

**School Integration: A Case Study of the 1971-1972 School Year  
at  
Indian River High School**

by

Lee V. Fowler

EdD Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic  
Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Administration

Approved

Thomas C. Hunt, Co-Chair  
Robert R. Richards, Co-Chair  
Glenn I. Earthman  
David Parks  
Charles H. Onks

July 31, 1997  
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: School, Integration  
Copyright 1988, Lee V. Fowler

School Integration  
A Case Study  
The 1971-1972 School Year  
at  
Indian River High School

By Lee V. Fowler

School Integration: A Case Study of the 1971-1972 School Year at  
Indain River High School

Lee V. Fowler

(ABSTRACT)

This dissertation is a case study of the initial year of integration at a predominantly white southern high school. The school's racial configuration changed from approximately 10% black to approximately 35% black in the course of a single year. The study includes a background of desegregation in Virginia, a discussion of the closing of the black high school in the local area, and a detailed, thematic study of the events of the school year. The information is gleaned from newspapers, historical works by original sources, school records, papers and memos, and primarily, from sixty-six interviews with former students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members.

Important sections deal with racial issues on a personal level for the students and teachers involved. Organizations such as the football team are dealt with in detail. Particular attention is paid to clubs and organizations, especially those where the students could choose the members. A substantial portion of the paper provides first hand accounts of violence that occurred during the school year, in particular an incident of riot proportions.

The objective of the study is to provide a detailed account of school integration through first hand accounts of day to day events at a school in the process of desegregation.

## Acknowledgements

The inspiration for this project came through the academic challenges in the course work provided by my research chair person, Dr. Tom Hunt. A historian of great distinction, he provided great guidance as did my co-chair, Dr. Bob Richards. These two gentlemen, with steady encouragement and guidance, allowed this project to come to completion.

Dr. Charles Onks, another committee member, offered the constructive criticism without which a project like this can easily become stagnant and die. His close friendship and support will always be remembered and cherished.

This project could not have been completed without the full cooperation, support, and at times prodding of my beautiful editor in chief, my wife Gail. She read every line and continued to love me despite many a disagreement when I became too possessive about my work.

Finally, a word needs to be said about a special individual of whom I had only the vaguest knowledge when I began this work. Students of both races consistently mentioned the important contributions of one able administrator. This black assistant principal, who had come from Crestwood, earned the trust of black and white students alike. The students trusted his fairness and his compassion. In an incredibly difficult situation, this individual, who must have often been torn by conflicting loyalties, displayed a consistent attitude of calmness and even-handed justice. He died several years before this study began, but his influence was clear in the recollections of many interviewees. His efforts received little public appreciation. There is no statue in his honor. No school is named after him. But he was a man who did his best in a difficult situation and as a true educator, he made a difference. As a result, this work is dedicated to a man the author never interviewed, and only met once briefly. On behalf of many interviewed, and many others who did not get the opportunity to express their gratitude, I would like to thank, posthumously, Mr. Foster Scott.

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page v</b>
<b>Chapter One</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
<b>Desegregation in Virginia</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Page 23</b>
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
<b>Preparation for Integration</b>	<b>Page 39</b>
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<b>The Opening of School</b>	<b>Page 71</b>
<b>Chapter Six</b>	
<b>Integration and the Normal Workings     of a School</b>	<b>Page 108</b>
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	
<b>Incidents from the Unusual to the     Out of Hand</b>	<b>Page 161</b>
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	
<b>Inter-Racial Relationships and     The Move to the New Building</b>	<b>Page 192</b>
<b>Chapter Nine</b>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Page 204</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>Page 228</b>
<b>Appendices: A -School Map</b>	<b>Page 234</b>
<b>B -School Calendar</b>	<b>Page 236</b>
<b>C -Interview Documents and     Correspondence</b>	<b>Page 254</b>
<b>D- Statistical Breakdown</b>	<b>Page 260</b>
<b>E - Interview List</b>	<b>Page 264</b>

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction to the Case Study**

At the time of this writing, the President of the United States has just made a major speech about race relations in America. Race is a crucial issue in our country today. It is virtually inescapable in every aspect of our society, particularly in that unique crucible, the public schools. Many question whether we have made any progress at all in relations between the races in our schools. Others see the struggle for school integration as complete. There are a myriad of viewpoints in between these two extremes. The question is, how to measure who is right, or how far we have come?

In order to do so we must examine where we began. No adequate measurement can take place if we do not have a starting point. To determine where this starting point is, many questions must be answered. What was it like in segregated schools? How did that effect racial attitudes? What was it like in the earliest days of integration? How did integration itself effect those to whom it was a tremendous change? We must begin to answer these questions if we are to be able to understand at all where we stand today in

terms of race relations in schools.

Today it is taken as a cultural mantra that the integration of schools had to take place in the United States, and that this integration was a positive step for our society. However, what of those individuals who actually had to lose their schools and the community identity that went with them? What about those who found that suddenly they had to share their schools with another race who did not want to be there? Did these individuals see this experience as positive?

This study cannot and will not attempt to provide a complete answer to all of these questions. It is instead a starting point. The purpose here is to study the events leading up to the integration of a single high school. We will then look closely at the experiences of the individuals who were intimately involved in the process. We will discuss not only the events but how those individuals reacted to them and how they felt about what was happening to them. In doing so, hopefully, we can find a starting point from which to measure how far we have come in the struggle to truly and equitably integrate our schools and our society.

The particular school in question was a fairly representative southern high school. It was predominantly middle class. Prior to true integration, it

had a type of limited desegregation resulting from a choice plan. This plan provided for a predominantly white school with only a ten per cent minority (black) population. During the school year in question this population would dramatically rise to about thirty-five per cent black due to the closing of the community's black high school.

This study will examine the questions described above in a single situation. The school in question was not unique and was probably similar in make up and circumstance to many throughout the country during this period. Whether or not broad generalizations can be generated will be left to the reader.

## **Chapter Two Desegregation in Virginia**

### **The Brown Decisions**

In what may have been "the most important Supreme Court decision of the Century" (Greenberg, 1994, p. 197), Brown v. Board of Education (1954) was decided on May 17, 1954. Segregated schools were deemed unconstitutional due to the negative impact they had on black children. However, the court did not address the question of how to desegregate the schools. This question would be decided after further argument. Approximately one year later, on May 31, 1955, the court decided what has come to be known as Brown II, dealing with implementation of its previous desegregation decision.

As a result of Brown II, school districts were ordered to "make a prompt and reasonable start toward full compliance" and to comply "at the earliest possible date," but were allowed to take into account various administrative problems (Greenberg, 1994, p. 206). The crucial phrase in this decision was that desegregation was to proceed with "all deliberate speed."

### **Public Reaction**

Regardless of what the phrase "all deliberate speed" might turn out to mean, many southerners were outraged at the court's challenge to the whole system of segregation. Public opinion was led by the politicians (Wilkinson, 1968), particularly in Virginia. Some argue (Muse, 1961) that a more moderate stance by the leadership of the state could have calmed public opinion in Virginia, one of the most cosmopolitan of the southern states. Instead, the political leaders stoked the fires of resistance and resentment. Their oratory was soon followed by newspaper editorials and civic outcry (Dabney, 1971).

A new organization, The Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, known as "The Defenders", was the center of the resistance (Wilkinson, 1968). It is remarkable, considering the extent of the public outcry, that there was little violence in Virginia. In fact, Virginia was the only state on the Atlantic seaboard, from Florida to Massachusetts that did not have to call out the National Guard to quell disturbances at some point between 1954 and 1970 (Dabney, 1971, p. 541).

At the state constitutional convention in March of 1956, the president of the convention stated that the Supreme Court was "a court which for theory

and political expediency, would subvert the very foundations of our government" (Constitutional convention journal, 1956). This was some of the milder rhetoric that appeared during the reaction. Indeed, as Richard Bardolph states "the effort to end discrimination in the schools continued to excite more public comment than did any other phase of the civil rights endeavor" (1970, page 319). Without a doubt, desegregation of schools was a heated topic throughout the south.

### **The Byrd Machine**

Despite the sensitive nature of the issue, the initial reaction to the Brown decisions appeared to be reasonable. Even Governor Stanley's first public reaction to the desegregation decisions was moderate:

"the people of Virginia will receive the opinion of the Supreme Court calmly and take time to carefully and dispassionately consider the situation before coming to conclusions on steps which should be taken... I contemplate no precipitate action, but I shall call together as quickly as practicable representatives of both state and local governments to consider the matter and work toward a plan which will be acceptable to our citizens and in keeping with the edict of the court." (Wilkinson, pp. 122-

123).

It was not until the Byrd machine nudged the major players that extremism gained the upper hand (Dabney, 1971) . Why did the Byrd machine get so heavily involved in this issue? The answer lies in the character of Senator Harry Flood Byrd.

Byrd had been a governor of Virginia from 1926 to 1930 and at the time of the Brown decisions had been in the United States Senate for twenty-one years (Wilkinson, 1968). Senator Byrd was also the head of a large informal machine that dominated politics in the state of Virginia at virtually all levels. Contrary to the popular image of a political machine, Byrd and his clique were strong fiscal conservatives and exceptionally honest.

Senator Byrd was never known as anti-negro, indeed he was proud of the anti-lynching law passed while he was governor. He essentially saw this as a states' rights issue and interference in the "personal domain of Harry Byrd" (Muse, 1961, page 26). "Now in the twilight of Byrd's career the Northerner was once again knocking at the door and intruding upon Byrd's beloved Virginia" (Wilkinson, 1968, p.141) .

Although a skilled politician, Senator Byrd could be an exceptionally

stubborn man. It is said that his initial vote in the state legislature was in the extreme minority on an issue he may not have fully understood (concerning bawdy houses). The story continues that when fellow legislators tried to persuade him to change his vote Byrd responded by saying "I won't change" (Fridell, 1968, page 183).

Byrd was interested in organizing the resistance to integration of schools on a national level. "If we can organize the Southern States for massive resistance to this order [of the Supreme Court in the school segregation cases] I think that in time the rest of the country will realize that racial integration is not going to be accepted in the South." (Wilkinson, 1968, p. 113) . The key ingredient to this plan was that all must go along with it. If this was to be true throughout the south, then it must be even more so in Byrd's home state.

### **The Gray Commission**

The official response in Virginia to the Brown decisions was the establishment, by Governor Thomas B. Stanley, of a commission in 1955, chaired by State Senator Garland Gray. The purpose of this commission,

commonly known as the Gray commission, was to develop a plan that would allow Virginia to circumvent the Supreme Court's decision. The group was dominated by legislators from the southside of Virginia, that area where the majority of Virginia's black population resides. This was also the area where the greatest resistance to integration could be found. Despite this, the plan submitted was somewhat moderate by comparison to later actions (Rubin, 1977).

The three part plan submitted by the commission included; 1) the development of a pupil assignment plan, 2) modification of the compulsory attendance laws so that no student would be forced to attend an integrated school, and 3) tuition grants for private schools. The third measure would involve an amendment to section 141 of the Virginia State Constitution. These measures were an effort to avoid integration within the law. There was no mention of closing schools. (Dabney, 1971)

In order to amend the constitution, the voters of Virginia would have to approve the calling of a constitutional convention. This vote was considered a crucial mandate on the resistance movement to the Brown decisions. During the campaign prior to the election, supporters of the Gray commission stressed that the plan included "local option" of how to deal with

desegregation. "Local option" was a key ingredient as it was in keeping with the great diversity of opinion in Virginia over the issue. The vote was won by a large majority and the constitutional convention was called. The resistance forces had won a victory that they interpreted as a mandate for massive resistance (Muse, 1961) .

Senator Byrd supported the calling of the convention, but carefully never mentioned "local option." Later, when the massive resistance package was legislated, many of those who voted for the constitutional convention felt betrayed when it was clear that they would have no "local option." The attitude of the Byrd machine was summed up by former Governor William Tuck's statement: "There is no middle ground, no compromise..... If the other [Virginia areas] won't stand with us, I say make'em.....If you ever let them integrate anywhere, the whole state will be integrated in a short time." (Dabney, 1971, p. 531).

The notion of a truly massive resistance was gaining momentum. Senator Byrd had engendered the signing of a "Southern Manifesto" on March 12, 1956. On that date, in Washington, 101 southern members of Congress signed the document that signified their agreement to Byrd's massive resistance.

The philosophical underpinnings of Byrd's movement in Virginia and throughout the south came from the pen of a young Richmond newspaper editor, James Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick, resurrecting the Jeffersonian idea of interposition, gave the states' rights position an historical grounding traced back to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of the eighteenth century. Kilpatrick's view, basically, was that the state government had the right to interpose itself between the people of the state and any disagreeable policy from the federal government. What this exactly meant in terms of positive actions is as unclear today as it was at the time. However, a number of southern state legislatures passed various interposition resolutions. At the very least, the young editor's writings provided a sense of legitimacy to the segregationist forces. To segregationists it was clear that Virginians did not need any "Yankees" to tell them how to live or to judge their institutions (Wilkinson, 1968).

## **The School Closing Laws**

On July 2, 1956, Byrd, State Senator Gray, State Representatives Watkins Abbitt and William Tuck, and Governor Stanley met in Byrd's Washington office (Wilkinson, 1968, page 130). Their purpose was to "secure legislation that would make the integration of any public school in Virginia virtually impossible" (Muse, 1961, p. 30). As a result of this meeting, Governor Stanley called a special session of the General Assembly that met on August 27, 1956.

At this session Governor Stanley submitted his legislative proposal to halt integration in Virginia. It consisted of thirteen separate pieces of legislation, the most important of which was Bill No. 1. This bill required the Governor "to close any school under court order to integrate, and to cut off all state funds from any school that tried to reopen in obedience to the order of the court" (Dabney, 1971, page 537).

The bill passed the House of Delegates by a 61-37 margin. In the Senate the vote was much closer, 21-17. This is especially surprising considering the upsurge of anti-integration outcry, the loose organization of its opponents, and the strength of the Byrd machine (Dabney, 1971) . It is an

example of how little unanimity there really was in Byrd's home state.

Benjamin Muse provides an interesting note on the nature of the vote. He found that due to the disproportionate strength of southern Virginia, that area with the greatest black population, the twenty one senators who voted for the measure to cut off school funds represented only about one million of Virginia's two and one half million white persons according to the 1950 census (Muse, 1961, page 30).

Additionally, a state pupil placement board was founded as part of the legislative package. This board was to have the authority to assign all pupils to schools. "It was clearly understood [that the board] would assign no Negro to any white school." (Muse, 1961, page 34)

Virginia had prepared itself to oppose integration. Governor Stanley completed his term and was replaced by Lindsay Almond. It would be up to Governor Almond, a fiery orator, to defend segregated schools in Virginia. To do so, he would have at his disposal those tools that the Byrd machine and Governor Stanley had left him, namely, the school closing laws.

## School Closings

"The segregated school system in Virginia might have lasted millenniums had outside pressure not battered it down." (Wilkinson, 1968, p. 60). After a quiet school year of 1956-1957, during which the courts litigated various cases around the state, the outside pressures began in earnest. By the summer of 1958, it was clear that several cases were going to be decided by the start of school.

The first was in Warren County. When the Federal District Court there ordered the integration of the public high school, Governor Almond, in obedience to the laws passed in August of 1956, responded by closing the school on September 12, 1958. Next came Charlottesville, where two high schools were closed. Then the most stunning of all, moderate Norfolk, home of the world's largest naval base and arguably the most cosmopolitan area in the state, had its six white secondary schools closed (Rubin, 1977). Most Virginians were shocked. They apparently, despite all the rhetoric, did not believe that their schools would actually be closed (Wilkinson, 1968, p. 139).

By the end of the month of September, 1958, twelve thousand white secondary students in the state of Virginia were denied public schooling

rather than have them attend with black students. In Norfolk alone, ten thousand students were out of school due to concern over seventeen black students who had filed suit to attend white schools (Parramore, Stewart, and Boggs, 1994).

Interestingly, this was clearly a case of principle (albeit, a racist one). The issue was not over seventeen black children but over segregation and the right of states to go their own way. The black schools in Norfolk were never closed. When at one point in the conflict Norfolk City Council proposed closing them as well, Governor Almond denounced the plan as vindictive, the Court agreed and Norfolk quickly backed off (Dabney, 1971) .

Various attempts were made to provide schooling for the huge number of students affected. Few were successful. Some 950 Norfolk students attended the town of South Norfolk's Oscar Smith High School at night and a number probably attended private school (Parramore, Stewart, and Boggs, 1994) . Despite these options, at least three thousand students in Norfolk were virtually without schooling (Wilkinson, 1968). It is interesting to note that despite massive resistance a full slate of football games was played, with bands playing without uniforms which were locked away in the schools (Parramore, Stewart, and Boggs, 1994).

For four months these schools were closed. During this time, public opinion gradually changed. By December, 1958, newspapers throughout the state were calling for some method to be found to reopen the schools. Even Mr. Kilpatrick had begun to call for moderation (Wilkinson, 1968).

Instrumental in this change was a televised documentary, "The Lost Class of 1959" which aired on CBS on the evening of January 21, 1959. This documentary, by Edward R. Murrow, was carefully neutral in its treatment of the subject. However, the citizens of Virginia, particularly Norfolk, were shocked to see how the rest of the nation perceived the school closing issue (Parramore, Stewart, and Boggs, 1994).

Also during January, the courts intervened. Surprisingly, it was both the Federal Courts and the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals which ruled against the school closing. In Federal District Court, the closings were ruled to violate the equal protection clause. In the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, it was ruled that cutting off funds to schools violated the state constitution's clause for an efficient educational system throughout the state (Rubin, 1977).

Despite one last fiery speech, Governor Almond gave in. Splitting with the Byrd machine, he virtually ended massive resistance (Muse, 1961). On

February 2, 1959, the three Norfolk High Schools (Norview, Maury, and Granby) and the three Junior High Schools were reopened. Of the ten thousand students who had left in September only 6,868 returned (Parramore, Stewart, and Boggs, 1994). No study has yet been undertaken (to the best of our knowledge) to determine what happened to the rest.

### **The Next Step: Local Option and Choice**

The forces of massive resistance had not given up the fight and legislative battles continued. Extraordinary measures were required to finally defeat the Byrd machine. The local option bill required the state senate to form a committee of the whole in order to avoid the Byrd controlled education committee. The senate did so by the narrowest of margins, a twenty to nineteen vote that was won only when one senator was dramatically carried into the chamber on a stretcher. It was now up to the localities to determine the best course for their individual districts (Dabney, 1971) .

In the southeastern Virginia, this generally involved some form of individual choice. Black students could attend the black school in their district or they could choose to attend the white school in their attendance

zone. According to the United States Commission on Civil Rights report of 1966, choice plans across the nation maintained a dual system and were the main reason for the slow pace of desegregation. Those black students who chose to attend white schools were often subject to harassment and a substantial majority returned to black schools (pages 40-41).

### **Choice and the Federal Government**

Choice plans were challenged in the federal courts since they in effect maintained segregated schools. The various circuit courts ruled in a mixed fashion with "most courts [upholding] the validity of choice plans among schools not segregated by law" (Civil Rights Commission, 1966, page 20). The federal courts seemed to accept choice as a temporary and tentative measure.

Eventually, these cases reached the Supreme Court. In Green v. New Kent County (1968), the highest court in the land sounded the death knell of choice. The court ordered local systems to "convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch", "delay was no longer tolerable" (Greenberg, 1994 p. 383). The NAACP immediately

began filing motions based on this decision to push the pace of school desegregation.

Almost as important as the court decisions in increasing the pace of desegregation was civil rights legislation. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 came into effect for the 1965-1966 school year. Prior to this, in the years 1955-1965, the percentage of black children in white schools throughout the south had increased about one percentage point per year. Title VI required the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to cut funding to any school system found to discriminate on the basis of race. As a result, the 1965-1966 school year saw the actual number of black students in white schools increase five full percentage points from 10.9 percent to 15.9 percent (Greenberg, 1994, page 380).

HEW enforcement, however, was a political solution and subject to the winds of change. The election of the Nixon administration, political expediency, and the unpopularity of busing plans throughout the nation resulted in less stringent enforcement by HEW (Greenberg, 1994). Although our focus is on Virginia, it is worth examining the interaction of the courts and HEW enforcement in Mississippi. The outcome of this interaction would have far reaching effects.

### **Alexander v. Holmes County**

In the summer of 1969, Leon Panetta (later a congressman from California and head of the Office of Management and Budget for the Clinton administration) was in charge of desegregation at HEW. In this function, Panetta had pushed for compliance with the Brown decisions in Mississippi . The Court of Appeals for the fifth circuit had ruled that twenty-nine Mississippi districts must submit new desegregation plans by August 11, 1969 and implement these plans by August 25, 1969. As a result, some thirty districts in Mississippi filed desegregation plans with the court by August 11.

At this point, the political winds of change began to blow. Senator John Stennis, of Mississippi, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, decided he had to leave Washington at a crucial time during military budget hearings. He gave as his reason the protests and general upheaval in Mississippi over the integration plans. The Nixon administration began to push the Secretary of HEW, Robert Finch, to ease the pressure on Mississippi. Finch wrote to Judge John R. Brown of the fifth circuit, with copies sent to all other federal judges in Mississippi, requesting a delay in

implementation until December 1, 1969. This would effectively delay desegregation in Mississippi for another year.

The fifth circuit, up to this point had been "a bastion of civil rights decency" (Greenberg, 1994, page 385). However, with Finch of HEW, Nixon's justice department, and Senator Stennis all applying pressure, the court granted the request for a delay.

Pro civil rights forces, especially the Legal Defense Fund of the NAACP, went on the offensive, filing a motion to vacate the extension. Justice Black denied the challenge, but encouraged the Legal Defense Fund to bring the issue before the full court.

Despite delaying tactics, particularly by Judge Harold Cox of Mississippi (he refused to forward necessary records to the Legal Defense fund unless the exorbitant price of fifty cents per page was paid for eight large boxes of legal records), the case was heard by the Supreme Court in October of 1969. The case, Alexander v. Holmes County (1969) was to be new Chief Justice Warren Burger's first case (Greenberg, 1994).

The basic issue before the court was whether desegregation plans should be implemented before or after all litigation concerning them was exhausted. The segregationists argued that the various details of boundary

lines, busing, and all other administrative concerns must be worked out before the desegregation plans could be implemented. The Legal Defense Fund argued that these were nothing more than delaying tactics and that litigation should take place while schools were already integrated in some fashion.

Jack Greenberg, arguing for the Legal Defense Fund argued that the segregationists had simply swapped "segregation forever for litigation forever" (Greenberg, 1994, page 386).

On October 23, the court ruled that "the court of appeals should have denied all motions for additional time because... all deliberate speed is no longer constitutionally permissible" (Greenberg, 1994, page 386). The court of appeals was to require integration "forthwith" without further arguments or submissions. This was a unanimous decision (Greenberg, 1994).

Fifteen years after the Brown decisions, the Supreme Court had ruled in Green v. New Kent County (1968) that schools must convert to a unitary system, and in Alexander v. Holmes, (1969) that they must do so "forthwith".

It was obvious that the 1970 school year would see the beginning of true integration throughout the country. Obstructionist tactics by those who wished to maintain segregated schools had been defeated.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

This project began as part of a class on historical methods of research. A rough draft of this paper was the culmination of that course. As a result, some actual interviews with principal characters of this school year had already been carried out prior to the inception of this project. There remained much to be done.

A time line was established in order to attempt to complete this project within some specific time constraints. The plan called for a summer of background research to be conducted in 1996. This research was to trace the case history and significant events from the Brown case in 1954 to the integration of Indian River High School in 1971. Works by Jack Greenberg, Virginius Dabney, and Carl Rowan, were all original sources. Not only did these individuals provide strong documentation, they were often present at the events they chronicled. The purpose of this research, laid out in Chapter Two of this paper, was to provide a historical context for the events in following chapters.

The next step was to study the various records available in Chesapeake. Staff bulletins, school board minutes, and minutes of principal's meetings were all reviewed. Local newspapers seemed a logical next step and led to some correctable errors. For example, the Virginian Pilot & Ledger Star are currently one newspaper. In this author's experience they had always been under joint ownership and even when published as two separate entities, they were, in effect, two editions of the same paper. This was not true in 1971. Stories that appeared in the Virginian Pilot might not appear in the Ledger Star. Therefore, both papers had to be examined thoroughly.

The existence of a flourishing minority newspaper also provided a rich field of study. The newspaper work created endless hours of research with little concrete reward. However, the review of the papers for this school year did provide a bountiful source of background information on both local and national matters during this time period.

## **The Interview Selection Process**

As important as the library research and document study was, it was obvious that the crucial work of this project would require interviewing individuals who were actually at Indian River High School during this school year. The first step in this process was to gain a listing of students and their addresses. The yearbook (Sequoyah) was an obvious starting point. Alumni chairpersons for the classes of 1972 and 1973 were contacted and graciously provided their most current address lists.

The classes of 1972 and 1973 were chosen. These students, Juniors and Seniors during this school year, would remember what their schools had been like before integration and could, therefore, more readily notice the changes that integration brought. Out of this pool of some six hundred addresses, four hundred were chosen. The basis of selection was students who had both a picture in the yearbook and a current address on the alumni list\*. Four hundred mailouts were sent, each with a stamped post card to

\* It was later found that this was an inaccurate method. Many black students did not have their picture taken as Indian River students, such was their bitterness over the loss of their school. Also, a number of black students participated in a separate, Crestwood reunion. As a result, their names may not have appeared on the lists.

return expressing interest.

With such a large pool of potential interviewees, individual interviews could be a daunting task that might also extend the project indefinitely. Ten interview dates were selected (every Wednesday and Saturday from October 30, 1996 through December 7, 1996 with a break for Thanksgiving). The response postcard gave each potential interviewee an opportunity to select one of these dates or, if not able to attend one of these sessions, an opportunity to express willingness to be contacted for an individual interview. It was hoped that group interviews would help speed up the interview process as well as stimulate memories and make the process more valid.

Disappointingly, the return rate was much smaller than expected. Only forty-four former students responded. Of these, only fifteen could participate in a scheduled group interview session. The result was that only one interview had as many as three former students present and two sessions were cancelled because no students signed up.

Eighteen former students were willing to help but could not attend any of the scheduled sessions. Many of these were out of town, although several who were within a two hour drive were interviewed. Eleven former students

responded that they were unwilling to participate.

This small response was surprising. As the interviews unfolded, it became clear that there was a great deal of bitterness among many of the students and that this was perhaps the reason for the small response (at least two individuals that the author knew either professionally or personally were unwilling to discuss their experiences during this school year even after direct requests).

Since the mailout did not provide a sizable enough sample to suit this study, other methods were used. Each interviewee was asked who else they knew who would consent to be interviewed. The phone book was used to attempt to call former students. Finally, the author resorted to asking virtually everyone he met of an appropriate age where they went to high school. As a result of these word of mouth contacts, a sizable number of interviews were conducted.

