

School Desegregation in Roanoke, Virginia:

The Black Student Perspective

Marietta Elizabeth Poff

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

N. Wayne Tripp, Chair

M. David Alexander

E. Wayne Harris

James L. Sellers

March 17, 2014

Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: Blacks, Desegregation, Oral History, NAACP, Roanoke, Virginia

School Desegregation in Roanoke, Virginia:

The Black Student Perspective

Marietta Elizabeth Poff

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the perspectives of the Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke, Virginia, schools during the 1960–1961 school year. In September of 1960, nine Black students were chosen to desegregate formerly all-White schools in Roanoke. The stories of these students have not been comprehensively researched or formally recorded. Their perspectives on the desegregation process provide valuable insight to add to the body of knowledge about the desegregation period.

A review of the history of Black education on the national, state, and local levels, as well as a brief history of the City of Roanoke are provided as historical context for the desegregation of schools in Roanoke. A review of the literature documenting first person accounts from other Black students who went through the desegregation experience revealed only a small number of formally recorded accounts. Examining the perspectives of Black students who were among the first to desegregate schools can provide a critical perspective on both desegregation and the larger societal issue of integration. The effects of the desegregation experience on students have received little attention. Recording and analyzing their stories provides an important piece of the desegregation record that is currently lacking.

The researcher conducted a qualitative case study incorporating interviews of the students, a review of newspaper articles and documents from the time period, and any artifacts and documents that the participants had retained from the time period. Five common themes emerged from the interviews with participants. They were: (a) rejection by White and Black peers, (b) family support, (c) preparation for life in a desegregated society, (d) a sense of loss related to not attending all-Black schools, and (e) the reflective meaning each participant made of their experience. These themes were similar to the experiences of other Black students who desegregated schools. These themes were also similar to themes found in the literature dealing with the value of all-Black schools. Continued documentation of the perspectives of Black students who desegregated schools is one of the recommendations of the study.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the first nine Black students who desegregated the public schools in Roanoke, Virginia: Charles, Judy, Cecelia, Rosiland, Milton, Amber, Darlene, Cassandra, and Nadine. I am proud to say that I had the opportunity to work with each one of them. Their stories are as varied as snowflakes, but the one similarity they all share is that they are some of the most insightful and reflective folks that I have ever had the pleasure to know. Having never been in an educational setting in which I was a minority, especially at the young age that this group was, I can only hope that I would have been able to take away as many positives as they did from an experience that was as challenging as theirs was.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the support and assistance from many people. First and foremost, without the understanding from my children, Taylor and Braden, that mom was once again working on “the paper” and all the sacrifices of time away from them that came with that, this study would not have been completed. Along those lines, my family members and extended family members who served as chaperones, chauffeurs, and entertainment for the boys while I was working on the study were an invaluable asset to me.

My examining committee represented a wealth of information on a wide variety of topics and provided valuable insight, guidance, and advice on all aspects of this study. Dr. Alexander’s knowledge of the court cases that were so crucial to the desegregation struggle, Dr. Harris’s knowledge of the Roanoke community, and Dr. Sellers’s knowledge of the social studies provided me with one powerhouse of a team. From my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Tripp, I have learned so much. Without his belief in the importance of my topic, I never would have finished this dissertation. I have never seen someone who claims to be retired work as hard as Dr. Tripp does. I can never express the depth of my sincere gratitude for all of his assistance.

Finally, to my small circle of friends who provided support, encouragement, and a shoulder to cry on when the process was difficult, your faith in me kept me going. Critical friends, jiminy crickets, and traveling companions made this journey so much easier. I thank God for each of you every day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to the Study	1
Introduction.....	1
Terms Used in the Study.....	4
CHAPTER 2 Historical Context of the Study	5
A History of Black Education in the South Prior to Desegregation	5
The Reconstruction Era: 1865–1876	6
White Southerners’ Reaction to Black Education During Reconstruction.....	7
The Industrial Education Era: 1876–1915	9
Northern Philanthropy	10
The Pursuit of Equality Era: 1915–1954	12
NAACP Involvement.....	13
A History of Black Education in Virginia Prior to Desegregation.....	16
A History of Black Education in the City of Roanoke Prior to Desegregation	22
A History of Roanoke, Virginia to 1960.....	25
Conclusions.....	32
CHAPTER 3 Methodology.....	36
Setting of the Study.....	36
Participants.....	39
Instrumentation	41
IRB Approval and Informed Consent.....	44
Analysis of Data.....	44
CHAPTER 4 Student Perspectives	47
The James Family	48

Charles James.....	51
Judith James Jones	55
The Long Family.....	61
Cecelia Long.....	64
Rosiland Long Mitchell	70
Milton Long	75
The Poindexter Family.....	80
Eula Amber Poindexter Waller.....	82
Darlene Poindexter Turner.....	87
The Wilkinson Family	91
Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty.....	94
Nadine Wilkinson Johnson	100
CHAPTER 5 Findings	105
Overview of Findings	107
Description of Findings.....	107
Rejection by White and Black Peers.....	107
Family Support.....	111
Preparation for Life in a Desegregated Society	113
Sense of Loss	116
Reflective Meaning Participants Made of Experience.....	119
Summary of the Findings.....	122
CHAPTER 6 Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations.....	124
Summary	124
Discussion.....	126
Recommendations.....	130

Personal Reflections on the Research Process.....	131
REFERENCES	133
APPENDIX A Roanoke Times Article September 7, 1960	138
APPENDIX B List of 39 Applicants	139
APPENDIX C Initial Electronic Mail Message to Amber Waller	140
APPENDIX D Initial Electronic Mail Message to Nadine Wilkinson Johnson.....	141
APPENDIX E Initial Electronic Mail Message to Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty.....	142
APPENDIX F Notes from Initial Phone Conversation with Judy James Jones	143
APPENDIX G Revised Interview Questions (After Field Testing) for Participants.....	144
APPENDIX H Interview Questions for Secondary Participants	146
APPENDIX I Initial Interview Questions for Primary Participants	147
APPENDIX J Virginia Tech IRB Approval for Study	149
APPENDIX K Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects	151
APPENDIX L Virginia Tech IRB Training Certificate.....	153
APPENDIX M World News Article September 6, 1960.....	154
APPENDIX N World News Article September 6, 1960	155
APPENDIX O World News Picture September 6, 1960	157
APPENDIX P Bible Club at Monroe Junior High School, 1960-1961	158
APPENDIX Q Roanoke Times & World News Picture February 27, 1988	159
APPENDIX R Roanoke Times Picture September 7, 1960	160
APPENDIX S WSLs Channel 10 News Coverage September 7, 1960.....	161
APPENDIX T Roanoke Times Picture September 7, 1960.....	162
APPENDIX U Roanoke Times Picture, September 7, 1960	163
APPENDIX V Roanoke Times & World News Article February 27, 1988.....	164

APPENDIX W Pupil Placement Board Application	165
APPENDIX X List of Information Required by Pupil Placement Board.....	166
APPENDIX Y List of Parent Interview Questions from Pupil Placement Board	167

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) (*Brown*) revolutionized American schools. Its impact on students, teachers, and communities was life-altering in many instances. Most people are familiar with images of desegregation: the composed young Black girl with sunglasses clasp her notebook to her body as an angry group of White people follows her, George Wallace standing in the doors of the University of Alabama, and National Guardsmen escorting children to school. Most people are familiar with the effects of desegregation: southern states acting with “all deliberate slowness,” closure of all-Black schools, and White flight from city centers. Few people, though, are familiar with the individual stories from the people who actually lived through school desegregation.

The experiences of Black students who had only known all-Black schools their whole lives and were suddenly thrown into all-White schools were bound to produce a great deal of stress for them. These students went from segregated schools where they were valued, pushed, and understood as members of a community to desegregated schools where they were a minority, were often treated with hostility, and often were taught by White teachers who did not understand them (Walker, 2000). How did these students survive this transition? What motivated these students to go into a desegregated school, a hostile environment for many Blacks, day after day after day? How did that experience affect them then? How does it affect them today? What did they gain by attending desegregated schools? And, maybe more importantly, what did they lose? These questions remain largely unanswered as little attention has been given to their stories.

