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The Unheard Voices of the Arkansas Delta: Living Through School Desegregation

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THE UNHEARD VOICES OF THE ARKANSAS DELTA: LIVING THROUGH SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

By

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DEDICATION

This body of work is dedicated to my parents. It is because of your contributions to education that have allowed me to accomplish this educational goal. Thank you for your unwavering and unfailing love. Your continuous encouragement has always motivated me to reach my full potential. I am ever so blessed to have the world's most incredible parents.

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ABSTRACT

This study was guided by the central research question: *What are the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta?* The phenomenological study used eight former African American teachers and student participants. Of the participants, there were four former teachers and four former students. In this study, the participants' voices are captured as they share their experiences and perception of each phase of education that influenced their lives and left an everlasting imprint. Through counternarratives, the participants provided insight into education in the Arkansas Delta during school segregation, desegregation, and integration. The findings from this study disclosed that the education system entailed opposition for African Americans, but they triumphed despite the adversities.

Keywords: desegregation phenomenology

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

African American enslavement in the United States began in Jamestown, Virginia 1619. The legal enslavement of African Americans denied them their physical freedom and their right to an education (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). Education in literacy was considered illegal for enslaved Africans to acquire (Dann & Purdy, 2015). Although most states in the southern part of the United States enforced literacy laws, a few towns were lenient in allowing enslaved Africans to be instructed in reading and writing (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005). Once slavery was abolished in 1865, former enslaved Africans were allowed to advance in education, and many pursued education aggressively (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). After Reconstruction, the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau serviced many former enslaved Africans seeking knowledge (Carruthers, 1977; Lowe, 1993). In addition, the founding of Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) during the Reconstruction Era became instrumental in the educational attainment of the African American community (Walter et al., 2007).

African Americans' journey to education has been a long, tumultuous road with many obstacles in place. Even though education was legal for African Americans, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) upheld the "separate but equal" doctrine that maintained segregation of public facilities, including education (Milner & Howard, 2004). To reinforce this "law of the land" the Southern states passed Jim Crow laws legalizing segregation of the races in education. This meant that African Americans and Whites would have to attend separate schools. Although the separation was

maintained, the equal was not, as the quality of facilities and resources greatly favored White students (Ware, 2021).

Background of the Problem

After 58 years, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional (Milner & Howard, 2004). A few years later, on September 4, 1957, after the Court's decision, the Little Rock Nine attempted to integrate Little Rock Central High School, only to be met with resistance by the state government of Arkansas (Gooden, 2004).

It was only when President Eisenhower deployed U.S. troops to safely escort the nine students that they would integrate Little Rock Central High School on September 25, 1957 (Gooden, 2004). The historical desegregation of Little Rock Central High School is considered one of the most compelling stories in Arkansas' history. Knowledge of the nine African American students' integration process at Little Rock Central High School and the obstacles they encountered are well documented in history. Today, Little Rock Central High School is considered to be a national historical landmark.

Problem Statement

As a result of the state and national attention to the Little Rock Nine's story, there is a lack of awareness of the lived experiences of former African American teachers and students that endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Because these experiences have been largely overlooked, the voices of former African American teachers and students in that region of the state have yet to be recorded and shared with the public at large. To understand fully effects of segregation, desegregation,

and integration upon the African American teachers, students, and communities these schools served, it is vital that the voices of these individuals be heard before time erases the memories.

If these stories continue to go unnoticed and untold, the history of school segregation, desegregation, and integration may repeat itself. Due to housing and school zoning patterns, many areas of the state have seen a resurgence of segregation (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). Because these experiences of school segregation, desegregation, and integration of former African American teachers and students in the Arkansas' Delta have not been fully reported, more research is needed to explore and understand the effect those experiences had on their lives and the educational quality of the region.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study explores and seeks to understand the experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students who lived through school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Through this study, the authentic truth from former African American teachers and students will provide an in-depth understanding of school segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta and how that experience influenced or affected their lives.

Research Question

The central research question that will guide this study is the following:

1. What are the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to bring attention to and provide further insight into school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta from the 1960s to the 1970s. This study explored the experiences of these participants in order to develop a better understanding of what education was like for these people during those challenging times. In addition, the perceptions of former African American teachers and students on their lived experiences may impart essential information to fulfill the void in literature omitted from the Arkansas Delta's educational history.

This study sought to capture the lived experiences of former African American teachers and students and to clarify any misconceptions about education for African Americans during the 1960s-1970s. It is also critical that former African American teachers and students tell these stories to document and preserve the history that may become nonexistent as these individuals' contributions to education in the Arkansas Delta remain overlooked.

Exploring the experiences of former African American teachers and students during school segregation, desegregation, and integration is pertinent to educational leadership by revealing the impediments in education that oppressed African American teachers and students. Such knowledge is essential to educational leadership to appreciate former African American teachers and students, overcoming oppositions that denied them access to equality and equity in education. With this study uncovering valuable history, educational leaders may gain vital information to develop policies that promote equality, equity, and diversity for educators and students of color.

Since desegregation and integration, many schools have seen a resurgence of segregation as the diversity of African American and White students continue to shift back to segregation (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). As there is a resurgence in segregation, it is necessary to inform educational leaders, teachers, students, parents, and the community of the past issues in segregation, desegregation, and integration that continue to influence the education of African Americans. The knowledge gained from this study may establish a newfound level of consciousness and dedication to education for African American teachers and students.

Definition of Terms

- *"Arkansas Delta* is one of the eight regions in Arkansas that extend along the Mississippi River to the northern and southern state border and are the primary agricultural regions of the state." (Collins, 2015, p. 2)
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that ruled that school segregation by race is unconstitutional.
- *De Facto segregation* is segregation not enforced by laws or policies (Ware, 2021).
- *De Jure segregation* is legalized racial segregation implemented by law (Russo et al., 1994)
- *Desegregation* is to eliminate segregation or to eliminate any law, provision, or practice requiring isolation of the members of a particular race in separate units (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
- *Integration* is to end the segregation of and bring into equal membership in society or an organization (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) is the U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled that "separate but equal" was constitutional.
- *Roberts v. Boston* (1850) is the case that set the standard for all other segregationally related instances in which the Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld that school segregation is based on society and not the law (Ficker, 1999).
- *Segregation* is the practice or policy of keeping people of different races, religions, etc., separate from each other (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Assumptions

This qualitative study explored and sought to understand the experiences of former African American teachers and students who endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Before interviewing the research participants, it was assumed that they would convey their authentic experiences and perceptions as this study was conducted. It is also essential that each participant has experienced each phase that altered education in that geographical area. These participants' lived experiences are necessary to explore the influence that segregation, desegregation, and integration had on individuals' professional, academic, and personal lives.

Limitations

For this study to involve eight former African American teachers and students as research participants that experienced school segregation, desegregation, and integration, four school districts in the Arkansas Delta had to be combined with having a sufficient number of participants to interview and collect data. Unfortunately, eight participants who attended the same schools and school district could not be selected due to these individuals' life circumstances. This study would be further enhanced if former African

American administrators in the Arkansas Delta were interviewed on their lived experiences and perceptions of school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Exploring these experiences of former African American administrators would provide their perception of the educational system and the challenges they encountered professionally during those transitioning times in education.

Delimitations

The delimitation in this study was the exclusion of former White teachers and students involved in school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Focusing the population of the study on former African American teachers and students allows those in a position of inferiority to counter the narratives of those that the dominant group formed. Furthermore, it establishes a sense of freedom and security for these research participants to be vulnerable as they share their school segregation, desegregation, and integration stories.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I, the researcher introduces the topic of study by providing background information. Also included in Chapter I is the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of study, definition of terms, the significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter II consists of the introduction to the literature review, literature review, research question, theoretical perspective, and summary. Chapter III provides details about the research design and methods used to conduct the study, as well as a description of the sampling procedures and the participants involved in the data collection procedures. Chapter IV provides a presentation of the findings, including detailed descriptions of the themes that arose from

the data analysis. Finally, Chapter V contains a discussion of the findings, the implications for educational practice, and recommendations for further study in this area.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Moreover, this literature review provides an understanding of the obstacles that have consistently oppressed African Americans in their quest for educational attainment.

Chapter II of this study is designed to lay out the past and present history of education for African Americans. It includes the following information that will be addressed: (a) slavery and the education journey, (b) education during the Reconstruction Era, (c) "separate but equal," (d) Education During Jim Crow, (e) The Gateway to *Brown*, (f) *Brown I*, (g) *Brown II*, (h) Little Rock Crisis, 1957, (i) Civil Rights Act (1964) and Busing, (j) School Desegregation, (k) Desegregation and Integration in Arkansas' School District, and (l) School Resegregation.

Pivotal historical events that influenced African American education were utilized to conduct the literature review. These events include slavery and education, Reconstruction Era, school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Each critical matter in history was placed chronologically to develop the literature review. In the development process, the relevant keywords to this study were used to search for information in the ProQuest database.

Slavery and the Journey to Education

The existence of slavery in the United States began in Jamestown, Virginia, in the year 1619, when Africans were captured from their native land and transported to

colonial Virginia to begin a life of involuntary servitude (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). Europeans viewed slavery as a financial means for economic increase and wealth through the forced labor of enslaved Africans who became a financial asset, helping to establish North America as an economically dominant country (Feagin, 1986; Joseph, 2020).

The enslaved Africans labored for free and were dehumanized by brutal treatment when compared to slavery in other countries. These dehumanizing efforts sought to oppress Africans by unwillingly ripping them of their freedom, liberty, and culture and denying them citizenship (Feagin, 1986; Mitchell, 2008; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016).

Literacy

Compared to slavery in other countries, African American slavery in North America was considered severely brutal to the extent that enslaved Africans were oppressed physically, mentally, emotionally, and intellectually (Feagin, 1986; Mitchell, 2008; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). As these forms of oppression were inflicted upon the enslaved, being oppressed intellectually restricted the enslaved Africans' freedom to be educated. Education and the right to be literate were unacceptable for enslaved Africans (Dann & Purdy, 2015).

For most White southern enslavers, education in literacy was considered forbidden (Dann & Purdy, 2015; Walter et al., 2007). The enslaved Africans were viewed as inferior and the denial of education was used to oppress the enslaved and maintain dominance and control over them (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Swartz, 2007). White southern enslavers understood and feared the potential that education had in transforming

the enslaved mindset from bondage to freedom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Mitchell, 2008; Swartz, 2007; Walter et al., 2007).

Enslaved Africans were perceived as ignorant and uneducated, but Africans were intellectually highly educated before their involuntary arrival in North America. However, the distorted view of enslaved Africans being uneducated has been perpetuated throughout American history. When Africans were forced into slavery, they were competent in literacy, linguistics, mathematics, science, and agriculture from their African education. In fact, enslavers utilized the enslaved Africans' knowledge and skills, especially in agriculture, to increase their economic capital (Swartz, 2007). As a part of the African culture, education was held highly regarded as able to one's intellectual freedom; therefore, the pursuit and desire to obtain knowledge in the form of literacy caused unrest for enslaved Africans (Mitchell, 2008; Swartz, 2007).

Although laws in different slaveholding states were developed to restrict enslaved Africans from acquiring literacy, some enslaved Africans were not deterred (Mitchell, 2008; Fleming-Rife & Proffitt, 2004). The attainment of literacy by some enslaved Africans was an intense craving that laws could not oppress, so they taught themselves how to read and write in secret without the knowledge of enslavers (Dann & Purdy, 2015; Mitchell, 2008). Enslaved people caught learning, and writing were punished with whippings, loss of privileges, mutilation, etc. (Mitchell, 2008).

South Carolina's School for Enslaved African Americans

Even though slaveholding states punished enslaved Africans for acquiring literacy, some states, such as South Carolina, instituted the Prohibition Law of 1740 that precluded others from teaching reading and writing to enslaved people (Comminey,

1999). Despite South Carolina's literacy law, the Charleston Negro School in South Carolina was established by Alexander Garden through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.), who developed the school to teach the enslaved how to read from the Bible. Garden evaded literacy laws due to the instruction of S.P.G. having a Christian foundation (Comminey, 1999; Watson, 2009).

Most enslavers in Charleston were receptive to the educational attainment of the enslaved Africans through the support of S.P.G. on the conditions that their teaching promoted their agenda of obedience and submission. Enslaved Africans were enthusiastic about the educational instruction without fully understanding the motive of S.P.G. to indoctrinate them to be obedient and submissive to their master as a mechanism to decrease the likelihood of revolts (Comminey, 1999; Lambert, 2002). The education provided by S.P.G. was embedded with limitations on how and what the enslaved were taught. Even though enslaved individuals received educational training from S.P.G., those in authority controlled education (Carruthers, 1997; Watson, 2009).

Hampton, Virginia

Mary Peake. Unlike most of the southern states, Hampton, Virginia's Whites did not actively enforce their literacy laws; as a result, free and enslaved African Americans were allowed to obtain literacy instruction from Mary Peake (Freedman, 1999). Mary Peake was a woman of color born in 1823 in Norfolk, Virginia, to Sarah, a free mixed-race woman and a French father (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005). Since Mary was free, she could obtain an education in reading, writing, and arithmetic, including dressmaking and needlework (Freedman, 1999). Shortly after arriving in Hampton, Virginia, Mary began her teaching career by educating free and enslaved Africans in the essential subject

areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Foundational to Mary's instruction was teaching scriptures, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005).

Despite the Virginia laws, teaching free and enslaved Africans was allowed by Whites in Hampton as it was not publicly advertised and was conducted discreetly (Freedman, 1999). In addition, Mary operated a school that educated free and enslaved adults and children, providing a day school for children and an evening school for adults (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005). Enslaved Africans in Hampton understood the importance of education, especially literacy, to establish political and economic freedom. For free and enslaved Africans, the opportunity for schooling before 1861 was a challenge; therefore, African Americans needed to develop schools within the community regardless of the tremendous danger of acquiring an education (Freedman, 1999).

Finally, Mary Peake recognized the seriousness of schooling in the African American community by ensuring that all who aspired to be educated would not be denied the privilege to receive an education under her direction (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005).

Mary Peake's dedication to teaching free and enslaved Africans was acknowledged by Lewis Lockwood, a representative of the American Missionary Association (A.M.A.). After observing Mary's teaching of literacy, writing, and arithmetic and teaching the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments to enslaved children and adults, Lockwood recommended Mary to A.M.A. (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005).

The A.M.A. accepted Lockwood's recommendation by compensating Mary for her salary, becoming the first paid teacher and the first African American teacher of

A.M.A. (Freedman, 1999; Taylor, 2005). Mary's dedication to teaching reflected African American women's attitudes during the post-Civil War that uplifted the African American community (Taylor, 2005).

Charlotte L. Forten. Charlotte L. Forten became the first African American female teacher of White students in Massachusetts. She was born to free African American parents associated with the elite class of African Americans, so she received an education comparable to White students (Taylor, 2005). Charlotte understood the relevance of education for African Americans to compete with Whites and her quest for intellectual growth motivated her to attend Higginson Grammar School in 1854 (Taylor, 2005). After studying arithmetic, philosophy, history, writing letters, and poetry, Forten graduated with honors in 1855. Following graduation, Charlotte began training to be a teacher at Salem Normal and graduated 1856, soon to become the first African American teacher at Epes Grammar School in Massachusetts, where she taught for two years (Taylor, 2005).

It was not until Charlotte left Salem that she became devoted to abolitionist activities, which was a life that she was familiar with through her family's abolition efforts. Her desire to teach formerly enslaved people guided her to Sea Island, Georgia, where she taught children and adults for 18 months (Taylor, 2005). She returned to her hometown of Philadelphia and became a clerk for the Teachers Committee of the New England Freemen's Union Commission. From Philadelphia at Shaw Memorial School, Charlotte taught in Charleston, South Carolina. Charlotte left South Carolina after one year to be appointed as a clerk for the Summer High School for Negroes in Washington, DC (Taylor, 2005).

Charlotte Forten and Mary Peake became African American women who contributed much to the education of African American students in different capacities (Taylor, 2005).

Education During the Reconstruction Era

Before the Emancipation Proclamation, education was valuable to enslaved Africans' intellectual liberation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Mitchell, 2008; Fleming-Rife & Proffitt, 2004; Swartz, 2007; Walter et al., 2007). Literacy was considered a power for the enslaved, but access to literacy was denied to most enslaved Africans (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Many White enslavers denied access to literacy as a technique that oppressed the enslaved to produce labor for economic gain and maintain a position of superiority among enslaved Africans (Fleming-Rife & Proffitt, 2004). President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 to end slavery. However, the country was in the middle of the Civil War at that time, and in practicality, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free anyone immediately. It applied only to the slaveholding states in rebellion at the time. It was not until after the war that the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1865 that slavery was legally abolished in the U.S. (Fleming-Rife & Proffitt, 2004).

With the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery, formerly enslaved people had newfound physical freedom and the freedom to pursue education (Fleming-Rife & Proffitt, 2004). The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868 and granted citizenship to former enslaved Africans, soon followed by the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 granting voting rights to them (Carruthers, 1977; Joseph, 2020; Mitchell, 2008; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016).

All three amendments provided freedom, rights, and privileges that were nonexistent during the years of enslavement and are seen as the beginning of the Reconstruction Era (Joseph, 2020). With newfound physical freedom during this period, the former enslaved Africans were permitted to seek education and literacy and did so with a vengeance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Freedmen's Bureau

As part of the transition from bondage to freedom, the Freedmen's Bureau was established in March 1865 before ending the Civil War (Carruthers, 1977; Lowe, 1993). The primary role of the Freedmen's Bureau was to educate the former enslaved Africans (Carruthers, 1977). With federal funds, it served 4,239 schools, 9,300 teachers, and over 250,000 Southern African American students (Carruthers, 1977; Rucker & Jubilee, 2007).

The Freedmen's Bureau encountered opposition from those who opposed educating freed slaves. Such opposition consisted of destroying African American schools by burning or bombing to obstruct progress in the education of African American students (Day et al., 2013; Scribner, 2020).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Before the Civil War, higher education for African Americans was first established in 1847 in Cheyney, Pennsylvania, at Lincoln University in 1854, and at Wilberforce University in 1856. These were among the few universities in the free territory of the Northern part of the U.S. where African Americans were allowed to obtain higher education (Clement, 1996). To model after the North, the South realized that it was necessary to educate the illiterate newly freed African Americans (Walter et

al., 2007). So, African American churches, the American Missionary Association (A.M.A.), Disciples of Christ, and African Methodist Episcopal Church established and supported institutions of higher learning to provide an education to the formally enslaved (Walter et al., 2007). These higher education institutions became recognized as HBCUs.

During the Reconstruction Era, many African American colleges and universities were a beacon of light and hope to the African American community through educating the community. Furthermore, the high production of African American teachers from these HBCUs taught African American students and the rest of the community. Southern states recognized the need to develop African American teachers to instruct African American students (Clement, 1966; Walter et al., 2007).

White Missionaries and Northern Philanthropists

HBCUs strived to train African American students; they often needed more funding to support the institutions (Clement, 1966; Walter et al., 2007). For HBCUs to continue to operate at their capacity, many colleges and universities had to depend on funding from White missionaries and Northern philanthropists. Receiving funds from Northern philanthropists positioned the HBCUs to relinquish control of the academic curriculum and goals to align with the ideology of the philanthropist by offering a vocational/industrial curriculum (Clement, 1966; Walter et al., 2007).

HBCUs were receiving funding from philanthropic foundations such as Rosenwald, The Rockefeller Brothers, Carnegie Corporation, and Ford Corporation to control the curriculum to train African students to be vocational/industrial laborers (Clement, 1966; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Walter et al., 2007). Not only did the Northern philanthropists promote a vocational or industrial curriculum for African

Americans, but progressive White Southerners favored industrial education to educate African Americans compared to liberal arts (Dennis, 1998).

The progressives and their Northern philanthropist allies viewed industrial education as a curriculum that would develop African American students as laborers to provide economic increase and political power to Whites (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dennis, 1998). In addition, progressives and philanthropists were committed to industrial education to maintain a position of power that would oppress African Americans by keeping them subservient and subordinate. In addition to the progressive philanthropists advocating for the industrial education curriculum for African Americans, they recommended a liberal arts curriculum for White students knowing that it would develop African Americans to be more intellectual, political, and economical (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dennis, 1998).

Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois

The frontrunners of the education of African Americans, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois, had opposing opinions over industrial education and liberal arts. Washington supported industrial education, believing African Americans' education should conform to White southern progressives. Being a graduate of Hampton Institute and the founder and principal of Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington encouraged industrial education to appease Whites by developing African Americans to contribute to economic advancement. He favored the teaching of industrial education to African Americans, allowing them to be socially moral, disciplined, and politically disenfranchised (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dennis, 1998; Walter et al., 2007).

On the other hand, W.E.B DuBois disagreed with Booker T. Washington's stance on industrial education. He thought industrial education was a way for African Americans to be socially subordinate to Whites, while a liberal arts curriculum would provide an education for intellectual growth that would enhance leadership and economic development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dennis, 1998; Walter et al., 2007). W.E.B DuBois was often critical of Booker T. Washington's industrial program regarding ill-prepared African American students to be competitive with their White counterparts (Walter et al., 2007). Furthermore, DuBois advocated for a liberal arts education to enlighten African American students' political power and social equality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

“Separate but Equal”

The Fourteenth Amendment grants equal protection under the law encompassing citizenship, absolute rights, and equal rights for African Americans and formerly enslaved people (Carruthers, 1977; Ficker, 1999; Joseph, 2020; Mitchell, 2008; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). During the mid-1800s, the distorted interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment influenced the Courts’ decisions in school segregation cases (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002). “Separate but equal" regarding the education of African American students was viewed by states such as Massachusetts, Nevada, California, etc., as providing an equal education separate from White students (Ficker, 1999).

Roberts v. City of Boston, 1849

Boston, Massachusetts was a haven and the epicenter for abolitionists and former enslaved African Americans (Hasian & Klinger, 2002). Although African Americans

were free from enslavement in Boston, they encountered prejudices in the education system from the Boston Public School Committee that denied African American students a free public education. This prompted the establishment of segregated African American schools in Boston, founded by African American leaders and parents (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002).

Around the early 1800s, these segregated schools were considered beneficial for Boston's African American teachers and students (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002). However, it was not until the early 1840s that some African Americans became dissatisfied with the African American segregated schools as they thought these schools did African American students a disservice by perpetuating an inferior education compared to their White counterparts (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002).

African Americans also assumed that African American children would receive an education of higher quality in integrated schools rather than segregated schools (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002). Moreover, as African Americans petitioned their concerns to the Boston Public School Committee, they remained unwavering in their stance on segregated schools for African American students due to God and society placing African Americans in an inferior position. The committee's decision to maintain segregated schools prompted Benjamin Roberts to challenge the education policies of Boston Public Schools (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002).

Roberts filed a lawsuit against Boston's Public School Committee. He wanted his daughter Sarah to attend a White primary school in Boston Public Schools because of the proximity compared to Smith, the African American school. Roberts' daughter was denied admission to four White primary schools in Boston Public Schools. Based on the

agreement of Charles Sumner, the attorney that represented Roberts, the establishment of the segregated schools in Boston Public Schools was inconsistent with Massachusetts's educational system. For Sumner, the interpretation of equality meant that segregated schools should be nonexistent and that discrimination existed in African Americans being required to attend separate schools (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002).

Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw upheld "separate but equal" in *Roberts v. City of Boston (1846)*; therefore, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Boston Public School Committee. The court's decision was derived from African Americans' inferior position in society; as a result, equality for African American students included providing a public education separate from Whites.

Roberts v. City of Boston (1846) became the leading court case foundational to the decisions of states' school segregation cases. This court case was also a precedent for the U.S. Supreme Court in the "separate but equal" court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)* (Ficker, 1999; Hasian & Klinger, 2002).

Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896

Plessy cemented and legitimized the "separate but equal" doctrine of institutionalized segregation. Homer Plessy was a 30-year-old light-complexioned Black Creole from Louisiana who was seven-eighths Caucasian and one-eighth African American (Carter, 2007; Ware, 2021). Due to Plessy's light skin complexion, he was selected by the civic organization to dispute the Louisiana Separate Car Act of 1890, which required all railway companies to have separate cars for African Americans and Whites (Carter, 2007; Powell, 2021; Ware, 2021). In June 1892, Plessy challenged the law by purchasing a ticket to Covington, Louisiana, and boarding the train car reserved

for Whites only (Fick, 1999; Ware, 2021). He then intentionally has an altercation with the train's conductor, resulting in Plessy being removed from the train car and placed in a Louisiana jail (Ware, 2021).

Plessy believed the Louisiana Separate Car Act of 1890 violated civil rights under the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. The Louisiana Supreme Court concluded that equal accommodation was unjustifiable according to the Thirteenth Amendment, which was explicitly established to abolish slavery and involuntary servitude; therefore, the court rejected Plessy's argument. Also, the Court acknowledged that the Fourteenth Amendment granted equal protection to African Americans and enslaved people who were emancipated; however, the Court prohibited equal protection under the U.S. Constitution (Ficker, 1999; Ware, 2021).

The Louisiana Supreme Court utilized several precedents, including *Roberts v. City of Boston (1849)* to determine that the Louisiana Separate Car Act was lawful for African Americans and Whites. Furthermore, in Plessy's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) was the leading precedent in upholding Plessy's conviction and deeming segregation constitutional (Ficker, 1999). The Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) legalized the "separate but equal" doctrine for the nation, it was now the "law of the land." (Ficker, 1999; Ware, 2021).

