

**The Perceived Impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing
on One Family's Educational Achievements and Occupational Choices
in Adulthood:
A Study in Recollective Memory**

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by

Linda Eanes Jefferson

(ABSTRACT)

From 1959 -1964, the Prince Edward County, VA School Board closed down its public schools to circumvent the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling declaring separate public schools for Black and White students “inherently unequal” and the 1955 *Brown II* ruling to desegregate public schools with “all deliberate speed.” For five years, more than 1700 African American children received no public education in the county, as White children attended a newly-constructed and private Prince Edward Academy. While some students left Prince Edward to reside with relatives, others were placed with families by the American Friends Service Committee. However, the majority of Black children remained in the county without formalized public instruction.

This study investigated the perceived impact of The Closing on adult self-directed learning, lifelong learning, occupational choices and success within a family with sixteen of its twenty-one children forced from school. Via audio-/video-taped interviews, three participants reflected upon their “lived experiences” during and since The Closing. Transcribed data were coded and analyzed based upon the major and underlying research questions guiding the study.

Nine major conclusions were drawn from its findings: (a) The Closing perceivably impacted immediate educational goals of participants differently, (b) The

Closing perceivably impacted specific and general long-range educational goals, (c) Participants have pursued educational goals via supportive spouses/family members and adult self-directed/lifelong learning measures, (d) Following the re-opening of schools, all respondents graduated high school, and two later enrolled in academic learning centers, (e) Self-directed learning has played an essential role in the lives of all participants, (f) All participants considered themselves life-long learners, (g) The Closing perceivably impacted the career plans of one participant, (h) Respondents acquired manufacturing and/or labor positions and were successfully employed throughout their adult lives, (i) Literacy assistance from family members, self-directed learning, on-the-job training and formalized coursework were perceived as having had a positive bearing on occupational success.

The implications of this study suggested resiliency, family dynamics, family values, and narratological significance. Study participants, driven to live productive and successful lives, appeared to have emulated Adult Learning Theory tenets of self-directed, lifelong quests for formally-delivered and informally-acquired knowledge.

Recommendations emerging from this study included investigations of School Closing survivors' motivations for adult learning, the role of faith in Closing survivors' lives, The Closing's perceived impact on the Next Generation, ancestral discourse, male birth order relationships, 1951 strikers' guilt, education vs. vocation and growth under adversity.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my paternal grandparents Taylor and Gertrude Richards Eanes who instilled in their twenty-one children a strong family legacy of integrity, diligence, perseverance and resiliency. For these strengths, which have been bequeathed to successive generations, we are eternally grateful.

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To my Heavenly Father, who has covered me, protected me and sustained me on this journey in spite of me, I acknowledge it is from You all blessings flow.

This doctoral journey, with its many twists, turns, road blocks, access roads and clearings, also would not have been possible without the selfless willingness, guidance, encouragement and support of some very special individuals.

Aunt Carrie Eanes Walker and Uncles Nathaniel, Vincent and Billy Eanes' gracious willingness to recollect their experiences during and since The Prince Edward County School Closing gave voice to a legacy and valuable piece of history that may have remained silent. Thank you for sharing your memories and entrusting me with your recollections.

Without guidance from my doctoral committee, this study would have remained just a dream deferred on a road untraveled. My gratitude to my advisor Dr. Marcie Boucouvalas for her incessant support and skillfully brilliant guidance of this study since its inception, as well as her unwavering belief in its value, defies measure. Likewise, I offer thanks to Dr. Roland Havis for his astute direction through the analysis process and his afternoons of patience. I thank Dr. Linda Morris for her keen eye for minute details and Dr. Paul Renard for his historical perspective and topic enthusiasm. To Dr. Harold Stubblefield, I am appreciative of class discussions during my earliest days in the ALHRD program that re-inspired a dormant inquiry into The Prince Edward County story, and to Dr. Vonita White Foster for her early support of this study by virtue of her first-hand experiences during The Closing.

Throughout this journey, so many others have offered encouragement, interest and assistance in this research endeavor. Thank you First Lady and Aunt Margaret Eanes Reed Johnson, Cousins Tracy Eanes, Gene Holliman and Lisa Eanes Woody, Pastor Eunice Lee Mercado, God-daughters Crystal Hawkes and Timanto Marima, Evangelist and Sis Danita Turner-Williams, Sis Antoinette Franklin, Valisa Farrington-Lynch, Phyllis Ware, Mentor Dr. Gracie Bailey, Professor and Soror Williabel Davis, Commonwealth Attorney and Soror Cassandra Stroud Conover, Drs. Jimmy Powell, Claudette Toppin and Gale Kamen for periodic inquiries about and calls to champion my progress. I extend appreciation, as well, to those who assisted this endeavor in various other capacities: Michele Eldredge, Sarah Ward, Lise Visser, Gwen Ewing, Kathy Surface, Professor David Majewski, Drs. Debbie Sydow, Vernon L. Lindquist, James McNeer, Vernon R. Lindquist, Ann Marie McCartan, Russell Whitaker, Virginia Cherry, and Edward Peeples, Jr., Producer Brian Grogan, Mercy Seat Films and the *They Closed Our Schools* Advisory Board, Broad Street Richmond Computer World, the Library of Congress, Virginia Tech, Richard Bland College, William and Mary, Virginia State University, Longwood University, Virginia Commonwealth University and Duke University Library Staff. If, inadvertently, I have omitted anyone from this appreciation list, please forgive this honest oversight.

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As I complete this stage of my life journey, I recognize the luminous sojourn that awaits the one who has given the past twenty-three years of my life true meaning and purpose. To my beautiful, brilliant, witty, loving, inquisitive and courageous daughter, Nicole Adia Jefferson, I thank my Heavenly Father for blessing me to be your mother. You have been a constant traveler with me on this journey, supporting and cheering it at every junction. For this I thank you and applaud you. When I think of your curious nature, your creative genius and your courage to step around and beyond traditionally-defined female career boundaries, I stand in awe of you. I always have encouraged you to know and believe firmly there is no limit to your capabilities. As you prepare to complete your undergraduate studies, I pray this Ph.D. journey and its completion inspire you to sojourn fervently even further. You bring me joy, Nicole, and serve as a daily reminder that “whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it truly can achieve.” Embrace your exciting future, Nik. I love you dear daughter.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

“Maybe This Year I Can Graduate”

*This year, maybe, do you think I can graduate?
I'm already two years late.
Dropped out six months when I was seven,
a year when I was eleven,
then got put back when we came up North.
To get through high at twenty's kind of late –
But maybe this year I can graduate.*

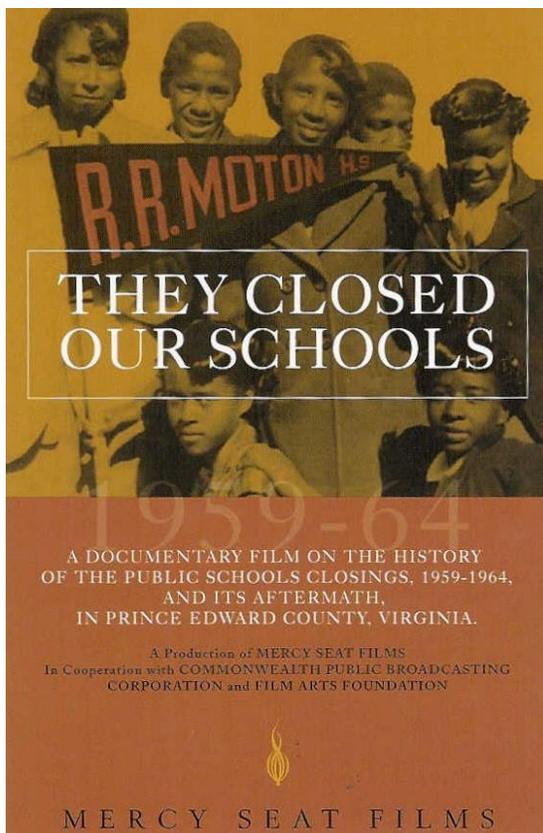
Preface to “Deferred,” *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, p. 252, 1959.

A Midnight Raid on the Treasury!

In 1959, following the May 17, 1954 United States Supreme Court declaration of *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* that separate public schools for Black and White students were “inherently unequal” and the May 31, 1955 *Brown II* ruling to integrate American public schools with “all deliberate speed,” one Virginia county school board took drastic measures to circumvent those rulings. A rural community nestled approximately 70 miles southwest of Richmond and 50 miles east of Lynchburg, VA, Prince Edward County closed and boarded up all of its public schools in an effort to maintain segregation in that county.¹ As a result of that closing, called “The Midnight

¹ When the *Brown* case reached the United States Supreme Court in 1952, it was combined with four other NAACP cases: *Belton and Bulah v. Gebhart* (Deleware), *Bolling v. Sharpe* (District of Columbia), *Briggs v. Elliot* (South Carolina) and *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (Virginia), thus becoming the umbrella case of *Oliver L. Brown et al. vs. The Board of Education of Topeka et. al.* (Kansas). On May 17, 1954, when the United States Supreme Court announced its unanimous decision that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal,” it further stated that to

Raid on the Treasury” (Smith, 1996), county school board officials used tax dollars to build Prince Edward Academy, a school that admitted only White children in the county. On the other hand, all Negro children whose families either were not physically or financially able to send them to school in neighboring counties or out of state or who were not placed in homes outside the county by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) were prevented from attending public school for five years.²



They Closed Our Schools PBS Documentary Marketing Card (c. 2003) (Copyright Brian Grogan, Producer) (2003). *They Closed Our Schools* [DVD Documentary]. United States: Mercy Seat Films. www.mercyseatfilms.com). Re-printed and hyperlinked with permission.

In the absence of a public school system, Black churches in the county turned their basements and sanctuaries into makeshift classrooms, while many families used separate children in public schools because of race was unconstitutional and, therefore, violated the “equal protection” clause of the 14th Amendment.

² As noted in Smith’s *They Closed Their Schools*, in 1959, the Quaker-founded “AFSC conducted an emergency placement program that placed young Black students from Prince Edward County with families from six states and ten communities” (p. ix).

their kitchen tables as desks for learning the three R's. However, without structured, formalized and consistent means of delivering instruction, county children continued to be denied equal access to education.

During year four of The Closing, a group of concerned Black and White politicians, educators and local citizens formed a Free School Association to provide a classroom environment for the more than 1700 Black children who were sitting out of school. The association, authorized by President John F. Kennedy and spearheaded by then Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was directed by New York school superintendent, Dr. Neil Vincent Sullivan. In August 1963, Sullivan and his family hurriedly moved to Prince Edward County to help organize in one month a makeshift free school system for Black children during the 1963-64 school year. The success of the Free School would rely heavily on donations and cooperation from within the local area and around the country. However, the continued success of its students would depend on whether the County School Board would follow the Supreme Court mandate to reopen public schools in the fall of 1964.

When the Public Schools re-opened in the fall of 1964, many students who had been forced from school five years earlier were beyond traditional school age. Thus, while some decided to re-enter the educational system at the original grade level upon departure (or at a higher grade) and graduate at age 23 or older, others decided to enter or remain in the workforce, feeling ashamed of sitting in classrooms with students as much as five years their junior. At the other end of the spectrum, other children, age 10 or 11, were entering a classroom for the first time at a great disadvantage or were placed in age-appropriate grades without the benefit of the first five years of formal preparation.

Of the more than 1700 school-age children affected by The Closing, many have declared they still have stories to tell (Smith, 1997). Thus, this narrative discovery of members from a family that had 16 of its 21 children affected by The School Closing investigated the perceived impact on self-directed / lifelong learning and occupational choices / successes in adulthood.

A Phenomenon in the South

Virginia was no stranger to Massive Resistance, as its venom plagued the South during the decades of the fifties and sixties. For, according to Murphy (1958), during the early days of the desegregation issue, Prince Edward was not alone in its threat to close its public schools. Feverishly infected by Virginia's Massive Resistance manifestos to abort desegregation efforts, schools in Warren County, Charlottesville and Norfolk closed their doors in the fall of 1958 but re-opened them in the winter of 1959. While these and other localities throughout the south incorporated rather drastic, yet short-lived, tactics to circumvent the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, only Prince Edward County did so to a much more extreme measure, when it became the only locality to literally board up its public school windows, chain its doors, corral its buses and declare a five-year non-existence of a public school system.³

³ For example, Gaziano (1998) noted the various tactics implemented by Southern States to avoid integrating their schools:

In 1956, 101 southern members of Congress denounced the *Brown* decision by issuing the "Southern Manifesto." Those who signed vowed to resist *Brown* for as long as they could by using lawful measures to maintain segregation. They also applauded the states that declared their intention to resist *Brown*. Because the *Brown* decision applied only to the five school boards listed on the docket, other school systems decided not to follow the court's ruling nor to desegregate until they were required by the Court to do so.

In 1957, defying a federal judge's order and backed by the Arkansas National Guard, Governor Faubus stood in the doorway of Little Rock's Central High School in order to

Plunged into the spotlight, the Prince Edward County controversy lay among the ranks of American school integration debates that attracted the attention of audiences from around the world. The British were especially interested in how the United States, the so-called embodiment of freedom and liberty, would handle the peculiar situation. Perhaps onlookers saw the proverbial writing on the wall, for in its April 1959 article, "Virginia Faces Facts," the *Economist* realized the lengths to which localities might resort in order to avoid integration and warned that "such a scheme may undermine the whole system of public education" (p. 133).

As suggested, The Closing did "undermine" and impact the system of public education in Prince Edward and surrounding counties, as the more than 1700 Negro children of the county experienced an educational void unparalleled to anywhere else in the nation. These children either had to flee the county to obtain an education, attend makeshift educational programs or literally spend the next five years in a stagnant state of cognitive growth and development.

prevent nine black students from attending. As a result, President Dwight Eisenhower sent in federal troops to enforce the court order.

In 1963, Alabama governor George Wallace declared, "segregation today . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever," as part of his first inaugural address. Then in June of that year, Wallace honored his pledge to prevent two black students from registering for classes by blocking the entrance of the University of Alabama. President John F. Kennedy would nationalize the Alabama National Guard, forcing Wallace to step aside.

There were even more subtle, less publicized attempts to maintain segregation or, at least, slow integration, as the federal courts overruled the more overt tactics. Some communities actually closed their schools for a short period, while others adopted complex, supposedly non-racial, laws that allowed school officials to place pupils in certain schools. At the same time, other localities devised "freedom-of-choice" plans that would automatically assign students to their old schools unless the parents specifically requested a transfer.

The Lost Generation

Commonly referred to as “The Lost Generation,” the more than 1700 school-age children literally “lost” five years of what should have been an education guaranteed to all citizens of Prince Edward County. In the more than fifty years since Prince Edward closed its school doors, those affected by The Closing quietly and solemnly have alluded to the fact that they “lost so many years toward a solid foundation;” “can’t find a decent paying job;” “still have difficulty reading, writing and spelling” and “don’t understand how Prince Edward county could deny us a public education.”⁴

However, along with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education in 2004 and the fiftieth anniversary of The Closing in 2009, a renewed and more heightened attention has been bestowed upon the survivors of The Closing. There appears to be a concerted effort to ensure the “Lost Generation” not be forgotten.

Why This Study?

The notion of researching the Prince Edward County School Closing had plagued me for over thirty years, since first learning of its devastating impact upon the citizens of the county. Born in 1960, I did not experience the impact of The Closing directly. However, growing up in the adjacent county of Nottoway -- which had its share of “integrational” growing pains during the 1960s and 1970s, but whose suffering paled in comparison to that of Prince Edward -- I lived “so close, yet so far” from the point of impact. Having just turned four years of age six months prior to the reopening of the

⁴ Even today, when survivors of The Closing gather at various functions commemorating the Prince Edward struggle for Civil Rights in education, they sometimes willingly discuss the perceived impact that being forced out of school has had and continues to have on their personal and professional lives. I have been privy to many of their discussions.

schools in 1964, I was barely aware of what the celebration really entailed when I accompanied my parents to Farmville to witness the official dedication of the new R. R. Moton High School.⁵ I was even less aware of the significance surrounding my being hoisted up by then Senator Robert Kennedy, steadied next to his chest and urged to “smile” for the cameras.



Dr. Edward Peeples, Jr. (1963 School Closing Researcher), Deacon Louis T. Eanes (1951 Walk-Out Striker) and Filmmaker Brian Grogan (Producer, *They Closed Our Schools* PBS Documentary) (2004)
(Courtesy Linda Eanes Jefferson).
Printed with Permission.

That significance was not to have full clarity until many years later when I decided to pursue “The Closing” as a topic for my high school History term paper. Upon scheduling an appointment in Farmville to meet with NAACP leader Francis L. Griffin, I

⁵ My father is the eldest son of the family of twenty one children, on which this study is based. In addition, he was among the Moton High School juniors and seniors who walked out on April 23, 1951, along with seventeen-year-old Barbara Johns, in protest of the horrible educational facilities and learning conditions for black children residing in Prince Edward County, VA. He then went on to graduate in 1952, never realizing the “walk-out” eventually would culminate in *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, one of the five grievances submitted to docket and ruled upon under the 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. Moreover, my father never imagined the walk-out would precipitate the educational deprivation of sixteen of his younger brothers and sisters. Thus, he reports that to this day he still is haunted by the fact that what he believed were necessary and positive actions in 1951 had such a negative consequence on the family he loves so dearly. Upon participating in the 50th Anniversary Re-enactment of the 1951 Moton High School Walk-out, he recalled, “As the oldest son, I thought my brothers and sisters would have an even better education than I did” (Interview with Deacon Louis Taylor Eanes, 23 April 2001, Farmville, VA).

was eager to learn first-hand about the Prince Edward Closing. However, that meeting was not to take place, as illness prevented Griffin from keeping the appointment.

As a result, I selected another, less enthralling topic in order to meet the criteria and deadline of my term paper. Yet, the thoughts of fulfilling this research destiny remained a plausibility for much of my adult academic career. Thus, over thirty years later, I have been determined and fortunate to re-investigate The Closing, albeit from a uniquely different perspective of adults who experienced its impact firsthand as children.

Guided Inquiry

This study was guided by an over-arching research question regarding the perceived impact of the Prince Edward County School Closing on adult learning: From the perspective of members of one Prince Edward County family, how did The School Closing perceivably impact their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood?

However, to better understand The Closing's perceived impact from the perspective of the individuals who lived it, an additional set of underlying questions were investigated. From the perspective of the participants:

1. How did The Closing perceivably impact immediate educational goals?
2. How did The Closing perceivably impact long-range educational goals?
3. In what manner have participants pursued their desired educational goals?
4. What educational achievements have been realized?
5. What role has self-directed learning played in their lives?
6. To what extent do they consider themselves life-long learners?
7. In what ways did The Closing perceivably impact job or career opportunities?

8. What occupational choices have been available to participants?
9. What bearing have educational achievements had on occupational success?

To capture the essence of The Closing's perceived impact, this study is organized as follows: Chapter Two provides a review of the quantitative and qualitative studies that have been conducted on the Prince Edward County, Virginia School Closing. More specifically, it references peripheral studies, such as narratives, articles, visual media and observations regarding the moral, social, educational and political implications of The Closing. The chapter also examines the various research studies reflecting the educational testing of the children during the period of school closure and upon its re-opening, as well as investigations of educational improvements, closure impact and racial climate in the decades that have followed. In addition, Chapter Two introduces the conceptual framework of adult self-directed and lifelong learning, as well as the qualitative framing of the narratological revealing of "lived experiences" in this study.

Chapter Three examines the method utilized in researching the perceived impact of The Closing on educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood. It explains the design of the study, driven by the major and underlying research questions, as well as establishes boundaries and the researcher's rationale for selecting participants. This chapter also discusses the research instrument and procedures for collecting and analyzing data.

Chapter Four introduces the findings and presents the results of the study via narrative summaries, as well as themes which emerged from the interviews. It re-introduces the participants more vividly to readers of this study by capturing the essence of their lived experiences often in their own words.

Chapter Five's discussion provides a summary of the investigative project and its conclusions. This chapter also considers limitations of this particular study, implications drawn from it and recommendations for future inquiry.

Investigative Significance

Time, multiple experiences as a non-traditional learner and a fascination with self-directed and life-long learning endeavors guided me back to the Prince Edward story. Even though numerous studies discussed further in Chapter Two investigated effects of The Closing on the children during the period the school doors were closed, following the reopening of the doors in 1964 and even into the 1970's, little attention had been given to The Closing's perceived impact on self-directed learning and occupational choices in adulthood. This inquiry investigated how members of this large Prince Edward County family have pursued and achieved self-directed, life-long learning projects outside the realm of the traditional classroom setting, while uncovering how they have pursued and attained their levels of achievement in spite of those lost five years. Additionally, the study investigated the occupational opportunities that have been available to Closing survivors. Perhaps just as enlightening, this inquiry into the "lived experiences" of a family who endured the 1959 – 1964 School Closing gave voice to members who otherwise may have remained silent about the phenomenon and perceived impact of being forced out of school.

Summary

Following the 1954 United States Supreme Court mandate to equalize and desegregate public schools nationwide, the School Board in Prince Edward County, Virginia circumvented the ruling in 1959 by boarding up classroom windows, chaining its school doors and parking its buses, thus eliminating a public school system. While

county tax dollars then were utilized to build and operate a private school for White students, Black students were left without any formalized means of public education for five years.

When school doors re-opened in 1964, many African-American children, often referred to as “The Lost Generation,” who emerged from The Closing faced numerous obstacles upon being reintegrated into a formalized educational system. The perceived impact of the five-year absence of formal instruction for those not placed in alternative school systems appears to have transcended beyond childhood, as the current adults have pursued educational and occupational advancements. This study investigated the perceived impact of The Closing on the adult-driven and formally-structured educational achievements and occupational choices of members from one single family.

Not only did the study investigate adult learning and achievement, it also encouraged participants in the study to reflect upon almost fifty years, while making meaning of The Closing’s perceived impact on their lives. In doing so, this study gave voice to some who had remained silent for almost five decades.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

“What Happens To A Dream Deferred?”

*What happens to a dream deferred?
 Does it dry up
 like a raisin in the sun?
 Or fester like a sore –
 And then run?
 Does it stink like rotten meat?
 Or crust and sugar over –
 like a syrupy sweet?
 Maybe it just sags
 like a heavy load.
 Or does it explode?*

“Harlem,” *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, 1959, p. 268.

In 1959, when the Prince Edward County, Virginia School Board closed down its public school system for a period of five years to circumvent the Supreme Court mandate requiring the desegregation of America’s public schools “with all deliberate speed,” it placed Farmville and the county in the media and political spotlight. Given the unprecedented nature of the 1959 – 1964 Closing, for more than five decades, researchers from across the country have descended upon the county to learn more about what precipitated such a drastic move by the County School Board. Such inquiries also have queried the impact The Closing had on the school-age children and families of Prince Edward. However, the implications from such lengthy closure of a school system moved beyond the school-age years. In an effort to expound upon previous research, this study investigated how a five-year absence of formalized education was perceived to have impacted educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood.

Research on “The School Closing”

Upon considering this research study in the winter of 1998, a fair amount of information existed regarding the Prince Edward School Closing. However, with the placement of the Robert Russa Moton School (now Robert Russa Moton Museum) on the list of historic landmarks and its declaration as the Center for the Study of Civil Rights in Education (Fall 1998)⁶, the Honorary Graduation Ceremony for Those Affected by the 1959-1964 Prince Edward County, Virginia School Closing (2003), the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of Brown vs. Board of Education (May 2004), the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial (2008)⁷, as well as the 50th Anniversary of The Closing (September 2009), a deluge of information surrounding the years preceding, during and since The Closing had surfaced and / or been recovered. These data in the form of memoirs, personal narratives, inquiries, judicial records, editorials, newspaper and journal articles, empirical studies, interviews, scrapbooks, photographs, films and documentaries (discussed more fully in the following section on “Peripheral Studies”) provided the historical and background information required to pursue this study of the perceived impact of The Closing on educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood. Thanks to the scholars,

⁶ As a Ph.D. student in residency at Virginia Tech in September 1998, I traveled to Farmville and joined my parents to witness this historic declaration. Also during that afternoon, I observed with pride, as my father and several other 1951 strikers were summoned to the stage in recognition of their courage and tenacity and to pay tribute to their then deceased walk-out leader, Barbara Johns.