A few of the pioneers of school desegregation have recorded their stories. Melba Patillo Beals (1994), a member of the Little Rock Nine; Betty Kilby Fisher (2002), one of the first Black students to desegregate Warren County High School in Virginia; and Andrew Heidelberg (2006), a member of the Norfolk 17, have all written accounts detailing their experiences. Warren Simmons (2004) recounted his experience as one of the first elementary students to integrate P.S. 183 on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in 1960. Sybil Stevenson (1978) described her

experience being in the “second wave” of students to attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

All of these accounts detail incidents of physical and verbal abuse, ranging from ignorant slights to outright premeditated violence. There are also other similarities that emerge from their experiences as well. Simmons (2004), Beals (1994), and Heidelberg (2006) all reported having to deal with what Simmons termed dual citizenship. Each of them was trying to fit into a White culture at school while trying to maintain their Black culture at home. The end result was that they were rejected in both arenas: Both Black and White peers shunned them. Another similarity all of the students shared was their reliance on others for support in surviving the process of desegregation. Stevenson (1978) and Fisher (2002) reported leaning on the other students who were going through the experience as well. Heidelberg discussed the meetings the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held for him and his cohort in Norfolk that helped support them. A final similarity from the experiences of these students was that one of the few bright spots in their schools was the cafeteria. Stevenson, Beals, and Heidelberg all spoke of the cafeteria workers, most of whom were Black, greeting them warmly and making them feel welcome at the school.

Their experiences had important effects on these students. Each of the students, except for Simmons (2004), reported feelings of inferiority or invisibility. Heidelberg (2006) said he began to feel inferior to Whites and felt he was cursed for being Black and poor. Stevenson (1978) described that she probably knew everything there was to know about everyone in the school because White students would talk openly and freely around her as if she were not there. Beals (1994) said she felt as though the experience had made her into someone else and that her old friends made her feel guilty because they were suffering from abuse for being associated with her. Fisher (2002) had perhaps the most dramatic transformation. During her tenure at Warren County High School, she was raped by two White boys while at school. She said the experience broke her spirit and she had no desire to continue living. She began to engage in risky behaviors like drag racing hoping she would die. None of the students reported positives while going through the desegregation experience. However, all of them except Stevenson were eventually able to find some good that had come out of their experiences. Beals said the experience gave her courage and strength. Heidelberg reported that he felt a sense of freedom; that he knew he could do anything after going through those years in Norfolk. He also said he

thought the experience had been good for both Black and White students because each side was able to see the other as human beings. Fisher believed that the experience helped her develop a closer relationship with God. Simmons was grateful for the exposure to successful adult role models who were the parents of his new classmates. Time and maturity seemed to have helped the students gain a more positive perspective on their sacrifices.

There appear to be very few recorded first person accounts from students' perspectives about desegregation. While searching for desegregation and student perspective during the week of June 18, 2012, 207 results were located in the ERIC database. The majority of the articles that resulted from this search dealt with perspectives on desegregation, but from principals, teachers, the community, or specific groups of people such as Black superintendents who experienced desegregation. Several other articles dealt with the effects of desegregation; on schools and on student achievement. During a search of Education Research Complete, the researcher found four results; one of them was a summary of student and parent perspectives from Boston when that city used busing as a means to desegregate their schools. The other three articles did not deal specifically with student perspectives about desegregation. A search on Google Scholar resulted in a little over 200 sources. Some of the articles that were found examined the effects of desegregation on students and/or academics. While some of the researchers did interview students who had gone through the desegregation process, the focus was not necessarily on telling the stories of the students as much as trying to link desegregation to different effects, such as academic achievement. Stevenson (1978) offered some insight as to why there may be so few of these accounts available. She believed that more experiences have not been shared because the story was too painful for the students to recount or that there would be a judgment from the listener that the experience could not have been as bad as it was. If these observations are true and more of the students who were on the front line of the desegregation battle do not soon record their experiences, they will be lost to time forever.

The students who desegregated schools have important stories to tell. Their experiences represent not only an important chapter in American history, but specifically represent an important part of the history of Blacks in the United States. While school desegregation is a major part of Civil Rights history and is well documented as a legal and social movement, the stories of the children who desegregated schools are often overlooked. These young people took on a great deal of responsibility going into a situation that was usually hostile. They often

sacrificed a school experience that should have been positive but instead, in many cases, was traumatic. Documenting their stories will help complete the picture of the history of Black education in the United States.

Terms Used in the Study

Throughout this study, the researcher has used a variety of terms related to race. The terms “Black” and “White” were chosen by the researcher to be used to designate race or ethnic origin. However, throughout the study, other terms used to designate race are also used, based on how they appeared in various sources of information. Terms such as “Negro”, “colored”, “African American”, and “Caucasian” all appear in the study. These terms were used to preserve the integrity of the source from which they came. In most of the interviews with the participants, racial slurs also appeared as these were terms the participants heard, sometimes often, during their experiences. The researcher struggled with the use of these slurs, debating whether to use them in order to preserve the integrity of the stories or eliminate words considered offensive. After consulting with committee members and colleagues, the researcher included one racial slur as it appeared in one of the participant’s experiences because of the message the word conveyed and how the participant used the opportunity to defuse the word’s meaning. Otherwise, the researcher used the term “racial slur” to substitute for the actual word throughout the study.

Additionally, the terms “desegregate” and “integrate” appear often in the study. The researcher used the following definitions of the terms to guide their usage. *Desegregation* was the process of eliminating all-White and all-Black schools. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) outlawed the separation of students in school based on race. *Integration* means to bring into equal participation or membership in society or an institution or body. It was interesting to note that almost all of the participants used the term “integration” to refer to their schooling experience, although what most of their experiences described was actually “desegregation.” The researcher believed the main reason for the participants’ use of the term “integration” was because integration was the term that was widely used in newspaper articles in 1960. One example of this is an editorial that appeared in the Roanoke Times on September 7, 1960, the day after desegregation began in Roanoke. “Orderly Integration in Roanoke” (1960) used the term integration six times within the article, while the term desegregation does not appear at all (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter reviews a history of Black education on the national, state, and local levels, as well as a brief history of the City of Roanoke. Historical events do not occur in a vacuum. Context helps to explain why events occur the way they do (Furay & Salevouris, 2000). Additionally, understanding an event means not only knowing what happened, but also understanding the context in which the event occurred (Merriam, 1998). Roanoke and the educational system that was in place in the city by 1960 were products of over 100 years of events prior to 1960.

A History of Black Education in the South Prior to Desegregation

The road to a free, public, desegregated education for Blacks was long and winding. Prior to the Civil War, the education of Blacks was generally limited to training to perform specific skills on the self-sufficient plantations or Black children being “taught” by the White children of the plantation who were playing school (Bullock, 1967). Vaughn (1974) estimated that by 1860, 5% to 10% of the Black population of the South was literate. Bullock noted that some efforts by religious groups to teach Blacks were allowed to exist before the Civil War. Vaughn confirmed that most education of Blacks prior to the Civil War was delivered either by slave owners trying to improve the skills of their slaves or by missionaries who believed slaves should be able to read the Bible on their own. Vaughn also noted that most of this education was in violation of state laws. Bullock (1967) cited this practice as “informal permissiveness” (p. 11) that developed as a result of White slave owners allowing house servants wider latitude in terms of what the slaves could and could not do. Bullock described how the Presbyterians and the Quakers both established schools in Virginia and other areas in the South where slaves were taught to read and spell. Additionally, the Quakers’ schools developed a program where slaves could eventually earn their freedom. Even though there was some permissiveness, Vaughn noted that this permissiveness was reined in after the Nat Turner revolt in Virginia in 1831. White Southerners believed educating Blacks led to revolts and therefore preferred to keep Blacks ignorant (Vaughn, 1974).

After the Civil War, the education of Blacks in the South prior to the *Brown v. Board* decision can be divided into three time periods: The Reconstruction Era: 1865–1876; The Industrial Education: 1876–1915; and The Pursuit of Equality Era: 1915–1954. The Reconstruction Era of 1865 to 1876 saw the influence of Northern authorities overseeing the South during the rebuilding period. The turning points of 1876 and 1915 represent significant changes in Black education. In 1876, the election of Rutherford B. Hayes and a return to Southern control of the South saw a regression in the progress of Black education in the South. Around 1915, support for industrial education, an educational approach intended to train Blacks as cheap labor, began to fade while support for an education equal to Whites grew.