Faculty and administrative interviews were somewhat easier to obtain. These individuals generally proved more willing to talk about their experiences during this school year. Some community leaders of the time

were also contacted and interviewed, particularly a pastor of a large church in the school zone. Parents were interviewed as well, to get their feelings on the events of this school year.

The ultimate goal was to obtain seventy interviews. This was a "do-able" number and would provide a representative sample of the approximately eleven hundred individuals involved. Eventually, sixty-six interviews were conducted from August of 1996 through April of 1997.

One particular interview source is worth noting. A current secretary at the school administration building had been employed there since the time frame studied in this paper. She was also an amateur history buff and was a great help to this research. She uncovered HEW (United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare-it enforced integration statutes and will hereafter be referred to as HEW) correspondence and a copy of the Crestwood High School accreditation evaluation of March 1967. This was a tremendous help and greatly appreciated.

## **The Interview Process**

Using information gleaned from Thad Sitton, George L. Mehaffy, & O. L. Davis (1983) and Edward Ives (1974), an interview format was developed. This format involved a script of topics to be asked. Importantly, the interviewee was allowed to move freely from one topic to another as memory served. As a result, the script became more of a checklist that insured that each interview covered all of the important topics.

The development of this list of topics was initially somewhat fluid. For example, after the first few interviews it appeared that the yearbook cover (it was a rather flamboyant splash of color representing the school colors of both Crestwood and Indian River) was a major issue and it was consequently included on the list of topics. After several dozen interviews, it became obvious that this was not an important issue to the majority of those interviewed.

The original concept of this project was to write a literal day by day account of the events of this school year. To this end, a calendar was

developed from staff bulletins of virtually every event that took place during the 1971-1972 school year. The plan was that students and teachers, when reminded of the specific dates of events (like basketball games, club meetings, dances, etc.) would remember significant occurrences at those events. It was hoped that with the specific information gained, an accurate chronology could be developed.

Like many idealistic goals, this concept proved unworkable after the first few interviews. Twenty-five years is a long time for anyone's memory and it became very clear that narrowing recollections down to specific days was impossible. It was difficult for individuals to remember whether an event occurred during the spring or the fall, much less a particular month or week. Despite every effort, it was clear that the development of a specific chronology was an impossible goal.

Fortunately, the school year itself provided a useful landmark. The school moved into a new building during February of 1972 and it was helpful to ask if a particular incident occurred in the new building or in the old building. Students could consistently place events in the new or old building

but this was usually as far as it went with respect to dating particular events chronologically. Only those events found listed in specific memos could be dated accurately (for example, the riot of November, 1971).

A thematic approach became a much more realistic method. Grouping the recollections of interviewees about certain events was the method eventually used. The major themes that the students, faculty, and administrators related have been grouped into appropriate chapters.

The interviews were tape recorded, thus providing a record that allowed the interviewer to check notes and quotes directly. Each interviewee signed a waiver and orally gave their permission at the beginning of each tape. Note cards made from the original interview notes were then prepared so that they could be arranged topically.

The tapes themselves were reviewed to refamiliarize the author with their contents. This was particularly important in the earliest interviews. Obviously, months had passed and hearing the interviewee's words again made the notes come to life. Equally important, the interviewer simply did not know as much to ask about in the earliest interviews.

Of perhaps greatest importance, it is crucial for the reader to understand that what sticks out in memory is the unusual. You will read of many problems in this paper, but it is important to remember that there were many days when there were no difficulties and the school functioned in a normal fashion. There were a number of interviewees who did not remember any problems at all.

### **Topical Arrangement**

Approximately six hundred notecards were grouped into appropriate topics. The topics were then organized into chapters. The chapters and the topics (original groupings of notecards they included) are listed below:

- Chapter One, Introduction
- Chapter Two, Desegregation in Virginia
- Chapter Three, Methodology
- Chapter Four, Preparation for Integration
- Chapter Five, The Opening of School
- Chapter Six, Extra-Curriculars
- Chapter Seven, Riot

-Chapter Eight, Inter-racial relationships and the Move to a New Building

-Chapter Nine, Conclusion

### **The Citation of Interviews**

Although most subjects (some were interviewed a year previously as part of a research class, before the waivers were developed) signed a waiver, it soon became clear that some statements made could be very damaging to individuals interviewed. For example, a white student's comment that "we realized that there were more of us than them" and that "black students weren't going to be given much input", could be a very damaging statement in her current occupation. A black student's statement that sometimes "white kids just had to pay for what other people did", could be equally damaging. Following either of these statements with a standard American Psychological Association (APA) citation would produce the following:

"We realized that there were more of us than them" and that black students weren't going to be given much input (Jane Jones, personal

communication, February 29, 1997). "White kids just had to pay for what other people did" (John Smith, personal communication, January 1, 1997).

Obviously, these types of quotes could be quite damaging to Jane and John when they return to the workplace if anyone there had knowledge of them. This seems grossly unfair to people who took their time to assist in this work.

A different approach to citation has been used. A quote, or information like that above will still be used. However, it will be cited in the text using only the race, sex, and position of the interviewee. The personal communication citation and date will follow in parentheses. For example, a white female student related that "We realized that there were more of us than them" and that "black students weren't going to be give much input" (personal communication, February 29, 1997).

Using this method will protect the identity of individuals and hopefully satisfy the needs of scholarship. A list of all interviewees will be included as a separate appendix, but individuals could only be identified if the date of their interviews was known. The list of interviews and the dates on which

they occurred will be available only to the dissertation committee to whom this author is responsible.

### **Author Bias**

The author initially felt that he was free of bias. Apparently, this is not an uncommon affliction. As an administrator and former teacher and coach, the author, a white male, has spent eighteen years in schools that were approximately one half white and one half black. He functions in an environment where race is always a factor in decision-making. This tends to make one particularly sensitive about minority feelings and attitudes. Years of experience teach one that seldom do incidents, particularly violent incidents, take place in a vacuum.

In the course of this project, many incidents have been relayed that seem to be totally causeless. This runs counter to the author's bias and it is a constant struggle not to reach too far to find justification for specific acts.

As the interviewer was a white male, some of the subjects may have

been reluctant to speak of particularly controversial issues. This subject of the interviewer's race is also something that must be remembered by the reader despite every attempt at fairness.

It was also clear that as interviews were conducted, some of the subjects were not completely candid about their feelings of twenty-five years ago. Today's environment is much different. Some of the interviewees had clearly changed perceptions about the opposite race and that colored their recollections. Of course this is impossible to accurately assess, but it appears to be a factor.

It is also important to consider the maturation process. Adults, interviewed today, are well aware that the world is not always fair. As students, twenty-five years ago, they did not have the benefit of this maturity. Issues that seem trivial today to adults were extremely important to teenagers living in that particularly explosive time.

Recollections vary widely. Some students remember the same events quite differently than do others. This seemed to be particularly tied to their level of activity in school life. Students who were very active, or who were

completely uninvolved in school functions seem to remember things going relatively smoothly. Those in the mid-range, who were at school most of the day yet only moderately involved or uninvolved in extracurricular activities, seem to remember the most problems. As a result, this author has consistently sought to keep to the middle ground between extreme differences among subject recollections. Only when one voice seems to recall an extreme situation contradictory to the vast majority of subjects, is that voice ignored or the singularity noted in the text.

Finally, one must remember that the times have changed. The world is a different place than it was in 1971. The students studied here went home each night and watched television reports of violent racial outbursts and riots around the country. The Vietnam war was still very much an issue. Richard Nixon was still president and would go on to an overwhelming victory in November of the following year. Virtually all of these students grew up with parents for whom segregation of the races and particularly schools was a fact of life.

This environment may have made the situation more explosive as

students perceived that they were supposed to have problems. However, it seems more often to have contributed to an attitude of minimalizing the problems that existed. It was commonly felt that whatever the problems experienced at Indian River, it was worse in other places.

Finally, this is a case study. There is no thesis. The goal is to present the events of a single school year at a single school in as accurate a manner as possible.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Preparation For Integration**

#### **Introduction**

The school term that began in September of 1971 was a watershed year for schools in the southeastern region of Virginia. Seventeen years after the Brown decisions ending racially segregated schools, their effects would be fully felt in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and to a lesser extent, Virginia Beach.

Many felt that the implementation of school integration had not been completely equitable and much litigation would continue (W. A. Johnson, personal communication-memo, December 15, 1969). However, racially identifiable black high schools were now a thing of the past. They were either opening their doors to white students, converting to elementary schools and junior high schools, or closing altogether. For the first time, all of the public schools of the Tidewater area would be racially integrated with no

single race schools.

American history texts tend to dwell on the positive aspects of the Brown decisions. In the text currently used in the Chesapeake school system, the decision for integration is called a "triumph for legal equality" (DiBarco, Mason, and Appy, p. 712). Americans are taught that segregated schooling was an archaic wrong that had run its course and that integration was a positive thing for society.

While in a larger context this is probably an accurate assessment, what of the individual students, teachers and administrators who had to put the various integration plans into effect? How did they react? How were they affected? We will examine these individuals through a case study of one high school. The goal is to understand the difficulties, experiences, and perceptions of the participants who went through true racial integration for the first time.

The students involved in this process are now in their forties; the teachers and administrators are nearly fifty years of age, some much older. Recording their experiences at this time is crucially important or many of

these sources may be lost forever. As the principal of a high school during this troubled time stated, "I am frustrated every time I see some aspect of integrated schools rolled back. Don't they realize what we went through to accomplish this?" (personal communication, July 11, 1995) . Imperfect though our current system may be, it was established only through a great deal of heartache, frustration, pain, and anger, as well as amazing attempts at fairness. This struggle brought together students, faculty, and administrators who had been taught separation as a way of life. Each carried their own prejudices and concerns into the school. They are certainly deserving of a thorough examination of the events that shaped this particular year of their educational experience.

### **A Brief Explanation of the Origins of Chesapeake and the Surrounding Cities**

For those unfamiliar with the Southeastern area of Virginia, a brief explanation of the beginnings of the cities involved is in order. This

explanation will allow the reader to become more familiar with the multi-city format of the area which otherwise could be quite confusing.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, Virginia struggled with the effects of the Brown decisions that found racial segregation of public schools unconstitutional. A variety of efforts were made to circumvent the spirit of the Supreme Court's decision. Although the court itself was popularly vilified (Muse, 1961), the localities still had to find a way to comply with its decisions. Various attempts to forestall true integration failed to pass the test of federal lawsuits. It became apparent that each of the cities known collectively as Tidewater would have to create a unitary system for all students. The term Tidewater, for our purposes, will include the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, as well as the much newer cities of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach.

In the early 1960's, Norfolk and Portsmouth were surrounded by Princess Anne County and Norfolk County. The small towns of South Norfolk and Virginia Beach were located within these counties. The cities of Norfolk (approximately 30% black) and Portsmouth (approximately 38%

black) contained the majority of Tidewater's black population (Wilkinson, 1968, pp. 116-117).

Norfolk and Portsmouth, primarily due to growth but at least partly for racial reasons, had ongoing plans to annex more land from the surrounding counties in order to gain both space for development and a larger (white) population (Butt, 1971). Virginia law made annexation a relatively simple process (Parramore, Stewart, and Boggs, 1994). The residents of the neighboring counties became alarmed that they would be forced to combine with their more urban neighbors.

Those who resisted annexation came to understand that one way to avoid joining their more populous neighbors was to incorporate into new cities (Dabney, 1971). As a result, the counties began plans to merge with the small city units within or on their boundaries in order to create new civic entities, immune to annexation by other cities. Norfolk County merged with the town of South Norfolk to form the new City of Chesapeake in 1963 (Butts, 1971). Princess Anne County merged with the town of Virginia Beach to form the new City of Virginia Beach (Dabney, 1971). A similar

process created the City of Suffolk from Nansemond County and the town of Suffolk. These mergers created three new suburban municipalities and effectively blocked future annexations by Norfolk and Portsmouth. Our focus will be on the City of Chesapeake and the integration of its secondary schools, particularly the integration of Indian River High School.

### **The Indian River Community**

The Indian River school district in 1971 was unique in many respects. To the north and west, the zone bordered the Campostella section of Norfolk and the former city of South Norfolk. These were both urban areas. To the east, the school bordered the suburban Kempsville area of Virginia Beach and to the south lay the more rural areas of Chesapeake. This unusual geographic location gave Indian River a diverse mix of students.

Most neighborhoods had been segregated; however, by 1971 this was beginning to change. The primarily white neighborhood of Georgetown,

located adjacent to the new Indian River High School building, was beginning to integrate. This was apparently somewhat painful as at least two interviewees remember rumors of the burning of a cross in the section (personal communication, Feb. 17, 1997 and Jan. 28, 1997). This also gives an indication of a type of attitude found among some members of the community, described by one white student who had transferred into Indian River as "if you're not a white red neck, you're not one of us" (personal communication, Feb. 17, 1997). Black kids found that one of the main streets of the area, Providence Road, was a "bad place to walk" due to things thrown from passing cars (personal communication, Jan. 28, 1997).

There is no indication that this was a majority viewpoint, particularly in Georgetown. One long time community member there stated that prior to the neighborhood becoming integrated, his home had been broken into three times. In the years since, he has not been robbed once (personal communication Feb. 10, 1997). There is no evidence of any type of formal protest of the integration of Indian River's schools by the white community.

The community in the Indian River school zone was solidly middle

class. A substantial portion of the community worked at the nearby Ford truck assembly plant. Although there were pockets of poorer whites (two trailer parks) and wealthier whites (waterfront homes), the majority of the white students zoned for Indian River were in the mid-range, socio-economically.

The black community that would attend Indian River was more diverse. A tiny minority had always been at Indian River (as a result of the 'choice plans' to be discussed in a later section) and lived primarily in the Queens City and Sunrise Hills neighborhoods. After the closing of the South Norfolk black high school, Carver High School, some eighty more blacks chose to attend Indian River in 1969. The majority of these students came from the Broadlawn and Strawberry Lane communities. Then in 1971, the students of the Crestwood section came to Indian River. The Crestwood and Strawberry Lane communities tended to be more middle class, while Broadlawn is primarily government housing. Queens City is an economically mixed community with a government housing project, MacDonald Manor, bordering the area.

## **Desegregation in Chesapeake**

With the formation of the City of Chesapeake on January 1, 1963 (Dabney, 1971), the school system included seven high schools. Of these seven, two were black; Carver in what was the town of South Norfolk and Crestwood in the former Norfolk County. The other five high schools, including the newly created Indian River High School, were primarily white. White students attended a white high school according to the district where they resided, while black students went to their respective black high school (Carver in South Norfolk or Crestwood for the rest of Chesapeake's black students).

As a result of the cases described in the previous section, it became apparent that black and white students would have to be allowed to attend school together. The plan to do this in Chesapeake was a choice plan. This plan gave black students a choice of attending either the white school in whose attendance zone they lived or their traditional black school.

As indicated by a casual perusal of school yearbooks, few black

students opted to leave their traditional schools. Many students had strong family ties with their black schools. Former students interviewed repeatedly stressed the sense of community in the area surrounding Crestwood High School. Black schools were a great source of pride in the community, and justifiably so, in light of national recognition earned by faculty members (Journal and Guide, "2 Teachers", Sept. 18, 1971) and a strong performance during accreditation in 1967<sup>1</sup>. Also, it took great courage for black students to choose to attend a primarily white school where they would be part of a tiny minority (U.S. commission on Civil Rights Report, 1966).

The result of this choice plan was predominately white schools, each with a handful of black students. Choice plans were a way out for school systems caught between fear of white parents, who were concerned about the effects of integration, and the concerns of black parents over the potential loss of their traditional schools (Civil Rights Commission Report, 1966). Despite the utilitarian nature of the choice plan, it still provided for two distinct and

---

<sup>1</sup>The National Study of Secondary Schools Evaluation was conducted in March of 1967. In the instructional area, Crestwood scored 4.7 on a scale of five where 4=very good and 5=excellent.

racially identifiable school systems, one white and one black. Therefore, Chesapeake's dual system was not in compliance with court decisions of the time, namely Green v. New Kent County (1968). Chesapeake would have to try another route and a truly unified school system would have to be created.

### **Chesapeake's Plan for a Unified School System**

Chesapeake developed a new plan, through zoning, one of the methods described by the Civil Rights Commission Report of 1966, to create a unified system. The original choice plan called for Carver High School, the smallest of the seven high schools, to be converted to an elementary school. Carver closed as a high school in 1969, with its students given the choice of attending either Crestwood or the white high school for which they were zoned. Those ninth and tenth grade students who chose to attend Crestwood would find themselves making a second school change two years later as a result of the eventual closing of Crestwood (see figure 1).

### **Figure 1**

- 1968** February 27-Agreement to purchase land for new Indian River High School.  
 March 19-Report to School Board of HEW visit to Chesapeake  
 Chesapeake to prepare two plans, one for implementation in September of 1968, one in September of 1969.  
 March 26- Freedom of Choice plan explained at School Board Meeting.
- 1969** June - Closing of Carver as a High School.  
 October 15-HEW approves plan to close Crestwood High School  
 December 9-Crestwood community complains about plan to close their high school at School Board Meeting.  
 December 16-Plan to keep Crestwood as a high school with a 71.5% black and 28.5% white population submitted to HEW.
- 1970** January 8-Members of white community who are zoned for Crestwood complain to board.  
 January 20-HEW rejects plan to keep Crestwood open because it will still be racially identifiable.  
 February 19-School Board Meeting, Crestwood community members upset that approved plan was developed and submitted "behind closed doors."  
 March 17-School Board Meeting-Lengthy, heated discussion about the closing of Crestwood.  
 March 23-Original plan to close Crestwood resubmitted to HEW  
 April 17-HEW rejects this plan, Chesapeake protests  
 August 20-HEW approves plan-too late for implementation during 1970-1971 school year.
- 1971** April 9-Letter from HEW comments that "they hope to react favorably" to Chesapeake plan.  
 April 16-Superintendent responds, outlining the steps that have been taken.  
 June-Last class graduates from Crestwood High School, it will become a junior high school in September.  
 July 2-NAACP suit ongoing  
 August 7- NAACP appeal rejected, Chesapeake plan approved

### **Timeline of Events in the Development of the Plan for a Unitary School District in Chesapeake**

When the choice plan was no longer acceptable under case law a plan was needed to create a unified school system. Under this plan, originally approved in October of 1969 (Personal letter, E.W. Chittum, April 16, 1971) Crestwood High School would become a Junior High School (Crestwood's last class graduated in 1971). Black students would then attend the white high school for which they were zoned, with the majority going to Indian River High since the primarily black Crestwood community fell within the Indian River zone.

HEW had already approved this plan in April of 1970 (personal letter, E.W. Chittum, April 16, 1971). The plan was very unpopular with the black community. Community groups from the area around Crestwood met with the Chesapeake School Board on numerous occasions. The black community felt that the plan to close Crestwood to achieve racial balance was created behind closed doors and submitted without their input (School Board Meeting, Feb. 17, 1970). As a result of a particularly rancorous meeting in December of 1969, the Chesapeake School Board responded to community concerns. Although HEW had already approved the plan to create a unitary

district through the closing of Crestwood, the Chesapeake School Board submitted a new plan (School Board Meeting, Dec. 16, 1969).

The new plan called for Crestwood to remain open as a High School with an approximate racial breakdown of 71% black and 29% white. It was now time for the white community to complain. It was reported that a local real estate agent was urging white home owners to sell before their homes lost value due to being zoned for primarily black Crestwood. Other whites expressed the view that the 29% white figure would not hold as many white families would leave the community rather than have their children attend a "black school" (School Board Meeting, Jan. 20, 1970).

HEW rejected this plan because Crestwood would remain racially identifiable (School Board Meeting, Jan. 20, 1970). Surprisingly, when the original plan to integrate Chesapeake Schools through the closing of Crestwood was resubmitted in March of 1970, HEW now found it, too unacceptable. The school administration in Chesapeake protested and the issue was not resolved until August of 1970 when the plan was finally approved. Both the school system and HEW felt that this date was too close

to the start of school to implement the plan during the 1970-1971 school year.

The desegregation plan was to be implemented in the fall of 1971.

However, in April of 1971, there was still HEW hedging about final acceptance of the twice approved plan . In a communication to the superintendent, HEW implied that they "hoped to react favorably" to the Chesapeake plan that the superintendent thought had been approved long before. This resulted in a scolding letter from the superintendent outlining all of the communications between the city and HEW and reminding the government agency that the plan had already been approved twice (Personal letter, Chittum, April 16, 1971). HEW eventually relented and Chesapeake prepared to implement the plan closing Crestwood in September of 1971.

In an attempt to halt the implementation of this plan, a civil case was filed in Federal Court to try to stop the closing of Crestwood (Downing v. School Board of Chesapeake, case number 623-70-N). The black community's concerns about the plan centered on two issues. First, they were concerned that the principal of Crestwood High School, was to be, in their eyes, demoted to a Junior High School Principal. Secondly, the closing of

Crestwood as a high school, rather than one of the white schools was a major concern of the black community.

These issues were litigated in an appeal cited as Downing v. The School Board of Chesapeake (1971). The court ruled that as the Crestwood High School Principal had been offered the principalship of a white high school the previous year and had refused it, and as he had not suffered any loss of salary or benefits, that Chesapeake had not treated him unfairly. As to the issue of which school to close, the court ruled that the desegregation plan had been prepared with full HEW cooperation, therefore, it must be assumed that the city had acted in good faith.

In his ruling on this appeal, Judge Walter Hoffman approved the Chesapeake plan to integrate by closing Crestwood High School on August 7, 1971 (Virginian Pilot, "Chesapeake Plan", 1971). This approval allowed schools to open on time in Chesapeake for the 1971-1972 school year (Virginian Pilot, "Few Snarls" 1971).

All of the legal battles had finally ended. Seventeen years of maneuvering had come to a close. Chesapeake's Indian River High School

would now open for the first time as a truly integrated school.

## **Events Surrounding the Closing of Carver and Crestwood High Schools**

Prior to 1969, Carver High School had been the black high school for the city of South Norfolk. It was a small high school and as a result, was unable to offer the number of courses available at the larger high schools in Chesapeake (personal communication, interview, March 12, 1997). When Carver High School was closed, in June of 1969, those students had the choice of attending either Crestwood or a white high school. Approximately one half elected to attend Crestwood. There was no provision made for these former Carver students at any of their new schools (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997).

The reception these students received at Crestwood seemed mixed. One former Carver student who eventually attended Indian River reported that she was treated badly when she entered Crestwood and that she was treated better at Indian River (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996). Although several former Carver students reported that the transition was smooth, at least one remembered some fighting "because we took their

[the Crestwood guys] girls" (personal communication, interview, March 8, 1997). Another recalled that there were a lot of fights (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997).

This was perhaps natural since the two schools had been rivals and students on both sides reported having negative feelings about the other. A Crestwood female reported that she always felt that Carver was "pretty rough" (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997), while a Carver female reported that she had negative feelings about Crestwood (personal communication, interview, Jan. 28, 1997). Some Carver students felt that it was hard to feel accepted at Crestwood (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). A teacher who taught at both schools apparently had a rough time at Carver and felt that the Carver kids had "no respect for authority" (personal communication, interview, March 4, 1997). Although the transition was accomplished, there were clearly some difficulties with the consolidation<sup>2</sup>.

When the former Carver students came to Crestwood they arrived at a

---

<sup>2</sup>Problems also occurred at Indian River when the former Carver students arrived as we will see later in this chapter.

unique school. Although students came to Crestwood from all over Chesapeake, the majority came from the nearby area and there was a strong sense of community. This community feeling came through repeatedly in interviews with former students. They often mentioned that there was such a sense of family that they could be disciplined by other parents in the community or given a meal, whichever was appropriate (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). Crestwood had many strong traditions in athletics and the arts (personal communication, interview, March 12, 1997). The school had a strong sense of identity with the community as witnessed by the many attempts to prevent its closing (Journal and Guide, "City Councilmen Speak Out", 1971).

Academically, Crestwood had a strong reputation. Although the white community tended to feel that it was an inferior school (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997), strong accreditation ratings speak differently (National Study of Secondary Schools, March 1967). The faculty was particularly outstanding, highly qualified and winning national awards (Journal and Guide, "2 Teachers", 1971). This is substantiated by the fact

that a number of former Crestwood teachers went on to administrative positions in Chesapeake. The excellence of many of the black teachers was perhaps due to the times. There were not as many opportunities for talented blacks in 1960's as there are today, hence, highly qualified blacks might have found teaching at a black school their only real option (personal communication, interview, March 12, 1997).

The dedication of the teachers was evidenced by their willingness to provide their own supplies, often purchasing paper and copying materials out of their own pockets. Several interviewees remembered that groups of teachers pooled their money to purchase their own copying machines because they were charged for copies at Crestwood (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1996).

Crestwood teachers often had to make do with inferior materials. The texts and other materials these teachers used were often older and the Crestwood students repeatedly commented on seeing the names of other students from white schools in the texts they used. After arriving at white schools, former Crestwood students at both Indian River and Oscar Smith (the former

white high school in South Norfolk) saw a substantial difference in furniture and equipment with that at the white schools being noticeably superior.

Virtually every black student who was interviewed noticed this discrepancy.

A black teacher who taught at Carver remembered not even having a teacher's edition of the text as a new teacher (personal communication, interview March 4, 1997).

Crestwood students compared favorably to those in the white schools. Two teachers (one white and one black) who spent time at both Indian River and Crestwood reported that they could find no real difference in performance between the two groups of students. One white teacher at Indian River reported that black students in the non-academic courses tended to perform poorly (personal communication, interview, Dec. 6., 1997). However, this was an isolated comment and is not consistent with interviews with over twenty other teachers. No former Crestwood student reported any academic difficulty after moving to a white school that could be attributed to stronger academics at the new school.

The Crestwood students themselves felt strongly about their school and

its academic reputation. Comments such as "we were in the top two per cent" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997) and "Crestwood was the highest academic school in the state" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997) were typical of the student comments about their school.

There is some divergence when interviewees report on the discipline environment at Crestwood. There was a great deal of unrest during the last year of Crestwood's existence as a high school. This unrest apparently centered around the closing of the school and both student and community anger about the closing. There were a number of class boycotts to protest the school's demise but the student leaders eventually discouraged these activities because they felt that missing class didn't help anything (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997).

Student comments about the closing of Crestwood consistently reflected their anger about the unfairness of it. "Why was it always black schools that were closed?"(Feb.8, 1997) or "funny how all plans involved closing black schools" (Jan. 28, 1997). Another stated "why didn't they close a white school" (personal communication, interview, March 12, 1997). The

students seemed particularly upset that "no one ever considered the white kids coming" to their school (personal communication, interview, March 25, 1997). The students consistently felt that the closing of Crestwood had racist motivations. This feeling was reflected in the comments made by their community leaders at a series of school board meetings. True or not, this perception by the minority community, that the reason for the closing of their school was racist in nature, would not bode well for the upcoming school year at Indian River.