⁷ In July 2008, Governor Tim Kaine unveiled the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial, also known as the Barbara Johns Memorial, as a legacy to the sixteen-year old who spearheaded the 1951 R. R. Moton student strike protesting the deplorable conditions of Prince Edward’s Black schools. The sculptured memorial, which was erected on the grounds of the Virginia State Capitol, also depicts other students, community leaders, lawyers and champions of the fight to end educational inequality and segregation.

educators, reporters, observers and even Closing survivors, these contributions broadened the viability of this particular study.

Peripheral Studies

In the early days of The Closing, a concerted effort was made to understand what precipitated the School Board's decision and the immediate impact of it on the citizens, the county and surrounding areas. In an effort to understand the historical background, a review of the literature revealed early narratives, inquiries, visual media, observations and discussions regarding the moral, social, educational and political implications of The School Closing of Prince Edward County (Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1968; Hart, 1964; Heuvel & Sullivan, 1964; Holland, 1964; Peeples, 1963a, 1963b; Picott & Peeples, 1964; Schuler & Green, 1967; Simsarian, 1966; Smith, 1965, 1996).

Upon the re-opening of public schools in 1964, the interest continued and then waned in the late sixties, following the initial surge of educational testing and observations of race relations within the county. Fortunately, interim re-visitations to the Prince Edward issue rendered investigations relevant to educational progress and even transitioned racial climates (Bonastia, 2012; Brookover, 1993; Brookover, Dudley, & Green, 1993; Egerton, 1979; Foster & Foster, 1993; Lee & Daugherty, 2013; McAloon, 1996; Morrow, 1989; Phelps, 1994; Pine, 1970; Rice, 1970; Terjen, 1973; Turner, 2001, 2004; Waugh, 2012; Wolters, 1984).

In the decades following The Closing and reopening of public schools, Prince Edward County remained a topic of interest. Researchers, reporters and curious spectators returned to the county in an effort to investigate the long-term impact of The Closing, while collecting numerous reports, documentaries and narratives of

perseverance and survival (Baker, 1996, 2001; Hicks & Pitre, 2010; Jersey & Wormser, 2002; Mercy Seat Films, 2003; Phillips, 2013; Ruff, 1994; Smith, 1997; Stokes, 2008; Titus, 2011; Ward, 1996).

Quantitative Studies

Once the news that an interim form of organized education (the 1963 Free Schools) would be implemented to fill the gap after a four-year period of no formalized education in Prince Edward County, scholars in the psycho-social arenas immediately recognized the researchable implications of The Closing's impact.

Green, Hofmann, Morse, Hayes, and Morgan (1964). Upon learning of efforts to incorporate an interim system of organized education in the county, Green and a team of researchers from Michigan State University visited the county to study the effects of non-schooling on the “educational achievement” of children who were returning to school and on those who were entering, albeit late, for the very first time. From June through August 1963, before the Free Schools (September 1963 – June 1964) opened, the team conducted its testing. However, Green et al. noted they had no previous empirical research on extended school absence on which to base the study, perhaps due to the nationwide requirement for school attendance. The Michigan State team went on to note the testing process was challenging, at best, as some children had difficulty holding a pencil correctly in order to mark the test sheets.

Using the Stanford-Binet Intelligence (ages 6- 22), Iowa Silent Reading (14 -18) and Stanford Achievement (10 – 22) tests, Green and his team tested a sampling of more than 500 students from three populations. Prince Edward County children who received some form of formal education from 1959 – 1963 comprised the “Education” group, while those without any formal schooling during the period formed the “No Education”

group. Green and his colleagues compared these children to another sampling of students from a neighboring county, “Other County” group, having similar demographic variables, yet whose education had not been interrupted during those four years.

Findings from the study indicated that educational deprivation affected normal academic development. Reading skills were affected throughout all age ranges, while spelling and language skills showed negative effects primarily between the ages of 6 to 11. However, scores indicated that mathematical development was greatly affected among students between 11 – 17 years of age. Also, at every age level, students who had received some form of education during The Closing “outperformed” those who had received no education at all. Yet, according to Green and his team, students who did receive some level of education from 1959 – 1963 “did not approach the development of the norm group, and the slopes of their achievement curves did not show typical achievement patterns” (p. 246). On the other hand, students who received no education at all during that period, exhibited even slower development. “At age 11, children (with and without education) resembled children of the norm group two to four years younger. At age 17, the discrepancy was even greater” (p. 247). Also in comparison, the Prince Edward children revealed lower achievement levels in all areas than the children from the even more rural neighboring county.

The Michigan State study investigated yet another aspect that was most crucial to the development of this current study of adult learners. The Michigan team also sought to determine the effects of The Closing on “educational and occupational aspiration, and the perceived importance of the role of school as a route to social mobility” (p. 251). The findings revealed an interesting pattern among the Education and No Education group, as well as among those who remained in and those who left the county during The Closing.

Respondents from the Education group expressed higher career / occupational goals than those of the No Education group, an indication that formal schooling may have played an important role in gearing children toward higher aspirations. In addition, those students who did not attend school outside the county but who were gainfully employed during The Closing viewed a formal education as less important to upward mobility than those who studied outside the county and were not employed during that same period.

Green and Hofmann (1965). As part of their continuing study of the Prince Edward children, in 1964, the Michigan State team again measured the effects of educational deprivation via a comparison sample of children from an unnamed nearby rural county with similar socio-economic and educational characteristics. Green and Hofmann's study included a randomly-selected sample of the total school-age population from ages 5 – 22, given the fact that some students would have been 18 years of age or high school seniors when their education was interrupted. The sampling of 125 children who attended the 1963 – 1964 Free Schools was referred to as the "Education" group, while the 154 students without formal instruction during the same period were labeled the "No Education" group. The 338 students from the neighboring school district were referred to as the "Other County" group. All three groups (ages 11 and above) were administered both the Stanford-Binet and the Stanford Achievement Test.

The results of Stanford-Binet Intelligence Tests suggested the absence of formal education had measurable adverse effects on intelligence, with the net negative effect for the No Education group ranging between 15 to 25 I.Q. points. Yet, the "cumulative effect of the absence of education on I.Q. scores was as much as 30 points at some age levels" (p. 337).

Likewise, the Stanford Achievement subtest results indicated a “suppressed development of achievement for both Prince Edward County groups, but particularly with the No Education group. Over all subtests, the effects of non-schooling were quite pronounced” (p. 330). In other words, achievement in paragraph meaning, word meaning, spelling, language and arithmetic reasoning and computation was depressed by the lack of formal education.

In summary, it was found that children from the neighboring county, where there was no interrupted education, achieved at a level higher than those of both the Education and No Education groups. And even though performance on the Stanford Achievement Test increased marginally following resumed schooling, the extended educational deprivation had a negative effect on intelligence and academic achievement of the Prince Edward children.

Mermelstein and Shulman (1967). This study investigated cognitive development via a series of Piagetian Conservation Tests by comparing the performance of sixty six and nine year-olds out of school during the 1959 – 1964 Prince Edward County School Closing with the same number and ages of students from a school district without disrupted education. In each sample, males and females were represented equally.

Mermelstein and Shulman specifically selected children from that age group in order to address Piaget’s theory that most six year-olds have not yet acquired the concept of substance conservation, while most nine year-olds have. The purpose of the study was three-fold: To examine the effects of a period of non-schooling on the attainment of conservation; to investigate the differences between verbal and non-verbal assessments of the same cognitive structures; and to assess the effects of rephrasing questions of verbal conservation tests.

Upon testing substance conservation via a series of five activities involving liquid volume continuous tasks and gumball amounts non-continuous tasks, the researchers determined there was no significant difference between the performance of the six year-olds from the two school districts. The scores may have been a result of each group having been in their first year of school at the time the study was conducted.

On the non-verbal tests, the scores of nine year-olds from Prince Edward County were similar to those of nine year-olds from the district that had no disrupted schooling. Additionally, the results showed no difference between the verbal test scores of the nine year-olds from each community. One plausible explanation for such similar results may be the eight months of formal classroom instruction prior to their testing. Thus, tasks' results suggested performance was affected by the absence or presence of language.

Finally, it appeared diversifying the phrasing of questions had a significant influence on some task performances. Between the two student groups, researchers saw no difference in performance for the continuous water tasks, whereas the non-disrupted school sample performed higher on the non-continuous gumball tasks. However rephrased question ambiguity may have contributed to these results.

Green and Morgan (1969). In a continued effort to better understand the impact of The Closing on the IQ of the county's children, the Michigan State University research team, together with the U.S. Department of Education, conducted yet another comparison study. As Green and Morgan noted, the field study "offer[ed] a chance at better defining the direct intellectual impact of [the] environment, or its absence" (p. 147).

In April 1965, after a year and a half of resumed public schooling in Prince Edward County, Green and Morgan retested 66 children who were drawn randomly from the original 1963 group of 9 – 17 year-olds. Of that group, 35 were from the original

“Some Education” group, while 31 were drawn from the “No Education” sample. Their results showed that even though the Some Education group performed at a significantly higher IQ level, the critical age for improving IQ for both groups may have been between the ages of 12 and 14. Among the Some Education group, 12- to 14-year olds saw a 6-point increase, while 9- to 11-year olds saw an increase of 5-points and 15- to 17-year olds that of 4 points. However, among the No Education group, the 12- to 14-year olds saw an 18-point IQ increase. Within that same group, the 9- to 11-year olds saw a 5-point increase, while the 15- to 17-year olds saw a negligible .5 decrease.

Even though the aforementioned Michigan State study results revealed valuable information, it must be noted that only the students who remained in the county were tested. Further analysis by Green and Morgan of the effects that resumed schooling had on the measured intelligence of the county’s Black children indicated the four-year School Closing may have created a “selective migration” (p. 148), as many of the brightest students left the county to receive an education. It further noted, however, that those who remained in the county were impacted deeply from the intellectual deprivation.

The study also revealed data that critically linked in-school education to cognitive growth and development. After further analysis of the study, Green and Morgan also concluded that “the amount of pre-deprivation school experience also may have [had] implications for post-deprivation measured intelligence and the responsiveness of this measured intelligence to retraining” (p. 154).

Madison (1988). One quantitative study, in particular, focused on the resiliency of students affected by The Closing into adulthood. Madison used a retrospective design to investigate pre-closing factors that indicated risk during The Closing. Considering (from recall over a period of more than 35 years) demographics and factors

such as school, family involvement and aspiration, she also investigated educational and career success, as well as life satisfaction into adulthood. In her sample of 89 adults, 44% were able to obtain the necessary education during The Closing, and 32% received some degree of education, while 24% were involved in no educational program at all. Her study seemed to indicate the greater the length of educational disruption, the more negative was the impact on educational and career aspirations, as well as on life satisfaction. The data also suggested that respondents with lower expectations for educational and occupational achievement prior to The Closing were less affected and not as devastated by the disruption. Also, because educational expectations for females in general were lower than those of males prior to The Closing, the disruption appeared to impact educational attainment less severely for women than it did men. However, both male and female respondents with a positive outlook and from high-expectation environments experienced educational and occupational success, despite the disruption.

Hale-Smith (1992). Another quantitative study focused on the effects of The Closing and its educational disruption on the beliefs and educational practices of adults who were of school age when the schools closed. Employing a combination of survey questions and interviews, Hale-Smith compared individuals who were placed by the American Friends Service Committee in homes outside of Virginia to those who remained in Prince Edward County during The Closing. Respondents who received an education outside of the county, the In-School group, tended to have pursued higher educational levels, obtained more fulfilling jobs, earned higher incomes, moved further from their childhood homes and pursued more adult-learning activities. In addition, they appeared to respond more positively about race relations than the Out-of-School group.

Heaton (2008). In a study by Heaton, various administrative sources were utilized to offer a projected impact of The Closing on the educational attainment, economic outcomes, mortality and incarceration rates of those affected. For the portion of his study covering educational attainment, Heaton pulled data from the National Center for Health Statistics' 1969 – 1988 Natality Detail Files, which included birth certificates, as well as demographic information such as race and county of residence. From the Natality statistics, Heaton viewed data from approximately 850 black mothers and fathers who were of appropriate age of individuals who would have been impacted by the 1959 – 1964 disruption of education in Prince Edward County. He surmised that number represented close to half the number of affected students that were suggested by Green, et al. in the 1964 study referenced above.

Considering what grade levels students may have missed during The Closing based upon birth years between 1942 - 1957, Heaton concluded the effects of closing the schools appeared quite pronounced within the group of students who were approaching high school age during the period of The Closing. Additionally, it appeared those students born between 1946 – 1949 and who would have missed late middle and early high school years experienced the most pronounced impact. He noted that relative to an average of 62 percent of high school completion, being exposed to The Closing reduced the probability of completing high school by 12 percentage points. However, his inability to determine what percentage of students actually would have attended school and graduated had the schools not closed offered a limitation to his study.

In spite of the multiple drawbacks to the five-year public education void, Heaton determined the makeshift and interim educational efforts that were offered throughout the county, coupled with outside county school placements and educational substitution

across time for younger students, the potential negative effects of The Closing on educational attainment were reduced. And even more significant to this current study on “The Perceived Impact” is Heaton’s conclusion that “individuals will respond creatively to the constraints generated by even very drastic circumstances” (184).

Qualitative Studies

Sullivan (1965). In addition to the empirical studies conducted by Green and the Michigan State team, Sullivan and his team of Free School teachers collected their own practitioner-styled evidence of The Closing’s impact upon academic preparedness during the pivotal Free Schools year of 1963-64. Via a frequently-entered reflective journal kept during his year in Prince Edward, Sullivan expounded upon the following: His first impression upon his arrival to the county; the racial discord; the challenges of requesting and receiving educational supplies and securing faculty; the academic deficits upon which students entered the classrooms; the social and psychological impact of The Closing on its students; as well as the classroom miracles, disappointments and successes.

It must be noted that in spite of the invaluable impact of the 1963 - 64 Free Schools on the children of Prince Edward, Sullivan made more than a few unpopular administrative decisions within the Black community and was even suspected of glory-seeking. Even though the accuracy of some of Sullivan’s recollections have been called into suspect by not a few associates and Free School educators, his vivid observations, as captured in his historical memoir *Bound For Freedom: An Educator’s Adventures in Prince Edward County, VA*, are worthy of note.⁸

⁷ For accounts of problems with Sullivan and his directorship over the Free Schools, see Turner, K. M. (2001), pp. 323 – 30.

Ortner (1984). Twenty years after the schools re-opened, Ortner, a professor at Hampden Sydney College, an all-white private male campus located five miles outside of Farmville proper, devised a questionnaire to study “the broad effects of the phenomenon of closed schools” (p. 51). Ortner relied heavily on the findings of and partially used as a model *The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia* study of famed sociologist W. E. B. DuBois (1898) who had visited Prince Edward County in 1897 to conduct a study of Negro life. Although acknowledging the methodological advances since the late nineteenth century, Ortner even mimicked the Black social classes specified by DuBois, while asking Black respondents to place themselves and their families into one of the four categories.⁹

Ortner utilized Hampden Sydney College students to conduct the Likert-scaled interviews in an attempt to determine “the long-term effects [of the School Closing] on the Black community . . . in terms of the aspirations of its citizens” (p. 52). Somewhat limited in its scope of twenty-one questions, the instrument questioned White (control group) and Black county residents about their “perceived progress” regarding employment opportunities and housing gains within the last five years, as well as their “expected progress” within the next five (p. 53). The study concluded that Blacks in the county felt they were “much better off than five years earlier” (p. 53), held higher

⁸ The Four Social Classes of the DuBois study in which respondents were asked to place themselves were as follows: #1. Families of undoubted respectability earning sufficient income to live well; not engaged in menial service of any kind; the wife engaged in no occupation save that of housewife, except in a few cases where she [has] special employment at home. The children not compelled to be bread-winners, but found in school; the family living in a well-kept home. #2. The respectable working-class; in comfortable circumstances, with a good home, and having steady remunerative work. The younger children in school. #3. The poor; persons not earning enough to keep them at all times above want; honest, although not always energetic or thrifty, and with no touch of gross immorality or crime. Including the very poor, and the poor. #4. The lowest class of criminals, prostitutes and loafers; the “submerged tenth.” (pp. 61 – 62)

aspirations and felt more positive about their employment futures than their White counterparts.

It must be noted, however, that certain variables may have slanted the study's outcome. For one, questions asked of Black respondents referred only to Black citizens, while the questions asked of Whites referred to "Farmville citizens" without reference to race. In addition, given that some African American respondents were employed by Hampden Sydney College at the time of the interviews, their responses to White male interviewers associated with the college very well may have been guarded.

Titus (2009). Titus resurrected data from American Friends Service Committee associate Ruth Turner's 1963 interviews with fifty-seven Black teenagers and young adults who had been forced from school during the 1959 – 1964 Prince Edward County School Closing. Originally selected to discuss their thoughts regarding their impending resumed schooling, the thirty-two males and twenty-five females, ranging in age from fourteen to twenty-one, also aired their views regarding their engagement in the Civil Rights struggle.

According to Turner's notes, most interviewees lived in rural farm areas outside of Farmville proper, and many were members of large families, one of which came from a family of twenty-one.¹⁰ Of the fifty-seven respondents, twenty-six interviewees had completed less than one year of high school or not attended at all, while seven had completed one year. Sixteen had completed two years, seven three years and only one four years. Some students revealed unsuccessful efforts to continue their education during The Closing by gaining enrollment in already-overcrowded neighboring county schools.

¹⁰ The young interviewee from the family of twenty-one, McCarthy Eanes, is brother to the four respondents in this *Perceived Impact* study.

From Turner's notes, Titus revealed some of the academic and occupational dreams and aspirations of the teenage and young adult respondents. While some desired to find a job, marry and settle down locally, others spoke of leaving Prince Edward and the south altogether for the bright lights and glamor of the city. Others desired leaving the area to attend college, to become an artist, politician, teacher and secretary, to earn good salaries and become socially mobile.

Some of Turner's respondents also actively engaged in the picketing protests prior to the resuming of public education in Prince Edward County. While most indicated the major impetus of their involvement was to re-open the schools, many cited higher salaries and the availability of more jobs as construction workers, teachers, truck drivers, restaurant workers for African American residents as another motivating factor.

Titus also noted the respondents' various attitudes toward resumed public education in the county. As all but one of the fifty-seven interviewees desired to return to school, most preferred an integrated system. However, as some of those who had missed four years of school while remaining in Prince Edward County favored the schools reopening, they did not consider integrating them as necessary. Thus, they preferred segregated schools to no schools at all. On the other hand, those having received education in integrated northern school districts during The Closing cited benefits of expanded educational programs, integrated classrooms, as well as non-rural exposure. Even though they recognized some of the academic, social and financial obstacles awaiting Prince Edward's black youth upon the schools reopening, they believed integrating the public schools was the only solution to gain educational equality, improve academic and occupational achievements and enhance race relations.

Summary

The aforementioned peripheral, quantitative and qualitative studies have contributed significantly to the body of knowledge surrounding the Prince Edward saga. In addition to providing an historical background, they have chronicled stories of hardship and personal triumph, discussions regarding the moral, social, educational and political implications of a non-functioning school system, educational progress and even transitioned racial climates.

In addition to investigating the social and psychological impact of The Closing on its students, early research studies investigated the effects of educational deprivation on cognitive development, normal academic development and IQ. One study also measured the acquisition of language skills of students affected by The Closing, while considering the importance of such skills to academic success.

Another study investigated The Closing's impact on the career aspirations of children who were forced out of school, while others considered its long-term effect on educational and career aspirations and life satisfaction in adulthood. Still another inquired whether educational disruption impacted the beliefs and educational practices of adults who were of school age when the schools closed.

A review of the literature was instrumental in understanding both the immediate and long-term impact of the Prince Edward County School Closing on the community and the individuals who endured it. However, there appeared to be no qualitative studies, to this author's knowledge, that chronicled adult self-directed educational practices, from the voice of those directly impacted, during the almost fifty years since The Closing. Having lived during an unfortunate chapter in our nation's educational history, these "Closing survivors" served as valuable resources to our better understanding their

perspective of that history. This researcher recognized the importance of capturing the essence of their lived experiences – the importance of giving them voice.

Conceptual Framework

As the goal in this study was to uncover the perceived impact of The Prince Edward County, VA School Closing in adulthood over almost fifty years, the research required participants to reflect upon their lived experiences and their perceptions of The Closing's impact on their lives. In other words, they were asked to make meaning of those experiences over the expanse of almost five decades – from childhood into mid- to late-adulthood. Investigating The Closing from a narratological perspective was helpful in understanding its perceived impact. However, it must be noted that for the purposes of this study, “impact” was viewed and determined from the perspectives of the participants, as they reflected upon their lived experiences during and since The Closing.

Adult Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning

Upon investigating the perceived impact of The Closing on educational achievement and occupational choices in adulthood, adult self-directed and lifelong learning assumptions were essential to understanding the creative measures participants had taken and continued developing, while gaining the knowledge they deemed necessary to remain competitive in the community and workforce. What steered them away from the hopelessness and confines of the “Lost Generation” and relegated them membership instead into the “Survived Generation”?

The notion of adult self-directed and lifelong learning is imbedded in the human condition. It suggests that, in the absence of formal instruction or an instructional environment, adults will find or create ways to gain the knowledge, skills and abilities they seek. Transcending gender, race, ethnicity, geographical location and cultural

norms, its concept has refused to elude the “survivors” of The Prince Edward County Public School Closing. Historically, Blacks in this country have faced a unique set of obstacles in the pursuit of education. As Stubblefield and Keane (1994) noted, “[i]n a segregated and discriminatory society, African Americans were forced to resort to their resources and to create their own institutions” (p. 166) and avenues for learning. More often than not, those who were impacted by The Closing have attested to the determined and creative methods they have used to educate and train themselves in order to secure employment and maintain a steady income to help support their families.

Yet, as Merriam and Caffarella (1991) noted, “[a]lthough learning on one’s own has been the primary mode of learning in adulthood throughout the ages, serious study of this phenomenon is fairly recent” (p. 207). In questioning why the delay in attributing academic credence to an obviously prevailing form of education, it was necessary to consider societal and academic notions of what constitutes “real learning.”

Among educators, there have been those who espoused researchable learning takes place in formal educational settings (Houle, 1988), and our role, as educators of adults, should not move us beyond the confines of those borders (Brookfield, 1981). Similarly, others questioned whether the investigation of learning in uncontrolled settings could produce valid and reliable data. Also, some theorists have questioned whether adult self-directed and lifelong learning is even a legitimate academic field of study (Brookfield 1986). Albeit shadowed by such doubt, the study of self-directed and lifelong learning has gained credibility and acceptance across the disciplines, and especially among scholars, such as Creswell (1998, 2013), McAdams (1985, 2003), and Moustakas (1994), who espouse practitioner-style research.