The Reconstruction Era: 1865–1876

Immediately following the Civil War, there was a flood of newly freed slaves who had no idea how to function in a free society. Combined with a defeated White population who did not want them free, Blacks in the South faced a difficult future (Anderson, 1988; Bullock, 1967). Congress responded by creating the Freedmen’s Bureau, which was actually established before the close of the war in March of 1865. The Reconstruction Era marked the first phase of formal Black education in the South. This period was defined by progress towards a free and public education for Blacks with assistance from Republicans and religious organizations who had already been involved in Black education (Anderson, 1988; Bullock, 1967). Vaughn (1974) noted that there were several religious organizations that were in operation during this time period which provided education to former slaves. The most active, though, was the American Missionary Association (AMA). The AMA had over 350 teachers in the South by 1866. By 1870 when most of the other organizations had faded away, the AMA was working with more than 21,000 students (Vaughn, 1974). Through the work of ex-slaves, the Freedmen’s Bureau, Republicans, and religious organizations, the simple framework of an education system that had been begun before the Civil War developed into a formal system of education (Bullock, 1967). The Freedmen’s Bureau helped to organize all of the various efforts at education in the South (Vaughn, 1974). Vaughn noted that the Bureau provided much indirect support to the private organizations through such methods as converting abandoned government buildings to schools and having a military presence to protect the new schools and teachers.

White Southerners' Reaction to Black Education During Reconstruction

The development of an education system in the South was not easy. Wealthy, land-owning Whites objected not only to the ex-slaves being educated, but to the poor Whites of the South being educated as well (Anderson, 1988). They firmly believed that a more educated population would upset the strict social system that had existed in the South before the Civil War. Fairclough (2001) noted that many Whites completely opposed any Black education. Vaughn (1974) described two concerns about the education of Blacks during and immediately following the Civil War: the selection of teachers for the new schools and whether or not Blacks should actually be educated at all. Hiring new teachers caused an intense debate in the South. Many Southerners believed that an influx of Yankee teachers would further incite the newly freed slaves to push for a more equal role in society (Vaughn, 1974). Vaughn further stated that Southerners also preferred that newly created Black schools be under the jurisdiction of Southerners, rather than Yankees. Even though White Southerners resented the Northern teachers, there simply were not enough Black teachers available right after the Civil War, and Southern Whites were not volunteering to teach Black students. Universal education for Blacks resulted in a wide variety of responses, including “violent and persistent opposition to moral and material assistance” (Vaughn, 1974, p. 38).

The former slaves, however, were intent on gaining an education. As Anderson (1988) explained, “the values of self-help and self-determination underlay the ex-slaves’ educational movement” (p. 4). As the number of schools grew, so did the demand for teachers. The Freedmen’s Bureau helped to establish normal schools that would train more teachers for the rapidly increasing number of Black schools (Bullock, 1967). Out of the development of normal schools the Hampton Model was born.

The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was established in Virginia by the American Missionary Association (AMA) in 1868. The new curriculum instituted by Hampton marked the beginning of competing philosophies about how Black education should be organized (Bullock, 1967). The first Black schools had been organized around a curriculum that mirrored a New England classical curriculum (Anderson, 1988). The Northern missionaries, who came to the South to teach, taught the former slaves the same content they themselves had been taught. Northern benevolent societies began to establish Black colleges which also followed a traditional classical curriculum (Bullock, 1967). This was exactly the kind of education for

Blacks that Southern Whites feared; they believed that an educated Black population would begin to demand the same rights the Whites enjoyed. The Hampton Model offered a different approach to education for Blacks that was more acceptable to Southern Whites (Anderson, 1988).

Samuel Chapman Armstrong was chosen by the AMA to lead Hampton Institute. He was a former general in the Union army and had been born to and raised by missionary parents in the Hawaiian Islands (Samuel Chapman Armstrong, 2012). Many of Armstrong's ideas about education most likely came from his father's treatment of the native Hawaiians (Spivey, 1978). Spivey (1978) stated that Armstrong's father believed that the Hawaiians were inherently lazy and that only a strong work ethic would make them productive citizens. Additionally, the younger Armstrong was a segregationist who believed in the academic and moral inferiority of Blacks (Anderson, 1988). As Spivey explained, Armstrong "believed that blacks should be taught to remain in their place, stay out of politics, keep quiet about their rights, and work" (p. x). When Armstrong arrived in Hampton, he "found a heterogeneous mass of negroes under the care of the government, doing nothing for themselves, depending upon the federal government for rations" (Heatwole, 1916, p. 349). Armstrong made it his mission to correct what he saw as this deficit in the Black race. He felt he could fix the problem through an education that stressed "the need for blacks to be good, subservient laborers" (Spivey, 1978, p. x).

As Hampton was a normal institute, its primary purpose was to prepare Black teachers for the classroom. The Hampton model stressed the use of hard labor to teach a strong work ethic and produce conservative Black teachers (Anderson, 1988). The typical experience of a student at Hampton was a day filled with hard labor to earn the money necessary to pay for their education and an evening filled with course work in classes that were considered appropriate for Blacks. These classes typically included agriculture, barbering, and bricklaying for men and hairdressing, dressmaking, and house cleaning for women (Anderson, 1988). This so-called industrial education was meant to prepare Blacks for their place in Southern society as laborers (Bullock, 1967). Armstrong believed that Blacks needed to focus on improving their lives through hard work rather than becoming involved in politics (Anderson, 1988). He believed Blacks to be "incapable of self-rule" (Spivey, 1978, p. 17). Armstrong's worldview included a permanently segregated society: Whites remaining in positions of power and Blacks remaining in positions of labor. As Armstrong's ideas about Black education began to spread, financed by

Northern philanthropic organizations, the Hampton model became more and more appealing to Southern Whites. Bullock (1967) described this shift in curriculum as the “Great Detour” (p. 60). He went on to say that “the assimilation of Negroes was blocked by the very institution that had been designed to foster it” (Bullock, 1967, p. 88).

One of Armstrong’s best known pupils was Booker T. Washington. According to his autobiography, Washington (2003) was born into slavery on a farm in Franklin County, Virginia in either 1858 or 1859. After the Civil War, Washington, two half-siblings, and their mother moved to West Virginia to live with his step-father. Washington worked in a salt mine for a time. He also received a very basic education, pieced together from attending a day school when he could and being tutored at night when he was forced to work during the day (Washington, 2003). When he was 16, Washington left West Virginia and made the trek to Hampton Institute where he received his formal education. After graduation, Armstrong offered Washington a teaching position at Hampton. After two years of teaching, Armstrong nominated Washington to run a new school in Alabama, Tuskegee Institute (Washington, 2003). Washington became an ardent supporter of the industrial form of education and rose to national fame promoting Tuskegee (Anderson, 1988). Although Washington supported the Hampton model, he did not support the idea of the inferiority of his race (Spivey, 1978). Rather, he felt that economic priorities were more important in America than social equality, and as a result, Blacks needed to prove themselves invaluable in the economic sector as laborers. He attempted to appeal to both Blacks and Whites of the times. Similar to the experiences of students who went through the desegregation process, Washington was often rejected by both Blacks and Whites for trying to fit into a dual society.

The Industrial Education Era: 1876–1915

The prominence of industrial education was further strengthened by the election of 1876. Southern Democrats were eager for Northern-influenced reconstruction to leave the South. Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican candidate, had promised to withdraw federal support for the Republican governments in Louisiana and South Carolina. When the Democratic candidate, Samuel J. Tilden, carried both states with an overwhelming majority, Republicans wanted a recount. When the recounts gave both states to Hayes, Southern Democrats refused to accept the results and inducted their own state governments. Congress eventually stepped in and established

an electoral commission to decide the election. During the negotiations, Republicans agreed to remove all troops from the South and the Democrats agreed to accept Hayes. Without the enforcing eye of the military, the southern states began to reestablish the old power structure of the South.

The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision (1896) firmly entrenched the separate but equal doctrine. Homer Plessy was arrested and jailed for taking a seat in a railroad car that had been designated for Whites only. He sued, among other reasons, on the basis of his 14th Amendment right being violated. The Supreme Court reasoned that states had the right to make laws that were reasonable with reference to the established customs and traditions of the state and that separation of the races did not imply inferiority of either race. Separate but equal then became common practice in all public facilities in the South including education. The education of Blacks in the South changed little during the rest of the 19th century (Anderson, 1988). Instead, the debate about the proper type of education for Blacks continued at a national level.