Black Codes and Jim Crow

Black Codes were enforced immediately after the Civil War to restrict African Americans by maintaining their position of inferiority in society (Daniel & Walker, 2014; Indritiz, 1954; Kelley, 2007). The origin of Black Codes can be connected to the antebellum North used to deny free African Americans rights and privileges (Kelley,

2007). These Codes transitioned to the Southern states to subjugate free African Americans through oppressive laws that deprived them of their freedom of movement, employment, and political, economic, and legal rights (Daniel & Walker, 2014; Kelley, 2007). Black Codes hindered the progress of African Americans by regulating their independence and ability to generate income and acquire wealth (Kelley, 2007).

Later, Black Codes transformed into Jim Crow laws that multiplied and intensified restrictions on African Americans (Kelley, 2007; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016) and *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)* legalized segregation (Davis, 2021; Ficker, 1999; Joseph, 2020; Powell, 2021; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016; Ware, 2021). As a result of sanctioning racial segregation, Jim Crow was enforced throughout Southern states (Davis, 2021; Powell, 2021; Ware, 2021).

The extreme implementation of racial segregation from Jim Crow established oppression, inferiority, and degradation (Graff, 2016). They were developed to dominate the lives of African Americans by imposing racial segregation. In addition, Jim Crow restricted African Americans' use of public places and facilities (Powell, 2021; Ware, 2021). These laws were meant to disenfranchise African Americans, but they also tortured and terrorized them by invoking violence (Joseph, 2020).

The enforcement of Jim Crow is most notably associated with the segregation of public schools. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were required to attend separate schools from Whites (Davis, 2021; Powell, 2021). In having separate schools for African Americans and Whites, discriminatory practices were present by African American schools having inadequate facilities and resources (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001).

Education During Jim Crow

In an era of Jim Crow, African American teachers and students triumphed despite the insurmountable obstacle they encountered due to the segregated South. *De jure* segregation dominated every public place and facility of the South by keeping African Americans and Whites legally segregated (Ensign, 2002; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000). Schools were segregated, with African Americans and Whites attending separate schools. African American schools were disproportionately unequal to White schools in having inadequate resources, materials, facilities, and funding. Despite teaching in Jim Crow South in substandard dilapidated school buildings and limited materials and second-hand books, African American teachers had a profound appreciation for education. African American teachers were a source of strength for African American students and the community during adversity (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001).

African American Teachers in the South

From the 1920s to the 1930s, the educational attainment of African American teachers in the South was secondary to their White counterparts. The average education of African American teachers during the 1920s was four years of high school compared to Whites having a few years of college. By the 1930s, African American teachers had obtained two years of college while White teachers had four years of college. However, it was not until the 1940s that the professional preparation of African American teachers in education would exceed White teachers when African American teachers would continue to advance in their profession by earning bachelor's and master's degrees compared to Whites in education (Walker, 2000, 2001).

Furthermore, the professional preparation of African American teachers involved them attending summer school for additional education to complete bachelor's and master's degrees (Walker, 2000, 2001). In addition, some teachers that were members of professional organizations would attend professional developments to enhance their teaching practices to support the learning of African American students. Learning for African American teachers was a continuing process to stay current in an ever-evolving world of education (Walker, 2000, 2001).

African American teachers understood the importance of education for African American students; therefore, these teachers worked tirelessly to ensure that students were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve their circumstances. In addition, African American teachers held African American students to a higher standard by maintaining high expectations and believing in their ability to achieve. They required students to perform beyond their capabilities (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001).

During Jim Crow, African American teachers were required by White school leaders to present students with a second-class education compared to their White counterparts (Walker, 2000). These teachers followed the curriculum developed by the state depending on the location and size of the school. African American students had a prescribed curriculum explicitly designed to sustain their inferior status, so their academic achievement would not exceed White students. The curriculum for African American students was limited in the type of courses offered compared to White students (Walker, 2000).

Although the curriculum was to have limitations, African American teachers educated students beyond the designated curriculum designed by White educational leaders. These teachers modified the curriculum based on the academic needs of African American students to encourage learning and develop interest. In addition, teachers developed African American students' gifts, talents, and leadership skills by implementing school events and extracurricular activities that complemented the academic curriculum (Coats, 2010; Kelly, 2010; Walker, 2000).

Teachers ensured that African American students' learning surpassed the available content of the curriculum (Coats, 2010; Kelly, 2010; Walker, 2000). African American teachers extended the curriculum and incorporated racial knowledge to effectively prepare students for White racism and discrimination to survive in a segregated society. It was also instilled in African American students to have pride in their race and culture regardless of a Jim Crow society (Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2001). Education was the vehicle for building educational capital to elevate the African American community to progress toward economic and political success (Kelly, 2010).

African American teachers empowered the community by educating African American students and communicating the relevance of education. These teachers were regarded as pillars of the African American community for their influence on the lives of African American students (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001).

Many African American teachers in the segregated South resided and attended church in the communities where the school employed them; therefore, these teachers

connected to the community (Coats, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001). Also, teachers were actively involved in the community by garnering the support of parents and other community members to participate in fundraisers along with other school programs to benefit students. The teachers' involvement in the community was a confirmation to parents of the teachers' dedication to their children's education (Coats, 2010). Their commitment to students learning extended outside the classroom into the community (Coats, 2010; Walker, 2001).

African Americans valued education during Jim Crow (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001). African American students were motivated and expected to obtain an education to improve their social and economic predicament in Jim Crow South (Kelly, 2009). For many African American students during these times, attending college following high school graduation was encouraged by African American teachers, parents, and the community (Horsford, 2009, 2010; Mungo, 201).

The education of African Americans students was a communal effort that not only involved the sacrifice of the teachers but the sacrifice of parents and community members that supported academics (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Horsford, 2009, 2010; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001). Parents and community members were instrumental in the involvement of the education of African American students by lending financial support for the classroom and school needs regarding supplies, equipment, instructional materials, resources, and physical management (Walker, 2000, 2001). Most of all, parents and the community believed in the educability of African American students and the influence of education on their productivity and position in society (Coats, 2010; Ensign,

2002; Horsford, 2009, 2010; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001). Students desired to fulfill the vision and goals established by teachers, parents, and the community for their education (Coats, 2010; Mungo, 2013). Education allowed African American students to compete with their White counterparts.

The Gateway to *Brown*

Charles Hamilton Houston was the mastermind that laid the legal foundation for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (Carter, 2007). A former vice dean of Howard University Law School, Houston joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as a special counsel in 1935 to fight for racial justice regarding school segregation (Carter, 2007; Whitman & Hayes, 2014). Houston devised a plan to attack school segregation by targeting professional and graduate schools, then elementary and secondary, due to the law-making accommodations for African American students at the professional and graduate level even though facilities were unavailable to African Americans (Carter, 2007). With the aid of Thurgood Marshall, his chief assistant, Charles Houston, is notable for his success in *Missouri ex rel—Gaines v. Canada (1938)* (Carter, 2007; Whitman & Hayes, 2014).

Houston challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) in the first U.S. Supreme Court case mounted by the NAACP on *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938) (Beilke, 1997; Carter, 2007; Delon, 1994; Hunter, 2004). Lloyd Lionel Gaines was denied admission into the all-White University of Missouri Law School. Instead of being granted entry into the University of Missouri Law School, the university proposed paying tuition to out-of-state institutions or establishing similar law schools at Lincoln University (M. C. Brown, 2004). This prompted Gaines to file a

lawsuit against the university in which the Missouri State Court upheld the admission policy of the University of Missouri Law School (Carter, 2007; Delon, 1994).

In Gaines' appeal to the United States Supreme Court, Houston argued that the Fourteenth Amendment was violated by denying Gaines equal protection (Beilke, 1997; M. C. Brown, 2004; Delon, 1994). The Court recognized and emphasized equality in the separate but equal doctrine when it ruled in favor of Lloyd Gaines's equal protection being violated (Beilke, 1997; M. C. Brown, 2004; Carter, 2007)—Missouri *ex rel. Gaines* v. *Canada* (1938) became the benchmark for other school desegregation court cases.

Following the victory in *Gaines*, Charles Houston decided to leave the NAACP, and Thurgood Marshall was appointed chief legal counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (Crater, 2007). It would take 10 years after the victory in *Gaines* that Thurgood Marshall would win another higher education school segregation case in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Sipuel v. Oklahoma* (1948) (M. C. Brown, 2004; Carter, 2007; Delon, 1994; Green, 2004; Hunter; 2004). In 1946, Ada Sipuel, a graduate of the all-African American Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, experienced discrimination by being denied admission to the University of Oklahoma Law School based on her race, which prompted the NAACP to file a lawsuit against the Oklahoma Board of Regents (Green, 2004).

Marshall challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) by arguing that segregation deprived African American students of quality education concerning the learning process and environment (Green, 2004; Hunter, 2004). He was using *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938) as the precedent case when the

U.S. Supreme ruled that Sipuel was denied equal protection to a legal education under the Fourteenth Amendment (M. C. Brown, 2004; Dorsey, 2008).

Although the court ruled in favor of Sipuel, the Oklahoma Board of Regents continued to practice segregation by designating a section of the capitol building for African American students and having three African American lawyers as professors (Delon, 1994; Green, 2004).

In 1950, 12 years after *Missouri ex-rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), *the* U.S. Supreme Court again declared the University of Texas Law School violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in refusing to admit Herman Sweat based on his race. Only when Sweat filed a lawsuit against the university did they seek to establish a less-than-equal separate law school at Texas Southern University (Dorsey, 2008; Gooden, 2004; Smith, 2005; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994).

Even though a law school was developed for African Americans, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that both institutions were incomparable with the University of Texas Law School being considerably superior in the number of professors and students, facilities, resources, and prestige. Furthermore, the Court realized that the interaction and collaboration with other law students were critical to the learning process and could not be replicated in isolation (Dorsey, 2008; Gooden, 2004; Smith, 2005; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). *Sweatt v. Painter (*1950) was one of the court cases that was the gateway to *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (Stefkovich & Leas, 1994).

McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents of Higher Education (1950) was another professional and graduate school segregation case that the U.S. Supreme Court decided on the same day as *Sweat.* In that case, the Court determined that George McLaurin was

deprived of his equal protection rights under the Fourteenth Amendment XIV (Gooden, 2004; Green, 2004). McLaurin, a graduate professor a Langston University, was denied admission to the doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma because it was unlawful to operate a school where both African Americans and Whites attend (Gooden, 2004; Green, 2004).

Despite the District Court of Oklahoma granting McLaurin the right to attend the university because of the availability of academic programs that were not offered at the African American schools, the program of instruction was designed to be segregated by having selected seating in an adjacent room from the actual classroom. Also, McLaurin encountered discrimination and isolation in other areas, such as the library and cafeteria (Gooden, 2004; Green, 2004). Finally, the Supreme Court concluded in the review of the McLaurin case that he was restricted from obtaining a thorough and effective graduate school education due to the impediment implemented by the University of Oklahoma (Gooden, 2004; Green, 2004). *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents of Higher Education* (1950) and *Sweatt v. Painter (*1950) were foundational to the decision in *Brown* overturning the "separate but equal" doctrine.

Brown I

It was not until the school boards ignored the African American parents' request for equalization of facilities and resources at the segregated African American schools or admission to the White schools due to the deplorable condition of the African American schools that provoked several lawsuits (Walker, 2014). The cases initially sought equalization of segregated African American schools. Still, they transitioned to the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, except for *Bolling* attacking due process

under the Fifth Amendment (Walker, 2014). *Brown I* consisted of the following five class-action lawsuits: *Briggs v. Elliot* (1950)*; Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (1952)*; Belton v. Gebhart* (1952)*; Bulah v. Gebhart* (1952)*; Bolling v. Sharpe* (1952)*; and Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (Carter, 2007; Fleming-Rife & Proffitt, 2004; Indritz, 1954; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014).

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Briggs and other African American parents and ministers filed a lawsuit against the Clarendon County School District in South Carolina because of physical and financial disparities and transportation (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). Based on the substandard condition of the educational facilities and inadequate bus transportation, Levi Pearson petitioned the Clarendon County School Board, and the board dismissed such claims (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). However, the South Carolina Court of Appeals ruled for equality in African American schools while the school district maintained segregation (Walker, 2014). *Briggs v. Elliot* (1950) was the first court case filed in the five cases within *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), representing segregated schools in the South (Walker, 2014).

The attorneys in *Briggs* wanted dismantled school segregation as a whole despite the possibility of obtaining an improvement in facilities and resources; therefore, the attorneys employed the doll test developed by Psychologist Kenneth and Mamie Clark to demonstrate the psychological influence that segregation had on African American (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004). The doll test displayed the majority of African American children in the study selecting the White as the “good doll" with the lovely complexion and the one they wanted to play with compared to the African American doll that was considered the “bad doll” (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004). From this study, the attorneys

argued that segregation psychologically harmed African American children and disrupted their learning ability by having an inferior learning environment violating the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004).

In *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (1952), the Virginia Federal Court deemed the "separate but equal" doctrine was constitutional, so segregation was permitted while African American schools should be equalized (Walker, 2014). Barbara Rose Johns, a ninth-grader in 1951 at the R.R. Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, organized a protest against Prince Edward County School Board to challenge the poor school conditions compared to the White school (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014).

When the NAACP petitioned the school board concerning the deplorable conditions of the school, R. R. Moton received additional school buses as alternatives for classrooms (Walker, 2014). The board's action motivated the NAACP to file a lawsuit against Prince Edward County School Board. Dorothy E. Davis was named the leading plaintiff due to her advocacy role in pursuing equality and desegregation (Walker, 2014).

Belton v. Gebhart (1952) *and Bulah v. Gebhart* (1952) were two of the consolidated court cases in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that were simultaneously brought before the Delaware Supreme Court on behalf of African American students seeking admission to geographically closer and equipped White schools in Claymont, Delaware, and Hockessin, Delaware due to the African American Howard High School in Wilmington, Delaware having insufficient facilities and resources (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014).

Of the five consolidated cases in *Brown, Belton v. Gebhart* (1952), represented by Jim Greenberg and Louis Redding, was the first to achieve success in the Judge ruling

that segregation was damaging to African American children based on the doll test of Kenneth and Mamie Clark; therefore, African American students at segregated schools should be allowed access to superior facilities (Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014). The related court case *Bulah v. Gebhart* (1952) involved Louis Redding, the first African American attorney of Delaware, willingness to directly attack segregation instead of Sarah Bulah's transportation concerns for African American students that were attending segregated schools (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014).

Like the other companion cases in *Brown,* Spottswood T. Bolling and 11 other African American students were denied enrollment at the all-White Philip Sousa Junior High School in Washington, DC (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). *Bolling v. Sharpe* (1952) legal procedure operated differently compared to the other consolidated court cases due to Washington D. C. being under the jurisdiction of federal laws instead of state laws; for that reason, the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was inapplicable (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). As a result, the lawyers James Nabrit, Jr. and George E.C. Hayes argued that segregated schools were unconstitutional and due process was denied by the African American students based on the Fifth Amendment (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). After the case was dismissed by the United States District Court of Columbia, the Supreme Court consolidated *Bolling v. Sharpe* (1952) *w*ith the other court cases in *Brown* (Walker, 2014).

On May 17, 1954, the U. S. Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Warren, ruled unanimously that *de jure* segregation was unconstitutional (Milner & Howard, 2004; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Court decided that separate schools denied African American children the opportunity to have

access to an equal education which violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Milner & Howard, 2004; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014).

The parents of Linda Brown and other African American parents followed the guidance of the NAACP to sue the Topeka, Kansas school board on behalf of Linda Brown and other African American children for being denied admission to the nearby White elementary school on the bases of race (Milner & Howard, 2004; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). Oliver and Leola Brown wanted their daughter Linda to attend the White elementary school closer than her walking over a mile to the African American segregated elementary school (Milner & Howard, 2004; Walker, 2014). Although the Browns and other African American families wanted to desegregate the Topeka school system, the District Court of Kansas ruled in favor of the Topeka, Kansas, school board (Walker, 2014).

In an appeal to the United States Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall and the other legal team members in *Brown* presented their case before the court in 1952 (Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014). The legal team's strategy was to attack racial-based school segregation by using the Fourteenth Amendment to challenge the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) (Carter, 2007; Indriz, 1954; Ogletree, 2004). Unlike the previous court cases argued and won before the Court by the NAACP that focused on equal educational opportunities for professional and graduate students instead of dismantling the "separate but equal" doctrine, the objective of the legal team in *Brown* was to present how school segregation based on race diminish the ability of African American children to learn which violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Carter, 2007; Walker, 2014). The legal team presented the data

of Kenneth and Mamie Clark's "doll test" to demonstrate that school segregation psychologically affected African American children's self-esteem and self-worth, therefore, jeopardizing their ability to learn (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014).

On June 8, 1953, after hearing the arguments of *Brown*, Chief Justice Fred Vinson and the other justices were divided in their decision. Hence, the Court agreed that the five cases be reargued with the inclusion of the intentions of the Fourteenth Amendment concerning school segregation (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014). Thurgood Marshall and the other *Brown* lawyers prepared to argue the intended use of the Fourteenth Amendment by receiving assistance from scholars specializing in history and the U.S. Constitution (Ogletree, 2004; Whitman & Hayes, 2014).

During this preparation period, Chief Justice Fred Vinson passed away in September 1953 and was replaced by Chief Justice Earl Warren with the appointment of President Dwight Eisenhower. After hearing the final arguments, Chief Justice Warren and his Court were convinced that school segregation obstructed the lives and education of African American children (Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014; Whitman & Hayes, 2014). Chief Justice Warren and his Court posed the question:

> We come then to the question: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does. (Ogletree, 2004, p. 69).

The court concluded the following damages of racial segregation on African American students:

> Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect on colored children. The impact is greater when it has sanction of law; for the policy of segregating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of the child to learn. Segregation with sanction of the law; therefore, has a tendency to retard the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in racially integrated school system. (*Brown v. Board of Education, 1954)*

Brown II

Although the United States Supreme Court declared its support for desegregation by unanimously ruling school segregation to be unconstitutional, they neglected to enforce the decision but instead shifted the responsibility to the lower federal courts to ensure that public schools comply with orders (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955) (*Brown II*) was to end *de jure* segregation with “all deliberate speed” on a nondiscriminatory basis to desegregate public schools with the guidance of the lower courts (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). However, the Supreme Court provided little clarity on "all deliberate speed" to allow the South to act according to the decision (Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). Despite the unanimous ruling of *Brown II* on May 31, 1955, it was less than a year later, on March 12, 1956, that 92 southern congressmen signed a manifesto that "promised to use all lawful means" to block

desegregation to maintain segregated school (Russo et al., 1994). White segregationists met *Brown II* with extreme resistance and hostility (Carter, 2007; Russo et al., 1994).

Little Rock Crisis, 1957

There is no more compelling representation of resistance to school desegregation by White segregationists than the attempt to desegregate the Little Rock Central High School. On September 4, 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval E. Faubus defied the orders of the federal district court by using the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the nine African American students from desegregating the all-White Little Rock Central High School (LRCHS) (Anderson, 2004; Freyer, 2007; Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a; Ogletree, 2004). In another effort to desegregate LRCHS with the aid of the police, the nine African American students attempted to desegregate LRCHS until an infuriated mob erupted (Anderson, 2004; Gooden, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). At every attempt to desegregate LRCHS, the nine African American students encountered opposition from a massive angry mob of White segregationists. By September 25, 1957, in a third attempt, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent federal troops to protect and escort the nine African American students through the doors of LRCHS as they desegregated the school (Anderson, 2004; Russo et al., 1994).

African American parents, families, and students courageously and relentlessly fought for school desegregation. After *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955), immediate school desegregation in the Little Rock School District (LRSD) was delayed by the Little Rock Board of Education and school superintendent Virgil Blossom until the fall of 1957. The Blossom Plan approved by the Little Rock Board of Education would be implemented in September of 1957 and completed in 1963 with LRCHS as the

designated school for integration (Freyer, 2007; Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b). In their displeasure and outrage at the deliberate lack of speed to desegregate, the African American parents and NAACP filed a lawsuit in the case of *Aaron v. Cooper* (1956) against Dr. William Cooper, President of the Little Rock Board of Education, on behalf of 33 African American students that suffered hardships from the district's reluctance to desegregate (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b).

The district court approved the LRSD school desegregation plan deeming the timespan appropriate. Unsatisfied with the court's decision in 1957, the African American parents appealed the ruling to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, agreeing with the district's plan (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b). The resistance to desegregation invoked by Governor Faubus and the legislature created public turbulence that was also indicative of other areas of the South. This persuaded the Board of Education on February 20, 1958, to request a postponement in desegregation plans from the district court (Freyer, 2007; Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b).

Nevertheless, the court granted the request of the Little Rock Board of Education, resulting in Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP appealing to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eight Circuit, reversing the district court's decision in *Aaron v. Cooper* (1958) (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b; Ogletree, 2004). The board appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which affirmed the reversal as *Cooper v. Aaron* (1958) (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b; Ogletree, 2004). In the landmark case of *Cooper v. Aaron* (1958), the Supreme Court asserted that the Court's decisions are the law of the land and that the government must comply with such rulings (Gooden, 2004). Known as the "Lost Years"

of 1958-1959, Governor Faubus defied the Court's orders by closing all the Little Rock high schools (Freyer, 2007; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b).

The Civil Rights Act (1964) and Busing

After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" was unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) the "all deliberate speed" in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955) was the typical pace of many school districts in the South (F. Brown, 2004; Hunter, 2004). The movement of White school districts toward desegregation remained at a slow, consistent speed. Even the federal courts interpreted the opinion of the higher court to be slow-moving in school desegregation (F. Brown, 2004; Hunter, 2004). It was not until the United States Congress under President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration passed the Civil Rights Act (1964), just ten years and two months after the landmark case of *Brown* on May 17, 1954, that we see improvement in the progress of school desegregation (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Smith, 2005). Title IV of the Civil Rights Act (1964) granted the U. S. Attorney General the power to prosecute school desegregation cases against school districts operating racially segregated schools on behalf of African American parents and students (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Smith, 2005). Moreover, Title VI of the Act prohibited discrimination against programs or activities receiving federal assistance (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Smith, 2005).

Years after passing the Civil Rights Act (1964), the U.S. Supreme Court became anxious about ending *de jure* school segregation and achieving unitary schools (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005). This was apparent in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent* (1968), where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the "freedom of choice plans" devised by New Kent gradually desegregated schools were impermissible without

seeking to accomplish the immediate eradication of racially segregated discriminatory schools. In compliance with the higher court, the lower courts shifted their attention to aggressively dismantling school desegregation after *Green* (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005).

After the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the U. S. Supreme Court ordered "unitary status" among school districts in *Green*, the federal district court ruled in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) that the implementation of cross-district busing was necessary and legitimate to have racially integrated schools (Daniel, 2005; Gooden, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). Darius and Vera Swann filed a lawsuit against the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education after their son was denied admission to a White school closer to their residence than the assigned Black school (Farinde et al., 2014).

Although the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Board of Education, U.S. District Judge James McMillian authorized busing to achieve school integration (Farinde et al., 2014). The dissatisfaction of the board prompted an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, where Chief Justice Warren Burger and his Court unanimously affirmed the federal court's decision on busing as a remedy to eliminate racial segregation (Daniel, 2005; Farinde et al., 2014; Russo et al., 1994; Smith, 2005). Interestingly, Chief Justice Burger's decision in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) did not reflect the opinion of his appointor President Richard Nixon, who at the time "Southern Strategy" strongly opposed the Civil Rights Act (1964) that enforced the implementation of *Brown* for school desegregation and busing to support racial integration of schools (F. Brown, 2004; McAndrews, 1997, 1998).

With Thurgood Marshall as one of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices in the unanimous decision on *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971), the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's team was under the leadership of Jack Greenberg (F. Brown, 2004). The NAACP agreed with the higher court's decision to use busing to desegregate and integrate schools to achieve racial balance (F. Brown, 2004). Even though busing was considered a viable means for the NAACP to push school integration, the African American community bared the burden of busing as opposed to the White community that resisted the busing order from *Swann* (F. Brown, 2004; Woodward, 2011). African American students were bused to predominantly White schools to accomplish racial balance and integration, while the African American schools and community suffered from busing (Horsford, 2009; Woodward, 2011).

School Desegregation

The U.S. Supreme Court demonstrated the relevance of school desegregation in their lack of involvement in dismantling segregated schools to accommodate White southerners and circumvent resistance. In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision on the unconstitutionality of "separate but equal" in education, President Dwight Eisenhower's leadership reflected his disappointment in the higher court's ruling by rendering limited support, which impeded the acceptance of *Brown* (Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Ogletree, 2004). Consequently, the inaction of President Eisenhower and the Court signaled permission for government and school officials to covertly and overtly resist school desegregation. As a result, government and school officials used their authority to form school desegregation plans to sustain segregation

while marginalizing African American students (Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Ogletree, 2004).

Resistance

The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* declared segregated schools unconstitutional (Carter, 2007; Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley; Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). From the establishment of *Brown I* in school segregation as unlawful, *Brown II* was supposed to provide the guidelines and timeframes for school desegregation but shifted the responsibility of school desegregation "with all deliberate speed" to the federal courts (Carter, 2007; Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley; Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). It was the U. S. Supreme Court's inaction that was indicative of their resistance toward the direct implementation to delay school desegregation as a strategy to avoid massive resistance from White. Many Whites were unsupportive of the decision of the high court to desegregate schools; therefore, the Court's order was followed by resistance from Southern states (Carter, 2007; Green, 2004; Hunter, 2004; Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley; Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994).

At the time of the ruling, President Dwight Eisenhower opposed school desegregation, while his appointee to the U.S. Supreme Court, Chief Justice Earl Warren, favored school desegregation (Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Ogletree, 2004). His disapproval demonstrated Eisenhower's resistance to school desegregation to accept the decision of the Court until 1957, when he replaced the Arkansas National Guard with the U.S. Army troops to escort the nine African American students in desegregating the all-White Little Rock Central High School after Governor Orval Faubus defiance to

school desegregation (Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Ogletree, 2004). Faubus's defiance further escalated in closing all the high schools in Little Rock after the higher court ruled in *Cooper v. Aaron* (1958) that the Little Rock Board of Education was denied the right to delay school desegregation for 30 months. Governor Faubus' massive resistance displayed to obstruct the law of school desegregation set for school districts in the South (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2007a, 2007b; Ogletree, 2004).

