave of the desegregated Chapel Hill High marked their determination to ensure that blacks belonged in the school:

I didn't have much rhythm; but I figured if white people were in it [cheerleading], so should I. My sister and I were determined that if whites could join a group, so could we. I was "Inter" and she was "Gration." We joined the cheerleading squad, student government, the chess club, and anything else that was mostly white. If there was anything going down, we were going to be there to know about it.³⁹²

Other black students set out to carve their place in the Chapel Hill High school culture as well. They refused, for example, to allow white students to have

³⁹⁰ Stella Nickerson, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 20, 2000, K-0554, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 26.

³⁹¹ Self interview, 37.

³⁹² Joanne Peerman, interview by Bob Gilgor, February 24, 2001, K-0557, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina,

ownership over the new school, even with its inception. Betty King, a former teacher, describes how some blacks decided to use “freedom of choice” plans to their own advantage. Under freedom of choice, the local school board had planned to have the white students spend a year at the new Chapel Hill High School and then be joined by the black students from Lincoln a year later in 1967. Black students were unhappy with this plan because they did not want the whites to feel that the new school was “theirs.” Many blacks, King argued, decided to attend the new Chapel Hill High as a consequence:

And so when they built the new high school, the black football—basketball [team]--, the athletes, decided what they were gonna do. They were gonna let the white students school out first that first year, and the next year they were going to bring the black students in. So they decided, the kids decided, and this is what caused a lot of trouble, cause the kids just up and decided themselves, that no, we are going when everybody goes. So all of them applied to the high school...And the kids said, “No, we’re all going out there at one time. So it won’t be *their* school.” Cause they felt like that if they went out there ahead of time, it would have been their school, and we were following them.³⁹³

Local activist Edwin Caldwell, Jr. maintained that the students’ desegregation strategy dovetailed with legal principles involved with freedom of choice plans. If Lincoln High’s student enrollment dropped below a certain percentage, it had to be closed.³⁹⁴

The students’ activism galvanized their parents to support their children. Rebecca Clark, a former Lincoln High graduate who agitated for better pay conditions during her time as a University Laundry employee, enlisted the help of other black parents to demand the school board transfer all the black students to the newly

³⁹³ Betty King, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 12, 2001, K-0550, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 28.

³⁹⁴ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, December 5, 2000, K-0532, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 3.

desegregated Chapel Hill High. Blacks had come to her house to address letters to the school board. Clark remembered black parents demanding “their children go the school where they can get the best—they can have a good science room, a larger library, larger this, and all of that.”³⁹⁵

During the first few years of desegregation, black students’ desire to have a stake in the new high school took a backseat to school officials’ efforts to maintain a grip over student discipline. In the era of rampant student protests—civil rights, anti-war, feminism—officials wanted to diminish any student dissent. They did so by instituting programs designed to appeal to contemporary issues in a classroom setting, initially on a trial basis. In March 1968, Chapel Hill High hired staff teachers to replace traditional teachers who were attending a workshop on handling school desegregation. The initial success led staff teaching to become a semi-permanent fixture in the Chapel Hill High curriculum. Staff teachers, unlike the traditional teachers, provided students the opportunity to discuss a range of topics, which administrators perceived as interesting to the student body. This initiative served to keep the students from “becoming bored in study hall or disobeying a substitute teacher who knows nothing about the subject being studied.”³⁹⁶ When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in April 1968, school officials took painstaking steps to ensure no violence occurred at the high school. They encouraged staff teachers to discuss touchy subjects, mostly about racial discrimination

³⁹⁵ Rebecca Clark, interview by Bob Gilgor, June 21, 2000, K-0536, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 21.

³⁹⁶ Barby Prothro, “Approaches by Teachers Examined: Students Question Staff Teachers,” *Proconian*, April 26, 1968. In the Chapel Hill High newspaper, the *Proconian*, topics ranged from psychedelic records to racial problems. Not all students, however, found value in the staff teaching strategy. Students, mostly white, viewed the classes as “completely asinine” and “a waste of money and students’ time” because teachers tended to support a one-sided positive view of black culture.

and the Vietnam War. Discussing various controversial subjects inside a classroom *and* away from vocal outbursts outside the classroom allowed school officials a means of control of the student population.³⁹⁷

Even as the school board tightened its rein over high school students, the student body tried to cope with each other in a racially unified school system. All of the white traditions had carried over to Chapel Hill High, including the Junior-Senior dance, Drama Club, and the Latin Club Slave Auction. Furthermore, the junior varsity and varsity cheerleading squads failed to pick any black females. Black students felt ostracized from the white Chapel Hill High traditions, preferring those of Lincoln High instead. Remembering their former school's championship sports teams, band, and cheerleaders and witnessing the absence of blacks in their new school's social identity made blacks feel invisible.³⁹⁸ Blacks' diminished presence at social functions caused many white students to presume blacks lacked school spirit, while black students attempted to find some black cultural identity in the new school. White and black students met on common ground when they decided to revise the school's constitution and make student

³⁹⁷ Stephen Scroggs, interview by Elizabeth Hamilton, April 9, 2001, K-0220, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina.

³⁹⁸ *Hillife* yearbook, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1967, 1968, 1969, and 1970. There were no black females on the junior varsity or Varsity cheerleading squads until 1969, when two joined the squad of 12. Black males, however, were more noticeable on sports teams. By the early 1970s, they composed a significant part of the teams.

government policies more democratic.³⁹⁹ They also established the Race Council where “black people could tell white people like it is—how life really is.”⁴⁰⁰

By 1969, white and black high school students negotiated control school traditions. Over the summer, the school board had created an ad hoc high school committee, organized by Wayne Stone, the black student body president. It charged the group with restoring Lincoln High traditions at Chapel Hill High for the upcoming school term.⁴⁰¹ The committee’s first order of business was finding an appropriate mascot to use in the upcoming football season. The students hoped it would boost school morale and unify the student body. Stone suggested they use Lincoln’s “Mighty Tigers” mascot instead of the former white Chapel Hill High’s “Wildcats.” Ann Holland, a white committee member, voted against Stone’s proposal. She felt a brand new mascot would better unify the school. Brought before the entire school in early September, the student body chose the “Mighty Tigers” as mascot by a margin of 75 votes. The ad hoc committee next proposed to change the school song and devise a method for electing junior graduation marshals.⁴⁰²

The inclusion of black culture began to change the high school atmosphere, giving blacks more power within their school. High school teachers contributed to the shifting power by placing more control in the hands of their students. History teacher,

³⁹⁹ “New SCA Constitution Adopted by Tremendous Majority Vote,” *Proconian*, October 8, 1969, 1. Rather than petition for office, prospective candidates would register for a primary election where the top two candidates would head to a run-off election. A smaller candidate pool increased blacks’ chances of becoming one of the two candidates in an election run-off.

⁴⁰⁰ “Race Council,” *Proconian*, November 4, 1968.

⁴⁰¹ “Local Boards Plans School Improvements,” *Proconian*, October 8, 1969, 1.

⁴⁰² “School Election Changes Team Mascot,” *Proconian*, October 8, 1969, 1. The student body voted to change the school through a student contest. They also voted to elect the junior marshals for graduation evenly—four blacks and four whites.

Joseph Knight, developed an Afro-American Studies class with the “purpose to give students a better understanding of Afro-American heritage but also to study relationship between Afro-American culture and other cultures.”⁴⁰³ Taught in chronological sequence from ancient African culture to the present, the course provided black students, in particular, a way to understand how much blacks have influenced American culture. Rather political in nature, the class used no textbook and was graded on the “ability to accept the opinions of other students regardless of race.”⁴⁰⁴ Another teacher sponsored an extracurricular club, the Society for the Study of Afro-American Culture (SSAA), created for “that necessary pride that comes from a knowledge and love of one’s own culture and background.”⁴⁰⁵ For black students, these conciliatory steps proved they had a presence, and voice, at the school.

Groups of teachers also tried experimental teaching strategies to elevate the black experience at the high school. Developed by a former Peace Corps worker and high school teacher, Teachers Incorporated was a self-styled desegregation institute seeking new methods and materials to deal with new curricular standards and attitudes in the integrated school by involving the local community, proposing teacher in-services, and introducing new curriculum.⁴⁰⁶ Twenty-nine teachers, only one black, participated in this pilot project. Derek Williams, new Chapel Hill High social studies teacher, joined

⁴⁰³ “Afro American Studies Added As New Course in Curriculum,” *Proconian*, October 8, 1969, 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ “Teachers Inc.,” *Proconian*, October 8, 1969. Dave Betts, Alice Battle, Jack Engler were members. Engler organized his fellow English teachers to teacher an experimental, independent study course.

Teachers Incorporated in his first years at the high school. Teachers Incorporated encouraged students to speak civilly on current issues, giving many black students the opportunity to voice their grievances in a respectful way.⁴⁰⁷

In the first years of desegregation, Chapel Hill school officials were pleased with their role keeping the peace at Chapel Hill High. The town's local press had reported no unfavorable stories about the merger of Lincoln High students into the recently constructed integrated Chapel Hill High. Chapel Hill Superintendent Dr. Wilmer Cody decided to ease black students' transition into an integrated school through the inclusion of black history into the curriculum.⁴⁰⁸ These courses were "to develop positive self concepts and identity through a study of the contributions of black people to American life."⁴⁰⁹ Seemingly, the students had meshed well academically and socially. By 1969, the high school had celebrated its third year of successful integration. But appearances were deceiving because just beneath the school's image of success brewed racial tensions and hostilities between white and black students and between black students and the largely white school administration.

⁴⁰⁷ John Derek Williams, interview by Joyce Uy, April 10, 2001, K-0223, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina. Williams identified three dominant groups at Chapel Hill High: University sons and daughters, black community and Carrboro kids he described as relatively poor white, textile mill working class." Despite his progressive efforts with Teachers Inc., Williams explains he shared a stronger rapport with middle-class whites rather than poor whites and blacks.

⁴⁰⁸ Chapel Hill Carrboro School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1967-1968. Between 1958 and 1967, the Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools had run through nine superintendents, one for every year, creating a "discontinuity in administration." When Wilmer S. Cody assumed the superintendent position in 1967, he immediately sought federal funding for teacher training for desegregated conditions. He also sought to overcome the increasing lack of black parental support, which had actively supported their children's segregated schools. He employed a number of reading enrichment programs to bring black students' reading abilities on par with white students.

⁴⁰⁹ "Black Studies' Program Will Begin This Fall," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, August 20, 1969, 5. Also, several *Proconian* articles 1968-1969.

While the house of cards built by Chapel Hill school officials and students threatened to tumble, Prince Edward County residents debated the best way to reconstruct the public school system. The public schools reopened on September 8, 1964, with 1,500 students, only eight white. The Board of Supervisors reluctantly funded the public schools to the bare minimum required by federal mandate. Surprisingly the public schools hired nine white teachers, integrating the county's teaching staff for the first time in its history.⁴¹⁰ Married adults with children returned to complete their education.⁴¹¹ Older students were placed in classrooms with much younger classmates. Teachers taught in classes with students on a variety of academic levels. In many cases, students were nearly the same age as their teachers.⁴¹² In the first year of the school reopening, school officials had not created a stable placement plan. What resulted was a fluid space where black parents and white school officials jockeyed for control over public school decisions.

Prince Edward County Superintendent Bryant Harper had assumed the role in 1964 after long time Superintendent T. J. McIllwaine retired.⁴¹³ Like all of the other white school board members, Harper lived in a racially exclusive neighborhood, attended a segregated church, and placed his children in the private all-white Prince Edward Academy. Harper began publicly to state to various education groups the hopeless

⁴¹⁰ Prince Edward County School Board, Superintendent Federal Census Report, Prince Edward County 1964-1965, Farmville, Virginia.

⁴¹¹ Jamie Ruff, "Course Explores Still Painful Prince Edward Schools Struggle," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 19, 1995, C1. See also, Lance Morrow, "Prince Edward and the Past: Massive Resistance Has Faded, but Something Hidden Remains," *Time Magazine*, November 20, 1989, 58.

⁴¹² Edward "Blue" Morton, interview by Ken and Laurie Hoen, October 7, 1992, "Not Our Children," Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society, Mss15 N8437a, 144.

⁴¹³ Superintendent McIllwaine had witnessed many changes in the Prince Edward public school system. He served as superintendent for the county schools from 1918 to 1965.

situation of the county's public schools. After three years as superintendent, Harper concluded that black students had no chance of succeeding in the schools. While the school board supported Harper's assessment, the white male leadership of the county school board wanted to avoid any federal interference with the public schools. Harper's statements raised the ire of a committed group of African American parents who formed a Citizens' Advisory Committee. They leveled a complaint against him with the school board calling for his dismissal, charging him with "transfer[ing] his own pessimism and lack of confidence to the teachers, and then the teacher pass[ed] this lack of confidence to the pupils with the inevitable result that the pupils will do less well than they otherwise could."⁴¹⁴ To them, Harper posed a threat to black education as his priorities certainly would not result in overseeing quality educational resources and teachers for public school students.

Although black parents called for Superintendent Harper's dismissal, they took more of an issue with the school board's hiring policies. At a special committee meeting of the school board in November 1969, the Committee demanded the dismissal of Elementary school principal James McLendon and the rehiring of veteran black teacher Elizabeth Hill Watkins.⁴¹⁵ While the teaching staff remained predominately black, the small contingent of white teachers garnered the most attention. The parental Advisory

⁴¹⁴ Reverend L. Francis Griffin, Editorial, *Farmville Herald*, August 14, 1968. Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, March 10, 1969. Reverend Harry Hudson, African American member of the Advisory Committee, argued "the schools cannot move forward with Mr. Harper as Superintendent. Mr. Harper has no diplomacy."

⁴¹⁵ Prince Edward County School Board, Special Committee Meeting, Farmville, Virginia, November 5, 1968.

Committee attended frequent meetings with school board officials to keep tabs on who was hired or fired.⁴¹⁶

White Moton High teachers rarely connected with their black students. A high turnover rate marked the early years of desegregation, as many teachers left the school after a year or less.⁴¹⁷ The white teachers who did stay with the public schools constantly expressed frustrations with students who lagged so far behind. Few developed tight bonds with black students, but Thomas Burwell Robinson, Jr. was one such teacher. Robinson, a popular white English teacher at Moton High School, differed from his other white colleagues. He seemed to understand the students' plight. As a recent graduate from Hampden-Sydney College in 1967, Robinson made significant inroads with his students by incorporating contemporary topics into his classes and allowing students to express themselves freely in class.

When the school board chose not to renew Robinson's contract based on his "disrupting conduct" in late April 1969, a majority of the student body was in an uproar.⁴¹⁸ Moton High Principal A.O. Hosley reasoned that Robinson's firing was "the straw that broke the camel's back."⁴¹⁹ The firing of Robinson merely lit the powder keg of frustrations building in the predominately black student body. The school board claimed that evidence of Robinson's conduct came from "routine school investigations."

⁴¹⁶ For more on black parental activism, see Dwana Waugh, "'The Issue Is Control of Public Schools': The Politics of School Desegregation," *Southern Cultures*, 18, no. 3 (Fall 2012).

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.* Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, 1969 to 1974. In fact some white teachers failed to report for classes. Because the school system was desperate to retain their employment, they were often given a verbal warning before being fired.

⁴¹⁸ "Students Protest," *Richmond News Leader*, April 23, 1969.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The student body organized a protest instantly. The school board called for his immediate dismissal on Tuesday April 15, and by Monday April 21, half of Moton High students had created placards and flyers demanding Robinson's contract be renewed.⁴²⁰ They devised what they hoped would be effective strategies to secure their beloved teacher's job, but to also call attention to the lack of black representation in school leadership: a sit-in and a protest march.

On Monday, students staged a sit-in in Moton High's auditorium, with half the student body participating. They locked themselves into the auditorium, refusing to attend classes. When the students realized their teacher was not rehired, the students continued their protest on Tuesday. On Wednesday, 300 students, composed mostly of Moton High students, fifteen Hampden-Sydney College students and a handful of Longwood College students participated in a protest march to the county courthouse. The crowd started at Moton High at 9:15 a.m. and walked two miles to the county courthouse, where they remained except for a brief respite at Rev. Griffin's First Baptist Church, until 2:45 p.m.⁴²¹ Marching to the courthouse, students chanted "Harper can't turn us around; we're not gonna let ol' Harper turn us around; we're gonna keep right on walkin' till we get TB back."⁴²² The students resolved to continue their protests by engaging in another student sit-in at the high school the following day until the school board relented on its decision.

⁴²⁰ John Clement, "300 Moton Students to Farmville," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 24, 1969, C1, C5.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Ibid.

The high school students viewed their protest as a wedge of power to influence the school board to increase African Americans' control over school decisions. The press coverage of their marches and boycotts emboldened students to make greater demands. The issue became bigger than restoring Robinson's job. They now wanted, and demanded, more autonomy and presence in school personnel decisions and county political offices. At a heated school board meeting a week after the student protest began, Moton High senior Jacquelyn White warned school board members to expect further student protests. White argued that students were willing to continue their protest until school officials reinstated Robinson, appointed blacks to the school board, and fired Superintendent Harper. Fully devoted the struggle for racial justice, White insisted that "I don't care if I don't graduate."⁴²³ The students met some success, as Harper resigned in July 1969, along with two of the school board's more resistant members—Dr. Ray A. Moore and George Palmer. In their place, the all-white Board of Supervisors appointed two African American men to the school board in the summer of 1969—Dr. N. P. Miller and James Holmes.⁴²⁴

Impervious to the high school students' actions and demand, as expected, the white school board demonstrated they had the ultimate power, for the moment. The school board refused to renew Robinson's teaching contract. As a consequence of the student sit-ins, the school board codified appropriate student behavior in the Prince Edward County Public Schools Student Handbook. The new behavior code limited student dissent and demonstrated the firm hand the white school board had over

⁴²³ John Clement, "Schools Reopen," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 30, 1969, 2.

⁴²⁴ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, June 9, 1969 and July 14, 1969.

predominately black student body. Another student strike or protest, the school board determined, would not threaten the county's schools again.⁴²⁵ To be sure, school officials threatened to discipline students "whether involved directly or indirectly, in the planning or execution of any disruptive demonstration or protests" to the full force of the state laws.⁴²⁶

Undeterred, Prince Edward black high school students refused to muzzle their activism. Students just discovered new ways to express their activism, rather than solely through direct-action tactics. Vowing "to make a statement" as pronounced as sit-ins, African American Moton students turned to criticizing racist school policies with the written word and to scaring local whites with intimidation tactics.⁴²⁷ Both strategies avoided sanctioning for public demonstrations (which were not fully abandoned), while illustrating black students' determination to see school officials provide better services to the public school system. Moton High student "Blue" Morton and other black students circulated a black consciousness student newspaper, *The Voice*. Influenced by Black Power strategies, the paper urged black students to act collectively to effect change in the school. Student journalists wrote articles about the ill-equipped classrooms, insufficient guidance services, and unsatisfactory curricular choices in attempts to persuade school officials to improve school conditions. Students also dressed in army fatigues to

⁴²⁵ Prince Edward County Public Schools Student Handbook, 1971, Farmville, Virginia, 31. The handbook determined that "demonstrations or protests are not appropriate methods for pupils to use in communicating their wishes pursuant to matters affecting policy, rules, and regulations dealing with the operation of the public schools. Forms of inappropriate demonstrations/protests may include, but are not limited to, carrying placards, distributing flyers, or conducting surveys without prior approval of the administration." Students who participated "may be disciplined according to the policies and regulations of the School Board, State Board of Education, or Virginia School Laws."

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Morton, "Not Our Children," 144.

symbolize black solidarity and militancy; Morton's editorial staff also found solace in having such power to raise fear among white teachers and school officials.⁴²⁸ The fear of a youthful, militant, and predominately male black group indeed struck fear into the white community. When one of *The Voice's* African American reporters was killed in a car accident by a white driver, whispers of how the black students might respond spread throughout the community. Local whites worried that there was "going to be a riot."⁴²⁹

Just as at Moton High, Chapel Hill High began experiencing heightened racial tensions too. In spite of the public perception of an unproblematic desegregation of Chapel Hill High, given the community's propensity for progress, there remained a very palpable, tense racial environment among black students and white students and teachers. While unreported to the public, former Chapel Hill High students recalled frequent physical fights in the school restrooms and hallways between white and black students. Kathryn Cheeks, a white student, remembers "getting earrings ripped out of [her] ears" in the school restroom.⁴³⁰ Cheeks blamed the excessive violence on the jealousies of black females "because a white girl would be paying attention to a black guy or vice versa, black guy paying attention to a white girl."⁴³¹ Blacks accused white students and teachers of murmuring racial slurs. Part-time Spanish teacher and graduate student, Michael Perna, allegedly called eleven black students "damn niggers" for using profane

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 145-146.

⁴³⁰ Kathryn Cheeks, interview with Susan Upton, March 27, 2003, K-0203, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

language.⁴³² Perna denied the statement and all of his white students circulated a petition to help maintain his job.

Rumors of potential black violence loomed in early November 1969. On November 11, anonymous notes were left to harass some white teachers and threaten hostile action. The following day, the North Carolina Grand Jury visited Chapel Hill High to investigate the notes and other rumors of intended violence. Over thirty Orange County and Chapel Hill law enforcement officers were also on hand, including riot-helmeted State Highway Patrolmen. They walked the halls and grounds of Chapel Hill High Tuesday morning, creating a tense racial atmosphere.⁴³³

Literally policed based on rumors, black students chalked up their experiences with desegregation as a one-sided endeavor. This anger simmered behind the confines of the school walls. A group of thirty black student leaders banded together to develop their list of grievances for the new school. Frustrated that not enough progress was being made to acknowledge black students' presence in the school, the group marched into the office of Chapel Hill High's principal May Marshbanks early on the morning of November 12 to demand that the school's administration incorporate more of Lincoln's school colors, trophies, and traditions in the new school. With a crowd swelling to 200 angry black students, they also demanded more black teachers, separate home rooms and assemblies for blacks, establishment of a separate department of Afro-American studies within the school, and more black cheerleaders on both the varsity and junior varsity squads to help them better identify with the unified school system. Principal Marshbanks

⁴³² "Editorial on School Unrest," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 9, 1969.