Northern Philanthropy

The Capon Springs Conference for Education was held in West Virginia on June 29, 1898. Conference attendees included Northern and Southern White men who all shared beliefs in universal education, White supremacy, and Black industrial education (Anderson, 1988). The members of the conference tried to determine what would be the best curriculum for Black schools. Although most of the attendees believed Blacks were capable of learning, they believed that only a select few should receive a higher education in order to prepare Black ministers, physicians, and lawyers who could take care of their own people. They believed the masses were slated for industrial education (Bullock, 1967). The conference continued to meet annually in various locations from 1898 until 1914. Their executive board, the Southern Education Board, played a large role in making education universal in the South. However, their decision to push universal education was made with the idea of keeping Southern Whites appeased. As Bullock (1967) explained, “it was agreed by all members that the best way to provide training for Negroes was first to provide adequate schools and training for the neglected whites” (p. 93). Although the Southern Education Board was able to construct a plan for universal education in the South, there was very little money available to finance the plan. Fortunately, America’s new industrialism provided the much needed capital.

Northern industrialists like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, who were making money very quickly, often at the expense of laborers, needed an outlet to promote a positive image. Industrial education for Blacks in the South seemed to fit the bill perfectly (Bullock, 1967). But, these industrialists also recognized that “industrial education would aid in the heightened exploitation of” Black labor (Spivey, 1978, p. 71). Northern investors flooded into the South after the Civil War. The railroad industry, coal, iron, steel, and the cotton industry all came under Northern influence (Spivey, 1978). Black labor dominated most of these industries. Employers liked the fact that most Black workers were non-union and that they accepted less pay than White workers (Spivey, 1978).

One of the reasons the industrialist’s money was so desperately needed was that Southerners in general resented paying taxes for universal education. Anderson (1988) noted that Virginians in particular believed educating Black children was a waste of tax money because they thought it made Black people want to challenge Whites for equality. The Southern Education Board used the money given to it, often with very few stipulations, to fund separate schools for Black and White children. Additionally, the Board withheld funds from localities where all children were educated together (Bullock, 1967). The Board also only gave money to schools that promoted industrial education (Spivey, 1978). In this manner, the Northern industrialists made sure that most of the schools in the South were following the Hampton model. There were three main contributing organizations to Southern education: the Slater Fund, the Rural School Fund (also known as the Jeanes Fund), and the Rosenwald Fund. Together they provided more than \$134 million to the South, in some cases as much or more than the local and state governments (Bullock, 1967). As Egerton (1994) pointed out, Northern philanthropists “appear to have done almost as much for the education of the Southern poor in the seventy-five years following the Civil War as all of the South’s state and local governments combined” (p. 25). This money helped build schools, train and pay teachers, buy materials, and ensure that industrial education had a solid foundation (Bullock, 1967). Robert Curtis Ogden, President of the Conference on Southern Education from 1903 until 1916, was perhaps most responsible for the vast influx of money from the Northern philanthropists (Spivey, 1978). A former agent for a New York clothing company, Ogden was able to “speak to Northern capitalists as a Northern capitalist” (Spivey, 1978, p. 84).

A great deal of the philanthropic money went towards the county training school program. By the year 1900, there was a push for more elementary schools in the South. This in turn meant a higher demand for teachers. The county training school met that demand. The curriculum of the county training school was designed to keep Blacks in their socially prescribed place in society. The grade school curriculum maintained an emphasis on reading, writing, mathematics, geography, and history, much like the White schools' curriculum. However, Black children learned mathematics by learning bookkeeping for crops, geography by learning about the specific local environment around them, and home economics by learning how to can vegetables and clean homes. The concessions made in the name of a universal education turned into an education for Black children that would better prepare them for a limited lot in life (Bullock, 1967).

The universal education system began to be stable and institutionalized by the beginning of the twentieth century. As it did, certain issues began to become evident. First, the differences between the amount of money spent on Black schools and White schools began to grow. This included teacher salaries, educational facilities, and resources (Bullock, 1967). Secondly, industrial education was not producing graduates who were ready for an industrialized economy. So-called industrial education had primarily prepared Blacks for agricultural work. By the turn of the century, though, the percentage of agricultural workers in the American economy had begun to shrink considerably (Bullock, 1967). A third time period in the history of Black education was about to begin.

The Pursuit of Equality Era: 1915–1954

Around the turn of the century, Black leadership began to change. Washington's ideas about industrial education and the social and political separation of the races were challenged by W. E. B. Du Bois' ideas of social equality. Washington had long been accused of compromising a quality education in the name of appeasing Whites who opposed Black education (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough (2001) described the clash of ideas between Washington and Du Bois as "a bitter dispute that had polarized Black leadership into opposing camps" (p. 22). One of the beginnings of this bitter dispute was most likely Du Bois' speech at Hampton Institute in 1906. In this speech, Du Bois (1973) advocated higher education as the key to uplifting the Black race. The industrial education model was, as he called it, "educational heresy" (p. 11). Du Bois called

on the teachers at Hampton to encourage the best and brightest of their students to go on to higher education. Ironically, it would be the very Black leaders that Whites had deemed acceptable for traditional higher education who would lead the revolution against segregation (Bullock, 1967). The Niagara Movement, established in 1905, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), established in 1910, were outgrowths of the backlash against segregation ideas. By 1915, the majority of Blacks preferred Du Bois' approach to education and society and even some of the leading newspapers of the day that had preferred Booker T. Washington were beginning to turn to Du Bois' approach (Anderson, 1988). With both the leadership and the organization, Blacks were now ready to fight a concerted effort against segregation (Bullock, 1967).

NAACP Involvement

The first assault against the separate but equal doctrine was aimed at higher education. Beginning in the 1930s, the NAACP leadership carefully orchestrated cases against border states and used law students in the test cases (Bullock, 1967). Their reasoning was that there would be a relatively small number of Black students involved in graduate and professional programs, thus making equalization of the programs less likely to create a widespread hostile reaction from the White community. The NAACP also believed that judges would be more sympathetic towards legal education no matter what color the students were (Bullock, 1967). They were successful in several states: Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. In the Maryland case, *Pearson v. Murray* (1936) Donald Murray was denied admission to The University of Maryland's law school solely based on his race. After he sued, the Court of Appeals in Maryland ordered the University to admit Murray. In the Missouri case, *State ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), after a lengthy path through the courts, the University of Missouri eventually admitted Lloyd Gaines to its law school. In the Oklahoma case, *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma* (1948), the Supreme Court ruled that Oklahoma must follow the Court's opinion in regard to not denying admission based solely on race. In the Texas case, *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the NAACP but gave Texas six months to create a separate but equal law department at Texas A. and M. University. When the state could not create an equal department to that of the University of Texas, the Supreme Court ruled that Black law students

had to be admitted to the University of Texas. In all of these cases, though, the legal leadership of the NAACP had been arguing that the separate facilities were not equal.

Under the leadership of Charles Houston, Dean of the Howard University Law School and NAACP Chief Legal Counsel, the NAACP had spent considerable time studying how to go about making their case against segregation. Tushnet (1987) explained that two paths were considered. The NAACP could have focused either on insisting that Black schools actually be made equal to White schools or they could have focused on attacking segregation itself as illegal. Lawsuits could have been aimed at attacking the disparity in the equal part of separate but equal. It would have been fairly simple to have proven that salaries for Black teachers and per pupil expenditures on Black students were both much less than salaries and expenditures for Whites. But, states had set regulations regarding money in such a way that the rules either could not be fought in federal court or a school board could show that it actually did cost less to run a Black school than a White school (Tushnet, 1987). NAACP leaders also had to take into account that many Black leaders were hesitant to openly challenge segregation in court (Patterson, 2001). Patterson (2001) stated that these leaders felt the NAACP should “push to ensure the ‘equal’ part of ‘separate-but-equal’” (p. 7). As a result, the leadership of the NAACP chose the first path; the main goal of NAACP litigation during the 1930s and 1940s was to focus on making Black schools equal to White schools in terms of facilities and Black teachers’ salaries. This process, known as equalization, was agonizingly slow, though. Court cases took several years to be settled, and even though the NAACP was successful in most of them, other localities did not follow the legal precedents being set in the decisions.

In June of 1950, Thurgood Marshall, who had become NAACP Chief Legal Counsel in 1938, decided to challenge the separate part of the separate but equal principle established in *Plessy* (Patterson, 2001). In this regard, the NAACP leadership wanted to make clear exactly what they were attacking in their next assault. Bullock (1967) explained, “the nature and development of these cases clearly showed that it was the inequality inherent in segregation and not the inequality inherent in schools which was under attack” (p. 232). Marshall looked for court cases that would specifically challenge the separate but equal principle and sought plaintiffs who could withstand the difficult process of fighting segregation (Patterson, 2001). The court cases that eventually were combined and came to be known as the *Brown* case included

cases from South Carolina, Delaware, Washington, D.C. and Prince Edward County in Virginia as well as the Kansas case that gave the case its name. The NAACP successfully argued that segregation was emotionally harmful to Black children, and on May 17, 1954, the doctrine of separate but equal in the public schools died at the hands of the Supreme Court.