Even though adult self-directed and lifelong learning theories and practices appear to have garnered relatively recent inclusion into the consciousness of facilitators of learning, the concept of adult learning as an educational practice was proposed over eighty years ago. In *The Meaning of Adult Education*, Eduard Lindeman (1926) suggested the following:

I am conceiving adult education in terms of a new technique for learning It represents a process by which the adult learns to become aware of and to evaluate his experience. To do this [,] he begins by giving attention to situations in which he finds himself, to problems which include obstacles to his self-fulfillment [A]dult education is . . . a cooperative venture in non [-] authoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which . . . elevates living to the level of adventurous experiment. (p. 160)

It is from this canon of thought that many subsequent proponents of adult education, and consequently adult learning, have derived impetus for their immersion into the field.

Having studied Lindeman and considered one of the forefathers in the field of adult education, Malcolm Knowles (1989) granted authenticity to this notion of “adult learning” and chronicled his journey in its study in his memoir, *The Making of an Adult Educator: An Autobiographical Journey*. Now considered a staple holding within the library of any serious adult educator or facilitator, Knowles’ autobiographical journal legitimized the concepts of adult, self-directed and life-long learning. Also, it is within these pages that Knowles discussed the evolution of his theoretical framework for adult

learning. In addition, his memoir continues to serve as a vehicle for discussion and research in the following areas: Andragogy; adult education; adult teaching principles; adult learning models, theories and practices; non-traditional learners; adult learner characteristics; learning motivations; facilitated learning; learning contracts; learning evaluations; continuing education; programmed instruction; computer and technology-assisted learning; cross-cultural learning; etc.

Probably most recognized for his practice of “Andragogy” (a term first used in early 19th century Germany but which lay in relative academic obscurity until the late 1920s), Knowles investigated the difference between the didactic teaching (pedagogy) of children and the facilitated, often self-directed, learning (andragogy) of adults. However after first regarding the two learning approaches in opposition one to the other (Knowles, 1970), he developed and presented the two approaches as assumptions about learners that actually paralleled each other (Knowles, 1980). More specifically, Knowles (1989) explained the practice within the two approaches as follows:

[T]he ideological pedagogs will do everything they can to keep learners dependent on them because this is their main psychic reward in teaching. Andragogs will accept dependency when it clearly is the reality and will meet the dependency needs through didactic instruction until the learners have built up a foundation of knowledge about the content area sufficient for them to feel confident about taking responsibility for planning and carrying out their own learning projects. (pp. 80 – 81)

Likewise, Freire (1970) proposed the educator share a role in the educational growth of the learner. In fact, he asserted education is, in a sense, power. Further, Freire’s pedagogical approach directly opposed authoritarianism, while embracing the

practice of dialogue between facilitator and learner. At the same time, he suggested the “goal of education is to foster social, political, and economic changes in a society by taking action against the oppressive elements within that society. These changes, in turn, should bring about the liberation of the individual” (Dillon-Black, 1998, p.21). Thus, according to advocates of Freire’s views, the educator has the responsibility of making the learner aware of the social and political infringements upon his attainment of education and empowerment. It is then that he can begin his liberation process via organized education and social awareness.

Furthering this facilitative concept is Daloz, who viewed the educator as a mentor and guide for the learner. Daloz (1988b) suggested educators should view themselves as “andragogical missionaries” (p. 7) but did not suggest they force change on a student who does not wish to change (1988b, p. 4). As a mentor, the educator helps students “see the limitations of an epistemology based on culturally defined absolutes” (1988a, p. 240). Thus, “[w]orthwhile . . . growth require[s] students to immerse themselves in a period of rich, profound questioning about the ‘givens’ of their culture, their upbringing” (1988b, p. 4).

Even the empirical theorists of transformative learning – that is becoming aware of how our experiences impact the way we perceive, feel about and integrate into our environment – have recognized the importance of adult learning to continued growth and development. According to Mezirow (1978), when individuals experience a *disorienting dilemma* – such as the five-year School Closing -- that alters their expectations of how things should occur based upon value systems and previous experiences, they will experience a new level of awareness and understanding. Consequently, their understanding of the event is determined by their *frames of reference* (structures of

assumptions through which they bring understanding to the event) at various points in their lives. They also make meaning of their lived experiences by their *habits of mind* (subjective and emotional methods of dealing with a dilemma).

Mezirow (1990) further suggested that individuals work through a stage called *meaning perspectives*, at which time they allow what is happening or has happened to them to transform their viewpoint, as they make judgments over what is right (just) or wrong (unjust). Following a *disorienting dilemma* (in this study, being shut out of school) and as a result of these realizations, according to Mezirow (1991), they may, with the aid of a facilitator or in a self-directed manner consider, explore and acquire the following: (a) options for new knowledge, skills, abilities and actions; (b) a course of action for educational and occupational success; (c) appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities for achieving that success.¹¹

While Mezirow is by far the most recognized and cited theorist in the area of transformative adult learning, others have added significantly to this canon of knowledge. Clark (1991, 1993) suggested that context is essential to understanding the changes or transformational experience, and whether the process is sudden or gradual, such changes are recognizable. Also, whether the change takes place in a formal educational environment assisted by a teacher or facilitator or in the self-directed, informality of day-to-day living, it is a part of the developmental process and will have an influence on the learner's future experiences.

To further address this formal-type of learning, Cranton (1994) provided excellent support for researchers who seek to offer practitioner-style support in the classroom

¹¹ Items a, b & c were adapted from Mezirow's Ten-Stage Transformative Learning Process when undergoing a disorienting dilemma.

setting, while Robertson (1996) addressed the importance of having a support system in place, as the learner undergoes the transformation.

The serious study of adult learning, and more specifically adult self-directed and life-long learning, has garnered a tremendous body of literature by theorists, academics and practitioners in the field. Included among those who have espoused the self-directed, life-long learning models is Ausubel (2000) whose assimilation theory of meaningful learning and retention suggested that adult learning builds upon or is sub-sumed by previously-acquired knowledge.

While incorporating previously-acquired skills and knowledge, adults frequently develop, coordinate, and self-direct their own “learning projects. Defined by Tough (1978) as a “highly deliberate effort to gain and retain certain definite knowledge and skill, or to change in some way . . . ,” the learning project must also include a “series of related learning sessions (episodes in which the person’s primary intention [is] to learn) . . .” (p. 250). As in the study by Tough (1979) that determined 70 percent of all learning projects were self-designed by the learners, adult learners are resourceful in acquiring what they need to know, while developing the skills they need in order to acquire the information.

But how do adults pursue successful self-directed educational opportunities? Tough (1979) cited the importance of establishing goals, locating essential resources, and selecting learning strategies when planning and pursuing self-directed learning projects. Further, according to Cross (1981), individuals pursue knowledge based upon a chain of responses (COR) to environmental and psychological factors. First the individual incorporates his or her attitudes about education to assess whether it is possible to succeed at the educational endeavor. Then the adult sets goals, and incorporates

measures to meet them. At this point, positive self-perception and self-esteem are crucial to notions of success. The Cross model also incorporated the typical transitions and changes of life (such as marriage, illness, death, retirement, etc.) that may impact the learning process. Yet, paramount to the successful pursuit of an educational endeavor are access to accurate information and the recognition of opportunities, as well as possible barriers.

An obvious consequence of involvement in successful educational endeavors is self-growth and development. Boucouvalas (1988) suggested self-growth and -direction are accomplished via autonomy (one's unique individuality and independence) coupled with homonomy ("the experience of being part of meaningful wholes and in harmony with . . . units such as family, social groups, [and] culture . . ." (p. 58). Further, Boucouvalas and Krupp (1989) suggested adult learning involves an intricate "network" of physiological, psychological and sociological variables interconnecting to compel and foster the learning process.

Given the lengthy absence of formalized education in Prince Edward County, it is highly likely The Closing "survivors" underwent some sort of change during and long since those five formative years. Yet, the recent release of numerous memoirs and stories of triumph and growth in the face of adversity, speaks to the evidence of continued learning and the resiliency of the human spirit.

Summary

Burgeoning as a fortified discipline of its very own, the field of Adult Learning continues to attract theorists and practitioners to the arena. Yet, sorting through the amassed literature of models and theories, such as Mezirow's work on Transformative Learning, that attempt to explain how, why and to what extent adults learn can be quite

overwhelming for newcomers to the field. Equally extensive are the countless programs and providers for adult learning experiences. Facilitators new to the adult learning arena and desiring an overview of the field will find a review of the *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (Merriam and Cunningham, 1989; Wilson and Hayes, 2000, Kasworm, Rose, and Ross-Gordon, 2010) an invaluable introduction to the discipline.

Qualitative Framework

Quite often, adults who experienced The Closing have alluded to their untold stories, as well as their lingering confusion over why and how the phenomenon ever could have happened. Or they have recalled certain events in a slightly different manner than their counterparts. According to Merriam & Simpson (1995), “[t]he overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their own lives, to delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and to describe how people interpret what they experience” (p. 98). More specifically, the individuation of qualitative inquiry allows each participant to legitimize the perceived recall and meaning of his own experiences regardless of outside expectations or general consensus. As a result, the researcher gains a better, or even closer, understanding and appreciation of the participant’s experience, as well.

The “making sense” that results from qualitative inquiry is heavily reliant on language, syntax and diction, which are vital to its design. Just as participants interpret experiences differently, so too may they interpret or experience words and phrases. The process of reflecting verbally may even appear somewhat evolutionary for both participant and researcher. As suggested by Creswell (1998), “the language becomes personal, literary, and based on definitions that evolve during a study rather than being defined by the researcher at the beginning of a study” (p. 77).

Likewise, the investigative method of a qualitative study is intrinsic to the nature of the data to be collected. Utilizing a probing method of qualitative analysis, this narratological study was informed by phenomenological philosophy, as are many qualitative approaches to research. Phenomenological inquiry tends to investigate the world (perceived meaning of what could be considered unique “lived experiences”) of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Although the uniqueness of The Closing in the scheme of American educational history categorizes the five-year absence of formalized public education as a “phenomenon” (a lived experience) within the American educational system, via recollective memory, this study focuses on the participants’ perceptions of how The Closing impacted their lives into and throughout adulthood.

In reporting the multiple recollections of an experience, the researcher offers a thematic representation of the diverse perspectives on the explored phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). As Polkinghorne (1989) suggested, it is important for the researcher to create a study that “gives an accurate, clear, and articulate description of an experience” (p. 46). Such also was the desire of this study.

The favor of this “perceived meaning” approach in the human services fields allows professionals to identify as closely as possible with, while improving practices and the services offered to, the clients they serve. Likewise, this “probing method” permitted me a better understanding of the perceived impact of Prince Edward County School Closing on the lives of those who actually experienced the five-year phenomenon within the American public educational system.

As Closing survivors in this study began reflecting upon their unique experience of being out of school, they often speculated and made assumptions regarding the courses their lives have or could have taken in the last forty-nine plus years. Such reflections and

assumptions availed themselves well to a qualitative study that is narratological in nature, especially as participants responded freely to semi-structured queries without the hindrance of time-restraints.

Narratology

This investigation relied upon the memories and interpretations -- spanning almost fifty years -- of adults who were merely children and pre-teens when the schools closed in Prince Edward County. The conversations with participants were grounded in narratology, an interpretive paradigm informed of by a phenomenological philosophical orientation, which fostered the emerging recall that accompanied such extensive reflection. Thus, as the participants in this study recounted their experiences, while reflecting upon their years out of school and upon their quest for knowledge since the schools re-opened, they began to make meaning of their unique lived experiences and the perceived impact of those experiences upon their lives.

In recent years, the narrative study of lives has gained popularity in the social sciences as an interdisciplinary endeavor to investigate, interpret and reveal the stories of people's lives. According to Josselson & Lieblich (1993), this movement especially has granted credence and attention to the lives of people of color, women, the underclass and other segments of society whose stories traditionally have been disregarded or minimized. The narrative approach even has won over converts, such as Clinchy (2003), a Professor of Psychology who revealed she once believed "truth was to be found in well-reasoned arguments and tightly controlled experiments," but who later recognized the "narrative is a rich source of knowledge . . . that should be a part of every psychology curriculum" (p. 29). Likewise, Chase (2003) submitted to students in her Qualitative

Research Methods course that “narration is a major way in which people make sense of experience, construct the self, and create and communicate meaning” (p. 79).

If given the opportunity, narrative-driven qualitative research findings offer a refreshing diversion from, or may serve as a vibrant complement to, hypothetically-driven / deductively-collected data. According to Creswell (1998), “[l]iterary forms of writing such as the use of metaphors, the use of first-person ‘I,’ and a focus on stories pervade qualitative inquiries” (p. 77). In an attempt to re-create events and moments – and perceptions thereof – in time, the interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry relies heavily on the researcher’s tone, voice, and overall rhetorical approach, which often assumes a literary style. Therefore, aided by vivid narrative, such verisimilitude allows the researcher and audience to step as closely to the event(s) as possible without actually having experienced it. In other words, “[t]he reader of the report should come away with the feeling that ‘I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that’” (Polkinghorne 1989, p. 46).

Equally important to the qualitative nature of this study is its narrative foundation, as African-American history and culture are deeply rooted in the oral tradition. Thus, early in the conceptualization stage of this research project, I realized the value narrative voice could offer this study. Based upon previous conversations with survivors of the “Lost Generation,” I had recognized their desire – their need – to tell their stories. Consequently, the numerous informal conversations almost always gravitated toward one memory episode leading to yet another. Quite often, those encapsulated memories were non-linear in nature, providing the survivor the opportunity to reflect upon episodes in an almost epiphany-like manner. Perhaps, such emergent revelations are one of the perks afforded the practitioner of Narratology.

Conceptually, Narratology lends itself quite effectively to qualitative inquiry and especially to stories that chronicle events and perceptions spanning almost half a century. Moreover, the narratological approach allows individuals who are recalling events and the effects thereof to develop “identity” during the process. In other words, through reflecting upon past events and verbalizing perceived meanings, an individual’s identity becomes, according to McAdams, “an internalized and evolving life story . . .” (2003, p. 187).

Even though the defining of identity occurs in adulthood, its exploration surfaces sometime during adolescence. Cohler (1982) and McAdams (2003) suggested that in Western Society, it is during this critical stage of cognitive development that society expects adolescents to begin exploring and defining their ideology, value systems, career possibilities and interpersonal relationships. While developing belief systems, they also begin to realize their capabilities and recognize the extent to which society will allow them to act upon them. This would lead us to question how this developing sense of “identity” may have been impacted by youngsters who remained in Prince Edward County during the five-year Closing. What incentives and opportunities might they have had to take stock in themselves, their environment and their futures?

Decades earlier, in discussing his Eight Stages of Life, Erikson (1959), too, addressed this notion of identity as pre-teens and teens transition from adolescence to “emerging adults.” He referred to this stage as a

psychosocial moratorium[,] during which the individual through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him. In finding it[,] the young adult gains an assured sense of inner continuity and

social sameness which will bridge what he was as a child and what he is about to become, and will reconcile his conception of himself and his community's recognition of him. (p.111)

How ironic it is that during the exact year of the Prince Edward School Closing, a leading theorist in the field of cognitive development released his report documenting the importance of adolescent and emerging adult identity. To what degree did children of The Closing find a defined niche in society? Given the interruption in formal learning for some and the extent of the Closing for all, did these children gain an assured sense of inner continuity? Finally, a consideration of racial climate of the time would have us question whether a Negro child growing up in Prince Edward County in 1959 could feel a sense of social sameness or even believe he was acknowledged by the community at large.

In as much as that rhetorical approach to qualitative inquiry lent itself to identity definitions, it also provided those experiencing The Closing an avenue for recollections of identity-defining moments. Referred to as “nuclear episodes” (McAdams, 1985) or “personal event memories” (Pillemer, 1998), these “self-defining memories,” Singer and Salovey (1993) suggested, are vivid life episodes that are “affectively charged, repetitive, linked to other similar memories, and related to an important unresolved theme or enduring concern in [a participant's] life” (p. 13). Even though the concepts of “nuclear episodes,” “personal event memories” or “self-defining memories” were not researchable components of this particular study, each participant did allude to one “memorable moment” -- the confusion and disbelief upon learning Prince Edward County schools would not open in the fall of 1959. In addition and in essence, the interview conversations provided a vehicle for respondents to recollect moments that defined who

they were (as young learners) and have become (as adult self-directed / lifelong learners and workers) over a period of fifty plus years.

Summary

Through the use of interviews, participants were prompted to make meaning of their lived experiences during and since the closing of the schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia. In undertaking this process, capturing the essence of the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences and of the impacts thereof as accurately as possible was crucial to this narratological study for, according to Creswell (1998), it was "based upon the premise that human experience makes sense to those who live it, prior to all interpretations and theorizing" (p. 86).

As previously noted, the experience of being forced out of public education was an episode unique to the children of Prince Edward County, as no other locale went to such drastic lengths to avoid court-ordered integration. Some responding Survivors of The Closing remarked that when the schools did not open in the fall of 1959, they were somewhat thrilled to have extra time off for the summer. Yet, it was not until they became adults, that they realized just how seriously The Closing perceivably had impacted their lives. As the tenets of qualitative inquiry would suggest, such "making sense" out of their lives and "interpreting" what they experienced provided legitimacy to their perceived experiences. Thus, as participants shared their stories, common threads in the form of epiphanies emerged.

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHOD

"I'm What I Feel And See And Hear"

The instructor said,

*'Go home and write a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you –
Then, it will be true.'*

I wonder if it's that simple?

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me at twenty two, my age.

But I guess I'm what I feel and see and hear

Opening and other lines of "Theme for English B," *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, 1959, p. 247.

This study investigated the narrative recollections of four members from a family that had sixteen of its twenty-one children affected by the 1959 Prince Edward County, Virginia School Closing. Because of its immersion in adult learning theory and narratology, which was discussed more fully in Chapter 2, this investigation discovered via personal semi-structured interviews (see Appendix G: Interview Questions) how The Closing perceivably impacted the individual participants' educational achievements and occupational choices based upon their perspective and "lived experiences" (Creswell, 1998). More specifically, this researcher sought to determine if Closing survivors had undertaken self-directed and, perhaps, lifelong learning projects. If so, in what manner had they done so? Also, this study investigated how, in an effort to obtain gainful employment, participants determined what knowledge and skills were and continued to be necessary to remain competitive in the workforce. Additionally, this investigation

ascertained the decisions and steps Closing survivors have taken to learn that information outside of a formal classroom setting.

Research Questions

Major Research Question

From the perspective of members of one Prince Edward County family, how did The School Closing perceivably impact their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood?

Underlying Research Questions

From the perspective of the participants:

1. How did The Closing perceivably impact immediate educational goals?
2. How did The Closing perceivably impact long-range educational goals?
3. In what manner have participants pursued their desired educational goals?
4. What educational achievements have been realized?
5. What role has self-directed learning played in their lives?
6. To what extent do they consider themselves life-long learners?
7. In what ways did The Closing perceivably impact job or career opportunities?
8. What occupational choices have been available to participants?
9. What bearing have educational achievements had on occupational success?

Participant Selection

As a renewed interest in The Closing since the latter part of the 1990's plunged Prince Edward County once again into the media spotlight, scholars and reporters have conducted numerous magazine, newspaper, radio and television interviews with Closing survivors. Quite often, the familiar faces and names of the more vocal community leaders and spokespersons have resurfaced in new reports or from different perspectives, while those who silently endured The Closing often have remained unheard.

Participants for this study were invited from a nuclear family of twenty-one siblings -- fourteen males and seven females who were raised in Prince Edward County. As five of the twenty-one had graduated high school prior to The Closing, sixteen remaining siblings were forced from school from 1959 – 1964.



Eanes Family (1963)

Taylor and Gertrude Richards Eanes with their twenty-one children (Courtesy First Lady Margaret Eanes Reed Johnson). Printed with Permission.

Upon determining the focus of this dissertation, over a period of several months, I initiated informal conversations with members of the family who were forced from school in 1959, while canvassing the family for interest in participating in the study. Of the sixteen siblings who sat out of school during The Closing, three brothers were deceased at the inception of this study. Of the thirteen remaining siblings, three brothers and one sister indicated either mixed emotions about or disinterest in discussing the perceived impact of the Closing on their lives, while two brothers were unavailable to determine interest. Another sister who did indicate an interest passed away prior to the initiation of this study's Prospectus proposal, narrowing the number of seemingly prospective participants to six. From that pool of six, four later agreed to participate in the study, each suggesting a believed benefit of discussing and reflecting upon the perceived impact of The Closing, not only on their childhood, but also on their past and current experiences as adults.

Through the informal conversations at family and community gatherings and prior to the official onset of this research, the following was ascertained: All four indicated an effect of The Closing on their levels of educational achievement. Three of the four had entertained some notion of pursuing formal higher education upon completing high school; however, numerous variables prevented them from doing such – all of which in regard to the participants are discussed further in Chapter Four.

Prior to the official onset of this study, one participant had been retired for several years, while another retired just prior to its commencement for medical reasons. Yet, another retired after the official authorization of this research, and the fourth participant remained employed. Even though all four participants had experienced gainful and extended employment, each admitted to having developed creative measures to

compensate for what knowledge and skills were lost during those crucial five years in order to remain competitive in the workforce. All participants had held various occupations, and two had moved into quasi-professional careers, in spite of the adversities caused by The Closing.

The informal conversations also revealed valuable information regarding learning practices. Also, as I had suspected, but was obligated to “bracket,” all four had been committed to some form of “continued learning,” even though they never had referred to their endeavors in terms of “self-directed” or “lifelong.” Yet, these participants who had continued to pursue knowledge in the face of many difficulties and achieve success in spite of it all reported of confidence issues they suggested would plague them the remainder of their lives.

Even though one male sibling had granted media interviews in the past, the other participants in this study had remained “silent” survivors. Moreover, their sharing of this survivor-status phenomenon presented them as ideal candidates for what Merriam (1998) refers to as a “purposeful sample.” Not only did they share the unique experience of having been raised in the same household, they shared in silence the experience of being forced from school.

Following the onset of this research proposal, one of the four participants, a brother, was diagnosed with a terminal illness. However, at his urging to record and preserve his legacy, and with permission from both dissertation and research advisors, I devised an “Interview Consent” form (see Appendix K: Preliminary Inquiry) that was signed by the participant. Shortly thereafter, an interview was conducted and recorded in November 2004. Data from that interview were included as a supplement to this study (also see Appendix K: Preliminary Inquiry).

After receiving authorization from Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board via its Human Subjects Approval Form and being comfortable with what seemed a purposeful sampling, I contacted the other three family members for approval to hand-deliver or mail two documents officially to initiate their involvement in the study. The Letter of Invitation to Participate (Appendix B) apprised prospective participants of the study's purpose and of my desire to converse with family members regarding their experiences during and following the Prince Edward County School Closing. Likewise, the Participation Interest Form (Appendix C) requested their signature, contact information and best time to call to schedule an interview. Upon my receipt of the signed Participation Interest Form, I called each participant to schedule an interview.

Research Instrument

“In all forms of qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Since understanding is a key goal of this research, the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive, would seem to be the ideal instrument for collecting and analyzing data” (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 98). Given this guiding principle to qualitative inquiry, a set of seven semi-structured interview questions (IVQ) was designed to investigate the perceived impact of The Closing on the educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood (see Appendix G: Interview Questions). The questions were semi-structured in nature, allowing for follow-up queries to certain responses, while also offering participants the freedom to elaborate at will. In an effort to ascertain demographic information (DIQ), eight short-response items addressing name, birth date, current age, age at Closing, grade at Closing, Free School attendance, marital status and number/age of children were included (also see Appendix G: Interview Questions).

The seven semi-structured Interview Question (IVQ) items designed to allow for open-ended reflective responses, as well as the eight Demographic Information Questions (DIQ), addressed the nine aforementioned Underlying Research Questions (URQ):

URQ1 (IEG) – **Immediate Educational Goals** (IVQ 1, 2, 7; DIQ 4, 5, 6) sought to understand the participants’ perception of The Closing’s impact on their immediate educational goals or the goals they, as children, had in mind for their immediate future.