⁴³³ John Martin, "Officers Patrolling Tense High School," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 12, 1969.

agreed to speak only with the student leaders and told the remaining crowd to return to their classes. The larger mass of black students perceived Marshbanks' refusal to meet with all the students as a dismissal of Lincoln High's traditions and customs, confirming that the markers of their black identity were loss. As a result, these students unleashed their irritation immediately upon leaving the principal's office and began throwing chairs, punching walls and windows, throwing trash, and smashing the school's trophy case. Students ran down the halls, entering classrooms switching lights on and off, turning over desks, bookcases, and chairs, and in some cases attacking students and teachers. Two white students and one white teacher sustained minor injuries in the course of the disturbance.⁴³⁴ The local press labeled the event a riot; and consequently, Chapel Hill High closed for two days.⁴³⁵

In the immediate wake of the student disturbance, black and white parents applied pressure to the school board to protect their children. Black parents urged school officials not to arrest black students. They wanted to protect their children's academic futures. For white parents, the disturbance was a matter of public safety. Indeed the school board found itself in a cultural quandary—forced to side with whites or side with blacks. Instead, the school board chose a middle ground. School board member, Marvin Silver, had received many calls from angry white parents wanting the involved black students to be punished. He admitted the board was pushed to “make a law and order decision.” But Silver argued “until the [white] community learns about, faces up to and acts to eliminate

⁴³⁴ Ibid. Juniors Beverly Moore and Vicky Williams suffered minor injuries. Williams was hit by a thrown desk and Moore had a small cut to her forehead. Both were treated in the emergency room at the local hospital and were released in satisfactory condition. Teacher Ruth Bass had been pounded, had her hair pulled, and had been scratched by an assailant by a black female student. She was treated at a private clinic for minor scratches. The assailants were never identified.

⁴³⁵ “Student Riot at Chapel Hill High,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 16, 1969.

the double standards on its own initiative, we cannot have progress.”⁴³⁶ School board chair Roy Lindahl told the crowd that “the board is honestly attempting to run the kind of school system you’d like to have, to be fair to all.” His statement prompted a black mother to yell, “Would you like to see your children discriminated against the way the school board and the school system discriminates against ours? Can you honestly tell us the school system is equal? You can’t Dr. Lindahl because if you did you’d be a liar.”⁴³⁷ A split among the school board resulted in some members declaring “until the [white] community learns about, faces up to and acts to eliminate the double standards on its own initiative, we cannot have progress” and others clamoring for the arrest of students who assaulted students and teachers.⁴³⁸ Unfortunately for many black parents, white parents’ calls for order within the schools appeared to drown out calls for racial fairness.

Still stung by the close election with Howard Lee,⁴³⁹ Roland Giduz conveyed many white professional parents’ dismay at the disturbance at Chapel Hill High and called for more “law and order.” In an editorial to the *Chapel Hill Weekly*, Giduz called

⁴³⁶ John Martin, “Board Backtracks on Prosecuting School Disrupters,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 16, 1969, 6-7.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. School board member Marvin Silver implored his peers and white community to understand the difficulties blacks had faced in desegregating the schools. Marie “Peachie” Wicker, “About that Disruption in Chapel Hill High School,” editorial, *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 16, 1969. Wicker was a newly elected school board member who ran on a platform of restoring order and discipline in the public schools.

⁴³⁹ Howard Lee was elected mayor on May 6, 1969, by a margin of 40 votes, defeating the establishment candidate, former Alderman and *Chapel Hill Weekly* newspaper editor, Roland Giduz. He became the first black to be elected to a predominately white southern city. Rebecca Clark worked for Lee’s campaign and recalls how blacks went to extremes to increase voter turnout. Edwin Caldwell explains how proud blacks were of his victory: “you could just see their backs straighten up and see how proud they were.” See also Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview with Bob Gilgor, March 2, 2001, K-0202, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Clark interview, interview by Bob Gilgor, June 21, 2000, K-0536, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

for greater teacher and administrative control over the schools. In Chapel Hill, he contended, the “community of experts” of the liberal intelligentsia put too much emphasis on methods and new teaching tactics. As expected, Giduz argued these strategies would be “for naught until they are based on a keystone of reasonable discipline in our schools.”⁴⁴⁰ He, as other white parents, concluded that “*our children*” required adult guidance as do those who “act[ed] violently, flouting civilization, common courtesy and rashly filling in the void we have left them.”⁴⁴¹ The onus was to fall on parents and citizens to demand a disciplinary focus in the public schools, which in turn would influence the school officials, teachers, and students to act orderly. Without discipline, Giduz asserted, there was no hope for the public education system.

White parent groups crafted a coalition based around the concept of “law and order.” In the days immediately after the disturbance, nearly two hundred white parents attempted to organize a biracial committee focused on restoring order in the public schools. Only two blacks attended. Faulting the school officials for creating a racially polarized environment, white parents sought ways to remedy black students’ frustration with academic classes and the lack of black teachers and staff.⁴⁴² They also thought black parents needed to be more involved in their children’s education. Although white parents agreed that the disturbance reflected “a manifestation of our root problems [of the unequal desegregation of schools],” they privileged discipline more highly.⁴⁴³ The parents insisted on the arrest and suspension of the participating students.

⁴⁴⁰Roland Giduz, “Discipline,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 16, 1969.

⁴⁴¹*Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁴⁴² John Martin, “1st Parent Discussions,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 26, 1969.

⁴⁴³ “Concerned Citizens Groups Being Organized,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 19, 1969.

The North Carolina Grand Jury produced its findings, echoing the sentiments of many white parents. It found that black students carefully planned the riot, with some students inciting others to participate. It also validated the school administration's disciplinary measures as "a measured, reasonable response appropriate to the situation," but warned that school officials must eradicate the "climate of lawlessness in the schools."⁴⁴⁴ While the Grand Jury acknowledged the anxieties of black students who were "thrown together with large number of another race," it did not condone the black students' outbursts against school policies. Jurors recommended an improved vocational education program to "establish positive student attitudes toward educational relevance," a clear disciplinary policy overcome "widespread [black] parental permissiveness," teacher workshops on student discipline to eliminate "the uncertainty in disciplining students of the opposite race."⁴⁴⁵ Despite the Grand Jury's recognition of blacks' losses with desegregation, black parents and students saw such talk as lip-service. Blacks, not whites, received the blame for the problems of desegregated public schools.

In the end, while much had changed for blacks, little had changed. In the short-term, many of black students' demands were ignored. The school board suspended the four black male students.⁴⁴⁶ Teacher Michael Perna retained his job. Although only two black females had made the varsity cheerleading squad (out of twelve) and four blacks had made the junior varsity squad (out of fourteen), the school board declared that the year's cheerleaders were "equally distributed racially, or nearly so," setting selection

⁴⁴⁴ "Grand Jury Findings," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, January 14, 1970.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ "School Board to Get Report," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 30, 1969. The four students--Walter McMillan, Wade Cotton, Walter Cotton, and Clarence Atwater were charged with destroying school property. Clarence Atwater had an additional charge of threatening a teacher.

procedures which advisors would “continue to use.”⁴⁴⁷ It also created two permanent positions--Dean of Students and attendance officer--charged with closely observing student (mis)behavior.

Nevertheless, in the long-run, the disturbance did shine a light on the permanence of racial discrimination. It pointed to some systemic problems of burdening black students with the duty of desegregation. Principal Marshbanks and school board officials set out to develop a grievance policy to handle future requests made by students. The school board vowed that while merit would “continue to be a criterion for employment and promotion,” a “special effort [would] continue to be made to secure black applicants.”⁴⁴⁸ They also called for an improved vocational curriculum, seen as a boon as it would benefit those not seasoned for college. The unspoken assumption was that blacks would benefit most from such programs.

In the aftermath of the disturbance, school officials skillfully laid the foundation for a law-and-order system of instruction where discipline became paramount to a quality education. In part, the school board tried to avoid being lambasted by white parents for being too soft on student offenders, but also tried to prevent being skewered by black parents for being too hard on crime. Officials’ uneasy balance could tip in any either side’s favor.

Although school board officials and Chapel Hill High administrators considered their gestures to black students as generous, black students viewed them differently. In

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ John Martin, “High School Calm; Warrants Served,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 19, 1969, A1. According to employment reports, however, Chapel Hill High still had an overwhelming majority of white teachers.

the weeks after the riot, blacks refused to back down from their demanding stance. Senior Kenneth Atwater expressed his mounting indignation with school officials' complicity in an inequitable school system. He argued that the school administration "continued to frustrate the Black students, knowing full well that frustration breeds aggression and racist acts breed hostility." In the high school newspaper, Atwater hinted to a growing black solidarity and warned the administration and white students that:

Black students are tired of being told what they can't have because it's not the democratic way. Black athletes are tired of winning games for a school that doesn't have a fair representation of black cheerleaders. Tired of a white head coach, white principal, and white department heads... Blacks [are] no longer afraid to stand up for what they know is right or to the white teacher. Black students no longer try to look like white people, they don't act like white people, in short they don't identify with white people. Black students no longer ask to be given power, instead they ask themselves how in the H-ll did you whites get it anyway. One thing more important than all of this is that black students are doing their thing together. Chapel Hill High School administration and school board must produce a sincere effort to solve racial problems or riots *will* continue to happen (emphasis added)⁴⁴⁹

As with Moton High students, the growing black consciousness and determined activism of black Chapel Hill High students tapped into earlier civil rights struggles by Lincoln High leaders in the early 1960s. Chapel Hill High student, Diane Pledger, explains how black students attempted to integrate into traditionally white activities, while also keeping the pressure on school officials to maintain effective changes:

Our class was more involved in integrating and infiltrating the clubs and the activities. And the cheerleading squad, again. Being in the French club and being in the Spanish club and having your African-American culture club. Being on the newspaper staff and running for offices and having some role in leadership. Those were the types of things that were instilled in us from what had happened earlier on from the sit-ins. So we were trying to take it to the next level, which was being more involved in the leadership roles of what was going on in our schools. Making sure that we were in the advanced classes. I mean, we were supposed to

⁴⁴⁹ Kenneth Atwater, "Blacks Are Tired of Waiting," *Proconian*, Friday December 5, 1969.

be in advanced classes. Other black kids were in advanced classes. So making sure that we were not being left out.”⁴⁵⁰

Pledger insists that her older siblings and other black student leaders taught her to take an active role in effecting change in her school. “I needed to be involved in this. It was obvious that these types of things were going on not only in our community but across the whole United States. And how are you going to make change, how are you going to effect change unless you’re not part of the status quo?”⁴⁵¹

While blacks viewed their activism as exemplary of their lack of influence over school affairs, whites viewed the school riot as demonstrative of blacks’ vast impact on the school’s policies and curriculum. One white parent, William Poe, justified removing his son from Chapel Hill High because he believed that the school catered to the “prejudices of manipulative black kids who are hell bent on extracting payment for the indignities suffered by their ancestors.”⁴⁵² Blacks, on the contrary, found the riot forgettable. If they remembered it at all, blacks expressed irritation with the unfair treatment by principal Marshbanks. Instead, blacks compensated for their perceived inability to control their educational environment by cultivating a narrative of Lincoln’s success.

As Chapel Hillians queried the fallout from the fluid space desegregation created, Prince Edward County residents were set to evaluate their new county superintendent. Ronald J. Perry, Pennsylvania native, offered a fresh perspective on the public schools for

⁴⁵⁰ Diane Pledger, interview by Bob Gilgor, March 5, 2001, K-0559, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library, at the University of North Carolina, 12-13.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁵² “He’s Sending His Son to Private School and Here Are Some of the Reasons Why,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, November 20, 1970, 2-3.

both whites and blacks. After the student protests related to reinstating Robinson's job, the county Board of Supervisors hoped he would alleviate the tensions between black parents and the school board, as well as develop strategies in dealing with black students.⁴⁵³ Perry was appointed to a four year term in June 1969. Early in his term, he hired a black high school principal, Clarence Penn, to replace outgoing Alfred O. Hosley.⁴⁵⁴ Perry also oversaw Moton High's successful application to the Virginia High School Sports League, validating the public schools statewide.⁴⁵⁵ He allocated funds to improve the athletic fields in hopes of increasing school spirit; introduced new technology into the classroom, and established a "Your Schools and You: Report to the Community" newsletter in November 1969, opening lines of communication between parents, teachers and the administration.⁴⁵⁶

Perry's assumption of the superintendent position did not, however, eliminate blacks' discontent with school board members. Members of the Prince Edward parental Advisory Committee asked the school board to publicize its meetings and to consider shifting the time in order to accommodate more African American parents. Harold White had requested members publish their agenda in the *Farmville Herald*, but school board officials argued it was impossible "because of the many items and requests listed on the agenda do not come to the school board office until [three days] before the board

⁴⁵³ Patricia Pine, "You Can See the Change in Prince Edward," *American Education* 6, no. 6 (1970): 24-28.

⁴⁵⁴ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, August 11, 1969.

⁴⁵⁵ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, September 8, 1969. As members of the Virginia High School Sports League, local teams had to play against Moton High. This was significant as many surrounding counties had refused to play against the team.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. Perry purchased a number of closed-circuit televisions and reading machines to help increase students' reading retention.

meets.”⁴⁵⁷ Reginald White encouraged board members to shift the afternoon meetings to the evening. School board members countered that it was more desirable to meet in the afternoon because “after working all day, members felt it an undue hardship to have to conduct school business and lengthy meetings at night” and, since each meeting was held at a different school, they said they could “observe the instructional program in action and communicate with staff, pupils, and citizens.”⁴⁵⁸ Blacks had hoped that Perry would provide them with a greater voice in school decisions.

Unfortunately, Perry only intensified the gap between the disempowered blacks and his administration, while also creating a rift within the administration itself. His improvements—better athletic fields, new educational technology and newsletter—merely existed, blacks contended, to appeal to white parents Perry wanted to draw from the Academy. It is telling that Perry recommended changing the name of Moton High to Prince Edward County High to disassociate the names of black schools from what he hoped would become biracial schools.⁴⁵⁹ Showcased in the *Virginia Journal of Education*, *American Education*, and local newspapers, Perry’s achievements, and consequential growing god-like self-image as savior to Prince Edward public schools began to distance him from the school board members. School board chair, Kenneth Worthy labeled Perry as “dogmatic,” to which Perry quipped “at least I’m not dictatorial.”⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁷ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, August 11, 1969.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, November 10, 1969. Perry pushed the school board to also change Mary E. Branch Elementary Schools #1 and #2 (named for a prominent black female county educator) to Prince Edward County Elementary Schools #1 and #2.

⁴⁶⁰ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, June 9, 1969.

It appeared that quality education depended on obtaining quality white, not black teachers. Superintendent Perry articulated higher standards for teachers, including the need for new teachers to have a professional teaching license as a result of attending a four-year college. Existing teachers had to participate in a newly instituted teacher training program and summer programs, resulting in the exclusion of some veteran black teachers who did not want to take more programs during their summer breaks.⁴⁶¹ By hiring more qualified white teachers and phasing out older black teachers, Perry assumed it would enhance the perception of a quality teaching staff among the white majority in the county.⁴⁶² He boasted that Prince Edward recruited teachers from “the finest universities [which resulted in a teaching] staff [that] is forty percent white.”⁴⁶³

But black leaders renounced Perry’s whitening of the teaching staff. They argued that it was black teachers to whom the predominately black students and parents could relate. Relate-ability, not whiteness, determined a teacher’s quality. A coalition of black parents, led by Rev. Griffin, insisted that having the teaching staff reflect the student body “is of the uttermost importance because the system is predominately black.”⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶¹ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, August 11, 1970.

⁴⁶² Linking whiteness to quality in education was not a foreign concept to many Prince Edward residents. See also, Verdella and Leslie Hamilton, interview by Ken and Laurie Hoen, “Not Our Children,” Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society, Mss15 N8437a, October 4, 1992). Leslie Hamilton served on the school board from 1972 to 1984. His wife, Verdella, taught in neighboring Randolph County. She refused to send her children to Prince Edward County’s public schools because they “didn’t have as good teachers either in the black.” Also see the interview with Jordan Thomas (J.T.) Jackson, Jr., interview by Ken and Laurie Hoen, “Not Our Children,” Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society, Mss15 N8437a, November 11, 1992. Jackson, a 1968 Moton High graduate, exposed county blacks’ acceptance that whiteness equaled quality. He maintains that this belief “exists in the black community probably more than it does in the white community.”

⁴⁶³ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, August, 11 1970.

⁴⁶⁴ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, “A Petition to the Division Superintendent and School Board of Prince Edward County Public Schools,” Farmville, Virginia, May 11, 1970.

Black parents also demanded the school board restore the Citizens' Advisory Committee to assure greater cooperation between parents, school officials, teachers and students, missing from the early years of desegregation and from Perry's administration.⁴⁶⁵ They pushed school board officials to find a new superintendent with black students' interests in mind. Perry resigned in June 1972.

With Ronald Perry out, the school board *and* black community looked for a man with intimate knowledge of southern race relations, but had progressive ideas for public education. James M. Anderson, Jr. was their man. Anderson grew up in the adjacent Buckingham County and had worked as Buckingham High's principal. His native status helped him win the allegiance of white school board officials who wanted a superintendent willing to advocate for public schools without destroying the white southern culture that created private academies. Anderson's support of fair application of school policy had won the fidelity of black leaders who wanted black children to have access to the same benefits as white children. As principal, he had thrown off the shackles of race for educational equity. In 1969, a black girl had received the honor of being class valedictorian for the first time in its school's history. School policy stated that the student with the highest grade point average would be announced the winner of the school's prestigious honor. But the school board and superintendent of Buckingham County urged Anderson to find an alternative method in selecting the high school valedictorian. Having the discretionary power as principal, Anderson refused and chose to apply the standard evenly, without regard to race. Buckingham County's

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. Written in the margins of the minutes, school board clerk Virginia Harper noted that this point "caused dissension."

superintendent flatly told Anderson he would no longer serve as principal the following year.⁴⁶⁶

When the Prince Edward County superintendent position opened up in 1972, Anderson promised to improve school standards, boost public school morale, and hire more black teachers. In 1972, the black students composed 94.3 percent of the school population, national reading test scores were abysmally low, and students had little school spirit. Perry's installation of closed circuit televisions and reading machines received the boot. Anderson wanted teachers, not machines, to read to students. He hired Vera Allen as the Director of Instruction, a position which, four years prior, former superintendent Bryant Harper had dismissed as an appropriate job.⁴⁶⁷ Unlike Perry, Anderson appeased black parents by hiring more black teachers. He also instituted extracurricular activities appealing to whites and blacks, causing Rev. Griffin to call Anderson's superintendence "the best we've had."⁴⁶⁸

But Anderson was careful to not neglect county whites he hoped to attend the public schools. He told the *Farmville Herald* that he was "not going to encourage anyone to do anything. [Anderson believed] it should be up to the individual parent to determine where his own children should go to school."⁴⁶⁹ This appealed to whites weary of too

⁴⁶⁶ Robert C. Smith, "Prince Edward County: Revisited and Revitalized." *Virginia Quarterly Review* 1, no. 73 (Winter 1997): 3-27, see 13-14. Indeed the valedictorian spoke to an audience absent school administrators and Anderson was given an office job the following year.

⁴⁶⁷ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, March 10 1968.

⁴⁶⁸ Smith, "Prince Edward County," 15. See also, Raymond Wolters, *Burden of Brown: Thirty Years of School Desegregation* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee, 1984), 121 and Jennifer Spreng, "Scenes from the Southside: A Desegregation Drama in Five Acts," *University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law Journal*, 19 U. Ark. Little Rock L.J. 327 (Spring 1997). Anderson oversaw the inclusion of white favored sports such as soccer and tennis and the inclusion of Afro-centric clubs.

⁴⁶⁹ "New Public School Superintendent," *Farmville Herald*, July 19, 1972, A17.

much government interference in school matters. Rather than lure Academy parents back to the public schools, Anderson focused his efforts on the children of Longwood College and Hampden-Sydney College faculty members. Their children attended the John P. Wynne Campus School. Opened in September 1970, the Wynne Campus School “was definitely a dodge [that] served a purpose of being a transitional facility that made it easier for some of these local people to place their children in an integrated situation, though it was only ten to twenty percent.”⁴⁷⁰ Anderson applied economic and social arguments for the parents. He asked why they used their taxes to fund two competing public schools, swaying some parents. He asked others to form the vanguard in the public school system.⁴⁷¹

Instead of engaging in weighty battles of racial control over the schools, Anderson focused on academic achievement. One of his early focal points was adult education. For two years, Anderson had advocated the creation of a General Education Development center; by 1974, the school board established a GED center outside Prince Edward County in nearby Amelia County.⁴⁷² The GED program eliminated the presence of much older students in the same classes as younger students.⁴⁷³ This effectively

⁴⁷⁰ Spreng, “Scenes from the Southside,” 373, quotes Dr. Ron Heinemann. The Wynne Campus School offered, at best, a temporary and limited solution. Housing the first through seventh grades, the school pulled in most of the Longwood College and Hampden-Sydney College crowd. Because the school was a relatively small building on Longwood’s campus, it could accommodate only a number of students. The school allowed ten to fifteen percent of local black students to attend, a small percentage of the school-aged population in the county (around 55% by 1970). White parents seemed to agree that the Campus School served as a useful testing ground for desegregating whites and blacks.

⁴⁷¹ Smith, *They Closed*, 14-15.

⁴⁷² Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, July 8, 1974. The new policy stated that “No pupil above the age of twenty be admitted unless he makes formal written application to be reviewed by the school board (emphasis the author).” Two years after the GED center’s establishment, a handful of applicants were denied access to the public schools.

squeezed out the last of the “lost generation.”⁴⁷⁴ Public schools would no longer resemble a bygone era of visible racial strife. Instead the county would refashion a new identity based on “quality” schools.⁴⁷⁵ Integral in creating such schools, Anderson argued, was grouping students according to their academic abilities.