Compliance with the Supreme Court's decision ranged from immediate in places like St. Louis, Missouri, and Louisville, Kentucky, to delay and outright defiance in places like Atlanta, Georgia, and Houston, Texas. Delay tactics included the use of study groups that were put together to decide how desegregation would occur and pleas for more time to build more schools to accommodate integrated student bodies (Bullock, 1967). The Deep South then began to erect barriers to prevent desegregation. These states' massive resistance included tactics such as pupil placement laws and laws that gave state legislative bodies control over money going to public schools (Muse, 1961). Pupil placement boards took power from local school boards and placed students according to where the boards thought they should go to school. White students ended up at White schools while Black students ended up at Black schools. States also made it illegal for state funds to go to school districts that operated integrated schools. Additionally, some states intimidated teachers who supported desegregation by abolishing continuing contracts and cancelling contracts at any time for any reason (Bullock, 1967). In perhaps the most extreme reaction to the Supreme Court's decision, several states drew up laws to abolish public education in the face of desegregation. Prince Edward County in Virginia actually did close its schools for more than five years rather than comply with the Supreme Court. Although not necessarily the majority view in the state of Virginia, Prince Edward County's reaction set the tone for the state (Muse, 1961).

A history of Black education prior to desegregation reveals a difficult journey in which a quality education was often sacrificed to accommodate intolerant views. The widely practiced Hampton Model promoted an education for Blacks that would result in jobs that Whites believed appropriate for Blacks. Maintaining a strict social order was more important than social equality. Even so, a framework for Black education was developed in the South. Most of the financing came from Northern philanthropists. Without the massive amounts of money that flowed from the North to the South in the name of Black education, it is doubtful that Black education would have progressed much at all. Slowly but steadily, Black education expanded to all areas of the

South. Centers for higher education, though few, educated an upper class; Black pastors, lawyers, and doctors: who could fulfill leadership roles within their Black communities (Bullock, 1967). Ironically enough, it was this group of leaders who led the assault on segregated schools. The path to desegregated schools looked different depending upon which part of the South one lived. Although some of the bitterest resistance came from the state of Virginia, not all parts of the state adopted such a view.

A History of Black Education in Virginia Prior to Desegregation

As Bullock (1967) stated, prior to the Civil War, the education of Blacks was limited to specific training for plantation work or children's playtime. Meagher (1939) noted that during the 17th and early part of the 18th centuries, slave owners taught slaves a basic education. It can be assumed that the education of Blacks in Virginia followed the same path. The earliest law dealing with Black education in Virginia dated from 1805. The law stated that an overseer of the poor whose job it was to teach poor children was not required to teach Black orphans (Guild, 1969). Laws became stricter after the Nat Turner revolt in 1831 and Virginia passed a law declaring teaching Blacks to read or write illegal (Guild, 1969). Guild noted that the punishment for Blacks could include corporal punishment such as being whipped, while punishment for Whites doing the teaching could include fines from \$10 to \$100 and/or being jailed for up to two months. This law was further solidified in 1848 when assembling Blacks for the purpose of instruction in reading and writing became illegal. Interestingly, punishment for Whites doing the teaching increased to a jail sentence of up to six months (Guild, 1969).

Even though there were laws against teaching slaves, religious education seemed to be immune from such laws. Secular Sunday Schools were another route through which Blacks received an education (Meagher, 1939). In addition to teaching religion, slaves were also taught how to read and write. Prior to the Civil War, Stonewall Jackson taught a class in Lexington every Sunday at his church with 100 slaves as students. Fairclough (2001) noted that Northern educated Blacks began teaching in missionary schools in Virginia in 1862. Heatwole (1916) also noted that the American Missionary Association had instituted schools for Blacks in Virginia in 1862.

Although Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute became the best known Virginia normal school, Clement Robinson's normal school was actually the first one founded in Virginia in 1862 (Fairclough, 2001). In 1869, Virginia ratified a new constitution that provided for a public education system (Works Project Administration [WPA], 1942). At that time, there were several Black members of the Virginia Legislature who had been instrumental in pushing for universal education (Richardson, 1976). In 1870, William Henry Ruffner became the first Superintendent of Public Instruction for the commonwealth and committed himself to building a public school system (WPA, 1942). Ruffner had to build a public school system "in the face of a staggering debt, of the lurking fear of Negro domination, of a dogged opposition to taxation, and a persistent free-school-ergo-charity-school complex" (Meagher, 1939, p. 111). Even with his commitment to a system of universal public education, laws passed in 1870 stated that White and Black persons could not be taught in the same school and that no one was allowed to attend school if their father had not paid a capitation tax, effectively barring nearly all Blacks (Guild, 1969). The separation of races in education was eventually institutionalized in the Virginia Constitution of 1902, whose primary purpose was the disfranchisement of Blacks (Buck, 1952).

As documented by Anderson (1988) and Bullock (1967), the Hampton Model became the leading educational philosophy for Black education. Virginia granted a charter to Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (Hampton Institute) in 1870 that provided for a Board of Trustees (Heatwole, 1916). Virginia supported this model with an 1877 law that appropriated monies to Hampton Institute on the condition that there were departments for instruction in agriculture, mechanic arts, and military tactics (Guild, 1969). Heatwole (1916) noted that one of General Armstrong's main principles at Hampton Institute was "that the purpose of Hampton Institute was to make the negroes of service to themselves, their people, and the white race" (p. 351).

As in the rest of the South, the philanthropic groups from the Northern states provided a great deal of money to Virginia for the education of Black students. The General Education Board and the John F. Slater Fund helped to establish several county training schools in Virginia (Buck, 1952). By 1916 there were five of these schools in the state, one of them being in Roanoke County. These schools included nine or ten grades, the last two years being spent in elementary teacher training (Buck, 1952).

Virginia's state superintendents were also influential in molding educational policy. Harris Hart, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the commonwealth from 1918 until 1931, made many changes to the state's education system. Hart was a teacher and principal in Roanoke, Virginia, for several years (Buck, 1952). He became one of the original members of the State Board of Examiners in 1905 and was appointed Superintendent of Roanoke Public Schools in 1909. Hart made several advances in education in Virginia during his tenure as Superintendent of Public Instruction. He ended the district system, effectively uniting all public school districts in the state into one system (Buck, 1952). He also appointed state supervisors for different areas of the education system; one of which was the Supervisor of Negro Education. He modeled these supervisors on the work of the Jeanes Supervisors who had been supervising the Black schools in Virginia for a number of years (Buck, 1952). By 1931, Hart had expanded the number of supervisors to 61. These supervisors served mainly rural areas in Virginia and were instrumental in improving the quality of education in those areas. Teacher salaries for both Black and White teachers doubled during Hart's administration (Buck, 1952). Hart also worked diligently to equalize state money for localities. He was dedicated to seeing rural areas provided with more money so that they would not be handicapped educationally (Buck, 1952). Hart was also concerned with Black education. The number of county training schools increased to 58 during Hart's tenure; 10 of them were state accredited (Buck, 1952). Hart also oversaw the Rosenwald Fund help build 363 schools for Black students in Virginia (Buck, 1952). Finally, Hart insisted that Black teachers be as qualified as White teachers (Buck, 1952). In 1918, the first year that Hart was State Superintendent, approximately 41% of Black teachers held the lowest level teaching license available in the state. By 1931, only about 5% of Black teachers held the same license (Buck, 1952).

Statewide surveys became another useful tool for assessing the state of education in Virginia (Buck, 1952). The first one completed in Virginia took place during the 1918–1919 school year (Buck, 1952). The survey commission reported both the needs it saw for education based on the survey and the commission's recommendations to meet the needs. Black education was always a part of these surveys. From the 1919 survey, the Commission saw the need for better salaries for Black teachers, more Jeanes Supervisors, more county training schools, and more money for the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, which was the land-grant college for Blacks that evolved into Virginia State University. The Commission's recommendations

based on those needs were that the amount of money allocated to schools from local taxes be proportionate to the number of Black children in each county, that county school boards work in closer cooperation with the State Department of Education to maintain Jeanes Supervisors and county training schools, and that attention be given to sanitation training for Black children. The local school boards followed the recommendation about the Jeanes Supervisors. During the 1920s, the Jeanes Supervisors were responsible for spreading the Hampton Method in Black schools in Virginia (Buck, 1952). The Supervisors helped teachers “relate their classroom instruction more closely to the daily lives and experiences of their pupils” (Buck, 1952, p. 297). By 1941, there were 67 Jeanes Supervisors serving 69 Virginia counties and six Black Supervisors in Virginia cities.