URQ2 (LREG) – **Long-range Educational Goals** (IVQ 1, 2, 7; DIQ 4, 5, 6) investigated the participants’ perception of The Closing’s impact on anticipated long-range educational goals, or what participants dreamed of or planned on doing when they “grew up.”

URQ3 (EPM) – **Educational Pursuit Methods** (IVQ 2, 3, 6, 7; DIQ 6) investigated the various ways participants have pursued their desired educational goals?

URQ4 (EA) – **Educational Achievements** (IVQ 3, 6, 7; DIQ 6) focused on the educational achievements and successes participants have obtained since The School Closing.

URQ5 (ASDL) – **Adult Self-directed Learning** (IVQ 3, 7) sought to determine the role self-directed learning has played in participants’ lives.

URQ6 (ALLL) – **Adult Life-long Learning** (IVQ 6, 7) sought to determine the extent to which participants considered themselves life-long learners.

URQ7 (E/CP) – **Employment / Career Pursuits** (IVQ 4, 7) was designed to discover participants’ perception of The Closing’s impact on their abilities to pursue and receive desired employment or career opportunities?

URQ8 (E/OA) – **Employment / Occupational Availability** (IVQ 4, 7) focused on the types of occupational choices that have been available to participants?

URQ9 (EA/OS) – **Educational Achievements / Occupational Success** (IVQ 5, 7) sought to discover the bearing educational achievements were perceived to have had on occupational success.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected via separate researcher-conducted interviews held in several locations -- one in North Carolina and two in Virginia. Upon my arrival and prior to the actual interview, the participant and I spent a few moments exchanging pleasantries, as I again thanked each one for permitting me the honor of including his or her reflections as a significant portion of my research study. Each graciously indicated a likewise appreciation for having the opportunity to share their stories.

Also, prior to the actual interview, I ensured informed consent by referring to the earlier-signed Participation Interest Form. I then presented each participant with an Interview Consent Form (Appendix D), while explaining the importance of the interviewee's clear understanding of the nature of the research and of his or her legal rights as a participant. The participant then was granted as much time as necessary to read and sign the Consent Form. My verbal reiteration of the Interview Consent Form's content ensured each interviewee of my commitment to conducting a fair and ethical study. At that point, the participant was re-apprised of his or her right to confidentiality, as well as the right to terminate the interview and further involvement in the study. Upon indicating the decision to continue with the process, the participant was assured of having the opportunity to review a written transcript of the interview for accuracy prior to my committing it to the analysis process.

During the interview, I made every effort to create and maintain a relaxed, non-threatening environment for candid discussion, while urging the interviewee to respond

freely and open-endedly to any and all responses. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), “. . . qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal events with pre-determined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participants’ meaning perspective, but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses . . . (p.80).

Also, given the narratological potential of interview responses, many of the questions prompted each participant to associate reflections with other episodes of his or her life. Such potential revelations were embraced without interruption, for as Marshall and Rossman also noted, “The participant’s perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it” (p. 80). My purpose was served by listening and taking mental and written notes of the process.

In addition to making relevant notes during the interview process, I captured the interviews with both digital audio and video recorders. However, participants were queried and monitored for comfort with the process. I also concluded the interview with candid photo shots of the participants, copies of which will be mailed to them at a later date, along with a full copy of this dissertation and a token of appreciation for their time and support of the study.

Upon returning home from the interview, I began transferring the digital data to the computer for immediate word processing transcription and, ultimately, analysis. Also, as Meloy (2002) suggested, “writing is a way to make visible what appears to be going on” (p. 145), during that period, I wrote reflective notes regarding the interview process, the participant’s reactions and perceived mood, as well as my views of and reactions to the process.

As the four siblings who maintained their support of this study from its inception entrusted me with conveying their stories, I was honored and dedicated to doing so in as accurate a manner as possible. It was interesting to discover how three brothers and a sister from the same family gave voice to and made meaning of The Closing's perceived impact upon their lives.

Data Analysis

In as much as analyzing such rich data was met with anticipation, the job of separating self from the process was indeed challenging. Upon collecting the stories and anecdotes of qualitative researchers from across the country, Meloy (2002) indicated, “[m]ost correspondents [found] the interaction of writer and researcher – that is, the researcher as writer, methodologist as interpreter – as one of the complicating issues of their work” (p. 149).

In spite of its complication, such interaction proved to be valuable in the triangulation of audio/video statements, transcribed interview data and my reflective notes. Further, I engaged in a process of identifying and horizontalizing (dividing into statements) the thematic clusters that surfaced from the transcribed interviews. These clusters were coded based upon the following dimensions of the underlying research questions (URQ):

Immediate Educational Goals (IEG)

Long-range Educational Goals (LREG)

Educational Pursuit Methods (EPM)

Educational Achievements (EA)

Adult Self-directed Learning (ASDL)

Adult Life-long Learning (ALLL)

Employment / Career Pursuits (E/CP)**Employment / Occupational Availability (E/OA)****Educational Achievements / Occupational Success (EA/OS)**

However, given the emergent and non-linear nature of qualitative inquiry, additional meaning clusters or modified themes, such as family relationships, resiliency, self-direction, life-long learning, religious faith and supportive white employers, revealed themselves during the analysis process.

A close inspection of the text or discourse analysis was implemented to transform the meaning clusters into general descriptions of the lived experience. Not only did the analysis investigate a textural description of “what was experienced,” it considered the structural description of “how the phenomenon was experienced.” Both the textural and structural descriptions culminated into the essence of the experience which, according to Creswell (1998), “recogniz[ed] that a single unifying meaning of the experience exists” (55).

Finally, I was fully aware of software programs, such as NUDIST and Ethnograph, which are designed to ease analysis by categorizing collected data. Even though I investigated their employment in this study, I elected to utilize Microsoft Word and a self-designed, color-coded system to organize the data thematically. Given my tendency toward a combined visual and kinesthetic learning style, physically and electronically handling, sorting and laying out the data provided opportunity for visual reflection, analysis and assimilation of data themes.

Summary

This study of the perceived impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing on the Eanes Family’s educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood

relied on the premise that reality is subjective, and even varied, based upon the diverse perceptions of the participants, as well as upon those of the researcher and audience of the study. In as much as each family member experienced The Closing during the same five-year period, each individual processed The Closing and perceived its impact in a different way.

Additionally, in order to address the nature of reality, it was important to acknowledge that multiple / varied realities did indeed exist. What pre-conceived notions had we of how one must have felt upon being “locked out” of school? How have the enormous media coverage commemorating both the 50th Anniversaries of Brown vs. Board and The Prince Edward County School Closing and consequent re-opening perceivably impacted our views? Thus, this researcher’s job became even more challenging than first surmised, as I attempted to bracket my pre-conceived awareness and personal biases. Even more exigent was my task to maintain that distance while, according to Creswell (1998), “report[ing] [those] realities, rely[ing] on voice and interpretations of informants through extensive quotes, present[ing] themes that reflect[ed] words used by informants and advance[ing] evidence of different perspectives on each theme” (p. 76). Therefore, in this study, it was important, as Moustakas (1994) suggested, to gather and objectively report the various statements by participants who actually lived this experience, yet who may have perceived its impact in different ways.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

"It Was A Long Time Ago"

*It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
In front of me,
Bright like a sun –
My dream.*

Opening lines of "As I Grew Older," *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, 1959, p.11.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived impact of the 1959 – 1964 Prince Edward County, Virginia School Closing on the educational achievements and occupational choices of members from one family. During individual semi-structured interviews, the two brothers and one sister reflected upon their lives during those five years and the more than fifty years since. Also, prior to the Virginia Tech Institutional Research Board's approval of this study, a fourth sibling stricken with a terminal illness requested and granted a pre-IRB interview regarding the perceived impact of The Closing. Recollections from that discussion with him are included in Appendix K: Preliminary Inquiry.

During individual video / audio taped interviews, a set of seven semi-structured and eight demographic questions was posed in an effort to allow for free-flowing reflection. The data from those queries would permit nine Underlying Research Questions to address the following Major Research Question: From the perspective of members of one Prince Edward County family, how did The School Closing perceivably

impact their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood? Thus this chapter provides an interpretive summary of the transcribed interviews responses that relate to the nine Underlying Research Questions below.

Also important to the integrity of this study was the participants' desire to have their interviews serve as a legacy for family members and for future scholars of The Prince Edward story. Thus, via signed document, all four participants requested their true identities be revealed in the study.

A careful transcription of the dialogue between participants and researcher produced a rich body of reflective memories and of participants' perceptions of The Closing's impact upon their lives. Below are summaries of their responses in relation to the nine Underlying Research Questions.

Narrative Summaries

From the perspective of the participants:

Underlying Research Question 1

How did The Closing perceivably impact immediate educational goals?

Carrie: No memory of receiving any type of education.



Carrie Eanes Walker (2009)

Interview Photo

(*Courtesy* Linda Eanes Jefferson). Printed with permission.

Carrie, who was four years old when the schools closed, did not remember receiving any type of education during the five-year school closure and recalled her education beginning when she started school in 1964. However, when the schools re-opened, she was nine and remembered being placed in classrooms with many other children to learn basic skills, such as their ABCs. She recalled they were learning “pretty much as kindergarten students.” At one point, Carrie remembered, she and four of her brothers were “sitting in the same classroom.” After the schools re-opened, she also attended summer school “to try to catch up as much as we could.” Carrie noted that some of the older students were skipped more than once to different grades based upon their

levels of knowledge. However, because she had not even started school when they closed, after her first year in school, she was skipped just once to the third grade. Even though she was too young at the time of The Closing to have developed goals for her education, she remarked that as an adult, she often has wondered “if the school system was just trying to pass us on through or did they really, really take the time to help us learn what we really needed to learn.”

Nathaniel: A struggle with getting the basics.

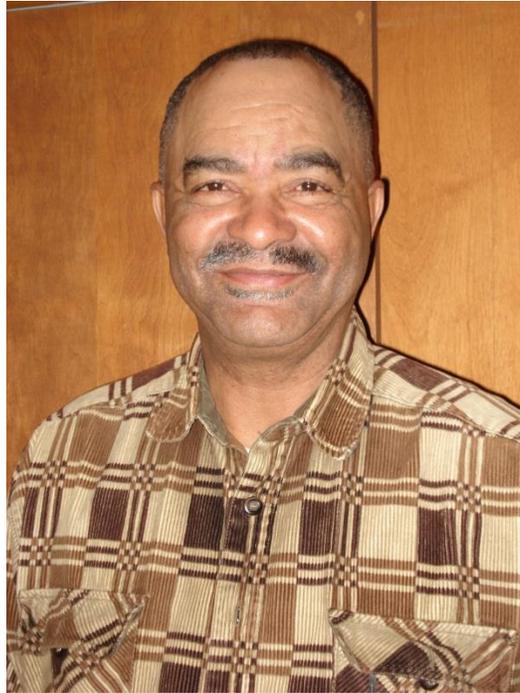


Deacon Nathaniel Eanes (2009)
Interview Photo
(*Courtesy Linda Eanes Jefferson*). Printed with permission.

Remembering being ten or twelve years old and preparing to enter the fourth grade when the schools closed, Nathaniel suggested his basic educational knowledge and skills remained limited during the five-year Closing. He also recalled his mother and father being approached by family members from the city who were willing to take individual siblings to live with them and enroll them in school. According to Nathaniel, his father “could not send one off to get an education, without sending the whole family. So he decided that we would stay home cause he could not afford [to] send all of us out

with different families to go to school.” Nathaniel remembered being allowed to attend the interim Free School which operated on a non-publicly funded basis from 1963-1964. During that period, he was placed in the eighth grade and remembered struggling “to get through with my basics I really didn’t pick up when they closed the schools.”

Vincent: The best of times during the worst of times.



Reverend Vincent Eanes (2009)
Interview Photo
(*Courtesy* Linda Eanes Jefferson). Printed with permission.

Vincent, who was eight and ready to enter the third grade when the schools closed, reflected upon his time out of school with mixed emotions: “It was one of the best experiences for us and especially for me, because there is so much I know we can share, but on the other hand, it’s one of the worst experiences.” He recalled that like any young child his age and “not knowing the devastation that would fall afterward,” he was happy upon learning the schools would not open in the fall of 1959 and had no idea the effects would “come down like a heavy rain.”

During the years out of school, Vincent recalled an absence of structured and consistent learning. He remembered not knowing the meaning of certain words and phrases, such as the cows being “in heat,” until an older brother explained it to him and believed that was “stuff that we was supposed to have gotten in school, but lost it, never did gain it.” He also recalled that during the years the schools were closed, volunteers drove throughout the countryside in station wagons picking up children “who didn’t have much to do” to take them to make-shift classrooms in people’s homes. However, because he and his brothers had to work in his father’s pulpwood business, and he and all his siblings had to work the family farm, they were not able to attend those sessions.

Vincent also noted his family built close relationships during the years the schools were closed and recalled his older sisters trying to teach him and his siblings, but stated they were so far behind. Vincent remarked that by the time the schools re-opened, he had forgotten a great deal of what he learned in first and second grade. Also, he remembered the challenges of returning to school and to “a system set up to put us in different grades we could handle according to the tests. Well, for me personally, I had lost 98% of my early learning. Be honest with you, I might could add two plus two. Not one thing of multiplication! Only subtraction I could have done, you take something from me physically. I know that taken from me. But far as, I couldn’t relate to it. Reading? I might could have spelled, ‘Dick’ or ‘Sally.’ That was about it.”

He further reflected on how displaced and embarrassed he felt when he returned to school and was unable to perform at his age-appropriate level: “And so, here I’m sitting in this gym out of touch with everybody. And look at the test score, and that didn’t line up. And so they said well then, after they gave me my test scores, and said, ‘This kid here, he so far back.’ Here I’m twelve years old, and they sent me to Worsham

Elementary School.” Not only was he embarrassed to be placed in classes with much younger children, he felt ashamed being taught by individuals close to his own age: “When you are in school, and you are just as old as the teacher, you can imagine the devastation.” At one point, shaking and lowering his head, while bringing a handkerchief to his eyes, Vincent remarked, “And I’ll never forget the stuff that we should have learned, or I should have learned. It’s too painful.”

Underlying Research Question 2

How did The Closing perceptibly impact long-range educational goals?

Carrie: Graduated but not fully educated.

Even though Carrie did graduate from high school, as she got older, she stated, “I realized how [the Closing] affected me and how I had to work hard to be where I am now.” Carrie continued to experience a deficit in her education and remarked, “Sometimes, I don’t feel like, now that I’m older, that I guess with the teachers and stuff, they did the best they could, but then as I got older, I realized, you know, I still needed a little bit more education to succeed in what I’m doing today.” However, she also determined she had not been affected as much as a sister who was in the third grade when the schools closed but was placed in the seventh grade when the schools re-opened.

Nathaniel: Lost his basics and his dream.

Nathaniel reported having felt “set back” because he had “lost a lot of my basics in school from the first to the eighth, and I never could regain it, reading and writing and arithmetic.” He stated those three skills were necessary for him to become successful in his planned career because he “had always dreamed of becoming a history teacher.” He continued by declaring, “[B]ut by me getting set back for five years out of school, it held me back from my dream of what I really wanted to do in life.”

Vincent: Felt set back and left behind.

Vincent reported the Free School was a “lifeline to life,” but he had continued feeling “a little awkward, a little left behind still because The School Closing set me back so far.” He declared those of us who did not experience the five-year educational deficit may not be able to understand the “essence” of what he was trying to say, “unless you can go down and get that umption out of your dungeon and bring it to the surface.” He recalled as a young adult feeling as if he did not have the necessary skills to help his own children with their homework when they came to him for assistance. To clarify further, he posed the following query: “Do you know what that feels like to feed a homeless child? Ain't talking bout food, you know. That child scuffling, and he hung up and can't spell like me. And he got to pass that test the next day. It's sorta like a million dollars sitting right there in your face, and you can't get it.”

Underlying Research Question 3

In what manner have participants pursued their desired educational goals?

Carrie: Her daughter, her husband, a dictionary, a reading class and on-the-job training.

Because the family was so large, Carrie recalled her siblings and her having to spend a lot of time working on the farm during the five-year school closing, but she also remembered her older sisters helping them “do a little bit of writing.” The only participant to relocate from Farmville, as a young adult, Carrie moved with her husband and daughter to Durham, North Carolina, where she had continued to reside for more than thirty years. She also noted that because she never “learned phonics” in school, she had difficulties pronouncing words correctly. Thus, Carrie attributed much of her out-of-classroom learning to her daughter who, when she was in kindergarten and first grade, helped her with the correct “pronunciation of words.”

Carrie also realized the need to improve her reading and vocabulary skills because her job in North Carolina required her to read a lot of blueprints. Even though she credited her husband and daughter with helping her improve her reading and verbal skills, she relied heavily on the dictionary and enrolled in a reading class. And when she was given the opportunity to attend a training class in Maryland for a new job description, she was very proud to have been selected. That training also prepared her for a “job instructor” position. Carrie noted that having spent time around her older brothers who became home building and other construction entrepreneurs gave her an advantage in adapting to the requirements of her job. However, she received most of the education required for her various positions with that company via on-the-job training.

Nathaniel: A Sunday School teacher and a good wife.

Nathaniel credited his Sunday School teacher, a retired school teacher who taught him a lot about the Bible and Christ whenever the family was able to attend church, for helping to educate him. He also thanked God for giving him a beautiful wife to whom he referred as “his backbone.” Not only did she help him become successful, Nathaniel attributed his wife with helping to raise their two children, assisting them with their homework and “helping them succeed [at] a better life than I have.” He passionately noted, “Raising my family without her, I don’t think I would be as successful.”

Vincent: Self-determination, a Bible, a dictionary and a devoted wife.

According to Vincent, his pursuit of educational goals was achieved through drive and self-determination. Referring to the Prince Edward County School Closing as a “monster,” he likened the forcing of the county’s black children from school to being “thrown . . . in a brush pile” and being “left . . . there to find our way out.” He reflected

with fervor that “if we didn’t have the desire to come out of that brush pile, they won't gonna help us. So somehow, some way, I found my way out of that brush pile.”

Vincent explained the importance of having realized “learning is always gonna be a process” and of knowing “where to go get help.” Believing God places people in our paths to help us along the way, he declared his plans never to stop learning. As he pointed backward over his shoulder, Vincent reminded himself that because he never wanted to return to that “monster time,” he always would “try to apply . . . at some learning center!”

Having pastored for three years at the time of this interview, Reverend Eanes’ educational quest had transcended beyond the learning centers and into the pulpit. He admitted The Closing and its aftermath had continued to place challenges before him. But, his determination had been relentless, as he noted a duty to help guide the youth a focus of his ministry: “Take me awhile to get my sermon together because I want it right. Sometimes, I run across words in there, quite often. I don’t get my Bible unless I get my dictionary. And, I be honest, it’s tough. Sometimes it take me a whole hour to get the true definition of one word. But I declare, after I get it, and after I get the understanding, you talk about joy! Then I'm able to pass it on. So, I can't mislead my children. Can't mislead my children.” Not unlike Carrie and Nathaniel, Vincent was thankful for a spouse who had helped him and stuck by him during his educational pursuit. Moreover, he acknowledged having come to “depend on God for it all.”

Underlying Research Question 4
What educational achievements have been realized?

Carrie: A fast learner on a fast track.

Carrie, who was just four years old when the schools closed in 1959, remembered having to work very hard to pass assignments and tests when she first started school in

1964 at age nine. She recalled after passing first grade, she was skipped to third grade the following year and was successful at completing her other grades. Upon graduating high school, marrying, working for a short period in Farmville, and moving to Durham, North Carolina, she was fortunate to get a job under a supervisor who recognized her ability to grasp the concepts and requirements of her job very quickly. Also recognizing her leadership skills, Carrie's supervisor sent her to Maryland for additional training, which prepared her to assume a new position as an on-the-job instructor. Extremely proud of that accomplishment and not wanting to disappoint her employer, Carrie always made concerted efforts to do the best job possible.

Nathaniel: Worked smarter, not harder.

Nathaniel would have entered fourth grade when the schools closed in 1959 and remembered being placed in "the eighth grade, according to my age" when the schools re-opened in 1964. Yet, he considered that placement being "kind of as a setback," because he had lost basics he felt he "never could regain," especially in his "reading and writing and arithmetic." However, after leaving high school, much of Nathaniel's education was achieved via trial and error. Whenever he prepared to do a task or a job, he realized he had the ability to analyze the situation first, discern the most efficient way to approach it, determine the necessary tools and equipment required to successfully complete it, and efficiently get the job done. According to him, "I learned to work smarter, not harder . . . without using my back."

Vincent: Had to start all over again.

Vincent, who would have entered third grade when the schools closed in 1959, remembered receiving, not an academic but, a practical and moral education at home – to be respectful, to be responsible, to know and to do things "the right way." However,

when the public schools re-opened in 1964, he recalled the scores on the tests he was given “didn’t line up” with his age and appropriate grade level. As a result, after spending a few days at a school with students his age, he was sent to Worsham Elementary and “had to start in the first grade -- all over again!” After enduring that setback and passing each grade, he recalled skipping from the grade six to grade eight. Yet, upon reaching high school, he experienced new educational challenges but eventually “kind of got a handle” on his grades. He even recalled making the honor roll on a few occasions. Even though he was twenty-three when he graduated high school, Vincent noted, “I never did regain my spelling ability. I never did regain pronunciation. Therefore, you can’t read; you’re cornered. You can’t spell; you’re crippled. And how serious it is that you must have an education!” Thus, later in life, Vincent, who declared he never would stop learning, returned to the classroom of a seminary program, successfully completing theological studies and ministerial training.

Underlying Research Question 5
What role has self-directed learning played in their lives?

Carrie: Curiously driven.

Having undertaken many learning projects on her own, Carrie stated she always has been “curious about learning new things because it’s a drive for me to see how different things would work and how you can improvise something and make it work better.” She also taught herself carpentry and home improvement skills. Able to do much of the labor herself, Carrie saved a great deal of money when she purchased and renovated a duplex as a rental property. She noted, “I didn’t use a whole lot of books to show me how to put a hole in the door or anything. It seem like it just came natural.”

Nathaniel: Visually directed.

Nathaniel also had undertaken learning projects without the aid of others. He stated he learned to do several things without training: “I learned how to lay bricks, block on my own how to run a power saw how to drive the tractor how to do field work.” Nathaniel also considered his ability to look at a project and visualize how it will appear and function once it is completed a gift from God. An ambitious worker, he declared, “I never tell anyone what I can't do.”

Vincent: Innovatively determined.

Vincent had accomplished learning projects on his own, as well, and stated he always has been “a creative type of fellow.” He, too, stated he always has had a curiosity to know how things work, and it had been “planted” in him to believe he could accomplish anything he had determined to do. Recalling his years of service with the Virginia Department of Transportation, Vincent exhibited pride, as he shared a successful caveat of that career. He noted he had been given the opportunity to operate a motor grade machine during a time when very few black men were trusted to handle such expensive equipment. Moreover, as his operating skills continued to develop, he innovated techniques to accomplish certain jobs that in the past had required the labor of five men.

Underlying Research Question 6**To what extent do they consider themselves life-long learners?****Carrie: Always curious about learning new things.**

Carrie indicated she is “always curious about learning new things” and loves “to see how things would work.” However, her curiosity extends beyond just knowing. As she investigates ways to improve the way items and objects already function, she likes to

“improvise” and enjoys repairing broken or discarded items or modifying them for repurpose.

Nathaniel: Always room for learning.