As an outgrowth of desegregated schools, Anderson welcomed an ability grouping placement strategy to help white and black students and teachers acclimate to the newly desegregated system. He and Director of Instruction, Vera Allen, had witnessed the struggles county teachers faced in teaching students with varied skills and abilities within the span of one class period. The use of ability grouping would separate students by ability and placed them in classes with similar ability peers. This, they argued, worked four-fold: one, students were grouped with students of similar ability;⁴⁷⁶ two, students gained greater confidence in their academic work; three, higher-ability students stayed academically motivated; and four, teachers did not have to create multiple lesson plans for one class period.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷³ Morton interview, 145. He joked that Moton High had the best football team the region because “players were 22 or 23.”

⁴⁷⁴ The “lost generation” refers to the group of students closed out of public schools during the 1959-1964 period. By 1974, the students ranged in ages, from 21 to 32 years old.

⁴⁷⁵ Prince Edward County Public School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, April 9, 1973 and February 11, 1974.

⁴⁷⁶ Vera Allen, interview by Ken and Laurie Hoen, “Not Our Children,” Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society, Mss15 N8437a, August 21, 1992, 7. Allen, the Curriculum Director, was responsible for the pupil placement strategy in Prince Edward. She reasoned that grouping “with some of his kind, those who needed the same kinds of skills” instead of by age allowed students to “help each other” academically.

⁴⁷⁷ James A. Kulik and Chen-Lin Kulik, “Meta-analytic Findings on Grouping Programs,” *Gifted Children Quarterly* 36, no.2 (1992): 73-77. Kulik and Kulik discovered that high-ability students in tracked classes achieved more highly found that high-ability students in tracked classes had higher achievement than their their similar-ability peers in non-tracked classes. See also L. M. Argys, D. I. Rees, and D. J. Brewer, “Detracking America’s Schools: Equity at Zero Cost?” *Journal of Policy Analysis and*

In Prince Edward County, John Hurt experienced the full impact of having had very little formal educational training in the reopened school system. He had just completed first grade when the schools closed and went to work on the family's dairy farm until the schools reopened. Placed in the sixth or seventh grade with more schooled peers, Hurt explained "it was just impossible to keep up, just real frustrating."⁴⁷⁸ After two years in Prince Edward public schools, Hurt dropped out, much to his mother's chagrin. He and his three older brothers found school "boring," and they felt misplaced in classes with higher achieving students.⁴⁷⁹ Hurt's educational story makes a powerful case for the utility of ability grouping in a system marked by undereducated students and unprepared teachers.

The use of ability-grouping presented a major policy issue at Chapel Hill High. Guidance counselor, Vivian Edmonds, conveyed the long-standing tension between ability-grouping opponents as those who felt "ability grouping benefits only one segment of the population and is injurious to those not grouped" versus ability-grouping advocates who felt "that the slow students will always be slow and why burden the fast people?"⁴⁸⁰ It was "obvious" to students that the high school grouped students according to ability,

Management 15, no. 4 (1996): 623-645. They found that high-track students' achievement plummeted when lower-ability students were integrated into the same class.

⁴⁷⁸ John Hurt, interview by Ken and Laurie Hoen, "Not Our Children," Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society, Mss15 N8437a, August 31, 1992, 66-67. Hurt's family of thirteen sharecropped the land of a local white dairy farmer. He concluded that whites chose to close the public schools for economic reasons, "because they didn't want us to get a learnin' because they figured if we got a learnin' we were going to leave the farm."

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 87. A functional illiterate, Hurt decided to take classes to obtain his GED once he started to reading the Bible for himself. With two teenaged sons of his own, Hurt admitted that he felt guilty pushing his children to complete school when he never completed high school. Hurt tells his sons that in an advanced world with fewer farming jobs, education is the path to economic security.

⁴⁸⁰ Griff Steel, "Semi-Ability Grouping Prevails at CHHS," *Proconian*, 36, no. 10, April 26, 1968.

but school officials refused transparent practices in student grouping. Rather than vocalizing the placement policy explicitly, school officials intentionally misled them. Students did not oppose ability-grouping or tracking on its face. Indeed, for many white Chapel Hill High students, tracking would benefit “numerous intelligent students and regrettably many students that need special help.”⁴⁸¹ The problem was less about uses of tracking and more about the lack of openness about how students would be academically placed. The covert placement tactics made Chapel Hill High students, especially blacks, feel more and more ostracized from decisions that keenly involved them. They demanded openness.

Educational theorists since the onset of school desegregation have battled fiercely over the effectiveness and fairness of ability grouping. Some theorists maintained that grouping permitted teachers to target their lessons to one specific ability level instead of to many different abilities, eliminating extra work for the teacher. They insisted that higher-ability students suffered academically in mixed ability classrooms⁴⁸² and argued that tracking prepared students for their future careers.⁴⁸³ Others contended that ability grouping was often too closely identified with tracking, where students are nearly locked into an ability grouping (low ability, average ability or advanced ability) permanently. Once placed in the low track a student has a virtually impossible chance of climbing into a higher, more advanced, track. They argued that students in lower-tracked classes were

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Kulik and Kulik, “Meta-analytic Findings,” 73-77. See also Argys, Rees, and Brewer, “Detracking America’s Schools,” 623-645.

⁴⁸³ George Ansalone, “Poverty, Tracking, and the Social Construction of Failure: International Perspectives on Tracking,” *Journal of Children & Poverty* 9, no.1 (2003): 3-20. Making an economic claim, Ansalone argues that tracking helps direct students in specific areas of the labor market.

stigmatized as “incapable learners.”⁴⁸⁴ Some educational scholars have argued that tracking and ability grouping are tantamount to prescribing Jim Crow schools for underachieving, lower-ability students.

In the early to mid-1970s, scholars began to advocate student-led, cooperative learning groups as the key to academic achievement. Cooperative learning involved students working together in small, mixed-ability learning teams. This sorting system saw “student diversity as a valued resource to be used in the classroom rather than a problem to be solved” and allowed students to demonstrate “individual accountability and responsibility for working with others toward a shared goal.”⁴⁸⁵ All the students in the cooperative learning groups learned the same coursework together and shared the responsibility for the success or failure of their group work. Yet even this system had its flaws. Predominately black and poor whites who populated low- to average-ability classes had a harder time shifting into higher-ability classes. Overcoming teachers’ pre-ascribed opinions of their academic potential proved a challenge. This grouping strategy began to fall out of favor by the early 1970s. As 1973 Chapel Hill High graduate, Kathy Cheeks revealed

Well, Chapel Hill High, if you’re smart and have means--the school is at your feet. If you’re medium, average, or below you can forget it. I think it’s just a natural selection process because Chapel Hill is so driven academically. And so if

⁴⁸⁴ Jomills Henry Braddock and Marvin P. Dawkins, “Ability Grouping, Aspirations, and Attainments: Evidence from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988,” *Journal of Negro Education* 62, no.3 (Summer 1993): 324-336, especially 326.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 335. See, also, Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1985). In 1985, Jeannie Oakes leveled charges of racism against teachers’ usage of ability grouping. She railed against ability grouping as widening the achievement gap and creating a larger disparity between the higher quality of teaching for advanced students rather than the lower quality of teaching for average or lower-ability grouped students. Oakes encouraged school systems to employ cooperative learning groups to provide an even application (and thereby equitable) of quality teachers to all school aged students.

you're academically above average, you've got every available opportunity there is. And if you're average or below, you're not. I mean it's just like "forget it, we don't have time" — I mean that's not said but the attitude is "we don't have time to mess with you. Our attention is going to be on the academically gifted kids. Figure it out."⁴⁸⁶

The laissez-faire tactics of many Chapel Hill High teachers colored black and poor white students invisible. With homogenous ability grouped classes becoming the norm, teachers began to predetermine the academic capabilities their students could have. Black students particularly took teacher-made assumptions personally. To them, teachers' hands-off teaching styles rendered blacks unseen. Elizabeth Carter described one incident

I didn't feel I would be recognized the same. Because there were times I had raised my hand and I had not been called on. And it wasn't, I think some things happened without a real thought process, without even thinking that, I'll call on John and I won't call on Elizabeth, even though Elizabeth's hand has been up. And you'd feel like, I'd been in the classroom with my hand held up--. Then after a while you get tired and you put your hand down."⁴⁸⁷

The common practice of such behavior not only assumed a powerless group of black and poor white students, it reaffirmed white racist attitudes. Couched in notions of racial ability, ability grouping and lenient teaching styles became an attempt to lessen blacks' presence within public schools. Former Chapel Hill High student, Raney Norwood, recounts the subtlety of a white teacher's discriminatory behavior.

[F]or one thing, when we came to class, she [white teacher] would make comments. They weren't hardcore racial comments, but you know. A couple of times she'd call us teddy bears, stupid, dumb. She would give assignments—and we know, different assignments from white students. She'd flunk three-quarters of the class at the end of the year—which made the blacks who had to graduate on time attend summer school.

⁴⁸⁶ Cheeks interview, 10.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 13.

Just as the public schools remained a testing ground for racial identification and power in Chapel Hill in the 1970s, Prince Edward public schools were no less contentious. Older establishment whites had used schools as a battle site for demonstrations of racial power, and the desegregated schools were no less contentious. Black leader Rev. Griffin and black parent groups and students fought to gain control over the desegregated public school system and access to economic resources. But formidable county white segregationist, J. Barrye Wall remained steadfast in his advocacy for separation racial education and in his refusal to release the funds to improve the public school system. The issues raised by the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction stayed unresolved well over a century later, with Wall ominously hinting at an unfinished struggle from both sides—white and black. By 1979, Wall argued that he and other segregation-minded whites “were defending State’s rights, state sovereignty. The principles for which Lee and the South fought weren’t settled at Appomattox...The South lost—we lost—but it’s not settled.”⁴⁸⁸

But this very battle between the white county establishment and blacks was eclipsed by the growing friction between older whites and younger professionals. Many of these younger professors were northerners and had come-of-age during the civil rights movement. In 1974, a group of young Longwood and Hampden-Sydney professors had decided to enroll their older children in Prince Edward County High. But the old guard would not be silent. They publicly ostracized these county newcomers from social functions, maintained frosty relations at church services, and garnered political seats on

⁴⁸⁸ John Egerton, “A Gentleman’s Fight,” *American Heritage Magazine* 30, no. 5 (August/September 1979): 56.

the Board of Supervisors, the group with the power to control the town's economics.⁴⁸⁹

Yet the tide was turning, as the new group of younger, white professors began to send their children to the public school and not Prince Edward Academy. That professional parents chose to enroll their children at the high school validated the public schools for other, more resistant county whites, formerly unwilling to stand against the mammoth force of the old guard. Surely, these new converts reasoned, the local professors would not allow their children to receive an inadequate education. Indeed they did not. After their arrival, the high school curriculum boasted a college preparatory curriculum. Replete with increased foreign language offerings and talented and gifted (TAG) courses, the public schools thrived. Superintendent Anderson assured college faculty parents that they would place their children "with kids from the best black families."⁴⁹⁰

School officials moved mountains to ensure the success of a cadre of intellectually bright, and white, students. One white parent explained that "if [a white parent] had a complaint, they listened to the complaint...They wanted white people in the school."⁴⁹¹ Donald Stuart, young migrant and Longwood College English professor, served as the chair of the biracial Democratic Party. He considered the "rigid segregationist" a "dying breed." Those arriving into the county, reasoned Stuart, "don't have any hang-ups about race. I wouldn't call them liberal—they're just color blind...because it's good for business."⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ Spreng, "Scenes from the Southside," 375.

⁴⁹⁰ Wolters, *Burden of Brown*, 123.

⁴⁹¹ Spreng, "Scenes from the Southside," 378.

⁴⁹² Egerton, "A Gentlemen's Fight," 64.

Blacks and white professionals forged a powerful alliance, wresting the power from the hands of establishment whites. In the 1979 county Board of Supervisors election, this pro-public school alliance gave credence to school desegregation. Dr. Bill Hendley, chair of the Hampden-Sydney economics department, won a seat. Blacks, forty percent of his district, had voted collectively for him because of his advocacy of the public schools.⁴⁹³ Though not yet silencing pro-private school advocates, the black and white alliance went a long way in garnering respect and appropriate funding for public schools. For the first time since 1954, the Board of Supervisors allocated all of the funds requested by the school board.⁴⁹⁴

Yet as younger whites began to gain more power in the county and within the school system, blacks worried they would lose control over the school which their children still heavily populated. The influx of professional parents' children had raised the percentage of white students to twenty-five percent, still significantly lower than the percentage of school-aged white children in the county. But the balance of power shifted in these parents' favor. White parents assumed new appointments to the county school board. They dominated the Parent Teachers Association. They also appeared frequently at their child's school, serving as substitute teachers and coaches. Black school official, Thomas Mayfield, refused to allow whites to "come into my house and take over." Other black leaders shared Mayfield's sentiment and successfully pushed the Board of Supervisors to nominate two long-time black educators—LaVerne Pervall and James

⁴⁹³ Speng, "Scenes from the Southside," 381.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid. Also, Edward Brookover, "Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1953-1993," *Journal of Negro Education* 62, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 149-161, see 156.

Massey—to the school board in 1979.⁴⁹⁵ They called attention to the lack of black history courses and discriminatory disciplinary practices⁴⁹⁶

Black students charged school officials and their peers with not recognizing the legacies of blacks' historical treatment. In 1977, local viewership of *Roots* generated heated arguments between white and black students. Former Prince Edward High student Blue Morton argued that *Roots* made “the whole cycle start again by hating white people” because progress did not seem much like progress anymore.⁴⁹⁷ The lack of progress, or stalemate as Reverend Griffin labeled it, stemmed in part from whites' failure to recognize the harsh legacy of slavery.⁴⁹⁸ When a group of white students argued that none of *Roots* “was true, that it was just fiction,” a coalition of black students wore dashikis to school in solidarity.⁴⁹⁹ In 1979, Eric Griffin, son of Rev. L. Francis Griffin, angrily contested the domination of the high school by whites in a campaign speech. His comments were met with thunderous applause by the black student body and a walk-out by white students.

In Prince Edward, desegregation had helped to mobilize blacks into local governmental participation, but they were still constricted by the majority white power

⁴⁹⁵ Prince Edward County Board of Supervision Book of Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, 1979-1982.

⁴⁹⁶ Edwilda Allen Issacs, Interview in *Farmville: An American Story*, DVD recording, (Farmville, Virginia: R.R. Moton Museum, 1999). Issacs, an educator in the Prince Edward school system, is the daughter of Vera Allen.

⁴⁹⁷ Morton interview, 133.

⁴⁹⁸ Egerton, “A Gentleman’s Fight,” 61-63. Using Cold War imagery, Rev. L. Francis Griffin labeled late 1970s Prince Edward County as in a racial “stalemate.” Desegregation had become the brass ring, noted Griffin, instead of merely one step in a continuing process for greater economic and social equality.

⁴⁹⁹ Vera Allen interview, 12. The secretary was in her early thirties and felt the miniseries exacerbated racial conflicts unnecessarily.

structure. Farmville town council member Armstead “Chuckie” Reid viewed life through the prism of race. Twenty years after the public schools closed, Reid correlated *Farmville Herald* editor J. Barrye Wall’s “nasty attitude at [town] council meetings” with white racism.⁵⁰⁰ He, along with the local branch of the NAACP, pushed for night meetings instead of the 1:30 p.m. time to accommodate other, mostly black, candidates. The town council rejected the suggestion arguing that they “had tried that one time before twenty-five years ago.”⁵⁰¹ Although whites still had the upper-hand in local politics by the late 1970s, blacks’ work in ushering in the desegregation of schools taught them that persistence would pay off.

The white power structure began to crumble by the early 1980s. Carl Eggleston epitomized the hope of county blacks. The schools closed when he was in the second grade and he graduated from Moton in 1967 feeling academically unprepared. Yet, Eggleston paved the way for increased political rights for blacks in the county. In 1983, he asked the Farmville town council to abolish the at-large system of voting for elected council members and requested a ward system of voting. The town council refused and Eggleston filed a federal lawsuit in June. Weary of federal legislation and the fees associated with legal fights, the town council conceded to a ward voting system. This new way of voting included two majority black districts out of the county’s seven, for once tearing down a barrier to black participation on county governmental organizations. Eggleston was rewarded for his efforts by being elected in May 1984 to serve four years on the town council.

⁵⁰⁰ Armstead “Chuckie” Reid, interview by Ken and Laurie Hoen, “Not Our Children,” Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society, Mss15 N8437a, August 19, 1992, 152.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 153.

In both places, the implementation of real and measurable desegregation raised questions of educational control. In 1964, the Supreme Court declared massive resistance illegal in Prince Edward County. Although white children continued to attend the private Prince Edward Academy, white school officials crafted the public school policies that affected black children. Because of the disconnection between those in power and those affected, school board members often designed programs that ignored the needs of black students. Yet, in rebuilding the public school system, desegregation provided black parents and students greater influence in educational policies. Likewise, in Chapel Hill, school officials created the atmosphere of the local schools without the consultation of the black community. By 1966, the town had desegregated all its schools. But, to school board members, desegregation meant the movement of black students into *white* schools. As a result, blacks lost many of their school traditions and customs. However, Chapel Hill blacks argued that real desegregation meant the fusion of both white and black cultures; and they mobilized politically to ensure they had a voice in educational decision-making. For Prince Edward and Chapel Hill blacks, these experiences bolstered them to participate in local government to make it more representative.

As desegregation came to embody political empowerment, it also reflected loss for Prince Edward and Chapel Hill residents. White school leaders' early assumptions about desegregation betrayed their low expectations of black students. Considering black schools inferior, Chapel Hill white school officials sought to give black students access to higher quality white schools, placing the burden of desegregation on blacks. In Prince Edward, white parents worried that black students lacked academic abilities. They insisted that public schools were inadequate for their children and kept them enrolled at

the private school. To prevent the loss of control over school order, whites called for more remediation and more discipline. Blacks, on the other hand, countered the assumptions of racial inferiority. Instead, they maintained that desegregated schools lacked the caring and nurturing teachers black schools had possessed. The schools also failed to teach curriculum that appealed to black students. In the case of both whites and blacks, the central issue became who would determine school decision-making.

By the early 1980s, decisions over who controlled the curriculum and the schools were still up for debate. While blacks were not arguing for a return of Jim Crow schools, they made the case that with desegregated schools their voices would be heard. But one thing was for sure—black students, teachers, and citizens, and whites, would play an active and vocal role in setting the course for the public school system.

CHAPTER 5

THE ESSENCE OF QUALITY, 1980-1994

“If you can’t learn diversity through schools, where will you learn it?”⁵⁰²

Judy van Wyk, Chapel Hill High graduate

“Racial segregation is not the offspring of racial bigotry or racial prejudice. It results from the exercise of a fundamental American freedom, to select one’s associates.”⁵⁰³

Sam Ervin, North Carolina State Senator

“I think we have to get some sense of ownership or some sense of pride in the education system itself and not because of who is there or what the ratio of population is.”⁵⁰⁴

Dorothy Holcomb, Prince Edward County resident

For both black and white parents, obtaining a “quality education” for their children became their chief goal. The meaning for instilling quality into the public education system, however, varied by race. Since the late 1960s, desegregation had remained the key focus of educational policies across the nation. Blacks vigorously pushed local school officials to adopt careful race-based policies toward student and teacher placement in order to achieve a racial balance reflective of their communities. Using racial gerrymandering tactics for school assignments and embracing affirmative

⁵⁰² Judith van Wyk, interview by Dwana Waugh, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, May 13, 2010, in the possession of the interviewer.

⁵⁰³ Sam Ervin Papers, #3847B, in the Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. See also, James W. Ivy, editor, “Looking and Listening: Dixie Dew,” *The Crisis* 63, no.5 (May 1956): 286.

⁵⁰⁴ Dorothy Holcomb, interview by Atif Gaddis and James Yount, April 15, 2002, in the Longwood Oral History Project Collection, Longwood University.

policies toward teacher hiring procedures, Chapel Hill and Prince Edward school board members complied with the black community's demands. But whites also articulated their concerns about lagging academics. They made their requests known to local school officials for a stronger academic-focused curriculum. Emphasizing the need for higher achievement test scores and stricter classroom discipline, Chapel Hill and Prince Edward school board members conceded to white parents' appeals. With white and black parents calling for more attention to their children's needs, local school leaders implemented a culturally sensitive curriculum as well as higher educational standards.