"With all deliberate speed," the decision by the high court permitted predominately White school districts to defy the school desegregation order by delaying, denying, and depriving African American students of the option to attend all-White schools. However, only a few Southern schools were compelled to desegregate after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (Kirk, 2011). Most all-White school districts resisted school desegregation, resulting in an extensive period before the districts entirely desegregated (Kirk, 2011). These districts utilized gradual and tokenism desegregation by implementing the Pupil Placement Law of 1956, which the State of Virginia passed to counter the mission of *Brown* (Golub, 2013; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019).

Other Southern states, including Arkansas, adopted the Pupil Placement Law to preserve segregation with limited school desegregation by admitting only a select number of African American students transferring to all-White schools based on meeting the psychological, physical, intellectual, and economic criteria depending on the school district. The approval process from the school boards was lengthy and required the African American students to wait for confirmation by the board before the transfer was granted, which was most likely denied (Golub, 2013; Pickhardt, 2009; Smith, 1960).

To further discriminate against African American students, Parents of the students dissatisfied with the decision of the board who challenged the issue in court underwent an extended battle that lasted months or years, with the verdict refusing the transfer (Golub, 2013; Pickhardt, 2009; Smith, 1960). By 1964, gradual and token desegregation implemented by districts managed to accomplish a minuscule number of African American students that attended all White school districts in the South. Only a few Southern White school districts entirely operated nonracially desegregated schools (Lyons & Chesley, 2004).

To combat the resistance to school desegregation and lack of progress, the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act (1964). Title VI of the Act required educational institutions to receive federal funds to operate nondiscriminatory entities and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's (HEW) responsibility was to ensure school districts complied before receiving federal funds (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Smith, 2005).

In addition, Title IV of the Act offered legal assistance to African American plaintiffs for discrimination against school districts' noncompliance with school desegregation (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Smith, 2005). White school districts that employed gradual and tokenism desegregation or that failed to desegregate were forced to obey the Civil Rights Act (1964) in fear of the government's mandatory withholding of federal funds; therefore, these districts received pressure to establish nonracially desegregated schools (F. Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Jackson, 2007 Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Smith, 2005; Stewart, 2019). The passing of the Civil Rights Act (1964) increased the pace of school desegregation in

the South. Still, some White school districts implemented the freedom of choice plan to control school desegregation by accepting fewer African American students.

The freedom of choice plan was widely popular in the Southern White school districts. It allowed some school districts to operate dual school systems for White and African American students and remain eligible for federal funds. However, the freedom of choice plan hindered the establishment of unitary nondiscriminatory, desegregated schools (Kirk, 2011, 2018; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019; William, 1994). As a result, White students did not select to attend all African American schools, but some African Americans exercised their freedom of choice to attend all-White Schools (Kirk, 2018; Lyons & Chesley, 2004). White school officials possessed the authority to reject African American students' admission to all White schools to maintain dual school systems (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2018; Pickhardt, 2009; Russo et al., 1994; Stewart, 2019; William, 1994).

Eventually, school districts aborted the freedom of choice plan after the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *(a) Green v. New Kent County* (1968), *(b) Monroe v. Board of Commissioners of the City of Jackson* (1968), *and (c) Raney v. Board of Education of the Gould School District* (1968) that the plans were unconstitutional in achieving nonracially identifiable school districts and eliminating dual school systems (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2018; Russo et al., 1994). After 14 years of resistance to imposing *Brown*, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered an end to "all deliberate speed" by demanding the lower courts command school districts to promptly convert to a unitary school system (F. Brown, 2004; Russo et al., 1994; William, 1994).

African American Teachers

W.E.B. Du Bois predicted the ramification of school desegregation on the African American teacher population in the 1960s (Madkins, 2011). He foresaw a declining African American teacher population due to school desegregation (Madkins, 2011). As White school districts resisted nonracial discriminatory desegregated schools, African American teachers, unfortunately, lost their jobs and were demoted from their current positions, therefore; contributing to the drastic dwindle in the African American teacher population (Green, 2004; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Milner & Howard, 2004). These teachers worked in formerly African American segregated schools before *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* (Green, 2004; Haywood, 1994; Kirk, 2011; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Milner & Howard, 2004).

The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown* ordered the segregated school to desegregate. After *Brown*, during the school desegregation process from 1954 to 1965, a massive layoff and demotions occurred with the African American teachers and principals due to White school districts' efforts to maintain segregated schools (Green, 2004; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Milner & Howard, 2004). Furthermore, some African American principals were demoted to assistant principals or subordinate positions to their job qualifications (Milner & Howard, 2004). White school districts also implemented tokenism desegregation in selecting the most competent African American teachers and principals from African American schools; consequently, these schools were stripped of influential teachers and administrators that were essential to the lives of African American students and their communities (Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004).

As White school districts developed and implemented desegregation plans to their benefit, African American teachers and administrators were removed from their positions in African American segregated schools (Green, 2004; Haywood, 1994; Kirk, 2011; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Madkins, 2011; Milner & Howard, 2004). Furthermore, the closure of African American schools commonly comprised displaced African American teachers and administrators (Green, 2004; Haywood, 1994; Kirk, 2011; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Madkins, 2011; Milner & Howard, 2004). Some White school boards involuntarily assigned a select group of African American teachers and administrators to the White school (Johnson, 2019; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Madkins, 2011; Milner & Howard, 2004). African American teachers and principals commonly challenged the discriminatory practices of White school districts through litigation to seek justice for unfair treatment related to race (Johnson, 2019; Kirk, 2011; Lyons & Chesley, 2004).

African American Students

Most all-White school districts rebelled against school desegregation by refusing African American students access to an equal-opportunity education (Green, 2004; Golub, 2013; Hunter, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009). African American students desiring to transfer to White school districts encountered obstacles in the requirements of the Pupil Placement Law of 1956 that imposed on African American students to be exceptional to qualify for admission (Golub, 2013; Hunter, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Smith, 1960). Only a few African American students were admitted under the Pupil Place Law as White school districts implemented the law to perpetuate school desegregation while remaining segregated (Golub, 2013; Hunter, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Smith, 1960). African American students and their parents, with the support of the NAACP, countered such

discrimination from White school districts resisting school through court litigation (Golub, 2013; Hunter, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Smith, 1960).

The possibility for African American students to attend predominantly White school districts ameliorated their access after the Civil Rights Act (1964) was instituted (F. Brown, 2004; Jackson, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004). White school districts develop desegregation plans following the act to further control the school desegregation experience of African American students (Kirk, 2011, 2018; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019). Some African American students transferred to all White school districts under the freedom of choice plan, while other White school districts impeded the enrollment of African American students (Kirk, 2011, 2018; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019). As the desegregation plan afforded some African Americans students the latitude to attend formerly segregated White schools, these students encountered an educational environment that was unfamiliar with their traditional all-African American schools (Kirk, 2011; Green, 2004; Horsford, 2009; Milner & Howard, 2004; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019). In formerly White segregated schools, White teachers in a classroom taught some African American students attending all White schools with a majority of White students. Furthermore, the desegregation plans allotted for the education of African American students to be managed by White school districts (Kirk, 2011; Green, 2004; Horsford, 2009; Milner & Howard, 2004; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019).

Mandated school desegregation in the wake of *Green v. County School Board of New Kent Count* (1968) imposed White school districts to achieve unitary school districts that were nonracially identifiable aggressively (F. Brown, 2004; Hunter, 2004; Russo et

al., 1994). From the higher court's decision, White school districts developed desegregation plans that shifted African American students from African-American-dominated schools into predominately White schools (F. Brown, 2004; Hunter, 2004; Russo et al., 1994; Stewart, 2019). Moreover, the majority of African American students were bused from their community to all White schools to aid in their attempt to accomplish school desegregation (F. Brown, 2004; Green, 2004; Horsford, 2009; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Madkins, 2011; Milner & Howard, 2004). Nonetheless, African American students obtained access to adequate resources and facilities in attending the all-White school districts, but some experienced hostility and marginalization from Whites while attending desegregated schools (Horsford, 2009; Madkins, 2011; Milner & Howard, 2004). School desegregation was an adjustment for many African American students, and for some, school desegregation came at a cost.

African American Community's Perception

After school desegregation was declared unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court, the African American community was optimistic about equal educational opportunities for African American children (Milner & Howard, 2004). Some of the African American communities thought the White education system was superior on account of the perceptions of African Americans or Whites (Green, 2004; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004). However, the superior perception made African Americans assume that White schools have exceptional learning (Milner & Howard, 2004). While some African American communities were persuaded by the educational opportunities that school desegregation would provide for African American children,

they could not have anticipated the tradeoff that sacrificed the community (Green, 2004; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004).

Desegregation and Integration in Arkansas' School Districts

Arkansas' school desegregation process was representative of other Southern school districts, except Charleston and Fayetteville peacefully desegregated. Much of school desegregation in Arkansas was met with resistance from school leaders and segregationists that wanted to thwart court-ordered desegregation. Some African American students encountered resistance in the form of violence and threats as they attempted to desegregate predominately White schools in Arkansas. To undermine *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), various Southern states, including Arkansas, implemented the Pupil Placement Act (1959) to continue operating segregated schools by denying African American students' admission to all-White schools based on the school district's covert discriminatory requirements. Moreover, gradual and token desegregation was a common practice for many Arkansas school districts to limit the enrollment of African American students while perpetuating segregation. As some White school districts failed to desegregate, African American parents and students, with the assistance of the NAACP, responded to the inaction of districts by instituting legal proceedings.

Charleston

Unlike other school districts in the South, Charleston and Fayetteville, Arkansas, had a more peaceful process of school desegregation and integration. Charleston School Board discreetly decided to desegregate without giving notice to the public during the summer of 1954 in fear of resistance from segregationists (Brill, 2006; Kirk, 2011). Before desegregation became public knowledge in Charleston, the 11 African American

students became the first in the South to integrate the public all-White Charleston High School on August 23, 1954, without resistance from the community. The decision to desegregate Charleston and Fayetteville was due to the financial cost of maintaining segregated schools and busing the African American high students to Forth Smith (Brill, 2006; Kirk, 2011).

Fayetteville

Fayetteville School Board, in a unanimous decision on May 22, 1954, only a few days following the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), voted to desegregate Fayetteville High School in the fall of the upcoming school year. Fayetteville became Arkansas's first school district publicly disclose its intent to desegregate (Brill, 2006; Kirk, 2011). The factors that influenced the board's decision to desegregate the high school were the support for integration and financial cost (Brill, 2006). On September 10, 1954, five African American high school students successfully integrated Fayetteville High School and two others in the following days without experiencing public backlash. With a pleasant transition similar to Charleston, the African American and White students established relationships through African American and White religious groups that conferenced before September 10 to ensure a successful integration process. In addition, African American students had the whole experience of school integration by being able to participate in and attend all extracurricular activities. Although most White students accepted the seven African American students, they did encounter discriminatory issues, such as inappropriate name-calling (Brill, 2006).

Hoxie

Following the school integration of Fayetteville was Hoxie, Arkansas, a small rural town located in the Northeastern part of Arkansas, with a sparse African American population (Kirk, 2011; Louk, 2020; Stephan, 1956; Vervack, 1989). The all-White Hoxie School Board voted unanimously on June 25, 1955, to completely desegregate and integrate Hoxie School District by providing access to facilities and extracurricular activities (Kirk, 2011; Louk, 2020; Stephan, 1956; Vervack, 1989). Superintendent Kunkel Edward Vance and the Hoxie School Board believe that school integration was (a) morally right under God, (b) it was lawful, and (c) economically feasible (Kirk, 2011; Stephan, 1956; Vervack, 1989).

On July 11, 1955, 21 African American students successfully integrated the all-White Hoxie School District without any racial incident (Vervack, 1989). Initially, school integration at Hoxie resembled Charleston and Fayetteville School District until *Life* captured the mixing of African American and White students walking arm-in-arm in July's edition of 1955 (Kirk, 2011; Vervack, 1989). The media's captured images generated opposition through boycotts and petitions for school integration from White Southerners led by Herbert Brewer, the town's segregationist (Vervack, 1989).

The segregationist efforts provoked fear and intimidation, causing declining student enrollment in Hoxie's schools (Vervack, 1989). Such extreme opposition prompted the board attorneys Bill Penix and James Sloan to file a lawsuit in October of 1955 against Herbert Brewer and the Hoxie Committee for Segregation, Amis Guthridge and White America, Inc., and James Johnson and Curt Copeland and the White Citizens Council of Arkansas on behalf of the Hoxie School Board (Stephan, 1956; Vervack,

1989). In *Hoxie School District No. 46 v. Brewer* (1955), Judge Trimble ruled in favor of the Hoxie School Board in that the U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) nullified Arkansas' school segregation law (Louk, 2020; Stephan, 1956; Vervack, 1989). However, Brewer and the other segregationist appealed the ruling in the Eight Circuit Court of Appeals at St. Louis on the permanent injunction issued by Judge Reeves; their attempts to maintain segregated schools in Hoxie ended in defeat on October 25, 1956 (Stephan, 1956; Vervack, 1989). Hoxie set the standard for the Little Rock Central High School desegregation (King, 2004).

Van Buren

Like many schools' desegregation battles, the NAACP played an intricate role in assisting African Americans parents in forcing Van Buren School District to desegregate by filing a lawsuit shortly after the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955) (Kirk, 2011, 2016). Some African American parents wanted their children to attend the all-White schools, but Superintendent Kelley Everett and the Van Buren School Board were inclined to school desegregation. To avoid desegregation, the board opted to contest the matter in the federal district with Judge John Miller as the presiding judge (Kirk, 2011, 2016).

In January 1956, Superintendent Everett conveyed to the judge his ill intentions to integrate even though it was the law under *Brown*. Understanding that *Brown* was the law of the land, Judge Miller ordered the superintendent and the Van Buren School Board to develop nondiscriminatory school desegregation plans. Like other school desegregation plans, it was a gradual process needing more urgency. The plan developed by the superintendent and the board outlined the start of school integration in August of 1957

with grades 9th-12th, then eighth grade in 1958, and seventh grade in 1960 without including elementary in the provided timeframe. Despite African American students having to endure the wait for school desegregation depending on their grade level in Van Buren School District, Judge Miller approved implementing the district's school desegregation plan (Kirk, 2011, 2016).

North Little Rock

After the North Little Rock Board adopted a limited desegregation plan in July of 1955 to admit only 12th graders based on residential zoning and student transfer, the board decided in a special session on September 3, 1957, to postpone school integration "indefinitely" due to the hostility of White segregationist and public opposition to school desegregation from Governor Orval Faubus on September 2, 1957, as the Little Rock Nine attempted to desegregate Little Rock Central High School. On September 9, 1957, the North Little Rock Six fearlessly tried desegregating the all-White North Little Rock High School (NLR). Unlike the Little Rock Nine, the NAACP was not actively involved in the North Little Rock Six school desegregation; however, the AME ministers and their parents supported the students in their efforts. As the six African American high school students and ministers approached the front entrance, they were overcome by a crowd of indignant White youth that blocked the entrance to deny them access (Cope, 2015; Donahue, 2021).

Later, the school board unanimously voted that integration would continue "indefinitely" at NLR (Cope, 2015; Donahue, 2021). Only in implementing busing in 1972 was the North Little Rock School District fully desegregated. NHS gradually desegregated in 1964 by admitting eight African American students to predominately

White elementary schools. Third through seventh grade, students were desegregated the following year and eleventh through twelfth in 1966-1967 (Cope, 2015; Donahue, 2021).

Fort Smith

On August 29, 1957, Fort Smith School District began implementing their stairstep school desegregation plan by admitting one African American male first-grade student into all-White DuVal Elementary School (Kirk, 2011). The Fort Smith School Board devised and adopted a plan on June 24, 1957, that allowed for desegregation on grade-by-grade bases starting with first grade. By 1963, grades first through seventh were desegregated under the board's adopted plan (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Kirk, 2011). However, Fort Smith High Schools remained segregated as they maneuvered to build Southside High School in a predominately all White community while also allowing the transfer of Whites students from Northside High School (Kirk, 2011).

The African American community and the Fort Smith Chapter of the NAACP expressed their request for immediate desegregation to the school board in September 1955 (Kirk, 2011). Since the board ignored the request and continued the gradual process of school desegregation, Corine Rogers, backed by the NAACP of the Fort Smith chapter, filed a lawsuit on behalf of her two daughters in regards to the school district violating the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment along with the discriminatory practices in assigning employees to certain schools based on their race (Bryan, 2019; Kirk, 2011).

Although the Eight Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed Judge John Miller's approval of the school board's desegregation plan, the plaintiffs appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Rogers v. Paul* (1965), which demanded immediate desegregation

of Fort Smith High Schools with African American students permitted to transfer to the all-White Fort Smith High Schools that provided courses that were limited at the all-African American Lincoln High School (Bryan, 2019; Kirk, 2011). Also, the U.S. Supreme did not demand a nondiscriminatory placement of employees to a specific school but instead encouraged Judged Miller to assign employees correctly (Kirk, 2011).

Pulaski County Special School District

Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) was forced to desegregate in 1964-1965 from the passing of the Civil Rights Act (1964) to continue to receive federal funds (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Stewart, 2017, 2019). After the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, Wiley Branton, Chairman of the State Legal Redress Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP attorneys, and parents petitioned Superintendent Edwin F. Dunn and the PCSSD School Board to establish an integrated school district that aligned to *Brown* but refused only to prolong desegregation for five years (Stewart, 2017, 2019).

On September 14, 1959, PCSSD desegregated the Air Base Elementary School by accepting the enrollment of 10 African American students whose parents were employed by the air base (Stewart, 2017, 2019). The Defense Department pressured PCSSD to desegregate Air Base Elementary School to qualify for the federal impact area funds (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Stewart, 2017, 2019). A few years following, in March of 1962, Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) developed a policy that excluded federal funds from school districts that segregated children whom the military employed parents and who resided on the premises (Stewart, 2017, 2019). Once again, in fear of losing federal funding, PCSSD School Board voted to desegregate Jacksonville Junior and

Senior High for those African American students that lived on the base (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Stewart, 2017, 2019).

Gould

The Gould School District functioned as a racially segregated school district with the all-White Gould Schools and all-African American Field Schools, where half the student population comprised African Americans (Kirk, 2018, 2020). Gould sustained a dual school system for over a decade after the passing of *Brown* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Like many school districts in the South, Gould School District adopted the "freedom of choice plan" in 1965 as a strategy to desegregate to comply with HEW, so federal funding would not be withheld from the district. Gould accommodated the white students that desired to transfer to the all-White Gould schools, while the 28 African American students' "freedom of choice" was revoked due to complete enrollment (Kirk, 2018, 2020).

After being denied access to equal education, Some African American students filed a lawsuit against the Gould School District in 1965 because the district operated a racially segregated school system with inadequate facilities for African American students (Kirk, 2018, 2020). The district and the appeals court supported the freedom of choice plan of the Gould School District. However, the U.S. Supreme Court deemed the freedom of choice plan as unconstitutional and ineffective in achieving nonracially identifiable unitary school districts in the case of *Arthur Lee Raney v. Board of Education of the Gould School District* (1968), *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (1968), and *Monroe v. Board of Commissioners of Jackson* (1968) (Gooden, 2004; Kirk, 2018, 2020; Russo et al.,1994).

Dollarway

The Dollarway School District litigation battle in *Dove v. Parham* (1959) lasted for 11 years, with the district maintaining a racially identified dual school system to prolong school desegregation (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Pickhardt, 2009). As a method to deprive African American students of access to the opportunity of equal education, the district adopted the Arkansas Pupil Assignment Act (1959) that covertly utilized discriminatory practices against African American students seeking transfer to the all-White Dollarway school district. In addition, African American students were required to take a four-hour physical exam and a six-hour intelligence assessment to meet the exceptional qualifications that Dollarway demanded of these students (Pickhardt, 2009). However, George Howard, an attorney in Pine Bluff, lead of the NAACP, and father to Sarah Howard, consistently challenged Dollarway School Board in the federal and district courts on the unconstitutional discriminatory strategies used by Dollarway in the Pupil Assignment Act to reject African American students and extend school segregation (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Pickhardt, 2009).

Even though Judge J. Smith and Judge Harvey M. Johnson considered using the Pupil Assignment Act (1959) unlawful, they believed the board was genuine in its attempts to desegregate the schools. The board finally accepted Delores York, an African American first grader, in 1960 to attend all-White Dollarway Elementary School, which met all the requirements (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Pickhardt, 2009). It was the board's action to accept Delores's transfer as token integration in that it was deliberate and racially minimum. The board continued to use token integration in the spring of 1963

when Sarah Howard, a tenth grader, was admitted to the all-White Dollarway High School (Pickhardt, 2009).

In Sarah's first year, she encountered resistance from some of her White counterparts through physical and verbal abuse. After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Dollarway adopted the freedom of choice plan in 1965 that allowed students to transfer without restriction, so the district could continue to receive federal funding (Daugherity & Bolton, 2008; Pickhardt, 2009). The freedom of choice plan was unconstitutional and failed to yield the necessary enrollment of African American students in the previous all-White Dollarway Schools. Finally, after many opportunities to desegregate, the Dollarway School District was immediately ordered to integrate in 1970 with a nonracially unitary school district (Pickhardt, 2009).

School Resegregation

The election of President Richard Nixon in 1969 impeded the progress of the implementation of school desegregation plans that school districts were accomplishing. In utilizing the southern strategy in his campaign, Nixon was vocal about attack busing to achieve racial balance to remedy school segregation under *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971). To enforce his political agenda of banning busing and the abandonment of school desegregation, Richard Nixon appointed four U.S. Supreme Court Justices and federal judges that opposed school desegregation to ensure the dismantling of school desegregation (Blanchett et al., 2005; Cann, 2004; Drone, 2005; Lane & White, 2010). Despite President Richard Nixon's effort to disestablish busing, he aided federal desegregation programs that supported the operation of interracial schools (Orfield &Yun, 1999).

The U. S Supreme Court supported Nixon's assault on busing and school desegregation in *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974). The U.S. Supreme Court decision ordered the Detroit School District to dissolve busing across individual school districts' boundaries to achieve racial balance (Daniel, 2005; Lane & White, 2010; Zhang & Ruther, 2021). *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) protected the suburban White schools by allowing them to maintain their demographic status. Although cross-district busing was influential in integrating schools, the prohibition of cross-district busing by the court contributed to the onset of resegregation (Daniel, 2005; Lane & White, 2010; Zhang & Ruther, 2021).

Years later, under President Ronald Reagan's administration, he ended programs that promoted federal desegregation (Orfield & Yun, 1999). Reagan resisted school desegregation; therefore, the U.S. Justice Department during his presidency supported school districts that failed to abide by school desegregation plans (Lane & White, 2010). The department filed no school desegregation lawsuits while Reagan was president (Lane & White, 2010). To intentionally stifle school desegregation, President Regan and George H.W. Bush also staffed the courts with conservative federal judges that rejected desegregation (Lane & White, 2010; Orfield & Yun, 1999). By the 1990s, the judicial system would contribute to school resegregation.

Under the George H.W. Bush administration, *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992) is most notable for being the main court case that catapults school resegregation. The U. S. Supreme Court decision declared that racial balance was impossible to accomplish due to demographic changes in DeKalb County, Georgia. Consequently, the court relieved the DeKalb County School District from its obligation to the school desegregation plan and

Green factors because the district was no longer responsible for ensuring de facto segregation. The ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court prompted other school districts to petition courts to end their court order school desegregation plans (Amsterdam, 2007; Lane & White, 2010).

Although school desegregation and integration required the participation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government to implement *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), these same branches contributed to the resegregation of schools with President Richard Nixon setting the standard for his successors. The decision by the higher and lower courts to end court-ordered school desegregation plans to establish unitary schools that were nonracially identifiable resulted in resegregation that allowed school officials to restrict African American students and other minorities equal opportunity of attending schools with more of a White demographic. Furthermore, the demise of school desegregation plans authorized metropolitan-centered schools to become more segregated with African American and Hispanic students (Blanchett et al., 2005; Cann, 2004; Drone, 2005; Lane & White, 2010; Orfield & Yun, 1999; Zhang & Ruther, 2020).

School desegregation plans deterred White families from urban area schools that had a high concentration of poor minority students (Blanchett et al., 2005; Cann, 2004; Drone, 2005; Lane & White, 2010; Orfield & Yun, 1999; Zhang & Ruther, 2020). White families utilize school choice to enroll their children in magnet, private, or charter schools. White students are disproportionally underrepresented in urban schools with a high African American and Hispanic student population (Zhang & Ruther, 2020). Compared to African American families, White families are more likely to employ the

school choice option and cross district lines instead of sending their children to neighborhood schools. Also, gerrymandering for years has impacted the attendance zones to prompt segregation by excluding minority students from attending nearby schools. Another menace that influenced resegregation is outmigration, "white flight," White families moved from urban to suburban areas to seek education for their children in majority White schools (Zhang & Ruther, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The theory that best informs this study is Critical Race Theory (CRT), developed by Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Angela Harris, Cheryl Harris, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams (Delgado et al., 2017). Critical Race Theory emerged from Critical Legal Studies and Racial Feminism to examine race, racism, and power in the legal system that contributes to the subordination of people of color. CRT is comprised of six tenets that are embedded in law: (a) racism is ordinary; (b) interest convergence; (c) social construction; (d) differential racialization; (e) intersectionality; and (f) unique voices of color (Delgado et al., 2017).