The students even went so far as to stage a march on city hall during school hours to protest the closing. A substantial number of students actually left school and walked the several miles from Crestwood to city hall where they made their discontent known. A large portion of the student body made the march and were even accompanied by several of the younger teachers (personal communication, interview, March 4, 1997). The students sang and linked arms as they marched in what one student remembers as rainy weather (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997). The real frustration was that although one of the assistant superintendents spoke with them, even

at the time the students felt that they had accomplished nothing (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997).

Crestwood's faculty had been integrated prior to its closing. The ten or so white teachers (personal communication, interview, March 28, 1997) who came to Crestwood had an interesting time teaching an all black student body at a particularly incendiary time. The perception of the Crestwood students was that, like their texts and furniture, the white teachers sent to them were substandard (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). One female Crestwood student remembered that at the end of the year her white female teacher received a great deal of abuse, particularly on the last day. It was as if the students were "taking it out" on the white teacher [that they were closing Crestwood] and many cursed her. She still remembered terms like "white bitch" being used (personal communication, interview, Jan. 28, 1997).

Another Crestwood female student remembered that she was in a white male teacher's room during a particularly violent disturbance in the halls. The teacher informed the eight students in class that he would protect them, "he

had a gun." Whether or not he really did, she did not know (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997).

A Chesapeake administrator felt that the administration at Crestwood was just trying to keep things together during the school's last year of existence. One incident seems to bear this out. A white former Crestwood teacher remembers that an emergency faculty meeting was called at ten a.m. on a school day. The teachers were told to leave a responsible student in charge and to come to the library. In the library, a student leader was allowed to address them with his concerns. One of these concerns was that the white teachers seemed to have "too belligerent an attitude" toward the black students" (personal communication, interview, March 25, 97). Indeed, concern over student protests and boycotts would color how the administration at Indian River would react to similar situations.

### **Indian River Before 1971**

Indian River was a fairly new community school. The children there

were primarily white. They had formerly attended school at Great Bridge High, in a more rural area to the south. As Indian River grew, its population justified a separate building by the early 1960's. The site opened in 1963, and included a separate building originally intended as an elementary school.

This separate annex building soon became a part of the High School campus.

Indian River was opened in a unique manner. The school began as a junior high school. As the students became older, the school became larger. For example, the oldest students in the building one year were ninth graders, the next, these same ninth graders became tenth graders and were again the oldest in the building. Indian River opened athletically with a junior varsity schedule, gradually moving to varsity as the students got older (personal communication, Aug. 27, 1996).

One area where the new school was able to make a mark quickly was in the arts. The chorus, band (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997) and particularly the drama department were immediately respected (personal communication, interview, Dec. 27, 1997). The faculty as a whole tended to be young and idealistic (personal communication, interview, Dec.

19, 1996).

The complex itself was a standard high school design (see Appendix A). A main hall bisected the building with academic wings, the main office, and the library branching off to the right (when entering from the main exterior doors in the front of the building) and the auditorium, gymnasium, music, and shop classes branching off to the left. Originally, there was no stadium (personal communication, interview, July 7, 1995).

The school was solidly middle class. Due to tracking, the students in the more advanced classes tended to have a cohort type arrangement where they went to school in the same classroom groupings from elementary school to high school (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997).

Racially, Indian River High School was very white. A female student who had transferred to Indian River remembered Indian River as "lily white" and a "piece of cake" when compared to her more integrated school in Norfolk (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

One of the first black teachers to integrate the faculty came to Indian River in 1967. She remembered that the white students were fascinated by

her "blackness", constantly asking personal questions about her hair, her skin, even her smell. She felt that it was not done in an ugly way, but out of curiosity (personal communication, interview, Mar. 27, 1997). Another black teacher who came to Indian River in 1970 after teaching at all black schools reported that her first experience with a large number of whites "did not impress" her (personal communication, interview, March 4, 1997).

Indian River was first integrated by a single black female student (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). This young lady was quite impressive as virtually all of the white students remembered her positively. It must have been difficult being the only black student, as one white student remembered, "she had a hard time, a rough time" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). She apparently held her own and was very respected. There was at least one confrontation between this young lady and a white male in class that almost came to blows (Personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). As time passed, more black students attended Indian River, but prior to 1969, there were never more than a handful.

In the fall of 1969, things changed. Carver High School closed and those students had an opportunity to choose whether or not to attend a white high school. Approximately 75 black students enrolled at Indian River. This was still a small percentage of the approximately 1,000 high school students there, but it was different than anything that had happened before. Former Carver students at Indian River experienced problems similar to those experienced by Carver students who elected to attend Crestwood.

One white female student at Indian River was often victimized by Carver girls. It may have been racial, but the fact that the white girl was small and did not fight back may have contributed to the bullying. Regardless, she was often hit in the mouth (she wore braces) after Physical Education and a primary memory of her eighth grade year (1970-71) was the taste of blood in her mouth. In a separate incident on the last day of school in June of 1971, she was knocked down and beaten by a group of black girls to the point where her father came to school with a gun to demand action (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997).

There were some ugly incidents for the black students as well.

Although unclear which year, one white student remembered a small black boy being hung by the belt in his pants and left hanging on a bathroom stall, too small to get down by himself (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1997). One black student who spent his entire high school career at Indian River, reported no incidents of mistreatment beyond some comments in the hallway.

There were problems during the 1970-71 school year, but many of the former Carver students were able to blend in. One former Carver teacher who ended up at Indian River recalled a girl who was a real "hellion at Carver" was "an angel" in her class at Indian River. Whether it was maturity or the change in climate is unclear, but there was a change (personal communication, interview, March 4, 1997). Another white girl remembered a "really neat black guy" in her tenth grade English class (1969-1970) who had "his own personality" and a "really big afro" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 1, 1996).

## **Conclusion**

Both the students at Indian River and Crestwood were from community schools. Neither had much personal experience with the opposite race. Many of the Crestwood students believed that they had lost their school due to racist indifference to their community and its desires.

The students from Crestwood were promised a brand new school building that would be larger and more modern than their previous facility. As one teacher put it, "they sold the closing of Crestwood by touting the new Indian River" (personal communication, interview, March 25, 1997). Unfortunately, that facility was not ready at the opening of school due to a steel workers strike. When school opened in September of 1971, the Crestwood students came to an Indian River High School building that was no larger than the building at Crestwood and may actually have been smaller.

## **Chapter Five The Opening of School**

### **Preparation at Crestwood**

The students interviewed consistently agree that there was very little preparation for the integration of Indian River High School. Apparently there were rumors among the students that Crestwood might be closed as early as 1969-1970 (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). Most Crestwood students did not seem to regard the rumors as having much substance until late spring of 1971 when a formal announcement of the closure was made during an assembly at the school (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997).

Several of the black students interviewed mentioned that their parents seemed uninvolved in the process. According to a black student leader, the community "was hostile, but pushed toward integration." He felt that the parents questioned whether "their children could get a first class education" at a segregated school (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997).

The time period of the late 1960's and early 1970's was one in which

the term "generation gap" was frequently used and may help to explain why the black students felt disjointed from their parents. As one black student said, "my parents never talked about race, it wasn't until Indian River that race was an issue" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

Crestwood students were angry over the closing and responded with boycotts and a march on city hall as mentioned in the previous chapter. They seemed to feel that racial events on television that had "seemed distant" were now happening here in Chesapeake. To one former student, the closing was simply "racist" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

The former Crestwood students were especially concerned that a group of "kids from one neighborhood, insulated, with most of their contact with their own race" would now go to a "white school" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). The break up of this cohesive community family had a "profound negative effect" and resulted in many "painful memories" (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997). The Crestwood students felt that "they were closing our school. None of the younger kids understood everything" but felt that it was "no accident that they closed a

black school" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

There had been some discussion of a boycott extending into September of 1971. The idea was for the black students to meet at the Crestwood High football stadium and hold a rally instead of reporting to school on the first day at Indian River. Apparently the idea died over the summer as the senior leadership at Crestwood (class of 1971) prepared for college (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

Crestwood was not simply closed; its students were divided among four separate high schools (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997). Some of the long standing anger about this spilled over when the Crestwood students held their own twentieth reunion (Crestwood class of 1972-the rising seniors that went to other schools after Crestwood closed as a high school). This was an effort to bring together the students who were divided among several high schools (personal communication, interview, Nov. 6, 1997). White students felt that the separate reunion was another indication that the Crestwood students wanted no part of Indian River (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

Athletes were aware of the change of schools and a group of Crestwood ball players reported to Indian River football practice. Former Crestwood cheerleaders were placed on the Indian River squad. All elected offices, class and SCA (Student Cooperative Association) that had been selected during the previous year were to function at Indian River. Each office would have two holders, one white from Indian River and one black from Crestwood (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995).

### **Preparation at Indian River**

Indian River students agreed with their counterparts at Crestwood that there was little formal preparation for integration. Most students remember no preparation at all. One student quite logically stated that there must not have been much preparation or separate SCA and class officers would not have been necessary (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). Several students remembered an assembly where the principal announced that the students would be coming from Crestwood. One in particular recalled the

principal's comments that asked the Indian River students to consider how they would respond if "they lost their home base" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997).

A number of the Indian River students remember the matter of the Crestwood students coming as a possibility that was "much discussed" but remembered no formal preparation (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997). Another former athlete commented that there was "no preparation except by the coaches" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 18, 1997).

When it became clear that the Crestwood students were coming, one Indian River girl reacted with "shock" that it was "like foreigners had come in," "that it was like their school invaded our school" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 1, 1997). Another white student remembered being told that the black students were coming because "their school was old and outdated" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

A black student, who had attended Indian River throughout his high school career, had an interesting perspective. Although black, he had not

come from either Carver or Crestwood. His military family had moved to Chesapeake at the outset of his high school years. This individual "was pleased to have a larger percentage of blacks" but concerned that they were "not gonna come into our school" and take over. He also felt that because their school was taken away, the Crestwood students "didn't get a chance to excel" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 30, 1997).

Several students from both Indian River and Crestwood commented that individual family values had a great deal to do with your attitude toward the coming integration. One white girl stated that her family was from South Carolina and that her Dad was "very racist." The things that she remembered most were "the fears that my parents generated. When I came home each day I was asked 'How was school? Was there any trouble? Did anything happen to you?' My family was negative about race" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997).

## Faculty Preparation

As early as the 1969-70 school year at least one Indian River teacher tried to prepare students for racial integration. A white male student remembers his black history teacher that year giving the class a quiz on current black terminology. This quiz elicited some negative comments from the white students such as "this is stupid" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

A black teacher whose career began in September of 1971 was "glad to have a job." She was not prepared in any way and stated that "I don't know what I expected but I ran into integration." This teacher noted that "the Crestwood students wanted to stay at Crestwood" and were unhappy at Indian River. She also noted a lack of sensitivity among many whites (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1997).

Another black teacher who had come to Indian River in 1970, a year before the Crestwood students came, felt that she met with a great deal of hostility from fellow faculty members. For example, "you would walk into

the teachers' lounge and there would be silence, you speak to people and they don't speak back, walk through the office and not be spoken to, I just didn't feel welcome" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1997). In contrast, several other black teachers who came from Crestwood a year later reported no difficulties. One stated when specifically asked that he "never experienced any lack of sensitivity" from the faculty or administration. A second described the principal as "being firm, but having a gentle side that allowed him to diffuse conflicts" (personal communication, interview, July 6, 1995).

As far as the attitude at Indian River toward the coming of the Crestwood students, different teachers appeared to have different perceptions. One black teacher reported that the white administration seemed to feel that "the black kids are coming, we may as well get ready because they will be here" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1997). Another black teacher commented that the administration seemed to feel that "the faculty would have trouble understanding black kids" (personal communication, interview, March 4, 1997).

Several black faculty members agreed with the statement made by one that many black parents expressed appreciation that she was there for their children (personal communication, interview, Dec.17. 1997). Not only were black teachers concerned with their own professional situation, the black community seemed to expect them to look out for black students. Balancing this expectation with loyalty to the administration may have been difficult at times.

Faculty members who came from Crestwood were instrumental in keeping problems under control at Indian River. A black administrator at Indian River who had been a teacher and guidance counselor at Crestwood (personal communication, interview, April 1, 1997) was very important to the process. White and black students in interview after interview spoke of their respect for this individual. This gave the black students a trusted adult that they could go to who, being black and from Crestwood, understood their plight (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997). This same individual was trusted to be fair by the white students (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997).

Classroom teachers helped a great deal in preparing the students for integration once they arrived at Indian River. Former students consistently commented on the positive attitude displayed by the faculty. One white student remembered a black teacher who told her class that "there shouldn't be any problem, but if you see one, and you are not in it, move on." The teacher went on to tell her class, "Nothing will change. We'll learn from each other." This white female student felt that the teachers "held it together" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). Teachers attempted to not have students "cluster by color in class" (personal communication, interview, March 4, 1997). Homeroom teachers tried to give students some preparation in dealing with each other (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996).

Many male students of both races commented on how the coaches helped keep the situation under control. Although the football staff was all white, they apparently knew a number of black football players from summer practice. This gave them an advantage over other white teachers in dealing with problems in the school. They were consistently called upon to help with

extra duties (personal communication, interview, Nov. 10, 1996).

The guidance department in particular remembered a number of in-service meetings prior to the start of school. The objective of these meetings was to "help counselors work with black and white students." The summer prior to the start of school was very difficult as "all of the Crestwood students had to be hand scheduled." This necessitated many hours of work (personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997).

Once the schedules went out, some white parents were unhappy that their students were placed with black teachers. The administration had made it clear to guidance that this was not an acceptable reason for a schedule change. One white parent came in and heatedly asked, "Would you let your kids be taught by a black teacher?," to which the white guidance counselor replied, "Yes," thereby eliciting threats of legal action and a slammed door. Interestingly, this individual apologized for her outburst some twenty years later (personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997).

This incident illustrates some of the problems that both teachers and the administration had to deal with. An exceptionally strong black teacher

(she later became an assistant principal for instruction) commented in her interview that although she knew she had excellent credentials, she still found herself with "something to prove" to her white students. She went on to emphasize that as a strong teacher, this did not affect her teaching style. She was aware that some white parents were initially concerned that their children were to be taught by a black teacher, particularly in advanced classes (personal communication, interview, July 6, 1995). The fact that black teachers were determined not to be intimidated by white students is an indication that such intimidation was a concern.

The administration as a whole and particularly the building principal was placed in a difficult position during this period. It was his first year as the principal of Indian River High School. Although familiar with the Indian River community as an elementary principal and with several years experience as a secondary school principal at Oscar Smith, the building principal at Indian River would still be starting his first year there in September of 1971.

His administrative team included two assistant principals. One

assistant principal was the black male mentioned above. He handled discipline and administrative functions. The other assistant principal, a white female, handled instruction. She was the first female administrator in Chesapeake. The guidance department included three white females and one white male. The principal was starting out in a new school at a difficult time with an administrative team that was new to him and to some extent to each other (personal communication, interview, July 25, 1995).

The official administrative position for the city of Chesapeake can be inferred by comments from the superintendent and assistant superintendent at various principals' meetings. The assistant superintendent advised principals to "hold tight and hang loose on firming up boundary lines until we get [final] approval of our plan (personal communication, memo, March 25, 1970). The superintendent of Chesapeake public schools at the time wrote, "The next two years will be critical in education, we will hold and refine our present programs" (personal communication, memo, March 13, 1970). Chesapeake would try to hold its ground in the face of integration. No proactive policies would be inaugurated. Chesapeake's policy would be reactive in nature.

This policy limited the building principal's freedom to take the initiative in dealing with the problems faced during integration. The building level administration was consistently described as positive and one teacher recalls the principal telling him, "If we can just get through Thanksgiving, we will be all right" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997). He did not know how prophetic those words would turn out to be, although at the time he probably believed that the new building would be completed by Thanksgiving and that would provide some relief.

The administration was faced with white parents who were very concerned about safety issues. They seemed to feel that the black students would be dangerous. These white parents were also concerned about the black teachers their children would have. Black parents were concerned that any action taken by the school be fair and that there be no hint of prejudice in any school decision. Students on both sides were wary of each other from the beginning. Virtually any action taken by the school principal was scrutinized carefully under the lens of race (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995). Even some of the faculty members felt that the building principal was

in a "no win situation" between the black and white parents (personal communication, interview, March 28, 1997) and the city administration that expected the principal to "keep a lid on things" (personal communication, interview, July 25, 1995).

Added to these difficulties was the close scrutiny of the federal government. Both faculty members and administrators interviewed felt that the representatives of HEW who visited the school were "looking for problems". One black teacher was stopped in the hall by the principal and asked to speak to an HEW team, which was evaluating the school. She was totally surprised, but of course complied with the principal's request. This teacher remembered being asked if "she had a longer trip to work now?" To which she replied, "If six minutes is appreciably longer than three minutes, then yes I do." She was also asked what she taught at Crestwood, to which she replied, "Senior english." She was then asked what she was teaching at Indian River, to which she again replied, "Senior english." This teacher's final comment on the matter is telling, "I don't think I gave them the type of answers they were looking for (personal communication, interview, July 6,

1995). A guidance counselor remembered one HEW investigator who asked how many black students were in a particular class. When she replied that she "didn't see white children or black children, only students" he did not seem to like the answer (personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997).

## Reports From Other Areas

As a whole, the black community in Tidewater reacted positively to the news that the local schools would be forced to become unitary systems with no racially recognizable schools. The local black paper, the Journal and Guide, reported with banner headlines that the Norfolk plan had been approved ("All City Schools Lower Bars", 1971). The means to achieve complete integration was busing in Norfolk and Portsmouth and the closure of Crestwood in Chesapeake and the traditional black schools in Virginia Beach (Union Kempsville).

As blacks came to understand that they would lose some of their traditional community schools, like Crestwood and Norcom, there was some resistance. Busing of students to achieve racial integration was unpopular among many whites and blacks (Journal and Guide, "Blacks State Position", 1971). Boycotts and violence were threatened but schools in the region experienced a calm opening (Virginian Pilot, "Calm Opening", 1971).

Chesapeake and Portsmouth schools opened on September 7, 1971.

Norfolk schools began their year a week later. This late opening was due to a busing flap caused by an increase in bus fares. This increase was made necessary by the large number of students using city buses under the new integration plan. These increased bus fares were at odds with President Nixon's wage price freeze and schools could not open until the matter was resolved (Virginian Pilot, "Opening Date Still Uncertain", 1971).

Allegations were made that large numbers of Norfolk and Portsmouth students were attending Chesapeake schools in an effort to escape busing. Some Norfolk officials alleged that "up to 20%" of their white students had left and gone to Chesapeake. Enrollment figures reported by Chesapeake did not support this claim (Virginian Pilot, "City Boundary Jumping Charged", 1971).

Throughout September and early October of 1971, Norfolk experienced several incidents serious enough to be reported in the paper. All of these incidents involved student-on-student violence with racial overtones. On October 10, 1971 the Superintendent of Norfolk Public Schools alleged that the integration plan was a failure. The Superintendent was quoted as

saying that "more than one half of school discipline problems were linked to busing" (Virginian Pilot, "Mix Plan Failing", 1971). A report by the Norfolk police department revealed 330 school incidents during the first thirty-seven school days (Journal and Guide, "37 Day Reports Reveal", 1971).

Portsmouth also experienced difficulties. During football season, a number of serious incidents following night games (Journal and Guide, "Police Pursue Assaults on 5", 1997) caused football games to be moved to Saturday afternoons (Virginian Pilot, "Portsmouth Football Games Shifted", 1971).

The most serious incident in Portsmouth came about due to a plan to convert the traditional black high school there, I.C. Norcom, to a vocational school (Journal and Guide, "Portsmouth School Plan Accepted", 1971).

During the week beginning on Monday, December 13, through the closing of school for the holiday, Norcom students conducted a boycott with the support of the local black community (Journal and Guide, "Norcom Students Strike", 1971). This boycott culminated on Wednesday December 15, with less than 10% of the students in school (Ledger Star, "Norcom H.S. Students

Boycotting", 1971).

Throughout Virginia and the nation, these types of incidents were not uncommon. Even a casual reading of the newspapers of the time reveals numerous articles about problems with integration and busing. A Pontiac, Michigan protest against busing led to women chaining themselves to gates through which buses would have to pass in an effort to halt integration (Journal and Guide, "Pontiac, Michigan Busing Disturbance", 1971). Early in 1972, the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, closed all of its public schools for at least a day following a disturbance by a group of white students at a black culture assembly (Ledger Star, "All Charlottesville Schools Closed", 1972). These two incidents were indicative of the climate of the time and were by no means isolated.

The black newspaper in southern Virginia, the Journal and Guide, published accounts of studies in North Carolina and Georgia supporting integration and its effects on students ("Quality of Education", 1971 and "Desegregation Rated Benefit", 1971). Students in local schools tended to observe the uproar and feel that "things are not as bad here" (personal

communication, interview, Jan. 2, 1997). Even students at other schools felt that things were not as bad at their school as at others. For example, one former Crestwood student went to Oscar Smith. Her perception was that things were much worse at Indian River. She had heard that at Indian River the word "nigger" was often heard in the halls and white girls got "their hair cut by black girls in the restrooms" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 28, 1997). A black male student at Indian River stated "It wasn't nearly as bad as at other places on the news and stuff" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). Consistently, those interviewed seemed to feel that things elsewhere were worse than at their respective schools.

### **Student Attitudes About Integration**

At least some of the white students felt that they "tried to make the [Crestwood kids] welcome" and that the administration tried to "cater to blacks" (personal communication, interview, March 22, 1997). A white male

remembered the tremendous influx of black students that year and that he "felt sorry for them" because they had "lost their school" and had to go to an almost all white school (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). Another white female reported that she felt that the blacks had been "uprooted from school and left on the doorstep, like orphans" and that with "all the new faces... would you ever be able to bridge the gap to know them" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

Commenting on the black students and their attitudes, a white female said that "some blacks made an earnest effort to fit in" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997). However, at least one white student (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996) and one black teacher (personal communication, interview, July 6, 1995) said that the black students seemed to "come in with a chip on their shoulder." Another white girl mentioned what she described as the black students' "reluctance to fit in" (personal communication, interview, March 22, 1997).

The majority of the white students interviewed recalled feeling negative about the blacks' entry into "their school". This view was reflected in a

number of comments such as this one by a white student government leader:

"This is our school and they're just going to have to adjust" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). Many of the white students seemed to feel that "this is our territory" and these are "our activities" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996) or "here they come to take over our stuff" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996).

Three white students interviewed simultaneously (two male and one female) seemed to agree that they "weren't taught to view blacks as people." White students were expected to "stick with your kind" and to avoid those [black students] who "were not your kind" (personal communication, interview, Nov 13, 1996).

A white male football player summed up this attitude when he stated, "They didn't want to be here and we didn't want them to be here. We didn't ask them to come" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 8, 1996).

Another white football player agreed with this sentiment but also noted, "We meshed on the football field" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1997). A white female remembered that there seemed to be more fights after

the Crestwood kids came because the black students were "less prepared to accept the merge that the white kids" (personal communication, interview, March 22, 1997).

Some of the white students were brutally honest in their appraisal of the situation. A white girl stated, "We were selfish. We thought that we were too good. We had the best school," and we didn't want to "grow and expand" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). Another white female noted that the "white kids didn't care if the black kids fit in or not; some [white kids] did, but the vast majority did not" and that the school was not "culturally mixed for three or four years" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

Most white students interviewed noted an increase in fighting after the merger of the schools. One white male felt that it was the "regular old bullies" and they were "mostly white" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996). Another felt that crowding made a big difference (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996) and a strong majority of all those interviewed (twenty-six of thirty-four of both races who were actually asked

that specific question) agreed that "overcrowding was a major cause of problems during this school year" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). There were some students that felt that there were few fights and when there were, "only small numbers were involved" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1996).

A black student also felt that the "biggest problem was that the halls were so crowded" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). A black female student that had made the move from Carver to Crestwood as a ninth grader and now had to move from Crestwood to Indian River felt that the situation was a little worse at Indian River. The black kids at Indian River had to "pull together as a race" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

Black students were "used to traveling in groups" due to segregation and traveling the halls in groups provided both a "comfort zone" and "safety in numbers." As described by one black male student, the hallways were crowded but the white kids would "part like the red sea" when a group of black kids came through. It was like the white students were "more leery of

us than we were of them" and they tended to "avoid us" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). The school administration would view this tendency to travel the halls in groups much differently.

Many black students didn't want to be at Indian River and the seniors from Crestwood were "really resentful" reported one black female (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). Even the teachers "made us feel like they didn't want us to be there" especially during the first month of school (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). A black athlete stated that "many of the black kids had only negative experiences" and were "angry and had trouble adjusting." " They did not know what to expect" and the "white kids did not know how to react" to them (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

Things seemed to go smoother for the former Crestwood athletes who already knew some white students and coaches because of summer practice (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997). It was also helpful that the Crestwood students met black football players who had played at Indian River the year before. Even so, one black football player felt that the

team's attitude was that it "looked like we have to accept you, they sent you" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

### **The First Day of School**

For many of the kids from Crestwood, the first day of school was a scary experience. One reported that she was scared because of "not really having any exposure or used to being with white people" and it was "like a forced deal, not on friendly terms." This black girl was concerned that if a fight broke out in this building that was new to her, "she wouldn't know where to go" (personal communication, interview, March 15, 1997). Another black girl mentioned that she was frightened because "she didn't know what to expect." She was especially concerned because she was "not a stereotype" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

A black male felt that "there was animosity from day one." The white kids seemed scared. "They [whites] were always on one side of the hallway, like we were criminals or something." "They're on one side like they're so

much better. We didn't want to be there either" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). Apparently as a result of this separation, the black students felt that they had to "support each other" and act as "support mechanisms" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

Again, the fact that the new Indian River building was not ready contributed to the problems of merging the schools. One black student remembered that it seemed like "they had sent us from a bigger school" to one that was so overcrowded that he "couldn't walk down the hall" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

Some black students were philosophical about the consolidation. One stated that it was like the white kids' "hierarchy" had been upset and "had to sort itself out" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). Another black male who had been at Indian River before integration felt that "there was not a lot of prejudice. The Indian River kids had adapted to being around black kids" and that people tried to be friendly. But you always remembered that attitude of "I'm white and you're black" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 30, 1997).

Specific recollections the white students had of the first day are consistent with those of the black students but with an understandably different slant. For example, one white girl remembers that there were "black kids everywhere," this was new and "we weren't used to it." But that the "blacks stood off by themselves, I guess they were as scared as we were" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). Another white female felt that there was a lot of "tenseness" on the first day and that the black students "seemed to come in with an attitude" either stating it verbally or through their "body language" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996). Two former white Indian River students recalled little specifically about the first day except that there "seemed to be more groups hanging together" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997). Another white student stated that "I personally didn't have a problem" on the first day, but "I was a little nervous about it, I'm not sure why" (personal communication, interview, March 22, 1997).