Nathaniel suggested “there is always room for learning,” and he “would never want to go through life and say that’s enough.” Attesting to the significance of God in his life, Nathaniel said he is willing to fulfill whatever test the Almighty puts before him, “whether it’s in books, Bible or teaching someone how to learn how to do things better.” He stated he even wanted to continue learning as much as possible about computers and suggested “learning is a non-stop process.” He summed his position regarding self-directed learning as follows: “I want to learn and learn until God call me home.”

Vincent: Learning will always be a process.

Believing learning is a continuous process, Vincent suggested the values he learned during The Closing influenced his life. He recalled that while out of school during that five-year period, he learned more about respect, responsibility and “the true value of family life” than at any other period in his life because of “the closeness that it brought the family.” And when speaking about his adult sons, he consistently mentioned how proud he was of their commitment to their own families.

Vincent also alluded to the pain of being denied an education and the need to survive as a catalyst for action, to move forward: “And when you suffer deep enough, and long enough, you come to the reality that you in this thing alone! And if you want to survive, you got to do something about it. You come to the – I guess I say – common sense that there ain’t no progress in looking back. So, you try to move forward, use what you have, what you got.”

Likewise, he mentioned the importance of recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities that were not available to him as a child: “Back then, I didn’t have a chance to make this thing a better thing. Now, not just me, but the world as a whole, we have a chance to make this life a better thing now. . . . And if you wanna grow, you gotta know! So, learning is always gonna be a process.” Thus, he referenced his constant quest for knowledge and stated he always will be enrolled at “some learning center.” With a soft smile, he then declared, “I can't help it. I'm like a lightning bug. I got it in me.”

As pastor of a small Baptist congregation in a neighboring county, Reverend Eanes discussed his concern over the youth and the importance of adults communicating with them and stressing the importance of an education: “[I]f we leave them behind. I know how easy it is to get back [to a time of no education].”

Lastly, Vincent even viewed learning as a process of growth in his personal relationships. Having recently engaged in conversation with his youngest son, he shared his growth as a parent by declaring, “You know something . . . I'm a much better dad now than I was twenty years ago.” With a nod of affirmation, Vincent ended that portion of the interview with, “It’s a growing experience.”

Underlying Research Question 7

In what ways did The Closing perceivably impact job or career opportunities?

Nathaniel: Lacked necessary skills to be a History teacher.

Although neither Carrie nor Vincent addressed The Closing’s perceived impact on job or career opportunities, Nathaniel recalled wanting to become a history teacher. However, he felt his deficits in reading, writing and arithmetic, the “three basic skills I really need . . . to really go on in life” prevented him from pursuing and achieving that career goal.

Underlying Research Question 8**What occupational choices have been available to participants?****Carrie: Successfully obtained manufacturing positions.**

As a young adult, Carrie had been very successful at obtaining manufacturing jobs. After graduating high school, she was able to gain employment in Prince Edward County with a company that manufactured light switches. Additionally, her position required a great deal of reading. She recalled her supervisor being “real pleased with the way I caught on to the work” and “the way I handled my job.” Upon relocating to Durham, North Carolina, she was fortunate to be hired in an assembly work position making airplane parts. Recognizing her strong work ethics and leadership abilities, Carrie’s supervisor eventually enrolled her in a program in Maryland where she received training as a job instructor for a particular job, so she “could come back and teach other people how to do it.”

Nathaniel: Successfully gained factory and other employment.

After graduating high school, Nathaniel left the farm to take a job in the public sector. On his first job at a shoe factory in Prince Edward County, he worked production making shoes for American soldiers in Vietnam. Then he took a job making machinery, before being hired at factory making boxes sixty miles away in Richmond. Nathaniel later gained employment with the Virginia Department of Transportation, where he joined the highway crew spreading chemicals on the road and operating a spreader. He then was promoted to crew leader and trained new hires how “to do things on the road.”

Vincent: Attempted several types of occupations.

Vincent noted having had numerous jobs. While still in high school, Vincent worked for a while in construction before taking a factory job at Uniroyal in Prince

Edward County. Because he recently had married, he left what he considered a low salary job and returned to construction in order to provide better for his new wife. Not satisfied with his salary, and having gained previous experience working in his father's pulpwood business, Vincent then began operating his own pulpwood enterprise. However, after paying the costs of overhead, equipment and employee wages, he made a profit of only eighteen dollars per day and was forced to close the business. Fortunately, the owner of the sawmill where he had sold the wood offered him a job earning sixty dollars a day, which, according to Vincent, was the most money he had ever earned at that time.

At approximately age thirty, Vincent was hired by the Virginia Department of Transportation, from which he later retired. Reflecting on his many years of service with VDOT, Vincent noted his supervisor had given him a rare opportunity during that time period: "And that man . . . gave me every opportunity to get things in order. He even put me places in early part of employment that black folk just didn't get. He gave me a chance on the motor grader. I was the first African American to run this piece of equipment in the early eighties. And how God will take your bad and turn it to good."

Having retired from VDOT, Vincent returned to the classroom as a seminary student. At the time of this interview, he had been pastoring a church for three years and emphasized his focus on the youth ministry: "God has given me a flock of people to lead. And, in that flock, I have youth. I think that's where we, we need to work with today." He also credited his parents for not instilling hostility in him during The Closing: "Now I'm retired. . . . I'm content. Thank my father, my mama that they didn't dwell that hatred in me. I'm not doing too good looking back. So, that's where I'm at."

Underlying Research Question 9**What bearing has educational achievement had on occupational success?****Carrie: Supplemental instruction and job success.**

Having been employed at her current company for thirty-four years at the time of this interview, Carrie believed the assistance her husband and daughter gave her with spelling, reading and pronunciation helped her become successful on her job. Additionally, the adult reading courses in which she enrolled and her constant reliance on a dictionary benefitted her, as well. Because those skills enhanced her ability to read the many blueprints required of her job, and her performance exhibited leadership potential, Carrie was selected by her supervisor for training as a job instructor. Carrie, who stated she loved her job, suggested her employer's belief in her abilities encouraged her to work even harder for the company to the best of her capabilities.

Very proud of her occupational success, Carrie noted, "I feel like I've been very successful because the company believed in me and knew that I could do the work to the best of my ability. And I've proved to the company that I could do the jobs that they have put before me." As another indicator of her success, she declared she had "seen a lot of people come and go." Additionally, as a result of the knowledge and skills Carrie had gained during her thirty-four years, even engineers and other individuals with college degrees sometimes had to confer with her and seek assistance from her to perform their jobs.

According to Carrie, the closing of the Prince Edward County Public Schools motivated in her a drive to succeed: "[B]ecause the schools did close down, and I didn't start school until I was nine years old, it really, really wanted me to motivate myself to say that, 'I can still be somebody.'" Reflecting further upon the interview question, Carrie

considered not just her success, but that of her siblings, as well: “So, but I feel good about myself even though they closed our schools. I feel like . . . my family and I, we have accomplished a lot despite we didn’t go to school.”

Nathaniel: Self-directed and good with his hands.

Nathaniel, who indicated his deficits in reading, writing and arithmetic prevented him from pursuing his dream of becoming a History teacher, also believed he had been very successful in his occupational choices. Believing his success had been a result of his desire to work hard, he indicated he had “never been the type of person to be lazy and didn’t want to work.” Having learned much through self-directed means, Nathaniel indicated, “I have always been good with my hands.”

On his last job with Virginia Department of Transportation, Nathaniel served as a crew leader and “had to learn how to be a role model” for the new employees, as he had to “show them how we had to do things on the road.” Nathaniel proudly declared, “I have been successful in my chosen jobs and well-blessed because I have always had a job! I have never been laid off on a job. And I have never been fired on a job!”

Vincent: Educational achievement after retirement.

Vincent, who emphasized he never did regain his “spelling ability” after the schools re-opened, made no allusion to the manner in which his educational achievement perceivably impacted his occupational success prior to retirement. Yet, he did suggest he may have been more successful had the schools not closed: “And I think back where I could have been if school hadn’t closed on old boy!”

However, after successfully enrolling in a seminary program following his retirement, he later was installed as pastor of a small congregation in a neighboring county. Reverend Eanes asserted he never picks up his Bible without also picking up his

dictionary. He also emphasized the challenges he sometimes faces when trying to grasp the meaning of a new word and the elation he experiences when he understands it. Yet, he forges ahead in his Biblical studies journey. “Then I'm able to pass it on,” Reverend Eanes declared. “So, I can't mislead my children. Can't mislead my children.”

Emergent Themes

As each participant shared their memories of The Closing's perceived impact on their lives over more than five decades, several common themes emerged. Those most revealing were family relationships, resiliency, self-direction, life-long learning, religious faith and supportive white employers.

Family relationships

Carrie, Nathaniel and Vincent recalled a close family relationship being important during the period of The Prince Edward County School Closing. Not only did older siblings attempt to help them learn basic educational skills, their parents instilled important family and moral values, as well as a strong work ethic. Participants also noted supportive spouses -- and in Carrie's case, even her daughter -- were instrumental in their educational and occupational successes in adulthood. According to Carrie, her husband and daughter helped her further develop her spelling and reading skills. Nathaniel revealed he would not have been as successful in life if it had not been for his wife supporting his goals and assisting their children with their school work. Likewise, Vincent declared he did not know what he would do if it were not for his wife of thirty-seven years who has stuck by him.

Resiliency

Resiliency and an unwillingness to give up resounded among all three participants. Even though each reported having struggled to acquire basic educational

skills and to fill in the five-year gap of knowledge through various and creative means, they also had been driven to succeed in spite of the educational deficits. In essence, the three suggested their determined belief they could achieve success at any task or job they were assigned by an employer or assigned themselves to do. As Carrie noted, “I feel, you know, my family and I, we have accomplished a lot despite we didn’t go to school.” While Nathaniel indicated he never tells anyone what he “can’t do,” Vincent spoke of feeling fortunate he did not harbor resentment. He noted, “I’m content. Thank my father, my mama that they didn’t dwell that hatred in me.”

Self-direction

All three participants reported an internal drive to learn things on their own without the aid of teachers or formalized classroom instruction. Carrie reported always having been curious to understand how things work and to improvise new ways to improve or re-purpose them. Having engaged in numerous home improvement projects over the years, she also indicated some things appeared to come naturally to her. Nathaniel also reported an ability to analyze and learn things on his own. Suggesting he always has been good with his hands, he noted being able to recognize what tools and supplies are required to undertake a project and visualize what the finished product will look like once completed. Vincent, too, suggested his ability to improvise and complete projects on his own. Having always been curious to know how things work, he also noted an instilled belief he could accomplish anything he was determined to do. Additionally, both Carrie and Vincent, who self-directed much of their reading and language improvement, noted a devout reliance on the dictionary, and Vincent a reliance on his Bible.

Life-long learning

The belief in life-long learning also resonated with all three participants. Mentioning her incessant curiosity to learn new things, Carrie noted her drive to “see how different things would work” and how to “improvise something and make it work better.” Nathaniel also declared his intention to continue learning. Noting “there is always room for learning,” he suggested he “would never want to go through life and say that’s enough. I want to learn and learn until God call me home.” Suggesting “learning is always gonna be a process,” Vincent declared, “I don’t want to ever stop . . . learning because I know the hinder of not learning back in that monster time.”

Religious faith

Both Deacon Nathaniel and Reverend Vincent spoke of God’s favor in their lives and their success. Nathaniel referred to his ability to visualize what a finished project will look like before it is begun as a “gift from God” and thanked God for placing a beautiful and supportive wife in his life. Additionally, he indicated he had been “well-blessed” to always have been employed and never to have been laid off or fired from a job. Reverend Vincent also referred heavily to God’s favor, stating he “depend[s] on God for it all.” He credited God with giving him a creative mind to self-direct his learning and for giving him the heavy equipment he operated on the highway department job from which he retired. Reverend Vincent also spoke of how God blessed him with a wonderful family and a flock of people to pastor. Noting his “learning is always gonna be a process,” he declared, “God will take your bad and turn it to good.”

Supportive white employers

All three participants referred to being promoted by supportive white supervisors who recognized their skills and abilities. Carrie noted her supervisor in Farmville was

impressed with “the way [she] caught on to the work” and “handled [her] job.” Moreover, after recognizing her strong work ethic and leadership capabilities, her North Carolina employer sent her for training as a job instructor. Nathaniel also was promoted by his supervisor as crew leader on his highway department job, where he was a “role model” and was “sent out and showed other people how to work and do . . . [the] road work.” Likewise employed with the highway department, Vincent, who was entrusted by his supervisor to operate a very large and expensive piece of highway machinery, noted he was “the first African American to run this piece of equipment in the early eighties.”

Summary

Having lived through five years without formalized education from 1959 – 1964, the three participants of this study, siblings Carrie, Nathaniel and Vincent, spoke to the perceived impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing on their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood. Even though they did not quite understand the magnitude of The Closing at its onset in 1959, all three reported recognizing their educational deficits upon the school doors re-opening in 1964. While each participant reported differing methods of pursuing additional knowledge upon graduating high school, all three were proud of their achievements. Additionally, the three participants declared their intrinsic interest in learning new things and their engagement in self-directed and life-long learning projects as means of knowledge advancement and occupational success. Having been gainfully employed throughout their adulthood, Carrie, Nathaniel and Vincent reported high levels of occupational success.



Eanes Family (c.1975)

Matriarch Gertrude Richards Eanes with her twenty-one children
after the passing of Patriarch Taylor Eanes
(*Courtesy* Deacon Louis Taylor Eanes). Printed with permission.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

"I'se Still Climbin'"

*Well, son, I'll tell you:
 Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
 It's had tacks in it,
 And splinters,
 And boards torn up,
 And places with no carpet on the floor --
 Bare.
 But all the time
 I'se been a-climbin' on,
 And reachin' landin's,
 And turnin' corners,
 And sometimes goin' in the dark
 Where there ain't been no light.
 So boy, don't you turn back.
 Don't you set down on the steps
 'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
 Don't you fall now --
 For I'se still goin', honey,
 I'se still climbin',
 And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.*

"Mother to Son," *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, 1959, p.187.

When Prince Edward County, Virginia closed its public schools from 1959 – 1964 in an effort to circumvent the 1955 Supreme Court ruling to desegregate public schools with “all deliberate speed,” the education of more than 1700 African American children was compromised. As white children in the county were provided vouchered access to a newly-built Prince Edward Academy, black children either were sent to live and attend school with family members and friends in neighboring counties or other

states, were placed by the American Friends Service Committee with families outside of Virginia to attend school or simply sat out of school for the duration.

This study investigated the perceived impact of The Closing on the educational achievements and occupational choices as perceived by representatives of a family of twenty-one children with sixteen school-age siblings denied an education during that five year period. Even though some black families were extended or found alternative measures to educate their children, the Eanes family children were not able to receive schooling. Being extended offers from several family members in northern cities to host a few of the sixteen children, their father declared his unwillingness to “choose” which of his children would be educated and decided to send no child north.

When the schools re-opened in 1964, five years after their doors were closed and chained in 1959, some of the Eanes children were beyond school age, were working outside the family farm and pulpwood business, had married and begun families, while others returned to the classroom. As three Eanes siblings, Carrie, Nathaniel and Vincent, agreed to participate in this approved study to investigate their perceptions of the Prince Edward County School Closing’s impact on their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood, a fourth sibling, Billy, requested and provided an interview prior to his passing and to Virginia Tech’s subsequent Institutional Review Board’s official approval of this study. Recollections from that discussion with him are included in Appendix K: Preliminary Inquiry.

Perceived Impact Conclusions

This study, which investigated the educational achievements and occupational choices of participants denied a public education when Prince Edward County, Virginia closed its public schools from 1959 – 1964, was predicated on the following Major

Research Question: From the perspective of members of one Prince Edward County family, how did The School Closing perceivably impact their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood? During individual interviews, three siblings from a family of twenty-one, with sixteen of its children forced from school during that five year period, responded to a set of seven semi-structured and eight demographic questions designed to address the nine Underlying Research Questions that follow. An analysis drawn from their reported perceptions is discussed below.

From the perspective of the participants:

Underlying Research Question 1

How did The Closing perceivably impact immediate educational goals?

By virtue of varying ages and previous formal classroom experience, or absence thereof, the Prince Edward County School Closing perceivably impacted the immediate educational goals of the three participants differently.

One participant, Carrie, who was four years old and had not even begun first grade when the school doors closed, had not formulated any educational goals prior to The Closing. She also did not remember receiving any type of structured education during the five-year closure but did recall older sisters helping younger brothers and sisters do a little writing. Entering first grade at age nine, Carrie was placed in classrooms with many other children -- four of them older brothers -- to learn basic skills, such as their ABC's. After her first year in school, Carrie was skipped to third grade. Also attending some summer school sessions to supplement her education, she successfully passed her grades until graduating high school.

On the other hand, Nathaniel, who was ten or twelve and ready to enter the fourth grade when the schools closed, received very limited academic engagement during the five year absence of classroom learning. Even though he attended the interim Free

School that operated from 1963 – 1964 and was placed in the eighth grade, he suggested he was never able to recover the basic academic skills he had lost during the five-year closure.

Likewise, eight-year-old Vincent, who would have entered third grade when the schools closed but was happy when he learned schools would not open in the fall of 1959, did not foresee the perceived impact that not going to school would have on his immediate educational goals. Even though his older sisters sometimes attempted to teach some basic educational skills at home, he recalled not having much structured and consistent learning during The Closing and forgetting much of what he had learned in first and second grade. Upon the schools re-opening, Vincent felt ashamed of not knowing simple word definitions or of not having basic spelling and math skills. Not able to handle age-appropriate class work, twelve-year-old Vincent was re-assigned to Worsham Elementary. Embarrassingly, he was placed in classes with children much younger than he and taught by teachers very close to his own age.

Underlying Research Question 2

How did The Closing perceivably impact long-range educational goals?

The Closing perceivably impacted the specific long-range educational goal of one participant and general long-range goals of the other two.

One participant, Nathaniel, spoke of the specific educational goal he had in mind before the schools closed. Reporting he had lost many of the basic reading, writing and math skills he had gained from first through eighth grade, Nathaniel indicated The Closing set him back academically and prevented him from fulfilling his dream of becoming a History teacher.

Even though Carrie did not indicate having a long-range educational goal prior to The Closing, she did indicate not realizing the perceived impact of the closure on her

abilities in the workforce until after gaining employment. As an adult, she worked hard and realized she needed a little more education to succeed in her current employment.

Vincent, who also did not indicate having a long-range educational goal prior to the schools closing, suggested the five-year deficit perceivably did have an impact on his academic abilities. Having always felt awkward, set back and left behind, he had difficulty comprehending the academic work of the age-appropriate grade level in which he was placed when the schools re-opened. Thus, he was required to return to elementary school to regain his basic skills. Even after repeating early grades and obtaining his high school diploma, Vincent believed he had not acquired sufficient foundational literacy skills. He even noted his lack of the necessary skills to help his own children with their homework when they were growing up and came to him for assistance.

Underlying Research Question 3

In what manner have participants pursued their desired educational goals?

All three participants have pursued their desired educational goals via supportive spouses/family members and adult self-directed/lifelong learning measures.

Carrie, the only participant to leave Prince Edward County after graduating high school by relocating with her husband and daughter to Durham, North Carolina, pursued her education via several means. Attributing her inability to pronounce words correctly to her never having learned phonics in school, she credited her improved pronunciation to her then young daughter who helped her while a kindergarten and first grade student. Her husband and daughter also assisted her with reading and verbal skills. Also, Carrie relied heavily on her dictionary and enrolled in a reading improvement class to improve her language and communication skills.

Nathaniel also took various avenues to pursue his desired educational goals. Owing a great deal of his adult success to a supportive wife, to whom he referred as “his backbone,” he also credited her with ensuring their children’s academic success. In addition, Nathaniel incorporated adult self-directed learning principles among his educational strategy. He took pride in teaching himself to perform certain skills and in accomplishing numerous personal and workforce tasks without much guidance from others.

Vincent also pursued his desired educational goals via various avenues. Attributing much of his success and achievement to a devoted and supportive wife, Vincent also spoke of his belief that God placed others in his life to help him “along the way.” Moreover, he declared as another factor his inherent drive and determination to continue learning throughout his lifetime. Not only has he relied heavily upon a dictionary at his side for self-directed study, many decades after graduating high school, he continued furthering his education by enrolling in a seminary program.

Underlying Research Question 4 **What educational achievements have been realized?**

After the Prince Edward County Public Schools re-opened in 1964, all three respondents progressed through their grades to graduate high school, and two later enrolled in learning centers to advance their academic skills.

Just four years old when the schools closed in 1959, Carrie was placed in the first grade when she first entered school at age nine. However, at the completion of that year, she was skipped to the third grade. Enrolling in a few summer sessions to supplement her learning during her public school tenure, she successfully completed her grades and graduated high school. After marrying and moving to North Carolina, Carrie also

enrolled in adult classes to build her reading literacy skills. Additionally, she successfully completed job advancement courses recommended by her employer.

Nathaniel, who would have entered fourth grade when the schools closed, was placed in eighth grade when schools re-opened in 1964. Even though he felt his reading, writing and math skills had diminished during the five years he was removed from an academic environment, Nathaniel did successfully complete his grades and graduated high school.

On the other hand, Vincent, who would have entered third grade when the schools closed and the eighth upon them reopening, was unable to handle the age appropriate academic work upon returning to school. As a result, at age twelve, he was re-assigned to Worsham Elementary and required to repeat the first grade. From that point, he successfully completed each successive grade, made the honor roll on several occasions and even skipped the seventh grade. Years after graduating high school, Vincent returned to the classroom as a seminary student, successfully completing theological studies and ministerial training.

Underlying Research Question 5

What role has self-directed learning played in their lives?

Self-directed learning has played an essential role in the life of each participant.

Carrie, who considered herself a self-directed learner and had always been driven to investigate how things operated and how to improvise them to work better, directed numerous do-it-yourself projects, as well as much of her post-high school literacy acquisition. Having taught herself carpentry and home improvement skills without the aid of many books and manuals, she believed her skills to undergo her learning projects came to her naturally. Over the years, Carrie saved expenses by doing much of the labor on her

home and rental properties. In addition, she made regular and heavy use of her dictionary as she continually enhanced her reading, spelling and verbal literacy skills.

A hard worker, Nathaniel, too, considered himself a self-directed learner and had taught himself multiple skills, such as how to lay bricks, run a power saw, drive a tractor and do field work. He also believed God had gifted him with the ability to visualize finished products and how they would function before he actually began his learning projects. Nathaniel never believed in admitting he was unable to figure out or complete a project.

Vincent, who always had been very creative, also shared an innate curiosity to know how things operated, applied his visionary skills on the job and self-directed much of his adult literacy acquisition. On his job, he innovated ways to utilize heavy equipment to function more efficiently, eliminating unnecessary manpower. Likewise, he faithfully utilized his dictionary while studying Biblical contexts before and since retiring and enrolling in the seminary.

Underlying Research Question 6

To what extent do they consider themselves life-long learners?

All three participants considered themselves incessant life-long learners.

Carrie who always had been curious to understand how things operated also had been driven to figure out ways to make things function even better. Likewise, considering learning a never-ending process, Nathaniel believed there always would be opportunities to learn new things and never wanted to go through life believing he had learned enough. Vincent also viewed learning to be a continual process for growth in his personal relationships and his post-retirement professional life as a pastor. Thus, he planned always to enroll in a learning center or to engage in some form of learning.

Underlying Research Question 7**In what ways did The Closing perceivably impact job or career opportunities?**

Only one participant spoke to the perceived impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing on his job or career opportunities.

Nathaniel, the only respondent to reference his career aspirations prior to The Closing, suggested he had wanted to become a History teacher but believed his skill deficits in reading, writing and math had prevented him from pursuing and achieving that goal.