In the 1980s, the duality of race-centered education and color-blind policies for academic courses coincided with a rise of conservative federal and state policies. Although parental petitions--white and black--maintained a heavy influence over school decisions, the state and federal governments' increased focus on raising academic standards began to dominate educational decision-making. In this chapter, I argue that this educational reprioritization began to lessen blacks' ability to critique unequal resource allocation on the basis of race. Instead, federal and state politicians initiated an effective "blame game" where people, not structural inequities, became the culprits for an inferior public school system. The increased push for teacher and student accountability, in effect, limited substantive conversations about racial and economic inequalities.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁵ Educational and legal scholars have studied the link between achievement testing and desegregation, see John C. Boger, "Education's 'Perfect Storm?' Racial Resegregation, High-stakes Testing, and School Resource Inequities: The Case of North Carolina," *North Carolina Law Review* 81 (2003): 1375-1462; Tomiko Brown-Nagin, "Toward a Pragmatic Understanding of Status-consciousness: The Case of Deregulated Education," *Duke Law Journal* 50 (2000): 753-886. For a historical overview of the rise in accountability standards, see Philip T. Daniel, "Accountability and Desegregation: *Brown* and Its Legacy," *Journal of Negro Education* 73, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 255-264. For literature on the declining significance of race in public school decisions, see Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996); Charles Clotfelter, *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Derrick A. Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the*

In 1968, Richard Nixon campaigned on a pro-*Brown*, anti-forced busing, and pro-school choice platform that would define his political attitude toward school desegregation.⁵⁰⁶ During his campaign, Nixon joined forces with southern white segregationists in a “southern strategy” to secure their political votes in exchange for policies that called for greater “law and order” and most certainly less federal oversight in southern school districts in matters of school desegregation. Upon winning the election, he did not disappoint his southern constituents. In 1970, Nixon fired Leon Panetta, director of the Office of Civil Rights, for his aggressive pursuit of southern school desegregation; Nixon pushed the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (H.E.W.) to delay financially penalizing segregated southern school districts.⁵⁰⁷ He opposed federal policies that interfered with individual choice, such as mandated busing for school desegregation. Yet, Nixon also supported the principle of school desegregation

Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and John C. Boger and Gary Orfield, *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

⁵⁰⁶ For works critical of Richard Nixon’s desegregation policies, see Marian Wright Edelman, “Southern School Desegregation, 1954-1973: A Judicial-Political Overview,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 407 (May 1973): 32-42 and Leon Jones, “School Desegregation in Retrospect and Prospect” *Journal of Negro Education* 47, no. 16 (Winter 1978): 46-57. Perhaps historical distance, contextual perspective, or cloudy memories have produced a number of revisionist studies of Nixon’s nuanced attitudes towards civil rights policies. Refer to Lawrence T. McAndrews, “The Politics of Principle: Richard Nixon and School Desegregation,” *Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 3 (Summer 1998) 187-200; Hugh Davis Graham, “Richard Nixon and Civil Rights: Explaining an Enigma,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 93-106; and Charles Shultz, “How a Republican Desegregated the South’s Schools,” *New York Times*, January 8, 2003. In newer literature on Nixon and the politics of conservatism, scholars have minimized Nixon’s ties to southern segregationists. In this emerging historical canon, Matthew Lassiter, Kevin Kruse, and Joseph Crespino argued the cornerstone of modern conservatism aligned with suburbanites that composed the “Silent Majority” rather than southerners that articulated racial segregation. These conservatives (like Nixon) embraced concepts of choice and class privilege more than race. See Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006); Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005); Crespino, *In Search of Another country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁵⁰⁷ The Office of Civil Rights was under the auspices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (H.E.W.).

and worked to eliminate de jure segregation. According to former aide Charles Shultz, Nixon designed a “peaceful” strategy that compelled black and white leaders from seven non-compliant southern states to meet with a presidential advisory committee at the White House. Once there, these state leaders were charged with constructing a reasonable and effective plan for school desegregation.⁵⁰⁸ By 1972, the percentage of all-black schools in the South fell to eight percent down from sixty-eight percent four years earlier.⁵⁰⁹ It would be a mistake to attribute the dramatic rise desegregated schools solely to Nixon. A Democrat-controlled Congress and an activist Supreme Court along with ideological in-fighting among Republicans gave Nixon little room to debate. Nevertheless, Nixon’s enigmatic positions on school desegregation led historian Lawrence McAndrews to declare that Nixon was “a mix of principle and politics, progress and paralysis, [and] success and failure.”⁵¹⁰

The federal courts and Congress in the late 1960s and early 1970s had pledged its ardent commitment to desegregating public education. After over a decade of painfully “deliberate” desegregation of southern public schools⁵¹¹, the policies of the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 (ESEA) and stringent oversight of the Department of H.E.W. expedited desegregation in southern public schools. Threatening to cut federal funding to slow-moving, predominately single-race southern school districts, the ESEA proved a prime motivator to hasten southern school officials’ speed toward measurable

⁵⁰⁸ Shultz, “How a Republican.”

⁵⁰⁹ Graham, “Richard Nixon.”

⁵¹⁰ McAndrews, “The Politics of Principle,” 187.

⁵¹¹ As of the mid-1960s, most black high school students had never attended school with whites. See U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Southern School Desegregation 1966-67*.

desegregation. Southern school boards created various remedial reading programs to assist low-income, predominately black students, promoted relationships between the school and parents, and instituted teacher training programs concerning the implementation of desegregated education to avoid a reduction in educational funding.⁵¹² Perhaps in its most proactive stance since *Brown*, the Supreme Court's 1971 ruling in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Board of Education* charged "in more precise terms than heretofore the scope of the duty of school authorities...to eliminate dual systems and establish unitary systems at once."⁵¹³ Quite effective in its implementation, mandated federal busing ensured the desegregation of many of the nation's schools.⁵¹⁴ These federal policies made clear that racial desegregation was a chief aim of federal educational policy and critical to public education.

In the early 1970s, both Virginia and North Carolina state governments also pledged their support, philosophically and monetarily, for erasing some of the vestiges of segregated education. Moderate Republican governors A. Linwood Holton, Jr. and James

⁵¹² See Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, 1968-1977 and Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1967-1975. Prince Edward invested in new technologies and teaching approaches under Superintendent Perry, including closed-circuit television, reading machines, and multimedia tools to help teachers reach all students. Chapel Hill school officials funded a number of remedial programs under Title I (Financial Assistance to Local Educational Agencies for the Education of Children of Low-Income Families) and Title IV (Educational Research and Training) of the ESEA, which included the use of reading machines and closed-circuit televisions.

⁵¹³ *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Board of Education*, 402 U.S. 1. (1971). The concepts of dual systems and unitary status emerge from Supreme Court case, *Green v. County School Board*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968). According to the Court, dual systems refers to a segregated school system—"one black, one white"—operating within one school district. Unitary status, on the other hand, describes a completely integrated school system, including an integrated student body, faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities, and facilities.

⁵¹⁴ As one black North Carolina parent admitted, "I contend that busing for one year will upgrade all our schools quicker than anything the President or Congress can do." Sadly, this was true because in a month's time, "the parents of white children who were bused managed to get the black school painted, repairs made, and new electric typewriters and sewing machines, and the shelves filled with books." See Leon Jones, "Desegregation in Retrospect and Prospect," *Journal of Negro Education*. 47, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 46-57, especially 53. See also U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Racial Isolation, 4.

Holshouser, Jr. had swept into office when southern politics began to endorse a two-party political system. Divorcing their states from the solidly Democratic Party-controlled and often pro-segregationist ideology, the Holton and Holshouser administrations represented a new era of change⁵¹⁵ Governor Holton voluntarily placed his children in the Richmond City Public Schools in 1970, instead of the private schools to which most of the city's whites had fled. His choice made a political statement that desegregation and busing, two hotly debated issues in Virginian education, would occur and with his vocal endorsement. Holshouser endorsed early childhood education, mandating kindergarten for all North Carolina children in 1973.⁵¹⁶ The tide toward progressive programs also swung to other state politicians. In 1973, the Virginia General Assembly spent over forty percent of the state's total budget for public education.⁵¹⁷ By 1974, North Carolina lawmakers expended 46.5 percent of the state's coffers for public education expenses.⁵¹⁸

In the midst of black students' protests, Virginia and North Carolina school officials quickly worked toward accommodating the needs of their desegregated student populations. This often took the shape of experimental educational programs. In Virginia,

⁵¹⁵ Senator Harry F. Byrd held a tight rein over Virginia governors. Byrd's abhorrence of racial desegregation created the setting for southern white massive resistance to the *Brown* ruling. When Byrd, Sr. died in 1966, the end of his tight-fisted control and specter of influence was beginning to wane. However, by the mid-1960s, the legacy of the Byrd machine still gripped Virginia's governors who had participated actively in the Byrd regime. As a consequence, Virginia governor Mills Godwin, Jr. appeared to blacks as anti-civil rights, despite his public support of President Johnson's Civil Rights Act. While North Carolina leadership resisted being branded as racist, governors Dan Moore and Robert Scott were hardly champions for racial equality and racial school desegregation. The domination of Democratic policies in Virginia and North Carolina seemed to endorse school segregation, even if it was tacitly.

⁵¹⁶ Kindergarten programs spread across the state's school systems by 1977.

⁵¹⁷ *Superintendent of Public Instruction Annual Report, 1973-1974*, (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Education), 1974, 28, 30. The state had appropriated \$4.6 million the maintenance of public education. This budget surpassed the \$1.4 million appropriated by state legislators in 1963-64.

⁵¹⁸ "Funding Threatened for North Carolina's Public Schools," <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/superintendents/home/funding.pdf>, (accessed April 29, 2010), 3.

the State Board of Education (SBOE) operated a Technical Assistance Program, funded through the Division of Equal Educational Opportunities of the Office of Education.⁵¹⁹ The Program initiated in-service teaching institutes to help school staff address the “peculiar needs of desegregated school students.”⁵²⁰ Teachers gathered instructional materials which centered on racial cooperation; and state officials allocated \$500,000 to fund pilot projects seeking “to determine optimal methods for improving educational achievement of disadvantaged students.”⁵²¹ The SBOE also began to evaluate the level of racial discrimination present in public school textbooks.⁵²² In Chapel Hill, school leaders received a \$190,000 grant from HEW to fund a unique “open-classroom” model school program with a “major emphasis on the total language development of its elementary pupils” for the 1970-71 academic year.⁵²³ As only one of five such projects in the nation, Superintendent Wilmer Cody argued the model school was “specifically geared toward curriculum development, observational capacity, demonstration functions, and pre-service training at the school,” effective strategies to help boost the students’ success.⁵²⁴

These new programs encouraged innovation within local schools. After the retirement of Chapel Hill High principal May Marshbanks in 1969, Chapel Hill school board members intentionally chose an administrative candidate supportive of academic

⁵¹⁹ Virginia State Board of Education Minutes, August 14-16, 1972, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 225 a.

⁵²⁰ *SPI Annual Report 1972-1973*, (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Education) 1973, 28.

⁵²¹ *SPI Annual Report 1971-1972*, (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Education) 1972, 172.

⁵²² *SPI Report 1972-1973*, 28.

⁵²³ Ross Scott, “Chapel Hill Gets School Grant,” *Durham Morning Herald*, August 6, 1970.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

freedom and teacher experimentation.⁵²⁵ Chapel Hill High principal Larry Graham's belief that "change does not necessarily result in progress, but progress cannot occur without change" was readily welcomed.⁵²⁶ He established a flexible open campus program at Chapel Hill High. Marked by fluctuating class schedules and individual student activities, Graham's program gave teachers carte blanche in setting up their curriculum and standards for students. Although less amenable to an "open campus" concept, Prince Edward County High principal Clarence Penn did back Superintendent Perry's purchase of a number of closed-circuit televisions and reading machines to help increase students' reading retention.⁵²⁷ Penn also supported the teaching of new Afrocentric courses, including Negro history and Twentieth Century History.⁵²⁸ To him, "the achievements of many of the blacks" offered positive role models for academic achievement "and the inclusion of this in the curriculum of any school is important in building pride in the black race."⁵²⁹

⁵²⁵ R.D. Smith, interview by Bob Gilgor, November 13-14, 2000, K-564, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 35.

⁵²⁶ Carolyn Horn, *Evolution of Southern Conscience from the Perspective of an Educator* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Magnolia Marketing and Publishing Company), 1994, 152. Horn considered Graham's hiring as "not one of [the Chapel Hill school board's] better judgments."

⁵²⁷ Following national trends in educational innovations, the purchase of cutting-edge media technologies initially promised to improve students' reading skills. However, as noted in the previous chapter, Prince Edward County's incoming superintendent James Anderson later abandoned the excessive use of reading machines for more one-on-one academic instruction for students recovering from an extended period of no formal schooling.

⁵²⁸ *SPI Annual Report 1970-71*, (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Education) 1971, 57. In 1971, Prince Edward County High was one of twenty-five of the state's high schools which taught Negro history. By 1974, the teaching of Afrocentric courses doubled, and in some cases tripled in number. See also, "PEP Youth Job Program Employs 91 in 3 Counties," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 27, 1973. Other programs established at Prince Edward County High included speech, journalism, drama, advanced math, economics, and a block typing program in the business education classes. Physical and health education classes were extended to the eleventh and twelfth grades.

⁵²⁹ "Right Gains in Prince Edward Cited," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 5, 1969.

Locally, Chapel Hill school administrators in charge of teacher recruitment and hiring actively sought out teachers who willingly adopted varied teaching strategies and embraced cultural competence in their courses. Using new teaching methods such as the inquiry model, Chapel Hill instructors were encouraged to get their students to learn academic subjects by “hav[ing] students find answers for themselves.”⁵³⁰ Chapel Hill school officials also funded experimental programs such as Teachers Incorporated, which “concern[ed] itself with structural and philosophical changes that [was] needed in public education.”⁵³¹ Superintendent Wilmer Cody recruited teacher John Derek Williams to teach at Chapel Hill High in an effort to help students undergoing the first wave of desegregation. As a social studies instructor, Williams taught a heterogeneous grouping of students.⁵³² Here, he describes the experimental tactics Teachers Incorporated would use:

I learned early on that I as a teacher standing up there trying to give a lesson particularly about Sir Walter Raleigh or whatever it might be, it wasn't going to be readily absorbed by everyone. And so a lot of what I did was group and individual projects where I could try to get to students on a more individual and small group basis, where, you know, leaving it open-minded enough....So I was always trying to think up, you know, different kinds of exercises.⁵³³ Although praised for building a rapport with black students and their enthusiasm,

Teachers, Inc. teachers failed to accommodate white parents' demands for establishing criteria for “quality education.” In Williams' classroom, he encouraged a debate of

⁵³⁰ Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 3, 1969.

⁵³¹ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 6, 1970.

⁵³² John Derek Williams, interview by Joyce Uy, April 10, 2001, K-223, April 10, 2001, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 7. Unlike math and science classes, Williams argues that social studies courses were invariably single-race, which allowed him to reach a greater number of students.

⁵³³ Ibid.

current events, including black power, Vietnam War protests, and hippie movements winning the allegiance of his black students. But for all his rapport building, Williams argued that “some in the community thought we were too provocative by even entertaining, or allowing, some of this resentment to be expressed.”⁵³⁴ Parents called for a special school board meeting in April 1970. There they criticized Teachers, Inc. teachers’ unconventional dress, grading procedures, unorthodox teaching ideologies, lack of classroom structure, “buddy-buddy approach to the students,” and “extremely permissive behavior codes and unresponsiveness to supervisor’s guidance.”⁵³⁵ These parents’ criticisms raised questions on how to best obtain a quality educational system.

As a consequence, state officials began to put more and more emphasis on developing essential strategies for obtaining a quality education for white and black children. In the early to mid-1970s, Virginia adopted its Standards of Quality and Objectives (SOQ) and North Carolina revamped its Standard Course of Study for the state’s public schools. The Virginia SOQs attempted to improve students’ graduation rates, strengthen classroom disciplinary practices and enhance the learning programs for students with gifted abilities, special needs, as well as those on the vocational track.⁵³⁶ North Carolina’s revised standards emphasized a set curriculum to include both vibrant academic and vocational course offerings. A stronger academic program reassured parents that their children would learn critical courses and be prepared for college, while

⁵³⁴ Ibid., 10. For national complaints against open classrooms, see “Help! Teacher Can’t Teach,” *Time Magazine*, June 16, 1980.

⁵³⁵ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 27, 1970.

⁵³⁶ 1974 Acts of Virginia General Assembly, Richmond, Virginia, Library of Virginia. The SOQs set pupil-teacher ratios, required special, gifted, and vocational education programs, and mandated the start of kindergarten by 1976.

a stronger vocational program promised to meet the needs of “50 to 60 percent of the students whose education ends with high school.”⁵³⁷ State school officials developed achievement tests to measure students’ academic or vocational performance. Establishing performance-centered directives, both Virginia’s and North Carolina’s state educational standards began to associate *quality* with students’ *performance* on achievement test scores.⁵³⁸

Seeking a means to measure student success, state politicians reasoned that achievement test scores would represent an accurate reflection of students’ academic performance. The tests were seemingly objective and could gauge what politicians deemed essential knowledge from their state’s educational standards. To test students on the state’s standards, the Virginia SBOE instituted minimum competency testing standards by 1976. Such testing emerged in North Carolina a year later. Both states set a benchmark for the 1980-81 school term for students to pass the exams. Students who failed to pass their competency tests would not receive their high school diplomas, even if they attained the necessary graduation unit requirements.

Virginia’s and North Carolina’s attention to student performance ultimately limited teachers’ abilities to teach creatively. During the early 1970s, local school systems had frequently used student test scores to try nationally recognizable, but experimental learning programs. In Chapel Hill, local school officials instituted the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development (WDRSD). The WDRSD approach to

⁵³⁷ Daniel C. Hoover, “School Head Plans Changes,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 21, 1972. A majority of these students were low-income and black.

⁵³⁸ Study of Criteria and Tests for Measuring Pupil Performance in Virginia Schools, 1974; Study of Teacher Evaluation in Virginia’s Public Schools, 1974; Report of the Joint Subcommittee Studying Minimum Competency Testing, 1981.

reading, according to Assistant Superintendent Charles Rivers, gave teachers autonomy over classroom instruction, by allowing them to “use whatever materials or procedures are judged to be most appropriate for a given individual in a given situation.”⁵³⁹

Although Rivers recounted the “open” and “progressive” tenor of the Chapel Hill school board to exploring innovative teaching strategies, it was apparent how much more important and entrenched student testing and a standardized curriculum had become. After two years of unsuccessful results from the utilization of the Wisconsin Reading Design, Chapel Hill abandoned the program. The educational standards enforced by the state demanded that teachers, not just students, perform. Following the Standard Course of Study set by the state was imperative “because that is the way you received your funding for teachers and everything, based on your teaching the Standard Course of Study.”⁵⁴⁰ As a result, Rivers argues, “there wasn’t a whole lot you had to do with the curriculum.”⁵⁴¹ While teachers found some room to maintain creative control over in their classroom instruction, increasingly, the emphasis on state educational standards and standardized testing significantly limited their academic freedom.

Teachers’ success became tethered to their students’ ability to pass achievement tests, as well as to their attainment of professional credentials. The state’s attention to

⁵³⁹ Eunice Askov and Wayne Otto, *Wisconsin Design for Reading Development: Teachers Planning Guide*, (Minneapolis: National Computer Systems), 1974. See also Mary Quilling and Wayne Otto, “Evaluation of an Objective Based Curriculum in Reading,” *The Journal of Educational Research*, 65, no. 1 (September 1971):, 15-18. Practitioners of the WDRSD argued that “[student acquired] skills are objective in the sense that they are not tied to any given set of materials or procedures. The teacher is free to use whatever materials or procedures are judged to be most appropriate for a given individual in a given situation.”

⁵⁴⁰ Charles Rivers, interview by Jenny Matthew, February 17, 2001, K-217, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 6.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

performance also demanded higher certification standards for teachers. Local school districts began to enact a system of evaluating beginning (i.e., probationary) teachers in their first three years. This promised to make teachers more accountable for their educational decisions. Local school boards provided in-service training for teachers in order to prepare “test materials and methods of assessing student progress.”⁵⁴² Professional development courses became a part of the teacher license renewal process as a means to help teachers increase their students’ academic performance.⁵⁴³ To white parents, these policies offered useful tools to measure students’ academic success. Poorly performing students, and teachers, would not permanently or negatively impact their children’s education. For white parents in particular, these policies helped to define a quality education—effective teachers and good achievement test scores.

By the late 1970s, educational policies had gradually defined “quality education” by seemingly objective standards, yet local school leaders remained committed to racial desegregation. Chapel Hill and Prince Edward school administrators created educational bureaucracies within public schools to oversee student testing and teacher certification. High school principals took on leadership roles in the area of student placement, discipline, and adult education.⁵⁴⁴ At Prince Edward County High, they focused on the vital issues of education: policies, instruction, discipline, and night school remediation. Chapel Hill High’s academic department chairs recommended strategies to improve students’ academic performance, including student classroom placement decisions,

⁵⁴² Code of Virginia, Title 22.1 Education: Section 22.1- 253.13:3 E, G, H, 1993.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ The *Eagle* yearbook, Prince Edward County, Virginia: Prince Edward County High School, 1983.

increased teacher observation, raised minimum academic standards, and planned integrated social activities.⁵⁴⁵ The triumph of these new professional policies however made school officials vulnerable to community pressures by blacks to racially balance teaching staff and student populations, as well as to develop a more inclusive educational program that served to represent their presence within public schools. Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County school board officials maintained Title I and Title IV programs that assisted underachieving, low-income students. Aware of student and teacher placement, Chapel Hill and Prince Edward school officials resolved to retain an equitable racial balance in all of their schools.

The federal government also maintained its commitment to desegregation. Under pressure from national teacher unions, the federal government created the Department of Education (ED) in 1979. The ED remained devoted to “assuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual.”⁵⁴⁶ Its designation to a cabinet-level department elevated education as an issue of national importance and placed it in a larger federal bureaucracy.

Conservative politicians, however, grew weary of an imposing federal government and socially engineered efforts to achieve racial balance within public schools. During Ronald Reagan’s campaign for the presidency in 1980, he promised to end the era of big government.⁵⁴⁷ Reagan championed the cause of “school choice,”

⁵⁴⁵ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 6, 1978.

⁵⁴⁶ Public Law 96-88, October 1979.

⁵⁴⁷ “1980 Presidential General Election Data Graphs—Virginia, By County,” Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/datagraph.php?year=1980&fips=51&f=1&off=0&elect=0>, (accessed April 19, 2010). In the 1980 presidential election, Reagan received a slight margin over Carter’s vote by Prince Edward County voters (Reagan received 49.6% of the vote; Carter received 45.6%). In Chapel Hill,

giving parents the freedom to select the schools their children would attend. Reagan's endorsement of smaller government, local control, and school choice won him the allegiance of voters exasperated by an active federal government. Incumbent President Jimmy Carter's flagging administration, marred by ballooning inflation and the Iranian hostage crisis, was a further boon to Reagan's campaign. By distilling the campaign into issues of national security and economic recession, Reagan won the presidency.⁵⁴⁸ His effectiveness in redirecting the public's attention from racial equality to national, even international, matters drew attention away from racial disparities and social programs.