By 1927, the year of the second statewide survey, progress had been made as the survey commission reported the needs for Black schools were more along the lines of better facilities, better courses of study, better trained teachers, and more opportunities for higher education for Black leaders. The commission’s recommendations were that facilities be increased, that Black students be required to use them, and that the programs of study in each Black school be suited to “the social and industrial areas in which he [the Black student] will live and labor” (Buck, 1952, p. 279). The state seemed interested in Black education, but made sure that the type of education they were receiving followed the Hampton Model.

One organization that helped achieve some of the recommendations of the Commission was The Negro Organization Society. The society had been formed in 1912 by Robert R. Moton. Moton succeeded Booker T. Washington as the leader of Tuskegee Institute, had been an ally of Washington’s, and was also a graduate of Hampton Institute (Fairclough, 2001). The aim of the society was “to coordinate efforts to improve Negro homes, farms, schools, and health, and to accelerate the rapidly developing determination on the part of the Negroes to take more initiative in promoting their own welfare” (Buck, 1952, p. 379). The society worked diligently with the Jeanes Supervisors to improve education for Black students in Virginia (McClure, 2011). During the 1920s and ‘30s, the society advocated increasing the length of the school year, improving attendance, and providing school lunches for Black students. The Virginia Department of Education worked on several of the same issues during the 1940s. The state worked to expand the number of supervisors and the amount of professional development available to teachers.

Additionally, the state worked to enforce compulsory attendance laws and to encourage localities to provide regional vocational schools for Black students (Buck, 1952).

One of the most important advances in Black education during the 1940s was the effort to equalize salaries of Black and White teachers (Buck, 1952). The battle to equalize salaries could be seen as the starting point for the legal battles that would end with *Brown*. In 1940, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on a salary case from Norfolk. Melvin A. Alston had petitioned the school board for an equal salary to that of his White colleagues. This petition was denied and a suit was filed in U.S. District Court. In *Alston v. Norfolk* (1940), the district court ruled that Alston had given up his constitutional rights when he signed his contract. Alston appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and the decision of the lower court was reversed. The Court of Appeals ruled that the school board had violated Alston's 14th Amendment rights. Norfolk realized they were not going to win this battle and began a process of equalizing salaries. Most localities in Virginia began to follow suit.

In the late 1940s, the NAACP had been filing court cases that dealt with the unequal nature of Black and White schools. There were two cases in particular in Virginia that showed this strategy. *Freeman v. School Board of Chesterfield County* (1948) was a case which combined several equalization cases including one from Gloucester County and another from King George County. In *Ashley v. School Board of Gloucester County* (1948), the school board was found in contempt of not equalizing Black and White schools and was fined. In *Smith v. School Board of King George County* (1948), the school board was taken to task for not providing equal curricula in the Black and White schools. The school board in this case decided to discontinue teaching Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Geometry at the White high school rather than provide instruction in those subjects to the Black students at the Black high school. In the second case, also in 1948, the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *Corbin v. County School Board of Pulaski County* (1949) that Pulaski County was discriminating against Black students because they had to be transported farther than White students to school. The Black students in Pulaski were riding a bus to a regional high school in Christiansburg because Pulaski County did not have a Black high school (Tripp, 2006).

By 1950, Virginia's State Superintendent, Dowell J. Howard, was pleading for more time to upgrade Black school facilities rather than taking school boards to court (Richardson, 1976).

Howard claimed that the state and the localities simply did not have the funds to equalize all facilities immediately. This plea fell on deaf ears, Black citizens had waited too long already for equal education. The NAACP by this time had decided to attack segregation as a legal principle rather than to continue with its equalization campaign (Richardson, 1976). A court case out of Farmville, Virginia would eventually be combined with other cases to make up the *Brown* case.

In April of 1951, high school students at Robert R. Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, staged a walkout to protest the inequality of their high school as compared to the White high school in town. When they were refused a conference with the superintendent, they wrote to NAACP lawyers in Richmond and asked them to come to Farmville (Richardson, 1976). Spotswood Robinson and Oliver Hill came from Richmond to Farmville. Hill spent most of his childhood in Roanoke before moving to Washington, D.C., where he attended Howard University with Thurgood Marshall (Hill, 2000). Robinson and Hill told the students they would only file suit if the students and their parents were seeking a complete end to segregation, not just seeking equal facilities (Richardson, 1976). The Parent-Teacher Association voted unanimously to sue the school board. In *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia* (1952) Robinson and Hill argued that it was impossible for Black children to obtain the same education as White children in a segregated setting. The U.S. District Court in Richmond ruled in favor of the Prince Edward County School Board. On appeal, the case went all the way to the Supreme Court and was joined with other cases under the *Brown* case.

Virginia's history of Black education was fairly similar to other Southern states. When a public system of education was established in Virginia, a dual system of segregated schools was maintained. Although many advances were made thanks to the philanthropic efforts of Northern organizations, and specifically the Jeanes Supervisors, differences between Black and White schools increasingly became larger and larger. By the 1940s, the NAACP had become involved in equalizing teacher salaries. The NAACP's legal strategy eventually progressed to fighting for equal facilities and then to seeking abolition of segregation altogether. Virginia played an important role in each step of the legal battle that eventually ended in *Brown*.

A History of Black Education in the City of Roanoke Prior to Desegregation

The very first Black school in Roanoke was built either in 1870 or 1871. The school was located in a section called Dasher Hill, later known as Diamond Hill, and was called the Old Lick Colored School (Ollie, 2003). This school was replaced by a two-room schoolhouse in 1875 because of a growth in population of the Black community (Shareef, 1996). The new school was located in Gainsboro (modern spelling), north of Hart Avenue on the site of the old Black cemetery between Hart and Douglass avenues. This school became known as the Gainsborough School (Ollie, 2003). By 1884, this school housed 200 students (WPA, 1942). A bond for \$5,000 for building a new school for Black students was passed on November 1, 1887 (WPA, 1942).

The first Roanoke City Directory, published in 1888, listed two schools for the Black community: The Colored Public School, located at Shenandoah Avenue west of Jefferson, with Ms. Lucy Addison as principal, and the Gainsborough Colored School, located in Gainsborough, with Charles Boston as principal (Haddock & Bailey Publishers and Compilers, 1888). The Colored Public School was also known as the First Ward School. There is conflicting information that suggests that the Gainsborough Colored School might have also been known as the Fifth Ward School (Shareef, 1996). There were two Black schools listed in the directory in 1898: one listed as the Gainsboro Avenue School and another as the Third Ward School located at the corner of Gregory Avenue and 6th Street, NE (Stone Printing and Manufacturing Company, 1898). In the 1892 city directory, two rooms were listed as being rented at the Methodist Episcopal Church while a new school was being built (Shareef, 1996). The completed building became the Gregory Avenue School and was also known as the Third Ward School. It was located on Gregory Avenue at the corner of 6th Street NE. From 1898 until 1910, the only two schools listed in the Directory were the Gainsboro Avenue School and the Third Ward School.

In 1916, Harrison Elementary School was completed (Shareef, 1996). The building cost \$31,818 (Shareef, 1996). Ms. Lucy Addison was the first principal (Shareef, 1996). This building eventually became the first public high school for Black students in Roanoke. Addison slowly worked to add a high school curriculum into the academic programming, and by 1924 the first Black high school graduates in Roanoke had their diplomas (Shareef, 1996). The school was also accredited by the Virginia Board of Education in 1924. Little information exists about the

curriculum at Harrison, but some evidence does suggest that the school did include industrial training for students (Hill, 2000).