One incident remembered by a white female seemed particularly poignant. Apparently, on the first day of school this white female had

befriended a black girl and helped her find her classes. She did this because she felt that "they [black students] were as scared as we were." But as time passed and "cliques formed", this same black friend now "refused to acknowledge her" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

Teachers also felt the tension on the first day. A black teacher from Crestwood detected a an attitude of "resentment" from the former Crestwood students that he felt was "natural," especially considering that they felt integration was "something that was jammed down their throats." He also remembered that there had been "bad kids and gangs" at both Crestwood and Indian River prior to the merger (personal communication, interview, March 12, 1997). A white teacher felt that "everybody was apprehensive just, because we and they were different" (personal communication, interview, March 24, 1997). A black female teacher felt that the kids were "standoffish" on the first day and that there is more socializing today [1996] than there was then. Both the black and white kids seemed to "have a chip on their shoulder" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1996).

Of course integration on this scale was something that neither race was

used to. The students "didn't know each other" and "didn't even try to know each other." The students segregated themselves (personal communication, interview, March 12, 1997).

In an apparent effort to alleviate some of the tension, the principal called several meetings of the black students in order to hear their concerns (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997). A black student leader felt that this was a "bad idea" as it led to even more feelings of separation (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997).

### **The Bus Situation and Boycott**

On the first day of school, the black students from Crestwood rode the bus to Indian River. For many of these students it was their first ride on a school bus . Crestwood was a centralized community where a majority of the students had walked to school. Riding the bus was a new experience for them. The black students felt that their buses were overcrowded, as only one bus was allotted to each of the black neighborhoods in Crestwood; Crestwood, Crestwood Manor, and Old Crestwood (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). As a result, the black students reacted the way the previous year's leaders had, they decided to boycott class.

On the second day of school, after arriving on their crowded buses, the black students stayed in the hallway, refusing to go to class. The administration quickly gathered the black students in the auditorium. As the teachers and administrators still did not know many of the black students' names, the principal recalls ordering pictures taken of the students who refused to go to class so that they could be identified later (this incident of

photography took place, but it is unclear if it took place during the bus boycott or later, near Thanksgiving). The principal, remembering the number of boycotts and protests that took place at Crestwood the previous year, was determined to nip this in the bud. The students were immediately given the option of going to class or being suspended from school (personal communication, interview, July 11 1997).

The number of students boycotting was somewhere between 70 and 90 of the nearly 250 former Crestwood students at Indian River. When confronted with the possibility of suspension, approximately one third returned to class. Between 50 and 60 elected to return home and walked back to Crestwood, missing school (Va. Pilot, "Negroes Protest Crowding", Sept. 9, 1971, p. C2).

The parents of the suspended students were outraged. They came to school the next day and spent hours in the office discussing the matter (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997). The parents apparently did not receive satisfaction at the school, so the following day, they went to the School Administration Building in Great Bridge to meet with the

superintendent. The building principal was summoned from Indian River to respond to the parents' complaints (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995).

In the meeting with the superintendent and the upset parents, the principal finally had "had enough." He stated that "no disrespect, but yesterday I spent five hours discussing this and today over an hour. If I'm wrong, then I'm the wrong principal of Indian River High School." The principal considered this "a proud moment" when he refused to bend to pressure (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995). The suspensions were upheld. This author has been unable to find any mention of further boycotts at Indian River during the 1971-1972 school year.

### **Late Buses**

When originally discussing the bus boycott issue, the building principal stated that the cause of the boycott was that the black students arrived at school later than the whites (personal communication, interview, July, 11,

1995). This was not the true cause of the boycott, and as was born out in other interviews, the facts were essentially what has been stated above.

However, the idea that the black students were deliberately bused to school later than the white students is factual. It is unclear who made the actual decision, but it is clear from interviews with the building principal (July 11, 1995), faculty members (Dec. 16, 1996), and former students (Nov. 6, 1996) that the black students arrived substantially after the white students.

Apparently this was out of concern that if the black students had too much time on their hands they would get into trouble and create problems. The safest course seemed to be to limit their "socialization time" (personal communication, interview, July 25, 1995).

According to one black student, the effect was the opposite. He stated that although his "bus was late, there was always a fight on the bus ramp." Interestingly, this same student remembered the actual bus ride to school (he'd always walked before) as a "lot of fun" when he and his friends could laugh and joke (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

Many black students were unaware of the late buses, but the black

faculty members noticed that "the black kids had to make up their work at lunch because they did not get to school on time" to do so in the morning (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1996). White teachers agreed that the black kids seemed to feel that they were arriving late, but the white teachers felt that there was "so much going on we were just glad to get through the day" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996).

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that many of the black students who arrived at Indian River were angry about the entire situation. The fact that the new building was not ready and the old building was overcrowded exacerbated the situation. Many felt that racism was the root cause of their displacement. White students were generally not in a welcoming mood.

Students in general were nervous as school began. The attitude of tenseness is constantly mentioned. The hallways were segregated by the students, groups staying together. The opening was "smooth and calm"

(Virginian Pilot, "Calm delights", 1971) but very uneasy.

The attitude of "ours and theirs" was prevalent and there seemed to be little sense of "we" at the start of school. The administration was in a difficult situation where little could be done except to react to potential problems.

Even then, every action had to be carefully considered from various racial, community and political viewpoints.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Integration and The Normal Workings of a School**

#### **Introduction**

After the opening of school, the question became, how would the black and white students get along? The vast majority of those reading this paper will be products of some type of school. In schools there are three general areas where students are exposed to each other and have an opportunity for social interaction. First there is the classroom, where, in a controlled environment, the students are exposed to one another. Second, there are the hallways and other areas of the school that students use to socialize when they have free time during the school day. Third, there are the extra-curricular activities that take place primarily after school.

Each of these areas will be dealt with in turn. In-class experiences will

be discussed first. This area tends to break down around student and teacher perceptions and recollections of specific events. The second area, hallways and other areas, will break down into categories surrounding the actual locations discussed, primarily the hallways, restrooms, bus ramp and cafeteria. Thirdly, a cross section of extra-curricular activities will be discussed. The various topics in this area gradually arranged themselves into four rather broad categories: athletics, music and dance, student sponsored activities and school sponsored activities.

### **In The Classroom: White Students Recall**

On October 3, 1971, the *Virginian Pilot* published an article ("School Casino) about an Indian River High School classroom where the teacher used a school casino in order to teach probability and statistics. The photographs accompanying the article showed black students and white students working together and enjoying themselves. All research indicates that this was typical of the classrooms in the school during this time period. All students

interviewed reported that there were very few problems in the classroom and the majority of those that did occur were usually chalked up to "bad kids" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997).

One of the favorite teachers mentioned by students was a black teacher who came over from Crestwood, "the lady with the bracelet." This teacher was highly respected and was quoted directly during the interview process as providing personal encouragement such as "all must personally excel," "give it your best" and when racial matters came up, "we're all people" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). She was described as "great" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 2, 1997) by two separate white males (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). Another white female recalled specifically that she was "thrilled" when this teacher took the time to bring her a book that the teacher thought would help with her reading difficulties (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

All of the black teachers at Indian River appear to have been highly respected. One apparently had some personal problems that the students were aware of, but was still not referred to negatively (personal

communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). White students consistently said positive things about their black teachers. In describing one black teacher who had been at Indian River before the merger with Crestwood, a white male recalled that everyone "wanted her class" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). A white girl did not remember any black teachers until she looked at the yearbook and then saw that one of her favorite teachers had been black (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996). Another white male felt that the black teachers were "of high quality" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996).

According to the white students interviewed, there were only a few racial problems in the classroom. One recalled that some white boys made ugly comments in a black teacher's class (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996). Another remembered the time in class that she used the term "colored" to a black girl that she had known before integration. The girl responded with "colored, what color?" The white girl concluded that 1971-1972 was "the year we had to learn to say black" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 1, 1996). A third white girl in the vocational education

program felt that the black students were treated differently than the white students. White students were expected to get jobs or they were out of the program. This white girl felt that black students often did not have jobs, yet they were allowed to remain in the program. She felt this was unfair and that the teachers were afraid to confront the black kids. One day there were words about this issue in class resulting in a confrontation among the black and white students, but nothing was resolved (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996). Another white girl remembered a "tension, a resentfulness by blacks who had lost their school" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 2, 1996).

Consistently, white students remembered their classroom experiences as positive. They did often recall their surprise at their first experience with black students in an academic environment. One white student still remembered a black student giving an oral report in class, how well he did, and that "he was not intimidated" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). Another recalled that blacks in her classes "impressed her" and a "couple of real sharp guys" were as good or better than anyone in the class

(personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

### **In The Classroom: Black Student Comments**

A significant portion of black students felt that the classroom environment was "race neutral" and people "got along" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 30, 1996). Comments such as "my teachers were okay" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997) or the "teachers felt neutral" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997) were common.

Although all interviewees believed that there were far more difficulties in the hallways than in class, many reported specific incidents or problems in the classroom. One black male specifically remembered a fight that took place in a classroom and the students in the neighboring classrooms spilling out to see "what was going on" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

A black female student felt that one reason that there were so few problems in class was that the teachers "were very careful. They put on a face like everyone else" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). A

black male remembered that in the classroom "the hostility was thick" and that sometimes black students would make comments like "we were never taught to do things this way" (personal communication, interview, Mar.19, 1997).

Two incidents that may have been isolated help to explain how the black students felt. The first involved a white teacher and a black male student who missed a lot of school. The student who reported the incident felt that "she [the white teacher] jumped him every day" that he was present "like she was out to get him." Eventually the black student "couldn't take it anymore and just blew up." The student who reported this incident felt that the white teacher was racially motivated in her treatment of this black student who was frequently absent (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

A second incident involved a black female in a government class who really liked the white teacher. She had been an 'A' or 'B' student early in the year. The things she liked best about the class were the discussions and the opinion questions. During a particular discussion, the logic of the issue led to

her saying that the teacher was prejudiced. At this point the teacher got angry and said "No, you're prejudiced." From this point on the black female became a 'C' student. She did not feel that this was a coincidence (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997).

### **In the Classroom: Black Teachers Comment**

Some black teachers at Indian River felt apprehension at the start of the school year. An administrator reported that one black teacher asked not to be observed for evaluation early in the year, because she was nervous about the tense situation (personal communication, interview, Nov. 10, 1996). Most reported no concerns about teaching white students. A new black teacher reported that she was "made welcome" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996) and another recalled that her fellow English teachers were "very receptive" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 4, 1997). The black teachers seemed to agree with the sentiment related by one male from

Crestwood "that overall things in class went very well" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997).

Several isolated incidents were reported by the black teachers. One female teacher recalled that the lights often went out in the old building. On one occasion when this occurred, a white boy said to her, "Smile, so I can see you." A white girl immediately told the boy to be quiet and apologized to the teacher. On another occasion this teacher reported that a white girl came up to her and pointed out a dark skinned black boy (the teacher was light skinned) and said, "Look at that boy. Doesn't he look just like a nigger to you." She felt that this had to do with his dark complexion. In spite of this incident, this same teacher reported she "did not encounter any racism, although others did" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1996).

A first-year teacher reported that although she was made welcome in the beginning, she later began to feel that some questioned her credentials because she was from a predominantly black college. The question of her preparation was put directly to her by an administrator (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996).

At times a single event could be interpreted as racial in nature by both white and black teachers. One such incident involved the burning of the paper Christmas decorations on a classroom door. When this incident was first reported during this research, by an administrator, it was felt that the burning was directed toward a white teacher who may not have been perceived as fair toward her black students (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995). In a later interview, a black teacher felt that it was directed at her since she also taught in that classroom (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996). The white administrator attributed this event to black students, the black teacher felt that white students had done it. This researcher did not discover which was correct.

A common occurrence for both black and white teachers was for personal problems in the classroom to be attributed to race. One black male teacher felt that a white female student worked inappropriately in his elective class and consistently graded her work lower because it did not meet his expectations. He felt that she "resented his high standards." The white girl later tried to complain to the administration about perceived racism on his

part. The student complained that the black teacher played "black music" while the students worked. He in fact played only classical music. The teacher felt supported by the administration and later said that the female student became very close to him by the end of the year (personal communication, interview, Mar.12, 1997).

Another black teacher encountered some problem with previous relationships between the administration and white parents. She had a parent conference with a white parent and a white administrator who had previously known each other. The white parent apparently had a background in education in another city and tried to exclude the black teacher from the conference so that she could resolve the matter with her friend, the white administrator. The black teacher refused to leave the conference until she felt that the matter had been handled in a satisfactory manner (personal communication, interview, Mar. 4, 1997).

**In The Classroom:  
The White Teachers**

Again, the majority of white teachers felt that things went well in the classroom. "The faculty gelled quickly, more so than the students" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996). Yet there was some strain. One white female teacher reported that she was "worried that I would not say or do something that would not make them [the black students] feel welcome" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996). A white male teacher felt that relations were good and that there were "no incidents" in his elective classroom (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997). A student teacher who came to Indian River during this school year felt that in class things went well and that the students were "good kids" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997).

A white social studies teacher recalled that her black department head encouraged teachers to "push more black history" and she remembered this as positive. This same teacher related an incident where her students, who felt she pushed them hard, painted the class podium with her name and the title "the great slave driver." The administration was upset and failed to see the humor (personal communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996).

One white teacher felt that many white teachers catered to black students. He felt that the white teachers were in a "no win situation" where no matter how hard they tried to be impartial, someone was always critical. He felt that this caused great "tension and stress" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996).

### **Between Classes: The Hallways**

The vast majority of those interviewed, and virtually all of the students, remembered the hallways as very crowded. It is important to remember that school opened in the old junior high building which, together with the annex, housed grades eight through twelve. The lower grades met with their classes primarily in the annex building. The upper grades used the main building. With the addition of the Crestwood students the campus was very crowded, especially the hallways.

Many students referred to crowding as "a major issue" (personal

communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). One black student went so far as to say that the crowding of the halls was "the biggest problem" and that the black kids were angry. They had expected more room. He also heard many racial slurs in the hallway but did not personally witness any fights (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). Another black student commented that the crowding contributed to general "frustration" and "you could feel the hostility" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997).

Teachers also noticed that the halls were badly overcrowded. One reported that the students "were like sardines" in the hallways (personal communication, interview, Dec.19, 1996). Another stated "surely there was tension there" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997). A white male teacher recalled fights starting "over nothing at all, just someone bumping into another and not saying excuse me" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997).

This crowding contributed to many problems. One group of white students reported that you didn't want "to bump into anyone or go the wrong way" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996) and another white

male recalled that the overcrowded halls "were pressurized and created problems" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). A black girl agreed that "while there was no problem getting places," there was a lot of "elbows and pushing that started fights" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). A white male "hurried to class to avoid problems" in the hallway and, according to him, there were "some halls you did not go down" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996).

White girls were especially taken aback by this crowding. One remembered that black guys would pull her hair (she was blonde and felt this was the reason) or "just stare her up and down" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 1, 1996). Another recalled that the "halls were very uncomfortable," "they [the black students] seemed so much more aggressive." She felt that "they didn't want to be there and took it out on us" and "all of a sudden they [black males] would surround you in a circle and you couldn't get away." Later in the interview, she said it did not happen to her but she saw it happen to others (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997).

The crowding of the hallways caused problems, as students who were

already angry about integration were now pushed closer together. A white male student commented that "there was a lot of tension, the black kids were angry about the school closing and the white kids had an attitude about the whole situation." In this atmosphere, one bump could cause a fight (personal communication, interview, Jan. 18, 1997). Interviewees consistently agreed with one girl who said "there were a lot of fights" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 2, 1996).

Before school and during lunch, students had an opportunity to spend a significant amount of time in the halls. One white male remembered that there "was a lot of freedom" and that during the lunch bell kids would hang out in the main corridor (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996). They quickly began to segregate themselves (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997). Different cliques had different spots (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996) and there was "little interaction between blacks and whites" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997). A black girl reported that "everyone had their territory" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). This tendency apparently worsened

as time passed and white students "were careful about leaving [themselves] unprotected" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

A white student reported that there was a tendency to "stick with groups" for a time and that the hallways seemed more "student controlled than teacher controlled" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 2, 1997). Black students agreed that they felt more comfortable in a group of their friends now that they were in this "white school" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). A white student recalled roving groups of blacks that would "pick out a white kid to beat up." Although he did not remember this happening often, the student recalled witnessing at least one such event (personal communication interview, Nov. 13, 1996).

The administration seemed especially concerned about these roving groups of blacks and attempted to limit "any group of more than four students" from travelling the halls together. This was primarily directed at the black students who the principal felt had more of a "gang mentality" than the whites (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995). Faculty members were instructed to be out in the halls to prevent groups from gathering

(personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997). This upset many blacks and one teacher said that if "three black kids walk down the hall together it was taken as an intent to riot" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996).

One incident is illustrative of the events that occurred. A white male who "didn't feel a lot of animosity toward blacks" still tried not to walk around alone because he wanted to protect himself. One morning he was coming into school after a pre-school activity. A group of black males was at the door and the smallest one in the group tripped him, causing him to drop his books. He was sure that if he confronted the smaller student he would have to fight the group, so he "gritted his teeth and picked them up" whether out of trying to avoid trouble or fear, he still could not say. He remembered a "feeling of violation, that things were not safe" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

### **Between Classes: The Restrooms**

It is a commonly held belief among school administrators that you can tell the condition of a school by its restrooms. As we begin this discussion, one must remember that school restrooms are not usually pleasant places in which to be. When a large number of people have to use the facilities in a short amount of time, they are seldom fastidious. At least one white male student commented that he never liked using the restroom at school, even before integration (personal communication, interview, Jan. 2, 1997). A white girl remembered that between classes the restroom was the "smokers' domain" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). School restrooms have always been a place for rule breaking, whether it be smoking a cigarette or fighting, because they are seldom as well supervised as the hallways.

During this school year, the restroom situation was more tense than usual. Several white girls interviewed said that they never went in the restrooms and one said she could "wait, rather than take a chance" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997). However, at least one white female went regularly and never experienced any problem (personal communication,

interview, Dec. 4, 1996). One white male recalled that he "never went to the restroom alone" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996).

The girls' restroom seemed to be the source of many rumors. The most consistent one was that a white girl had her hair cut by a group of black girls. This was a persistent memory among the interviewees. One white girl remembered a direct threat to cut her hair, but still used the restroom regularly with no problem (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997). No one interviewed witnessed anyone's hair cut in a restroom. The source of the rumor seems to be an incident that occurred on the path to the new high school (personal communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997).

Both girls and boys expressed concern that the lights would be cut out and they would be "sucker punched" in the restroom (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). This seemed to happen fairly often after integration, but the practice had gone on among white students even before the Crestwood students came (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996). According to a faculty member, white kids were consistently more fearful than blacks about what might happen in the restroom (personal

communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997). The principal remembered at least one incident where a white girl was beaten up in the restroom after the lights had been turned off. As a result, the old manual light switches were replaced with the key variety (personal communication, interview, July 25, 1995). A white girl reported that one group of white girls had enough of "being jumped" in the restroom. One day they went into the restroom, cut off the lights and beat up a black girl (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997).

The boys experienced similar problems in their restrooms. One male teacher recalled an incident where a large number of boys crowded into a restroom during a fight. A white female teacher blocked the doorway to keep anyone from leaving and then went inside to break up the fight (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997). Whether as a result of this incident or not, the doors were eventually taken off and teachers were posted on duty inside the restrooms (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996).

There was consistent congregating inside the restrooms (personal

communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997). A white student reported that the "blacks seemed to always be in a gang" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). This grouping gradually became more systematic, particularly in the morning before school. With two boys' restrooms in the main hall, it was perhaps inevitable that, as a black male reported, one was regarded as a "white" restroom and one a "black" restroom (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). Even the teachers were aware of this self imposed segregation of restrooms (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997).

One black male recalled that he often heard about fights in the restroom and that it was usually two blacks versus one white or two whites versus one black. He was irritated that "you always heard about the white kids getting beat up by a group of blacks, never whites beating up a black" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). Another black male remembered saving a white boy from being beaten by a group of blacks. He told the other blacks "Hey, it ain't worth it; why are all of y'all gonna jump on one white guy." He also reported that he had no concern about the restroom because if anyone "messed with me they'd be messing with all of Crestwood"

(personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

The worst rumors about the restroom, along with the hair cutting story, were that a teacher was beaten up in one (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997) and that there had been a stabbing in a restroom (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). Neither of these rumors were substantiated in this study. There were definitely problems in the restrooms, but the rumors were probably worse than the actuality. It is important to note that a number of interviewees, both white and black, reported no problems in the restroom.

There were, however, the traditional school incidences of vandalism in the restrooms. One teacher recalled an incident where a "cherry bomb" was exploded in a commode while a group of black kids was in the restroom. A white teacher reacted by entering the facility and kicking the black kids aside. The white teacher who related the story pushed the violent white teacher outside and told him, "There is no sense treating them like this" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 6, 1996).

## Other Areas

There were other areas of the school where students congregated, most notably the cafeteria and the bus ramp. The bus ramp was a particularly crowded place, particularly in the early part of the year. One white girl remembered that "all of the black kids came off of one bus" and that it "felt like they didn't belong." "My heart went out to them" she said (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). A white girl remembered no problems on the bus ramp (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997) and a black girl agreed that "the bus ramp was fine, no problem" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

However, a female administrator recalled that the morning bus ramp was "the worst place" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 10, 1996). Perhaps because, as a white girl recalled, the black students "came in late and in mass" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997) there were many fights there. As a black male remembered, "We fought on the bus ramp every day" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). In order to alleviate

the crowding there and the problems it caused, the principal eventually had some buses unload on the annex side.

The cafeteria was another location where the students were thrown together in a large group with free time. Many students avoided it due to crowding and fear of problems (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996). The students seated themselves by race in the cafeteria with little mixing (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997).

One white girl recalled "that there was always a fight during lunch for the first month." There was a glass wall that separated the cafeteria from the main hall and groups would make gestures at one another through the glass. She went on to say: "there were always groups of black guys and white guys who antagonized each other" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). A white girl reported that the white boys "said many ugly things" in the cafeteria (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996).

The problem reported most often in the cafeteria was line cutting (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). The lines were long due to the crowding. A white girl reported that a black boy would cut and "just

glare at you" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). Several students reported that there were always a large number of teachers on duty and they maintained "high visibility, really working the cafeteria" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997).

### **Extra-Curriculars**

#### **Athletics: Football**

A study of social interactions at any high school must center on extra-curricular activities. It is during extra-curricular activities that a large portion of socialization occurs. Fortunately, the broad spectrum of interviewees gives at least limited access to almost all of the many extra-curriculars at Indian River in 1971-1972, either from the viewpoint of a participant, a sponsor, or a coach.

Football and cheering, which of necessity must begin in August, before the start of school, initiated the first official activities at Indian River after the closing of Crestwood. The Indian River football team had included black participants prior to the 1971 season with at least one star black player. Now

the players from Crestwood would join the squad.

From all reports, most of the former Crestwood players came out for football at Indian River. In at least one case, a student from Crestwood that had not previously played football but was interested, decided not to play "for that white school" even though the coach personally asked him to come out for the team (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996). However, there was another first year player from Crestwood who did go out and was actually named a team co-captain after only three weeks of football (personal communication, interview, March 19, 1997).

The belief was that the new Crestwood players should improve the Indian River team. One black male who did not participate in athletics stated that the "brothers coming over should have improved athletics" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 30, 1996). The feeling among black students can be summed up by one black interviewee who stated that "the black students felt that they were better" at sports (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996).

Several of the black players from Crestwood did star for the Indian

River team (Virginian Pilot, "Crestwood's Demise", 1971). One black sophomore from Crestwood beat out a white senior who had started the first two games. This sent a strong message of fairness since the white player's father was a personal friend and hunting companion of the coach (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996).

The attitude of the coaching staff would be important in setting the tone for the season and the entire school year. The paid staff was all white, with one black teacher volunteering as an assistant. Black players from Crestwood consistently commented that the head coach was firm and fair (personal communication, interview, April 15, 1997), if something of a "drill sergeant." The assistants were praised for being "decent men" who helped with "relations in bringing cohesion to the whole school." They treated the black players exactly the same way they treated the white players. "We didn't want to see people change for us" commented a black player (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997). On the other hand, at least one white player felt that the head coach was something of a "bigot" and "more lenient with white kids" but "would not hold back if the black player was a

good athlete" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996). It is interesting to note that while a white player felt that there was some lack of fairness in discipline matters, none of the black players commented on it despite direct questions in interviews. This is perhaps explained by one former Crestwood player's comment that "the physical part" [conditioning] was easier at Indian River (personal communication, interview, April 15, 1997).

As a whole, football seemed to be quite a success, both on the field and off. Assistant coaches and teachers felt that the head coach "made an effort to make black kids a part of things" even naming a white and a black co-captain (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996). Both white and black players commented that football went well, with no racial problems. One specifically commented that the success of the football team helped with integration as a whole and that "after football season, things got better, the team won" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). A white player said that "things meshed on the football field." He also felt that the strong black leaders on the football field helped to quell problems in the

school, and that while at least three black players he mentioned were "not peacemakers, they still tried to make things work" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1996).

This season also saw Indian River crush its arch rival, Great Bridge, 32-0 (Virginian Pilot, "Wildcats lose", 1971). Coaches and players alike recognized that this victory was largely due to the contributions of a former Crestwood player (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1996). This helped to cement the sense of team among both white and black players. One black player commented that during football season "blacks and whites demonstrated that they could get along with no problem at all" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

The relationships forged on the field and in the locker room did not seem to carry over into the social sphere. No former players indicated any close friendships that developed into social relationships. As one white player commented, "after games whites [white players] got in their cars and left for Shoneys" and "I guess they [black players] walked back to Crestwood." He did not feel that it was a close team and there seemed to be

many "cliques" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996).

Those not on the team also commented on football. The team had a black quarterback, resulting in a star white player being moved to running back. This later turned out to be his natural position and he was a college standout there (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). One white female student felt that there was resentment that the white player was treated unfairly, although she did not know the details (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996). At least two other white females, one a cheerleader, felt that football "went okay" and helped bring the students together (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

The games themselves had always been social events at Indian River (personal communication, interview, Feb.10, 1997). The crowds at home games apparently segregated themselves (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996). No interviewee noted any problem occurring at a game. One white female commented that she "heard stuff, but never saw anything" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). A white male stated that football games went well but that he had a vague feeling that "it might not be

safe to walk under the bleachers." He also felt that football increased acceptance for blacks "especially the stars" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). A community member who attended games for years commented that there seemed to be more spirit in the stands before integration and that afterwards the crowd seemed "rowdier" and that fewer whites attended (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

## **Other Sports and Cheerleading**

The other sports were mentioned with much less frequency than football during the interview process. It is important to remember that at the time there was little in the way of varsity competition for girls. There was a large girls' athletic club that appeared to be well integrated from its yearbook photograph. None of those interviewed had any comment about the club.