The first tenet, racism is ordinary, is the consistent daily experience for people of color in the United States (Delgado et al., 2017). Second, interest convergence which Derrick Bell developed, suggests that Whites will promote racial justice or progress if it benefits the agenda of the White elites. Third, social construction in CRT holds that race has been deliberately formed based on social assumptions and connections. The fourth tenet of CRT, differential racialization, occurs when the need for a specific minority group takes priority over other minority groups depending on the time. Fifth, intersectionality in CRT indicates an individual has multiple identities. Finally, unique

voices of color are suited to communicate their lived experience with racial oppression to their White counterpart (Delgado et al., 2017).

The basic tenets of CRT address and identify race and racism as social constructs. CRT is an intellectual and social tool for understanding institutional racism. It questions the inequalities in legislation and policies that disproportionally influence the lives of people of color to sustain White supremacy. CRT can often be misunderstood as a theory that teaches hate, but it is not. Still, it is a framework that unpacks how the U.S. legal system was created to marginalize and disenfranchise people of color intentionally (Delgado et al., 2017).

There are six tenets specific to CRT, with three recognized in education. These tenets that are essential to education include (a) race is ordinary, (b) unique voices of color, and (c) interest convergence. Race as being ordinary is prevalent in society; therefore, it is also ingrained in every facet of the education system (Delgado et al., 2017). The racism that developed laws and policies for marginalized minorities is foundational to the development of the education system in inadequately educating minorities through disparities in curriculum, funding, testing, and resources (Delgado et al., 2017). As the educational system continues to marginalize minorities, it is pertinent to communicate their narratives regarding their educational experiences.

The voices of these minorities provide the truth about a warped education system that oppresses people of color by denying access to equal opportunities. The counternarratives given by people of color attack the false ideology of the dominant group's stereotypical portrayal of the minorities' educational experience, which is a strategy that allows them to control the narrative to sustain their superiority. When the

dominant group's superiority is being jeopardized, they will seek to oppress minorities; therefore, the progress of minorities in education cannot exist when Whites' position of power is threatened (Delgado et al., 2017).

Furthermore, racial equity in education for minorities can only occur when Whites' interest is promoted and they can maintain their social dominance. So, desegregation was sanctioned not for the progress of minorities but to benefit those of the dominant group and America's standing with other countries. However, CRT informs this study by exposing how institutional racism exists in the education system through laws and policies developed to marginalize and disenfranchise students through discriminatory practices such as segregation, desegregation, and integration that deny minorities equity and equality in education. Also, CRT is foundational to understanding the phenomenon of segregation, desegregation, and integration that are rooted and motivated by racism to control the education of minorities through oppressive forms (Delgado et al., 2017).

Summary

The pursuit of educational attainment for African Americans has been a constant quest filled with opposition since slavery. During the time of slavery, African Americans viewed literacy as intellectual freedom that provided liberation from their current circumstances. The White enslavers understood the influence of literacy on the enslaved; therefore, it was unlawful for enslaved African Americans to acquire literacy. After slavery was abolished in 1865, African Americans possessed a newfound physical and intellectual freedom during the Reconstruction Era that allowed them to pursue an education. The Reconstruction Era was groundbreaking for African Americans by enabling them to have the liberty to acquire education. Through establishing the

Freedman's Bureau and the Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), African Americans sought the knowledge offered by both entities. Moreover, HBCUs allowed many African Americans to obtain a higher education with an emphasis on industrial, vocational, or liberal arts.

As African Americans gained traction in education, the "separate but equal" doctrines obstructed their educational goals and progress through inequalities and inequities in school systems (Carter, 2007; Ficker, 1999; Ware, 2021). The Reconstruction Era granted African Americans access to education, but the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) institutionalized the Jim Crow laws to sustain African Americans' subordinate status. Jim Crow laws legalized de jure segregation to restrict African Americans' movement while keeping them separate from Whites. Segregation in education wreaked havoc on African American students and teachers, denying them equity and equality in education. African American teachers were forced to educate African American students in substandard conditions compared to White teachers having access to superb resources and facilities to instruct White students better as African American teachers and students under the system of Jim Crow, the NAACP Legal Defense set in motion a plan to dismantle school segregation by targeting segregation at the professional and graduate levels.

After the NAACP Legal Defense success with multiple segregation court cases in higher education and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents of Higher Education* (1950) and *Sweatt v. Painter (*1950), Thurgood Marshall and other prominent lawyers of the legal defense team undertook public school segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The team attacked the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v.*

Ferguson (1896) to argue the negative influence of school segregation on African American students. On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that school segregation was unconstitutional (Milner & Howard, 2004; Ogletree, 2004; Walker, 2014). In defiance of *Brown I* and *Brown II* court-ordered school desegregation, most Southern all-White school districts approached desegregation with resistance. Such massive resistance was apparent in the Little Rock Crisis of 1957 when Governor Orval Faubus ignited the rage of segregationists as the Little Rock Nine desegregated Little Rock Central High School. School desegregation continued at the pace of "all deliberate speed" until the U. S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act (1964).

The Civil Rights Act (1964) pressured all-White school districts to expedite school desegregation by withholding federal funds from districts that refused to desegregate. While most Southern all-White school districts implemented desegregation plans to comply with the act, some of these school districts adopted the freedom of choice plan to control the enrollment of African American students further. Once the freedom of choice plans was deemed unlawful in establishing nonracially identifiable school districts by the U.S. Supreme Court in the cases of *Arthur Lee Raney v. Board of Education of the Gould School District* (1968), *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (1968), and *Monroe v. Board of Commissioners of Jackson* (1968), Southern school districted forced by the lower courts to comply with *Brown*. To ultimately achieve a unitary school district, the U. S. Supreme Court imposed busing after the decision in *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg* (1971). As African American students bared the brunt of busing, the African American community suffered hardship in closing African American schools and displacing African American teachers who were viewed as pillars in the community.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Since the end of slavery, African Americans have experienced obstacles to educational attainment through a lack of access to quality education. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) declared "separate but equal" as constitutional, which legalized and institutionalized Jim Crow for decades. All public places and facilities during the era of Jim Crow restricted African Americans, especially in the education system, forcing African American students to attend separate schools from Whites. Even though school segregation disenfranchised and marginalized African American students with substandard facilities and resources, African American teachers provided students with an education that surpassed their circumstances.

Once the U.S. Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and ordered schools to desegregate “with all deliberate speed,″ African American students and teachers faced the challenge of school districts defying the Court’s ruling by delaying school desegregation. In addition, African American students and teachers encountered racial discrimination from school districts' refusing to accept school desegregation and integration until the Civil Rights Act (1964).

Despite the Civil Rights Act (1964) expediting school desegregation and integration, some school districts implemented desegregation plans that allowed the continued operation of dual school systems while negating the education of African American students. Furthermore, most White school districts racially discriminated against African American teachers by dismissing or demoting them as schools desegregated. African American teachers, students, and parents litigated the unlawful treatment of some formerly White school districts to seek equal employment and

educational opportunities for teachers and students. The prolonged desegregation process "with all deliberate speed" pushed the U.S. Supreme Court to pressure school districts to integrate in the 1970s vigorously.

This chapter focuses on the research methodology used to explore the lived experience and perceptions of former African American teachers and students who endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta. Qualitative research methodology is appropriate for this study to capture the stories of former African American teachers and students to understand their experiences and perception of segregation, desegregation, and integration. As part of this qualitative methodology, the researcher must articulate the meaning of the experiences and their influences on the participants' lives. In addition, this chapter consists of the following: (a) research question, (b) research methodology, (c) research design, (d) population of study, (e) instrumentation, (f) data collection, and (g) data analysis.

Research Question

The phenomenon of school segregation, desegregation, and integration dominated the education system from the late 1800s to the 1970s. School segregation ensured that African American teachers and students remained separate from Whites in education. The profound restrictions of school segregation influenced the education provided by African American teachers and African American students' acquisition of education while confronting inadequate treatment. However, after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), African American teachers and students experienced school desegregation and integration, allowing them to change their educational environment and position. Each phenomenon presented African American teachers and students with experiences that

imprinted their lives. The lack of testimony from these individuals that encounter the phenomenon of each phase in education reveals a void in research during the era of segregation, desegregation, and integration.

This qualitative study explored and understood the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students who endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. As these phenomena are generally discussed in the literature, former African American teachers' and students' experiences in the Arkansas Delta have been disregarded. Although research addressing African American teachers' and students' experiences of school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the South have been vastly documented, the limited information on the experiences and perceptions of these individuals specific to the Arkansas Delta region necessitates this study. Through this study, African American teachers' and students' experiences and perceptions are voiced to provide further insight into school segregation, desegregation, and integration through the lens of former teachers and students. Moreover, it is also essential to determine the effect each phenomenon played in the participants' lives and how the phases shaped their educational experiences.

To procure a thorough understanding of how segregation, desegregation, and integration influenced the lives of former African American teachers and students, this study was guided by the central research question:

> What are the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students who endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta?

As this research study gives a voice to former African American teachers and students that underwent the phenomenon, the testimonies of their experiences and perceptions contribute to the existing rich literature. These testimonies of former African American teachers and students before and after desegregation provided an intensive view to challenge the preconceived beliefs established by previous narratives.

Research Methods

The foundation of qualitative research began in anthropology and sociology during the 20th century (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018; Mohajan, 2018; Patton, 2015; Ward et al., 2018). In qualitative research, the researcher is interested in exploring the phenomenon to understand the lived experiences of the sampling population (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018; Mohajan, 2018; Patton, 2015; Ward et al., 2018). The researcher also values the research participants' perceptions to construct the meaning of their interpretation of the phenomenon (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018; Mohajan, 2018; Patton, 2015; Ward et al., 2018). To obtain this rich data from participants, the researcher collects data through interviews, observations, and documents (J.W. Creswell & J.D. Creswell, 2018; Mohajan, 2018; Patton, 2015; Ward et al., 2018). In addition, data collected in a qualitative research study is non-numerical and descriptive to accurately communicate the researched population's experiences (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018; Mohajan, 2018; Patton, 2015; Ward et al., 2018).

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students who endured segregation, desegregation, and integration from the 1960s to 1970s in the Arkansas Delta. Utilizing qualitative research methodology enhanced the study by

providing explicit details that accurately depict the experiences and perceptions of former African teachers and students' journey from school segregation to integration. These details were documented by collecting data by interviewing and analyzing documents from former African American teachers and students during the 1960s to 1970s. Moreover, the research participants were asked various in-depth, open-ended interview questions to produce many descriptive responses to gain further insight and understanding.

Research Design

As part of the qualitative research design, a phenomenological approach was used to thoroughly understand the participants' lived experiences. Phenomenological research is developed to investigate the phenomenon described by the participants (J.W. Creswell & J.D. Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015). Through in-depth inquiry from interviews, these first-hand experiences in school segregation, desegregation, and integration illustrated how the participants interpret the world. Finally, the phenomenological approach explored the experiences and interpretations of former African American teachers and students to find meaning in the particular phenomenon. The central and common truths illuminated this study from this approach as these lived experiences are captured.

Qualitative research seeks to explore and understand the participants' experiences and perceptions of those involved in a phenomenon (J.W. Creswell & J.D. Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015). The phenomenological research best coordinates with this qualitative study in that the research describes the lived experiences of the studied individuals. Phenomenology aims to understand the nature or meaning of lived experiences (Patton, 2015). To explore how these individuals make sense of their

professional and academic experiences, extensive interviews will be utilized to gather data on how these experiences directly shaped their worldviews. Through interviews, research participants' narratives will give voice to counter the narratives found in the literature. In addition, open-ended interview questions will be formulated to guide the inquiry.

Population and Sampling

This qualitative research study examined a population sample of eight participants deeply connected to the Arkansas Delta by teaching or attending school in the region. This study required that the research participants be African Americans who were former teachers, students, or students who later became teachers in the 1960s to 1970s during school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Most of this qualitative research study included former African American teachers and a small number of former African American students that attended Arkansas Delta school. The participants must have also lived through each dramatic change that altered education.

During school segregation, desegregation, and integration, the research participants were residents of the Arkansas Delta. Some of these areas where the participants dwelled throughout this time were Monroe, Hurd, Davis, and Horace, Arkansas. Most of the sample population began their education at all African American segregated schools in the Arkansas Delta. In contrast, a few former African American teachers attended all African American segregated schools in other parts of the South. Still, they migrated to Arkansas Delta to teach at African American segregated schools. As for the former African American students, the start of their education was at segregated African American schools. It was not until later that the former African

American students were allowed to integrate all-White schools after school desegregation.

Instrumentation

This qualitative research study interviewed former African American teachers and students to collect data on their experiences and perception of school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. The interview questions that the participants must answer were placed in categories. These categories included segregation, desegregation, and integration to obtain data relevant to each phase of the research participants' journey in education.

In addition, the interview questions were created to inquire about the experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Some interview questions referenced issues that obstructed education for former African American teachers and students during such problematic educational times.

Data Collection

The data collection process included interviewing eight African American participants who were former teachers and students who experienced school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. When preparing to interview these participants, they were contacted by phone to schedule an interview, depending on their available dates. As these participants were contacted, they were asked to recommend fellow acquaintances who qualify to participate in the study and are receptive to being interviewed. Before conducting interviews, the participants were asked to consent to be interviewed for the study. In addition, each participant was interviewed separately in their

desired setting. All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder to document the information obtained from the participants.

Data Analysis

Once the data were collected, the interviews were transcribed using Google Scribbl. The transcribed data were read extensively to identify words, phrases, or sentences that could be considered a code. These words and phrases were highlighted and coded based on the patterns in the data. The selected data aligned to codes were extracted from the interview transcripts and placed on index cards. Each index card was given a code related to the data, depending on the commonality of the information received from the participants. After the codes were established, the next phase was to place the coded data into categories according to shared characteristics.

Researcher Positionality

As an African American female educator, I was reared by parents who were former African American educators in a small rural town in the Arkansas Delta. My role in this research study was connected to these family members who influenced and shaped my identity. In conducting this research study, I am deeply aware that my identity impacted this research. Through the lived experiences of racism and discrimination, my parents informed me that I would have obstacles due to being an African American female. Therefore, I was taught to embrace my race and culture regardless of the many obstacles I would encounter. Finally, the challenges of these individuals during segregation, desegregation, and integration sparked an interest in exploring the phenomenon in the Arkansas Delta.

Growing up in a rural town in the Arkansas Delta, the demographic population consisted of half African American and half White, and these demographics were reflected in the elementary, middle, and high school population. Although the schools were desegregated, I can recall how most educators in each grade level were majority White women. The racial discrepancies that existed during this period were blatantly obvious. Those individuals involved in my education recognized the racial difference between African American and White educators. In addition, they realized how beneficial African American teachers were to educating African American students. Now that I am an African American educator and have experienced having African American teachers, I have observed these teachers' influence on African American students.

The first 10 years of my professional career were dedicated to teaching elementary students in a small town in the Arkansas Delta. The teacher and student population were majority African American, with only a few White teachers. I had the opportunity to work for a predominately African American administrative team and school board. To teach in a majority African American school district, I felt a sense of belonging because the administrators and my coworkers shared a common thread, our race. Also, there was an undeniable appreciation for African American teachers from administrators and parents.

Not until I transitioned to Central Arkansas did, I observe a difference in the school environment. The teacher population consisted primarily of White teachers and a small number of African American teachers with predominately African American and Hispanic students. Through my experience teaching in Central Arkansas and observing the lack of representation of African American teachers, I started to inquire about the

shortage of African American teachers in Arkansas. This experience directed my research toward segregation and desegregation. In my research, I discovered that desegregation was critical to the decline of the African American teacher population (Madkins, 2011). As I continued to research, I became more fascinated by the impact of school segregation and desegregation on African American teachers and students.

It can also be assumed that my interest in segregation, desegregation, and integration is connected to my personal and professional experiences. My personal experiences with segregation, desegregation, and integration directly involved the experiences of those individuals closest to me who encountered each phase of education. The hardships during segregation, desegregation, and integration were incredibly trying for these individuals. I remember them recalling how as students and teachers at the segregated school, there was a lack of resources for both teachers and students, but the teachers ensured that the students learned. While at the segregated school, there was closeness and togetherness among educators, students, and parents. This also allowed the African American community to have solidarity.

My parents did not consider segregation as the culprit but desegregation. Desegregation dismantled what my parents and others became accustomed to as educators in an all-African-American school. Some of the hardships that my parents and others endured during desegregation were in the form of job demotion, discrepancies in pay, denial of employment opportunities for advanced positions, and a racial school environment.

My professional experiences have influenced and shaped my research on segregation, desegregation, and integration. These experiences have directly affected how

I view education issues concerning African American teachers and students. These issues include laws and policies that influence African American teacher shortage and the achievement of African American students. Teaching in an environment where most teachers are White females, and the students are African American and Hispanic, there appears to be a need for more African American teachers. In addition, representation of African American teachers must be present to empower African American students. The African American male educator is vital to educating African American students. The presents of African American teachers are essential to the overall growth of African American students.

Summary

This chapter details the qualitative research study through which the researcher explored and understood the experiences of former African American teachers and students who endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Data were gathered from the eight research participants using open-ended interview questions. The study population consisted of former African American teachers whose teaching careers were based in the Arkansas Delta during the phenomenon. In addition, African American students were also essential to this study. These participants would have attended school in the Arkansas Delta and experienced the critical changes that transformed the education system. Furthermore, this research study captured the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that worked and attended segregated and desegregated school systems before and after Brown v. Board of Education (1954) in the Arkansas Delta.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study sought to explore and understand the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. The study consisted of former African American male and female teachers and students that had a first-hand experience with the phenomenon. To ensure that interview questions were appropriate and would yield authentic responses from each participant, a mock interview was conducted using a digital audio recorder with a non-participant who encountered each phase in education.

Once the mocked interview was completed, the vocabulary in a few questions was edited to clarify the selected words' meaning. Afterward, the former African American teachers and students were contacted by phone to inquire about their willingness to participate in the study. When the participants confirmed their desire to participate, they were mailed an Informed Letter of Consent Form required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before scheduling any interviews. Upon receiving the Informed Letter of Consent Forms from the participants, interviews were scheduled via phone at the designated date that was convenient for the participants.

The research participants consisted of eight individuals that underwent segregation and desegregation; segregation, desegregation, and integration; or segregation and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Initially, the IRB approval request specified 10 to 12 participants, but the researcher could not secure other participants that would have been willing to participate in the study. Out of the eight research participants, four interviews were conducted via phone, with two being former African American

teachers and the other two former African American students. The remaining four participants, who also consisted of two former African American teachers and two former African American students' interviews were administered in person at the request of the participants.

The data were collected using an audio recorder in each interview, whether via phone or in person. The former African American teacher participants were asked 37 interview questions, with 14 questions relating to school segregation and 23 on desegregation and integration. However, the former African American student participants had 46 interview questions, with 14 questions on school segregation and 32 on school desegregation and integration. Most interviews lasted an average of one hour to two hours, except one interview lasting four hours and 30 minutes.

All the former African American teachers began their teaching careers in a segregated school and later transitioned to a desegregated and integrated school. Former African American students attended segregated and integrated schools. Of the four participants, one attended a segregated African American and a desegregated White school, while the other attended segregated, desegregated, and integrated schools. Two former African American students attended segregated schools until their last year of high school when schools integrated. Former African American students attended segregated schools primarily from grade school until the middle or end of high school. Some participants are from the exact location that taught or attended school in the same school district; others are from different school districts. Nevertheless, all the participants were employed or attended school in Arkansas' Delta, while some were from various districts within that region.

To analyze the transcribed data collected from each participant, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was employed as a lens to explore and understand the lived experiences of individuals involved in school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Several themes from this study associated with CRT include whiteness as property, race, racism in society, and counter-narratives. Whiteness as property excludes former African American teachers and students from privileges exclusive to Whites. As for race and racism in society, the participants expressed the discriminatory practices from segregation to integration that persisted once schools were integrated. Participants also used counter-narratives to illustrate their educational experiences during the phenomenon thoroughly.

Critical Race Theory of Whiteness as a property is exposed by former African American teachers and students that witnessed Whites maintain control during the school integration. As Whites were in positions of power, the participants expressed the unjust treatment rendered by Whites that attempted to ensure former African American teachers and students' subordinate status in education. As a result, whiteness as property undercovers the discriminatory practices of Whites in authority during the phenomenon disparaged and discouraged participants.

Race and racism in society are another theme from CRT that is apparent in this study. With race and racism in society, racism is embedded in the American societal structure to dominate the society through laws and policies to benefit the superior group of people. The participants described this study as noting inadequate and limited resources that were common for the African American segregated schools. In contrast, the White schools receive the finest in resources, materials, and facilities due to the

hierarchical structures' unequal distribution of resources. Furthermore, these hierarchical structures ensure that the dominant group's unfair discipline practices benefit White students, as former African teachers and students expressed.

Review of the Research Question

The research question was developed to guide this study in exploring and understanding the perceptions of individuals that lived through school segregation, desegregation, and integration. The following research question grounds this phenomenological research study:

> What are the experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students who endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta?

Study Participants

This study consisted of eight former African American teachers and students during school segregation, desegregation, and integration in the Arkansas Delta. Within the group of participants, there were five African American males and three African American females. The five African American male participants comprised three former African American students and two former African American teachers. All of the participants' educational experiences originated in a segregated school setting. In addition, there were two former African American teachers and one former African American student.

The former African American teachers' careers started in segregated schools, while former African American students' education also began in segregated schools. Only one former African American teacher experienced all three phases of education.

The other former African American teachers encounter segregation and integration. As for the former African American students, one individual endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Another former African American student was involved in a high school desegregation process. Of the participants, two former African American students attended segregated and integrated schools. Several participants are from the exact location of the Arkansas Delta, while others are from different regions within Arkansas Delta. Those participants from the same geographical location attended the same grade and high schools. To conceal the participants' identity, a pseudonym was used to identify each participant, school, and school district. A description of each participant who experienced the phenomenon of education is provided.

- *Samuel* is an African American male. He started teaching in 1961 at the segregated all-African American school at Lillian Stewart in the Hurd School District of Hurd, Arkansas. Samuel later transferred to the all African American J.L.W. He was the first African American to desegregate the all-White Hurd High School in the 1966-1967 school year.
- *Joshua* is an African American male. He started teaching in 1964 at the segregated all-African American M.S Jackson High School in the Monroe School District of Monroe, Arkansas. In 1970, Joshua and several other African American teachers integrated Monroe High School.
- *Ruth* is an African American female. She started teaching in 1967 at Mattie Edwards High School, the all-African American segregated school in the Horace School District of Horace, Arkansas. Once Horace School

District was wholly integrated in 1970-1971, Ruth began teaching at the integrated Horace High School.

- *Hannah* is an African American female. She started teaching in 1967 at Susie Johnson High School, the all-African American school in the Davis School District of Davis, Arkansas. Three years later, in 1970, she began teaching in an integrated setting at Future High School in the Davis School District. A few years later, Hannah transferred to Davis High School.
- *Daniel* is an African American male. He attended segregated all-African-American schools from 1956-1957 through 1966-1967. Daniel started attending grade school at the M. Pleasant Elementary School, a rural school that only went to the 8th grade. Then he transferred to the M.S Jackson School, which went to the 12th grade but only attended from the 3rd to the 10th grade. Then in 1967, Daniel and a few others were the first African American males to desegregate the all-White Monroe High School in the Monroe School District of Monroe, Arkansas. From 1967-1969, he attended and graduated from the formerly segregated all-White Monroe High School.
- *Isaiah* is an African American male. He attended the all-African - American M.S Jackson School in the Monroe School District of Monroe, AR, from first grade through eighth grade from 1959-1968. In 1968 his tenth-grade year, he transferred to the formerly all-White Monroe High School in the Monroe School District. From 1968-1971, he attended and graduated from the previously segregated all-White Monroe High School.

- *Sarah* is an African American female. She attended African American segregated schools from 1959-1970. Sarah attended the Horace School District, Leroy Jackson, and Mattie Edwards High School until the 11th grade. Once the district was integrated entirely in 1970-1971, Sarah attended the formerly segregated all-White Horace High School during her 12th-grade year.
- *Joseph* is an African American male. He attended African American segregated schools from 1959-1970. Joseph attended Seth Elementary in the Horace School District and went to the fifth grade. They closed Seth at the end of his fourth-grade year. After 4th grade, he attended the all-African American Mattie Edwards Elementary School and later Mattie Edwards High School in the Horace District in Horace, Arkansas. When the district integrated in 1970-1971, he spent his 12th-grade year attending the formerly segregated all-White Horace High School.

Table 1

Former African American Teacher Participants' Information

Pseudonym Names	Gender	Phenomenon and Years Experienced	Pseudonym Segregated Schools-Employed	Pseudonym Desegregated Schools-Employed	Pseudonym Integrated Schools-Employed
Samuel	M	Segregation 1961-1966, Desegregation 1966-1970, & Integration 1970-2000s	Lillian Stewart Elementary School & J.L.W High School	All-White Hurd High School	Hurd High School
Joshua	M	Segregation 1964-1970 & Integration 1970-2000s	M.S Jackson High School	N/A	Monroe High School
Ruth	F	Segregation 1967-1970 & Integration 1970-2000s	Mattie Edwards High School	N/A	Horace High School
Hannah	F	Segregation 1967-1970 & Integration 1970-1990s	Future High School & Susie Johnson High School	N/A	Davis High School

Note. This table presents information on each former African American teacher participant's involvement in school segregation, desegregation, and integration. The phenomenon, years, and location of where the phenomenon occurred are also provided in the table. Information classified as NA is not applicable, indicating that the participant did not teach in a desegregated school.