Underlying Research Question 8**What occupational choices have been available to participants?**

All three respondents were able to acquire manufacturing and/or manual labor positions.

With no mentioning of periods of unemployment, Carrie, Nathaniel and Vincent were able to acquire employment throughout their adult lives. After graduating high school, Carrie worked for a company in Farmville that manufactured light switches before moving to Durham, North Carolina where she was hired by a company that manufactured airplane parts. At the writing of this study, she had remained employed there for more than thirty years.

As a young man, Nathaniel held two jobs with local companies, one which manufactured shoes and the other machinery, before taking a job over sixty miles away with a company that manufactured corrugated boxes. He later was hired by and retired from a road crew of the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Vincent, who also had held several jobs, began working in construction while in high school before taking a factory job at Uniroyal in Farmville. After returning for a short period to a construction job, he began operating a small-scale pulpwood business

before accepting a job with a local sawmill. In his thirties, Vincent was hired by the Virginia Department of Transportation, from which he eventually retired. At the writing of this research, he was serving as pastor of a Baptist Church in a neighboring county.

Underlying Research Question 9

What bearing has educational achievement had on occupational success?

Literacy skills assistance from Carrie's family members, self-directed and on-the-job educational training of all three participants and Carrie's and Vincent's formalized coursework had a positive bearing on occupational success.

According to Carrie, supportive literacy skills assistance from her husband and daughter, along with post-high school self-directed dictionary study, an adult reading class, off-work-site courses and on-the-job training had a positive bearing her occupational success. Having proven a quick comprehension of job skills and natural leadership abilities, Carrie also was promoted to and continued employment as a job instructor during the writing of this study.

While Nathaniel made no reference to post-high school formalized coursework, he suggested his self-directed acquisition of hands-on skills and knowledge and unwillingness to adopt an "I can't" attitude had a positive bearing on his success on his road crew job with the Virginia Department of Transportation, where he was promoted to crew leader.

Even though Vincent alluded to no formalized coursework during his pre-retirement work history, he did suggest his curious and innovative nature had a positive bearing on his success in a Department of Transportation job during a period when, to his knowledge, no other black man was permitted to operate the specialized piece of equipment to which he was assigned. After retiring from the transportation job, Vincent's self-directed dictionary study and successful completion of a seminary program prepared

him for the pulpit of a small Baptist church in a neighboring county where he continued to pastor at the writing of this study. According to the positive bearing of his ministry on the youth in his congregation, Vincent also has achieved success in his post-retirement career.

Reverend Vincent Eanes (2003)
 Upon receiving his honorary
 high school diploma: Honorary
 Graduation Ceremony for
 Those Affected by the
 1959-1964 Prince Edward
 County, Virginia School
 Closing, Sunday, June 15,
 2003, 4:00 p.m., Prince
 Edward County High
 School Auditorium,
 Farmville, VA.
 (*Courtesy Linda Eanes Jefferson*).
 Printed with permission.



Limitations

This study met with contextual and methodological limitations that, albeit require addressing, did not infringe upon the dependability of its findings.

The contextual limitations to this study were as follows:

1. The study was limited to members of one family perceivably impacted by The 1959 – 1964 Prince Edward County, Virginia School Closing.
2. Because this study investigated a phenomenon (five-year absence of formalized education) during the period of Massive resistance that occurred in an encapsulated rural community in the American south, the uniqueness of its perceived

impact may differ from those resulting from briefer closings and/or in less rural localities, such as Norfolk or Charlottesville.

3. It was an investigation of “perception” in which participants were asked to “recollect” memories of more than fifty years.

4. Participants also were asked to reflect upon and determine a perceived impact or series of perceived impacts over the span of much of their lives.

The study also met with methodological limitations, as discussed below:

5. Even though this researcher was not reared in Prince Edward County, she is a next-generation member of the Eanes family siblings who were the focus of this study. Thus, she made every professional effort to bracket herself from familial bias in order to maintain the integrity of study. As added protection against bias, Dr. Roland Havis, Professor of Psychology at Richard Bland College of William and Mary served as reader / inter-rater to garner interpretation reliability. Based on his and the researcher’s full agreement, a comparison of both interpretations and results of separate analyses concluded no major discrepancies.

6. The inability to include in this study all siblings who were of school age when Prince Edward closed its schools created a sampling bias. Of the sixteen brothers and sisters perceivably impacted by The Closing, only four were available and/or willing to participate in the study.

7. The rapidly-declining health of one participant who requested his desire to share his story with this interviewer prior to this study’s official authorization by Virginia Tech’s Institutional Research Board obviated the results of his interview from the data coded and analyzed for this study. (Recollections from his interview are found in Appendix K: Preliminary Inquiry.)

Juxtaposed to the purpose of this study to understand the perceived impact of the Prince Edward County School Closing on the educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood, via the recollected memories and stories of individuals from a nuclear family, the limitations of this study were relatively minor. As this study gave voice to individuals who were obscurely invisible during the five-year Closing and had remained somewhat silent over the many decades since, their stories of resiliency are valuable contributions to the literature of narratology, adult self-directed and adult-life-long learning.

Implications

Even though the closing of the schools in Prince Edward County for a period of five years denied more than seventeen hundred African American children a guaranteed public education, the implications of this study resound in a spirit of resiliency. An unfortunate chapter in the pages of American history, the lengthy period of educational deprivation created by The Prince Edward County School Closing relegated many children to a future of functional illiteracy and some to a life of hopelessness and broken dreams. Yet, it fostered in others a drive and determination to succeed in spite of those five lost years. The latter was revealed in the findings of the participants in this study.

Those individuals who emerged from The Closing driven to live productive and successful lives appear to emulate the Adult Learning theory tenets of self-directed, lifelong quests for knowledge. More specifically, the participants of this study have tended to adopt various “learning projects” (Tough 1978, 1979) over the span of their adult lives to gain knowledge about what they desired to learn and accomplish. They each spoke of an innate curiosity and drive to “figure out” how to approach a task or project and the ability to accomplish it in the absence of formalized instruction.

Implications for educational achievement also are revealed in this investigation. The results of the Michigan State University team's Green, Hofmann, Morse, Hayes, & Morgan (1964) study, which conducted intelligence testing on Prince Edward County children who had sat out of school, suggested reading skills were affected throughout all age ranges, while spelling and language skills showed negative effects primarily between the ages of 6 to 11. These findings resonate with the findings of this Perceived Impact study, in which all respondents spoke to their continued difficulties with reading, writing, spelling and verbal skills.

This Perceived Impact study also revealed occupational implications. A study by Hale-Smith (1992) of the effects of early educational disruption on Prince Edward residents compared the belief systems and educational practices of adults who, as children, remained in Prince Edward County during The Closing to those who were sent away to attend school. Her findings, which suggested those who sat out "were less likely to have entered or completed college [and] were often in lower ranking jobs", resonate with the findings of this study in which one participant actually declared his diminished educational skills obviated his dream of becoming a History teacher. Overall, participants in this study geared themselves toward manufacturing and manual labor jobs.

Another implication, initially not considered at the onset of this study, is the importance of family dynamics revealed through its core values and strong family ties. The participants of this study echo the close family bonding that commonly occurs in large families. Whereas Hale-Smith's (1992) study revealed the sense of irreparable loss and fracturing that occurred in some families that sent siblings away to attend school, this study's participants did not report such fracturing. Even though the Eanes family resided in a large two-story farmhouse and their wealth lay in acreage and farmland, the family

possessed little monetary wealth. However, their interviews revealed an abundance of family togetherness. Each participant spoke to the strong values and family ties they developed during the five-year closing, and one even spoke to the value of non-hatred his parents instilled in him. Likewise they all alluded to the instilled values of respect, hard work, ambition and dependability.

The findings in this study also speak to the intrinsic value of narratological inquiry as a means to give meaning and voice to the often silent individuals among us. The one woman and two men who agreed to participate in this study, were eager to finally tell their stories. And even though they had not been among the individuals who had gained spotlight media recognition regarding their experience during and since The Closing, their interviews and this study granted their “lived experiences” (Creswell, 1998) meaning and validation. Additionally, during the course of Carrie, Nathaniel and Vincent’s interviews, their identities transformed into “evolving life stories” (McAdams, 2003), rich with emerging themes and unanticipated revelations.

Recommendations

While granting previously silent survivors of a five-year educational deprivation a recollected voice, this study of The Perceived Impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing On One Family's Educational Achievements and Occupational Choices in Adulthood also created an avenue for further invigorating investigations.

As a caveat of this study investigated the participants’ adult self-directed and adult life-long learning measures, an investigation of School Closing survivors’ motivations for adult learning also would serve the body of knowledge in the field. A fielding of the interview data revealed frequent references by two participants to the role God has held in their lives and in their abilities to persevere and become successful in

their endeavors. As religion and the church historically have provided foundation, stability and safe haven for African Americans in this nation, perhaps a study of the role faith has held in the lives of Closing survivors would prove most interesting.

The perceived impact of the Prince Edward School Closing did not end just with those who experienced it first-hand. As the laws of procreation dictate, The Lost Generation produced a Next Generation who has gone on to produce even Another Generation. The participants in this study alluded to and spoke frankly about the effects their interrupted and deprived education had on their ability to provide their own children the educational assistance they required. Older brother, Louis Eanes who, in 1951, walked out of Moton High School with Barbara Johns in protest of Prince Edward's deplorable school conditions went on to graduate in 1952. Yet, he and that group of protestors could not have foreseen the aftermath of their actions as provoked by a ruling of the highest court in the nation. Inadvertently the Supreme Court's Brown I and II rulings precipitated such fervent massive resistance against school integration, that Prince Edward County took its drastic Closing measure. In remorse, Louis Eanes recalled never imagining his actions eight years earlier would have his younger siblings receive less education than he had. Such dialogue lends itself well to an investigation of The Closing's perceived impact on not just the Lost Generation but on the generations that have followed.

As has been suggested, the semi-structured nature of the interviews, which permitted life stories to evolve without constriction, produced rich data that often fell beyond the purview of this particular study. Likewise, that data opened itself to seemingly endless topics opportunities for further inquiry, such as ancestral discourse,

male birth order relationships, 1951 strikers' guilt, views of education vs. vocation (W. E. B. DuBois vs. Booker T. Washington) and growth under adversity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 540/231-4991 Fax 540/231-0959
 e-mail moored@vt.edu
 www.irb.vt.edu

FWA00000572 (expires 1/20/2010)
 IRB # is IRB00000667

DATE: February 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marcie Boucouvalas
 Linda Jefferson

Approval date: 2/28/2008
 Continuing Review Due Date: 2/13/2009
 Expiration Date: 2/27/2009

FROM: David M. Moore 

SUBJECT: **IRB Expedited Approval:** "The Perceived Impact of the Prince Edward County School Closing on One Family's Educational Achievements and Occupational Choices in Adulthood: A Study in Recollective Memory", IRB # 08-107

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective February 28, 2008.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.
3. Report promptly to the IRB of the study's closing (i.e., data collecting and data analysis complete at Virginia Tech). If the study is to continue past the expiration date (listed above), investigators must submit a request for continuing review prior to the continuing review due date (listed above). It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain re-approval from the IRB before the study's expiration date.
4. If re-approval is not obtained (unless the study has been reported to the IRB as closed) prior to the expiration date, all activities involving human subjects and data analysis must cease immediately, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

Important:

If you are conducting **federally funded non-exempt research**, this approval letter must state that the IRB has compared the OSP grant application and IRB application and found the documents to be consistent. Otherwise, this approval letter is invalid for OSP to release funds. Visit our website at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/newstudy.htm#OSP> for further information.

cc: File

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY AND STATE UNIVERSITY

An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

25 July 2008

Dear Prince Edward County School Closing Survivor,

During the 1959 – 1964 academic years, you experienced an educational phenomenon unique to the County of Prince Edward, VA. As localities throughout the South sought measures to avoid the integration of its classrooms, no other community closed down and chained the doors of its public schools for five years.

As a graduate student completing a Ph.D. program in Adult Learning & Human Resource Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), I am conducting a research study of ***The Perceived Impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing on One Family's Educational Achievements and Occupational Choices in Adulthood***. Your participation in this study will assist me in better understanding your experiences relative to The School Closing. More specifically, I am interested in understanding how you have navigated learning on your own or with others during your lifetime for employment and living purposes.

In order to obtain the information necessary for this study, I will be conducting video / audio-taped interviews with each participant who agrees to take part in the research. If you agree to participate by **completing, signing and returning the attached *Participation Interest Form* to me by 4 August 2008**, I will contact you to schedule an interview during a time and at a location convenient for you. At the onset of that meeting, I will further explain your rights as a participant.

The meeting and interview should last no more than two hours. However, should you wish to converse longer, I gladly will accommodate you. Also, because the interview and research will not request you to engage in any activity beyond what you would expect in a typical conversation, it poses minimal risk.

Please know this research study has been approved by Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board, the governing body which ensures the rights and safety of individuals participating in research. Also, for your convenience, a self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for the return of the attached *Participation Interest Form*. However, your signing and returning it does not obligate you to take part in the study, and you may withdraw your participation at any time.

Thank you for your interest and willingness to discuss how The School Closing may have impacted your life as an adult. As you consider your participation in this study, please feel free to call or e-mail me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to hearing from you.

Linda Eanes Jefferson

(804) 862 – 6123 W

(804) 732 – 0962 H

(804) 691 – 2058 C

ljefferson@rbc.edu

Attachment: *Participation Interest Form*

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPATION INTEREST FORM

I am interested in participating in the following Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University research study:

***The Perceived Impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing
on One Family's Educational Achievements and Occupational Choices in
Adulthood:
A Study in Recollective Memory***

As a participant, I will agree to a video/audio-taped interview with Linda Eanes Jefferson to discuss learning projects I have undertaken as an adult and occupations I have held since The Closing. I also realize that by signing this form, I am not obligated to continue with the study and may withdraw my participation at any time.

Name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Phone (Home) _____

(Cell) _____

(Other) _____

E-Mail _____

Best time to call me _____

*Please return in the enclosed Self-addressed, stamped envelope to
Linda Eanes Jefferson
4300 Red Cedar Ct.
Disputanta, VA 23842*

Thank you

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

08-107

Interview Consent

I, _____, consent to this video/audio-taped interview conducted by Linda Eanes Jefferson, a doctoral candidate in the Adult Learning Human Resource Development Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). I understand that the results of this interview will be used to investigate ***The Perceived Impact of The Prince Edward County School Closing on One Family's Educational Achievements and Occupational Choices in Adulthood: A Study in Recollective Memory.***

In addition, I am fully aware of the following:

- My interview images and voice will not be shared with any other source outside of this Virginia Tech research without my consent.
- Should I prefer my identity not be revealed, my actual name will be substituted with that of a code name in the study.
- Upon my request, I will have the opportunity to review the video/audio-tape prior to Jefferson's inclusion of my statements in her study.
- Upon my request, I will have the opportunity to clarify my video/audio-taped statements prior to Jefferson's inclusion of my statements in her study.
- I will have an opportunity to review Jefferson's summary of my interview results and request any clarifications of my statements.

Interview Consent *continued*

- I will receive a written copy of Jefferson's summary of my interview results prior to the conclusion of her study.
- I have the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any stage of the process.

Full Name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Please insert a name on one of the blanks below:

In this study, I wish to be referred to as

Actual First Name _____ or

Code Name _____

Interview Consent *continued*

I further understand that should I have any questions about the protection of human research participants regarding this study, I may contact the following:

Dr. David Moore, Chair Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Address: Office of Research Compliance, 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497), Blacksburg, VA 24060.

Phone: (540) 231 - 4991

E-mail: Moored@vt.edu

or

Dr. Marcie Boucouvalas, Dissertation Chair and Principal Investigator

Address: Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center
National Capital Region
7054 Haycock Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22043

Phone: (703) 538 – 8469

E-mail: Marcie@vt.edu

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX E: AUTHORIZATIONS TO USE ACTUAL NAMES

08-107

Interview Consent *continued*

- I will receive a written copy of Jefferson's summary of my interview results prior to the conclusion of her study.
- I have the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any stage of the process.

Full Name (please print) Carrie Eanes Walker
Signature Carrie Eanes Walker Date Oct 12 2008
Address 110 S. Dwyer St
Durham, N.C.
Phone 919-596-5558 E-Mail _____

Please insert a name on one of the blanks below:

In this study, I wish to be referred to as

Actual First Name Carrie Eanes Walker or

Code Name _____

Interview Consent *continued*

- I will receive a written copy of Jefferson's summary of my interview results prior to the conclusion of her study.
- I have the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any stage of the process.

Full Name (please print) Nathaniel Eanes
 Signature Nathaniel Eanes Date Aug 9, 2008
 Address 47 Shady Grove Rd.
Farmville, VA 23901
 Phone 434 223 8296 E-Mail _____

Please insert a name on one of the blanks below:

In this study, I wish to be referred to as

Actual First Name Nathaniel or

Code Name _____

08-107

Interview Consent *continued*

- I will receive a written copy of Jefferson's summary of my interview results prior to the conclusion of her study.
- I have the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any stage of the process.

Full Name (please print) Vincent Eanes
Signature Vincent Eanes Date 11/31/09
Address 2442 Worsham Road
Farmville, Va. 23901
Phone 434-223-8404 E-Mail _____

Please insert a name on one of the blanks below:

In this study, I wish to be referred to as

Actual First Name Vincent or

Code Name _____

APPENDIX F: MAJOR AND UNDERLYING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Major Research Question

From the perspective of members of one Prince Edward County family, how did The School Closing perceivably impact their educational achievements and occupational choices in adulthood?

Underlying Research Questions

From the perspective of the participants:

1. How did The Closing perceivably impact immediate educational goals?
2. How did The Closing perceivably impact long-range educational goals?
3. In what manner have participants pursued their desired educational goals?
4. What educational achievements have been realized?
5. What role has self-directed learning played in their lives?
6. To what extent do they consider themselves life-long learners?
7. In what ways did The Closing perceivably impact job or career opportunities?
8. What occupational choices have been available to participants?
9. What bearing have educational achievements had on occupational success?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

Before we begin this interview: As you respond to these questions, please feel free to elaborate as you see fit and to share whatever memories that come to mind.

1. Tell me about your experiences when the schools were closed in Prince Edward County from 1959 – 1964.
2. Talk about what you did when the schools reopened.
3. Tell me about anything you may have learned on your own without formal training in a classroom. (*In other words, have you ever taught yourself how to do something without help from a classroom teacher?*)
4. Tell me about the jobs or occupations you have had during your adult life.
5. To what extent do you believe you have been successful in your chosen jobs or occupations? Why or why not?
6. To what extent do you consider yourself a life-long learner? (*In other words, are you curious about learning new things and improving the way you already do things?*) Why or why not?
7. What other recollections, memories and feelings would you like to share about your experiences -- past and present -- relative to The School Closing?

Demographic Information

1. Full name
2. Birth date
3. Current age
4. How old were you when the schools closed in 1959?
5. What grade would you have been entering when the schools closed?
6. Did you attend the Free Schools which operated from 1963 – 1964?
7. Marital status
8. Children
 - a. Number
 - b. Ages

APPENDIX H: CODING SYSTEM

URQ = Underlying Research Question

IVQ = Interview Question

URQ1 IEG – **Immediate Educational Goals** (IVQ 1, 2, 7; DIQ 4, 5, 6)

URQ2 LREG – **Long-range Educational Goals** (IVQ 1, 2, 7; DIQ 4, 5, 6)

URQ3 EPM – **Educational Pursuit Methods** (IVQ 2, 3, 6, 7; DIQ 6)

URQ4 EA – **Educational Achievements** (IVQ 3, 6, 7; DIQ 6)

URQ5 ASDL – **Adult Self-directed Learning** (IVQ 3, 7)

URQ6 ALLL – **Adult Life-long Learning** (IVQ 6, 7)

URQ7 E/CP – **Employment / Career Pursuits** (IVQ 4, 7)

URQ8 E/OA – **Employment / Occupational Availability** (IVQ 4, 7)

URQ9 EA/OS – **Educational Achievements / Occupational Success** (IVQ 5, 7)

RECOLLECTIVE DEMOGRAPHICS

DOB **Date of birth**

A59 **Age in 1959**

G59 **Grade would have entered in 1959**

FSY **Attended Free School in 1963**

FSN **Did not attend Free School in 1963**

G64 **Grade placed in 1964**

URQ1 (IEG) – Immediate Educational Goals (IVQ 1, 2, 7; DIQ 4, 5, 6) sought to understand the participants’ perception of The Closing’s impact on their immediate educational goals or the goals they, as children, had in mind for their immediate future.

URQ2 (LREG) – Long-range Educational Goals (IVQ 1, 2, 7; DIQ 4, 5, 6) investigated the participants’ perception of The Closing’s impact on anticipated long-range educational goals, or what participants dreamed of or planned on doing when they “grew up.”

URQ3 (EPM) – Educational Pursuit Methods (IVQ 2, 3, 6, 7; DIQ 6) investigated the various ways participants have pursued their desired educational goals?

URQ4 (EA) – Educational Achievements (IVQ 3, 6, 7; DIQ 6) focused on the educational achievements and successes participants have obtained since The School Closing.

URQ5 (ASDL) – Adult Self-directed Learning (IVQ 3, 7) sought to determine the role self-directed learning has played in participants’ lives.

URQ6 (ALLL) – Adult Life-long Learning (IVQ 6, 7) sought to determine the extent to which participants considered themselves life-long learners.

URQ7 (E/CP) – Employment / Career Pursuits (IVQ 4, 7) was designed to discover participants’ perception of The Closing’s impact on their abilities to pursue and receive desired employment or career opportunities?

URQ8 (E/OA) – Employment / Occupational Availability (IVQ 4, 7) focused on the types of occupational choices that have been available to participants?

URQ9 (EA/OS) – Educational Achievements / Occupational Success (IVQ 5, 7) sought to discover the bearing educational achievements have had on occupational success.

APPENDIX I: RECOLLECTIVE DEMOGRAPHICS

| | Carrie | Nathaniel | Vincent |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Date of birth | 28 Feb. 1955 | 17 June 1947 | 8 Nov. 1950 |
| Age when schools closed in 1959 | 4 | 10 or 12 | 8 |
| Grade would have entered in 1959 | 0 | 4 th | 3 rd |
| Attended 1963 Free School | No | Yes | Yes |
| Age when schools opened in 1964 | 9 | *15 or 17 | 12 |
| Grade placed in 1964 | 3 rd | 8 th | 1 st |

*Researcher's estimation based on age at closure

APPENDIX J: RECOLLECTIONS

The semi-structured nature of some interview questions allowed the three participants to reflect upon the perceived impact of The Closing beyond the parameters of adult self-directed / life-long learning, educational achievements, occupational choices and success. Below are interesting verbatim “recollections” of their age and academic preparation when the schools closed; life at home and on the farm during the five-year closure; experiences upon entering or returning to school when the doors re-opened; perceived on-going academic deficits; and positive outcomes amid adversity.

Age and academic preparation upon The Closing

Carrie

Well in 1959, when they closed the schools, I was only 4 years old, so I didn't have the opportunity to even start school.

Nathaniel

When they closed [the schools] I may have been in the third grade ready to go to the fourth grade. . . . I estimate I must have been around 10 or 12.

Vincent

I believe I was right at eight years of age. When schools closed, I was at, I don't know whether I said earlier, I was in the, I had completed the second grade. And, oh, I was happy then because what kid in the second grade love school, not knowing the devastation that would fall afterward? Because then, there were no kindergarten. So, I was, I believe I was eight years of age.