Varsity level team sports had one common denominator. They were all subject to a certain tenseness in the beginning as a result of blacks and whites, in the words of one coach, "not being used to being around one another" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997).

After football, basketball was the most discussed team sport. The team had been virtually all white the year before and achieved moderate success. Now, with the arrival of the Crestwood basketball players, there was a "total change" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). The team became "practically all black" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). Many of the former starters, who had been white, lost their positions,

and some, their place on the team. One white player who was no longer on the team commented that there was some bitterness. He understood the situation, but still did not attend any games until the regional playoffs. He could not help wondering, "What if they [the Crestwood players] had not come" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996).

The basketball team enjoyed great success, winning its first ever district championship largely due to the contributions of the former Crestwood players (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). The coach was popular with the players and was described as a "good guy" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997). One black student who reportedly had many close friends on the team said that "the guys loved Coach..." (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

The interviewees mentioned no problems at basketball games or at any of the other sporting events. All of the sports teams appeared to be integrated in their yearbook photographs. Wrestling had several black participants (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1996). Baseball had a black standout player who was also the only black on the team. He felt that there

may have been some favoritism as to his position, but he won a starting position that year as a sophomore (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). The coaches of baseball and basketball both felt that integration went smoothly (personal communications, interviews, Aug. 27, 1996 and Dec. 6, 1996).

The cheerleaders were one of the earliest groups to be integrated. A number of the cheerleaders from Crestwood were placed on the squad just two weeks prior to the start of the cheering season (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). This presented a difficulty for the black girls who had to have uniforms made quickly in order to be able to cheer (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

Unlike the team sports, the Crestwood cheerleaders did not have to try out for the squad. A black cheerleader remembered that at first the girls from Indian River and Crestwood "tolerated each other" and that the Crestwood girls initially felt "unaccepted" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). One of the white girls stated that at first "we were unsure about it [integration of the squad], but in cheerleading, it went well" (personal

communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997). At least some of the white cheerleaders were resentful that the Crestwood girls had not been required to try out for the squad. The white girls had already practiced and prepared their cheers and resented the change (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

The two groups had to learn each others' cheers, dances and chants. A white girl interviewed felt that the white girls worked harder to learn the Crestwood cheers than "they worked to learn ours" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997). One white cheerleader commented that the Crestwood cheers were "jazzier, ours were more cut and dried", "they danced more, had more rhythm and dance" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997).

Placing the black girls on the squad may have had some negative effects. One black girl was reported as commenting the following year that she was upset that she was placed on the squad. The white interviewee had the impression that the black girl was concerned that she may not have made it on her own merits (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

The white sponsor was felt to be fair by the black girls. One commented that the sponsor "did not show preference, but did not go out of her way either" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997).

There was more social mixing of races among the cheerleaders than any other group, perhaps because of the year long nature of cheering. The girls reported that they attended pajama parties together and at least one inter-racial friendship from cheering exists today (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). One black girl reported a problem with a white cheerleader that she felt was race related, but it may have been centered more on tryouts the following year when the white girl did not make the squad and the black girl did (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). All of the former cheerleaders interviewed commented that the year went well for their squad.

## The Fine Arts

The faculty may have been a young one, but it was particularly strong in the area of the arts. All of the sponsors of chorus, band, and drama were white. They were also young and enthusiastic. The participants in these activities were integrated.

The choral department was strong. Merging the schools was an opportunity to integrate some new voices from Crestwood into the class. The choral director felt that integration went smoothly (personal communication, interview, Mar. 24, 1997). However, other sources remembered some difficulties. The administration remembered a problem with the arrangement of the chorus on the risers. The current popular hair style of 1971 for black students was known as the "Afro". Apparently students with large "Afro" hair styles tended to block out the students behind them. The principal remembered having to deal with this issue (personal communication, interview, July 25, 1995).

The choral director recalled that she did not get all of the black

students who had been in chorus at Crestwood in her class. She went to see the four or five individuals that she lost but felt that they were too well entrenched in their new electives to make a change back to chorus (personal communication, interview, Mar. 24, 1997). This may have been a further indication of black students who were unhappy with the move and chose not to participate in activities at Indian River.

One white girl felt that discipline in the chorus class slipped somewhat with the addition of the black students. She recalled one incident that occurred immediately prior to a performance which almost led to a fight; but some of the black females helped settle the males who were angry so that the performance could go on. She elected, after six years, not to continue her senior year in chorus, largely because of this type of problem (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

There was some question about the type of music chosen for the chorus to perform. A black teacher recalled that the students from Crestwood were used to different styles of music than the white students and that "it took some getting used to" on both sides (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17,

1996). At one point, due to complaints by black students, the choral director called her black counterpart from Crestwood (who was now at another high school in Chesapeake) to find out if she should be using different music. He responded that she was using the same music he was (personal communication, interview, Mar. 24. 1997).

The band was a vibrant organization. One white member recalled the band director as the "single biggest influence on his life" (personal communication, interview, Jan.21, 1997). The band director was very strong and his discipline apparently helped the band members to avoid problems. When trouble began to occur in the school, the band director made it clear that he expected band members to stay out of problems. There was a significant influx of black students in the band, but members interviewed felt that its integration went smoothly (personal communication, interview, Jan. 2, 1997). No one interviewed recalled any incidents during performances at games or concerts.

Drama also went well during this school year. The drama club performed a large Shakespearian play in the fall that was quite a success.

One drama club member felt that it was easier to integrate in the arts where individuals were judged on talent (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). This was also one of the few areas where inter-racial friendships developed (personal communication, interview, Mar. 4, 1997).

### **School Sponsored Activities**

The school sponsored the normal activities that would be expected during a school year. There were dances, a senior banquet, and of course, the prom. These activities were integrated and open to all students. No significant problems were reported at any except for the selection of the bands. The white and black students favored different types of music, rock and roll versus motown. Some students recalled having two different bands at some dances (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996).

School dances were open to all but the students still tended to segregate themselves. One black male recalled, "We didn't mingle much, we just didn't understand each other" and that even at dances the "common

denominator was the color of our skins" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997). A white girl agreed that although the black kids came to the dances, "there was almost an invisible line between the races." She did not know how to respond when black guys asked her to dance. This caused tension and was "quickly censured" (personal communication, interview, Jan.23, 1997). How, or by whom, she did not say.

The senior banquet apparently attracted few blacks. A white male student "felt like they [blacks] weren't interested" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1997). A white female remembered that the planning for the prom and the senior banquet was white controlled and "no black was gonna have anything to say about that" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997).

A tradition at Indian River involved painting the parking lot with graffiti after the senior banquet. When the seniors did so, despite warnings from the administration (the new building was by this time open and the parking lot was brand new), the principal reacted by calling all of the seniors into the auditorium for a scolding. Some of the black students were upset at

this meeting because few had attended and it is doubtful that any participated in the painting of the parking lot (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1997).

The prom was well attended and integrated. It was held in the new building's commons area. White students interviewed recalled it positively. At least one black couple who attended also remembered it going well, although some black kids "did not participate" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996). Another black couple remembered it as "dry" and "not as good as ours" at Crestwood (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). One black male "didn't go and didn't want to go" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). Although another white girl said "few blacks came" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997), the majority of interviewees remembered that it was integrated and "a nice affair" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997).

## **Student Government**

According to the school principal, the decision to have dual student government functions came from the superintendent of schools (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995). The Student Cooperative Association (SCA) had two presidents, one elected by the Indian River students (white) and one elected by the Crestwood student body (black). The various other offices were divided the same way. These individuals were supposed to work together. However, one white elected SCA official believed that "this is our school, they're just going to have to adjust" and that dual officers "caused a little friction" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). A black student leader recalled that both groups felt that the idea of co-office holders was unfair as both had been elected by their schools and both lost by having to share (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997). A white student government leader recalled the "bottom line" as being "there are more of us than them" and "we didn't take many suggestions" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). Despite these attitudes,

at least one black SCA official felt that she had input (personal communication, interview, Mar. 15, 1997).

The black co-president of the SCA had a difficult time. The Crestwood students were "very frustrated" and a large segment of the black students were "just livid " over having to come to Indian River. They came to the black co-president as their representative. He "didn't want to be there either" but knew he had to try and make things work (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997). This individual was highly respected by whites and blacks alike, but still had a difficult year (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1996).

The initial student elections held that year were for the homecoming court. Although a number of black girls were nominated for the court, none were elected. The black students had split their votes and the court was all white. This upset a number of black students and there was some unrest. The principal called another meeting of the black students in the auditorium to deal with the situation (personal communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996). From this point onward black students would "talk up" black candidates

(personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997) and were very concerned with fair elections (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997).

This concern was viewed with irritation by some white students. One white girl reported that a black student who was always leading the "fight for black candidates...really bugged" her (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). Another white female reported that a black male was always complaining and "tended to make noise, antagonizing and trying to stir things up." They [the black boy and white girl] would "go back and forth at each other" and that he was "very prejudiced." She viewed his concern for more black votes as a ploy to get himself elected (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). However, other white students regarded it as evidence of the success of integration at Indian River when, in the spring of 1972, a black SCA president was elected for the following school year (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997).

Often the results of elections were misconstrued by both sides. A good example was the senior superlatives announced at the Christmas dance. The superlatives included both black and white students. Both a white student

(personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996) and a black student (personal communication, interview, Nov. 30, 1996) felt that the results were manipulated to make sure that the other race was represented. The atmosphere became such that the legitimacy of any election result was questioned.

Another example of this racial interpretation of events was the yearbook. The cover had traditionally been a solid color with the seal of the school on it. The 1971-1972 yearbook had a cover that was an abstract multi-color of the Indian River and Crestwood colors. Some white students were "very disappointed" (personal communication, interview, Jan.7, 1997) and considered it "ugly" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996). The yearbook editor remembered this as a conscious decision to bring the school together as represented by the theme of the yearbook which was "putting the pieces together [as in a jigsaw puzzle]" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 23, 1996). For some white students this was a major issue, another example of "our bending over backwards for them" (Nov. 9, 1996). Yet for the majority of those interviewed, the color of the yearbook cover was

meaningless.

## Clubs and Organizations

Clubs and organizations fell into two broad categories-Those sponsored by the school and, therefore, open to all students, and those sponsored primarily by students and, therefore, selective in their admissions. The clubs discussed here are those mentioned during the interview process. The open clubs, such as the art club (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997), the monogram club (personal communication, interview, Dec.6, 1996) and various foreign language clubs (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996) were integrated relatively smoothly. The clubs in which students selected the members had more problems with integration

The Key club was the most discussed of the male clubs by interviewees. The Key club had one black member. It was felt by one white member that this was "probably someone's conscious decision" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). There may have been some "tokenism," in a conscious effort to get a black in the club (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996).

This club met, as did many of the student clubs, at members' homes on a rotating basis. The lone black member had a meeting at his home. The sponsor recalled this meeting as being well attended. This meeting, coupled with the fact that the black member was well liked, paved the way for integration in the club (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996).

There was also at least one segregated club of black males "the Emperors" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996). It was sponsored by a black teacher (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996) but does not appear in the year book under that name.

Girls seemed to have more clubs and place more importance on them than the boys. The Keyettes were a popular group and one white girl was thrilled to have been selected as a member. She remembered the club as all white, but "didn't think much about race" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996). At least two black girls were in the Keyettes, albeit temporarily. They later came to believe that they were selected because "they did an income check on our families." One of the girls reported that "we didn't stay in too long." She hosted a meeting at her house and "only two

white girls showed up." The last straw for the two black girls was a garage sale to be held at 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning that they got up for, but nobody had told them it was cancelled (personal communication, interview, Mar. 15, 1997).

There were several Tri-Hi-Y sororities for the girls at Indian River. Some of these integrated, usually with one or two black members. A white member of one of these sororities said "the black girls [in her sorority] made a real effort to fit in." She had some of the black girls over to her house and one was a close friend (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997). A black girl recalled that she was one of two black girls in her sorority. She still remembered her first visit to a "white home" and that when the white kids visited her house they seemed "shocked that it was so nice" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997) In another sorority with a single black member, a white girl was "surprised by how pleasant she was" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996).

Not all of the white sororities were integrated. One white girl recalled that blacks were nominated for her sorority but it took a unanimous vote. The

black girls were always voted out and "it wasn't just one vote." She defended this position because "they had invaded our space but we still had control of a part of it" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). Another white girl said "that some [black girls] felt that they should be in it [the sorority] just because they were black" (personal communication, Dec. 4, 1996).

There were also some all black sororities. One group, the Y-teens, carried over from Crestwood and appeared in the yearbook. A sponsor remembered that her black sorority raised a great deal of money with off campus dances and had donated mirrors in the girls' restrooms. These dances were later forbidden and the sponsor felt that it was at least partly for racial reasons (personal communication, interview, Dec. 17, 1996).

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Incidents: From the Unusual to the Out-of-Hand**

#### **Introduction**

Many of the school days during the 1971-1972 year were normal. Kids went to class, went to practice, went to work or extra-curriculars and then went home with no major incidents. One white girl stated that fights were "few and far between." Later in the same interview she said "we fought, we fought a lot." When asked about the discrepancy she replied that one week there would be three or four fights a day, then things would quiet down and there would be no problems for "a couple of weeks" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996).

Enough of the days were clouded with problems to heavily color the memories of virtually all of the interviewees. The incidents that occurred varied in type and severity. Not all of them were directly attributable to race, however, black-white issues seemed to cast a shadow over almost everything.

This chapter will attempt to discuss the many different types of incidents in which those interviewed were involved. The interviewees remembered them from their own unique point of view. An attempt will be made here to alternate viewpoints in the interest of fairness.

The last and longest section of this chapter will pertain to what was called a riot by those interviewed. This was one extremely ugly and widespread incident that was definitely 'out of hand'. Afterward, there were many situations to which students applied this name, particularly those who were not involved in the initial riot. But it is clear from the data that there was only one occasion where the term "riot" is appropriate.

### **Incidents That Reflected Attitudes**

When school began, many white students were surprised by the large number of blacks now present. Approximately one third of the student body was black in September of 1971. This was up from about ten per cent the previous year. As one white male put it when asked about his recollections

on the first day of school, "Damn, there is a lot of black people" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 18, 1997).

This was an entirely different experience for the white students. One white girl expressed an interesting opinion. She felt that it was "easier to get along with a few" minority students. When there were so many, it was "threatening." But with just a few blacks, there was some abuse of the black students, "if they would put up with it" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996).

One black girl had previously been the only black student in school. She was highly respected by those interviewed, but, with integration, must have often found herself caught between her white and black friends. According to a white female interviewee, on one occasion after the Crestwood students had come, this black girl joined a group of other black girls who were dancing to music in a side hall. Many of her white friends "were disgusted with her" and made comments like "how could you do this?" The white girl still remembered seeing "the look of hurt in her [the black girl's] eyes" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

Some interviews reflect the administration's efforts to deal with these attitudes. One white female student recalled small group meetings where whites and blacks would meet to discuss issues. They met in a classroom, apparently during the school day, but didn't seem to accomplish much. She remembered that they mainly "argued about music" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). Classroom teachers also tried to help ease tensions. One teacher asked the white students in her class "what if they had closed Indian River and sent the Indian River kids to Crestwood?" The white girl who related this story said that this possibility had never occurred to the white students. This gave her a new perspective on black kids and their motivations after they "were thrown into a new school where it was evident that they were not wanted" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996).

A common difficulty seemed to come from fears about the black males and their relationships with white females. One white boy recalled that if an "ugly white girl got pinched by a white boy" it was no problem and no one cared, but let it be a black boy who pinched her and there would be a fight

(personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996). Another white male remembered that there would be tension and fights, especially if a white boy accused blacks of "flirting with his girlfriend" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). White boys would approach the white girls and ask, "Has anybody said anything to you?" or "done anything to you?", with "anybody" clearly referring to blacks (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). When the black students first arrived a white girl remembered that the white boys would say, "We'll take care of you....we won't let anything happen to you" (personal communication, interview, Jan.23, 1997).

Many of the white students were bitter over so many blacks suddenly playing such a large part in their school. They were especially concerned about the administration's reaction. "I felt like they tried to cater to blacks....more so because of their [blacks] reluctance to fit in," said one white girl (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997).

Some students and teachers attributed many of the problems to so-called "bad kids." One black female remarked that a "couple of bad white guys and bad black guys had to see who was toughest" (personal

communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). A black teacher agreed, stating that there had been groups of bad kids who got into fights at both schools before they were merged (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997). A former black cheerleader felt that with so many new students a new "pecking order" of who was "toughest" had to be established (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997). A white girl also recalled, "Instigators could find trouble to get in" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

Many of the black students and teachers were angered by the steps taken by the administration to limit groups from gathering. They felt that these were directed toward black students. A black female student still remembered that if "two or three black kids were together in the hall, we were to be dispersed" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997). Even the special combs, called "Afro picks" or "cake cutters" were outlawed by the administration on the premise that they could be used as weapons. This type of thing angered the black students and they felt that if the black administrator from Crestwood had not been with them, "There would really have been trouble" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997).

Large belt buckles and hair clips favored by white students were to be turned in to the administration. The administration was also concerned that these could be used as weapons (personal communication, interview, Jan.7, 1997).

Many white girls felt that black girls were especially antagonistic toward them. Particularly the more popular white girls. One remembered an incident when she was walking with a white girl who had recently won a prestigious award in a local pageant. A group of black girls gathered around them and made many comments about the award. The white girl felt that the black girls "made a big deal about it" in a sarcastic, "smart" way (personal communication, interview, Dec. 1, 1996).

A white student (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996) and a white teacher (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997) both remembered an incident where a black boy had apparently torn a sink from a restroom wall but was not punished. The black boy was in the bathroom with a deep cut on his hand, apparently from the broken sink. He claimed that he had just leaned against it and the sink fell (personal communication, interview, April 15, 1997). The administration had no other witnesses and

chose to believe the black boy's version of the story. The principal himself stated that he was determined not to discipline black students unless he was sure of the facts (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995).

There were often rumors about weapons. Even a white student leader who stayed out of trouble recalled rumors about bringing knives to school (personal communication, interview, Jan. 2, 1997). A white girl recalled the rumors of "kids carrying knives" and that the "blacks seemed more armed than we were" but she "never saw a knife" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997).

A black girl was particularly upset about remarks made in a classroom after a hallway problem. When the students were settled in the class the teacher began to ask what had happened. In the course of the discussion one white girl said that her parents had given her a knife to take to school. The black girl said that the teacher said nothing to the white girl and apparently did not report the comment to the administration (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996). Despite many rumors, there was no memory of anyone actually being attacked with a knife or even seeing one.

An interesting note on student attitudes comes from many stories about the absence of the class picture. Like many high schools, Indian River displays the pictures of its past senior classes on a prominent wall in the building. The class of 1972 is not there. Some students, particularly blacks, believed that this was because the administration was angry about the events of this year. Others believe that the picture was lost in the move. One particularly believable story implies that the class photograph was unusable, because due to their unhappiness about the events of this school year, a large portion of the group displayed an obscene gesture (personal communication, interview, Nov. 13, 1996).

## Violent Incidents

Early in the year there was a great deal of unease in the school. As time passed the tension built. As one black male remembered, a group of three or four blacks would be together in school. They would see one white guy that one of them didn't like or who was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. One of the black boys would say, "I'm gonna go over and kick that white guy's ass" and a fight would occur. This same black male said the "kids from Crestwood didn't want to be there and expressed it by fighting" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). A black male and female confirmed this type of event. When they described a situation where a group of blacks attacked a white male, they were asked, "What did the white kid do?" They made it clear that the white boy had done nothing; the black kids were just angry (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997).

Many interviewees were bitter about the events of the school year, particularly those who were victims of assaults. Some of these individuals did not wish to speak about what happened to them. It is definite that at least

one individual who had been attacked by a group of black students refused a direct request to talk about it (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

A number of white students recalled specific incidents where white kids created incidents. One white girl described a situation that occurred outside her classroom. At the end of class as the students were leaving, a white boy told a black boy he was "stupid" and "we don't want you here." The white boy then tried to hit the black boy, missed and struck the white girl telling the story, knocking the wind out of her (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). Another white girl recalled a big fight in the cafeteria early in the school year. The fight began when a white guy, whom she described as getting in a "lot of fights," stood up and yelled, "Nigger go home" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). As to racial slurs in the hallway that caused problems, one white male said, "we didn't use the word 'nigger' around blacks but sometimes it just bled through" (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996).

This time period was one where the Black Panthers were rising in

popularity. The previous summers had been marred by race riots in many of America's cities. Some blacks were very militant during this time period. Some of the black students from Crestwood reflected this militant attitude. One black student leader reported that some of these more militant blacks wanted to fight him because "he was not militant enough" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 10, 1997).

"Students hadn't been in the halls very long when a fight broke out," recalled a white teacher. It "seemed to be an orchestrated effort." There would be a fight on one end of the hall and then when teachers went to break it up, there would be fight on the other end of the main hall (personal communication, interview, Jan 30, 1997). This was referred to as "how to kill the principal" by the administration (personal communication, interview, July 11, 1995). It is exceedingly doubtful if there was any type of planning at all, regardless of what the faculty thought. However, adult supervision prevents problems in schools. It is very probable that if all of the adult supervision in an area left to deal with a problem elsewhere, then a problem in the area they left would be more likely to occur.

As upset as the black students were about efforts by the administration to limit groups, there was clearly some justification for it. One white girl reported a group of blacks beating up her boyfriend in the new building. They had been standing talking on the gym hall when her boyfriend saw the group of blacks coming in from the bus ramp. He pushed her into a classroom and then was quickly surrounded and beaten. Later in the year, this same white boy saw a group of black boys beating on another white student. He intervened and it became a group fight. The administration did everything it could to get him to identify those involved. He refused, despite the pressure of a "police threat" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

These accounts are troubling and appear one sided. However, they were confirmed in the accounts of some of the black students. A black male recalled that when fights began "it wasn't like the white kids picking on blacks." "It was blacks going over and fighting...It wasn't one black kid, it was twenty...I ran in a crowd, sometimes I couldn't even pass a lick" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

A white girl recalled standing and talking to a white boy when a group of "three or four black guys came up." They began fighting and her white friend went down. The black boys then kicked him. "He probably mouthed off to them, but I didn't hear him." (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

There were fights in a number of different locations. A significant disturbance "broke out" on the breezeway that separated the annex from the main building. A white girl recalled that her class was completely disrupted as all of the students ran to the windows to watch this large fight (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). A white male student said that fights were generally "one on one" and that "sides usually formed up to make sure." He never saw a group of blacks jump on a white kid, but "it could have happened to him" if he had not ignored provocation (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

One day a group of black boys was pushing around a white girl in the old building. A white boy tried to interfere and was badly beaten. The white interviewee who reported this remembered seeing a "bald patch" where the

white girl had lost some hair in the exchange (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997).

One white boy who was admittedly more into partying and surfing than the "whole school scene," recalled that one morning he and his friends came to school late. They walked to the main doors of the building. As they got ready to go in, they saw through the windows that a huge fight was going on in the hallway. They looked at each other and decided that they didn't need to be a part of this. The boys then got back in their car and skipped school for the day (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

Another white boy remembered a specific incident where he tried to follow adult advice with varying amounts of success. It seemed that he had a class with a black boy named Gary who had a gold tooth. He and Gary got along reasonably well in class. They had agreed during teacher led discussions that people could get along if they would just "communicate."

One evening the white boy had a long conversation with a police officer working security at a local strip mall. The officer urged him to "get involved" if there was a problem, that people could not just look the other

way.

The next day in school, this same white boy walked out to the bus ramp and saw a group of "four or five black guys" fighting a white couple. The white boy decided, after remembering his talk with the police officer, that he should get involved. Apparently others did as well and there was soon a general melee. He quickly found himself face to face with a black student. When he noticed the flash of a gold tooth he realized that it was Gary. They were both surprised to see each other. The white interviewee apparently tried to communicate with Gary while they were both fighting others. He did not feel that it worked well (personal communication, interview, Jan. 18, 1997).

The school did not have the resources to continually handle these violent incidents. On several occasions the principal called to the school administration building and male administrators would leave their offices and come to Indian River to help provide security (personal communication, interview, Sept. 18, 1996). This was not always quick enough. Soon the administration had to call for police help to control violent situations. A black male recalled that on one occasion there were "state troopers every five

or ten feet in the main hall." He supported his story with a detail about how funny it was when one of the state troopers' hats blew off (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). However, his is the only account of state trooper involvement or of this large a number of police officers. There are many accounts of a police presence in the building, particularly after the riot, when as many as seven police cars were reported around the building, (personal communication, interview, Dec. 6, 1996).

### **The Riot A Situation Out of Control**

There was a situation that could be best described as a riot. It occurred during Thanksgiving week, on the Wednesday before the holiday break (Ledger Star, "Indian River", 1971). Not all students saw it, many did not even remember it. They may have been absent, already in class, or late to school that day. A significant number of students (five) and teachers (three), both white and black, had no memory of any riot type event. A few had only vague recollections that there was something that occurred that was called a

riot or was like a riot.

The majority of those interviewed recalled a riot. Some apparently remembered a different event than the specific incident of November 24. All assumed that what they witnessed was the center point of the incident.

Obviously this was not the case but it resulted in a variety of accounts of where and how the riot started.

Some described it beginning by the front door, others said it started near the cafeteria, others a restroom, and some the breezeway. The difficulty was to determine which, of all of the accounts, were the most valid versions. Fortunately for this study, one individual interviewed had actually been suspended from school for his participation in the situation (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). The newspaper account quotes the principal as stating that since the "faculty was unable to pinpoint most of the participants...only a couple of students were suspended" (Ledger Star, "Indian River", Nov. 25, 1971). The administration must have felt confident that this individual was at the center of the problem since he was one of only two students suspended. Therefore, the following version is considered to be the

most plausible and accounts that seem to agree with it are used to create the picture presented here. Whether it is 100% accurate is questionable, however, it appears to be the best account that can be re-created twenty-five years after the fact.

### **The Riot Begins**

The overall atmosphere of tension in the school had been building since the start of school. One black student recalled that it was "like a stick of dynamite" waiting to go off (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, a white teacher who had been at Crestwood felt that there would be a problem. He remembered that there were often large fights at Crestwood on the day before a holiday. This teacher distinctly remembers that this recollection caused him to change out of the suit he had been wearing into something more casual. This change of clothing made him late to work and would lead to an incident we will discuss later (personal communication, interview, Mar. 28, 1997).