Table 2

Former African American Student Participants' Information

Pseudonym Names	Gender	Phenomenon and Years Experienced	Pseudonym Segregated School Attended	Pseudonym Desegregated Schools Attended	Pseudonym Integrated Schools-Employed
Daniel	M	Segregation 1956-1967 & Desegregation 1967-1969	M. Pleasant Grade School & M.S Jackson	All-White Monroe High School	NA
Isaiah	M	Segregation 1959-1968, Desegregation 1968-1970, & Integration 1970-1971	M.S Jackson Elementary & Middle School	Monroe High School	Monroe High School
Sarah	F	Segregation 1959-1970 & Integration 1970-1971	Leroy Jackson Elementary & Mattie Edwards High School	NA	Horace High School
Joseph	M	Segregation 1959-1970 & Integration 1959-1971	Seth Elementary & Mattie Edwards Elementary and High School	NA	Horace High School

Note. This table presents information on each former African American student participant's involvement in school segregation, desegregation, and integration. The phenomenon, years, and location of where the phenomenon occurred are also provided in the table. Information classified as NA is not applicable, indicating that the participant did not attend a desegregated school.

Research Findings

There were eight interviews conducted in this study. Before the official interviews, a mocked interview was performed to ensure interview questions were appropriate for the participants. The interviews aimed to explore and understand the participants' school segregation to integration experiences. Each interview transcription was analyzed and coded to develop the findings' proper themes. Critical Race Theory was employed to analyze the collected data. The themes that emerged from this study: (a) limitations of resources, (b) African American segregated schools' learning environment, (c) African American teachers, (d) African American segregated schools' influence, (e) segregation beneficial and non-beneficial, (f) segregation to integration, (g) "Just as sexist as racist," (h) control, (i) segregation within integration, (j) academic support, (k) racial tension, (l) discrimination in education, (m) "Had to be gold to just to be silver," and (n) school integration's impact**.**

Overview of Findings

Limitation of Resources. From analyzing and coding transcripts, the limitation of resources in segregated African American schools was a regular occurrence among participants. Most of the participants in this study, the former African American teachers and students during segregation, have an unforgettable remembrance of insufficient resources, materials, and facilities presented to them by the White superintendent of the school district that the all-African American schools were affiliated with. It was common for the all-African-American segregated schools to be ill-equipped with adequate resources and facilities to aid in the education of African American students. As a result, these schools often needed more resources and materials from their school district.

Usually, the former African American teachers ensured that the former African American students were receiving the necessary instruction despite the availability of the proper resources.

According to the participants, the African American segregated school lacked resources. The former African American teachers and students during school segregation remember the substandard resources that were hardly ever new but of times used. Joshua, a former African American teacher during segregation, recalled,

> During segregation in education, Black schools did not get the money appropriated for Black schools. They put that in the White schools. So, we received most of the hand-me-downs. The textbooks, materials, equipment, and other resources and materials were all used and inadequate. That was the negative about teaching in a segregated school, lack of facilities, updated books, and equipment. When I say facilities, I mean in-classroom facilities. We did not have that. We did not have the textbooks. The books were used, books that the White school passed down. We did not have the tools we needed to teach students unless we had to make them, invent them, or supplement something instead of the things we needed. We didn't have gyms. We had dirt courts. We didn't have football fields. We had a practice field. We had to play on the White school's football field on Thursday rather than Friday nights because White students played Friday nights. So, we had to alter our schedule around the White school because that was the only football field we had with lights. So, we didn't have a football field with lights. That was one negative thing about segregation. We didn't have gyms; when we got one, they were very small. We played basketball games in our gym, but we

played on the ground before we got a gym and on a dirt court. We start getting gyms about 1952, 53, 54, and 55. Outside of that, we did not have the facilities. It was unheard of for Black schools to have a gym, a football field, or any facilities to work with until around 1955.

Daniel also called to mind a time that he witnessed being at an African American school with his father and observing sports equipment and uniforms that the White school's football team had the privilege to while the African American school had yet to have a football team. He recounts:

> When I walked with my daddy to the bus that he drove to that country school, we walked right by their locker room for their football teams, and I saw those boys getting dressed and putting on those pads and uniforms that the Black school didn't even have because we didn't have a football team. When we did have a football team, they took those white boys' practice uniforms, put them in the back of a pickup, and hauled them over to the Black school, and that was our uniform. Our game uniform was there, rejected practice uniforms because I saw them boys practicing, wearing, and throwing those things on the floor every day when I walked by their locker rooms. I knew how they were treating us. So, I just had a different perspective.

Regarding textbooks, the African American students at the segregated school received second-hand textbooks from the White school that they discarded. The textbooks were in poor condition after the White students had used them for several years. African teachers utilized second-hand textbooks to instruct students. Daniel remembered a story shared with him about when his father confronted the White

superintendent about the unfit second-hand books provided to the African American school.

> He called that superintendent to the street, to his car, and he raised the trunk of his car, and it was full of boxes of books." He said, "He stood there and told that man, I'm bringing these books back to you. This is what you sent over there to the school for our kids, and they are all too raggedy for the kids to learn from." He said, "I'm going to give these books back to you, and I want some better books for our students." He said, "Mr. L. took them books out the car and set them on the ground, and he waited there for about an hour, and they brought him some better books and new looking books in boxes and put them in the car, and he drove off." It was just an example of him doing what he needed to do, and that was the environment of those teachers and those conditions and those administrators at the time.

The African American segregated school educational environment regarding resources was limited. Sarah said, "The best way I could describe it is that resources and materials and things that we had to work with and were exposed to were limited. It was limited from transportation to supplies and things that we work with."

Joshua attribute, "Buses, everything was handed down. The segregated schools did not benefit from the resource part. It didn't benefit as far as equipment and the things to work with."

Even the science laboratories at M.S Jackson High School were of low quality compared to the laboratory at all White Monroe High School. Daniel recalls:

> The laboratories in our classroom may not have been equipped with advanced and sufficient material, like the White schools. Their chemistry department was glorified with everything that was on the shelves. The rooms were big. They had these bottles, tubes, and everything you could think of for chemistry and biology classes. Their equipment was better and more modern.

As resources and materials were limited, the African American teachers used their own finances to meet the needs of African American students educationally and personally. Ruth described the benevolence of African American teachers during segregation.

> When we were segregated, teachers went out and bought things for those students to make bulletin boards to help. We bought clothing for children that were below the poverty line. We were helpers. We were their support system.

Hannah echoed a similar sentiment as well.

> I used to help kids economically. I would take the kids home and give them my best. If they need something, I would share my own resources.

Although much of the African American segregated school experience entailed inadequate resources, the African American teachers educated African American students to the best of their ability. It was without question that these teachers' educational instruction was foundational to the academic growth of the former African American students during segregation. Daniel expresses:

> You know, and I never thought we were getting any less from our teachers. They took what they had and made the best of it. I used to express that at our caucus meeting; I said, "We can do anything they do. Our teachers are good as their

> teachers; if we get as good of books and equipment, we can compete with them on any level. All we get from them is the fact that we said we went to the White school because their being White doesn't make them any better than us." That's just how I felt about it. Everybody may not have felt that way. So, when it came to it, I think M.S Jackson, the Black school had sufficient material and equipment to be adequate, but to succeed and advance and be better, we lacked it because we didn't have as much or as good, but those teachers made the best of what they had.

Sarah also believed that the African American teachers willingly gave their best.

> I believe the educational instruction to be the best they could give with what they had to work with, as far as equipment, materials, and resources.

African American Segregated Schools' Learning Environment. A second theme that emerged from this study was the African American segregated schools' learning environment. The African American teachers established a learning environment that cultivated the young minds of African American students. These students were enthusiastic about learning and receiving an education. In attending a segregated school, the learning environment was one where the students could sense the genuine interest that the teacher exhibited. Ruth remembered a time in her teaching career when the overcrowding and size of the classroom did not deter students. She remembers:

> The learning environment at the all-African American School was good, but when I started teaching in Horace School District in 1967, I had 50 students in one class; we were wall to wall. Closed in a classroom that was too small for twenty-five students, but the children at that time wanted to learn, so the environment

they were in though it was not what it should have been, did not stop them from wanting to learn.

In the segregated school learning environment, the African American students felt comfortable with their African American teachers. They had the freedom to communicate with their teacher about their aspirations. Hannah describes her observation on the segregated learning environment:

> The learning environment was caring. I thought the students felt good that they could come to teachers and express their feelings or their academic desire. They could go freely to teachers, and the teacher would give them the proper instruction they needed. So, I would think it was good.

Joseph explains:

> One of the things that was required of us was you've got to get an education, and you cannot get an education without applying yourself, so the environment was always one of learning. We always enjoyed being in the environment because of the teachers, their teaching style, and the students. The environment was always conducive to education.

Not only did the learning environment develop students academically, but it also equipped them with vocational skills that African American students could utilize if they decided to pursue an occupation in that area. Daniel describes the learning environment of various vocational classes:

> Those schools used to teach home economics. They taught those girls how to cook. Even in my father's grade school, which only went to the 8th grade, they learned how to cook and sew. When those girls got in the 5th and 6th grades, 7th

and 8th grades, they started learning to cook and sew. Ms. C. taught them how to cook, and so, and the family living activities that those girls needed to know, those boys took Agri. So, they could learn about crops, learn about animal husbandry. You know, because they may be working on a farm because that's what the majority of the outside environment was like. You need to know how to harvest your crops and plow a field. How to rotate the crops, how to mate animals to have more animals, how to slaughter animals and cut the meats up so you can feed yourself. You know. You need to know how to put two wires together, let electricity pass through them, put a washer on a nut, and stop the faucet from leaking. They taught those guys Agri. It was agriculture mechanical. It was part of the education process for some boys.

Samuel had a different perception of the learning environment for African American students as he witnessed some African American teachers develop a sense of complacency. Some African American teachers tended to stifle the learning environment by teaching what was familiar to them instead of what the child needed to know. He recounts:

> I had some concerns at the African American school, but to put it simply. You had some teachers at the all-African-American school. So, if I had to select, I would not choose my kid to take the class under teacher X, if I had that choice. It was common to find teachers doing their own thing. For example, let's say you were a math teacher who loved to teach fractions or did not love to teach fractions; you might not have dealt with that as you should. Instead, you tend to

deal with the things you feel more comfortable with. At less, that was the impression that I got.

African American Teachers. The third that emerged was African American teachers. During school segregation, African American teachers realized the importance of education for African American students. They played a profound role in ensuring African American students received an education despite their current circumstance of a segregated learning environment that was deficient in resources. Notwithstanding such cases, the African American teachers' passion for educating African American students and their interest in their learning overpowered the obstacles that the education system put in place. The former African American students felt the genuine interest that these teachers exuded in educating African American students. Instead, they intended to provide students with a quality education that would effectively prepare them to compete in the world beyond segregation.

While attending an African American segregated school, Sarah states, “The majority of the teachers that taught me were caring individuals whom I felt had my best interest in mind. Several of them tried to help me outside of the classroom setting by enhancing my environment by exposure in the community.”

Isaiah's description of African American teachers during segregation aligns with Sarah's response. “They were well educated. They taught us with love and made sure that we learned the subjects being taught,” described Isaiah.

African American teachers had a deep compassion for students and a desire for their students to learn; therefore, they would motivate students to achieve their highest potential. These teachers gave their absolute best to educating African American students

while at the same time expecting students to provide their best. In addition, African American teachers' roles extend past their educator duties to parental figures guiding students as they navigate life. Joseph describes:

> One word I would use to describe the educational instruction would be dedicated and precise, and they did an excellent job. They were well-educated and helped educate their students on a high level. The teachers had to be above par level. It was just the way it was in the delta at those schools. The teachers were for them to be hired. The requirement was that they had to be qualified. The teachers were outstanding. The part I remember most about the teachers of those years is they cared about the students' education. They provided the best teaching that children could have, especially African American students. The teachers love their job, and they love their students. The African American teachers would not accept substandard level work from many students when they knew you could do better. They would call your parents. Parents would then would motivate you to shape up or receive disciplinary actions. They always supported us academically. What I mean by that is they gave of themselves to prepare themselves and make sure that we always brought our best, and when we did not bring our best, they let us know that we could do better. They always encouraged us not to associate ourselves with children we knew were not trying to get a good education. So, it was an extension of parental guidance from the school teachers. They cared so much that they would even call our parents. When things were not going how they should have been with students,

> the teachers that taught us in those days realized that we would be facing a world that may not like or love us. Education was one thing they knew would propel us on a good path of professionalism. So, the positive, I think, was the education requirements that all the teachers required. The teachers in those days at the Mattie Edwards School, the all-African American school I attended, required us to get our lessons, behave well, and participate in sports.

African American teachers designed their educational instruction to meet the academic needs of the students. The teacher was trusted and respected for being qualified to educate students effectively. Daniel recalls:

> The instruction of the Black or African American teachers at the Black High School I attended was adequate. You know, it was susceptible. It was significant. It was easy to understand that they were teaching relevant to our needs and, in a way, they had been teaching for most of their years. They were usually older teachers. Very few teachers had come back home or had come to that area to begin teaching. So, most of the teachers there had been there for years, and they were well prepared, experienced, and versed in that subject matter and teaching. So, you felt they knew what they were saying and were qualified. One of the things that I don't think ever occurred at the Black school was questioning whether or not that teacher could teach adequately. You always felt like you were getting the information and knowledge in the way; even if you didn't like the subject, you couldn't say that the teacher didn't know it or didn't know what they were talking about. It was just hard for you to learn and comprehend it.

As a result of the African American teachers having parents that were college graduates and educators that inspired them to obtain an education, Daniel explains that the teachers were paying it forward to the future generations. Daniel viewed the academic support of the African American teachers required students to do their best.

> You know, they came from the same type of environment that I was in then because their parents were teachers, their parents were hard workers. They completed high school and went to college. So, they had sacrificed and done what they needed to do, and those good habits that gave them that success, they are now back there passing that on to us, to the younger generation, and they had to want to do it to be doing it because when they didn't want to, they left for better jobs.
>
> You could always tell their bottom line was to motivate you and make you do your best. It didn't matter whether it was the choir teacher or the English teacher who taught choir. They wanted that choir to be good. If it was a spelling bee, they wanted you to know the words. If it's an essay, you got to write. They want that story to be written correctly and properly. They never wavered. I never had a teacher who I felt was giving us work for the sake of doing it.

It was also understood by students during school segregation to respect the position of African American teachers as authority figures. Daniel explains:

> I had no problem with any of the teachers and any of their manners. They were the authority. One of the things that the Black schools and the Black teachers emphasized was that they were the teacher and you were the student, and you couldn't challenge them. You didn't tell that teacher they were wrong. They

> weren't fair. You weren't going to do that. It just wasn't acceptable. You know, because you had no reason to object to it. They were in that position, had been in that position, and they were put there to do their job and administer those classrooms over you. It wasn't about whether they liked you or didn't like you or why they didn't. Why they, even if they did, mistreat you? You couldn't even ask why because this is just the fact that it must be your fault, and you were not doing what they told you to do. That's the only reason I ever saw that they would punish you. It was because you were disobedient and hard-headed and this unruly and disorderly. That's all your fault. It's not because they don't like you; they don't want the best for you. It's because they do want the best for you. They do want you to walk out of there exhibiting an example of what you ought to be doing and ought to know to the best of your ability and knowledge. I don't think I ever had a teacher at the segregated Black school that didn't realize that was their intent and purpose.

African American Segregated Schools' Influence. In analyzing the data, a fourth theme emerged: African American segregated schools' influence. The African American segregated school was influential in the lives of former African American teachers and students. Its influence ranged from academic and professional to personal. Attending an all-African American segregated challenged students to want to achieve at their highest academic level to be prepared for a life outside the school walls. Furthermore, the education provided students with a foundation that allowed them to compete with their White counterparts. Professionally, African American teachers wanted to be the type of teachers to inspire African American students' quest to seek an

education. African American students developed an appreciation for their segregated school experience by attending a segregated school.

Joshua explains:

> You felt a sense of personal worth in the African American school because the kids really wanted to learn. We tried to be role models for the kids and were the role models outside their parents. So that was one thing. We wanted to present our best package to them and do our best job because we wanted them to go further. We wanted them to go to college, and personally, that was our goal to get them where we were and where we came from and help them reach the goals they were trying to attain. We were trying to prepare the students for college. Primarily African American colleges, those were most of the colleges that they would be welcome to anyway. We're trying to give them insight into what they could be and what they could do to get there. That was professional, and it was personal. We took it personally. Professionally, it made us improvise what we did not have, substitute things we did not have, and use the tools we had to make students even better because we knew we didn't have the resources and materials we needed. Still, we tried to implement and tell them about what would occur. So that they could be ready whenever the time came, that was in the segregated. We always knew that integration was coming, but we didn't believe it until it happened.

For Joseph, the importance of receiving an education was enforced by his parents, which transitioned into knowing he must apply himself. Besides the home, the segregated school was the primary source where African American students were taught academically. African American teachers in the segregated setting taught past the present

but for the future profession. Personally, the African American segregated school developed a connection and unity with each other. Joseph explains how attending an all-African American school influenced his life academically, professionally, and personally.

> Academically, we started with our parents requiring us to get a good education. So academically, the all-African American school was all we had, so it impacted us to know that you've got to do your best academically. Professionally, because I went 11 years at an all-African American segregated school, it made me realize that I had to be prepared to inner society as being educated. That was the most significant impact professionally I got. I think it was drilled in us; if I could use that word, you've got to apply yourself to have an excellent professional career. Personally, I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to do 11 years in an all-American African American segregated school. It impacted me in such a way that the relationships that we had earlier went all the way through school. Many of those close friends have now deceased, but the families were closed. We still have several families that we are really close to, so personally. It will always have a special place in my heart. With those years, those 11 years of segregated schools.

Daniel described an occasion when he realized the academic influence of an African American school while attending summer school at the all-White Monroe High School.

> After the 10th grade, my last year at the Black School. I had taken biology. I fell in love with it. The instructor was a former graduate of M.S. Jackson High School. He had come back and was now the biology teacher. That summer after the 10th grade. I had also taken geometry, but I had a young teacher that to me

either wasn't as effective as she could have been, or I wasn’t the student I should have been because I didn't feel like I knew a sufficient amount of geometry to proceed and to feel qualified. Making a B and C in geometry was good, but I should have been an A student, but I knew I didn't know it or understand it. So, I went to summer school at the White School because that was the only school at that time that had summer school. I went to summer school at the White school before I even enrolled as a student at the White school. After all, I wanted to retake geometry because I felt I needed to know more geometry. I thought another teacher could give me a different perspective on it. What's the point of attending summer school and losing half a day to take one class? I might as well take another class.

Well, I like biology, so let me take biology. So, I took biology. One day my dad came home. He asked, "Who was your biology teacher? Didn't you take biology at M.S Jackson?" I said, "It was Mr. J. you know him; his dad plays the piano at our church." He said, "Oh, really, I didn't think that boy knew nothing." I said, "He is a pretty good teacher. I learned a lot. I liked his class." So, I said, "Why you ask?" He said, "Because I ran into Mrs. E., and she came up to me and wanted to know why you were in her class." She said, "You know everything." She said, "You could have been teaching the class because you knew every muscle, every bone, every circulation, digestive system in there, and she was just trying to figure out why he was even in that class, making 98s and 99s on every test.

> You know, we dissected frogs. We dissected earthworms we had formaldehyde; somebody caught a cat, euthanized the cat, boiled, broke it down, examined the muscles and put the bones back together, and made a skeleton out of it at M.S Jackson High School. Tell me that teacher wasn't doing something. They didn't do that at the White School, but that teacher had only been in the room a few years ago. They had come fresh out of college, and that's what they did. I'm sure he learned that at the all-Black college he attended and passed that on to his students. That was an all-Black college, and he came back and passed that on to his students there. So, they were doing what they needed to do.
>
> That told me then that the education I was getting at M.S Jackson High School could compete with anything they did at the White School, and I had made that point during one of the Black caucuses we did in the 9th and 10th grades.

As an African American teacher teaching in a segregated school, Ruth was impacted professionally and personally by wanting to give of herself by serving her students and the parents.

> Professionally, the African American segregated school impacted my life in the sense that I was very qualified to teach anywhere. I gave it my all. I did the very, very best that I could as a new teacher and as a seasoned teacher. In my high school year, I decided when I was in the 12th grade; I decided that I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher like Jesus Christ. I wanted to give love, show love, and be loved. Personally, my husband was already there a year before I got there, personally. So, we were together, and that was a joy. That was happiness for us, and it made us more involved with our students because we could come

home together and talk about issues at school that particular day. So, we did a lot of multitasking with our students and parents. So, personally and professionally. My husband and I and the community were a village.

Hannah's life was professionally influenced while teaching in an African American segregated school by wanting to acquire more education to assist students academically. While personally, Hannah was more compassionate for the disadvantage.

Professionally, it made me want to study more or do more to help my students academically or in whatever way I could help them to extend my education. Personally, it affected me because I became more concerned for them or the way some people had to survive to live or strive to do the best they could. After all, they were less fortunate. That was how it affected me personally.

Samuel's segregated school experience taught him to ensure that students learn in various ways persistently.

Teaching at an African American segregated school really impacted me to understand that all students can learn, and I looked at it from the standpoint that if a student fails, then I fail. What did I not do? What else should I have done? I took that into that if the student fails, I fail. It was something I didn't do right. It must be away. I always operate on the basis that all students can learn. Now it is my job to find a way.

So, teaching in a segregated school impacted me because this is how you have always done this; it is not necessarily the best way for all students to learn. For most of my education career, my schooling was always an integrated environment. Although I was taught and grew up in a segregated school, so I tend

to look at it from the standpoint that this child did get this, so I did something wrong; I need to find a way. I wanted to believe that all students could learn. I did not find the way if a student did not get it. I was pretty successful at that most time. They would get it.

Segregation Beneficial and Non-beneficial. A fifth theme that appeared was segregation beneficial and non-beneficial. Some former African American teachers and students recognized that segregated African American schools benefited African American students, teachers, and the community. School segregation created a closeness between former African teachers, parents, and students. These African American segregated schools became revered in the community; therefore, education was greatly valued, and teachers received support from African American parents. Joseph explains how segregated schools were beneficial.

> What made it beneficial again was the level of education requirements that the teachers required of the students. Your teacher loved you and then loved you loved your teachers. It benefited the teachers because they felt, or I believe, they were preparing the next generation of African Americans from a professional level, preparing us for our future. I think the community benefited because there was just something about the camaraderie of Black people of African American people in those days that was much different after segregation.

Daniel also expresses that school segregation benefited the African American community and teachers.

> It was beneficial to us because it kept our unity together. It kept us striving for this common purpose. We had our own Community Center. We had our own

churches. We had our own Funeral Home, and we were striving to maintain that. You know, and that was the benefit of it. The teachers taught us for the sake of teaching and didn't have to worry about whether they called you Black, Colored, Negro, or what because it wasn't about the terms. It was about their intent and purpose.

So, a benefit to the students, the teachers, the teachers had the security. Teaching was a very secure profession. You never heard of a teacher getting fired. You never heard of teachers getting sued. You barely even heard of a teacher getting transferred. They transferred the teacher just because the teacher was moving for some other reason. They got married. Her husband got a different job, or the wife had a different position, and they went to an area and went to that place looking for a job. They were often fortunate because good teachers were hard to find, and nobody wanted to turn down or lose a good teacher. So, they always made a position for a teacher. Teaching was going to be a way to keep employed. So, you couldn't go to a white school and get a teaching job, but you could if you were a Black teacher, you go to a Black school, and they would hire you because you would stay in their community. You know that it was from the 50s to the 60s that segregation was understood.

The teachers' relationship with African American parents during segregation provided parental support for teachers to work with students. Although reaching students was beneficial, the absence of adequate resources was non-beneficial. Joshua states,

Segregated schools were beneficial in a couple of ways. Teachers were able to correlate with the students. In other words, teachers knew the students knew the

parents, and there was cooperation between teachers, students, and parents. You had the students that you could work with. You had the parents that you could work with. It was beneficial because you had students you wanted to work with, but it was another problem that we didn't have the tools to work with. Non-beneficial things that we saw in teaching and the community, we didn't have the equipment. We didn't have the equipment to advance our students to be better than they could have normally been.

Moreover, Hannah witnessed the beneficial and non-beneficial aspects of school segregation in an environment to work directly with students. School segregation was non-beneficial, the continuous struggle for resources.

In some aspects, I feel like it was more beneficial to African American students because you could do more for them during segregation. Discipline-wise, you were free to do. Non-beneficial during desegregation because you had to be careful about disciplining students.

It was beneficial for African American Teachers. The African American teachers had a particular relationship to me during segregation that did not carry over during integration. They had a closer relationship with their fellow African American teachers and the students during segregation when they were all Black. So, I think segregation for the community was non-beneficial because they were always trying to get better buses. All the time, the African American community struggled to get something done—better this and better that. So, segregation was not so beneficial to the community.

Ruth elaborates:

> Beneficial in this sense. I will use Coretta Scott King, Dr. King's wife; she said, "We really didn't want to integrate. We just wanted the same thing that the white students had." So now, at that point, segregation was beneficial. Students were parents to the students, along with their parents. For the community, it was both. It was beneficial by us being on our turf. Black students, Black teachers, Black caring teachers, In the community, the conditions in the Horace community were so, so poor, so poor. We survived, and many of our students survived coming out of those conditions because so many of our students, even though we were segregated, went to college. They went to college, and they did well. They wanted to get out of the cotton fields and farm labor. They wanted to do better, and their parents as well. We were a village. What would hurt the community would hurt the parents and us as teachers. It affected the students.

While overall, school segregation was beneficial to most of the former African American teachers and students. Some participants considered it to be non-beneficial due to the limited environment and the perception that it conveyed. Sarah states how school segregation was non-beneficial:

> I strongly believe it was more non-beneficial because I don't believe it totally equipped me and others for the real world. We were segregated, and we were given limited resources. Limited in many different ways, and I really felt like that was more of a handicap than anything as well as the community, too, because it divided people and made me feel like something was wrong with me. So, why

was I being treated so differently as opposed to White kids, Asian kids, or Kids that weren't African American?