Home and farm life during The Closing

Carrie

Well, being at home and being so young, I know with my parents having a farm, we basically just worked on the farm. I don't remember getting any type of education. My older sisters, I can remember my older sisters helping us to do a little bit of writing. But, then being on a farm and having such a large family, we did a lot of work for those years when they closed the schools.

Nathaniel

Well, I'll start off by telling you that when the school was closed in 1959 – 1963, I was at home with my parents. We worked on the farm. We raised tobacco. We cut pulpwood, and being such a large family, we had to help one another on the farm to make ends meet for the farm family.

Well, tell you, as my father would say, it was such a large family, he could not send one off to get an education, without sending the whole family. So he decided that we would stay home cause he could not afford send all of us out with different families to go to school. So, we all stayed at home and done the best we could without education, and we used to go to Sunday School on Sunday and we had taught us a lot in Sunday School. It was a retired teacher by the name of Miss Mary Foster was in the community, and she helped us a lot at Sunday School when we could go there. And she taught us a lot in Sunday School, and that's where I really started getting my learning in Christ -- learning in Christ from the Bible from Mrs. Mary Foster, who taught us a lot in Sunday School. And from then on, we had to sort of like learn to do the best we could with one another.

And, I'll never forget that on, I think it was in, when President John F. Kennedy came on the air and said that the schools will be open in 1963 on a certain date, and how happy and how joyful we all was in the tobacco field, and joy to raising hand and just was so happy, knowing that we were able to go back to school for another term. And I was very at one of the most important times in my day, I remember at being out of school for five years. With school being closed, and with school ready to be opened up again in September, and John F. Kennedy came out said that the schools will be open on a free basis. And we were so happy about that.

Well, when the school re-opened, we went to school. When we came back, got off at home on the school bus, we had to help my father to load the pulpwood truck until it got dark, then we went home, got inside the house and did our homework to the best of our ability. And we had to milk the cows and the chores we had to do around home and get the wood in for the next day's work, the next day.

Vincent

It was one of the best experiences for us and especially for me, because there is so much I know we can share, but on the other hand, it's one of the worst experiences. Did numerous things, cut tobacco, pulpwood in the woods. So many things happened that you never will forget it. Cutting wood, dad would take us into the woods, and it looked like we was too young to drive truck and operate equipment, but our main, my main job and our main jobs were to as the truck would come out on the road, it would make mud holes. And it just looked like everyday there was a thunderstorm, and we would have dish pans, pails, buckets, throwing that water out of those mud holes, so the trucks would be able to go in and out, and maybe the next day it would dry up. Everyday it looked like it was the same. Um, tobacco, getting up plant beds, it was an experience that really brought us along. But those days were difficult; we had a farm. Each one had a cow we had to milk; had to learn how to milk a cow. Never forget my sister Yvonne, she had the cow we called the crawling cow. Couldn't keep that cow in no kind of fence. She would always get her head through the wire some kind of way. If you ever get that head through the wire, she's out. And then, you know, um, a lot of time there was another farm joined my daddy farm – the Boats farm, the Duncan farm. A lot of times, my dad he didn't have a bull, a male in the fence, in the pasture. And he always would find our cow out in that man's, on that man's farm. And I'll never forget the stuff that we should have learned, or I should have learned. *(Shaking and lowering his head, he brings a handkerchief to his*

eyes. *We take a few moments for him to collect his emotions.*) It's too painful. *(Emotionally.)*

Never forgot, um, one day, the cows got out and got in this man's pasture, and I asked Nathaniel, he was a little older than I am, Nathaniel, Jeep, Nathaniel, how come these cows always get in this man's pasture? And he told me, I'll never forget, he said, "Well Vincent, the cows are in heat, and they got to go where the male cow is." I didn't know what the word "in heat" meant, stuff that we was supposed to have gotten in school, but lost it, never did gain it. . . . We had three or four other farmers you know they would raise that tobacco. We would have to plant our tobacco with dad; then, we would help the other farmers with their tobacco. I hear people talk nowadays, "I worked for two dollars a day." But, I worked for a dollar a day, too. And I don't think no one knows what it feels like to *(shaking head again)* all day long. Sometimes, you get blood you know, plant peg, planting bacca. And then you come in the evening and give you a dollar. Take that dollar and give it to dad and mama; we would go to the store and we would buy – I believe back then they called it – cow belly. And you'd buy the bag of the cow; we'd eat that, make sandwiches. And, um, taste just like milk. And I don't know whether they sell it now or not. If they do, I don't want anymore. But those were some peaceful days. And then, they were days that I wouldn't want to see anyone go back to. Um, I remember once, well quite a few times, when harvest time come, and we used to help this gentleman, Mr. Joe Irving was his name. Had a huge cucumber patch. And we would pick bushel after bushel of cucumbers. Everyday, I don't know if you know anything about cucumbers or not, but they grow twice the size overnight. So every morning, they would get fresh cucumbers, and what we would have for lunch. It is amazing, he would go downtown to the bread store and come back out there where we are. Some kind of bushel basket or barrel. Nothing but honey buns, donuts, three cookies -- they a month old feeding them to us. *(Becomes emotional once again, bringing a handkerchief to his eyes.)* Excuse me. You open up a package, and there was all this mold, and he called hisself paying us, but we got by.

Remember so many mornings and, um, everyone loved breakfast. We won't supposed to eat dinner. Mom would get up early and make wood, fire that old wood stove. And time after time, she would cook rice. She would buy lard, and of course we got a lot off the farm, too, but she would buy lard, and it would come in the size of about a regular brick size, four by six or better. We would fight and fuss over that little piece of box because that was supposed to be our lunch box and once we get it, we keep it, you know. So, every morning for our, look half of our rice, we take the other half, make rice sandwich. Eat it for lunch. Two or three o'clock in the evening we be done, you know, bringing back wood, for get ready for another day. And many a times, see mom she cooked eight, ten pounds of beans. Every Sunday morning, we could eat fried chicken. But, I would always get the neck or the wing. Older brothers, they would get the legs. I never will forget when the schools opened, the Free schools, a lot of my brothers, three or four of them left and went to Washington to get a job. That left me like the man of the house. I was sixteen. Got my first chicken leg. *(Laughing.)*

Oh! But you know, but those days were, they were the best, because of the closeness. And um, I remember during that time, Dad and Mom, they couldn't send us to other

schools, and there were other people in the neighborhood had station wagons, and they was able to go up and down the road and pick up children that didn't have much to do and take them to other lil' people houses study, and a lil' place set aside for school, but we was never able to go and; therefore, um the little bit of learning that I had prior to closing the schools, it did, it gave me a good start. I was in the, when they closed the schools down, I was in the second grade, and, and um not knowing the effect, you know, that this thing come down like a heavy rain. I was in the second grade and to my knowledge, not knowing that next year there won't gonna be no school at the end of that school year

Dad would not allow any type of gun in the house. Remember one day, it was raining, and we couldn't go out in the woods. Somehow or another, one of my brothers, some of them cut wood, got a hold to a bb, and went upstairs and looking down, one of us went out and put a ball out there in the yard, and we was shooting at it. Somehow or another, daddy found out about that gun. And when he started coming up them steps, the stairs, we couldn't hide it enough. My dad seemed to be a man almost to me back then is like the man we see in the Bible, and Sampson, not Sampson, Goliath. He was a giant, my daddy was. Seemed to be tall and thick and strong! I'll never forget he come up the steps that day and jerked that gun out of our hands and he just raised one knee up and made an elbow out that gun. And but we respected Daddy. We also were afraid of Daddy, because Daddy said what he meant and meant what he said but was a good daddy.

When I was in school, Dad wouldn't allow us to have public jobs. Had to stay at the house. Couldn't go out and work public unless we bring, take care of your responsibility. Each person, I don't care how much money you made, if you were in the house, and you went out, and if you didn't make that's your fault, but he would always charge each one of us twenty dollars a week. That's if you stay in the house, so, I went to school through my whole adult years and stayed basically with daddy. I was, I was twenty three when I graduated from high school, and by then, I had kind of got a handle on my grades, my school. I had learned a little bit. I think a few times, I made the honor roll. And as my first job public, I begin working at Uniroyal. And I never forget I was in twelfth grade. . . . Dad would always tell me every morning before we leave for school, or leave home, and a lot of time, Dad had a few of us he could really depend on. I never forget, sometimes we be sitting in the house there by the heater getting warm, and he be half sleep and nodding, and uhm his mind would be somewhere on something that him and my oldest brother would be doing. I would hear him many nights: "Louis! Oh Louis!" And he would go on back to sleep, you know. Then the next one come along, I think it was Wilbur. And, he could depend on Wilbur. Louis kind of got out the house before I you know could really realize. But then I come along and I was like you say the one he depend on to drive the trucks and help him out. . . . And I never forget, . . . he would tell me every morning, tell me, "Now, Vincent, when you come in this evening, now, you take the tractor and you do this and do that. . . ." He always said, "Come here son; I want to talk to you."

[B]efore the schools opened, when we heard all this talk, you know, President Kennedy. And Daddy, you know, we had just this small radio, no television. And, my dad, um, he, every time the news would come on, my mother's name was Gertrude. And, um, I think I

picked up that habit, because I ask my wife right often, and every time the news would come on and Dad would ask my mom (*Becomes emotional*), “What did he say? What did he say?” Then there was the talk, you know, the school was gonna open up. And, um, it was news. Now I see why Dad asked that question all the time, “What did he say? What did he say?” Because he had never gone no farther than, I think, the third grade. And basically, all he really could do was sign his name, but he knew that schools were to open, that he was gonna lose his business. He had twelve of us in the woods helping him. And he knew if that school opened, all of us children was gonna go back to school. That meant he would have to work another way to feed us. So he would always ask us, “What did he say?” And, um, quite an experience. Quite an experience . . . !

Experiences upon The Re-opening

Carrie

When they re-opened the schools in 1964, right, I was 9 years old when they started school. I do remember when we started school, they put us in a classroom according to our age. And, I remember going into the classroom and all these strange people. I was scared because I was away from my mom, my dad. But they put us in this classroom with all these people, and then we began to learn our ABCs and just the basic stuff that we had to learn, pretty much as kindergarten students. But that first year after I went to school, I was put in the third grade. So until this day, I don’t even know; I guess they combined first, second work together. ‘Cause actually, what they were doing was trying to put us out according to our age. And so I just, after that first year, like I said, I went to the third grade.

It seems like, like I said, when we started school, everybody was pretty much, well, just like for an example . . . it was five of us, five of my siblings; we all was in the same classroom at one time. And the school system was really trying to see what, how to place you in different classrooms, so at one point, it was four brothers and myself; we all was sitting in the same classroom. But then after about two or three years, then they kind of promoted them on up. They got skipped grades and stuff. Yeah, they was skipped to different grade levels, based on what they knew, ‘cause some of them had already started school, which I didn’t had never started school, so I kind of like just maintained and just went on through all most of my grades anyway. So, but everybody at school pretty much seem like we was just trying, I don’t know if the school system was just trying to pass us on through or did they really, really take the time to help us learn what we really needed to learn? Sometimes, I don’t feel like, now that I’m older, that I guess with the teachers and stuff, they did the best they could, but then as I got older, I realized, you know, I still needed a little bit more education to succeed in what I’m doing today.

Nathaniel

[W]hen the school was closed, I was . . . going to the fourth grade. When the school re-opened, they put me in the eighth grade, according to my age. And that was a, kind of as a setback, because I should have, well, well, I lost a lot of my basics in school from the first to the eighth, and I never could regain it, especially in my reading and writing and arithmetic.

Well, when the school re-opened, we went to school. When we came back, got off at home on the school bus, we had to help my father to load the pulpwood truck until it got dark, then we went home, got inside the house and did our homework to the best of our ability. And we had to milk the cows and the chores we had to do around home and get the wood in for the next day's work, the next day.

Vincent

Well, you know, when the schools reopened, and um, we, I'll never forget as time pressed upon the date that schools were gonna reopen, being out of school so long, we didn't know, well at least, I didn't know what to expect. I think I expected what I was gonna go through when schools closed down. And basically, I remember when schools closed down, how the schools were and um how the teachers were. But through the four years of schools being closed, um, we picked up, you know my sisters would try to teach us and learn us, but we were so far back. I had lost 98% of what I had learned from first and second grade. And when schools reopened we was helping these people in the fields cutting tobacco and uh so just by that time schools opened here I am, my brothers we gotta helping that man pull tobacco. We supposed to be in school when school opened that day, and I never forget, so, um, somebody from the school sent and come out in the tobacco field and said you know "Look, man, boys, yall coming to school?" "Yeah, we coming" and "We starting next week."

And when I did go to school, I was not able to go the first two weeks during the Free Schools, because of helping this man in the tobacco fields. And, when I got there, it was my understanding, I didn't know where to go, how to go or what. But, um, they gave each student a test, because all of our records and everything was gone. So, they announced it, you know, on the air and everywhere, saying, "Now, when you go to school, if you eight years old, you go to this school. (*Pointing hands right.*) If you ten, you apply to this school. (*Pointing hands left.*) And then, if you twelve, you go to this school. (*Pointing hands right again.*) And I happened to been twelve years old, twelve years of age. And said when you go there, they told you where you should report to. And they said, if you twelve, you report to the gym. Everybody that's twelve, go to the gym. Everybody that was fourteen, fifteen, you would go to another section of the school. And as you took the tests, they within two, say within a month, they kinda said now, "This kid can go here," and "This kid can go there." And they got a system set up to put us in different grades we could handle according to the tests. Well, for me personally, I had lost 98% of my early learning. Be honest with you, I might could add two plus two. Not one thing of multiplication! Only subtraction I could have done, you take something from me physically. I know that taken from me. But far as, I couldn't relate to it. Reading? I might could have spelled, "Dick" or "Sally." That was about it. And so, here I'm sitting in this gym out of touch with everybody. And look at the test score, and that didn't line up. And so they said well then, after they gave me my test scores, and said, "This kid here, he so far back." Here I'm twelve years old, and they sent me to Worsham Elementary School. And I get to Worsham Elementary School, just seeing a cousin or wasn't bout grades, wasn't bout school. It was bout trying to gain friendship with someone. And that brought me around. But I had to go back to Worsham, I had to start in the first grade -- all over again. And from first grade, second grade and on up til I got to the seventh grade, then I was able to go to the high school. Going to the high school, I

think I did skip the seventh grade, sixth grade to the eighth grade. But when I got into high school, it hit me all over again. But, I wasn't as fearful.

But the free school, and I never will forget – they gave us the books, and being there were so many of us, my siblings. And they say well, it's right much expensive, feeding all of us! So told me, I had to during my lunch period, I had to go and wash dishes. Eating on the counter in the kitchen, you know, so my other sisters and brothers could eat, you know. And um, then, you know, during the time out of school, Dad and Mom didn't take us to the doctor, you know. We got up and looked healthy, and we was. But when I got to school, they give me a dental examination, you know, my teeth were rotten. I never will forget, and um, I had never been to the dentist before. And man, they did a little something; they pulled three out. They was the most stinky things! I don't see how I stood it much! I think about it now. And then I remember reading the book Dr. Neil Vincent Sullivan. And I forget the dentist name, and the dentist said there was somewhere in that book, he said when he came to the free school, I don't know whether six months or how long, he said all I did was pull rotten teeth. (*Laughing and shaking his head.*) Three of them mine. Yeah, when the schools opened and starting all back over again, during that free school, it brought me, I had lost. I never did regain my spelling ability. I never did regain pronunciation. Therefore, you can't read; you're cornered. You can't spell; you're crippled. And how serious it is that you must have an education. I started at school, the free school, and like I said, I was twelve. And I saw students – black men, black boys – they dropped out just like flies. It almost got sickening that if you gained a friend, you come in the next morning, he dropped out; he ain't coming back. Gone off to get him a job. “Where Bob?” “Bob quit man, cause he couldn't take the pressure.”

When you are in school, and you are just as old as the teacher, you can imagine the devastation. But the free school, I think it was our lifeline to life.

Perceived on-going academic deficits

Carrie

I missed out on a lot of education as a young person, as well as phonics and pronouncing words and stuff

Sometimes, I don't feel like, now that I'm older, that I guess with the teachers and stuff, they did the best they could, but then as I got older, I realized, you know, I still needed a little bit more education to succeed in what I'm doing today.

Nathaniel

When the school, before the school, when the school was closed, I was in the, I was going to the fourth grade. When the school re-opened, they put me in the eighth grade, according to my age. And that was a, kind of as a setback, because I should have, well, well, I lost a lot of my basics in school from the first to the eighth, and I never could regain it, especially in my reading and writing and arithmetic. Those were my three basic skills I really need in life to concern, to really go on in life and become what I had always dreamed of in becoming a history teacher in life, but by me getting set back for five years out of school, it held me back from my dream of what I really wanted to do in life.

Vincent

I never did regain my spelling ability. I never did regain pronunciation. Therefore, you can't read; you're cornered. You can't spell; you're crippled. And how serious it is that you must have an education.

Sad thing about it, I feel a little awkward, a little left behind still because The School Closing set me back so far, and I, to get the real essence to what I'm saying, unless you can go down and get that umption out of your dungeon and bring it to the surface, time after time, when my children were in school and would come home with homework, and they would bring it before me for me to help them, and I wasn't able to give them the help in their homework. Do you know what that feels like to feed a homeless child? Ain't talking bout food, you know. That child scuffling, and he hung up and can't spell like me. And he got to pass that test the next day. It's sorta like a million dollars sitting right there in your face, and you can't get it. My children come and dad, I did the best I could with what I had.

You know, I hardly do anything unless, I'm a call it a monster! I'm gonna call this thing a monster! The closing of the school had such a devastating effect on me (*Pauses then lowers and shakes his head in tears*). If you can imagine getting condemned for something you had no part of then constantly being reminded of it one way or another. For instance, you say a word, and the word come out a little crooked, and people laugh and make fun of it. You try all you can to get it together. I don't do basically nothing unless I have to be reminded of it one way or the other. And when you suffer deep enough, and long enough, you come to the reality that you in this thing alone! And if you want to survive, you got to do something about it. You come to the – I guess I say – common sense that there ain't no progress in looking back. So, you try to move forward, use what you have, what you got.

Positive outcomes amid adversity***Carrie***

So, but I feel good about myself even though they closed our schools. I feel like, I feel, you know my family and I, we have accomplished a lot despite we didn't go to school. But like I said, I do feel like my older sisters and brothers had it worse than I did, because by me being so young in starting school.

I love my job. In order to succeed, I feel like, you know, you have to really love your job to succeed in what you're doing. And a lot of times on my job, by me being there for such a long period of time, I mean we do have engineers, people that has actually have, actually had a higher education than I did, as far as going to college and stuff, but then when you're out in the workforce, like I have been for so many years, they still have to come and they ask me a lot of questions about different things on the job. And I feel good about that, you know. Sometimes it makes me wonder, I mean, even though I know I missed out on a lot of education as a young person, as well as phonics and pronouncing words and stuff, but then, you know, I've seen a lot of people with college degrees and stuff but still have to come and just ask, you know, me questions and stuff about different things on the job.

That's why I say now I do talk to a lot of young kids at the school about my experience when the schools closed and try to talk to them about getting a good education, because they have the opportunity to get that education. And I do try to talk to a lot of kids when I speak at the school. Once in a while, for Black History month, I've had the opportunity to speak at the school based [on] when the schools closed, to try to encourage them to continue their education. You know, because we didn't have a chance to go to go to school, and they have that opportunity to go

Nathaniel

I have been successful in my chosen jobs and well-blessed because I have always had a job! I have never been laid off on a job. And I have never been fired on a job. I have always been successful because I have always come to work. I've never been the type of person to be lazy and didn't want to work. And I have always been good with my hands. And I never tell anyone what I can't do.

Vincent

Dad and Mom were the type of people that expressed love, but they would not allow disobedience. Um, there was one word that we as Blacks would always use when referring to, um, the White race. We wouldn't say, "White" or "Black." We used to say "Cracker." And whenever that word was about to come out of our mouth, we got dealt with! And, for the respect that we learned at home during that Free School, when schools were closed, is something that is down within that is just not beautiful, but we don't want to see it again, but it did taught, um, give us a lot of responsibility, knowing the right way. It . . . had its trials.

[I] [t]hank my father, my mama that they didn't dwell that hatred in me.

It was difficult, but one thing that happened during those days that the family and I was, believe it or not, much closer. I believe because of the contact with one another.

But during the time of that school closing, I honestly believe, and I learned more then when it come to the true value of family life than I did after all of this because of the closeness that it brought the family. And it was an experience.

I'm just a firm believer that when, when this monster – talking about the school thing – they took us, I'm gonna say us, the black children, and thrown us in a brush pile, and the system left us there to find our own way out. And if we didn't have the desire to come out of that brush pile, they won't gonna help us. So somehow, someway, I found my way out of that brush pile. And I tried not to look back. Back then, I didn't have a chance to make this thing a better thing. Now, not just me, but the world as a whole, we have a chance to make this life a better thing now. Because there ain't nothing to looking back. And if you wanna grow, you gotta know!

APPENDIX K: PRELIMINARY INQUIRY

INTERVIEW CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION TO USE ACTUAL NAME
Preliminary Inquiry**Interview Consent Form**

I, William E. Eanes, consent to this videotaped interview conducted by Linda Eanes Jefferson, a doctoral student in the Adult Learning Human Resource Development Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). I understand that the results of this interview will be used to study the *Effects of The Prince Edward County School Closing on One Family's Educational Motivations and Achievements in Adulthood*. In addition, I am fully aware of the following:

- My interview comments will not be shared with any other source outside of the Virginia Tech research without my consent.
- Should I prefer, my identity will not be revealed, and my actual name will be substituted with that of a code name in the study. *Check here for code name* _____
- Upon my request, I will have the opportunity to review the videotape prior to Jefferson's inclusion of my statements in her study.
- Upon my request, I will have the opportunity to revise my videotaped statements prior to Jefferson's inclusion of my statements in her study.
- I will have an opportunity to review Jefferson's draft of my interview results and request any revisions of my statements.
- I will receive a written copy of Jefferson's draft of my interview results prior to the conclusion of her study.
- I will receive a bound copy of Jefferson's dissertation upon the completion of her study.

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Signature | Date |
| <u>William E. Eanes</u> | <u>13 Nov. 2004</u> |

Note: Consent form includes Dissertation title prior to researcher's revision and IRB approval.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Preliminary Inquiry

Note: Following the onset of this research proposal, this participant, brother Billy, was diagnosed with a terminal illness. However, at his urging to record and preserve his legacy, and with permission from both dissertation and research advisors, I devised an “Interview Consent” form (see page 128) that was signed by the participant. Shortly thereafter, an interview derived from the questions that follow was conducted and recorded in November 2004. Data from that interview were included in the “Recollections” section of this Appendix K.

1. Please state your full name.
2. What is your current address?
3. What is your birth date and current age?
4. Are you currently married?
5. Do you have children?
 - a. *If yes, how many?*
 - b. *What are their ages?*
6. How old were you when the Prince Edward County Schools closed in the fall of 1959.
7. Were you able to read and write when the schools closed?
8. Were you able to do math when the schools closed?
9. What grade would you have been entering when the schools closed?
10. Where were you living when the schools closed?
11. How many of your brothers and sisters were living at home at the time?
12. Do you recall how you felt when you heard the schools were not opening that fall?
13. Did you remain in Prince Edward County during the five years that the schools were closed?
 - a. *If not, where did you go?*
 - b. *Did you attend school at your new location?*
14. Did you attend any of the educational programs provided by local churches or other groups during the five years that the schools were closed?
15. Did you attend the Free School that opened during the fall of 1963?
16. What did you do during the five years the schools were closed?
17. What did you learn during the five years the schools were closed?
18. How did you learn these things?
19. How old were you when the county schools re-opened in the fall of 1964?
20. In what grade should you have been placed when the schools re-opened.
21. Did you return to school when they reopened?