The the riot had its origins in an incident that occurred on Tuesday, November 23. There was "tension that whole week....a couple of fights" recalled a white female. A white male who was a good friend of hers was very "prejudiced and loud." When a black male walked past and said something to her friend, the white boy responded, using the word "nigger." Several blacks heard this and a fight ensued. The white boy was eventually pushed down and was kicked by several blacks. The source of this story recalls that her white friend was suspended from school<sup>3</sup> because of this incident and the black guys were not disciplined (This was a common belief; both sides felt that they were disciplined more severely than the other). As a result of this incident, many of the white students were very aroused. It was clear to this white female that something was going to happen the next day (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997).

The next morning, Wednesday, Nov. 24, a group of whites came to school prepared to do something about the previous day's incident. They

---

<sup>3</sup>A side note to this story is that the white student who was suspended was angry. The next day he drove around with a friend, picked up a black hitch hiker and beat him, dumping him on the side of the road. This was apparently in retaliation for what had happened to him. This is a classic example of the senseless ripple effect that characterizes racial violence.

approached what had become known as the black restroom. A white male approached a black male who was seated on top of a trash can, "his usual perch." This black male was a leader of a group of blacks standing outside the restroom. The white student did something to the black on the trashcan. It is still unclear what actually happened, even the black student on the trashcan is unsure. The most common account, given by a teacher and a student is something about an orange seed being spit on someone.

Regardless of what exactly occurred, one of the "henchmen" of the youth seated on the trash can "popped" the white boy in retaliation. Black students came spilling out of the restroom and what became known as a riot was on. "All hell broke loose" recalled the black student seated on the trash can. "Even if you were uninvolved you got hit. The white kids were running and some white kids paid for what others did" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997).

The situation was quickly "out of control," reported one teacher (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996). The newspaper account reported that the police were called "after a dozen teachers were unable to

control a crowd of students that gathered in the hall about 8:30," prior to the start of school (Ledger Star, "Indian River", 1971).

A large group of blacks was moving down the main hall, striking anyone who got in their way. A black female recalls a friend pulling her against the wall because if you tried to run you could fall and be trampled (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996). A white girl had hurried to put up her books and go out in the main hall to see what would happen. She moved against the wall to get out of the way of the crowd. As it passed, she pulled a white boy, who had fallen, over to her and pushed him under the pay telephone for protection. The large group of blacks would "hit, punch, push" anyone white they passed (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997).

There were clearly some blacks from outside Indian River who were involved. The gym was often open before school for basketball. Many non-students showed up to play. It is probable that this is the source of the non-students who both black and white students recall as being involved. No one interviewed was familiar with the name of the one individual arrested and it is

doubtful if he was a student. He does not appear in any way in the yearbook. Both students and teachers, black and white recall that there were often "outsiders" in the building (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997).

### **The Riot Spreads**

The teacher previously mentioned, had arrived late for school because of his change of clothing. He recalled that he got approximately three steps into the building before he was "hit in the face by a black kid" with whom he began fighting. "It looked like there were three or four hundred kids fighting in the main hall." When the youth who hit him was finally subdued, it turned out that he was not an Indian River student (personal communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997). The three or four hundred figure is obviously an exaggeration, however, student accounts put the size of the group of blacks going down the main hall as between thirty and fifty.

White male teachers were trying to break up the fight and subdue the

students. As students were separated, they were placed in the auditorium to be identified later. One female teacher was there with a polaroid camera. She was apparently told to take pictures of the students to aid in identification. As she tried to do so, a black student in the auditorium yelled out, "You can take them, but I'll take the camera away." According to the black female student who reported this incident, this was typical of the "rebellious and resentful attitude" of some of the black students (personal communication, interview, Nov. 7, 1996).

The female teachers didn't know what to do. One black teacher recalled that she was "just as frightened as a white teacher" would have been and stayed in her room<sup>4</sup> (personal communication, interview, Mar. 4, 1997). A white female teacher saw the group of blacks coming down either 'D' or 'E' the hall from the main corridor. Two or three white kids were beaten up in front of the group and the teacher responded by fearfully ducking into the hall doorway and covering her head so she would not be injured (personal

---

<sup>4</sup>This black teacher had been at Crestwood. She recalled the Carver kids as particularly disruptive there. She, therefore, assumed that it was the Carver students who caused this problem. Interestingly, the young man seated on the trash can was from Carver.

communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996). People were afraid.

The group of blacks moved down the main hall and split off into various side halls. One white girl saw "four black girls beating two white girls as the big group of up to thirty were fighting in the main hall" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). Students in music were at their lockers in the band hall when the fight broke out and could look out into the main hall at what was happening. One music student said, "It looked like it [the fighting] was everywhere." There was confusion and things were "all balled up" (personal communication, interview, Jan.21, 1997). A girl reported "a free-for-all in the main hallway" that seemed to be coming from the cafeteria (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). There "was an influx of police officers" and "mass hysteria" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997).

If the teachers were afraid, many of the students were absolutely terrified. One white female reported that it was "so unrealistic, scary....it really scared the teachers and administrators." "I was afraid, but couldn't get out" because of the crowding. "Bodies were pushing bodies...you didn't have

any control." She remembered being caught up in people who were running away (personal communication, interview, Jan. 23, 1997). Another white girl would "never forget the fight." "It was so inhuman, animalistic...you don't do that" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

A number of policemen arrived. There were police cars out front and as fights were broken up, kids were carried to the cars to calm down. Gradually things settled down and the situation came under control. Surprisingly, there were no reports of serious injuries, (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996) only one arrest and two subsequent suspensions from school (Ledger Star, "Indian River", 1971).

### **Riot: The Aftermath**

The police would remain in the "vicinity of the school as long as necessary...This should help in reassuring parents on the safety of their children" said the principal of the school to reporters on the day of the riot (Ledger Star, "Indian River", 1971). From this time forward, the administration would never hesitate to call the police and police vehicles were consistently on patrol near the school, ready to respond to problems if needed (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997).

The police presence was disturbing to the black students. They felt that the police were there to "control the blacks, not help them" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 9, 1997) and the police were in school to "protect them [the white students] from us" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997). The white students also "just couldn't believe" that there were police officers in the building (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997).

It is clear from statements by many students, teachers and the principal

that the police were often in the building after the riot episode. However, there were several, very active students and teachers who had no memory of any police presence whatsoever.

Many students, particularly white females, called their parents immediately after the riot. Apparently, parents then called one another and the school soon had large numbers of parents picking up their children. One white girl reported that so many students left that she was the only student in her afternoon history class (personal communication, interview, Nov. 2, 1996). Many students and teachers reported large numbers of students leaving school after the riot, however, the principal only reports about twenty parents "retrieving their children" in his interview to the newspaper (Ledger-Star, "Indian River", Nov. 25, 1971, p.B1).

These students had learned a lesson. From now on, any time there was any type of incident these students, primarily white, would call home to be picked up. Many faculty members felt that the students were abusing this and it "got to where any little disturbance and they called home" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997). A male teacher recalled that the

principal "took heat" later in the year because he "wouldn't let the kids use the phone" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 25, 1997).

The upcoming holiday, two days for Thanksgiving, gave the administration and students some breathing room. School reopened the following Monday with no reported incidents. The tension had been released (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). After a few days, the two suspended students returned. The mother of one of the black males who had been suspended still recalls her interview with the principal to return her son to school.

His family was traveling to Philadelphia to spend the holiday with friends. It was not until he was in the car and his parents were reading the newspaper account of the riot that he told his parent that he had been suspended from school.

When the mother came with her son to try and readmit him to school, following his suspension, she had to meet with the principal. The principal told her that her son had seen what had taken place but would not tell who was involved. The principal threatened to send the young man back home if

he would not cooperate. The mother responded by telling the principal that "it sounds like you're a little bit prejudiced." She remembers his reply as, "Well, I am," to which she answered, "Well, I am too, a little bit." But her son stayed in school.

This conversation with the principal offers one strong example of how efforts to communicate can totally fail. In attempting to establish a common rapport with the parent, the white principal mentioned that he had grown up in a nearby neighborhood called Berkley. Far from establishing rapport, the black parent remembered Berkley as being a very prejudiced area "filled with whites and Jews." She had a very negative attitude toward the principal throughout the rest of the interview (personal communication, interview, Mar. 8, 1997).

The entire riot incident would change many attitudes at Indian River. It had been severe enough that students and teachers wanted to make sure that it did not recur. One teacher commented "It made people realize how volatile the situation was. It scared them." The faculty realized that they would have to really pull together to make things work (personal communication,

interview, Mar.28, 1997).

Many students recalled episodes that they called riots, apparently trying to make up for not witnessing this one. Some students felt that the media made more of it than there really was (personal communication, interview, Aug. 27, 1996). A student teacher who came to the building not long afterward was unaware that there had been a riot. However, he noticed that there seemed to be a wariness between the students in the hallway (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997).

## **Chapter 8**

### **Inter-Racial Relationships and The Move To The New Building**

#### **Introduction**

The move to the new building was finally accomplished over the weekend of February 19-20, 1972 (Staff Bulletin, Indian River High School, Feb. 14-20, 1972). According to most accounts, this transition began a time of healing. Most of the negative memories of the school year came from the old building. With a new building, and more space, things in general settled down. There were still problems. Fights of a racial nature still occurred, but overall, the situation was better. As this chapter prepares to discuss the move to the new building, it is fitting to first examine the relationships that gradually began to develop among the white and black students and how those relationships developed after the move to the new building.

## **Inter-Racial Friendships**

Most students interviewed remembered inter-racial relationships within the school setting. Few of these carried over beyond school hours and into true social activities. As one white male recalled there was "no real social intermingling (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). A black male recalled that social activities were "usually segregated" and that the Crestwood kids "usually went home" after activities and had "house parties" where the kids would play records, dance and eat (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

Students worked together when they had to, but seldom socialized. For example, one white girl reported that "except for chorus" she experienced "no integrated activities" outside class (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996). A black male recalled that other blacks had white friends but he did not. Inter-racial friendships "happened, but not a lot" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

Parents and the community seemed concerned about potential

intermingling, especially white parents. One white girl recalled that she had a black boy in her neighborhood that was a friend. Her father was upset when the black boy called the house. "Dad didn't like a black boy calling the house" even if it was just for homework (personal communication, interview, Dec. 12, 1996). A white community member recalled parental concerns that the white and black kids would "shower together" and have "inter-racial dates" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

Where inter-racial friendships did exist, they seemed to stand out in the minds of the interviewees. One white male still remembered the name of a black girl that he sometimes gave a ride home from the Tech Center, even though they were not close friends (personal communication, interview, Aug. 20, 1996). A white girl recalled giving a black girl a ride home and being "let know" by other whites that "she's not your kind" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996).

The cheering squad, despite some problems initially, did develop some lasting friendships between white and black girls. One white cheerleader recalled that although she had black friends on the squad they were not really

social. However, she did recall pajama parties involving both white and black cheerleaders (personal communication, interview, Mar. 22, 1997). A black cheerleader had several white friends and they would call each other on the phone. Other black girls "got on her" because she had "white friends." A lot of her black friends "couldn't understand how I mingled with white kids so easily" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 15, 1997). A white cheerleader kept up a close friendship through the years with a black girl who was also on the squad (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). This type of enduring inter-racial friendship was rare among interviewees.

Those students who were forced to work closely together became reasonably close friends. One black student government leader recalled that he was friendly with his white counterpart. They "got to be pretty decent friends" but this was still not social in nature (personal communication, interview, Mar. 19, 1997).

Apparently by the end of the school year, some tentative efforts were made to include black students in traditional white activities. The clearest

indication of this was in trips to the beach. "White people turned us on to Sandbridge (a local beach)" recalled one black male. One white interviewee recalled that at the end of the year white and black students "mingled on the beach" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). Another white girl also recalled blacks and whites at the beach together at Sandbridge (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). A white male recalled that the only social contact he had with blacks outside of school was when they would "hook up with a bottle or a joint" in a party atmosphere (personal communication, interview, Jan. 18, 1997). Although most interviewees remembered few, if any, inter-racial friendships, it is clear that some did exist.

### **Inter-Racial Dating**

A majority of those interviewed recalled no inter-racial dating. While a white male recalled no real inter-racial couples, there were many accusations of black guys flirting with white girls (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997). A white eleventh grader remembered no inter-racial couples

from the 1971-1972 school year but specifically recalled two the following year (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). A white cheerleader recalled no inter-racial dating but she "got hit on" by a black guy. She felt that there was "pressure not to" date blacks (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997).

A white community member had become close with a black athlete. The "white girls flocked to him" and the black male's mother was concerned. According to this community member, the mother came to the football coach and asked him to talk with her son. The mother wanted the football coach to let her son know the "dangers of white girls" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997). A black teacher recalled that when there was an incident of perceived inter-racial dating between a black male and white female, the white girl "would be called in and counselled about it" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1997).

Several interviewees recalled that there was some inter-racial dating that was, in the words of a black male, "kept on the sly" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997). A white teacher saw evidence of

some inter-racial activity in the mostly empty halls after school that he felt was "probably sexual" in nature (personal communication, interview, Dec. 6, 1997). A white girl remembered some inter-racial dating after school and at parties but it was "kept quiet," and the black girls "did not like it" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 9, 1996). A black girl knew of white girls who would pick up black guys at their homes in order to be with them secretly (personal communication, interview, Mar. 15, 1997). There was some inter-racial dating but it was clearly not out in the open with one notable exception.

At least ten interviewees were aware of one white female who dated a black male with some degree of openness. There was no walking down the hall and holding hands, but it was common knowledge to a substantial number of their classmates. There was a rumor that the white girl eventually became pregnant (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997).

### **The Move To The New Building**

The old building, with its "tight, crowded" conditions (personal communication, interview, Mar. 4, 1997) was the "scene of most problems" according to a white female. She did not "remember any problems" in the new building (personal communication, interview, Jan. 27, 1997). This was obviously not the case but there was a tremendous difference in attitude after the move.

Of all those interviewed, only three did not feel that the move significantly improved the situation. One, a white teacher, felt that the student body was "already over the hump" in terms of improvement in race relations (personal communication, interview, Jan. 30, 1997). Another, a white male, felt that the move may have "rekindled some tensions" and brought back "some resentment" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 18, 1997). The third, a black male from Crestwood by way of Carver, felt that this was just one more move we had to make." However, even he felt that there was less of an "ours and theirs" attitude at the new school (personal communication, interview, Feb. 8, 1997).

The fact that the move itself took place over a weekend is phenomenal.

Two white teachers remembered the move as "well planned" and "well organized" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 9, 1996). Teachers felt that the suddenness of the weekend move gave students a "fresh start" and both races "wanted to be the first" at the new school (personal communication, interview, Dec. 19, 1996).

The move to the new building went smoothly. The students, especially the black kids, were excited. According to one black teacher, the black students now felt that they "could claim ownership" of the new school (personal communication, interview, Mar. 4, 1997). A black male agreed with this idea that the black students "took more ownership" in the new building (personal communication, interview, Feb. 10, 1997).

The white students were looking forward to the move. When interviewed they described the experience glowingly. One white girl said the new building was "better," "exciting" and "nobody had been there." "We all went for the first time" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 13, 1997). Another white female remembered that the move "made us feel special, more united, like it was a special privilege" (personal communication, interview,

Jan.23, 1997).

The move clearly helped in terms of space. The crowded conditions of the old building had contributed to many problems (personal communication interview, Mar. 19, 1997). Because the new building was "brand new and much larger," the move "helped everybody" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 15, 1997). A large number of the interviewees commented on the change from the cramped old building to the much more spacious new building. At least eleven commented that they felt that the increase in space helped to alleviate potential problems. One white female referred to "breathing room" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 4, 1996), while a white male mentioned that the move "cooled things off." He felt that the tension was released like "opening a valve" once the move was complete (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

Although the situation improved dramatically with the move to the new building there were still problems. One white girl recalled that the cafeteria was larger and less crowded but that "people still sat in cliques" (personal communication, interview, Jan. 7, 1997). A white male said that the move

"helped things, but didn't cure it" as he went on to describe a violent episode he had with several blacks in the new building (personal communication, interview, Jan. 21, 1997).

### **Atmosphere In The New Building: "Ours"**

Comments from students such as "we didn't want to be here to begin with" or "well, it's your school anyway" were common in the old building (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997). According to a white student, things had been "ours and theirs" but after the move "we got together" and "the storm was over" (personal communication, Dec. 12, 1996). A black teacher recalled that "things really turned around [in the new building] as to how well students got along." He felt that even in the old building, students were "making adjustments." In the new building "everybody is on an equal footing" and all were involved in "planning new traditions." Friendships that "had developed in the old building helped in the new building" (personal communication, interview, Mar. 12, 1997).

The atmosphere of "a white school where black kids were forced to come" began to disappear. The new school was "ours, not anyone else's previously" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 17, 1997).

Consistently, the interviewees agreed that the move "had a melding effect" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 24, 1997). Students could "all claim the new building" (personal communication, interview, Nov. 20, 1996). As one black teacher remembered, the old building had been "someone else's school, now, it's our school" (personal communication, interview, Dec. 16, 1997). A black student recalled the move saying "the tension wasn't there by then. It was bigger with more room. We got used to each other" (personal communication, interview, Feb. 3, 1997).

This was a major attitude shift and signalled the beginning of Indian River's new identity. It would no longer be considered a white school. From this time forward, for at least the next twenty-five years, Indian River would be an integrated school.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps, in view of the stated purpose of this paper, a conclusion is unnecessary. The attempt has been made to set forward the facts in as clear and unbiased manner as possible. Let those who read this document determine for themselves what is able to be generalized from this work. However, several observations are in order and are organized by topic.

#### **Chesapeake's Lack of Preparation**

No true organized effort took place in Chesapeake to prepare students for the establishment of a unitary system and the closure of Crestwood. It seems clear that acceptance of the status quo had become ingrained in the leadership of the city's schools, even as they planned for integration. This is perhaps understandable for a number of reasons.

The students who actually moved from Crestwood to Indian River had

generally been born in 1954, the year of the initial Brown decision. Despite living in this era of court ordered desegregation, virtually all of these Crestwood students had attended segregated black schools throughout their school careers. The choice plan had been in effect for years and had become institutionalized in Chesapeake. Like a family with a terminally ill member, Chesapeake had accepted the current, temporary condition as permanent.

Various court battles did not help. Litigation continued until the last minute and there was always the possibility of a stay by the courts up until the final days before the opening of school. HEW's continued vacillation also contributed to this sense that the plan to integrate might not go forward. The cumulative effect of these factors seemed to contribute to an attitude of "wait and see" by the city's administration.

There was plenty of evidence that the plan would be put into effect. The city had made a good faith effort to comply with federal guidelines. Despite contrary opinions by citizens, the school system had tried to respond to community concerns. The plan that was put into effect had been approved for over a year. Regardless of possible court and bureaucratic stumbling

blocks, the school system clearly had an opportunity to prepare for the implementation of the closure plan. Instead, the central administration seemed to have a "bunker" mentality and intended to ride the storm.

There may have been some justification for this. There was no such thing in 1971 as "racial sensitivity" training. No one really knew what to do to prepare. Clearly, doing nothing was not the answer. Some type of proactive steps initiated by the school system at both schools was needed and could have gone far to alleviate the worst of the problems that occurred.

The closing of Carver was a rather haphazard affair. The students were left to fend for themselves in their new environments. The difficulties incurred during the introduction of a relatively small number of black students to Indian River and Crestwood, should have provided a wake up call to the city that something more was needed. There is no evidence that anyone attempted to study the events that surrounded the closing of Carver and apply the lessons to the situation unfolding in the fall of 1971. It could be argued that the provision of dual student government officers and providing a mixed cheerleading squad at Indian River were evidence of planning for the

introduction of the Crestwood students. It is more likely that these steps were taken to avoid immediate problems involved in denying students the opportunity to participate in functions which they had already been chosen to perform. There is no evidence of any type of coherent, organized plan to assist students in the transition process.

Perhaps more could have been done at the building level at both Indian River and Crestwood. The reality of the situation is that the administration at Crestwood had no real motivation to try and do more to prepare the students for the change. The administration there had enough on its hands in trying to control a student body which, with community support, was outraged by the loss of its school.

At Indian River, the loss, due to illness, of its previous principal, resulted in the introduction of a new administration to the building. The new principal had no opportunity to prepare students before the actual implementation of the plan to integrate. A new administration often takes its time in initiating any type of radical change. The new administration at Indian River did not have this luxury and had to deal with difficult situations

"on the fly." The result was a situation where school officials were always in a reactionary mode. The only element that consistently helped the situation was the positive attitude with which the administration faced each problem.

### **Starting School in the Old Building**

When the black students from Crestwood arrived at Indian River for the first day of school, they had no orientation of any kind. They were unfamiliar with the building. Consistently, they expressed surprise at the crowded conditions. Several commented on the fact that the building seemed smaller than Crestwood. The promised new building was not yet ready.

This was unavoidable due to construction delays. The administration of the school clearly expected the new school to be ready much earlier than February, when it was occupied in a still incomplete state. Perhaps it would have been better to wait until the new building was complete. In hindsight, this seems reasonable, especially when one views the way problems were compounded by the crowded conditions. It was probably not possible or

even feasible at the time. The federal government would have viewed any attempt to wait as a delaying tactic and questioned the commitment of the school system to integration. Once the decision was made, it was probably best to go forward with the plan to close Crestwood.

The delay may have been a blessing in disguise. Virtually every student who emphasized problems that occurred, recalled them happening in the old building. This does not mean that there were not many difficult situations in the new facility, however, a kind of collective, institutional memory led students to associate the old building with the negative experiences. This allowed the new building to open in February without much of the rancor that accompanied the start of school. The traditions that were established in the new building began after the worst of the racial difficulties had already occurred. Opening the year in the smaller old building made it harder at the time but may have been a long term blessing that none could have predicted.

### **Student Memories and Perceptions**

As has been pointed out elsewhere in this document, interviewee recollections are at times somewhat suspect. Individuals recall what stands out in their memories. The unusual is much more likely to be remembered than normal, everyday events.

Another, interesting phenomenon that consistently occurred, is what can be called "institutional memory." This phenomenon occurs when events that were rumored become fact and incidents that involved a few individuals become personalized by many others. Consistently, those interviewed would relate a story as fact. When questioned more closely, it would become clear that this was an incident that they had heard about but not seen. Often, something that happened to others would be related as though the interviewee was a participant. Over the intervening twenty-five years, these events had become personalized and the individuals interviewed now often saw themselves as participants in situations they had only seen or heard about. Events that had occurred in reality on one, two or several occasions, grew in memory to daily happenings. While there were clearly many problems, often

quite ugly in nature, the situation was not as bad as some construed it. There were many days and activities that went on in a normal fashion with few or no problems. This helps explain the recollections of students who recalled few problems during the year, or the discrepancy between those who saw no police and another student's detailed memory of state troopers throughout the halls.

The students, black and white, clearly entered the school that year with many negative attitudes. For black students the closing of their traditional high school, which they felt had been done in a racist atmosphere, caused many hard feelings. Their entry into a building that appeared smaller than their previous school and the excessive crowding that ensued, was more evidence that they had been dealt with dishonestly.

Perhaps most distressing for black students was an underlying concern about their need to prove themselves. This attitude came through in the interview process, but was seldom put into words. If asked directly, few black students responded affirmatively to concern about the need to prove themselves. However, the constant feeling of comparison with white students

helped to foster much anger. This author concludes that this constant atmosphere of comparison helped to create the anger that was most often expressed as rage over the closing of Crestwood, which had provided a much more nurturing environment for the black students. The black students didn't want to be at Indian River and were uncomfortable with the pressurized climate they perceived there. None recalled positive feelings about the move or looking forward to it in any way.

White students were equally upset about sharing a school whose traditions were still fairly new. They saw themselves as intruded upon and forced to accept a group that they did not want to have in their school. Student government leaders had to share positions they felt they had earned. Some athletes lost the opportunity to excel during their senior year. This is the area that could have been most effectively addressed by some type of preparation. When the situation of the former Crestwood students was pointed out to the white students, they consistently expressed sympathy for the black students. All too often, being teenagers, they only thought about how the situation affected them, with no thought to the difficulties endured by

the black students.

The result of these student attitudes at the start of school was a sort of self-imposed segregation. Both races tended to keep to themselves. This grouping increased their comfort level in a situation where they were unsure how to react. Both races looked upon this tendency of the other to keep to itself as evidence of hostility. The fact that black kids travelled in groups meant, to the whites, that they were aggressive. White kids who kept to themselves in groups were clearly, to the blacks, trying to avoid contact with the blacks and expressing their feelings of superiority. Both groups tended to be extremely critical of behaviors of the other group, but ignored or rationalized these same behaviors in their own group.

No one at the time appreciated the natural tendency of kids in situations where they are unsure, to try and surround themselves with the familiar. No one had the opportunity or the foresight to sit down and consider what the situation would be like and what measures could be taken to try and alleviate the potential problems. This is an easy criticism to make twenty-five years later. However, it is the responsibility of schools to try and create a

comfortable atmosphere for learning. This comfortable atmosphere simply did not exist at Indian River in the fall of 1971.

The students involved in clubs and activities tended to follow this trend toward separation. Consistently, if left to the students' choice, activities were segregated. Fraternities, sororities, and any organization of a social nature where the students chose who they would associate with, were segregated without exception. At best, a token integration was achieved in these organizations. Activities where the students were forced to work together, such as athletics, clubs with open memberships, or student government, usually worked reasonably well. When placed in an environment where cooperation was necessary and expected, black and white students worked appropriately together. This explains the consistent reports of few problems in the classroom and the success of race relations on the football team.

This, then, was a necessary function of the schools, a forcing of students into situations which they would otherwise avoid, but which in the long run are good for them and society. At first glance this might seem quite harsh, but few children, left to their own devices would ever visit a dentist,

attend church, or even attend school. Parents and schools regularly force children into activities that are in the long run good for them (ask any physical education teacher). This is not to argue that the experience of integration was always a good one, but that it was necessary for the good of the society, and in the long run, for the individual children who learned to work with those of other races.

### **Difficulties of Black Teachers**

Black teachers at Indian River operated in a situation of intense pressure. The white community did not hesitate to express its concerns about the qualifications of black teachers to the guidance department and the administration. Although the black teachers generally felt supported by the administration, this parental attitude must have, at times, expressed itself in the conduct of the white children in their classes.

Black parents made it clear that they were pleased the black teachers were there to look out for their children. Pressure was, therefore, exerted

from both directions. Occasionally, the black teachers found themselves explaining and defending administrative decisions to black children. They must have questioned some of these decisions, but were placed in a difficult situation of conflicting loyalties. HEW's investigators did not address the issues that concerned the black teachers and merely added another irritant to the situation.