Congress witnessed a conservative Republican resurgence by Virginian politicians as well in the late 1970s and early 1980s. When Virginia's Republican lieutenant governor John Dalton won the state's 1978 gubernatorial election, he ushered in an era marked by limited government and conservative fiscal policies. Dalton, determined to build the Republican Party into a viable and competitive challenger to the Democratic Party, had discovered the benefits to marrying his economic minimalism with the state's mounting social conservatism. By the late 1970s, both economic and social conservative Virginia voters came to support limited government; and more importantly, the pendulum began to swing further to the right in federal elections. In 1978, dark horse candidate and moderate Republican John Warner sought Moral Majority founder Jerry Falwell's political endorsement. As leader of a large church and nationwide Christian

voters preferred Carter to Reagan by a 20.9% margin. (Carter received 53.3% of the vote and Reagan 32.4%). These numbers would change by the 1984 election, when Prince Edward voters preferred Reagan to Mondale by a wider percentage (56.1% to 42.1%); Chapel Hill voters increasingly supported Reagan, though he did not win their allegiance (56.7 for Mondale and 43% for Reagan).

⁵⁴⁸ Nationwide Reagan won 489 electoral votes over Carter's 49. The popular vote, however, was narrower. Reagan surpassed Carter by ten percent points. In Virginia, the popular vote was larger than the national statistics; Reagan garnered 53% of the vote to Carter's 40%. In North Carolina, the popular vote was narrower. Reagan won 49% of the popular vote compared to Carter's 47%. Virginia and North Carolina electors, however, wholly supported Reagan.

media outlet, Falwell's sponsorship of political candidates often persuaded his church members to join the conservative constituency. Facing the favored Democrat Andrew Miller in the election, Warner appealed to Falwell's disapproval of the SALT II treaty negotiations by pledging his opposition their passage. Warner defeated Miller in a close race by a 0.4 percent margin and joined Republican Senator Harry Byrd, Jr. in the Senate.⁵⁴⁹ It became clear that conservative Republicans could only lose a state election "if all the voting machines malfunctioned on [an] election day."⁵⁵⁰ With no electoral problems, by 1980, Virginian Republicans sailed in on a tide of conservatism. They swept the elections for the House, with nine of the state's ten representative positions.

In North Carolina, similar trends emerged. The state underwent a hotly contested election between incumbent moderate Democrat Robert Morgan and conservative Republican John Porter East. Morgan, a long-time Democratic Party insider, was considered a shoo-in for the Senate seat for the November 1980 election; but East cleverly campaigned on Morgan's vote for the U.S. to relinquish ownership of the Panama Canal. Playing upon mounting national pride in a Cold War context, East, a relative unknown, won the Senate seat in a 50 to 49.4% vote. The same year Republicans rode in on the wave of Reagan support and won twelve Senate seats, shifting the balance of power firmly in the Republicans favor.⁵⁵¹

After Reagan's sweeping success in the 1980 election, he aggressively moved forward on honoring his campaign promises for less government interference in local

⁵⁴⁹ Garrett Epps, "Virginia Goes...: The Old Dominion's New Politics of Computerized Conservatism May be Programming the Electoral Future," *Washington Post*, January 25, 1981, 8.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. This statement is attributed to Governor John Dalton's press secretary Charley Davis.

⁵⁵¹ Republican victory over the twelve Senate seats resulted in 53 Republicans and 46 Democrats in the Senate.

affairs and less federal funding for education. Reagan wanted localities to decide their own plans for quality schooling. He argued that parents had an individual right to choose their children's school. Parental choice, through the use of school vouchers and charter schools, would give white and black parents the ability to select a quality school without the use of race-based policies. By centering these plans on individual rights, he was able to shift the national obsession with racial equality onto his conservative, seemingly color-blind agenda.⁵⁵² While Reagan sought to dismantle the newly formed Department of Education, his Secretary of Education Terrell Bell did not. Bell was an early proponent of the ED. At Bell's urging, Reagan chartered the National Commission on the Excellence in Education, composed of eighteen members from the fields of government, education, and the private sector. The Commission set out to assess the utility of public education. In its report, *A Nation at Risk*, members of the Commission sounded the alarm for national education reform.

In the era of fierce anticommunism, the *Nation at Risk* excelled at playing to Americans' fears of the nation's declining global influence. The report argued that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people."⁵⁵³ Using data from standardized test scores between 1963 and 1980, the commission pointed to a number of tangible failures. Students on average nationally performed poorly on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), scoring over fifty points lower on verbal tests, forty points lower

⁵⁵² I define color-blind educational policies as those that exclude race as integral in decision-making procedures, but use race as a point of difference among students, teachers, and staff.

⁵⁵³ "Indicators of Risk," *A Nation at Risk: An Imperative for Educational Reform*, <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>, (accessed October 27, 2009).

on math tests since pre-1963. Students had difficulties comprehending reading passages; twenty percent of students could not write a persuasive essay. On nineteen academic tests taken in 1973, Americans compared abysmally to same-aged international students. The report concluded that “American students were never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, [but] were last seven times.”⁵⁵⁴ The low international rankings, coupled with the threat of communism, shocked Americans.⁵⁵⁵

The Commission recommended a number of changes to American schools. They proposed changes to educational sequences and content, more standardized testing, longer instructional time, and increased teacher standards.⁵⁵⁶ While many of the recommendations did not become institutionalized across the nation’s public schools, the scrutiny of teacher performance did. Teachers were encouraged to demonstrate competency in their academic discipline in order to make the United States competitive. Consequently, teachers would receive pay commensurate with their experience and success, based on their merit. The Department of Education passed House Joint Resolution 108 “Differentiated Compensation Plans” which persuaded local school boards to “include quality of performance among the factors in the compensation plan for classroom teachers.”⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Gerald Holton, “*A Nation at Risk Revisited*,” *Daedalus* 113, no.4 (Fall 1984): 1-27.

⁵⁵⁶ “Indicators of Risk.” The report recommended an emphasis on core subjects of English, math, science, social studies, foreign language, and computer science. It also pushed for a seven-hour school day, with over 200 instructional days; this conflicted with many school system’s six-hour, 180 instructional day system, including that of Prince Edward County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

⁵⁵⁷ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, May 4, 1983. While Prince Edward County did not embrace teacher merit pay at the time of the report, school officials did tighten teacher credentials.

The Commission's findings did shift Americans' belief in the public school system, and the language surrounding schools, by attributing blame to individual local policy choices, instead of examining systemic racial and economic problems in the educational system. Conservatives pointed back to the failures of *Brown* and the desegregation of schools as the impetus for this decline. They argued that federal funding was poured into subpar desegregation programs, with little to no results. Teachers and school administrators had spent more money and focused more attention on educational programming tools rather than on student outcomes. Instead, the Commission called for stronger school accountability through higher standards for teacher and student success. But even the implication of educational mismanagement made public education seem flawed. Parents needed more alternatives to a failed public educational system. Advocating for school choice, conservative politicians pushed for an end to Title I and Title IV education programs and federal funding.

How would Prince Edward and Chapel Hill digest the federal Commission's conclusions? Both systems did not address merit pay for teachers, but did extend the number of instructional hours for students by an additional hour. In Prince Edward, high school students enrolled in the vocational curriculum were no longer allowed to take a half-day of academic classes in order to later work as apprentices outside of school. School leaders implemented an altered full-time vocational program, which required students' full-time attendance of classes in the school building, if they wanted to graduate.⁵⁵⁸ Additionally, both school systems increasingly focused on standardized

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid. Prince Edward County High senior Johnnie W. Barton sought a permission to leave school before noon to work in order to care for his family. Because Barton was enrolled in the vocational program, Superintendent James Anderson denied Barton's request.

student testing, devoting a portion of their capital outlay budget to testing.⁵⁵⁹ Prince Edward and Chapel Hill school officials also heeded the suggestions from the *A Nation at Risk* and heightened the scrutiny of teachers. A North Carolina statute permitted school boards to release a probationary teacher from his/her contract “for any reason a school board deemed sufficient” as long as the teacher had not experienced discrimination or a constitution infringement on his/her rights. New teachers’ probationary status led to frequent administrator evaluations; the recurrence of surveillance hung over new teachers, who became steadily results-oriented. The outcome of the Commission’s report and local school board’s incorporation of its ideas gradually withdrew attention from race as an integral factor of schools and placed more emphasis on student and teacher accountability.⁵⁶⁰

Unsurprisingly, conservative Republicans began to dismantle federal aid for school desegregation. In 1981, Congress enacted the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) as part of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act.⁵⁶¹ The Reagan

⁵⁵⁹ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, August 31, 1981 and January 11, 1982. Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, April 6, 1983. Some of the tests used by the school systems were the California Achievement Test (CAT), the Prescriptive Reading Inventory, and the Diagnostic Mathematics Inventory. In Chapel Hill, approximately one percent of the \$1.3 million budget was set aside for standardized testing. While seemingly a small sum to spend on testing, it afforded the school an additional test (the Prescriptive Reading Inventory).

⁵⁶⁰ These steps made the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation possible in the twenty-first century. With this legislation, the federal government pledged to withhold federal dollars if states failed to establish accountability systems in their public schools that met adequate yearly progress (AYP) benchmarks. States are required to develop state testing standards and report the student outcomes to the U.S. Department of Education. The most dangerous element of NCLB is the penalties ascribed to public school teachers whose students fall under the state-established AYP. Local school districts have the authority, under NCLB, to transfer or fire “poor performing” teachers.

⁵⁶¹ Linda Darling-Hammond and Ellen L. Marks, *The New Federalism in Education: State Responses to the 1981 Education Consolidation Improvement Act*, (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation and the U.S. Department of Education), February 1983, 1, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2006/R3008.pdf>, (accessed April 19, 2010). The Omnibus Act “provided the Reagan Administration with a tool to put forth its economic programs as a philosophical package and to restructure basic social legislation to reflect that philosophy.” In effect, the Omnibus Act reframed what

administration successfully attempted to reduce federal intervention and monetary support of the social goals of desegregated public education. Opposed to expanding the federal bureaucracy (and more subtly racial diversity), the economic downturn gave conservatives easy reasoning for making significant cuts in federal funding. School districts seeking programs to hasten racial desegregation found their requests for federal dollars routinely challenged. The ECIA replaced the Elementary and Secondary School Act's (ESEA) programs with less federal oversight.⁵⁶² Congressional passage of the Act permitted the creation of concentration grants for areas with large populations of disadvantaged students and local block grants, giving ultimate discretionary power to local school boards. Yet these grants, as evidenced by the table below, clearly demonstrate conservative Republicans' objective to severely reduce federal monies toward public education, particularly for disadvantaged students.

Table 5.1

1981 Title I and 1982-83 Chapter 1 Appropriations⁵⁶³

<i>Programs for Disadvantaged Students</i>	<i>Title I Fiscal Year 1981 Appropriations</i>	<i>Chapter 1 Fiscal Year 1982 Appropriations</i>	<i>Chapter 1 Fiscal Year 1983 President's Requested Appropriations</i>
Basic Grants	\$2,512,614	\$2,412,756	\$1,726,526
State Agency Programs	\$266,400	\$255,744	\$167,012
Migrants	\$266,400	\$255,744	\$167,012
	\$152,625	\$146,520	---

groups were deemed eligible for federal monetary assistance, providing a new framework for what defined "need".

⁵⁶² Since the late 1970s, the Republicans in Congress began to reduce ESEA funding, though not in as large numbers as would come with the Reagan administration.

⁵⁶³ Darling-Hammond and Marks, *The New Federalism*, 12-13. Also see *Education Daily*, April 2, 1982, 5.

Handicapped Neglected & Delinquent	\$33,975	\$32,616	\$21,886
State	\$33,930	\$32,573	\$22,100
Administration			
Evaluation and Studies	\$6,000	---	---
Concentration	\$98,773	---	---
Grants			
Total	\$3,104,377	\$2,885,969	\$1,942,000

The ECIA reconfigured the stewards and beneficiaries of federal funding. Under the preceding Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965, many school systems applied for Title I funding to assist with the reading comprehension of underprivileged and low-income students.⁵⁶⁴ The ECIA streamlined ESEA's Title I to allow for more flexibility and control to local school divisions. The new provision, Chapter I, mandated that federal programs be conducted in school divisions "having the highest concentrations of low-income children in all attendance areas having a uniformly high concentration of such children, or for services that promise to provide significant help for all such children served by local schools."⁵⁶⁵ ECIA's Chapter I did not guarantee federal funding for low-income children and its ambiguous language of "such children" failed to define who could get benefits. It gave states and local school boards wide latitude in determining who would receive funding. And, it placed enormous pressure on local school officials to seek alternative funding sources to accomplish further desegregation.

⁵⁶⁴ Title I was the largest and best funded provisions under the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1965.

⁵⁶⁵ Darling-Hammond and Marks, *The New Federalism*, 12-13.

Perhaps most detrimental was how the ECIA hampered the financial efforts of local and smaller school systems to desegregate their schools.⁵⁶⁶ Chapter II of the ECIA consolidated the funding for desegregation programs in a lump sum, or block grant, giving local school districts wide discretionary powers for using the money. Under the ESEA, school systems had various programs to address school desegregation needs. School officials frequently exhausted federal funding to pay for teacher training and compensatory instruction.⁵⁶⁷ With Chapter II, federal funding was stretched not only to finance teacher programs and services, but also to pay for new technologies and library resources. For many school districts, the early 1980s saw drastic cuts in the number of resource teachers. By the 1981-82 school year, the Chapel Hill school board had requested \$32,000 to focus on raising students' test scores with the assistance of full-time compensatory teachers, but they only received \$16,375 in federal funding.⁵⁶⁸ Eager to reduce any extraneous expenses to stem the loss of educational funding, Chapel Hill school board members looked for ways to save money in the thin economic times. Teaching assistants and resource teachers fell victim to budget cuts.⁵⁶⁹ The loss of teachers specializing in services for disadvantaged, or "underachieving students," resulted in a dramatic decline in the importance of educational equity.⁵⁷⁰ By the spring of 1983, Prince Edward school officials also struggled to find a means to cope with the loss

⁵⁶⁶ See Table 5.2.

⁵⁶⁷ Compensatory education subsidizes teachers who work with disadvantaged students considered "at-risk" for lower academic achievement based on economic and social factors.

⁵⁶⁸ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, September 14, 1981.

⁵⁶⁹ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, August 31, 1981, September 14, 1981, October 19, 1981.

⁵⁷⁰ This term was used by Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools in the 1980s.

of school funds. The Board of Supervisors reduced the school board's budget by \$103,814.⁵⁷¹ While the economic decline was initially gradual, the financial groundwork laid by the ECIA elevated library services and computer acquisitions to the same level as improving the educational status of underachieving, largely black, and low-income, students.

Table 5.2

“Net Effect of Block Grant on Federal Dollars Applied to Desegregation and On Percentage of Districts and Students Involved”⁵⁷²

<i>Programs for Disadvantaged Students</i>	<i>Under Elementary and Secondary Schools Act 1981-82</i>	<i>Under Chapter II 1984-85</i>	<i>Percentage of Change between from ESEA and Chapter II</i>
Total Federal Funds Applied to Desegregation Related Purposes	\$145,296,973	\$37,891,304	-74%
Percentage of Use of Block Grants at Local Level	36%	11%	69%
Per Pupil Federal Support for Desegregation Assistance	\$20.35	\$5.64	-72%

In the wake of new federal mandates and spending cuts, school systems had to evaluate how important desegregation was as an educational goal. School officials were forced to spread a lower sum of federal money, along with constrained state and local funds, across a broad range of school services and resources. But even as “Reag-ucation”

⁵⁷¹ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, May 4, 1983.

⁵⁷² Michael S. Knapp and Craig H. Blakely, *The Education Block Grant at the Local Level: The Implementation of Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act in Districts and Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education), January 1986. See also, the online version of this article at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED270835.pdf>, (accessed April 20, 2010).

trickled down to local school policies, black parents refused to let school officials forget the needs of their children. The period of closed schools, subsequent student protests, and black-led economic selective boycotts had taught Prince Edward officials an inescapable lesson—they could not ignore the demands of black parents and students. Nor could Chapel Hill school board members, as the 1969 Chapel Hill racial disturbance had left an imprint on school administrators that blacks insisted on inclusion in desegregated schools. In both communities, black parents and students wanted courses, programs, and teachers that reflected them. While testing and a tighter focus on academic standards began to squeeze out some additional resource support staff and programs, desegregation remained an integral goal in Prince Edward and Chapel Hill schools. Its implementation through racial inclusion, programs, curriculum, and balancing marked the two communities' initial response to national shifts in public education.

The preservation and use of Lincoln High symbolized just how much influence blacks had in Chapel Hill. Since the closure of Lincoln as a school, school officials debated its utility.⁵⁷³ Superintendent Wilmer Cody argued for a pairing between Lincoln High and the new elementary program at Frank Porter Graham Center targeting underprivileged students or for its use as an adult education center. School board chair Roy Lindahl made a case that Lincoln could “do a lot for the residents of the area and the community” as a vocational education site.⁵⁷⁴ In all of the conversations about Lincoln's reuse, however, it was never considered as a viable academic counterpart to Chapel Hill

⁵⁷³ See Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1967-1976. After Lincoln closed as a high school in 1966-67, the school board decided to use the building for the town's sixth grade students for one year. In 1967, school officials had to decide what to do with Lincoln.

⁵⁷⁴ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, March 3, 1969.

High. As other school board members maintained, Lincoln's physical state put it in the "position of being sort of a socially less acceptable place" for use as an academic alternative to the existing high school.⁵⁷⁵ In 1969, the school board set up a commission to determine the building's fate. It found Lincoln to be a "sound building, in a good location, and a pillar and symbol in the community" and suggested reuse as an adult education center, school for pregnant females or a vocational counterpart to Chapel Hill High, or to sell the building.⁵⁷⁶ To afford new school construction, school officials began talks with local construction sites to sell Lincoln. But uproar from black community members stalled the potential sale. At every school board meeting in 1969-70, black leaders voiced their objections to the sale of the building. Because of their efforts, the school board voted to reserve the building for future school use.⁵⁷⁷ By the late 1970s, school officials decided to reuse the building for school board offices. On September 22, 1981, officials held the first of their monthly noon lunch to encourage whites and blacks to "see administrative offices and talk with school administrators."⁵⁷⁸ They also introduced Lincoln Recognition Day to "recognize the educational heritage of blacks."⁵⁷⁹ Repurposing Lincoln served two goals: it convinced whites that black sites had educational value and it satisfied blacks that their historical role in local education was

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. School board member Betty Denny described the problems of Lincoln as having "great echo in the halls and the school is very noisy, plus in the winter, the ice is very bad."

⁵⁷⁶ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, March 3, 1969 and May 5, 1969.

⁵⁷⁷ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1970.

⁵⁷⁸ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, September 14, 1981.

⁵⁷⁹ Leslie Takahashi, "Community Honors Education of Blacks," *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 21, 1985.

not forgotten. Lincoln's rebirth as a center of school affairs, more importantly, demonstrated just how powerful black protests could be, even in the face of the system's economic need.

While the preservation of the building was important to Chapel Hill blacks, Prince Edward blacks viewed curriculum and teacher hires to have a more lasting impact. With an increasing focus on achievement test scores by the early 1980s, school systems closely examined the ever-widening gap in scores between black and white students. Many educational studies sought to explain what caused the "achievement gap." Scholars Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu developed an "oppositional culture" theory to describe black students' underperformance in public schools, arguing that underachieving black students viewed educational accomplishment as a marker of whiteness.⁵⁸⁰ Fordham and Ogbu maintained that black students resisted losing their identities by performing poorly in school. Other educational theorists linked black students' performance in school to their academic self-perceptions. They found that black students in desegregated schools tended to have lower self-esteem because they ranked consistently lower than whites in social standing and academic achievement.⁵⁸¹ In Prince Edward, this lowered self-esteem was even more pronounced due to the system's earlier school closings. Even after Prince Edward High alum Shirley Eanes had long since graduated, she admitted to feeling inadequate to whites. She described how the school closings and subsequent desegregation of the public schools affected her self-perception:

⁵⁸⁰ John U. Ogbu, *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 1978). See also, Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu, "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the 'Burden of 'Acting White,'" *Urban Review* 18 (1986): 176-206.

⁵⁸¹ Daniel W. Drury, "Black Self-Esteem and Desegregated Schools," *Sociology of Education* 53, no.2 (April 1980): 88-103, esp. pp. 89-90.

I always had to play catch-up in some area or another... Then as an adult, I didn't realize... how it impacted my self-esteem. [I] was really basically bothered by it. Because [even when my children] were younger and further on in my life as an adult, I always never quite felt--. How can I put it? Up to standard with others.⁵⁸²

Black parents' perpetual sense of educational deficiency certainly seeped into their children's psyche. In an effort to counteract the negative self-image and lower test scores of black students, particularly in Prince Edward County, school systems introduced multicultural programs and pursued affirmative hiring policies to find black teachers who could confirm students' blackness.

Multiculturalism offered the promise to alter, as renowned educational scholar James Banks argues, "social, economic, and political systems so that structurally excluded and powerless ethnic groups would attain social and economic mobility and educational equality."⁵⁸³ Educational scholars have identified four goals of multicultural education to level the playing field for all students. One, it sought to equalize education by broadening educational programs to and for black and white students. Two, it attempted to raise black students' self-esteem. Three, it aimed to insert black culture into the curriculum. Finally, multiculturalism intended to prepare black and white students for an integrated world post-high school graduation.

Multicultural education made its entrance into Prince Edward County's and Chapel Hill's curriculum in the early 1980s. In February 1983, the Martha E. Forrester Council of Women proposed an academic course of study to examine the totality of

⁵⁸² Shirley Eanes, interview by Kathryn Blackwell, 1998, in the Longwood Oral History Project Collection, Longwood University.

⁵⁸³ James Banks, "The Social Studies, Ethnic Diversity, and Social Change" *The Elementary School Journal* Special Issue: Social Studies (May 1987), 531-543. See also, James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1993). The latter is a seminal work on the theories of multicultural education.

students' home, personal, and school experiences entitled Family Life and Self-Awareness.⁵⁸⁴ The course called for student introspection and teacher interaction with students' families; it also encouraged black students to celebrate black accomplishments as valued and attainable goal. The school board's Academic Affairs committee agreed to incorporate this program into the county's curriculum began for the 1983-84 term. In Chapel Hill, school board member Ted Parrish argued that black males were still the least likely to obtain a college education.⁵⁸⁵ To address the disparity, he requested the board vote to include the Effective Schools program in the 1986-87 school term. Despite the cuts in federal funds, school officials committed funds to the Effective Schools program, which set out to help junior and senior high underachieving students gain a mastery of course content and to promote the belief that every student could achieve a high level of work.