Samuel viewed school segregation as maintaining the current situation.

It was non-beneficial for the community, teachers, and students because it tends to foster the status quo of what is and what is does not necessarily mean that's what it should be. It is no such thing that a student can't learn; if the student fail. Teaching in a segregated school, you would tend to maintain the status quo.

Segregation to Integration. A sixth theme that emerged was segregation to integration. The integration process was gradual for some school districts in Arkansas' Delta. Schools were desegregated before completely integrating. Desegregation came in the form of primarily African American students having the opportunity to attend an all-White segregated school through Freedom of Choice. African Americans were more likely to desegregate an all-White school than Whites desegregate an all-African American school. However, not all African American were willing to desegregate White segregated schools. Only a select few African American students desegregated the all-White segregated schools during the 1960s in Monroe and Horace School District.

Daniel remembered the desegregation and integration process in the Monroe School District.

In 1965-1966, they integrated the 1st through the 4th grades. For some reason, I don't think any of them went because they were too young. Nobody wanted to risk their 1st through 4th-grade kid at the White School without Black teachers or other Black friends that supported them. So, I don't remember anyone who integrated before we integrated the last four years. Still, I do remember them

being proud that they would have allowed you to attend if you were 1st through 4th grade, you could have attended, but nobody did. The following year it was 5th through 8th. I don't recall anybody that attended then. For the same reasons, probably, but when the time came for the 9th through the 12th, that's the year they moved my parents because they probably realized we don't even have a Black teacher over here. So how are you going to get a Black kid? I'm sure the state or the government was starting to monitor them and realize you all integrated, but then you have not integrated anything. So, they put my mother in the elementary school and my dad in the high school to have representation, showing that they were compliant.

Then four classmates and I, Black male boys and two Black females in the class ahead of us, desegregated the all-White Monroe High School. They would have been seniors. They attended and graduated, so the first Black graduates from the formerly segregated all-White Monroe High School were actually two Black females. My best friend and I were the first Black males. Always say it that way to say I was the first Black male graduate because two girls who graduated the year before who went there for one year that finished my junior year were seniors, so they were the first Black graduates from that high school. I emphasize that because they don't get any credit for that because they were just mild, passive, stay-in-your-lane type of girls. They didn't ruffle. They didn't cause a ripple in the water, ever. They were nice, smart, and quiet young Black girls who didn't cause any problems.

Along with Daniel, Joseph recounts the desegregation process in the Horace Schools District before full integration in 1970.

> In 1968, two Black students started the Horace High School desegregation process. It was a strategic plan. We did not know integration was two years down the road, but the superintendent and the district began that desegregation process by bringing over two brothers to join the school. Also, they sent over to the Black school, the all-African American school, two White teachers to teach, one driver's education class, and the other one was Future Farmers of America class, which was called FFA, and those two teachers were sent over to begin preparing us for integration that we were not aware of that was two years down the road that was 1968. They were White male teachers.

Some school districts not only desegregated the student body but desegregated the faculty. Samuel was the first African American teacher to desegregate faculty at Hurd High School by way of the superintendent requesting his assistance in the desegregation process.

> It was the 1966-1967 school year. I was the first Black teacher to integrate the staff. The superintendent asked me to go to Hurd High School because they had a court order during that time. They were operating on Freedom of Choice, where students could select to go to J.L.W or Hurd High. I went to Hurd High School as a teacher, and during that time, Hurd High School was a White school for white students. J.L.W was the Black school for Black students in elementary school through twelfth grade, but they had a program called the Freedom of Choice. Students could go where they choose. They could decide to go to Hurd High, or

they could choose to go to J.L.W. A few Black students were selected to go there, but the majority of the Black students were selected to go to J.L.W. By 1969 or 1970, it was no longer Freedom of Choice anymore. The court had ordered Hurd to integrate and go to one school system. The court issued or enforced an order in 1970 whereby it was no longer Freedom of Choice. The court ordered the school district to form a unitary school system. Unitary means no longer identifying as a Black or White school but just one school. So, what was J.L.W, the former African American school with grades 1st- 12th; it became the Hurd Elementary, Hurd Junior High School. What was the former Hurd Elementary School, before desegregation, which was the white school, but after the court issued that order, they had to have just one school. At that time, you had white students coming to J.L.W depending on the grade level, and you had Black students going to Hurd High School depending on the grade level. They had to go to one system for all; no longer could you have a campus for Blacks and Whites or what they call Freedom of Choice. It was no longer Freedom of Choice any more. The court just said a unitary school system. So, to utilize the facilities and the staff, J.L.W became the Junior High, Hurd Elementary became elementary for all students, and Hurd High School became the high school for all students in Hurd School District.

Going from school segregation, desegregation, and to integration for some former African American students was prompted by their parents, who wanted them to attend a formerly segregated all-White school. The former African American students were reluctant to attend an all-White school. At the same time, other former African American

students that attended Horace School District were forced into school integration in 1970. Former African American teachers received verbal notice from the superintendent of schools integrating within their school district.

Daniel explains his position on desegregating the formerly all-White Monroe High School.

> I did not have a choice. It could have been forced integration for me because my parents told me I was going, and I didn't go against my parents. So, I didn't go against my parents.
>
> My parents asked me to because they would have been transferred to be teachers over there. They didn't think it was representing themselves and our family properly by them working there, and I am going to a different school. They said, "Because they were working there. I need to go to school over there, and it would be best for everybody." So, I gave up my Presidency of the Student Council at the Black High School for an opportunity to play basketball at the White high school and play in the band.
>
> I didn't contest their wish for me to go over to that school. That's how I ended up over there at that school because I was still talking against it at the Black school. I felt like a trader. Some of my best friends that I left at the Black school told me, "Why did you leave us? If you would have stayed here at this school, man, don't you know we'd have a championship team too." So, I go over there to the White School, and the first thing we do is win the district championship.

Similar to Daniel, Isaiah did not resist his parents' willingness for him to desegregate Monroe High School.

The reason was my parents chose for us to attend that school. It was not myself that volunteered. I did not want to go, but how are you going to buck your parents? They decided that was best for me, so that's what happened. I was hesitant. My parents signed the paperwork because you had to have the parents' permission for you to go to Monroe High School, which was the all-White school. It was a voluntary situation in that your parents had to sign paperwork for you to attend, so it's a voluntary thing. So, my parents volunteered for us to go there, as well as other African American students.

Unlike Daniel and Isaiah, Joseph was forced into integration by the Horace School District.

We did not have a choice. It was mandatory. The school fully integrated in September of 1970. So, in order to graduate, you had to be moved to the White school. We were not in support of integration. Being 17-year-olds, we felt like we had been mistreated. My first day, if I can remember, was when I went through it with youth anger, youth unpleasantry, youth mouth poked out, and yet saying yes, sir, yes, ma'am. Then I went home at the end of the day, feeling like this would be a bad year. In my senior year now, I've got to give up the opportunity to graduate from an all-Black school. I did it and am grateful that the Lord blessed us to go through and graduate with honors.

Sarah's reasoning for attending the formerly segregated Horace High School reflects Joseph's response.

> I didn't believe that I had a choice because we were told by our parents and the school district that the schools would be merging on the secondary level that year. So, I wanted to graduate, so I agreed and went on ahead.

Some African American teachers were notified that schools would integrate within their district. Ruth was fortunate to receive a formal notification from the superintendent regarding schools integrating into the Horace School District.

> We were informed by the superintendent of Horace School District in 1970 that we would be integrated. He said in a faculty meeting, "The schools would come together. That we would be integrating, but do not come over to the school asking for anything."

Although some African American students attended Monroe High School, Joshua recounts needing to be made aware of whether or not Monroe School District would integrate.

> They really didn't know. We knew we had students going from M.S Jackson to Monroe High School. Black students going back, they go back and forth because they didn't like the White school. They didn't like it over there. So, they went over there to try it in 1967, 1968, and 1969. Some of them stayed, and some of them came back. We knew we would come together at some point, but we didn't know exactly when. So, it was 1970 in May; they said, "The schools would integrate in September." That's what we got.

Hannah remembers the communication involving school integration and being placed in an integrated environment after returning to school in the fall.

I recall going back and being placed at Lee High School. There was no formal letter. They just took over on what they were going to do, and there was no question about it. This is what it was. They just told you your assignment.

Samuel was provided with the opportunity to be invited by the Superintendent of Hurd School District to aid in the school desegregation process.

It was the 1966-1967 school year. The superintendent told me that this is what he did not volunteer to do, but the court had ordered him to integrate the faculty, and he asked me if I would go to Hurd High School. I thought I was a good teacher. I said, "I want to teach my son; if he decided to stay at Tate, then I would want to go back." So, he assured me he would accommodate me in what I wanted to do. They were operating on Freedom of Choice, where students could select to go to J.L.W or Hurd High. A few Black students were selected to go there, but the majority of the Black students selected to go to J.L.W.

The onset of school integration was met with pessimism from some former African American teachers and students in that they foresaw the devastation of school integration. They knew the potential backlash that could acquire from African American teachers and students integrating predominately Whites schools.

Joshua expressed his thoughts on school desegregation and integration as he was informed.

Our thoughts were that this was not going to be good for Black teachers. It was not going to be ideal for Black students. We know it's going to be a challenge. We didn't know what we would have to come up against, but we knew we would be demoted. Some were going to be fired, and some were. Some moved on and did

not want to go through the desegregation and integration process. They didn't want to be bothered with that. We felt like this was not a good situation for Black folks, and that was it. We had some teachers leave. Some teachers stayed with it. Some didn't even go into the profession.

Ruth also predicted the challenge that school integration would result in for oneself. Once informed about the Horace School District integration, her thoughts and feeling were, "I knew I was going to be mistreated because we were not wanted in the first place. The whites did not want integration."

"Just as sexist as racist." "Just as sexist as racist" is the seventh theme in the study. Even though schools were desegregated and integrated, there was segregation within integration, including sexism. Administrators ensured that African American and White students had separate social events restricting the mingling of both races and ensuring African American males would not have the opportunity to interact with White females. Monroe High School canceled their senior prom to avoid such mingling between African American males and White females. At the same time, Horace High School had a separate prom for African Americans and White students.

"Just as sexist as racist" is also reflected in Daniel's statement. Daniel recalls when the African American males in his class were denied the privilege of having a senior prom.

The girls didn't cause any problem, and I saw that it was just as sexist as it was racist because those girls were seniors, and they had their senior prom. They had their senior activities, and they attended if they wanted to or not, but there was never an issue or question. After graduating, my four partners and I, all Black

males, became seniors; suddenly, we couldn't have a prom because one of them was observed at the dairy bar in the community trying to show this White girl how to do this dance move. Some white boys didn't like it and ran him off the parking lot. So, therefore we couldn't dance with the white girls, and the best way was not to let that happen. We can't have a function at the school with dances anymore because we don't want the White girls dancing with the Black boys. That was the sole reason we couldn't have a prom. We could have no activity on campus. So, the White parents got together and decided to have an activity for their kids on the North end of town at one of the prominent doctor's houses, which had a pool in his backyard with a privacy fence. The only way you could get in there was by invitation only, and don't you know everybody in our class got an invitation except me and the other Black boy that graduated.

Joseph experienced a segregated prom as a result of the control the plantation owners had over the Horace School District.

When it came to the prom, we had to have two proms even though we were integrated in school, but when it came to socializing, they weren't ready for Black, a man to slow dance with a white girl. They wouldn't allow that. You just got to keep in mind during that time that the school board made decisions, and the school board was mostly plantation owners. Who've all the years had Black folks living on their plantation that were farming? So, it was segregation among Black and white that they weren't ready to let us get together socially. They did all they could with the rule book to keep us from socializing other than going to school with white people, especially when it came to romancing, hugging, and kissing.

> They were not going to allow any rules to make that something that could happen. So, they were doing all they could to prevent that.

Sexism within school integration occurred among African American female teachers at Horace High School. Ruth states, “The Superintendent was always calling me in; rarely did he call a Black male teacher into his office, but he always called several, Black lady teachers in, and I was number one because I was respectfully bold.”

Control. Control was the eighth theme that emerged. The former African American students recognized that school desegregation and integration were political within the Horace and Monroe High School Districts. Although the superintendent operated the districts, outside forces potentially dictated administrators' decision-making. These external forces contributed to controlling how African American students were treated during the onset of school desegregation and integration. In addition, African American parents in Horace, Arkansas, understood the possible repercussion from plantation owners if they protested their displeasure.

Daniel acknowledges that the school administrators and teachers were powerless compared to those who controlled Monroe, Arkansas.

> The teachers weren't the dominant people of the community, especially in the white community. They were just regular folks. The white folks that owned the big businesses that held all the property and the farmland were running the schools; those on the school board contributed to the school and hired those teachers to be there; they were just pawns. Those teachers and administrators were doing what they were told to do. They weren't making any of those big decisions. When to open, when the close. Who to let this one in, who to let that

one out? If you weren't an administrator, big-time banker, business owner, or property farm manager, you had nothing to say about it. So, the teachers and administrators were falling in line and trying not to ruffle the feathers and muddy the waters. They wanted it to be peaceful and easy. The teachers were not affected by it as much as the powers that be because control and the greatest influence came from outside the schools, not inside the schools.

In thinking about his school desegregation experience, Daniel is reminded of when the high school principal redirected him to take honor courses to prepare for college because of the probable influence of the town's elite.

I had one experience with my principal, who didn't want me to take those advanced classes because I thought he was responding to the community. He was responding to the business owners. Who had told him they didn't want the colors in the class with their kids. I think he was doing the best he could to accommodate them to abide by what their wishes were to keep us from associating with the society of white people because the business owners and the rich people had the best kids. They didn't want just the colored kids in that class affecting their kids. I think that was more of his motivation and factor than punishing me. He was the principal. He had to do what they said. That was his way of complying with what they wanted: to keep me out of the class. I don't compete with their kids. They didn't change anybody else's schedule but mine. Four Black boys were in there, and I was the only one he confronted because I was the only one signed up for those classes. So, we were not intimidating them as a group, but I was because I wanted to be in the class with their best kids. I wanted to take the same courses

> that the best kids were taking. I wanted to be equal to them when I came out so I have the same opportunities they did. So that's what they saw. They knew that, so they sent him to me that way.

Joseph observed the authority that the plantation owner had over African American parents living on their property.

> So much of that student leadership was so one-sided that racism was just so visible. So that was the white administrators. Teachers, parents, and Black parents had to go along with it because so many parents lived on plantations. You didn't get a lot of public arguments from parents because they had to live on those plantations, which white people owned, and the school board was all white except one Black person was on the school board. Keep in mind during that time, the school board made the decisions, and the school board mainly was plantation owners. Who've all the years had Black folks living on their plantation that was farming?

Segregation within Integration. Segregation within integration was the ninth theme that transpired. School integration did not change the mentality of school administrators as they continued to operate in a segregated form within the walls of integrated schools. Former African American teachers experienced discrimination through not being allowed to teach a particular demographic of students. Horace' administrators denied African American teachers the opportunity to teach White students. The opposite issue occurred in the Monroe School District during integration in the 1970s, where the African American teachers could only African American students and

the disadvantaged White students. While in the Davis, segregation within integration transitioned into the learning groups.

Ruth expounds on segregation within integration in the classroom.

> The first year we integrated at Horace High School, Black teachers had Black students only, and white teachers had white and Black students. At the end of the first year of integration, the Superintendent sent all of us to Ouachita. There were seven English teachers, two Blacks and five Whites. He sent us all to Ouachita to learn how to be integrated. We stayed there for two weeks. Nevertheless, when we began the next school year, the two Black English teachers taught integrated classes, and if my memory serves me right. It might have been a third year before all of the teachers taught integrated classes.

Joseph describes the challenge of witnessing how African American teachers were discriminated against in the classroom.

> One of the things that we encountered that we could not and did not accept with a smile was how our teachers were treated because our teachers were qualified. The Black teachers I am referring to were qualified but restricted from teaching white students. That didn't sit well with us. So, I think that was the biggest thing that we experienced that was discrimination and challenging to us was to see our teachers be discriminated against like that and yet go ahead and take it because of us and only educate us, however; the white teachers were under pressure because they were the only teachers that could teach white and Black students. So, their class was always white and Black, whereas the Black teachers' classes in the first year were always Black students.

At Monroe High School, Joshua had an integrated room with African American and White students, but a specific sector of White students was excluded from having African American teachers.

> The classroom was good. As I said, during the 71, 72, and 73 school years, our classes were good. You had Black students. We had a mixture of white students, but the white students were poor. They did not send the upper crust, which might say White students. They didn't come to us or go through us. Sometimes they gave us White students that were from poor backgrounds. The upper-crust students, Whites, went with White teachers and were scheduled and taught by Whites. That's the way the White counselors set up their schedule. The poor Whites got us and were very cooperative with us during the first part of integration. We taught the Black kids and the poor whites because they also had a hard time and did well. Most White teachers had all white students and maybe one or two Blacks. So, one or two Blacks had to follow suit. They were not going to get 6-7 Blacks in there. If they wanted to get rid of a white teacher, they gave them a lot of Black students.
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> So, they try to keep their environment pretty much the same. They kept our environment pretty much the same. We just got the poor Whites, but many white teachers went to private schools. So, they would not have to deal with us. So that's why we had three private schools in our area. We had Marvell Academy, Lee Academy, and Calvary Christian. They went to those schools. Those that didn't want their kids to be in the integrated school system. Trying to get away from us.

The discriminatory practice of segregation within integration was also exhibited in the discrepancies in learning groups. Hannah recalls:

> They came up with learning groups. The remedial group was where most Blacks fell. It was still a form of segregation in an integrated environment. Whites had their ways of advancing White students over Black students. Even integrating it did not solve anything. It wasn't a significant change. They made sure they had learning groups. Most White kids were in the upper group, and they threw a few Blacks in that group. I think they would call the groups, A group B group. It did not matter to me about the slow achiever because I always wanted the ones that needed to learn. That brought joy to me. You had to be on target with your teaching. If you can teach, it does not matter who you teach. I did not have a big problem with that part.

Academic Support. Academic support was the 10th theme that unfolded from this study. The academic support the former African American students grew accustomed to during school segregation differed from the norm. In the segregated school environment, former African American students realized the passion and interest the African American teachers displayed in instructing them in their learning. However, the former African American students recognized the absence of enthusiasm from the White teachers regarding the education of African American students during integration. The former African American teacher also observed that most White teachers, when school integrated, had difficulty relating to the African American students.

Daniel noticed that the White teachers during his time attending a desegregated school did not cater to the academic achievement of African American students but taught all students.

> The academic support was only in the sense that they couldn't prevent me from learning. They didn't try to put me out of class. They didn't try to separate or segregate me from the other students and opportunities as a student to learn what they were teaching. They may not have made examples I could identify with, like the college teachers. College teachers understand society and sociology, and they were going to give examples that you can identify with at that level. Not in high school; they were not trying to do that much for you. So, they took the position that if you were going to be here in class, if you learn it, you are going to have to retain it because you are that kind of student, but I'm not going to present and emphasize in a way to help you remember it. I'm not trying to do that uniquely for you, but you'll never be able to say I wasn't teaching you like I did everybody else.

African American students experienced former African American teachers' dedication while attending a segregated school. Once school was integrated, Sarah noticed that some White teachers failed to demonstrate an interest in her education.

> In thinking back, the white teachers did not spend as much time, and I don't think they invested as much time in me personally as my African American teachers did. I felt like I could easily go to or stop and ask my African American teacher a question and get what I needed or what I lacked in understanding as opposed to the white teacher.

Sarah explains that some White teachers provided her with opportunities to contribute to classroom discussions. Nevertheless, Sarah recounted the discouragement she received from the counselor when she communicated her interest in attending college.

> The ones I was going to on a day-to-day basis were cordial and would call on me when I offered to participate or would call on me at different times to give my insight. Then the ones that I think of were the supportive staff like the counselor. She did not support me academically by sharing with me that she felt like I was not college material because of the applications that I was making or attempting to make to continue my education past high school.

Furthermore, during school integration with the White teachers, Joseph noticed a lack of high expectations in requiring students to learn compared to African American teachers during segregation, insisting that African American students give their best.

> During integration, the white teachers' education instruction was they wanted us to learn from the teaching, but the focus was not as demanding as the African American teachers. The African American teachers demanded that you learn. Many of the white teachers, you get it, or you don't get it. The Black teachers just never did accept that. If you're going to be in my class, you are going to learn.

Isaiah's echoed a similar statement.

> The Black teachers put forth an effort for you to learn. The white teacher put it out there, but you know it's there for you to learn if you want to learn. It was up to you to learn. The Black teachers instilled in you what was best for you to do, and

this is for your benefit. With the White teachers, it was you learn it, or you didn't. So that is what I got out of it.

African American teachers during the time of segregation developed a relationship with African American students that aided in influencing their pursuit of an education. African American students' environment changed when schools integrated, and their relationship with White teachers struggled.

> Some African American students quit school because the environment was different. There wasn't any personal teaching. There was no connection between the teacher and the student, especially Black students. White teachers did not connect with the Black students and were not trying to do that. They're just trying to make Black students fail if they could, and Black students did fail. Some quit school early, but the ones who stuck it out did well. The first few years were difficult.

Racial Tension. Racial tension was the 11th theme that unfolded. The racial issues were dormant when the former African American students desegregated Monroe High School. It was not until the Monroe School District wholly integrated in 1971 that racial tension amongst African American and White students and White teachers erupted at the high school level. Following Monroe was the Davis in 1972, which also experienced the displeasure demonstrated by African American teachers, students, and parents.

Only a few African American students at Monroe High School during school desegregation were not a serious threat to the White administrators, teachers, and students. African American students desegregating the high school created a tense

environment. Daniel elaborates on the tension during school desegregation and integration.

> It was like a bomb with no fuse. You knew the potential was always there, with very little done to set it in motion because there was only a handful of us. We never really built up any tension or pressure to ignite that fuse. They kept a close watch on us. They kept a close watch on the activities and what the potential was. It actually got worse before it got better, but I was gone by then because I didn't get to experience the full integration with Monroe High School. I was gone. That didn't happen until the year after I left after I graduated. A year or two, I left there in 1969, it was probably 70 or 71 before the first integrated class came along, and I heard of the problems they were having regarding discipline, punishment, and treatment of those Black kids because it became more of a factor. It was easy to control and monitor a handful of us; then, it was a room full of us. Those teachers and administrators started feeling intimidated and overwhelmed about what that room full was presenting compared to what they had seen with just a handful.

The years of school desegregation at Monroe High School for Isaiah were untroubled until 1971. African American students became concerned with the inequity in treating African American students compared to White students. Isaiah recalls,

> During my years at Monroe High, the White school from 1968, 1969, and 1970 everything was okay. In 1971, when we totally integrated the school system, there was a lot of discrimination happening. It might have been some of the Blacks' fault who did not want to be there, or it might have been some of the Whites' fault. They bumped heads, and the White teachers sometimes sided with the

White students over the Black students. It was a problem in 1971. It was a tough year. The Black students were getting suspended, but the White students were not getting suspended. We had a walkout, which I attended; therefore, I was kicked off the basketball team for participating in the walkout. It was just a problem. It was a problem in 1971.

The walkout was about suspending two Black males and not suspending the two White males. They were in an altercation with one another. The White teachers were siding with the White students over the Black students. The Black students did not like that, so they protested by walking out. I was not allowed back on the team, and that was my senior year.

As a former African American teacher involved in integrating Monroe High School, Joshua remembered the racial tension demonstrated in the 1970s by African American students.

What I remember the most is that we had a lot of walkouts, a lot of protests. The racial tension was walkouts and protests. They were protesting about the things that some of the White teachers were doing. They were using racial slurs. That's how we express racial tension back during that time. Walkouts were the expression that the Blacks used to let the people know that something had to be done; something had to change because this person was way out of line.

So consequently, when they had to walk out, that either made the teacher straighten up or leave because they didn't want Black students marching around or walking out.

There were a lot of walkouts, a lot of marching. A lot of set-ins got noticed by the community that something was wrong because students were marching, sitting in or not going to class due to racial tension. They would let you know that it was racial tension, so the Black churches stepped in and tried to help the community to resolve the racial tension, the Black churches. What they would do is they would go and talk to the superintendent school board to try to plead the case.

These students would not be outside marching or protesting if the racial tension was cut out if this teacher or teachers over here would not use racial terms or racial slurs. We wouldn't be out marching. We wouldn't have racial tension. So, the Black preachers tried to help, but the white preachers did not. They were enjoying the festivities. They did not do anything. They did not help. They were part of the problem. This was why most of the athletes in the walkouts and marches could not come back to the team. They told them they could not come back because they were marching. They were in the walkout. Like this was some crime, so that's the racial tension that we experience. That's what happened during the 70s.

Joshua provides further explanation for the protests.

Discipline was another factor for all the walkouts. All that went together on how Blacks were disciplined differently from White students. That's why they had to do the walkouts. This is why they had to march because it was discriminatory, and discrimination comes in all forms and fashions. Not only just job demotions, not being promoted, and being fired. It comes verbally and socially; we were

> discriminated against in every way. This creates racial tension. Anytime you do something unfairly to a segment of people or Black people, this creates racial tension. So, this has been happening for a while, more so in the 60s and the 70s.

Davis School District encountered difficulties that resulted in racial tension in the 1970s at the beginning of school integration. The African American community organized a boycott of the discrepancies in the treatment of African American teachers and students. Hannah states,

> In 1972, during the boycott, they beat those Black kids and sprayed them down with the fire hose at Davis High School. The boycott aimed to get Black teachers equal pay, better transportation for the kids, and better books and resources. The biggest thing was adequate pay for the teachers. The Black community was trying to get adequate resources like books, transportation, and equal pay for Black teachers. That was their demand. The system did not like that. Whites thought they should not have been boycotting. They thought Blacks should have been satisfied with the status quo. So, they discriminated against them. The year was 1972. That was the year I was fired. Blacks boycotted the White businesses and Davis.