There was perhaps no other educator in Roanoke who worked harder for the education of Black students than Lucy Addison. Certainly none is better known. Addison came to Roanoke in 1886 (Macy, 2006). Originally from Fauquier County, Addison was educated in Philadelphia at the Institute for Colored Youth (Macy, 2006). She began her teaching career at the Gainsborough school and became the principal there in 1887 (Shareef, 1996). In 1917, she moved on to become the principal at Harrison and spent the rest of her educational career there (Shareef, 1996). She retired in 1927 after more than 40 years of service to the Black students of Roanoke. The year after her retirement, a new high school was built for Blacks. This building was erected on Douglass Avenue and was named for Addison. It was the first building in Roanoke to be named for a Roanoker. In 1952, the original Lucy Addison High School building became Booker T. Washington Junior High School and the new Lucy Addison High School was built at Orange Avenue and 5th Street. The new Lucy Addison High School remained the only Black high school in Roanoke until its closing in 1973 (Shareef, 1996).

A review of selected statistics from the *Third Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1936–1937*, reveals the differences between the city's Black and White schools. During this school year, there were four schools serving the Black students of Roanoke: Addison, Gainsboro, Gilmer, and Harrison. Their total attendance was listed at 2,554 (Roanoke City School Board, 1937). There were 15 schools serving 6,866 White students. The attendance rates of the Black schools hovered between 93% and 95%, while the White schools ranged from 87% – 95%. The per capita cost of instruction for the White students was \$39.64, while the cost for the Black students was \$26.21. By 1941, the value of sites and buildings for White schools was \$2.2 million, averaging approximately \$147,000 per building, while the value of Black schools was \$330,000, averaging approximately \$83,000 per building (WPA, 1942).

As referenced in the above section on Black education in Virginia, the 1930s and 40s saw an effort to equalize Black teacher's salaries. The 1935 convention of the Black Teacher's Association met in Roanoke and passed a resolution to appeal to state and local authorities to equalize teachers' salaries (Richardson, 1976). Appeals to the local school boards proved ineffective, though, and Black teachers eventually resorted to litigation, working in conjunction

with the NAACP. Following the *Alston v. Norfolk* (1940) decision in June, the Colored Teachers Association in Roanoke petitioned the Roanoke City School Board at the November 26 Board meeting requesting a single salary schedule (Roanoke City School Board Minutes, November 26, 1940). Roanoke City Public Schools began to gradually equalize salaries for Black teachers, taking a total of four years to bring Black teacher salaries up to those of White teachers. At the August 17, 1945 meeting of the School Board, Superintendent D. E. McQuilkin presented an historical outline of teacher's salaries which announced the equalization of salaries based on education and merit (Roanoke City School Board Minutes, August 17, 1945). After achieving success in the area of salaries, the NAACP was ready to move on to attack segregation itself, rather than just arguing for equalization.

Roanoke did not follow the belligerent anti-desegregation rhetoric of some other areas of the state. Rather, an informal 12-man biracial committee formed in Roanoke to deal with the process of desegregation (White, 1982). These men were well known in their respective communities. From the Black community: Rev. Emmett Green; Lawrence Hamlar, President and Founder of Hamlar and Curtis Funeral Home; Dr. Maynard Law; George P. Lawrence, an attorney in Roanoke; A. Byron Smith, president of his own real estate and oil companies; and Rev. Raymond Wilkinson. From the White community: G. Frank Clement, president of Shenandoah Life Insurance Company; John Hancock, Roanoke Electric Steel; William A. Lashley, businessman; Ben F. Parrott, attorney; Gordon Willis, real estate developer; and Arthur Taubman, founder of Advance Auto Parts (Potter, 1996). They met regularly from 1960 until 1968 to discuss several issues including desegregation and integrating public places (Potter, 1996).

In 1960, the Roanoke chapter of the NAACP helped 30 Black students apply to White schools in Roanoke (30 Negroes Apply, 1960). The number of Black students who applied eventually grew to 39. The state Pupil Placement Board placed "nine of the most outstanding black students in various schools throughout the city, an unusual move for the usually inactive board" (Potter, 1996, p. 49). The Pupil Placement Board's decision was largely a formality. School officials made recommendations to the Board as to the assignment of students and, if there were no objections from parents, the recommendations were approved by the Board's staff. Applications were rarely even presented to the three Board members (*Green v. School Board of*

City of Roanoke, 1962). Documents located in the Pupil Placement Board's records at the Library of Virginia indicate Roanoke City School officials made their recommendation to the Board (see Appendix B). The initials "DLG" in the upper right hand corner of the document more than likely are those of Dorothy L. Gibboney who was Personnel Director for Roanoke City Schools in 1960 and who was to become division superintendent in 1965. School Board minutes from August 15, 1960 reported that Roanoke's Superintendent, Dr. E. W. Rushton, met with the Pupil Placement Board in Richmond when the Board approved the nine applications. The Board reported that:

in as much as the local school authorities of Roanoke City have applied, at the request of the Pupil Placement Board, criteria and standards dealing with the transfer and assignment of pupils of different races to the schools of that school division, which are regarded by this Board as valid and reasonable, and since through application of these criteria and standards of the local school authorities are not in a position to legally oppose the following assignments and transfers, the Pupil Placement Board takes the following action: (Roanoke City School Board Minutes, August 15, 1960).

The minutes then listed each of the nine students and the schools to which they were transferred. These nine students became the first Black students to integrate Roanoke schools in September 1960. The experiences of these students have not been formally documented and are the basis of the current research study.

A History of Roanoke, Virginia to 1960

The area that would eventually become Roanoke was settled in the 1740s by Mark Evans and Tasker Tosh. These two men and their families bought land in the area that is currently in the downtown Roanoke area (White, 1982). The town of Big Lick developed around the area's first railroad tracks in the early 1850s and was officially granted township status in 1874 by the General Assembly (Dotson, 2007). The town began to grow as a tobacco hub, but really began to expand when Norfolk and Western Railroad (N&W) decided to build a terminus nearby in the early 1880s. Delegations from Salem, Lynchburg, and Big Lick met with Philadelphia based officials of the railroad making a plea for the terminus to be located in their town. When Big Lick was chosen, town leaders offered to change the name of the town to Kimball in honor of

Frederick Kimball, who was president of the Shenandoah line and vice president of N&W. Kimball politely declined, instead suggesting that the town be named Roanoke on the basis of its proximity to the Roanoke River. The town leaders happily agreed, and the new town charter for Roanoke was approved by the General Assembly in 1882 (Dotson, 2007). Two years later, Roanoke's status changed once again when a city charter was applied for and granted (Kagey, 1988).

Once the railroad established its terminus in Roanoke, a period of rapid expansion followed. In the town of Big Lick's first census in 1880, the population was 669. By the end of 1882, the population was estimated at 3,500 (Dotson, 2007). In 1880, the population had been approximately 50% White and 50% Black. By 1882, it was about 75% White. The railroad company built living quarters for railroad workers, streets, business headquarters, and a hotel for the company's use. Roanoke was quickly beginning to look like a company town (Dotson, 2007). This created some animosity between native residents and newcomers, many of whom were from the North or were Blacks from the surrounding countryside. It did not help matters that each group lived in a specific section of the town. Native residents lived in what had been Big Lick; new laborers from the North lived in an area to the northeast of Big Lick; while wealthy company executives lived in an area at the base of Mill Mountain; and Blacks lived in an area northwest of Big Lick in the long established neighborhood called Gainesborough (Dotson, 2007).

Even though Black residents were segregated in the city, the Black community was able to develop culturally and economically. In 1883, an all-Black baseball team was formed in Roanoke (Dotson, 2007). The Roanoke Slippers played other all-Black teams from the region with much pageantry and showmanship with hundreds of Black fans attending the games. In 1886, Blacks organized the Roanoke Brass Band and held a parade in downtown Roanoke, earning a rare positive endorsement from the local newspaper (Dotson, 2007). Black entrepreneurs also established several businesses in Roanoke. By 1888, there were four grocery stores, a butcher shop, two barbershops, four "eating houses" and a saloon along Peach Road that were all owned and operated by Black merchants. One of these businessmen, John H. Davis, opened a community center for Black citizens in 1891 that was a place for neighborhood meetings, dances, concerts, and political gatherings (Dotson, 2007).