Remarkably, in the era of public education funding cutbacks, Prince Edward continued to receive ample state funding for remedial education. Although school officials had asked the state for \$24,975 in funding for remedial education in 1982-83, Prince Edward's school system received nearly 3.5 times the amount requested. In stark contrast to the surrounding counties, Prince Edward requested far lower funding to assist students who needed additional educational assistance, although the number of students

⁵⁸⁴The idea for the course was first introduced in the school board minutes. Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, February 2, 1983. The course was later incorporated into Virginia's BOE standards of learning with the goals "to promote parental involvement, foster positive self-concepts and provide mechanisms for coping with peer pressure and the stresses of modern living according to the students' developmental stages and abilities." For more information on the Family Life state curriculum, see http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/family_life/familylife_guidelines_standards.pdf.

⁵⁸⁵ Takahashi, "Community Honors Education of Blacks."

remained similar across the Southside counties. That the state deemed the need for Prince Edward so high demonstrated the lasting impact of the school closings.

On the other hand, Prince Edward school officials' paltry request for remediation funds from the state and comparable funding for gifted education illustrated their reprioritization of public education. It is not surprising that the Virginia Education Association reported that Prince Edward ranked "112 out of 136 Virginia localities in the proportion of its wealth is spent on the public schools."⁵⁸⁶ Officials attempted to shift the focus away from providing remedial services for the county's students in favor of placing more funding in creating a definitive gifted (and white) education curriculum.

Table 5.3

State and Local Funding for Special Education 1982-83⁵⁸⁷

Southside, Virginia Counties	State funds requested for Remedial Education 1982-83	State funds requested for Gifted Education 1982-83	State Funds received for Special Education 1982-83	Percentage of increase/decrease in requested local budgets 1982-1983
Prince Edward County	\$24,975	\$7624.50	\$134,878.81	414% increase
Buckingham	\$112,275	\$7,593.75	\$66,859.52	43% decrease
Appomattox	\$92,800	\$8,518.50	\$90,235.89	10.5% decrease
Charlotte	\$97,100	\$8,643.75	\$51,651.06	51.5% decrease
Lunenburg	\$97,725	\$7,998.75	\$63,856.30	39.5% decrease
Nottoway	\$121,950	\$8,991.00	\$105,357.71	19.5% decrease
Amelia	\$45,975	\$5,022.00	\$83,218.90	65% increase
Cumberland	\$68,250	\$5,295.75	\$59,453.95	19% decrease
<i>State Average</i>	<i>\$82,631.50</i>	<i>\$7,461</i>	<i>\$81,939.02</i>	<i>9% decrease</i>

The infusion of conservative ideas of individual initiative resulted in declining tangible support of racial-specific programs. Hoping to boost achievement test scores, Prince Edward's school board, for example, funded remediation programs targeting black

⁵⁸⁶ Fred Hiatt and Lawrence Feinberg, "Farmville's School without Blacks: Prince Edward County: 2 Separate Races 2 Separate Schools," *Washington Post*, January 25, 1982, A1.

⁵⁸⁷ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, June 1, 1983.

students in larger numbers in 1981 with state and federal funds. Yet by 1983, the economic recession dried up federal funding for such programs. Certainly the impact of federal budget cuts burdened the county school system; but with an emphasis on high achievement as the norm, Prince Edward school officials created a rhetorical scapegoat. Although the lack of appropriate funding prevented remedial programs to be implemented as designed, it did not stop officials from placing the responsibility for student achievement on students. Harkening back to the blame game educational politics that emerged from *A Nation at Risk*, black students now received some fault for their academic performance rather than systemic inequitable structures. Failing or underachieving students were accused of academic apathy.

Moreover, the notion of student accountability made special treatment much more difficult to support. In Chapel Hill, school board member Edwin Caldwell, Jr. represented school administrators' vacillating stance on school equity. While he publicly espoused the school board's line of equal opportunity for all students, Caldwell privately sponsored segregated college tours for black students. In the mid-1980s, he took select groups of students who had demonstrated individual initiative in improving their test scores to several historically black colleges in North Carolina and Virginia.⁵⁸⁸ Although Caldwell had received parental permission (and that of Superintendent Pamela Mayer), he failed to obtain authorization from the rest of the school board. Because he used a public school activity bus and allowed only black students to participate, Caldwell was "called on the

⁵⁸⁸ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, May 28, 2000, K-529, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 14. Caldwell, a graduate of Hampton University, toured Hampton University, Norfolk State University and Elizabeth City state University with Chapel Hill High guidance counselors.

carpet” by his peers. They consequently terminated Caldwell’s college tours.⁵⁸⁹ As a consequence, Caldwell refused to favor black students by lavishing them with special treatment and attention. As a product of segregated schools and a member of the school board, he believed they had to work hard and prove themselves.⁵⁹⁰

Although the essence of multiculturalism and racial balancing efforts was to give blacks greater educational opportunity, the practice of multiculturalism promoted equal opportunity for *all* students. Instead of concentrating just on blacks’ academic and extracurricular interests, multicultural education began to use language of inclusiveness for all students. Because of Chapel Hill’s growth, Caldwell maintained that the “community was beginning to not only be black and white, but a lot of children [were] coming in. Asians--really, in this community they come from everywhere.” With increased pressure from local parents to include all children’s experiences into the school curriculum, Chapel Hill school officials came to adopt a color-blind approach. They diversified courses to accommodate a wide range of student perspectives.⁵⁹¹ Expressing the sentiment that “if it’s good enough for white kids, it ought to be good enough for black kids,” Caldwell implies the funding and support of good academic programs for whites would undoubtedly trickle down to blacks.⁵⁹² Although local school board members and school officials genuinely cared about the growing achievement gap between white and black students, their goodwill efforts also created a language of color-blindness as they attempted to include the diversity for all students.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 10. Caldwell describes how Jewish parents advocated for an inclusion of Jewish holidays and Christian parents promoted religious education.

⁵⁹² Ibid., 6.

Unfortunately the color-blind approach employed by teachers often overlooked the needs of most black students in both communities. Reduced funding for remedial or race-sensitive courses, coupled with black students' lower achievement test scores, made meeting the needs of black students more difficult. How teachers responded to the challenge varied. Some teachers lowered their expectations of students and paid no attention to them in the classroom. As one black Prince Edward County parent argued, some teachers simply "don't care about the little black students...If [black students] want to sleep all day in the classroom, let them sleep. They can't do anything anyway. They aren't going to do anything."⁵⁹³ Other teachers lavished attention on black students in an effort to counteract the interest white students received by a majority of their teachers. Caldwell explained, "You'll find a lot of the white teachers and so forth says, 'Hey, you white kids are going to make it anyway. I'm going to spend my time trying to bring these black kids along and encourage them.' You'll find an awful lot of that."⁵⁹⁴ Yet these teachers received reprimands from school administrators when white parents complained of the unequal time spent on their children.⁵⁹⁵

Black students turned to each other for cultural fortification. Perhaps most upsetting for them was the loss of caring black teachers. Desegregation had shifted the dynamic between black students and their black teachers. In Jim Crow schools, black teachers were like parents; but with desegregation, the black teacher as cheerleader

⁵⁹³ Dr. Theresa Clark, interview by Jerry Little and Amir Abassy, February 22, 2002, Longwood Oral History Project Collection, Longwood University.

⁵⁹⁴ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, December 5, 2000, K-532, Tape 7 of 7, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 5.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

vanished.⁵⁹⁶ Instead, black teachers worried about impressing white parents and students to become “like everybody else” and preserve their jobs.⁵⁹⁷ Black students were often left to fend for themselves. Unable to stand against many of their teachers’ lowered expectations, they sought out each other in similar classes and in extracurricular activities. They hoped that more black teachers would eliminate the fear of job loss and reinstate the motivating black teacher as role model.

Believing that a quality education for their children required a racially representative teaching staff, black parents and school leaders fought for affirmative hiring policies. In 1983, Chapel Hill school board member and parent Ted Parrish began to question whether the racial balance of school’s professional staff reflected the student body. “In talking with students” at Chapel Hill High, Parrish argued, “there was a need for more black academic teachers.”⁵⁹⁸ School board superintendent Gerry House insisted that the teaching staff roughly mirrored the community. But of the eighteen black professional teachers at the high school, however, only four were academic teachers.⁵⁹⁹ The remaining fourteen blacks filled the positions of assistant principal, vocational

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., 2. See also, Betty King, interview by Bob Gilgor, January 18, 2001, K-558, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 22. Although many black teachers struggled to maintain their jobs, they still tried to offer extra assistance to black students. But to be sure, a number of black teachers struggled with how to reach both black and white students. Those who became overwhelmed with protecting their jobs were branded “Uncle Toms” by black students. Betty King argued that “there were black teachers and then there were *black* teachers. Now just because my skin is black didn’t necessarily mean I’m black.... [black teachers unconcerned with black issues would] kow-tow to whites and didn’t respect their own culture.”

⁵⁹⁷ Virginia Hill, “Local Histories/Local Memories of Desegregation: Extending Critical Theory to Improve Understanding of Continuing Problems,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997), 89 quoting Everett Goldston.

⁵⁹⁸ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, September 12, 1983.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

teachers and personnel. Looking at raw student numbers, board member Barbara Thornton contended that there were more white students in vocational classes, in fact, than blacks.⁶⁰⁰ By disregarding proportional deficiencies, Thornton obscured Parrish's critique of schools' structural racism. She also missed Parrish's point that academic teachers would impact black students' educational experience positively. Chapel Hill school board member Ed Caldwell addressed Thornton's concerns by arguing that the system was "a long way from balanced among teachers when most minority teachers were in vocational areas."⁶⁰¹

Although cuts were inevitable, administrators made sure not to eliminate black teachers deemed vital to black students' educational experience. Still, the Chapel Hill school board hoped to avoid complaints of unfairness and adopted affirmative hiring policies. In 1983, Superintendent Mayer established the system's first annual Affirmative Action Report. The goal was to increase the recruitment of minority personnel. Mayer speculated the decline was based on the system's inability to compete with larger, urban school systems and applicants' unwillingness to relocate due to familial ties.⁶⁰² The school board ensured its "efforts to achieve the goal of staff diversity [would] reflect student population diversity."⁶⁰³ While diversity was the goal, "the pool of applicants is limited." Actively seeking qualified black teaching candidates, Ted Parrish pushed for

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, September 22, 1986.

public awareness by making local universities and high school counselors aware of the shortages to minorities.⁶⁰⁴

It is little wonder that Chapel Hill school board member Ed Caldwell bragged that Chapel Hill had successfully “integrated all the schools.”⁶⁰⁵ With “a racial balance policy that schools had to reflect the racial balance of the community,” Caldwell expressed the need for school redistricting. In Chapel Hill, if enrollment numbers fell below 5,000 students, students were subjected to changing schools. By 1982, Chapel Hill had drawn new school attendance lines three times. Although redistricting was “painful and disruptive,” Caldwell argued that “positive things have happened in the community as a result, both test scores and a feeling that schools in Chapel Hill belong to all people.”⁶⁰⁶ Indeed the Chapel Hill school board had seemed to accomplish a great feat—the public schools had a racial balance of students in numbers, more black teachers, and an equal opportunity for all philosophy—and ostensibly appealed to both local whites and blacks.

But the issue of student reassignment was far more contentious a topic than Caldwell imagined. Black parents began asking why their children bore the brunt of school reassignments.⁶⁰⁷ School assignment was subject to attaining racial balance, school capacity, stability, and travel time. Under the system’s Feeder Plan, when racial balance of two grade schools was changed, the racial balance of the two junior high

⁶⁰⁴ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, September 12, 1983.

⁶⁰⁵ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, May 28, 2000, K-529, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 8.

⁶⁰⁶ Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 2, 1981.

⁶⁰⁷ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, May 3, 1982.

schools also changed. Parents contended that a feeder system virtually guaranteed that large, cohesive especially white neighborhoods would be locked into their school. White parents who lived in the town's outlying areas, on the other hand, would be forced to move to make redistricting work. Consequently, some neighborhoods would always be redistricted and many would be black. Although Superintendent Mayer articulated the main purpose for redistricting was to "reduce and/or eliminate racial isolation in the schools," parental protest caused her to examine any other alternatives first.⁶⁰⁸ She established a seventeen-member Pupil Assignment Committee composed of three school board members, eight parents, two teachers, two principals, the assistant superintendent, and the home-school coordinator, with eight non-voting alternates.⁶⁰⁹ Special care was taken to ensure that the committee represented all parts of the community. Each elementary and junior high school was advised to select two parents, one black and one white. Superintendent Mayer selected a white and a black teacher, as well as a white and black principal to serve on the committee. The first charge given to the committee was to handle the reassignment of 288 students,

Three months later, the Pupil Assignment Committee issued a ten-page report offering three recommendations. Weighing the utility of school buildings and the value of racial balancing, committee members endorsed preserving "identifiable neighborhoods" by "mov[ing] intact." In one recommendation, members called for reassigning nine community areas to the newly constructed elementary school. Another recommendation

⁶⁰⁸ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 2, 1981.

⁶⁰⁹ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, January 25, 1982. Of the three school board members, one of which will be the chair. Parents had to reside in Chapel Hill a minimum of two years and been an active participant in their children's PTA.

suggested moving six areas of the community from Guy B. Phillips Junior High to Grey Culbreth Junior High school. The final recommendation proposed a transfer process plan giving older students more choice in their assignments. The plan advocated giving “rising sixth and ninth grade students affected by the redistricting first priority in granting transfer requests.”⁶¹⁰

Community protest over redistricting factors persisted. Deborah Farrington read a memo she wrote to the school board at its May 1982 meeting. In “Redistricting—To Be or Not to Be, Isn’t the Question,” Farrington argued that during the committee’s first meeting, members raised the issue of blacks’ socioeconomic status but never considered it as a valid criterion in the reassignment options. She accused a white committee member of hypocrisy. Farrington claimed that the committee member insinuated that socioeconomic and racial status mattered in redistricting, when economic class factored into school assignments infrequently. Middle-class blacks often remained in large numbers at the same school, while low-income blacks more likely received new school assignments. If white kids must associate with blacks, they needed to be middle-class blacks, not low-income housing children.⁶¹¹ White parents also pointed to the psychological impact of switching students’ schools and the length of a bus ride. Their most vocal objection, however, was the perception of unfairness. White parent Miriam Bachar who had served on the committee shared such sentiments from her neighbors at the May school board meeting. Bachar remarked that “the community [was] alive with rumors that athletes would go to the school of their choice, kids of parents who

⁶¹⁰ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 26, 1982.

⁶¹¹ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, May 3, 1982.

volunteer[ed] in the school would be exempt from moves, attendance figures [were not] accurate.”⁶¹² Whites felt school administrators were “actively using capacity figures to politically manipulate those who [would be] reassigned.”⁶¹³

By the mid-1980s, white parents grew frustrated with the frequent shifts from one school to another for what many viewed as arbitrary racial balance. Since test scores had improved so little, these parents saw no understandable purpose for racial balancing in the schools.⁶¹⁴ Blacks’ insistence on racially balancing the schools alienated many white parents who thought desegregation simply meant getting along with whites. Consequently, white students and teachers often left blacks to their own devices. Capitalizing on a disgruntled constituency, conservative politicians argued that the results of race-based educational policies and pressures by blacks to make schools more inclusive made the goals of racial equity synonymous with calculated and socially engineered efforts to integrate the public schools.

If the early years of the 1980s had demonstrated how school officials sought to balance the demands of whites and blacks for a quality education, the latter half of the decade would illustrate how the delicate balance began to fray. By the mid-1980s, the higher tuition costs of Prince Edward Academy had driven greater numbers of white students to the county’s public schools.⁶¹⁵ The influx of white students resulted in

⁶¹² Ibid.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Racial balancing meant that the composition of schools roughly reflected the racial makeup of the community, both in terms of the student population and the teaching staff. It also implied that white parents had the ear of school officials and profoundly influenced school decisions in Chapel Hill. If white parents complained to the school board about teachers, teachers would be reprimanded, even fired.

⁶¹⁵ For more about Prince Edward Academy’s legal troubles, see Hiatt and Feinberg, “Farmville’s School without Blacks”, A1 and “Prince Edward’s Legacy: ‘Still Working for Integration,’ Black Helps

increased white parental involvement. Likewise, in Chapel Hill, white parents gained more control over school decisions. Attending every school board meeting, “They pick who’s going to be on the school board and they are at every meeting. At every meeting. At every meeting.”⁶¹⁶ The activism of white parents in both school systems began to out-voice that of black parents, shifting the control of educational matters to their advantage.

Because many of these parents were professors or professors’ spouses, Caldwell argued it gave them an air of superiority. As a result, these parents lacked respect for the teachers: “So we didn’t keep a lot of good teachers here, you know. I mean, why teach in this community when I can go to Durham or somewhere else, man, and get more respect?”⁶¹⁷ Whites also greatly shaped curricular choices. They advocated for the creation of gifted and college dual enrollment courses.⁶¹⁸ And because of their economic and physical presence, school officials were rarely “very willing to stand up to [white] parents.”⁶¹⁹

In Prince Edward, white parents blamed black parents for their children’s poor academic performance. As schools began to track students along racial lines, black

Academy’s Efforts,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 24, 1986, E-1. Since 1978, Prince Edward Academy faced legal troubles with the Internal Revenue Service over its tax-exempt status because of the Academy’s discriminatory admissions policy. Resultantly Academy officials hiked the tuition to defray the costs of fighting a protracted legal battle. As a result, more white Academy students began attending Prince Edward County Public Schools. Saddled with the costs and declining student enrollment, by 1985, the school began to admit its first black students.

⁶¹⁶ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, December 5, 2000, K-532, Tape 7 of 7, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 6.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

students typically remained in lower-ability classes with novice teachers. White parent Dr. William Hendley maintained that segregation within classes existed`

Because [white] parents will say, “I want certain teachers.” These are parents who are showing an interest in their kids. But if no one else is coming in and saying, “I want something” and the only variables [administrators] have to look at are these, then [segregated classes] is what is going to happen....The rules are if you want something, you tell somebody.⁶²⁰

Contrary to Hendley’s assumptions of black parents’ apathy, many black parents did continue to advocate for their children’s education. Prince Edward County black parent and teacher Shirley Eanes argued that black parents “had to fight for the little bits of steps of progress in their [children’s] educational process. [They] had to constantly stay on top of things.”⁶²¹ However, blacks’ advocacy did become increasingly less vocal and visible in many cases. Some parents argued that desegregation gave blacks what whites had—equal opportunity and resources. Others, exhausted from the lengthy battle to procure adequate services for their children, felt as Caldwell explained, ““whew, we don’t have to work as hard now to fund the schools.””⁶²² Yet other black parents faced difficulties with their white employers. Caldwell continued: “Some of the same parents that they were meeting with, these [black parents] worked for. You know, it was an economic thing. If they disagreed with somebody that they worked for, man, it just strained the employer-employee relations. So they preferred not to sit on [school committees]. They didn’t want to go. I think it was more economic than anything else.”⁶²³

⁶²⁰ Jennifer Spreng, “Scenes from Southside in Five Acts,” *University of Arkansas Law Review*, 1996, interview with Dr. William Hendley, in Hampden-Sydney, Virginia, August 7, 1995.

⁶²¹ Eanes interview.

⁶²² Edwin Caldwell interview, 8.

⁶²³ Ibid.

The perception that desegregation had been achieved in Prince Edward and Chapel Hill also made race seem like less of an integral feature in public schools. Discipline and school spirit were important attributes to crafting an image of successful integration in the 1980s school. Discipline reassured white parents that the school system would place the focus on academics, not schoolhouse shenanigans as shown in Illustration 5.1. Initiated by Prince Edward High principal Willie Townes in the early 1980s, In-School Suspension (ISS) was instituted in the local high to remove disorderly students from the classroom during the school day. Initially, few teachers sent students out of their classroom; but by the mid-1980s, ISS blossomed into a full-fledged program with a separate classroom for students with behavioral issues and received teacher support. Many even pushed for a greater and better supervised ISS.⁶²⁴ School principals, especially at the high school level, asserted that “discipline on the part of adults and students is [sic] necessary in order for learning to be a success.”⁶²⁵

School spirit, on the other hand, convinced black and white students to buy into the public school system. In the early 1980s, Prince Edward County High principal Willie Townes established a spirit week. Students and teachers were encouraged to dress in costumes or to wear their favorite clothes on theme days. At first reluctant to catch on, by the mid-1980s students and teachers began participating in record numbers. School spirit activities served as a way to get white students to support and champion a largely black populated Prince Edward High School. It also increased black student buy-in too. With the advent of white students, blacks felt they were losing control over “their” school.

⁶²⁴ The *Eagle* yearbook, 1986. Statement by Prince Edward High teacher Pat Schoknecht.

⁶²⁵ Ibid. Statement by Principal Claude Miller, Jr.

Dorothy Holcomb, black Prince Edward County resident, argued “I think we have to get some sense of ownership or some sense of pride in the education system itself and not because of who is there or what the ratio of population is.”⁶²⁶ School spirit helped to ensure an image of a merged and racially integrated school and would signal that Prince Edward was where desegregation worked. In Chapel Hill, once blacks expressed pride in attending Chapel Hill High, the tense days of racial disturbances and the memories of Lincoln’s loss could be placed in the past. Proud student endorsements of their public schools presented a unified appearance that desegregation’s goal of integrating black and white bodies had been accomplished.