Discrimination in Education. The 12th theme that emerged was discrimination in education. Discriminatory practices from White administrators plagued school integration for many African Americans within the school districts. Discrimination in education was prevalent in Arkansas' Delta. Former African American teachers endured oppressive, discriminatory tactics to eliminate them from education. African American in education were viewed as inferior to Whites; therefore, equitable treatment was non-existent for

many. Former African American teachers sought legal counsel by filing discrimination lawsuits against school districts to obtain justice.

During the years of school integration, many African American teachers encountered challenges. Such challenges threatened their jobs or completely removed them from their current position at the all-African-American school. The first years of school integration were troublesome for former African American teachers in maintaining employment through opposition in the form of discriminatory practices constructed defenestrate African American from their positions in education. Joshua describes the first few years of school integration.

> The first few years were difficult. They were trying to cut the Black teachers out. They were trying to get us out of there, discourage us so we would not stay. Discourage Black students so they would not stay. That happened in teaching in the classroom. It happened in athletics. It happened in every phase of the school environment during integration. The main thing they were trying to do was get rid of as many Blacks and discourage as much as possible.
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> One tactic was to demote you. If you were a math teacher, they might demote you to the study hall. If you were a principal, they might demote you to maybe a counselor. If you were a teacher in science, you might be demoted to something else. Perhaps something that you don't want to do. The demotion was to discourage you to leave there and go someplace else to find a job. That's why many Black teachers did leave because it was discouraging. They were trying to discourage as much as possible and demote. You don't want to be demoted, and when head jobs became available, you did not get those. So therefore, lawsuits

were filed. Lawsuits were all over Eastern Arkansas because of discrimination in employment, promotion against Blacks, and salary discrepancies.

The discrimination experienced by former African American teachers was widespread in every aspect where an African American possessed a position in education. As a result, Joshua continues to describe discrimination endured by former African American teachers during school integration and the solution to counter the discriminatory attacks from White administrators.

> The handwriting was on the wall. We were discriminated against in pay. We were discriminated against in promotions. We were discriminated against by being demoted in job positions. We were discriminated against in about every phase you can name. In other words, we got the facilities and equipment but were still discriminated against. There was still segregation within the integration. The demotion was the main part. All African American teachers, coaches, administrators, cafeteria workers, and anybody with any title was demoted. That was number one. That was not going to happen. You're either going to be demoted. If you're not going to be demoted, then you're going to leave. So, we had to stick it out. That will not happen. No Black principal that was Black was going to be the principal. There wasn't going to be a Black principal.
>
> No student, no teacher, no coach, you were not going to be head of anything. You were going to be demoted to the bottom. For instance, you would not be the head coach at the White school even if you had 20 years of experience, and the White coach could have three. If you were the head cook at the all-Black school, you would not be the head cook at the White school even though you were

a better cook, but you would not be the head cook even if the head cook had left. The last cook there was White moved up to the head cook position. You could also have 20 years of experience, and they have one. You were going to be at the bottom. We were at the bottom. So, there was no promotion. It was all demotion. All demoted that had a head position at the all-Black School.

That was clear across Eastern Arkansas. Black principals, coaches, and teachers were demoted. We had a problem with that. We cried on each other's shoulders. We wondered what we were going to do. Black people in Davis, Wynne, Cotton Plant, and surrounding areas embraced each other. We tried to give each other strength. An excellent Black coach like Coach C. in Davis was demoted to the last coach on the totem pole, but he kept coaching until he worked his way back up to the head coach position. We just had to outlast them. We had to endure—the best we could. Eventually, we prevailed, but it took a long time. They were either going to wear us out, fire us, or demote us. In other words, the White administrators wanted us out, out! They didn't want to fool with us. That's the way it was. That's the way they wanted it. That's the only way they knew. They were following what their parents had done. In other words, this was new for them too, but they knew the ground they were standing on. They didn't want us to stand on the same ground. So, they already had in their mind, and their mind was already equipped that we were lesser people than them. We were inferior. We were inferior to them. It took them a long time for this to settle out. It took from 1970 to probably 1983 or 84 before things started to open up, but the door was barred for the first 10, 12, or 14 years. Whatever you thought you wanted to do.

You got the thought out of your mind, or you went some other place because what you were doing, you were not going to do that anymore. You were going to be fired or demoted. So, coach, teacher, administrator, whatever title you had, you would not have that title.

So, we discovered that the only way we could resolve the demotion and discriminatory practices they were doing on salaries, job promotions, and athletics was by lawsuits. The white schools suffered a lot of lawsuits because they did not want to do it fairly. They did not want to promote you. They did not want to pay Blacks a salary equal to whites. They did not want to do that and knew they didn't. They told you no, you're not going to make it, and if you want to make that kind of money, you need to go someplace else. They were open about it, so when they tell you that, that's when you do the paperwork. That's when you get a lawyer, and that's when you file a lawsuit and let them deal with the lawsuit. Most times, the lawsuit was going to win and let them know that they discriminated, but yet still, they would instead go through a lawsuit than do it right. Once they got enough lawsuits, the schools in eastern Arkansas started doing things right because they found out it was easier for them to do it right, then go to court and be made to do it, and then come back and pay you back pay and then come back and promote you. They could have done that in the first place.

Despite their qualifications, Horace School District failed to consider African American teachers for promotion to higher positions. Ruth remembers her husband seeking a more elevated position at Horace High School.

> My husband had a BS degree in coaching he was never promoted or hired as a coach. We went to Harding University, and he got his master's in health and physical education, thinking that he would be promoted to a coach at Horace High School. He was never promoted as a coach, even with a master's degree. He had played all the sports but was never promoted or hired as a coach.

Horace School District also exercised demoting African Americans in education during school integration, and Joseph witnessed such actions from the school district.

> We were seeing our Black coach, who was superb and had coached us in basketball all the years of the Black School, now come over to the White School, and he now got to be an assistant coach because they were not going to let a Black coach, coach White students. So, the biggest thing that we experienced that was discrimination and challenging to us was to see our Black teachers be discriminated against like that and yet go ahead and take it because of us and only educate us.

African American in education during the school integration times were viewed as inferior people and treated as such. School integration failed to resolve issues of discrimination that require African Africans to continue their pursuit of justice. Davis operated under the same discriminatory system as many school districts in Arkansas' Delta during the first few years of school integration. Hannah states,

> They treated us like always. They were the power. That is what they wanted you to believe. You had to come by them. They got the first opportunity for everything. That is why the Blacks had the demand they wanted to be met

because they wanted to be treated equally. It was something. All during the equal rights struggle, you had some of the same problems, but in a different form.

The integrated environment was inferior in ensuring African Americans were limited to position secondary in rank compared to Whites. It was not uncommon for some White administrators to use African Americans that managed to maintain a higher position to impede the progress of other African Americans. Hannah recall,

> It was more like a superior environment of Whites versus Blacks. You were only going to get so far. You had Black assistant principals or Black assistant superintendents. That was the big thing during that era, but they (Blacks) were not going to it to the principal or superintendent job. It made the one (Black) who did get there over the ones (Blacks) who did not get there. It was always like they (Whites) do; you had a divide-and-conquer situation. They would put one Black against the other if they (Black) got in that position. So. if they had someone Black, they wanted to get rid of, then the Black in the head position would do it.

Due to Hannah's activism, she was dismissed from her teaching position in the Davis.

> I was fired because they had a boycott, and I wrote a letter addressing the situation. In 1972, I was fired from Future High School and reinstated at Future in 1977. I did not stay there long; I went to Lee High School. Anyway, I was reinstated with adequate pay and back to my position. They fired me because of the solution to the problem I wrote. They told us to write a solution to the problem, so I wrote one. I let them carry my letter over to the superintendent. Some did not send their letter because they were told not to do it. So, they tried to

get me not to submit mine, but I put a lot of time into it, so I was saying what I believed.

Davis's discrimination practices resemble the practices of other school districts. Hannah describes,

> They discriminating in teacher salaries for sure. The White people got a higher salary. The salary was one of the issues during integration. We won the lawsuit, so they had to go back and pay those people who were underpaid. During desegregation and integration, they put you in a job you had no degree. They pretty much put you where they wanted you. According to your race, you got certain positions in the system. It was not always by how great you were.

For Hannah and several others to seek justice required filing a lawsuit against the Davis. Hannah states,

> When we were fired, it was nine of us Blacks. All the principals in the district were White except one, Ms. D. She was the Black elementary principal. All the rest of them were White. The superintendent was also White. When we filed the lawsuit in 1972, we were reinstated in 1977; all the principals and the superintendent were Black. By filing the lawsuit, they got those positions back, salaries were equal, and the school district paid the Blacks back that were underpaid. That was the result of the lawsuit.

Once discrimination lawsuits were filed against school districts in Arkansas Delta, former African American teachers, and administrators were allowed to maintain their current position or be promoted to head positions at formerly segregated all-White schools. Sometimes it was a waiting process for former African American teachers,

coaches, and principals to move into a desired position due to the occupancy of the current person in that position. Daniel recall,

> The principal at the Black school was subsequently transferred to Monroe High School and became the Principal of Monroe High School, but that even took a transition because they couldn't just move him from principal to the Black school to principal of the white school. So, he had to be a vice principal at the White School until that principal tenured out, left or quit, got fired, or whatever happened before they could make him the principal. The truth is the only reason he became principal was probably under threat of a lawsuit because several teachers and people of positions that went to the White high school from the Black school had to sue to keep their job and had to sue to get fair pay. Lawsuits were real, and integration was real. The Black teachers and administrators were winning because the courts were siding with them because of the laws that had been passed, so it was to their advantage. It was just disheartening that they even had to do it, but it was necessary. Nobody could hold them at fault for wanting to be treated fairly and equally. Once they've got established, then it was pretty much not spoken or contested as much. It didn't instantly change a lot of people's feelings of what they had been growing up to do, know, and feel, but it made the acceptance just a little bit easier because you couldn't fight it—nothing you could do about it.

Discrimination also existed in the form of unfair discipline practices administered by White administrators and teachers. Former African American students experienced the unjust treatment compared to their White counterparts once schools were integrated. It

was not unusual for the disciplinary actions against African American students to be more intense than that of White students. Sometimes the punishment issued to the African American students was not equivalent to the offense they were punished for.

Joshua observed the unfair discipline practices African American students endured at Monroe High School. Joshua explains,

> White administrators and teachers disciplined African American students unfairly, and sometimes they would overdo it. Sometimes the discipline was more severe than what was done. Sometimes you were just thrown in the pack because you were there. These behaviors were just handed down from generation to generation, and some of this was a carryover from what they had learned from their parents, what they had been through, and what they were taught that we were lesser, lesser people.
>
> The White teachers had a problem, and they wanted you out of school, or they wanted to severely discipline you for nothing that compared to what they wanted to do to you, and a lot of this came from just plain hate, inner hate, no feelings for Blacks. Blacks have no feelings, so we can paddle as hard as we want to. We can send you home and let you be uneducated. Let you grow up ignorant. We don't care if you go to prison. That's just the way they felt about us. We weren't the same humans. Some of them still feel like that.
>
> If the Black student had to be disciplined for some reason, then he might have five licks coming, and the licks were going to be severe. If he's white, he might get to stay in the study hall for about two days. He will not get any leaks, but he will get his work and send it to the teachers. They would have his work

picked up. If he were Black, he would get paddled physically. If he didn't want to take the paddling, you go home for five days or might be expelled forever. It was severe. It wasn't pleasant. It wasn't kind. It was all or none. That was hard to see. So, you'd ask a kid, “Why are you not in school?” “Well, they wanted to give me a paddling, and John Doe, he did the same thing. They sent him to the study hall for two days and sent me home forever." Why, 15-year-old they send him home forever? We weren't worth anything.

Most of the athletes that were in the walkouts and marches were not able to come back to the team. They told them they could not come back because they were marching. They were in the walkout. Like this was some crime. Our Black kids, they went through a tough time. On the athletic field, they were discriminated against. The punishments were different. If a guy missed a practice, his punishment if he's Black would be severe. If he were White, it would be a tap on the wrist. In other words, they were trying to discourage Blacks not to stay, turn your stuff in and go, or come out here and take what I'm going to put on you. So, we stood in the gap. We said, "No if you're going to send a Black student-athlete through this, you make sure you send the White athlete through the same thing."

Isaiah’s involvement in the walkout with the other African American students at Monroe High School drastically impacted his senior year.

The superintendent, principal, and all the team coaches agreed to suspend the Blacks off the basketball team. All Blacks and no Whites that participated in the walkout were kicked off the basketball team because the Blacks were the ones

who were protesting. I was not allowed back on the team; that was my senior year. I might have gotten a college education, but I did not get a scholarship to play anywhere.

Horace School District also displayed bias when it involved disciplining African American students. Ruth remembered a study hall teacher at Horace High School that was distinctly harsh toward African American students.

After we were integrated, this White man ran a study hall. The Black students were afraid even to ask if they could go to the restroom. He was so mean toward the Black students. He was cruel, and we didn't experience that before integration.

While attending Horace High School, Sara also noticed that a particular teacher was discriminatory in punishing African American students as opposed to White students.

There was one particular White teacher that comes to mind. What I call is just generally rude. He had a rude attitude, and his attitude toward students was not all that positive. It was even worse toward Black students and at least from my observation. He was very biased in his punishment.

Joseph encountered discrimination firsthand from Horace High School's study hall teacher, who had a reputation for assigning excessive work, especially to African American students.

The first year it was just discrimination, and it was visible discrimination. For instance, I recall we were in the study hall before lunch. We only had 30 minutes for lunch. The study hall group that got to go to the lunch room was about 50 students. You had to be back from study hall before the 30 minutes up, and this

particular teacher was a racist teacher of study hall, and if you were late, he would require you to write 500 words and submit it just for being late. That would cause you some days to eat too fast if you're at the end of the line. One particular day, I just decided that I was not going to get indigestion. I was going to eat my food and chew it and not run back to class. So, I was a couple of minutes late. He required me to write 500 words, hoping I would rebel and get kicked out. That was the plan because several Black students had already got expelled from that same teacher for doing the same thing. So, I went on and wrote the 500 words. I knew it was discrimination because we had seen white students be late and didn't have to do that. So, I wrote the 500 words and presented it, which was my punishment. That was just one incident of discrimination and us being treated differently than white students.

In describing the building-level leadership at Horace High School regarding the treatment of African American students, Joseph acknowledges that such treatment was unequal.

> Much of it was unfair, a white student could be reprimanded one way, and a Black student would be reprimanded differently, pretty much being expelled, put on punishment, or sent home for some of the same things that the white student would not be punished at the same level. We experienced that.
>
> If we rebelled at a level that would require the administrators to enforce the consequences, they had on the books waiting, the consequences were waiting. I remember three students that were my friends and seniors. They got put out of school and never got a high school diploma because they got expelled for

disrespecting White teachers. The consequence was that you did it; you went home. So, to this day, I don't remember whether they ever went and got the GD, and both are now deceased. Two of them I know are deceased, but they did not graduate that year.

The extreme consequences for African American students at Horace High School were activated when tension between African American students and White administrators became intolerable. Joseph recalls when the African American students attempted to organize and execute a boycott.

On occasion, I can remember well, with all the mistreatment and discrimination and us being 17 years old, we planned a boycott and walkout. So, we had organized this particular day that we were going to boycott. We were not going to come to school, but we were not going to school. We were going to stand in line and boycott. Somehow, we believe it came from the two students they brought to desegregate before integration. The word got back so that we would call them, in modern day, informers. They informed somebody, and somebody informed the administration of our intent. So, we were on the school bus coming to school.

When we hit the campus, I will say approximately 20 carloads of polices with ride guns are waiting on us from Forrest City, Horace, and all surrounding areas. They brought in because they didn't know what we were going to do. They had prepared for us that day, law enforcement, to ensure we didn't get out of hand. Quite naturally, the boycott didn't go through because we were 17, and we saw all the policies, and we just went on and decided that it would be canceled. The racial tension had become so high, and we had felt that we were discriminated against

so much. We just wanted to protest. During the 60s, you know how protests were that we had seen with Dr. Martin Luther King. We didn't know anything else to do. We couldn't fight them. So, we were going to protest, but that racial tension that day with those riding guns and those policies will always be remembered in my mind that they would do whatever they had to do to control. They were ready to do that, even if it took them shooting us.

At the end of the spectrum, discipline for African American teachers during and after school integration was conducted cautiously. School segregation for African American teachers allowed them the latitude to discipline African American students, thereby having the support of African American parents. The integration of schools changed the dynamics of how students were disciplined.

Hannah's challenge in the integrated setting was not having the freedom to discipline students as she did in the all-African segregated school environment.

Discipline problems have always been a challenge during integration. You had to be careful. You had those parents that would come out to the school about you disciplining their child. You had to have your stuff together. You did not feel as free with discipline as you did during segregation.

For Joseph, the consequences of school integration in the aspect of discipline were a detriment to African American students due to the restrictions placed on discipline. Such regulations restrain African American from disciplining White students. Joseph explains,

In my personal and professional opinion, I don't think that integration and desegregation helped Black students. I don't feel it benefited us as much as it did

at the all-Black school because the rule book changed so much to prevent Black teachers from whooping white kids. They had to remove that whole whooping thing from teachers, so discipline was removed from the school system. I think that for any child being educated in the school system, there should have been more strict disciplinary procedures that once lived in the African American segregated schools. Once that got removed, the behavior of the African American students changed a lot. As a result, many teachers, I believe, became more concerned about their paychecks than their students. They begin to go to school because it was a job. Many African American students became more disrespectful at home and school, so we didn't have that many problems before integration. So, I think that was one of the most significant downsides of desegregation and integration: how the rule book got rewritten to benefit the white population.

Daniel also viewed discipline as a challenge once schools integrated.

One of the greatest problems that I think integration brought to society was the need for discipline. It has now become such an infraction and penalty for hitting a child until they developed what they call it child brutality now. Where was child brutality in 1959? Why didn't child brutality become a big issue until after integration? Black kids were beating Black kids. White kids were beating White kids. Black parents, White parents doing the same thing. It did not become an issue until Black adults started paddling white children. Then it was a no, no. Then they had to do something about it. Then it became a violation of the law because they did not want Black adults whipping their white children.

> You may never find anybody who will agree with me or admit to that, but they know it if they live through it because it was prevalent. It was the most significant influencing factor on school policies in America on who got to be over that child or that teacher because of race, because of what they were eligible to do for that because the Black administrators got to discipline the White students and the Black administrators could punish the White faculty. They felt it wasn't anything but payback for what their ancestors had been doing to his ancestors the whole time. You put him in that position; he would get you back. He was going to pay you back. He was going to do to you and your kids what we, my parents and forefathers, did to him and his forefathers. It is hard to admit and acknowledge

"You had to be gold just to be silver." The 13th theme that was revealed was "You had to be gold just to be silver." The integrated school setting was challenging for former African American teachers and students. At the all-African American schools, these individuals were valued by their race; however, former African American teachers and students were viewed as inferior at the integrated schools. This demanded former African American teachers and students perform beyond the expected level at the integrated school due to Whites considering them of lesser caliber.

Sarah's academic performance at the all-African American school allowed her to maintain a high ranking in her class at the segregated school. Sarah no longer held that same position once schools integrated into the Horace School District.

> Well, academically, it changed my ranking when I got to high school. They changed my ranking. My ranking in the class was lowered. Personally, that was

kind of a setback for me because I felt that I had done my best. The entire time in school, I had done my best, and when I reached my high school year.

Joshua realized that in the integrated school environment, African Americans had to be exceptional compared to Whites. However, being exceptional was classified as mediocre by their standards.

> We had to be superb just to be average. That's what it took, and that's what our parents taught us. They taught us that in the White world, where they were in control if you were going to get in anywhere, you had to be gold just to be silver. So that means you got to be twice as good, which still holds true today.

"You had to be gold just to be silver" reflects the sentiment of Joshua on the challenges of teaching in an integrated school. Teaching in an integrated school was challenging.

> It was challenging every day. It was always challenging. You had to do your best because you would be evaluated by Whites. Again, to simplify it, you had to be gold just to be silver. You had to do a superb job just to be average because you're going to be evaluated at the end of the year. That evaluation was sometimes going to be obvious that they discriminate against you. Sometimes it would be so bad that they could recommend firing you. That should be replaced, or you'd be demoted. So, this is what we experienced. Even though you're doing your best job, but just left it up to them whether you were going to be able to take it or you say, "I give up; you all can have it." So, if you were going to endure, you had to be mentally tough, mentally ready because you knew what was coming up, and you knew how it was, you know how it was before this happened. So, we knew

> what the tendency as to what it's going to be now that we're in the process. So, we encountered a lot of challenges. It was a challenge every day to do a good job. So, it was a challenge to make the right decision.

Professionally, Joshua knew that to compete with his White counterparts; he must have more credentials than they currently possessed.

> I earned a master's degree because I wanted to make sure that I had stability. I had enough education to sustain me to get the promotions I needed without somebody coming over me, which is one reason I could advance in job promotion. That did happen. It gave me more knowledge. I wanted to have more knowledge. We had to be gold to be silver. So, we had to have more education and be more qualified than our White counterparts. We had to have more, and that's the way it still works today.

School integration motivated African American students to perform optimally, knowing their low academic ability expectations. Joseph states,

> Academically, it made us bring our A-game. Those of us who knew we were smart would not get over there and not perform. We were A and B students, and now that we are integrated. We're not going to not do our best. Most of us showed up bringing our A-game. We left there on record as an intelligent group of seniors.

School Integration's Impact. The 14th theme that surfaced was school integration's impact. School integration birthed impediments that complicated former African American teachers' desire to educate students and former African American

students obtaining an education. Despite the barrier, former African American teachers and students prevailed professionally, personally, and academically.

Daniel contributes his professional and academic accomplishments to school integration's influence.

> It absolutely helped me professionally because now I can't say that the bureau would have considered me If it hadn't been for my background through my college and education. I don't know if I would have been as influential without that Hendrix's degree as I would never have gotten without that Monroe High School Diploma. I like to give credit where credit is due. I can't tell you how much that Hendrix's degree helped me and what it did for me. I know I would never have stepped in through that door if it was not for my achievements at Monroe High School that attracted the coach. If I had never made Allstate, the coach probably would never have recruited me because he recruited four Allstate players during my freshman year. We had the best freshman team in the state because all four of us were Allstate Ball players. It made me feel good. If it didn't impress anybody, I feel good because of the four of us that went there; I was the only one who graduated in four years. I feel good about myself, and I know where it came from and why. You can't earn it if you don't have an opportunity to compete for it. They gave me the opportunity. I just took advantage of it. I made my way because I had an opportunity. Other people, I always like to acknowledge the people that gave me the opportunity. That's why I can't ever forget my 9th-grade Coach. He inspired and motivated me and gave me those basic skills that coach at Monroe High School might have cut me. I got motivated by the right

guy; I chose to make him my mentor because I wanted to play like him. He was so great in my eyes.

School integration motivated African American students to perform academically at their optimal level. In addition, it provided exposure to an environment that represented the outside world for former African American students. Joseph states,

> Academically, I would say, it made us bring our A-game. Those of us that knew we were smart were not going to get over there and not perform. We were A and B students, and now that we are integrated. We're not going to not do our best. Most of us showed up bringing our A-game. We left there on record as an intelligent group of seniors. Professionally, it impacted our focus that you're now going to get out into this world, and you're going to have to perform. You academically got to be prepared, and now, professionally, you got to prepare yourself. Personally, it had us more equipped to deal with white and Black. Back in those days, it wasn't too many Hispanics. A few foreigners other than a few Asians, but it was mostly Black and white. So, personally, it had us able and equipped to deal with white and Black folks, and that was something that I left there; I think better equipped to get along with people with different skin colors than me. That has helped me, and even to this day, I was able to experience those racial boundaries professionally.

In being undeterred by school integration, Joshua was driven to be an effective and productive teacher. Integration impacted Joshua professionally by prompting him to obtain a master's degree. His professional life influenced his personal life by allowing him to develop a different perspective that transformed how he perceived Whites.

Well, it impacted me to do a good job and the best job I could do. It was good because I knew what I wanted to do. I didn't have hate against white people. I felt they needed to be educated like Black kids, but they didn't feel like that about us. So, it affected my personal life to believe that everybody is human and should be educated regardless of color, creed, or sex. It broadened my personal life. It made me realize that people say and do stupid things because we are the color we are, but that still does not lessen our character. So, we still have to keep marching on. It made me a strong individual. It made me learn to persevere. It made me learn that I needed God. I saw God show up and show out over a period of time. That's a good thing because I couldn't have done it on my own. They couldn't have done it on their own. God put us all in the right places in due time. So, it affected my personal life spiritually, intellectually, and socially. I learned to socialize with white people. So, it helped me intellectually, spiritually, and socially. It also helped me economically because I stayed, and I'm reaping benefits now. So, I saw the salvation of the Lord. He heard my cry.

Professionally, I went to a lot of workshops; I went to a lot of colleges. I went to work on my Master's degree. We achieved our Master's degree, which helped. Not only did we work in an integrated school system, but we went to Harding. That was in the 70s, but they welcomed us there. That's when I learned that all white people are not alike. There were some good ones. They were very good. I felt at home. So, what I got at Monroe High School, I received something different at Harding University because it showed me that the people, I was dealing with in Monroe they're just a small portion of my professional career. It

didn't shape my professional career once I went to Harding University in the 1970s, 77. It broadened my scope. I knew it was some good white people who did a good job, so that's another time I saw the hands of God working. He showed me a different outlook.

Professionally, Ruth and her husband were compelled by school integration to extend their education beyond their bachelor's degrees to pursue better opportunities outside of the Horace school district.