### **The School Administration**

The school administration was handicapped by its first year status. There had been no opportunity to establish trust with the more established teachers. Many of the black teachers were new to the building and unknown to the principal, although several noted a special effort by the administration to make them welcome. The administrative team itself was new and relationships and responsibilities had to be worked out. All of this had to be done in a particularly tense environment where quick and decisive action was often necessary.

The expectation from the central office must have been to keep the situation under control. No one understood the difficulties that this would entail. The principal faced pressure from white parents and their concerns about black teachers and strict discipline. Black parents were very concerned about fairness and interpreted strict action against their children as racist. Any perceived leniency toward black children resulted in charges of favoritism by the white community. Added to this tense situation was the occasional visitation of HEW investigators who seemed to be looking for problems.

The result was a situation where every administrative action was criticized by one group or the other. The principal deserves great credit for keeping his sanity in this difficult situation. He attempted to do what he could with limited resources. He did not hesitate to spend his time working to improve the situation. Many students did not understand the extent of the principal's efforts because they dealt more often with the assistant principals. Parents consistently felt that he needed to be tougher on others and more lenient with their children. Both groups were totally unaware of the many

long parent conferences that he was involved in, the HEW investigators, or the myriad of other problems he faced while they felt he was tucked away in his office. It is clear that his efforts to maintain a positive attitude and confront difficult situations helped the school navigate this tumultuous period.

An example of this willingness to do whatever was necessary to try and improve the situation occurred in the aftermath of the riot. A police presence at a school is clear indication that the administration cannot keep the situation under control and is the worst sort of publicity. The principal was willing to not only have a police presence but to discuss it openly in an effort to reassure parents. Many of his policies were not popular, and some were perhaps unwise, but the school got through the year successfully, if not always happily.

### **Comments on Race**

Teachers and administrators carried their own backgrounds with them into this situation. Few felt that they had any bias at all. Often their

comments indicated otherwise. For example, the principal felt that he worked very hard to be fair at all times, however, he saw nothing wrong at the time with busing black students to school later than whites due to potential problems. Administrators in a multi-racial school often have to work very hard to avoid insensitive comments or policies. Decisions, that to their minds seem very rational, can clearly be perceived as unfair if one takes a moment to look at things from another perspective.

There were many problems during this school year. Many students reported daily difficulties, while others recalled few problems. Why this difference? Surely some were simply not present when the worst events occurred. However, another reason suggests itself and goes to the very roots of racism.

Attitude seems to be the crucial factor. Many interviewees were not looking for problems and operated under an assumption that everyone dealt with situations fairly. This may seem idealistic, but it seemed to work for these individuals as they came out of a difficult situation with few negative experiences. Others tend to look for race as the initial motivation for any

negative action. Kids, being kids, used whatever tools they could to achieve their objectives. If that meant a white girl who received bad grades in an elective class could accuse her black teacher of racism, so be it. If a black male who refused to go to class due to a boycott was suspended, that action was due to prejudice. Generalizations become common in a racially charged situation and are the seed of future racism. The black kids seemed much more aggressive, the white football star was unfairly forced to change positions, the administration is dealing too harshly with blacks and treating them unfairly - all of these accusations are examples of how everything becomes race related.

An attitude of mistrust soon becomes prevalent. Electioneering by black students obviously became necessary after the homecoming fiasco (when no blacks were represented on the homecoming court). The black students felt that this lack of representation was clear evidence of unfairness. Interestingly, it would have been much more to the administration's best interest if they had skewed the results and placed some black girls on the court. An unfair action would have given the black students the impression of

fairness. Of course, the white students would have been sure the girls were placed there unfairly.

The result of this homecoming election was an increased awareness among black students about their political situation and the need to vote in blocks. Whites resented this action and felt that it was very unfair.

Interestingly, this question is prevalent today, as we see congressional districts gerrymandered to create a black majority. The question is still whether a white populace will vote for a black representative. Most automatically assume the answer is no, but there are enough exceptions to question this assumption. At Indian River, a black SCA president was elected within one year of integration, despite a student body that was only one-third black.

When dealing with others, it quickly becomes counter productive to assume that they operate under racist motivations. One must start with the presumption of fairness. Only when all rational motives have been exhausted can racism be inferred. At that point it must be attacked root and vine. However, until that time, race should not be assumed to be the problem.

Immediate assumption that any negative action is caused by racism creates more problems and immediately escalates the situation from the rational to the emotional. In this atmosphere it is almost impossible to foster trust. The great problem at Indian River in 1971 was that virtually no one agreed with this proposition. Most attributed racial motivations to virtually every action. This made any type of positive discourse difficult. Again, children can be expected to act in this way. They are willing to use any tool to win, fair or unfair. The adults in the situation, particularly the parents, should be held to a higher standard. They give their children an example. If that example is to look for racial reasons for anything bad that happens, then they will often raise little racists. If that example is one of reason, personal responsibility and willingness to deal with problems when they clearly exist, then responsible children are often the result. This issue is clearly relevant to today's society.

This discussion cannot be left without mention of those students who were mistreated through no fault of their own. A student who was subject to racial epithets in the hall or beaten for no good reason does not need to

question his attitude about race. Some of the events that occurred were completely immoral and no children should have ever been subjected to such treatment. Unbiased observers can only feel empathy for those whose high school experience was tainted by such events and hope that those individuals will not allow isolated incidents to color their attitudes for life.

### **Questions For Further Study**

This study logically leads to further questions. Did other school systems, facing similar circumstances, do more to prepare for integration of their schools? If so, what did they do and how successful were their efforts? Any study in this area would be useful as a comparison to the experiences in Chesapeake. Criticism of Chesapeake's lack of effort to prepare students may be unfounded if other systems' attempts to alleviate tensions in fact led to more problems.

A study of schools which consolidated without the racial overtones

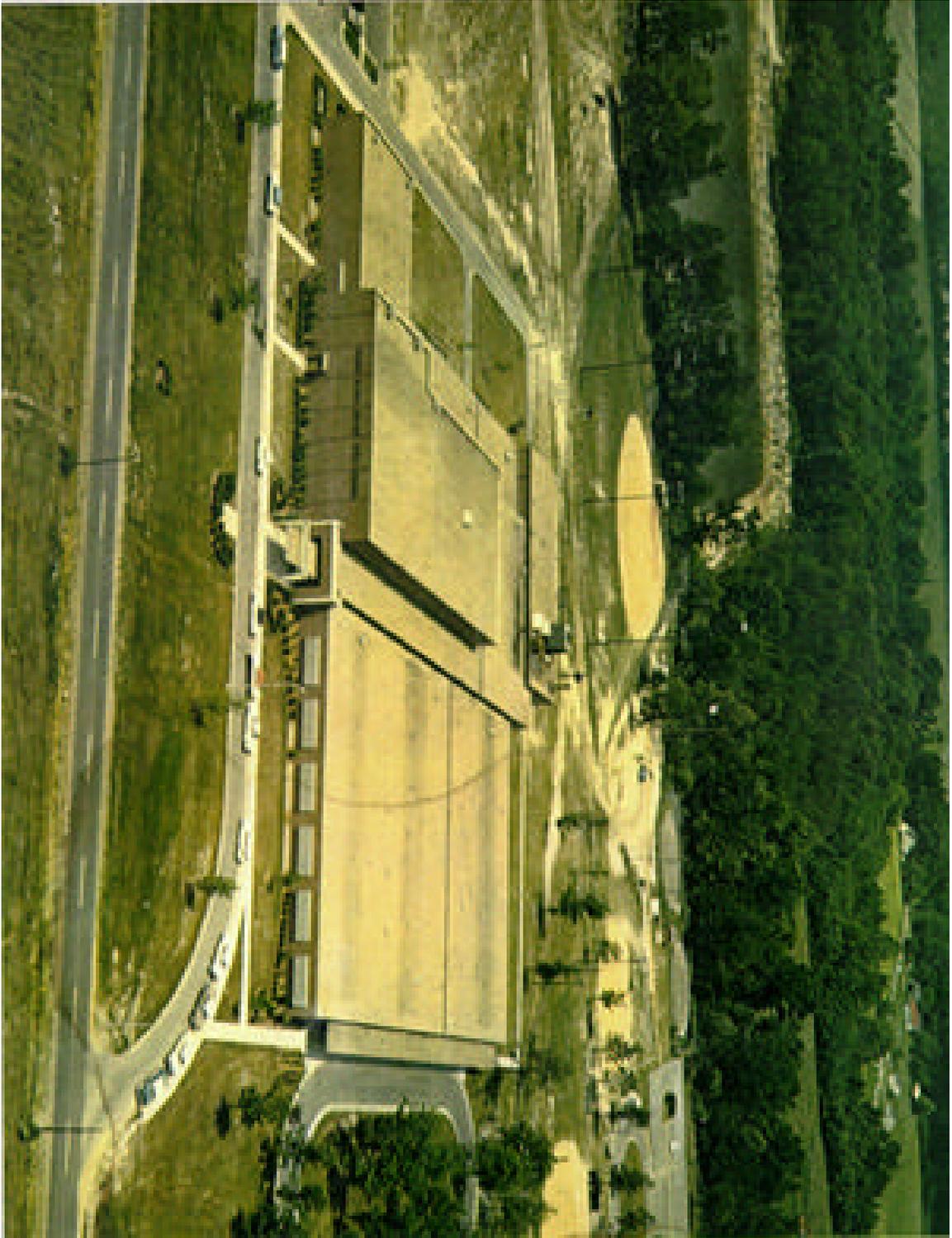
involved in the Chesapeake effort would be especially useful. Many systems have been forced to consolidate schools in the years since the 1971-1972 school year. What problems did they face? How severe were they? Were there violent incidents? Answering the question of whether these systems faced similar or significantly worse problems than those that occurred at Indian River, would be very useful in studying the situation in Chesapeake. Was the major issue consolidation, exacerbated by racial issues, or racial issues, exacerbated by consolidation? Only by determining the answer to this question is it possible to begin to gauge the influence of race on the situation at Indian River.

## **Final Thoughts**

The administration attempted to maintain a positive attitude at all times. There was never any doubt expressed by the administration that things would eventually improve at Indian River. The principal maintained this pose regardless of how negative the situation. Without a doubt, this positive attitude weighed heavily in the successful completion of the school year.

Many black students reported that integration did not work for them. They sacrificed much and were forced into difficult circumstances. Being children, they sometimes reacted poorly to difficult situations. The white children also had problems with the situation. They also lost much and at times reacted poorly. Many of both races lost much of the joy that should have been a part of their senior year of high school. Many now have negative memories of a year which they anticipated would be their best time in school. Society may have moved forward, but there was a price paid by individuals. The students who, although unwillingly, sacrificed a large portion of the excitement, joy and fun of their senior year of high school deserve to have

their sacrifice recognized and remembered..



## Reference List

All Charlottesville schools closed. 1972, February 18). The Ledger Star, p. A-2

Bardolph, Richard. (1970) . The civil rights record: Black americans and the law 1849-1970. New York: Crowell Company.

Blacks state position at anti-busing rally. (1971, August 28). Journal and Guide, p.2.

Buses haul thousands to desegregate schools. (1971, September 11). Journal and Guide, p.1

Butts, Marshall W. (1971). Portsmouth under four flags: 1752-1970. Portsmouth, Va.: Portsmouth Historical Association and the Friends of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum.

Brown v. Board of Education. (1953). 345 U. S. 972 (S. Ct. 1954)

Brown v. Board of Education. (1954). 347 U. S. 483 (S. Ct. 1955)

Calm delights school leaders. (1971, September 8). The Virginian Pilot, p. B3.

Chesapeake plan okayed by Hoffman. (1971, October 3). The Virginian Pilot, p. B1.

City boundary jumping charged in schools. (1971, October 5). The Virginian Pilot, p. H1.

City Councilmen speak out on Crestwood issue. (1971, July 10). Journal and Guide, p. 15.

Crestwood's demise becomes Indian River's gain. (1971, September 16). The Virginian Pilot, p. E5.

Dabney, Virginius. (1971). Virginia, the new dominion. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.

Desegregation rated beneficial. (1971, November 27). Journal and Guide, p. 2.

DiMarco, Thomas V., Mason, Lorna C. , Appy, Christian G. (1991). The history of the United States; Boston: Doubleday.

Downing v. School Board. (1972) . 455 F.2d 1153. (E. D. Va. 1972)  
 Few few snarls in Portsmouth, Chesapeake. (1971, September 8).  
The Virginian Pilot, p. B1.

First time: all city schools lower bars. (1971, July 31). Journal and Guide, p. 1.

4 Arrested in school assault. (1971, October 5). The Virginian Pilot, p. A6.

4 Granby high students charged with assault. (1971, October 9)  
Journal and Guide, p.9.

Fridell, Guy. (1968). We began at Jamestown. Richmond: Dietz Press.

Fun, not fortune in school casino. (1971, October 3) . The Virginian Pilot, p. H2.

Greenberg, Jack. (1994) . Crusaders in the courts . New York: Basicbooks.

Hoffman Oks Chesapeake plan; NAACP to appeal. (1971, August 7). Journal and Guide, p. 2.

Indian River school principal requests police assistance. (1971, November, 25). Ledger Star, p. B1.

Journal of the constitutional convention of the Commonwealth of Virginia to revise and amend section 141 of the constitution of Virginia. (1956). Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia Division of Purchase and Printing.

Mix plan failing, Thomas says. (1971, October 10) . The Virginian Pilot, p. A1.

Muse, Benjamin. (1961) . Virginia's massive resistance. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

National Study of Secondary Schools Evaluation: (1967 March). Crestwood High School. Edwards, E.L., Chairman of Visiting Committee.

Negroes protest crowding on buses. (1971, September 9). The Virginian Pilot, p. C2.

Norcom back to normal. (1972, February 17). Ledger Star, p. B1.

Norcom HS students boycotting. (1971, December 15). Ledger Star, p. C1.

Norcom pupils strike. (1971, December 25). Journal and Guide, p.6.

Norcom students return. (1971, December 14). Ledger Star, p. A14.

Opening date still unclear. (1971, September 8). The Virginian Pilot, p. A1.

Parramore, Thomas C. , Stewart, Peter C. , & Boggs, Tommy L. (1994). Norfolk's first four centuries. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia.

Police pursue assaults on 5 Portsmouth youths. (1971, October 2). Journal and Guide, p. 16.

Portsmouth football games shifted. (1971, October 9). The Virginian Pilot, p. B1.

Pupils again quit Norcom. (1972, February 18). Ledger Star, p. B1.

Pupil boycott stuns Norcom. (1971, December 15). Journal and Guide, p.1.

Pupil disturbances lead to 9 arrests by police. (1971, November 13). Journal and Guide, p. 4.

Quality of education raised by integration. (1971, December 4). Journal and Guide, p. 1.

Sequoyah: 1971 Indian River High School Yearbook, Eds. Herrington, Lynn and Potter, Janis.

Sequoyah: 1972 Indian River High School Yearbook, Ed. Nuckols, Mike.

Students strike Norcom, threaten citywide effort. (1971, December 13). Ledger Star, p. A14.

37 day reports reveal 330 school incidents. (1971, October 23). Journal and Guide, p. 1.

Three Portsmouth school plans accepted by judge. (1971, August 21).

Journal and Guide, p. 11.

2 teachers from Crestwood honored. (1971, September 18). Journal and Guide, p. 7).

United States commission on civil rights: A survey of school desegregation. (1966)

Uptown group disagrees with 'Thomas doctrine'. (1971, November 13). Journal and Guide, p.2

Wildcats lose, 32-0. (1971, October 5). The Virginian Pilot, p. B8.

### **Citation Note:**

-An official letter written by Mr. E. W. Chittum (Superintendent of Chesapeake Public Schools) to Lloyd R. Henderson (Director of the Education Division of HEW's Office of Civil Rights), on April 16, 1971, gave a full accounting of the various correspondence that had taken place between HEW and Chesapeake up until that time.

-Mrs. Patsy Everton is listed in the interview section due to brief discussions we had on two separate occasions. However, it was her diligent research that provided materials to which, otherwise, this researcher would not have had access. For example, her efforts allowed the Crestwood Accreditation report of March, 1967 and the above mentioned correspondence from Mr. Chittum to be made available for this study.

-A presentation was made by James L. Frye on July 8, 1995, as a class requirement. The presentation concerned the history of black education in Chesapeake. Mr. Frye is currently the principal of Indian River High School, he followed Mr. Philips. Mr. Frye also graciously allowed this researcher to have access to the following documents:

-Staff bulletins issued by the Indian River High School administration which were examined carefully for the 1971-1972 school year.

-Minutes of various meetings held for administrators were examined for the period from 1971-1972. these included:

-Chesapeake Association of Administrators and Supervisors meetings

-Principals meetings

-Memos from the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent.

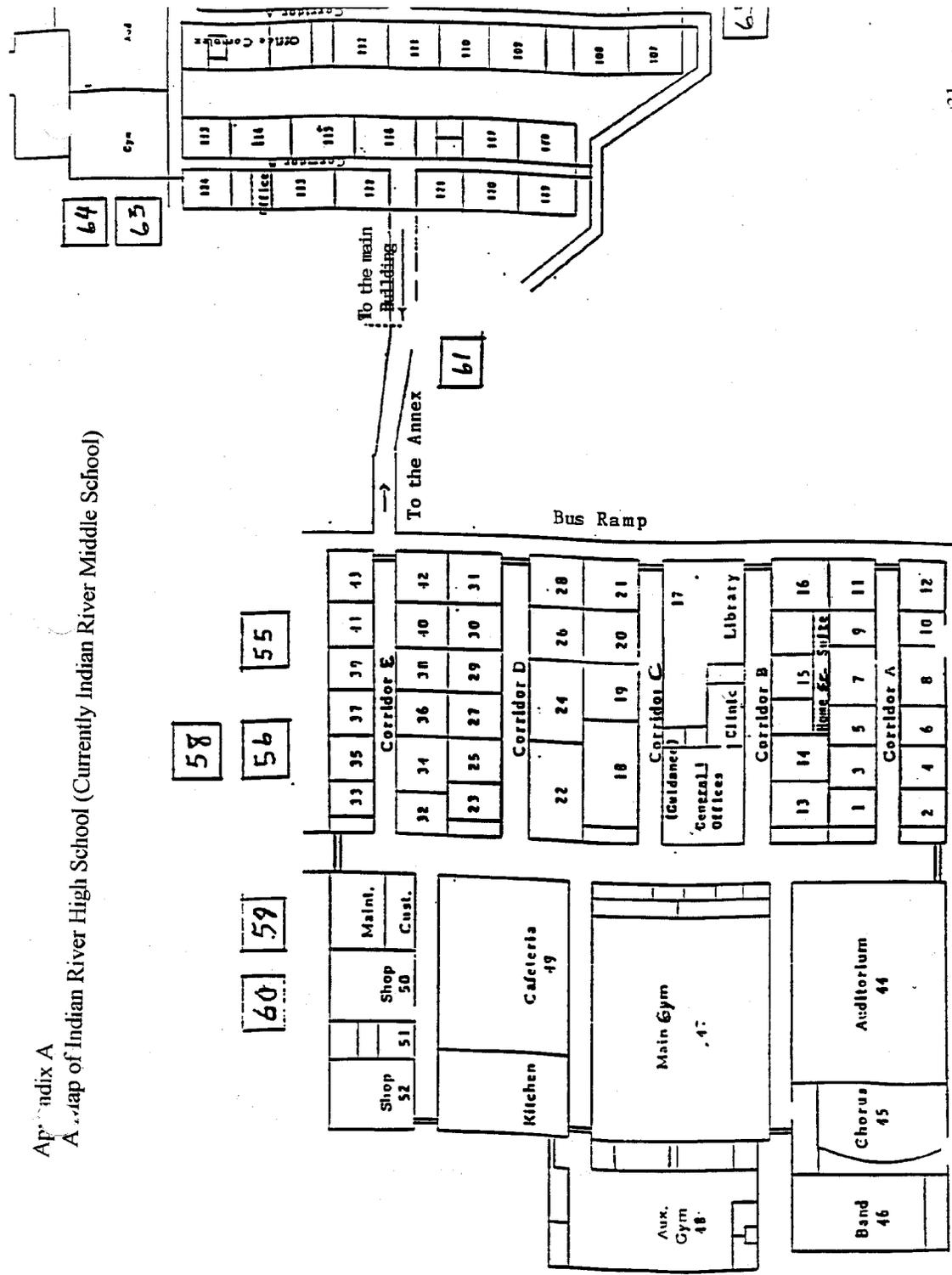
-School Board Minutes are available at the Chesapeake Public School Administration Building. Again Mrs. Everton was a great help. The minutes of numerous meetings were used and are appropriately cited in the text.

-Dr. Henry I. Willett deserves credit for his many outstanding lectures, from which came most of the material on the origin of the cities of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach.

## **Appendix A**

A Map of Indian River High School (Currently Indian River Middle School)

Appendix A  
 A Map of Indian River High School (Currently Indian River Middle School)



## Appendix B A Calendar of the 1971-1972 School Year

### September 1971 Indian River High School

abbreviations: c/c = cross country, asc=after school

Note: Mr. Bryant hospitalized and out most of month

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	7 -School Opens -SCA assemblies for orientation	8 Thespians meet asc	9 JV football GB at IR	10 Football 7:30 IR at Churchland	11 ROTC field trip	12
13 -Thespians open house, 7:30 library	14 -Meeting of all club sponsors asc - <u>As You Like It</u> auditions-asc auditorium	15 -City wide SCA council in library -Play auditions cont. asc -JV football Churcland at IR	16 -Play auditions asc	17 Football IR at OSH 8:00	18	19
20 -SCA meeting cafeteria bell 1 -Athletic Parents 7:30 -Dept. meetings -c/c IR at Portsmouth Catholic	21 -Chorus Parents board meeting 8pm -Group Guidance class 4-6:45 Home ec suite -Sectional chorus rehearsal 7pm	22 -Key club meeting 7:30 -Club info forms filled out, bell 1 -10th grade hearing test in library	23 -JV football IR at Wilson 4pm -Parent council 7:30 library	24 -Football Wilson at IR 8pm	25	26

<p>Sept. 1971(cont) 27 Teacher work day no school</p>	<p>28 -Play practice asc -Group Guidance asc -PTA board 7:30 lib -Amica TrihiY membership drive begins -Junior class pin sale begins</p>	<p>29 -Play practice asc -Spanish club asc -Key club 7:30</p>	<p>30 -play practice asc -c/c Norcom at IR -Delta club asc -Ecology club asc -French club asc -SCA exec committee asc -Senior Portraits all day by appt. on stage -JV football DC at IR</p>			

**October 1971** All month- Play practice every afternoon-Monday thru Thursday play=As You Like It, Chorus  
candy sale abbreviations-asc=after school cc=cross country

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1 No School Football-at GB	2	3
4 -Sigma Tau TrihiY mtg-7:30 mbrship drive all week -Future Nurses-asc -Alpha TrihiY pompom sale -Athletic Parents 7:30 Faculty mtg. asc	5 -Group - Guidance asc -Amica TrihiY asc -PTA board 7:30 -Locker check last bell	6 -cc at DC -Key club 7:30 -NHS asc -Weaver field trip to Merrill Lynch-bells 2-4	7 ICC mtg asc SCA council 2nd bell	8 Football-Kellam at home-Stadium dedication	9 cc-Wm & Mary Invitational-at Williamsburg	10
11 -Future Nurses asc -Sigma Tau TrihiY 7:30/Melody Moore's home	12 -Future Teachers asc -cc OSH at IR	13 -Back to School Night(open house)  -Key club-Jack Bolster-7:30	14 -French club -Science club both asc -Amica TrihiY induction- Armstrong Mem Pres Church -JV football IR at OSH	15 -Football Crad at IR -cc at Wilson	16 Fall Festival Inv cc meet at Newport News	17
18 -Future Nurses -Debate team both asc -SCA council 8:15 -Ecology club mbrship drive all week	19 -ICC mtg 8:15 -Amica TrihiY asc -Sigma Tau TrihiY- Village Inn-Janaf 6:30 -Jr./Sr. class ring orders	20 -Jr. High home football - 6:30 Melody Maidens Oaklette Meth. -Key Club 7:30 Jennings Bryant -JV football IR at Crad. GAA Christmas card orders begin -Homecoming elections	21 Debate team asc	22 Homecoming WB at IR Parent Council BBQ dinner 5:00  Dance School Caf. 10:00-12:00	23 SCA operation W.E.E.D.	24

<p>Oct.1971(cont) 25 Veterans day school holiday</p>	<p>26- Report Card -Pop Choral Concert 3d bell -cc Church at IR -FTA asc Keyettes 7:30 LuAnn Morelli</p>	<p>27 -Chorus 3d -Jr. High home Football DECA rally 7:30-9:30</p>	<p>28 Chorus 3d Debate/French asc Club Pix JV football</p>	<p>29 Varsity Football Kempsville at IR</p>	<p>30 -District cc meet Frederick 10:00 Keyettes svc at Leigh Mem Amica Bakesale</p>	<p>31 Sigma Tau candy to under priv. children</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------

**November 1971**All Month- Play Practice, As You Like It, 3:30-5:30 Monday-Thursday

Abbreviations- cc=Cross Country

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1 -Group Guidance 3:30-6:00 -Thespian Induction-6-9pm -Sigma Tau 7:30 -Athletic Parents 7:30 -Keyettes- Kleenex for the classroom -Black Solidarity day	2 -SCA exec council 1st bell -Senior Class mtg 2d bell -Alpha Omega TrihiY Birthday  Election day	3 -City cc meet -Nat. Honor Soc. asc -District TrihiY concil library asc -Key club Mike Nuckols house	4 -Ms. Trimyer field trip-bells 1,3,5 -Amica TrihiY asc	5 Football IR at DCHS	6 -Regional cc Newport News -Spanish club donut sale -Pep club car wash- ARCO	7
8 -Junior Class Variety show practice-7:30-10:30 -Keyettes skatingparty-colleg park -Ath. Parents 7:30	9 -Student Council 6th bell -FTA asc -Group Guidance asc -Variety Show practice 7:30 -Key club- Mike Nuckols -Keyettes-Susan Lancaster PTA-8:00 pm	10 College night Wilson HS- 7:30	11 -Keyettes car bash- before school -French club asc	12 -Order graduation announcements -Varsity Football Kennedy at IR	13 -state cc meet Williamsburg -French club donut sale	14
15 -Soph class officers meet-1st bell -Dept meetings -Variety show practice -Sigma Tau 7:30 -Ath Parents 7:30	16 -ICC mtg bell 2 -Grp Guidance asc -Variety Show practice	17 -National Honor Society asc -Variety Show practice -Parent Council 7:30 -Key club Mark Callahan 7:30 -Keyettes canned food drive	18 -Natl Honor assembly bell 1 -Amica TrihiY asc -Variety Show practice	19 -Junior Class Variety Show practice 7-10:30	20 Junior Class Variety Show 8:00 pm	21 Melodious Maidens 2d Pres church 11:00 am