- a. *If yes, in what grade were you placed?*
 - i. *Did you feel prepared to do the work of that grade?*
 - ii. *Did you graduate from high school?*
 - iii. *How old were you when you graduated from high school?*
- b. *If you did not return to school when they re-opened, what did you do instead of returning to school?*
22. Before the schools closed, did you have dreams of what you wanted to be “when you grew up”?
 - a. *If yes, were you able to accomplish those goals?*
 - i. *If you were able to accomplish those goals, how did you do it?*
 - ii. *If you were not able to accomplish those goals, what do you think were the reasons?*
 - b. *If no, why do you think you did not have such dreams?*
23. Before the schools closed, did you ever think of attending college?
24. What types of jobs or careers have you had since becoming an adult?
25. Do you think you would have taken those jobs or chosen those careers if the schools had not closed?
26. What type of training have you had to prepare you for the jobs or careers you have held?
27. Since becoming an adult, have you ever enrolled in a formal college, technical or vocational program training?
28. What skills have you learned on your own without formal training?
29. How did you teach yourself those skills?
30. What motivated you to teach yourself those skills?
31. What type of job or career do you hold now?
32. How long have you been doing this job?
33. Do you think you are good at your job or career?
34. Did you teach yourself to do your current job or career?
 - a. *If yes, how did you teach yourself?*
 - b. *How long did it take you to teach yourself?*
35. Do you think the school closing had an impact on your job or career choices?
36. Do you believe you have been successful in your chosen career or careers?
 - a. *If yes, what has motivated you to be so successful?*
 - b. *If no, what do you think has contributed to your not thinking you have been successful?*
37. What do you think is your greatest strength?
38. In your adult life, what accomplishment has made you the most proud?

CODING SYSTEM
Preliminary Inquiry

URQ = Underlying Research Question

IVQ = Interview Question

- URQ1 IEG – **Immediate Educational Goals** (IVQ 7, 8, 17, 20, 21ai)
- URQ2 LREG – **Long-range Educational Goals** (IVQ 22, 22a, 22ai, 22aii, 22b, 23)
- URQ3 EPM – **Educational Pursuit Methods** (IVQ 14, 15, 18, 21b)
- URQ4 EA – **Educational Achievements** (IVQ 21aii, 21aiii, 26, 27)
- URQ5 ASDL – **Adult Self-directed Learning** (IVQ 28, 29, 30, 34, 34a, 34b)
- URQ6 ALLL – **Adult Life-long Learning** (IVQ 28, 34a, 34b)
- URQ7 E/CP – **Employment / Career Pursuits** (IVQ 25, 35)
- URQ8 E/OA – **Employment / Occupational Availability** (IVQ 24, 31, 32, 35)
- URQ9 EA/OS – **Educational Achievements / Occupational Success** (IVQ 26, 33,
36, 36a, 36b)

RECOLLECTIVE DEMOGRAPHICS

DOB **Date of birth**

A59 **Age in 1959**

G59 **Grade would have entered in 1959**

FSY **Attended Free School in 1963**

FSN **Did not attend Free School in 1963**

G64 **Grade placed in 1964**

URQ1 (IEG) – Immediate Educational Goals (IVQ 7, 8, 17, 20, 21ai)

sought to understand the participant's perception of The Closing's impact on his immediate educational goals or the goals he, as a child, had in mind for his immediate future.

URQ2 (LREG) – Long-range Educational Goals (IVQ 22, 22a, 22ai, 22aii, 22b, 23) investigated the participant's perception of The Closing's impact on anticipated long-range educational goals, or what the participant dreamed of or planned on doing when he "grew up."

URQ3 (EPM) – Educational Pursuit Methods (IVQ 14, 15, 18, 21b)

investigated the various ways the participant pursued his desired educational goals?

URQ4 (EA) – Educational Achievements (IVQ 21aii, 21aiii, 26, 27)

focused on the educational achievements and successes the participant obtained since The School Closing.

URQ5 (ASDL) – Adult Self-directed Learning (IVQ 28, 29, 30, 34, 34a, 34b)

sought to determine the role self-directed learning has played in the participant's life.

URQ6 (ALLL) – Adult Life-long Learning (IVQ 28, 34a, 34b)

sought to determine the extent to which the participant considered himself a life-long learner.

URQ7 (E/CP) – Employment / Career Pursuits (IVQ 25, 35)

was designed to discover the participant's perception of The Closing's impact on his abilities to pursue and receive desired employment or career opportunities?

URQ8 (E/OA) – Employment / Occupational Availability (IVQ 24, 31, 32, 35)

focused on the types of occupational choices that was available to participant?

URQ9 (EA/OS) – Educational Achievements / Occupational Success (IVQ 26,

33, 36, 36a, 36b) sought to discover the bearing educational achievements have had on occupational success.

RECOLLECTIVE DEMOGRAPHICS

Preliminary Inquiry

Billy

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Date of birth | 17 May 1946 |
| Age when schools closed in 1959 | 11 or 12 |
| Grade would have entered in 1959 | 6 th |
| Attended 1963 Free School | Yes |
| Age when schools opened in 1964 | @15 |
| Grade placed in 1964 | 8 th |

RECOLLECTIONS

Preliminary Inquiry

In Loving Memory
17 May 1946 - 10 October 2005



William Ernest "Billy" Eanes (2004)
Interview Photo
(*Courtesy Linda Eanes Jefferson*).
Printed with permission.

As previously noted (see page 129), following the onset of this research proposal, this participant, brother Billy, was diagnosed with a terminal illness. However, at his urging to record and preserve his legacy, I met with him at his home in November 2004 to conduct an interview from which these recollections were derived. The semi-structured nature of some interview questions allowed the participant to reflect upon the perceived impact of *The Closing* beyond the parameters of adult self-directed / life-long learning,

educational achievements, occupational attainment and success. Below are interesting verbatim “recollections” of his age and academic preparation when the schools closed; life at home and on the farm during the five-year closure; experiences upon returning to school when the doors re-opened; perceived on-going academic deficits; and positive outcomes amid adversity.

Age and academic preparation upon The Closing

I was in the 5th grade when the schools closed. So you start school when you are six years old. So I must have been . . . 11 or 12 years old when the schools closed.

I felt like I . . . reached the borderline [of being able to read and write]. When you finish the 5th grade in school, you should know how to read and write . . . well enough to make it if you did your work while you were in school. But the . . . 6th and 7th grade is most important out of all of the years, and I missed both of those. So I did get enough out of the 5th grade to make it thus far, but those years hurt the most. . . . [W]hen the schools closed, I was promoted to the sixth grade which meant that I was going to another school. And I had always looked forward to going on to a new school, and I didn't make it there.

[When schools closed, I could do] basic math, add and subtract and divide a little. But I never did get into the other heavier math. I knew how to do my multiplications and so forth [B]ut I still feel that [when you skip] your sixth and seventh grade . . . you're missing the middle and the bulk of your education to . . . get qualified to get into the higher grades like the eighth, ninth and tenth and going on to finish school. So those . . . three grades, sixth, seventh and eighth [are] very important [to] a child. That's when you really have to buckle down and study and you learn I think a tremendous lot. . . .

[When the schools closed, I had been] promoted to the sixth grade. And that's . . . one of the most important years of my life that I missed, because I was looking forward after working so hard through grade school to get into the higher grades which was the sixth and the seventh grade over at the . . . high school. And when they closed the schools, it was just like . . . I was shut out

Home and farm life during The Closing

When . . . I first heard that schools were not reopening, to be honest, I kind of felt glad about it, because I really did not, at that time, realize the value of education. So, going to school is fun, and then sometimes it's not so much fun, because you get up every single morning to go to school. You know what I mean; there are a lot of other things you could be doing. When you are young, you don't see it that way, as far as education. So, in the fifth grade, when the schools closed, to be honest . . . the work didn't bother me. Whatever my dad had for me to do, it didn't bother me. I accepted it, and after the first year went by, that's when it started getting serious School was a lot better. And that's where we should have been – in school. So . . . the hurt didn't come on the first year of school so much, because I was too young to pretty much understand. But, then as

time went on, and when people came from different areas out of the city and told my mom and dad that they would be glad to take me . . . back with them to go to school, or to take another sister, another brother to go to school, and people were concerned. We had a lot of relatives. Some lived in Philadelphia and different parts of the cities, and my dad made his final decision, said that if he “couldn’t let ‘em all go,” he “wouldn’t let none leave.” He didn’t think it would be fair to split up the family like that. I cried when this was . . . the second year when the schools were closed. I cried because I wanted to go to school and get away to go, even if I did go to the city. But, that was his decision, and I respect that. Today I respect that decision, because when you got a large family, you suppose to do for one as you do for all. It doesn’t bother me now, but it would have been sweet if we could have went on back to school early. It would have been sweet.

Well, basically as a youngster, when I was . . . twelve when school got out, I was, along with my other brothers . . . old enough to follow my father out in the woods and tobacco. I knew how to work tobacco. I knew how to . . . work the corn. You had to get grass out of the corn. But . . . I enjoyed [the woods] more so than the farm. [W]e grew up too be young strong men by working in the woods . . .; we worked a lot. And I never regret working out there . . . when schools closed, but when school re-opened back up, I had no more desire for woods and fooling with the pulpwood and farming You know, growing up in a large family, we were kind of like denied from doing a lot of things, such as playing sports, ‘cause we had to work, you know. I regret that, but that’s the way it was back in those days. You had to do what your father [said], and honor your mother and father. That’s what they wanted you to do was to come home and you’d go load up a load of wood. That’s how we kept food on the table. I look back now over my life. You know; it was a rare family. And [if] . . . a mother and a father got twenty-one children, that’s a lot of food to be put on the table, a lot of clothes to be bought, a lot of shoes to be bought. So, my mom never had a public job, and my dad always worked for himself steady . . . and the only thing he sold from the farm was tobacco. And the rest, we made the money. [H]e made a lot of money cutting wood. And he had a lot of free labor

[When the schools were closed, I learned] very little as far as education. Very little. I learned a lot about how to survive. And even today, with the little schooling that I have, I’m thankful, and I’m blessed to have the education that I do have.

[I was] living with my parents, and . . . I was about . . . twelve years old when school closed, so you add four years to that Fifteen years old . . . that’s when it was time to go back to school. . . . [W]e stayed pretty busy the whole four years we [were out of] school. And being that I come from a family of twenty-one, and that being fourteen boys, that was a lot of manpower there with the boys. So we always worked, worked hard. And I’ll never forget the day that . . . a very close friend of mine rode his bicycle down in the woods where we were working, and he yelled, said (*shaking head from side to side and in loud boisterous laughter*) school was opening back up! I don’t like to get emotional, but that was one of the happiest days of my life (*Returning to lower, more reticent voice*), when he told me he heard it on the radio that schools were reopening. And I just said, “Thank God.” I don’t know whether [I] was . . . glad that school was opening back up because I wanted to go back to school or to stop working so hard or what, but I remember it being one of the happiest days of my life. . . . And . . . pretty soon after we got . . .

home from . . . work that day, I found out . . . for sure that schools were opening back up. And it took a little while for us to get back in school, but it was a blessing, a great blessing. And I'll never forget it as long as I live. It was one of the happiest days of my life.

Experiences upon The Re-opening

It took me . . . approximately close to half of the school year to get adjusted that I was in school again, and I had to try and learn, as well. And there were a lot of days I just didn't learn that much. I couldn't; I just didn't learn that much. You are just spaced out, you know. It's hard to take a child from out of four years of working on a farm in the woods and go back to try and take off where he left off at. So, I didn't take off where I left off. I took off in another generation, in another . . . altogether a new system. You know, when you go to school from grade school up to the fifth grade and then skip four years, and then they put you in the eighth, those four or five [or]six years . . . [are] just (*raising forward in the chair*) blanked out! So you can't just put a child in the eighth grade and expect him to take off. And a lot of the things that you didn't learn, you kind of refer yourself back. You never get back to where you were. You gotta keep smooth. Those grades, they say from first grade through high school to graduating, all those years are important. . . . Some of them may not be as important as the others, maybe eleventh and twelfth. But if you learn a lot in the eleventh grade, you may be able to breathe through the twelfth grade. It wasn't any breezing for me from the eighth to the twelfth. There was never . . . breathing room, no breathing room at all. It was all hard, hard, hard work to try to struggle to make a passing grade. Homework, you know my mom couldn't help all of us with homework at times You had to study and study hard to try to make it through them grades. And the work was hard. But I [wish] . . . I had stayed in school and gotten my sixth and seventh grade, because I've always made fair grades in school. I had to work for it. I wasn't a gifted smart person, but I had to work. If I studied, I made my grades. If I studied my tests, I passed them. So . . . the sixth and seventh grade . . . it still hurts today because that's where you get the basics You got to get that basic. You're learning . . . [a]nd when you skip that long out of school, then they put you in two grades up higher, it's got to be devastating. It's got to be. [A]ny person with common sense should understand that. It is devastating. It is just no way to do no child. Maybe we needed Bush for president then, when he said no child should be left behind. We got left behind. (*Jokingly, while clapping his hands.*)

When I went back to school . . . the . . . teachers, and principals and so forth . . . really did not know what to do with us. They did not know what to do with men or boys my age, at fifteen years old that had missed four years out of school. They really didn't know what grade to put us in. And there were so many of us. The school was packed. When the school reopened, everybody looked like they wanted to go back. A few didn't. But the school was packed. And they were packed with men and girls and boys like myself at that age. So they would ask us questions like, you know, "What grade were you in when schools closed?" "What grade were you in?" "How old are you?" "How many sisters do you have?" And so forth like that. And the age is what they basically . . . put us into; they put us in classes according to our age. Not according to tests and so forth. We didn't take any tests to be qualified to get into any particular grade. Except [if] you had gone to school elsewhere, when you came back, you told her that, and they put you in the

grade that they [thought] you should be in. So, they just put me in the eighth grade. . . . along with a lot of my other friends. . . . [I]t was hard. I mean, to give us an eighth grade book with algebra and different things like that . . . it was hard. But if we had buckled down, if a student buckle down in school and listen to the teacher, and try hard to understand what she is trying to drill us and to teach us, you may not get it all, but you'd get half of it. So . . . I kind of made it through the . . . eighth grade, and my grade was like a . . . C or D or maybe a B in Health So it was all good.

And [in] the ninth grade, we worked during the summer I think I wind up getting a . . . little public job at an early age, because my father wasn't paying enough money, and I needed clothes and things like that, so I got me a job at a Safeway store at an early age when I was sixteen years old. And that helped me out a lot. But anyway, in the ninth grade, it was a lot better than the eighth. I had kind of gotten used to school then. So that put me up to . . . sixteen years old. It may have been a little bit higher, because I graduated when I was twenty-one (*pondering*). . . . [A]nyway, I passed through the ninth grade . . . very well, especially with a job. . . .

And the tenth grade, I made it through that pretty easy I had to be . . . almost nineteen years old. I'm getting this age thing kind of mixed up, but I had to be about nineteen, and I remember telling my supervisor, my boss man at the grocery store, which was Safeway, . . . that I was [going to] quit school and that I wanted a full-time job, because Safeway paid pretty good money. And I remember him telling me that, "Safeway, this company, do not work drop-outs in school. They only work people who have graduated from high school or currently in school. You have to stay in school. If you quit school, Billy, you quit your job." And it made me think really, I knew if I quit school then I lose my job. Then I realized the value of education. I said if this is the way it's [going to] be, then I have no other choice but to go back to school. I can't quit school; no, I can't go like this. So I told him, "Ok. I'll stay in school." And I did.

I hope that you can understand what I'm trying to say. When you're nineteen years old, and you got two more years of schooling to go, it's hard because you have your mind on job . . . and girls, of course, and things of that nature, your car and so forth. So when I told [my principal] I was [going] to quit, he . . . begged me not to quit, cause he said he figured up my credits. When I was in the eighth grade, I took six subjects. In the ninth grade, I took six subjects. And the tenth grade, I took the same thing. So that's eighteen credits. And I think at the time, when I was in school, you needed twenty-three units, twenty-three credits to graduate. And he told me that since I had taken all of these six subjects all through the three years of school that maybe if I [came] to summer school and take eleventh grade English that would give me another credit, and then I could probably skip the eleventh grade and go to the twelfth grade. And he [told] me if he did that then that would give me enough credits to graduate. And it motivated me. And so that worked out pretty good. . . . I graduated in 1967, and that's when I got a full-time job, and I've been pretty prosperous. I've done very well since then.

You know . . . I'll never forget my . . . senior year, when my teacher would tell the class . . . , "You all go on, and you're gonna be good young men, and you're gonna prosper, and you're gonna be alright." And . . . she said that she understood and that she realized that

we could not have the education that high school seniors should have. “But you’re gonna be alright! You’ll make it.” And it looked like she wanted to cry, and tears were coming down her eyes when she said those words. And I remember her saying, “The one good thing about it, when you get out in life, if you’re speaking or talking . . . nobody’s gonna kill you if you say, ‘I is.’” And that made us happy! It made me happy! ‘Cause nobody will kill you if you split a verb or something like that. But we . . . (*inaudible*), she knew it, and the students knew it too. Not all of the students. Some of the students were more acceptable and smarter than other kids, but most of the students were like myself. . . . [W]e knew that. You . . . know you missed too many [years]; there was too much time lost. Even the time schools closed for the [five] years, and then going back to school, you still couldn’t get it all in. You had to go to school for two years to realize this is school I’m in. So there were a lot of days you were in school, and your mind was elsewhere. Your mind just couldn’t be, you had to stay, you had to be, you had to listen to the teacher, but there were times in your life when your mind was outside of the classroom because of the work you had been doing the times schools were closed. A lot of students quit their jobs to come back to school. And a lot didn’t. So it’s been hard to explain, you know, true feelings It’s just too much. It’s too much.

Perceived on-going academic deficits

I have always been able to understand what I read. Always been able to read what I want. But I was never able to spell what I want. And spelling to me is a must. It’s just, well you know if you can’t read, that’s really really bad, but . . . spelling! I don’t know what grade I missed learning how to spell. They didn’t teach me how to spell in the eighth grade. So much now (*expression of disgust and confusion*), I don’t remember. I’ve never learned how to spell. I did good up until the fifth grade. I liked it I memorized my words a lot . . . to get ready for a spelling test. Well, memorizing words is one thing, and then using your vowels and studying and learning how to spell a particular word is another. And I didn’t get enough of that So . . . whenever I want to write a letter – a business letter – and I’ve owned seven businesses in my life, so you know there have been plenty of times when I needed my pencil. You’ve got to be able to write out whatever you want to say. And there have been times I had to get my wife or . . . a secretary . . . somebody to do this for me. I’ve always had the words (*passionately gesturing to the inside of his chest*). I can tell you what I want you to write for me. That was no problem. All I want you to do is write it like I want it to be . . . and if . . . you know a better way of putting the words in a better perspective and get the same results, I go along with that. But that’s been my handicap . . . through life, through my school, missing my . . . school like it should have been

Positive outcomes amid adversity

I guess the only way I can explain that is through my mother and my father[’s] teaching. . . . [C]ommon sense is one education and then graduating from college is another education. I figure . . . common sense is gonna almost weigh as much as a college degree if you use it right because I’m a living witness for what I have done in life. And I . . . have owned quite a few businesses, and I’ve done very well. I’ve been a prosperous man, and I’ve done these things with common sense. So, I guess I learned a lot just by being around the right people, I guess. You’ve always heard that people can educate themselves and do very well. . . . [I]t’s kind of hard to explain I always did pick up a book or a

newspaper and read and try to understand this and that. And I remember times I used to go get my dictionary and try to look up words myself and get the understanding. And if schools hadn't closed, who knows whether or not I would have gone to college? Nobody knows that. You just don't know because during that time . . . you've lost a lot. And I remember that I always wanted to . . . wear a white shirt and tie (*passionately gesturing to the inside of his chest*) when I was a kid growing up in school. I do remember that. I wanted a white shirt and a tie. I wanted to . . . be dressed up to go to work. And I got blessed; I was blessed to have that job when I worked for Safeway. (*At the request of Mr. Eanes, we paused for a short break.*) When I was telling you about . . . when I was growing up in life as a youngster, that I always wanted me a white shirt and a tie job . . . I was blessed to get that white shirt and a tie, but it wasn't a tie, it was a bow tie. Safeway required you to wear a white shirt, and it had to be clean and a bow tie. So I fell in love with a bow tie. . . . I'll never forget that . . . I always wanted a clean job you know. And I got blessed with that bow tie.

APPENDIX L: PHOTO CREDITS

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William Ernest “Billy” Eanes (2004)

Interview Photo

(*Courtesy* Linda Eanes Jefferson). Printed with permission.

RESEARCHER'S BIOGRAPHY

A native of Nottoway County, Virginia, Linda Eanes Jefferson has resided in Prince George County, Virginia for the past twenty-five years, where she serves as an Associate Professor of English at Richard Bland College of the College of William and Mary. Linda's dream of becoming a teacher began at an early age when she "played school" with her younger cousins during weekend family gatherings; however, her journey as an educator has taken her around the globe. According to her elementary school principal, she always had a knack for reciting, reading and writing poems and stories. However, Linda owes her love of teaching literature and writing to her parents, Louis and Ada Eanes, and her Aunt Sallie who always surrounded her with books and encouraged her love of academia. Upon graduating high school in 1978, she first attended Virginia Commonwealth University before transferring to Longwood University, where she graduated summa cum laude in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts in English and minors in Psychology and Speech. She then went on to earn a Master of Arts in English with a Composition and Rhetoric emphasis in 1985. Linda also earned additional graduate study hours at the Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University and Northeastern University.

Armed with a strong Liberal Arts background, Linda began her journey along a diversified career path. Following a short career as a University Career Planning and Placement Officer, she served as an instructor of English at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA (1985 – 1987) and a Fulbright Exchange Professor at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco, N. Africa (1987 – 1988). Prior to joining the faculty at Richard Bland College in 1989, she designed and facilitated workshops as a Training Specialist for Staff Development in the field of psycho-geriatrics and gerontology. And while on sabbatical from Richard Bland (1993 – 1994), she served as Professor of English at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

An avid proponent of reading, writing and oral literacy and a frequent engager of narrative, poetic and dramatic interpretation, Linda has facilitated and presented at workshops, seminars and conferences from San Francisco to Edinburg, Scotland. Likewise, her passion for the spoken word has provided her opportunities to record ESL lessons voiceovers, as well as serve as a volunteer reader for Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic.

Additionally, Linda has shared her passion for multi-culturalism and travel with her students by coordinating trips abroad with them to England, Amsterdam and Kenya. It was during a second journey to Kenya that she and her students adopted Sekenani Primary, a small rural school on the Serengeti, to where they sent educational supplies collected and donated by local Virginia public schools.

Embracing the unique concerns and the self-directed, lifelong learning tenets of the non-traditional learner, Linda was drawn to Virginia Tech's Adult Learning Human Resource Development Program, where she resurrected a three-decade-old interest in The Prince Edward County School Closing. It also was through this venue she accepted the honor of serving on the Advisory Committee for Mercy Seat Films' PBS Documentary, *They Closed Our Schools*.

Linda Eanes Jefferson completes her doctoral milestone having taken a diversified journey in life. A non-traditional learner having crossed her half century mark, she declares the dissertation journey outside of the structured classroom presented discipline challenges, while granting her surges of renewal and strength for continued growth and development. Yet, of her many careers, being a mother to her 23 year-old daughter Nicole Adia (aka “Mini Me”), who began, traveled and cheered this PhD journey along with her, has been her most treasured accomplishment of all. Thus, Linda would measure herself successful to know she has been half as good a mom to Nicole as her own mother has been to her.