It impacted my professional life by wanting to go back to school and get a master's degree. My husband and I made that decision because we wanted to get out of Horace. We wanted to get out of Horace High School. We talked about and agreed that if we went back to school and got out a master's degree, mines in English, and his in-health administration that we would have a better chance of getting jobs in another school district. Our personal life, as I've shared before, what hurt my husband, hurt me, and even after he received his Master's in Health Administration. He was not hired, which was another reason we wanted to leave the Horace School District.

Hannah's experience with school integration affects her personal life by revealing that the truth can be absent, and others fail to consider the truth. For example, after being fired from Davis, Hannah shifted her purpose toward community involvement to educate preschool-age children.

Personally, it made me grow in a sense. It made me know that life does not always go by the truth. So, you are not always judged by the truth. Professionally,

> I wanted to do more for myself to be independent. When I was out those five years, I organized the daycare center.

As for Samuel, school desegregation and integration impacted his professional and personal life by recognizing that the teacher selected for any position is the individual who is best qualified to educate students despite their color.

> When I look at it, it doesn't matter who you have, but when you put the best person in the classroom, the coaching field, or in that shop. You want the best regardless. It wouldn't matter whether he or she was Black or White when I said the best that can help students. You want the best that will have the students' interests at heart.

Summary

The lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students during the phenomenon share many common interests. For most participants, the African American segregated school was revered in the African American community. A deep regard for education brought a sense of empowerment to African Americans. Many of the participants' segregated school experiences contributed to their success in education due to the intricate role played by school segregation.

A consistent negative among the African American segregated schools was the limited resources and facilities. The participants' recollections indicated that inadequate resources and materials left an unforgettable educational experience. Once participants moved to a desegregated and integrated environment, they discovered the deprivation they endured by denying proper resources and facilities in an African American segregated school. Nevertheless, despite the lack of resources and facilities, the African

American teachers, through their dedication and determination, created a learning environment of high expectations where students could flourish. The amount of care and compassion exhibited by African American teachers was undeniable to the participants.

School integration for most former African American teachers and students failed to yield the level of confront the African American segregated schools provided. As for most participants, school integration forced them to integrate formerly segregated White schools. It was problematic for many former African American teachers and students due to leaving a familiar environment to transfer into the unknown. Although the segregated African American school struggled to have the necessities such as resources and facilities to propel the education of African American students further, there was a mutual appreciation for each other that provided an atmosphere of peace.

By attending segregated African American schools for an extended period, in contrast to attending integrated schools with predominately White teachers, African American students became acclimated to the instruction of African American teachers. The former African American student participants that experienced the phenomenon had the opportunity to observe the teaching of African American teachers during segregation and White teachers during desegregation and integration. These participants detected how African American teachers invested and displayed an interest in their education compared to White teachers who just provided instruction. The high expectation level of the African American teachers demanded that African American students surpass their potential.

School desegregation and integration opened the door to discrimination against former African American teachers and students. Segregated African American schools shielded participants from direct opposition imposed by some Whites. Discrimination

existed in multiple areas of education, from the classroom to athletics. Some of the discriminatory practices that the former African student participants were exposed to were a lack of academic support, unfair discipline practices, and exclusion from influential positions. At the same time, some discrimination against former African American teachers included demotion from job positions, dismissal from jobs, and inequity in pay. In addition, the participants experienced various levels of discrimination that presented obstacles to inflict difficulty.

For some participants, school segregation was nonbeneficial in providing a false representation of the world, and the limitations of segregation on the African American community stifled progress. Other participants viewed school segregation as beneficial to educating African American students in an environment that promoted education with high expectations. For most participants, school segregation for African Americans produced unity within the schools and the community, which allowed African American teachers, parents, and the community to correlate.

Although school integration for former African American teachers and students presented impediments, these participants persevered despite the obstruction. The influence of school integration motivated the participants to advance academically and professionally. While personally, school integration allowed the participants to have exposure to diversity and access to adequate resources and facilities.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter V presents the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured school segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta. The study consisted of eight participants, which included five African American males and three African American females that lived through the phenomenon. In the study, each participant was asked interview questions relating to their school segregation, desegregation, and integration experiences and perceptions. All the participants resided in Arkansas' Delta during such times in education, while some are from the same geographical location and attended the same schools within the school district.

Presentation of Findings

This study revealed several themes from interviewing former African American teachers and students. The themes that emerged from this study: a) limitations of resources, (b) African American segregated schools' learning environment, (c) African American teachers, (d) African American segregated schools' influence, (e) segregation beneficial and non-beneficial, (f) segregation to integration, (g) "Just as sexist as racist," (h) control, (i) segregation within integration, (j) academic support, (k) racial tension, (l) discrimination in education, (m) "Had to be gold to just to be silver," and (n) school integration's impact**.**

This study sought to explore and understand each participant's experience and perception of school segregation, desegregation, and integration, along with the influence the phenomenon had on their lives personally, professionally, and academically.

Although each participant experienced at least two phases in education, the provided information from the interviews consists of some connections.

Addressing the Research Question

The central research question guided this**: "***What are the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta?"* Through conducting this study, participants recalled situations, events, and experiences that revealed how the phenomenon had a lasting effect on each participant. As former African American teachers and students contributed specific details from the phenomenon, it clarifies their educational experiences with the Arkansas Delta's segregated and integrated school systems.

During school segregation and integration, all participants resided in Arkansas' Delta region; therefore, the former African American teachers were employed in the geographical location, and students attended school there. School segregation was foundational to all participants regarding teachers starting their teaching careers in all African American segregated schools. At the same time, former African American students' schooling began in the segregated African American schools. Only a select few experienced desegregations, while the majority of the participants experienced integration, with the exception of one former African American student that graduated before complete integration in 1970.

Review of the Literature and Findings

At the time of enslavement, Africans were denied access to acquire education and to become literate. Africans were viewed by their White enslavers as inferior; therefore, the oppressive measure establishing literacy as being unlawful for Africans to possess would allow enslavers to maintain their dominance and control over the subordinate group (Dann & Purdy, 2015; Walter et al., 2007). It was not until the Reconstruction Era started in 1965 following the abolishment of slavery that former enslaved Africans and African Americans had the freedom to pursue literacy and education. The freedom to obtain an education existed; however, stipulations in the form of segregation would challenge the acquisition of education. Segregation remained prominent, especially in the southern states, and was strictly enforced after *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896),* which legalized the "**se**parate but equal" doctrine that institutionalized segregation. From the "separate but equal" doctrine, Jim Crow was birth to impose sanctions on racial segregation (Davis, 2021; Ficker, 1999; Joseph, 2020; Powell, 2021; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016; Ware, 2021). The familiarity of Jim Crow was mainly aligned with public school segregation in which African Americans and Whites were required to attend separate schools. African Americans' subordinate and discriminatory treatment was reflected in the inadequate facilities and resources provided to the African American segregated schools compared to White segregated schools.

Charles Hamilton Houston, a special of the NAACP, observed the lack of resources and facilities in African American segregated schools. Houston developed a plan to take action against the "separate but equal" doctrine at the collegiate level. His mastermind plan resulted in the United States Supreme Court ruling in favor of *Missouri*

ex. Rel Gaines v. Canada (1938). The case was essential and foundational to other higher education lawsuits where the NAACP argued that school segregation deprived African American students of receiving a quality education (Green, 2004; Hunter, 2004). As the groundwork was established to attack the inequities of school segregation at the professional and graduate levels, the legal actions would later be central to the gateway of *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*.

Just as African Americans were classified as inferior, their resources and facilities were also subordinate to Whites (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000; Walker, 2001). African American segregated schools were consistently denied the proper resources and materials to assist African American students' education (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001). In addition, the facilities were also substandard and, at times, nonexistent compared to the White segregated schools. Through interviewing each participant, the majority often expressed how the resources and facilities were inadequate. Some participants described the textbooks as being used, outdated, and the hand-me-downs from the White segregated school. Furthermore, the athletic uniforms and buses were hand-me-downs from the Whites. As schools transitioned from segregated, desegregated to integrated settings, it was apparent by the African American participants the deliberate neglect that the African American segregated school received from White administrators.

Even though the attempt to deny African American students an education during school segregation by withholding the necessary resources and facilities, the one common factor that prevailed despite the obstacles was the African American teachers of the all-African-American segregated schools. These teachers ensured African American students

were provided a quality education with limited resources (Coats, 2010; Ensign, 2002; Kelly, 2010; Mungo, 2013; Walker, 2000, 2001). From this study, the participants viewed African American teachers during segregation as caring and interested in the academic achievement of African American students. The distinction in the level of dedication that African American teachers possessed was evident in participants once schools were desegregated and integrated. In the desegregated and integrated setting, the participants noticed how African American teachers at the segregated school took a genuine interest in supporting the education of African American students. Finally, they demanded they learn the required subjects, unlike most of their White teachers.

After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school segregation was unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education (1954),* the year following *Brown v. Board of Education (1955),* the court ruled for public schools to desegregate with "all deliberate speed" on a nondiscriminatory basis (Carter, 2007; Ogletree, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). Many White schools obeyed the court's order by desegregating at a gradual pace due to their resistance to school desegregation (Kirk, 2011; Kirk, 2018; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019). White school districts also employed tokenism with gradual speed to select the preferred African American students (Kirk, 2011; Kirk, 2018; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Pickhardt, 2009; Stewart, 2019). The freedom of choice plan was implemented in the desegregation process to control the number of African Americans attending White schools. A few participants were selected to enroll in all-White formerly segregated through the freedom of choice plan by their parents applying to the school district. The participants favored attending the all-African American school instead of the all-White formerly segregated. However, they transferred to the all-White

school to honor their parent's request. As school districts adopted the freedom of choice plan, some White administrators selected specific African American teachers from the segregated African American schools to desegregate the staff. At the superintendent's request, a participant was selected to desegregate the staff of a high school.

Although the Civil Rights Act (1964) countered the “all deliberate speed” by permitting lawsuits to be filed and withholding federal funds against school districts operating a segregated school system (Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005; Smith, 2005). It was not until the *Green vs. County Board of New Kent (1968)* that the U.S. Supreme Court wanted to expedite the school integration process by terminating racially discriminatory segregated schools (Brown, 2004; Daniel, 2005). To further achieve unitary statutes among school districts, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of (1971) that cross-district busing was necessary to establish integrated school systems (Daniel, 2005; Gooden, 2004; Russo et al., 1994). As school districts battled the pressure to integrate in the 1970s, former African teachers and students were also forced to integrate due to school districts following court orders. Most participants had limited options; therefore, they had to integrate to receive an education or maintain employment.

School districts wholly integrated in the 1970s, operating as a unitary, nonracial system; however, segregation within integration existed remained present. Some classrooms remained segregated, separating a specific demographic of students from teachers. For example, during school integration, former African American teacher participants were deemed qualified by White administrators to teach only African American and disadvantaged White students. In addition, a participant witnessed

segregation in learning groups. The majority classified African American students in the low level of the groups. In contrast, Whites students were placed in the upper tier, with only a select few African Americans in the high position.

As Whites resisted school integration, African American teachers and students experienced discriminatory practices imposed by some Whites administrators. African American teachers, coaches, and administrators were demoted or fired from their current position. Some teachers ultimately left the profession as a result of the discrimination. The discriminatory practices implemented by White administrators to their resistance to school integration brought forth the job demotion and dismissal of participants from their positions. Other discriminatory tactics that the participants battled included teacher salary discrepancies and job promotion exclusion. The participants received less pay than their White counterparts during the years of school integration.

Moreover, White administrators fail to consider African American teachers for advanced positions. As discrimination continued, participants sought justice by filing lawsuits against school districts. African American students during the onset of school integration also endured discrimination. Participations received harsher punishments compared to their White classmates.

Resistance to integration produced discriminatory practices that spurred racial tension among African American and Whites. To bring recognition to such practices, African Americans demonstrated their displeasure through walkouts and boycotts. In addition, the participant was involved in a walkout with other African American students due to unfair discipline operations exhibited by White administrators and White teachers siding with White students. In addition, a former African American teacher participant

observed the African American community express indignation by assembling a boycott regarding the inequities in teachers' salaries, transportation, resources, and materials provided to schools within the district.

As African American teachers and students were viewed as subordinate to Whites during integration, they had to strive to compete with their White counterparts. Although African American teachers worked tirelessly with students and African American students worked to achieve, they both "Had to be gold just to be silver;" therefore, it did not depend on the qualifications that African Americans possessed; they were considered inferior. Due to discrimination, former African American teacher participants became motivated to pursue advanced degrees to transition from their current circumstances and have job stability. Former African American student participants allowed integration to influence their academic achievement to demonstrate their intellectual capabilities to perform and surpass the set standard.

Analysis, Finding(s), and Explanation of Research

Several findings emerged from this research study on former African American teachers' and students' lived experiences and perceptions of school segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta. The African American participants were born into segregation, which was familiar to their daily life. Most of the education each individual obtained was in all-African-American segregated schools.

Former African American teachers and students cherished their all-African-American segregated school experience. For most teacher participants, the segregated school provided a sense of community amongst each other, allowing them to collaborate for the betterment of African American students. The all-African-American segregated

schools created unity within the schools and the community. As for former African American student participants, they felt valued by their African American teachers during school segregation. Segregated schools for these individuals were foundational to acquiring an education.

African American segregated schools afforded protection and security to former African American teachers and students. These schools' demographics included all African American administrators, teachers, and other staff members. Therefore, racial discrimination from Whites occurred indirectly due to African Americans having limited interactions with Whites and operating their schools.

School integration for most participants interrupted the segregated environment they grew accustomed to in education. Racial discrimination against African American teachers and students during integration became visible and pervasive, which presented opposition. Integration dismantled the protection and security, exposing African American to unjust treatment from some Whites. However, the segregated school experience equipped former African American teachers and students to persevere through adversity.

Limitations

The study involved eight former African American teachers and students as research participants who experienced school segregation, desegregation, and integration in three school districts in Arkansas' Delta. Unfortunately, eight participants who attended the same schools and school district could not be selected due to these individuals' life circumstances. Although this study provides the experiences and perceptions of eight participants, additional research would contribute to this body of

work. It would also further enhance this body of research if former African American administrators in Arkansas' Delta were interviewed on their lived experiences and perceptions of school segregation, desegregation, and integration. Exploring these experiences of former African American administrators would provide their perception of the educational system and the challenges they encountered professionally during those transitioning times in education.

Recommendations for Future Study

It is recommended that school segregation to integration be explored in other areas of Arkansas' Delta to obtain knowledge beyond this study. This would allow the researcher to have a closer glimpse of the influence of the phenomenon of former African American teachers and students. Also, this study could expand to various regions of Arkansas to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of school segregation, desegregation, and integration of other former African teachers and students.

While this study included three former African American students that endured only one year of complete school integration during their senior year of high school, another recommendation would be to study former African American students that underwent segregation, desegregation, and multiple years of school integration in Arkansas. Conducting a study on former African American students' experiences during several years of integration will delve deeper into the impact of integration on African American students. It would also provide a more thorough insight into the education system’s handling of the integration process in Arkansas.

Through interviewing participants, some revealed that they sought legal action for discrimination by filing lawsuits against school districts during integration. To delve into

this study, it is also recommended that further research be conducted on former African American teachers and students who played an intricate role in demanding equity through litigation. Such studies can potentially disclose information about African Americans' school integration struggles.

Implications for Practice

After exploring the lived experiences and perceptions of former African American teachers and students that endured segregation, desegregation, and integration, this qualitative study's findings build on the phenomenon's research information. The results from this study enhance the body research of educational leadership. In addition, the data collected in this study will inform teachers, educational leaders, and parents of segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta. Through this study, these individuals will develop more awareness of the phenomenon and how it continues to influence public school education. Knowledge of such information and the appropriate application will effectively impact the stakeholder's decision-making regarding the education of African American students and other minority groups.

This study equips the educational leader, local officials, or government officials to understand the opposition in education for African American teachers and students; therefore, they will be more intentional in ensuring equity for African Americans and other minorities. The research can show how schools continue to be segregated and how desegregating strategies are ineffective in creating diverse schools. This topic of study would be beneficial in reporting research to Arkansas lawmakers and school administrators to discourage decisions that promote segregation and racial disparities in education. Also, lawmakers and administrators could use this topic to reevaluate and

guide their practices to ensure equity in developing laws and policies that are not perpetuating discrimination.

The policies connected with zoning, funding, school choice, etc., have resulted in the resegregation of schools. This type of segregation is implicit in that it is hidden among established laws and policies. Although we are desegregated, segregation is continuously present in various forms in education. Due to zoning, schools are still segregated, and students are forced to go to schools based on their address. The inner-city schools are predominately African American and Hispanic and lack sufficient funding. These inner-city schools receive inadequate funding depending on their location and performance. Adequate funding allows schools to have resources to assist in educating students.

This study will unveil the necessity of African American teachers in education, and the lack thereof can be considered resegregation. Conducting this study, African American teachers during segregation played a pivotal role in the lives of African American students. They work relentlessly to ensure the academic success of their students. This study also reiterates the relevance of African American teachers from segregation to integration. Before *Brown v. Board of Education (1954),* African American teachers contributed significantly to the teaching force. These teachers were essential to educating African American students in segregated African American schools. Their presents were revered in the segregated schools and the community where they educated African American students. As African American teachers taught former African American students during segregation, they recalled the care and dedication that these teachers exuberated. It was not until school integration that African American

teachers and their crucial presents to African American students intimidated formerly segregated White schools. The repercussion of school integration resulted in a tremendous number of African American teachers and especially African American males dismissed from their teaching jobs. So, the decline in representation of African American teachers can be linked to the onset of school integration through the implementation of discriminatory practices that intentionally dismiss African American teachers.

The education profession and African American students currently need more African American teachers in the classroom. The African American teachers' shortage can also be connected to professional teaching exams required for certification. In addition, the exams have created obstacles to obstruct the progress of African Americans pursuing education. So, from this study, educational leaders and state and local officials can be enlightened on the implicit and explicit discriminatory practices to combat such issues for the betterment of African American and other minority groups.

Another issue identified in conducting this study is the discrepancy in discipline among African American students compared to White students. Since enslavement, African Americans have received harsher punishments from Whites for their actions. Such unfair discipline practices have transitioned into the education system differently. From this study, some participants identified the discrepancies and disproportionalities in discipline between African American and White students during integration, which continues to exist and remains an issue that school districts have not resolved. This study provides educational leaders, state and local officials, and teachers with information to

effectively address and resolve the discrepancies and disproportionalities in discipline that have historically plagued African American students' educational experience.

School segregation, desegregation, and integration are attached to the power and control of the education of African American students. Leadership from the executive, legislative, and judicial to educational leaders and school officials have abused their positions of authority to deny African American students a quality education. However, the current state of education for African American students continues to involve discriminatory practices disguised in different forms that serve to disenfranchise and marginalize African American to support the long-term interest of Whites in education.

Conclusions

This research study's rich data collected from the participants on school segregation, desegregation, and integration in Arkansas' Delta provides essential information to avoid discriminatory practices to improve the education system where African Americans and other minorities will consistently benefit. As the past coincides with the present, the data collected from the perception and experiences of former African American teachers and students reveal an education system that continues to be flawed. This study informs how the transition through each education phenomenon remains inequitable for African American and other minority groups of students.

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Appendix

Former African American Teachers' Interview Questions

Segregation

1. What year did you begin your teaching career?
2. What grade(s) did you teach, and what other positions or duties did you have?
3. How long did you teach in an African American segregated school(s)?
4. What school(s) and district(s) did you teach in during segregation?
5. How would you describe your teaching experience at the all-African American segregated school(s)?
6. What were the typical African American teachers like before school desegregation?
7. How would you describe the relationship between African American teachers during segregation?
8. How would you describe the building-level leadership (principal) during segregation?
9. How would you describe the school district leadership (superintendent) before school desegregation?
10. What was the learning environment like at the all-African-American school(s)?
11. What do you remember most about teaching in an African American segregated school?
12. In your opinion, what were the positives and negatives of teaching in segregated school(s)?
13. How did teaching at an African American segregated school impact your life professionally and personally?

14. Do you feel school segregation was beneficial or nonbeneficial to African American students, teachers, and the community? Please explain your response.

Desegregation and Integration

1. What year did you begin teaching in a desegregated and integrated school(s)?
2. What grade(s) did you teach, and what other positions or duties did you have?
3. How long did you teach in desegregated and integrated schools?
4. What school district(s) did you teach in during desegregation and integration?
5. Can you describe how you were informed that schools would be desegregated and integrated?
6. What were your thoughts and feelings on desegregation and integration once you were informed?
7. How were you received by White administrators, coworkers, students, and parents once schools were desegregated and integrated?
8. What was the expectation level when teaching and instructing students at the formerly segregated White school(s)?
9. After school desegregation, how was teaching different at the predominately White school(s) compared to the segregated African American school?
10. How would you describe your teaching experience once schools integrated?
11. How would you describe the learning environment at the formerly segregated all-White school(s) compared to the all-African American school(s)?
12. While teaching at the formerly segregated all-White school(s), how would you describe your experience during the first few years after school desegregation and integration?

13. How would you describe the transition from teaching at a segregated African American school(s) to a formerly segregated White school(s)?
14. What changes did you encounter during desegregation and integration that differed from teaching at the African American segregated school(s)?
15. What do you remember the most about school integration?
16. What did you have to overcome the most during school desegregation and integration?
17. Did you experience discrimination? If so, describe what type of discrimination you experienced during school desegregation and integration? How was the issue(s) of discrimination resolved?
18. Did you witness racial tension or conflict at the formerly all White school? If so, please describe what type of discrimination you witness?
19. As schools desegregated and integrated, did African American administrators, teachers, and coaches maintain their current positions they held at the segregated African American school(s)? Please explain
20. Describe some challenges you encountered while teaching in desegregated and integrated school setting.
21. How did school desegregation and integration impact your professional and personal life?
22. What were some of the positives and negatives of teaching in a desegregated and integrated school(s)?

23. Do you feel school desegregation and integration were beneficial or nonbeneficial to African American students, teachers, and the community? Explain your response.

Former African American Students' Interview Questions

Segregation

1. What year did you begin attending an all-African American segregated school(s)?
2. How long did you attend an all-African American segregated school(s)?
3. What school(s) and district(s) did you attend during segregation?
4. How would you describe your experience as a student attending an all-African American segregated school(s)?
5. While attending a segregated school(s), how would you describe the African American teachers who taught you?
6. How was the educational instruction of African American teachers at the time of school segregation?
7. How would you describe the learning environment when you attended an all-African American segregated school(s)?
8. Did the African American teachers support you academically? If so, please explain.
9. What do you remember about building level leadership (principal) while attending African American segregated school(s)?
10. How would you describe the environment as a whole when you attended all African American segregated school(s)?

11. How did attending an all-African American segregated school impact your life academically, professionally, and personally?
12. What were some positives and negatives of attending a segregated African American school(s)?
13. Describe what you remember the most about attending an all-African American school.
14. Do you feel school segregation was beneficial or nonbeneficial to African American students, teachers, and the community? Please explain your response.

Desegregation and Integration

1. What year did you begin attending the formerly desegregated White school(s), and what grade were you in then?
2. What was the name of the school(s) and school district(s) you attended during school desegregation and integration?
3. Was the school(s) already desegregated or wholly integrated?
4. How long did you attend the formerly segregated White school(s)?
5. What was the reason why you decided to attend the formerly segregated all-White school?
6. What was your experience on the first day when you arrived at the formerly White school?
    - How would you describe the treatment from White administrators, teachers, parents, and students on the first day?

7. How did the White administrators and teachers treat you as an African American student during your years at the majority White school?
8. How would you describe building-level leadership (principal) of the predominately White school(s) regarding the treatment of African American students?
9. How would you describe the atmosphere while attending a formerly White school(s)?
10. How would you describe the transition from attending an all-African American segregated school(s) to attending a predominately White school(s)?
11. What was your experience like as a student during your first year of school desegregation?
12. Were there any African American teachers at the formerly segregated all-White School? About how many can you recall? Can you describe the instruction you received from the African American teachers?
13. How many White teachers can you recall while attending the majority White school(s)? Can you describe the instruction of the White Teachers?
14. What was the learning environment like for you during your first year and the years following while attending the majority White school(s)?
15. Were you included in classroom activities and discussions? If so, how did the teacher(s) ensure that you were included?
16. Did the White teachers support you academically? If so, please explain.

17. Did you participate in any extracurricular activities? If not, please explain. If so, what was it like for you to participate in extracurricular activities at the formerly all-White school(s)?
18. How did your White classmates receive you at the predominately White school(s)?
19. What was the treatment like/actions of your White classmates toward you?
20. What was your relationship(s) like with your White classmate(s) during school desegregation and integration?
21. Did you experience discrimination? If so, describe the discrimination you experienced during school desegregation and integration and how was the issue(s) of discrimination were resolved.
22. Describe other challenges you encountered while attending a desegregated and integrated school(s).
23. Did you experience racial tension or conflict while attending the formerly all-White School? Please explain
24. At the time, what were your thoughts about the education offered by the predominately White school(s) compared to the African American school(s)?
25. How did white teachers' educational instruction during desegregation differ from African American teachers during segregation?
26. After attending the predominately White school(s), was the quality of education different from all African American school(s)? If so, describe the difference.

27. Do you think you fared better by attending formerly segregated White school(s)? Why or why not?
28. What memories stand out the most while being a student at a majority White school?
29. What were the positives and negatives of attending a formerly all-White segregated school(s)?
30. How did attending a formerly segregated White school(s) school impact you academically, professionally, and personally?
31. Do you feel desegregation and integration were beneficial or nonbeneficial for African American students, teachers, and the African American community? Please explain your response.
32. Do you feel you benefited more from attending segregated or desegrated schools? Please explain your response.