22 -Yteens 8:15 -Delta asc -Dept. meetings -Soph class council bell 1 -Alpha canned food drive begins -NHS candy sale -7:30 athl par.	23 ** problem -admin council bell 2 -SCA exec counc -FTA asc -Keyettes Janet Wrenn -Keyettes serve seniors	24**problem -Key club 7:30 -Alpha meanest teacher	25 Thanksgiving holiday	26 Thanksgiving holiday	27	28
29 -Amica TrihiY Guardian Care home 6:30 -Alpha TrihiY 7:30	30 SCA council bell 2					

**December 1971**

Ongoing Activities- Play Practice, 3:30-5:30 Monday-Thursday

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1 -Admin Counc. bell 2 -NHS asc -Key club 7:30	2 -Amica TrihiY asc -Yearbook pix	3 -Key club donkey Basketball game -Keyettes bake sale at the game	4 DECA donut sale	5 Keyettes at Elizabeth River Bapt. Church
6 -Faculty mtg asc -Teacher rap group to discuss problems -Math club bake sale asc -Alphs TrihiY Ellen Grover	7 -SCA exec council asc -Keyettes bandages to project Concern	8 -Math club bake sale asc -Powder Puff football-Keyettes v. Alpha 4:00 pm -Key club 7:30	9 -French club asc	10 -Math club bake sale asc - Basketball Chuchland at IR JV-6:30, Varsity 8:00	11 -Debate Tourn. all day -Senior Dance 8-12 pm.	12
13 -Dept. Mtgs asc -Alpha TrihiY 7:30 -Alpha canned good drive	14 -Club Pictures -FTA asc -Science Club asc -Basketball IR at Smith -Keyettes 7:30 Susie Jackson -PTA mtg 8 pm	15 -Basketball DC at IR 6:30 -Key club 7 pm George Wilson	16 -Homeroom rep workshop bell 2 -Amica TrihiY asc -IRHS band and chorus concert 8:00	17 -Basketball IR at DC 6:30	18 -Alpha Christmas party at Kings Daughters Childrens Hospital	19 Chorus at Oaklette Meth. 5 pm
20 -Athletic Banq. Caf. 6:30 -School assessment com. mtg- 1:30 home ec suite -Sigma Tau 7:30 -Alpha 7:30	21 -Fac Christmas mtg asc w/ refreshments -Science club asc -Amica- Guardian Care Home 4:00 -SCA council bell 2	22 -Keyettes Christmas caroling Georgetown	23 Christmas holiday	24 Christmas holiday  -Yteens Christmas stockings to YWCA children	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**January 1972**Ongoing Activities: Play Practice, 3:30-5:30 Monday-Thursday As You Like It

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Sat	Sun
3 -Group Guid. asc -Alpha 7:30 -Sigma Tau 7:30	4 -Delta Donut sale asc -Basketball Cradock at IR 6:30 -PTA exec board 8pm	5 -Natl Honor Soc asc -Key club 7:30	6 -Amica asc -Wrestling IR at Churchland 6:30	7	8 IR at FC	9 Wrestling 6:30
10 -Alpha asc -Sigma Tau Logene Baker	11 -Govt. Students assembly bell 2 -Keyettes 7:30 Lynn Austin -Group Guid. asc -Basketball OSH at IR 6:30	12 -SCA council workshop bell 1 -Key club 7:30 Lester Dominick	13 -French Club asc -Wrestling GB at IR 6:30	14 -Basketball Kennedy at IR 6:30	15	16
17 -Alpha asc -Assembly 1/3	18 -Basketball IR at GB 6:30 -Assembly 1/3 -Group Guid. asc	19 -Wrestling Kempsville at IR 6:30 -Assembly 1/3 -Key club 7:30 Allen Crumpler -Play dress rehearsal 5:45	20 - <u>As You Like It</u> 8pm Audit. -Amica asc	21 - <u>As You Like It</u> 8:00 -Basketball IR at Cradock 6:30	22 - <u>As You Like It</u> 8:00 -Wrestling IR at Menchville	23
24 -Choral Parents 7:30 -Alpha 7:30 E.J. Ashcroft -Dept. Meetings	25 -Basketball Kemps. at IR -Keyettes 7:30 at Nancy Worley	26 -Key club 7:30 Mike Spoto	27 -French club asc -Wrestling IR at WB 6:30 -End of 3d 6 wks	28 -Teacher work day -Basketball IR at Churchland -Wrestling Ferguson at IR	29 -Amica bake sale at Grants -Sigma donut sale	30
31 Teacher work day Sigma Tau 7:30 Patty Cannon -Alpha 7:30 Angie Harrell						



**February 1972 Indian River High School**

Abbreviations- BBall= basketball, asc=after school meeting, AthPar=Athletic Parents group

Mon      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Sat

Sun

	1 -Basketball GB at IR 6:30 -PTA exec board 8:00 pm	2 -Natl Honor Soc candy sale Feb. 2-9 -Key club 7:30	3 -Amica asc -Wrestling Cradock at IR	4 -Regional band at Wilson -Basketball DC at IR	5 -Regional band at Wilson -Wrestling Wilson at IR 2:00	6 Regional Band at Wilson
7 -Alpha Sweetheart teachers 7-14 -Alpha 7:30 Diane Hume	8 -Basketball IR at Norcom 6:30 -SCA council bell 6 -Keyettes 7:30 Nani Marple -Assembly?	9 -Key club 7:30 Mark Early	10 -French club asc -Intramural BBall class comp. 8:00	11 -SE district wrestling tourn. Wilson HS -BBall IR at WB -Regional Chorus	12 -SE district wrestling tourn. -Regional Chorus - Sweetheart ball 8-12	13
14 -Alpha valentine party for GI's at Portsmouth Naval Hosp. -Keyettes singing valentines -Soph class valentine carnations	15 -BBall IR at Wilson 6:30 -Jr.High BBall Crestwood at IR	16 -Key club 7:30 Bobby Taylor	17 -Health careers assembly 2pm. 10th grade only -Amica TrihiY asc -PTA exec board 8pm.	18 -Regional wrestling at Ferguson HS -BBall Cox at IR 6:30	19 -Regional Wrestling -Key club donut sale	20 teachers -Move to new school
21 **** -1st day in new building -Guides in hall	22 Black History Week	23** Move limits activities this week- no schedule of activities published	24	25	26	27

28 -Dept. mtgs -Choral parents 7:30 -Alpha 7:30 to visit "old ladies home"	29					
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----	--	--	--	--	--

**March 1972** (In the new building)

Abbreviations: BBall=basketball, asc=after school

Monday                      Tuesday                      Wednesday                      Thursday                      Friday                      Saturday                      Sun

		1 -District Tri-Hi-Y council asc -Key club 7:30 IRHS rm. C15 -Parent Council 7:30	2	3 -Regional BBall at Hampton	4 -Regional BBall at Hampton -Amica donut sale	5
6 -All depts. meet asc -Soph class council 8:30 in Caf -Alpha placemat sale -Band in Auditorium all week -Alpha 7:30 Becky Rawls -Sigma Tau 7:30 Donna Simmons -Chorus Donut sale	7 -PTA exec board 10:00 am. -Keyette mtg Debbie Baker	8 -Key club 7:30 IRHS C15	9 -ICC bell 2	10 -Band Festival at Cradock -Choral faculty BBall game	11 -Band Fest. cont. -Chorus donut sale cont.	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 -Keyettes sell Daffodils -Sigma Tau 7:30 at Debbie Heath's home -Alpha 7:30 Angie Harrell -Senior class officers bell 2	21 -French club eclair eating contest asc -Keyettes asc -Student activities committee asc -Field trip aero space classes to Langley for flight experience	22 -Joint Tri Hi Y program asc -Keyettes v. OSHS BBall 4pm. -French club asc -Key club 7:30 Field Trip Mr. Brewer's classes to Williamsburg	23 SE district forensics tourn. IRHS	24 Regional Baseball Laurence stadium	25 Regional baseball Laur. stad. -Choral chicken dinner -Keyettes paper drive	26

27	28	29	30	31		
----	----	----	----	----	--	--

## April 1972

Abbreviations: Bsbal = baseball, asc=after school meeting

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
3 -VICA candy sale begins -Amica takes in new members	4 -SCA council mtg. bell 1 -Naval Acad midshipman, main hall during lunch -PTA exec board 8pm -Tennis IR at Cradock	5 -GAA faculty basketball 7:30 IRJHS gym -Key club 7:30 Richard MacDonald	6 Model General Assembly Richmond all day	7 -Model General Assembly- Rich. -Tennis DC at IR -Track Colonial Relays, Williamsburg	8 -All City Chorus auditions OSHS -Model Gen Assembly -Spanish club donut sale	9
10 -DE classes field trip to Va. Pilot 9am-1pm -Keyette skating party Colleg Park 7-10pm -Alpha takes in new members all week -ICC mtg. G13 -Alpha 7:30 Jeannie Ponton -Miss Ches at IRJHS all week	11 -National Assessment -PTA 8pm -Golf IR v. Cradock at Stumpy Lake -Tennis WB at IR -Keyettes 7:30 Diane Day -VICA employee employer banq. Cavalier dinner theatre	12 -Natl Assessment -National Honor Soc. asc -Track IR v. OSH -Key club 7:30 Mike Nuckols	13 -Teachers to view VD film asc -French club asc	14 -Golf IR v. Wilson Stumpy Lake -Tennis Churchland at IR	15 -Chorus donut sale -Track Tidewater meet at Wlmsburg -Senior Banquet Cavalier Hotel	16

<p>April 1971(cont) 17 -Earth Week -IRHS glass drive -Sigma Tau 7:30 -Study Hall teachers meet</p>	<p>18 -Va. Wesleyan seminar at IR 10am. -Baseball IR at Wilson -Tennis OSHS at IR -SCA exec council asc -Awards Comm. mtg 8am.</p>	<p>19 -Track IR v. Churchland -IR Keyettes v. OSHS Keyettes in Basketball at IRJHS gym 4pm -Announcement of SCA election procedures -Key club 7:30 Jack Bolster</p>	<p>20 -Amica asc</p>	<p>21 -Golf IR v. GB at Stumpy Lake -Tennis -Baseball IR at GB</p>	<p>22 -Track AAA relays IRHS -Earth day glass picked up in student parking lot -Keyettes car wash</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>April 24 -Choral Parents 7:30 -Amica induction ceremony-6:30 Armstrong Mem Pres. Church -Sigma Tau Tracy Detherage</p>	<p>25 -Golf IR v. DC Stumpy Lake -Tennis IR at GB -Track IR v. Cradock -SCA council bell 6 -Keyettes-Debbie Crocker -Baseball Norcom at IR</p>	<p>26 -Key club Dan Etheridge -DE/VOT banquet Pine Tree Inn</p>	<p>27 -Key club basketball game IRJHS faculty v. IRHS faculty -Petitions for SCA offices due</p>	<p>28 -Golf IR v OSHS Stumpy Lake -Tennis IR at Wilson -Track Wilson at IR -Baseball WB at IR</p>	<p>29 -Amica car wash -Gymnastics at Kellam HS -Track AAA relays at IRHS (29 schools)</p>	<p>30</p>

**May 1972 Indian River High School**

Abbreviations- asc=after school

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
1 -Alpha 6:30 Connie Wilfore	2 -Va. Wesleyan seminar 10am Faculty dining room -Space mobile-Bells 1 &2 -Golf IR v. Churchland at Stumpy Lake -Tennis IR v. Norcom -Baseball OSH at IR -PTA exec board	3 -Track IR v. Kennedy -Annual staff with Mr. McIntosh asc room A12 -Key club 7:30 Robert Shirley	4 -Report Cards -Junior and Senior English classes attend <u>MacBeth</u> at the Terrace theatre 8pm.	5 -All City Chorus at IR -Band goes to Winchester -Baseball IR v. Churchland	6 All City Chorus at IR	7
8 -Amica candy sale -Alpha mother//daughter banquet 7:30 -Varsity club 7:45	9 -Admin council bell 2 -PTA 8pm. -Golf IR v Norcom City Park -Baseball IR v. DC -Ches. Assoc of Student Councils- Drama Room -all day -Keyettes 7:15 Janet Wrenn -VD program 7:15 Library -Thespians asc	10 -Track IR at Norcom -Art Workshop all day-art room -Key Club 7:30 Mark Callahan	11 ROTC visitation Capt. Robinson	12 -All City Band IRJHS & IRHS -Golf - SE district Tourn.	13 -All City Band -Track district meet -Keyettes donut sale	14 All City Band IRJHS

15 -Varsity club 7:45 D19 -Sigma Tau Lynn Moore -Faculty Mtg asc	16 -District Baseball Tourn. GBHS -Science club asc -Meet the candidates cafeteria/lunch (candidates for SCA)	17 -Key club 7:30 Clarence Jones -Candidate speeches given over PA system bell 2	18 -City wide Jr. High track at IRHS -Meet the candidates-lunch -Baseball Tourn GBHS -Golf Regional tourn Newport News Golf Course	19 -Band Concert 8pm -Track Eastern Region Meet	20 -Prom IRHS commons 8pm -Regional Track Meet	21 -Day in the Park 1-5pm IRHS band plays at 4:20 GB civic center
May 1971 (cont) 22 -Choral parents 7:30 -Golf State Tourn -Varsity club 7:45 -Delta- collect items for Central State Hospital -Choral rehearsal in commons -VD program this week	23 -Science Club asc -Choral Rehearsal in Commons -Keyettes 7:30 Gayle Shoulars	24	25 -Key club banquet- Diamond club 6:30 pm -ROTC banquet 7-9:30pm Naval Amphibious Base	26 -Track State Meet in Charlottesville -Tennis State Meet	27 FTA car wash College Park Esso 9-3pm -Alpha donut sale -Band Banquet Shore Drive Inn -State Track	28
29 Memorial Day Holiday	30 -Campaign for class officers begins -Senior Week -Senior dress up day	31 -Pop Music by IR band- 8:30-8:55 -Choral Rehearsal commons area -SCA library day SCA reps to pick up any library books in class- overdue fines forgiven				

## June 1972

Abbreviations: asc=after school

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Sat	Sun
			1 -Spring Athletic banquet IRHS caf 6pm -Choral rehearsal 7:30 commons -Thespia Troupe 1941 asc -Seniors meet at school 7:30	2 -Chorus Concert 8pm commons IRHS -All Seniors miss 4th period for picnic lunch	3 -Lakeside art show Lakeside Park South Norfolk 12-5pm	4 -Lakeside art show -Thespian awards banquet Sheraton Motor Inn 6:30pm
5 -Class elections held through English classes -Keyettes skating party College Park	6 -Keyettes 7:30 Kathy Miles -Run offs for class elections	7 -Installation of SCA officers over PA system bell 2 -Senior Tests bells 5 & 6 -Senior Baccalaureate rehearsal bell 1	8 -First and Second Period Tests	9 3rd and 4th period tests	10 Sigma Tau donut sale	11 Baccalaureate Service Stadium 5pm.
12 5th and 6th period tests  <b>Commencement</b>						

**Appendix C Interview Documents and Correspondence**

Document 1- Initial letter

September 30, 1996

To: Students of the Class of 72 and the Class of 73 at Indian River High School

From: Lee Fowler, Doctoral Student, Virginia Tech

Subject: Research concerning the 1971-1972 year at Indian River High School

I hopefully have aroused your curiosity. As you well know, the 1971-1972 school year was a unique year in the history of Chesapeake schools. Crestwood High School closed as a high school in June of 1971. As a result, we had true integration of schools in Chesapeake for the first time. It has now been twenty-five years since that particular school year. The Education Department at Virginia Tech has approved my study of this particular school year and the experiences of the students involved for my dissertation. I will be interviewing people over the next seven months to try and gain as much information as possible about this school year before I begin writing. If you have questions about my credentials, please feel free to contact Dr. Bob Richards at the Va. Tech graduate center in Virginia Beach (552-1880).

Your help is needed if this project is to be completed. I believe that the experiences that you underwent during this school year are important and worthy of study. What I need from you is some of your time. I would like to conduct as many interviews as possible over the next several months. If you will, please take a few minutes of your time and complete the enclosed card and drop it in the mail. If it is at all possible for you to be at one of the proposed group meetings I would greatly appreciate it.

I have already spoken with a few of your classmates and faculty. It is apparent that while many people have stories to tell, it is difficult to say exactly when an event happened. If at all possible you may wish to coordinate your meeting with some friends from your class so that a group of you may be there together. Wednesday sessions will run from 7:00-9:00 p.m., Saturday sessions will run from 10:00-12:00 in the morning. Late is fine, please don't stay away if you're running behind!

For those who attend a group session, we will basically get together to tell stories about this particular year. I am doing research now so that I will know enough to get you started with questions. What I have found so far is that once you get started, it's like opening the floodgates and the sessions become a lot of fun. I hope this is the case! By the way, refreshments will be provided. Sessions will be held at the library in what is now Indian River Middle School.

I believe that future historians of the period of integration will benefit greatly from this study of an individual school during the period in question. I hope that many of you will take the time to fill out and return the card provided. Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Lee Fowler

*Response Card sent with Initial Letter*

Please check the block for the date you hope to attend so that I can plan for group sessions:

Wed. Oct. 30	Sat. Nov. 2
Wed. Nov. 6	Sat. Nov. 9
Wed. Nov. 13	Sat. Nov. 16
Wed. Nov. 20	Sat. Nov. 23
Wed. Dec. 4	Sat. Dec. 7

I cannot attend any of these, but would like to participate, contact me.

I do not wish to participate.

In high school I participated in:

football	job
cheering	forensics
basketball	drama
wrestling	other-list below
track	
band	
chorus	

clubs-list

Code: (for identification so your name won't appear on this card)

THANKS!

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State  
University

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative  
Projects

Project Title: Study of the 1971-1972 School Year at Indian River High  
School

Purpose of this Project: The events of the first school year in which schools in Chesapeake were truly integrated will be examined in detail in order to give a clear picture of the events of the time to future historians.

Risks: There should be a minimal risk involved in this history project.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Subjects may be identified by citation unless otherwise specified in the Special Restrictions section.

Compensation: No compensation will be provided for interview subjects.

Approval of Research:

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Human Subject Research Permission  
Form

Subject's Permission:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Date

I hereby give to Lee Fowler, for whatever scholarly or educational purposes may be determined, the tape recordings, transcriptions, and contents of this oral history interview, subject to the restrictions listed below:

Name of  
Interviewee

Address

Signature

Name of Interviewer \_Lee V. Fowler\_ Signature

Interview Guide for Students- 1971-1972 School Year Indian River High School

Please remember that I am not looking for negative responses. If you don't remember any problems, or you only remember positive situations concerning a certain question, that is fine. I am trying to get as close to reality as possible, I am not looking for sensation.

1. What activities were you involved in during 1971-1972? Who were some of your closest friends? What extra-curricular activities were they involved in?
2. Were racial tensions a problem in your extra-curriculars? Were your extra curricular activities integrated?
3. What expectations did you have going into the school year? When did you first hear that the Crestwood students would be coming to DI? Were you aware that IR would be fully integrated for the first time? How did that effect your feelings about school or concerning aDer school activities?
4. Who were your teachers? Your favorites? Least favorite? What do you remember about classroom experiences? Do you remember any situations that you felt were difficult or tense in the classroom due to the racial climate?
5. What was the atmosphere at school, particularly on the first day? Did things improve or get worse as the year progressed?
6. Did you consider the hallways safe? How about the restrooms? Did you witness any problems? What about the breezeway to the annex? The bus ramp?
7. Was the school crowded? How about your locker situation? Did you have trouble getting from class to class?
8. What were your feelings regarding school spirit? After school activities? Games? Prom? Dances? Did you attend? Were there problems? What about the yearbook and its cover?
9. Did the races mix? Were many activities mixed? There was a separate student government for IR and Crestwood, how did you and your friends feel about this? Were there problems?
10. Specific problems have been mentioned concerning the first few days of school, were you aware of any?
11. The word riot has been used, do you recall any situations that you would call a riot? Do you recall any details about it? Were the police present? How often were they at school?
12. Were there many interracial social activities, parties, etc.? What about interracial dating?
13. How did the move into the new building effect the total situation?

Questionnaire for Students 1971-1972

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. There was little or no preparation for the integration of Indian River High School in 1971-1972.
2. The opening of school was a very tense time.
3. There was definitely an attitude of "ours" and "theirs", particularly early in the school year.
4. Overcrowding was a substantial cause of the problems during this school year.
5. The move to the new school generally improved the situation.
6. The Yearbook cover was a significant concern or controversy during this school year.
7. Clubs and organizations were not integrated or achieved only token integration.
8. Most problems occurred in the hallways as opposed to the classroom.
9. There was a riot situation and many students left school as a result.
10. Educational standards were (higher/lower/the same) at IRHS as opposed to CHS.
11. There were problems but if you were not looking for trouble you could avoid it.
12. Indian River was a very spirited school during this school year.
13. Late buses were a problem, particularly at the beginning of this school year.
14. Grades for Crestwood students tended to drop after they arrived at IRHS.
15. You generally felt safe in the hallways.
16. You were afraid to go to the restroom.

**Appendix D: Statistical Breakdown of Indian River High School  
Comparison of 1970-1971 and 1971-1972  
Breakdown of Racial Makeup of Extra-curricular Activities  
1971-1972**

Racial breakdown Organizations at IRHS 1971-1972

<u>Organization</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Total</u>
ICC	10	2	12
SCA homeroom reps	17	25	42
Homecoming Court	All white		
Thespians	28	5	33
Yearbook staff	14	5	19
Natl. Hon. Soc. SRS	35	8	43
JRS	31	11	42
Keyettes	24	0	24
French Club	23	1	24
Math club	16	5	21
Forensics	15	6	21
Spanish club	16	1	17
Amica trihiy	31	1	32
Sigma Tau trihiy	33	1	34
Alphs trihiy	23	2	25

Y teens	0	8	8
Delta	0	27	27
Modern dance	0	10	10
Omega	0	9	9
GAA	14	25	39
Varsity club	21	4	25
Pep Club	74	15	89

## Racial Breakdown -Athletics/Music

<u>Organization</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Total</u>
Band	67	13	80
Chorus	38	23	61
Football	30	15	45
Cross Country	7	2	9
Basketball	10	2	12
Wrestling	1	11	12
Cheering	10	3	13
JV Football	23	12	35
JV Cheering	9	6	15

Coaches/Sponsors All white

Student Racial Breakdown (Source, yearbook, may be skewed. It is possible that some black students did not have their pictures taken due to anger about the move) The senior class picture is not displayed. These numbers reflect the dramatic change in the racial make up Indian River High School from 1971 to 1972.

1971-1972 numbers1970-1971 numbers

Class of 1972 (Seniors)

(as Juniors)

White 241 (68%)

White 205 (96%)

Black 113 (32%)Black 8 (4%)

Total 354

Total 213

Class of 1973 (Juniors)

(as Sophomores)

White 227 (67%)

White 225 (94%)

Black 99 (33%)Black 15 (6%)

Total 336

240

Class of 1974 (Sophomores)

(as Freshman)

White 248 (64%)

White 222 (88%)

Black 138 (36%)Black 30 (12%)

Total 386

Total 252

Student Body in 1971-1972

Student Body in 1970-1971 (grades 9-11 only -there were  
15 blacks in the class of 1971)

White 716 (67%)

White 652 (92%)

Black 350 (33%)Black 53 (8%)

Total 1066

Total 705

Student Body Totals from 1971 yearbook

## Appendix E: List and Description of Individuals Interviewed

### Interview List

#### Breakdown by Interviewee Race, Sex, and Status

<u>Interviewee</u>	<u>Code</u>
Abrams, H. D.	White male student
Abrams, Debbie`	White male student
Amerson, Ovid	White male student
Berryman, Mildred	White female teacher/parent
Brock, James	White male student
Byrd, Noelle	White female teacher
Caldwell, Judy S.	White female student
Chadwick, Wilbur	Black male teacher
Cochran, Karen H.	White female teacher
Cupitt, Tom	White male student teacher
Davenport, Eddie	White male student
Davenport, Ray	White male student
Davenport, Sharon	White female student
Delk, C.E.	Black male student
Dobson, Marie,	Black female student
Duke Vivian	Black female teacher
Dukes, John	White male teacher
Early, Mark	White male student
Etheridge, Bessie Mae	White female guidance
Edmonds, Moses	Black male student
Everton, Patsy*	White female secretary
Everton, Patsy	White female secretary
Everton, Gary	White male teacher
Finneran, Kaye	White female student
Fitzgerald, Carolyn	White female student
Fleming, Carol	White female teacher
Foote, Alma	Black female parent

<u>Interviewee</u>	<u>Code</u>
Foote, June Custis	Black female student
Foote, Reginald	Black male student
French, Mike	White male student
Gaffney, John (Col.)	White male teacher
Green, Maxine	Black female teacher
Halterman, Norma	White female teacher
Hanbury, Elizabeth	White female Asst. Princ.
Harris, Freda E.	Black female student
Hunt, Pearl	Black female teacher
Jones, Karen	Black female student
Johnson, Wayne	White male student
Joyner, Emmit	Black male student
Kellihan, Dorian	White female student
Kellihan, Jeannie P.	White female student
Lane, Dale	White female guidance
Lawrence, Brenda	Black female teacher
Linsey, Dawn	Black female student
MacDonald, Richard	White male student
Maples, Charlene Denise	White female student
Moore, Paul D.	White male community member
Moore, Miriam	White female community member
Nuckols, Mike	White male student
Peterson, Wayne	White male teacher
Philips, Herbert*	White male principal
Philips, Herbert	White male principal
Redd, Al	Black male teacher
Riley, Linda Perry	White female student
Rogers, Carolyn	Black female student
Rogers, Evan C. Jr.	Black male student
Shirley, Robert	White male student
Smith, Brenda M.	White female student
Spanos, Clara	White female teacher
Spellman, Freddie	Black male student

<u>Interviewee</u>	<u>Code</u>
Styron, Steve	White male teacher
Viers, Connie	White female student
Watson, Rudy	Black male student
Whitehurst, Jamie	Black female teacher
Williford, Lynn	White female student
Wingate, Arlene	Black female teacher
Wise, Kathryn	White female student
Woodall, Fred	White male teacher

\*Names listed more than once indicate multiple interviews

## Vita

Lee V. Fowler

## Academic:

BA Furman University, 1979  
MA George Washington University, 1980  
CAGS Virginia Tech, 1996  
EdD Virginia Tech, 1998

## Professional

Employed by Chesapeake Public Schools, 1979 to present  
Teacher, 1979-1993  
Head Football Coach, 1989-1992  
Administration, 1993 to present  
1983-present, Indian River School Zone

## Personal

Married, 1991, Mrs. Gail Lopresti Fowler  
Step Sons, Blair P. Kinchen and Justin W. Kinchen