Academics, not race, became the focus of public schools. In 1986, Prince Edward school board chair of the Academic Committee announced that standards of excellence would pertain to extracurricular activities as well as to academics. Students who participated in interscholastic sports faced a new academic requirement that raised students’ grade point averages (GPA) to 2.0.⁶²⁷ Ultimately known as the “no pass-no participation” policy, school officials insisted that any student who wanted to engage in interscholastic activities must have a GPA of a C- by July 1, 1986 and a GPA of a C by July 1, 1987.⁶²⁸ This policy was designed to combat parents’ feelings that there was an anti-intelligence atmosphere among the athletes. It demonstrated that higher academic standards would permeate even extracurricular activities. In a student poll in the 1987

⁶²⁶Holcomb interview.

⁶²⁷ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, March 5, 1986. A student could participate in extracurricular activities if s/he had at least a 1.5 GPA.

⁶²⁸ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, May 7, 1986.

Eagle yearbook, students ranked this policy as having the greatest impact on students.⁶²⁹

That most of school's interscholastic athletes were black, had lower GPAs, and were in lower-achieving classes was inconsequential. School officials argued that improved academics were the key matter.

The heightened focus on academic achievement in particular widened the divide between white and black students. Although remedial programs for underachieving students continued to receive more funding support, the establishment of Gifted and Talented (GT) courses widened the gap between blacks and whites and made classes physically separated. Predominately black students labeled as “disruptive” or “discipline problems” were often classified as having severe emotional disturbances. They were placed in special education classes. The sheer removal of black students from the classroom did not ensure higher-achieving students obtained a quality education. So gradually by the late 1980s, school officials had increased the funding for Talented and Gifted (TAG) classes to segregate students, mostly along racial lines. The tiered learning structure created a caste system within the public schools. Low-income blacks represented the low end of the educational totem pole. They were relegated to regular or remedial special education classes. Though still funded, school officials began channeling more school funds into improving gifted education programs for middle-class blacks and white students. They, unlike low-income students and blacks, characterized officials' changing educational priority.

White parental advocacy played a dominant role in refocusing schools' objectives from racial parity to academics. Chapel Hill's white parents supported tracked courses if

⁶²⁹ Of the new educational policies, students placed the “no pass-no participation” rule at 47%, no smoking ban at 23% and required hall passes at 15%.

it enhanced their children's academic opportunities. Ed Caldwell described the pressures he received from white parents to endorse gifted courses, as they:

...wanted tracking so they could separate their kids from the total school. In this community, the guidance counselors spent an awful lot of time trying to get people's children in the best academic colleges and so forth. So they spent a lot of time filling out applications and so forth and contacting, whatever. And they were not spending enough time with some kids that had behavioral problems and other things.⁶³⁰

By the mid-1980s and 1990s, Chapel Hill strengthened its gifted programs, and increasingly alienated black, higher-achieving students. The uneven enrollment of blacks into the talented and gifted programs posed a significant problem. Black parents hence felt their children were "not getting a fair shake" and sent their children to private schools. Al Hogan, former Chapel Hill High educator, argued that the system lost significant numbers of higher-achieving black students. Even Hogan, an educator in the system, had difficulty enrolling his daughter in the talented and gifted program. Siphoned off from the school system, Chapel Hill public schools were left with a "mass of [black] kids who aren't on that [gifted] level" unable to compete with the white students.⁶³¹ Consequently, the achievement gap between white and lower-achieving black students widened. As of 1996-97, only 2% of black Chapel Hill residents were in TAG courses.

By the early 1990s, gifted education had developed as a permanent component of states' educational programs. The Virginia Board of Education instituted a new teaching endorsement for gifted education.⁶³² Locally, Prince Edward school board member

⁶³⁰ Edwin Caldwell, Jr., interview by Bob Gilgor, May 28, 2000, K-529, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 10.

⁶³¹ Virginia Hill, "Local Histories/Local Memories of Desegregation," 109-110.

⁶³² Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, June 21, 1994.

Sherry Honeycutt motioned and board members seconded the formation of a gifted coordinator position to allow teachers to focus solely on teaching rather than administrative tasks⁶³³ Board members agreed that the advent of a stronger gifted education program would improve the educational opportunities for the underserved higher-achieving student population.⁶³⁴ They developed separate gifted courses instead of differentiated learning within a regular classroom.⁶³⁵

The creation of a separate curriculum for gifted and mostly white students reinstated racial segregation in practice, while promoting quality educational standards in word. Sparing no expense, Prince Edward school leaders established rigid criteria for gifted education referrals. Students had to undergo costly testing at \$345 per student by a licensed school psychologist. In order for students to receive a referral to the gifted curriculum, the system required parental contact and permission, teacher evaluations, and a full psychological evaluation by the school psychologist. Only students who scored in the 90th percentile on achievement tests, as well as students with a GPA of a B or better, were permitted to enroll in TAG courses. Far more selective than the process of identifying and referring students for remedial services, fewer students were actually accepted in gifted education classes.⁶³⁶ Of the 2,696 students in Prince Edward County

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ “Personal Reflections on the Decade and What the Future Holds,” *Proconian*, December 20, 1989.

⁶³⁵ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, June 21, 1994.

⁶³⁶ Ibid. Only one in four referrals was accepted for gifted education, in contrast to the 1 in 2 student referrals accepted for remedial special education courses.

public schools, only 197 students participated in TAG programs, few of them black.⁶³⁷ Prince Edward black parents had to petition to have their children considered for gifted education.

The Prince Edward NAACP maintained a watchful eye over school policies, fearing that black students were beginning to get slighted academically. NAACP chair, Elsie Carrington, attended school board meetings frequently to protest white teachers' perceptions that black children were "different" or came "from broken homes."⁶³⁸ She despised the lowered standards teachers projected onto black students and the "idea that all of our [black] children have learning disabilities." Carrington insisted these "children and students who need to be educated," implying that the quality of education had eclipsed black students.⁶³⁹ When NAACP leader and educational activist Mary W. Redd read about a TAG trip to Africa in the *Farmville Herald*, she expressed her anger that only one of the ten participating students was black.⁶⁴⁰ By 1995, the NAACP accused the school board of restricting TAG course referrals for black students, while allowing easier access to remedial classes.

But Prince Edward County school officials argued that the heightened focus on academics alone could not explain the expanded racial division between white and black students. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, school administrators created extracurricular activities to attract white students to the public schools. Sports, such as Ski Club or cross-

⁶³⁷ Ibid. See also, Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, January 4, 1995.

⁶³⁸ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, May 4, 1994.

⁶³⁹ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, March 8, 1995.

⁶⁴⁰ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, November 2, 1994.

country track, had won the allegiance of white students and garnered all-white participation. Except in a few sports, students continued to socialize in a segregated fashion. At Prince Edward High, the split of extracurricular activities fell along academic lines; black students dominated vocational clubs and most sports, while whites populated academic clubs.⁶⁴¹ School officials insisted that students decided to cooperate with whomever they wanted. Forgetting their hand in orchestrating race-based activities, school officials strayed from active and vocal support of segregated extracurricular programs.

The growing divide within classes became seen as students' choice rather than the fault of instructional designers. As a result, students' racial and economic status was not the culprit in the discussion of how to desegregate schools effectively. The repurposing of multicultural education along with effective Republican policies began to limit any room for a meaningful racial and educational critique of public schools. Electing to "accentuate the multicultural positives of this community rather than dwell on just the negative aspects," Chapel Hill school board member Douglas Breeden best articulated the hopes with a broad based multicultural program—to avoid focusing on points of racial strife.⁶⁴² Rather than condemn innate racial structures, the blame lay with the individual attributes of school officials, parents, teachers, and students.

⁶⁴¹ See Illustration 5.2 and Illustration 5.3.

⁶⁴² Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board Minutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 19, 1990 and March 19, 1990. In 1989, Chapel Hill school officials created a Multicultural Task Force in response to emergent disputes of the absence of black culture in the public schools. Task Force members were charged with investigating the validity of revising the curriculum to include studies of cultural identity. A discussion of multiculturalism threatened to disturb delicate relations between blacks and whites. As one member of the school board articulated, he hoped the program would not "drive a wedge between the races."

By the 1990s, political conservatives had successfully transformed the language of school desegregation from advocacy of structural changes to one of judgment. As part of the conservative trend to cut entitlement programs, many schools cut the funding for free and reduced lunches. Part of the language revolved around fairness; low-income students received a free lunch in order to pay better attention in class, while wealthier students had to pay for their lunch. In 1994, Prince Edward school board officials followed suit and reduced their budgets, affecting a number of black and low-income students. Despite having fifty percent of the student population receiving free lunch, officials argued it was no longer “politically or economically sound for all children to eat free.”⁶⁴³ The widespread usage of the subsidized lunch program, officials asserted, placed other higher income students at a disadvantage. This value judgment failed to account for familial economic difficulties these children faced.

The shift from viewing structural inequities as a culprit in racial differences also diminished the potency of race in local communities. Chapel Hill’s Rev. J.R. Manley declared that the civil rights movement had prioritized black issues on the public agenda but was undergoing a change by the late 1980s. The attitude shifted from a “core black group approaching a problem to a coalition approaching a problem.” The downside was that the coalition focused on black and other issues, so “the black issues are diluted.”⁶⁴⁴ Black Chapel Hillians faced more challenges in garnering the city’s support for improved housing and educational programs for low-income blacks alone. Color-blind policies had

⁶⁴³ Prince Edward County School Board Minutes, Farmville, Virginia, August 3, 1994.

⁶⁴⁴ Mark Schultz, “It’s Still a Battle,” *Chapel Hill Herald*, 1989.

“diluted” the impact of race, making criticizing educational or economic structures challenging.

Black students’ engagement with black-centered concepts confused many white students who thought racism had declined. During black history month in 1990 however, white students witnessed how wrong their assumptions were. Chapel Hill High junior Krystal Williams recited a poem entitled “White Girl” by Mia Garrison.⁶⁴⁵ The poem encouraged black females to demonstrate their pride. White students however were disturbed by the poetry recitation and wrote to the student newspaper that “I felt guilty about something that was not my fault...that is not fair.”⁶⁴⁶ White students had an issue with Malcolm X shirts which said “It’s a black thing, you wouldn’t understand.”⁶⁴⁷ Black Chapel Hill High senior class president Malcolm Crawford asserted the T-shirt, and poem, were symbols of racial pride. He argued that the strain between white and black students emerged because they failed to talk to each other.

In attempts to repair the misunderstandings among Chapel Hill High students, students and administrators formed groups to bring racial discussions to the fore. Crawford created a Minority Support Group, a weekly forum and integrated group, which became the most integrated group ever at Chapel Hill High.⁶⁴⁸ Chapel Hill High’s administration also developed strategies to address the racial antagonism in the school. Assistant principal Marguerite Peebles created an after-school program in the spring of 1990. Designed to help students handle uncomfortable racial situations and avoid

⁶⁴⁵ “Projects Afoot to Encourage Racial Harmony at CHHS, “*Proconian*, March 9, 1990.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

stereotypes, R.A.C.E. (Racial Awareness for Community Educators) taught students how to avoid stereotypes in a series of interactive multicultural workshops.⁶⁴⁹

Unfortunately the moment of racial understanding was short-lived. In Chapel Hill, construction started on a new high school. Since the closure of Lincoln, rumors swirled among the black community that a new high school in the system would carry the name “Lincoln” However, by the mid-1990s, school board members hoped to sever the ties to a segregated past. As a brand-new building with both white and black students, they sought to avoid any racial identification. As Chapel Hill High alum David Kirkman recounted:

And it was said in the hallways, it was said amongst the adults in Chapel Hill, if there’s ever another high school in Chapel Hill, we will name it Lincoln High School. That was one of the things that was probably said to assuage a lot of these feelings. It was almost like a sacred promise, although there was never anything put in writing. But I think people at that time felt the reaction, felt the pain, over all this. White and black really wanted that to happen. And Chapel Hill being so transient, I think that got forgotten. And a few years back [1995-96] when they named the new high school East Chapel Hill High School, so that these probably white doctors’ kids whose parents work over in Durham, or out in the [Research Triangle] Park, when you apply for a position in a major university somewhere else, it just looks better to have Chapel Hill this, Chapel Hill that, than to have Lincoln.⁶⁵⁰

The naming of schools carried particular importance to black Prince Edward residents. When the new county middle school was being erected in Prince Edward County, educational leaders had unanimously voted to name the school for the county’s superintendent. James M. Anderson was credited for guiding the county school system through the stages of desegregation, creating a thriving public education program. Black

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid. Forty Chapel Hill High students participated.

⁶⁵⁰ David Kirkman, interview by Bob Gilgor, April 14, 2001, K-551, in Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 19.

leaders of the local NAACP objected to the choice, recalling the county's history of schools into question. As local black attorney and NAACP president James Ghee, Jr. penned in letter to the school board, the change of school names in 1969 "was done to make the schools racially unidentifiable and to clearly identify the schools with the county." But Ghee argued that the school board told the black community that "the schools would never again carry the name of any individual."⁶⁵¹

A firestorm of emotions was released among members of the school board. Dr. Roger Barrus, a newly elected school board member, did not understand the hubbub about the school name change. Arguing that neither he nor Superintendent Anderson was present in the county in 1969, Barrus countered that the board wanted to honor Anderson because "he brought the school system from an embarrassment to the verge of greatness." He wondered whether "this county [had] put itself in a position that it [could not] look up to anyone because everyone happen[ed] to be of one race or the other."⁶⁵² The fact that Barrus assumed that new faces to the system or the gains made during the years of desegregation should make blacks get over the past, underscoring the colorblind perspective that pervaded educational policy. The simplicity that "we can't honor anybody except Prince Edward, whoever he was," implied that the school system was to have broken away from the racial turmoil that had plagued the earlier generation. Instead the schools were to reflect the racially progressive image that could allow a white man's name to reside on a school building.

⁶⁵¹ Overton McGehee, "School's Name Opens Wounds," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 10, 1990, B9.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

The limited space for race-based discussion made black students more protective of their racial identity. Because of the backlash against race-sensitive education, white students had a hard time understanding why race was so important. Blacks, on the other hand, fully understood the implications of structural racism within the public schools, but their issues became seen as complaints rather than problems. To black students, color-blind policies were pernicious to the equalizing mission of desegregation. Many white students continued to receive better funded classes and better skilled teachers, while most black students persisted in fighting for access to these hallmarks of a quality education. Reduced to a single chant “it’s a black thing, you wouldn’t understand,” African American students across economic lines in Chapel Hill and Prince Edward County critiqued the persistence of racism in with a color-blind atmosphere. The phrase did not excuse whites from racial misunderstandings, but instead spoke to blacks’ feelings of exclusion from a white dominated world. More significantly, these students acutely learned the power of blending a sense of community with blackness.

On the eve of *Brown’s* fortieth anniversary, educators and the public alike reevaluated the merits of school desegregation. The public conversation turned to why *Brown* failed—poor teachers, low test scores, apathetic underachieving students. Rarely were assessments of educational curricula made. The foregone conclusion was not how or in what ways *Brown* could have been effective but that it was a colossal failure except in the areas of interpersonal relations. Conservative Republican policies, it seems, changed the public discussion about race and class into one on individual rights. Individuals’ memories of desegregation, however, would threaten to expose issues of race and power in the next wave of desegregation.

Illustration 5.1⁶⁵³

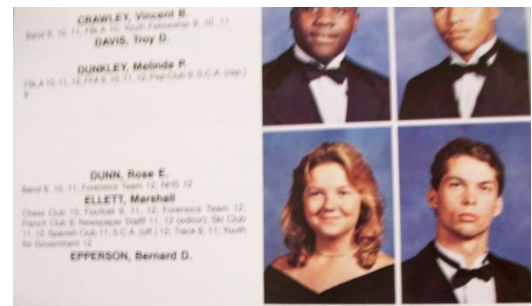
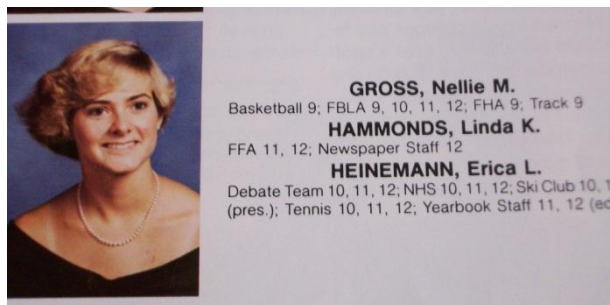
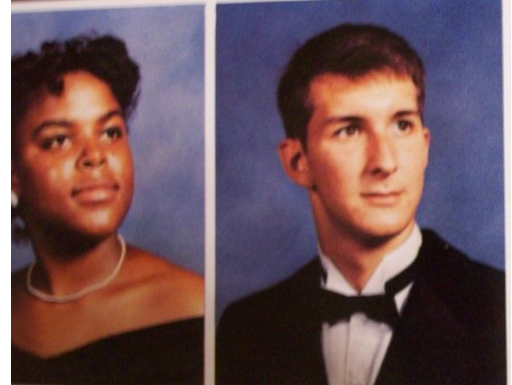
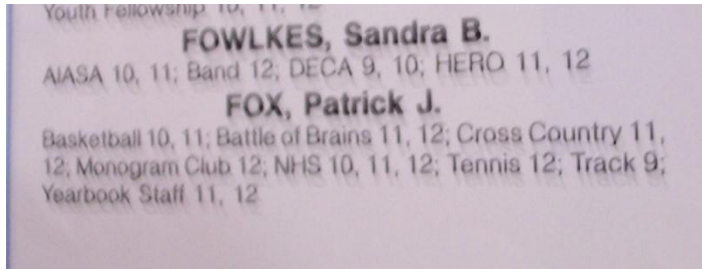
Discipline in Chapel Hill Public Schools



⁶⁵³ Editorial Cartoon, *Chapel Hill News*, November 8, 1977, 4A.

Illustration 5.2

Prince Edward County High School, Senior Class Pictures of 1986⁶⁵⁴



⁶⁵⁴The *Eagle* yearbook, 1986. As shown from each student's club listings, PECHS witnessed a growing racial divide for club activities.

Illustration 5.3

Prince Edward County High School, Club Photographs, 1986⁶⁵⁵



⁶⁵⁵ Ibid. Extracurricular activities at Prince Edward County High stratified largely along racial lines. By the mid-1980s, for example, black females predominately composed the junior varsity cheerleading squad while white females formed the ranks of the varsity squad. The membership of academic clubs was white while the membership of vocational clubs was black.

EPILOGUE

DREDGING UP THE PAST

*“We can affix blame to those in the past who denied not only justice, but opportunity and hope for the future to countless young people. But the blame will be meaningless unless we hold fast to our memories and our convictions to never let such injustices plague our land again—and to speak out against denial of rights in every form.”*⁶⁵⁶

Former Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder

*“This is a battle over our last legacy.”*⁶⁵⁷

Vera Allen, Martha E. Forrester Council of Women president

*“When I pass Lincoln school, I get teary-eyed because of the loss. The sense of loss. It’s almost like losing someone very close to you. A family member. A death. And that’s the only way I can describe it, how I feel.”*⁶⁵⁸

Keith Edwards, Lincoln High student

In 1978, Guy Friddell wrote a book about his friend and former Virginia governor, Colgate Darden. In it, the former Byrd Machine politician emerged as a man tolerant of racial changes.⁶⁵⁹ Vexed by Friddell’s reinterpretation of school desegregation history, Prince Edward County researcher Edward Peebles wrote an opinion piece to counter this revisionist history:

⁶⁵⁶ Gerald Anthony Foster and Vonita White Foster, *Silent Trumpets of Justice: Integration’s Failure in Prince Edward County* (Hampton, Virginia: U.B. & U.S. Communications Systems, Inc., 1993), foreword.

⁶⁵⁷ Donald Baker, “Support for a Virginia School and Its History Lesson,” *Washington Post*, March 6, 1993, B3.

⁶⁵⁸ Keith Edwards, interview by Bob Gilgor, #K-541, December 14, 2000. In the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection, in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, 12.

⁶⁵⁹ Edward H. Peebles, “Making Heroes of Those of Lesser Sin,” 1979, Virginia Historical Society. The book to which Peebles referred is Guy Friddell, *Colgate Darden: Conversations with Guy Friddell* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978). Friddell, a former journalist for the *Richmond News Leader*, interviewed and maintained close working relationships with many members of the Byrd regime.

The recent *Times-Dispatch* (March 18, 1979) account of the Prince Edward County School closing, excerpted from Guy Friddell's book on Colgate Darden, illustrates so vividly the self-serving, selective memory of so many old watchdogs and apologists for privilege in Virginia. These days, politicians like Darden, journalists such as Friddell, Virginius Dabney and James J. Kilpatrick, and all of the Byrd brains of Massive Resistance, seem to recall past events only in a manner which disassociates them from the old white supremacist orthodoxy which the record shows they once supported. Perhaps, in the light of present-day standards, they are embarrassed about their past views on race and now wish for us to believe that they had nothing whatsoever to do with the irrational persistence of segregation. To hear Friddell tell it today, Darden and Governor Albertis Harrison never had any connections with the white supremacist Byrd establishment.⁶⁶⁰

The process of retelling stories of the past relates to how we choose to remember the past. That is, memories often serve political purposes and what we remember or forget tells us more about our present than they do our past. The dissonance between historical facts and individual memory, as oral historian Alessandro Portelli claims, does not devalue oral accounts, because they allow us to excavate “the interests of the tellers, and the dreams and desires, beneath them.”⁶⁶¹ In the case of segregationists’ memory, they have elected to gloss over the negative and racist aspects of their past in favor of a more uplifting narrative centered on their commitment to individual rights and freedom of choice. On the other hand, Peebles argued that those affected by Byrd Machine politics could not forget. They lived with the legacies of the choices segregationist politicians had made. Speaking more to white sympathizers, Peebles warned that to forget those who closed the public schools to black children will obscure the necessity for continued efforts to equalize education for whites and blacks.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. Peebles circulated his piece to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and the State News Desk, where he was told the piece was “too controversial.” After being asked by Rev. L. Francis Griffin to forward the editorial to the *Richmond Afro-American*, Peebles agreed. However, the piece was never published in any print media.

⁶⁶¹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning In Oral History* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 2.

In the summer of 1994, even further removed from the era of school closings than Peeples, the Prince Edward school board publicized that R.R. Moton High was about to be demolished and the land sold to the highest bidder. This announcement triggered a flurry of organization in the black community to preserve the school as a treasured, and important, national landmark.⁶⁶² The Martha E. Forrester Council of Women and the R.R. Moton-Branch Historical Society lobbied the school board to “save Moton School as a memorial to the desegregation struggle.”⁶⁶³ By the winter of 1994, the groups had raised \$1,000 and garnered the support of at least 200 people to stall the bulldozing project. The stakes were high with the destruction of Moton High for the black community. They remembered the period of school closings. But blacks did not want to recount that story; instead, by turning Moton into a national historic site, they revised the story into a symbol of black resilience. It was not distance from the past, but the ways in which the past is remembered that mattered most.

The problem with memory is its slipperiness. Often the uses of school desegregation narratives evaluate the success or failure of *Brown*. The memories associated with it may conflate the past as a direct link to the present. But as school desegregation scholars Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton warn, it is dangerous to “compare

⁶⁶² For scholarship on the historical memory and public commemorations, see Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2004); Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: American Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2003).; and Elgin L. Klugh, “Reclaiming Segregation-Era, African American Schoolhouses: Building on Symbols of Past Cooperation,” *Journal of Negro Education* 74, no.3 (Summer 2005): 246-259. Other treatments of historical memory have examined their politically charged nature, see Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford, eds., *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2006) and Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (California: University of California Press, 1997).

⁶⁶³ Mary Beth Joachim, “A Symbol of Black Pride: Virginians Try to Save School that Segregation Shut,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (from *Farmville Herald*), April 2, 1995, N3.

their memory of the best of the old black schools with the worst problems in the desegregated schools and assume a decline” in black achievement without verifying reports.⁶⁶⁴ Oral historian Barbara Shircliffe agrees. She argues that we must treat blacks’ nostalgic memories of the past critically, as a critique of contemporary educational issues more than as an accurate retelling of Jim Crow schools.⁶⁶⁵ Yet those who view educational policy in political terms experience difficulty separating the politics (the memory) from the “what actually happened” (the history).

In the decades after the school closings, Prince Edward County’s public schools had begun to reflect a desegregated institution. The racial composition of classes matched that of the county. The teaching staff and county principals generally reflected the numbers of the county’s black-to-white ratios. Citizens elected blacks for the first time to the school board and Board of Supervisors, responsible for making educational decisions for the school system. It is no wonder that *New York Newsday* reporter Timothy Phelps labeled the county’s desegregation process a “success story” and “model for the nation.

But Phelps’ positive portrayal ignored the racial tensions that continued to thrive in the county. When Prince Edward school officials decided to sell the land surrounding Moton, they entertained offers. One of the largest to come to the table was made by Longwood. By the early 1990s, the College experienced drastic growth in its undergraduate population. Consequently, the school had sought to expand its campus, by incorporating the fields surrounding Moton and its adjacent predominately black neighborhood along Griffin Boulevard. This raised a host of questions of exactly how far

⁶⁶⁴ Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 82.

⁶⁶⁵ Barbara Shircliffe, *The Best of That World: Historically Black High Schools and the Crisis of Desegregation in a Southern Metropolis* (Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2006).

blacks and whites had come since the school closing period. Blacks argued that the school officials' plans and Longwood's expansion tactics reflected the long history of overlooking blacks in the county. Charles Herndon recalled how his aunt lost her home for the purpose of building Longwood's basketball courts. The College declared her land eminent domain and paid her a fraction of its real value, while whites who lived on valuable land close to the College could maintain their homes "because they are landmarks."⁶⁶⁶ As one former Moton student argued,

I think [blacks are] looked at basically as people who can be disposed of and manipulated. One of the things I was trying to talk to some of our black leaders about is the displacement of some black people on Griffin Boulevard for Longwood College. That to me seems like Longwood officials are saying we don't have to worry about blacks. We can do what we want. We won't even take the time to try to look for an effective way or a secondary campus.⁶⁶⁷

The manifestation of these tensions multiplied once talk of commemorating Moton began. Blacks angrily recalled the period when whites closed the schools. Some admitted to having "a streak of anger" about the losses the black community faced in the 1960s.⁶⁶⁸ Local whites had blamed black leaders for the public school's closure. Dredging up the past seemed that it might spark a racial conflict in the community.

The black and white communities of Prince Edward debated the merits to unearthing the past which presumably had lain fallow since the school closings. Board of Supervisors member Hugh Carwile and former segregationist argued that "the county

⁶⁶⁶ Charles Herndon, August 20, 1992, Farmville, Virginia, Not Our Children," with Ken and Laurie Hoen of Phoenix Production, Virginia Historical Society Mss15 N8437a, 57. For more on Longwood's desire for the land, see Baker, "Support for a Virginia School."

⁶⁶⁷ Foster and Foster, *Silent Trumpets*, 34.

⁶⁶⁸ Donald P. Baker, "Remembering Segregation's End," *Washington Post*, May 30, 1999, C3.

may be better served if the building is removed.”⁶⁶⁹ A marker or a flower garden seemed more appropriate. These commemorative symbols, unlike the resurrection of the former segregated black high school, neutralized the memories of school desegregation. Turning Moton into a national historic site not only projected the county’s racist history to the nation, but also reminded local blacks and whites of the deep investment in segregated history. As Carwile maintained, “...it’s like a constant reminder, like rubbing salt in a wound.”⁶⁷⁰ The preservation of Moton threatened to unearth blacks’ animosities over the losses brought by the school closing era. To local older whites, Prince Edward had traveled a far distance from the days of closed schools. Blacks had access to greater resources and had gained political power. The commemoration of Moton only served to exacerbate the past that had been resolved.

Blacks were also divided over what should happen with Moton. Elsie Carrington felt energies were better used in remedying racial inequities within the public school system. The issue revolved around money, she reasoned, because “if that place was inadequate forty years ago, why do we want to save it now?”⁶⁷¹ But other black leaders fiercely disagreed with Carrington. Ghee asserted that Moton’s national historic landmark status would prevent the tragedy of no formal education from ever reoccurring in the county. He argued that “like the Jews remember the Holocaust, we shall never forget the price we paid for public education.”⁶⁷² Commemorating the former black school would not heighten black-white racial tensions, but promised to resolve them

⁶⁶⁹ Baker, “Support for a Virginia School.”

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Baker, “Remembering Segregation’s End.”

instead by making its preservation a morality tale of good (racial progressiveness) conquering evil (racial bigotry).

Understanding the rationale behind the memories attached to Moton, perhaps, would provide Prince Edward blacks and whites a deeper meaning to the former site of student protest. To white leaders involved in closing the public schools, Moton embodied white injustice to blacks. To whites who remained complacent during the closings, Moton evoked feelings of guilt. Commemorations served as “a way to make up for what took place, and in part, that’s good.”⁶⁷³ Blacks, on the other hand, expressed a range of sentiments. Some viewed the school as a reminder of blacks’ powerlessness in the county, while other black leaders viewed Moton as the epitome of black persistence.

The racial reinterpretations of Moton High resulted in black ownership over its legacy. Most whites’ perceptions of the school referred to the political maneuvers of segregationists. Most blacks, however, had attended Moton. They taught there. They staged a protest movement there. And, they had built a community at Moton. As a result, black organizations, such as the Martha E. Forrester Council of Women (MEFCW), fought to obtain ownership over the school.⁶⁷⁴

But the memory they sought to preserve was one of progress, not sadness. MEFCW president Vera Allen, a former black teacher displaced by the school closings, and historical society president James Ghee, a former black student in eighth grade when the schools closed, latched onto the idea of converting the old Moton High School into a national historic site and/or civil rights museum. For Allen and Ghee, Moton symbolized

⁶⁷³ Michael Janofsky, “A New Hope for Dreams Suspended by Segregation, *New York Times*, July 31, 2005, 1. Comment made by Barbara Spring.

⁶⁷⁴ Baker, “Support for a Virginia School.”

the quintessential American story of grit, hard work, and persistence in the face of all odds. Commemorating Moton would redeem the county for its period of school closing, and tie it with other struggles for civil rights.

The national element to Moton's legacy allowed Prince Edward whites and blacks to participate in its remaking. By removing the local aspect from its projected image, Moton's commemoration obscured the grave losses blacks suffered at the hands of segregationists. Yet, Moton's national status also helped reconcile whites and blacks, in a town where tensions went unspoken and hurts unhealed. Kenneth Woodley, editor of the *Farmville Herald*, asked that Farmville residents support the mission to convert Moton into a national historic site. Woodley argued that "it would be a healing act of affirmation in Prince Edward County...The Moton-Branch school is a rare piece of American history...We can't rewrite history. But we can make it."⁶⁷⁵ And make it was indeed what black and white county residents did. In asserting their place not only in history, but also in the city's landscape, blacks and whites crafted a story of racial cooperation and a space for both races in the past and future of the town.

Many of the town residents endorsed the commemoration of Moton. Skip Griffin, litigant in the Supreme Court case which reopened Prince Edward County public schools, called the museum "the symbol of how a community that was once torn apart by its racial differences has come together to preserve an important part of its history and thus move a step further in the direction of becoming reconciled, one to another."⁶⁷⁶ For blacks, Moton's designation as a national landmark allowed them to remember black resistance

⁶⁷⁵ Kenneth Woodley, "Shall We Tear Down America?" *Farmville Herald*, 1994.

⁶⁷⁶ Kenneth Woodley, "The Rainbow...Before Me," *Farmville Herald*, April 25, 2001.

against segregation as central to the start of the civil rights movement. Now, having a place in local history and in the national legacy of the civil rights movement, Prince Edward County blacks could relinquish some of the frustrations from the school closing era. Moreover, the guilt associated with closing the public schools offered whites the opportunity to vindicate their passive or active role in massive resistance. Even whites who had fought against closing the public schools supported turning Moton into a civil rights museum. Gretchen Rogers, a white supporter of public education in the 1970s, admitted to hating that reporters “lock[ed] us in to what happened in the 1959-64 period.” Designating Moton as a historic landmark would paint a portrait of a racially cooperative community, a far cry from the entrenched segregated environment thirty years before.

Moton’s commemoration also held further promise for a fledgling rural economy. Heritage tourism composed a large portion of Virginia businesses, yielding approximately 3.6 million black visitors out of 33 million a year.⁶⁷⁷ The former State Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Michael J. Schewel, explained that “African American tourists to Virginia spend more and stay longer than the average visitor.”⁶⁷⁸ Marketing Moton as “ground zero” for the Civil Rights Movement, where student protesters marched to change segregated schools, held high promise for the rural town. For a community with a low median income, attracting visitors made sense for its economy.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁷ Jamie Ruff, “Warner: Students Will Be Helped,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 15, 2004.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Prince Edward County’s median income in 2000 was \$31,301 found on <http://www.co.prince-edward.va.us/demographics.html>, (assessed September 14, 2008). The national median income in 2000 was \$41,990 found on <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/files/income.html>, (assessed September 14, 2008).

In 1996, the MECFW agreed to purchase Moton from the Board of Supervisors. In the same year, Congressman L.F. Payne of Virginia's fifth District secured an appropriation of \$200,000 for a planning project to be executed through the National Park Service to help transform this closed county school into a museum and a center for the study of civil rights. The old high school was also placed on the National Register of Historic Places in the fall of the year. By 1998, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior designated Moton High as a National Historic Landmark, the highest level of historical recognition offered by the federal government. After further grassroots efforts by the MEFCW, R.R. Moton opened as a museum on the fiftieth anniversary of the student strike.

In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the story of desegregation lacked Prince Edward's drama, but illustrated the poignancy of community loss. As the school that all Chapel Hill blacks had to attend under segregation, Lincoln High formed one of the black community's most prized cultural institutions. It represented everything the desegregated school was not for blacks—caring, thriving, and theirs. Black students remembered Lincoln as a vital institution, which instilled cultural pride and self-determination. Former students recalled the caring teachers and the nurturing environment of the all-black school. Teachers visited students' homes and stayed after school to offer extra academic assistance. At Lincoln, black teachers encouraged their students to strive for their best. Unlike at Chapel Hill High, former Lincoln students felt wanted and supported by their teachers and principals. While their current memories acknowledge the educational inequities of Lincoln, the black students recollect a tight racial community. Students

recall how parents and teachers rallied together to raise funds for school necessities such as science equipment, uniforms, and an activity bus.⁶⁸⁰

These nostalgic stories of communal togetherness not only reflect the constraints on racial space in late 1960s Chapel Hill, but also reflect the disappointment with the current school system. Although black students had gained access to newer books and to better equipment in integrated schools, they felt they had little control over the school's administrative choices. Blacks' inability to direct educational curriculum maintained a learning gap between blacks and whites. In 1992, Chapel Hill's town council and school board members created a Blue Ribbon Task Force to assist in lowering the achievement gap. The Task Force found that seventy percent of black males and sixty-two percent of black females at Chapel Hill High School averaged "Ds" and "Fs," while thirty-one percent of white males and twenty-one percent of white females fell into the same grade averages.⁶⁸¹ Nearly forty years after the first integrated class crossed the threshold of Chapel Hill High, racial disparities continued to plague public education. In the 2005-2006 North Carolina Report Cards, Chapel Hill's black high school students averaged sixty-three percent on end-of-course tests, while white high school students averaged ninety-five percent.⁶⁸² The desegregation of public schools, one may argue, did not eliminate the educational gaps between white and black students.

⁶⁸⁰ "School Contest Funds Allocated," *Lincoln Echo* 18, no. 2, December 13, 1949. "Lincoln Gets Bus," *Lincoln Echo* 22, no.1, November 1953.

⁶⁸¹ Jennifer Nardone, "Race, Memory, and Desegregation of Chapel Hill 1954-1964," (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002), 1.

⁶⁸² North Carolina Report Cards 2005-2006, (assessed January 25, 2007), <http://www.ncreportcards.org/src>.

Chapel Hill blacks seek to combat the negative realities of public education by remembering the best of segregated education. Cultural geographer Kenneth Foote argues that the pride surrounding sites of collective remembrances “was only a first step in understanding what had happened to these places... [T]he sites themselves seemed to play an active role in their own interpretation.”⁶⁸³ Lincoln High was a site of educational inequities. After undergoing the process of desegregation, blacks collectively remembered the school as a site of the best of educational achievement as a critique of the current school system.

The public use of Lincoln spoke to blacks’ place in Chapel Hill society. The physical site of Lincoln today is home to the Chapel Hill school board offices. The transformation of the black school to the control base for the town’s schools is illuminating. Are Chapel Hill blacks the only ones allowed to derive meaning from Lincoln High? Which groups are allowed to retain ownership over its legacy? While blacks remember the positive images of Lincoln, whites remember a fairly smooth transition. Together, their stories suggest that desegregation disrupted the cultural bond among Chapel Hill blacks, even as it made positive changes within the larger community.

Lincoln emerged as Chapel Hill’s tribute to successful desegregation. A plaque placed near the entrance of Lincoln reminds its visitors of its past; but it also alerts them to its present. Dedicated to Rev. J. R. Manley, Sr., the town’s first black school board member, the plaque reads:

Through public outcry, Lincoln High was transformed into the now present site of the administration offices of the Chapel Hill Carrboro Schools. Painful and difficult as it was, these changes were crucial to

⁶⁸³ Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: American Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1997, revised 2003), 3, 5.

achieving the full integration that many people in the community, both white and blacks, wanted.⁶⁸⁴

The desegregation of Chapel Hill schools allowed black and white students to craft identity of racial cooperation. According to a former white school board member, Sam Holton, without integration, “Chapel Hill would be like Ireland and Israel—two geographic areas struggling to maintain two separate cultures.”⁶⁸⁵

Yet blacks continued to narrate the changes in their communities as a story of loss. The answers to these questions lay in the larger community. By the mid-1990s, the town’s University of North Carolina college students flooded into predominately black areas surrounding the college, displacing long-time black residents. As Lincoln graduate Thurman Couch argued, “Nothing’s going to remain black in Chapel Hill; they’re going to destroy the black community... [it’s] on its way out.”⁶⁸⁶ Gentrification dominated the community. Newer housing developments such as the new “green-focused” Greenbridge condos are promising to dwarf its nearby housing structures in both size and wealth. With only fifteen percent of the condos set aside as affordable coupled with the increased need for college housing, the end result is a changing economic and social environment.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁴ “Plaque to Rev. J.R. Manley, Sr., Pastor of First Baptist Church—Presented by the Board of Education,” December, 8, 1996, Lincoln Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁶⁸⁵ Sam Holton, interview by Jenny Matthews, #K-206, March 28, 2001, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 24.

⁶⁸⁶ Thurman Couch, interview by Bob Gilgor, #K-537, February 12, 2001, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 22.

⁶⁸⁷ Kate Wheeler, ‘Green’ Building a Threat to Historic Neighborhood,” *Chapel Hill News*, January 10, 2007.

The forgetfulness of desegregation memories creates room for dangerous educational reform policies. In Chapel Hill, Angela Lee spearheaded the effort to establish a kindergarten through eighth grade charter school in honor of her parents: the Howard and Lillian Lee Scholars Academy.⁶⁸⁸ Applying for a state license as a charter school, Lee hopes to open the school by the fall of 2012. According to Lee, the school's goal is "to close the achievement gap... [and] to help African-American students raise their performance on standardized tests."⁶⁸⁹ The Chapel Hill NAACP, however, argued that the school would contribute to a single-race, low-income, resegregated public school system instead. In December 2011, the local NAACP held a news conference with the attempt to bar the charter school from applying for approval by the state charter school committee. NAACP chair Rev. Robert Campbell concluded that the school would "siphon off public money to set up special, semi-private schools for families that can afford lunches and transportation."⁶⁹⁰ Although over 900 Chapel Hill community members signed a petition to prevent the creation of the Lee Charter School, the State Board of Education approved the school's application on March 1, 2012.⁶⁹¹

Considered academically rigorous alternatives to traditional public schools, charter schools received a lot of support by the state legislature. Although state law

⁶⁸⁸ Angela Lee is daughter to Howard and Lillian Lee. Howard Lee was elected the first African American mayor in a majority white southern city (Chapel Hill) in 1969. Lillian Lee was a longtime educator in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School System. When Chapel Hill needs to construct new schools, the names of Howard and Lillian Lee are always among the short list of potential names for a public school.

⁶⁸⁹ Katelyn Ferral, "N.C. Board of Education Approves 3 Triangle Charter Schools, 9 Statewide," *Raleigh News and Observer*, March 1, 2012, <http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/03/01/1896671/nc-board-of-education-approves.html>, (accessed March 22, 2012).

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

requires that charter schools enroll a racially and ethnically student body, North Carolina legislators are most seduced by charter schools' commitment to reduce the achievement test gap and boost test scores. In the summer of 2011, North Carolina's General Assembly passed Senate Bill 8, which allowed for a limitless number of charter schools in the state.⁶⁹² The bill also established a Public Charter School Advisory Council which would approve or reject applications for charter school. The bill's Republican drafters warned the State Board of Education to "either get some new charter schools open next fall or have their power to review applicants handed to the advisory council."⁶⁹³ The pressure to create publicly-supported charter schools reflects the state's color-blind policies of the 1980s and 1990s. Because North Carolina law mandates that charter schools accept all applications, there is often an overabundance of potential students. The duty falls to the charter schools to select students from a lottery system at random. In perfect conditions, the schools are racially diversity. However, the higher numbers of white versus black residents in Chapel Hill and Orange County provides a greater probability of a racially homogeneous school.

By viewing educational "quality" as improved test scores alone, black and white schoolchildren miss out on the benefits of interracial and interclass social interactions. African American parent Darrell Allison presides over the Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina (PEFNC), a parental advocacy group that promotes freedom of choice in their children's education. Allison argues that "if by chance, a school

⁶⁹² Ibid. Currently there are 140 Orange County residents enrolled in the county's two existing charter schools: There Orange County Charter School located in Hillsborough (grades K-8) and PACE Academy (grades 9-12).

⁶⁹³ Bob Geary, "Charter Schools Face Potential Hazards Amid Proliferation," March 7, 2012, [Indyweek.com](http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/charter-schools-face-potential-hazards-amid-proliferation/Content?oid=2884915), <http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/charter-schools-face-potential-hazards-amid-proliferation/Content?oid=2884915>, (accessed March 22, 2012).

happens to be 80, 90 percent, or even 100 percent minority, that doesn't concern me.” What does concern him is “the question of it being a quality school.”⁶⁹⁴ Unfortunately the zealous pursuit of “good schools” inevitably leaves some students with “bad schools.” Most often, these students represent the same race and same economic class. If we reflect more on the lessons about race that desegregation memories reveal, we might better understand the dangers of ahistorical educational policies.

The stories of Moton High and Lincoln High could not be more different or more the same. In Prince Edward, a large portion of the black community lost access to formal public education for five years. Their schools, once reopened, served predominately black students until the 1980s. The prevailing narrative of school desegregation was racism and educational devastation. In Chapel Hill, the public schools remained open; however, desegregation cost blacks the use of their school. The desegregated Chapel Hill High largely incorporated the traditions of the white school. It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the two school systems experienced similar curricular programs and student-body compositions. The decision to record and use the memories of Lincoln and Moton students in recent years demonstrated ways in which blacks and whites envisioned their autonomy within their communities.

In a documentary on Prince Edward County education, George Gilliam concludes that “Even though the massive resistance era is over, race relations are still very much under negotiation in Virginia and the South, generally. But negotiations are taking place,

⁶⁹⁴ Gregory Childress, “School Approved over NAACP protests,” *The Herald Sun*, March 1, 2012, http://www.heraldsun.com/view/full_story/17712751/article-School-approved-over-NAACP-protests, (accessed March 22, 2012).

not in courts or legislatures, but between people living in the community.”⁶⁹⁵ Gilliam is indeed correct. The negotiations for control over educational policy decisions occur among black and white residents. Commemorations serve as the sites around which these conversations of race, power, and politics take place.

⁶⁹⁵ George Gilliam and Mason Mills, University of Virginia’s *The Ground Beneath Our Feet* project, 2001.

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