In addition to the animosity between the different groups of citizens, other growing pains included problems with sanitation, a lack of paved roads, an increase in saloons, brothels and gambling halls, and an increase in issues associated with these establishments like drunkenness, fighting, and petty theft (Dotson, 2007). Roanoke struggled to address and fix these problems as voters continually defeated bond proposals. Progress was slowly made though and by the end of the 1890s, most of the issues had been solved (Dotson, 2007). The debates and solutions had unfortunately continued the division among the citizens of Roanoke. Black citizens often refused to vote for bonds as the proposed projects usually did not benefit their neighborhoods. Additionally, one of the solutions for putting an end to saloons and brothels was to push them to the Black areas of town (Dotson, 2007). Black citizens of Roanoke also began to feel segregation become stronger in the city around the turn of the century. Conflicts over access to physical space, such as which side of the sidewalk Blacks could walk on, became more common and even though Black men composed about 25% of the city's population, they accounted for almost 50% of all arrests in the city (Dotson, 2007). Education was also a point of contention among the Black population. In the summer of 1892, a group of Black professionals organized an education committee to petition the school board for "more and better school facilities" (Dotson, 2007, p. 110) for the Black children of Roanoke.

Racial tension in Roanoke was exacerbated by four events: the murder of Lizzie Wilson in 1884, the lynching of William Lavender in 1892, the Roanoke Riot of 1893, and the hanging of Henry Williams in 1904 (Dotson, 2007; White, 1982). In each case, Black men were accused of assaulting and/or killing White women. In the case of Lizzie Wilson, no killer was ever caught, but the girl's sister said a Black man had abducted Lizzie and dragged her off in the woods where her body was later found. Lavender was lynched for knocking a White girl down and allegedly trying to rape her. The Riot of 1893 was perhaps the worst racial incident Roanoke has ever seen. Thomas Smith was accused of beating a White woman with a brick. After a tentative identification by the woman, Smith was taken to the City jail where a mob demanded that he be handed over to them and lynched. The mayor and the police refused to do so. In the ensuing hours, a larger mob gathered and the militia was called out. When an exchange of gunfire eventually erupted, eight people were killed, 31 wounded, and the mayor was shot in the foot (Dotson, 2007). The mob recovered and eventually took Smith from authorities, lynched him, threatened to bury him in the mayor's yard, and finally burned his body (White, 1982). The

event was certainly a low point for Roanoke. White described how Roanokers tried to cover up the event, while Dotson discussed how it was well publicized in not only several U.S. cities, but also overseas. The hanging of Henry Williams occurred after a quick trial where he was accused of beating a White woman and her daughter with an ax, raping the woman and then cutting her throat. Although the woman appeared publicly and said her attacker had not raped her, Williams was found guilty and sentenced to death. With the Riot of 1893 still fairly fresh in many memories, authorities took several measures to prevent a repeat and Williams was hung at the Roanoke City Jail without mob violence (Dotson, 2007).

By the turn of the century, Roanoke was on the road to recovery from a national depression and several new businesses were established (Dotson, 2007; White, 1982). Although the railroad had been the spark that had ignited the business boom in Roanoke, a diversified economy would be the key to lasting business success. The Virginia Brewing Company, The Stone Printing and Manufacturing Company, the Roanoke Cotton Mill, the Adams, Payne & Gleaves Brick Factory, and The Roanoke Bridge Company were just a few of the new businesses in Roanoke by the early 1900s (Dotson, 2007). Each company brought something new and different to the city and employed hundreds of new workers. The new companies certainly helped the economy but the employees themselves saw few benefits. Long hours, low pay, and dangerous working conditions were as common in Roanoke as they were in other parts of the country during this time period. The city's leaders were encouraged by the growth and continued with their vision of progress for Roanoke (Dotson, 2007).

One group of citizens that would see few benefits from the city's progress was Roanoke's Black citizens. Racial tension was still an issue from earlier events, Black workers were not allowed to join labor unions, Black women were mostly relegated to domestic work, and when Blacks paired with the Republican party on various voting issues, the progressive city leaders decided to further disfranchise Black residents (Dotson, 2007). The new state constitution that was drafted in the early 1900s imposed a grandfather clause, a poll tax, and a literacy test. Additionally, Jim Crow laws were put into effect and residential segregation became more commonplace as well (Dotson, 2007). Roanoke put two city ordinances in place that required Blacks and Whites to live apart. These ordinances were in effect from 1911 until 1917 (Chittum, 2005).

Despite the restrictions being placed on the city's Black residents, the Black community thrived. By the turn of the century, several influential Black citizens were on the Roanoke scene. Reverend L. L. Downing, Dr. Isaac David Burrell, Lucy Addison, and Andrew Jackson Oliver were leaders in religion, medicine, education, and law respectively (White, 1982). Downing led the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church for 43 years, Burrell was instrumental in improving health conditions for Blacks, Addison was a tireless educational administrator, and Oliver was one of the first Black attorneys in the city. Home to these citizens was the Gainsboro neighborhood. Gainsboro was the nucleus of the Black community. In this area, the Black citizens of Roanoke created their own self-sufficient city. Many businesses were located there; some of them the only ones Blacks had access to, such as a hospital and a library (Shareef, 1996).

Gainsboro, once the area of Roanoke's original settlement, transitioned to a predominantly Black neighborhood by 1880 (White, 1982). The arrival of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad in 1852 helped with that transition. According to White (1982), when the railroad's depot was located about one-half mile south of Gainsboro, businesses and Whites moved accordingly. White stated that by 1880, the Black population of Gainsboro numbered 272, compared to 67 Whites. The church building that had originally been St. John's Episcopal Church was sold to Black parishioners in 1876 and became First Baptist Church (White, 1982). The railroad again influenced Gainsboro and the entire Black community when the Shenandoah Valley Railroad and the Norfolk and Western Railroad were joined in Roanoke in 1881. The Black population of Roanoke grew, as many Black men were hired to work in the railroad shops and on the trains as porters (White, 1982). Henry Street, one of the main thoroughfares in Gainsboro, was the center of Black business and social life for the Roanoke Valley (Shareef, 1996). Shareef (1996) said that the area was known as "The Yard" (p. 153). Many Black owned businesses, including restaurants, grocery stores, clubs, and hotels, lined this well-known street. One of the best known hotels was the Hotel Dumas. The Hotel Dumas was one of only two hotels in Roanoke where Blacks could stay while the City followed Jim Crow laws (Shareef, 1996). According to Shareef, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Cab Calloway, and many other well-known Black entertainers stayed at the Hotel Dumas when they performed in Roanoke. Another of the Dumas' well-known boarders was Oscar Micheaux. Micheaux is credited as being the country's first Black filmmaker. He located his film corporation on Henry Street from 1923 until 1925 and shot scenes for several of his movies in Roanoke (Adams, 2008). One of these scenes

included a young Oliver Hill who lived in Roanoke during the 1920s (Hill, 2000). Hill (2000) remembered Micheaux filming a movie called *House Behind the Cedars* which portrayed Blacks in a more positive light, as a middle class family, as opposed to the typical portrayal of Blacks in movies of that time as “servants or clowns” (Hill, 2000, p. 17).

Roanoke continued to grow and expand as World War I approached. The formation of the Woman’s Civic Betterment Club (WCBC) and the Roanoke City Health Department led to several advances in the city. The WCBC was led by Sarah Cocke, wife of Roanoke’s first mayor, Lucian Cocke. The goal of the WCBC was to improve conditions in Roanoke in terms of health and sanitation as well as beautification projects (Dotson, 2007). The ladies developed an extensive plan for the city but were never able to implement it fully. However, their model became a useful guide for public planning (White, 1982). The health department helped with cleaning up the springs in the downtown area that were routinely used as open sewers. The department was also invaluable when a flu epidemic swept through the city in 1918 (White, 1982). More businesses opened, most notably the American Viscose Corporation in 1917, which employed 5,000 workers by 1928 (White, 1982). The factory was built in the southeast part of town, which led to an expansion of housing in that area. The downtown area of Roanoke continued to expand during the 1920s. In 1920 alone, there were over \$1,000,000 dollars spent in new construction (White, 1982). Several buildings rose above seven stories while two were twelve stories. Additionally, the first public library was opened in 1921, and Roanoke’s first radio station took to the air waves in 1924. Prohibition ushered a sense of lawlessness into Roanoke as many people either made or bought illegal whiskey. As White (1982) described, “a whole generation came to adulthood in an atmosphere of permissive lawbreaking never before seen” (p. 98).

The economic success enjoyed in the 1920s was quickly replaced by the Great Depression after the Stock Market crash in 1929. Fortunately for Roanoke, much of the crushing economic blow dealt to the rest of the country was not felt in the city (White, 1982). Land was bought north of the city for the construction of an airport; the city celebrated its 50th anniversary (two years late, though, due to economic concerns); the Veterans Administrations facility was dedicated by President Roosevelt; and the Roanoke Civic Symphony gave its first performance at Jefferson High School. Roanoke’s unemployment rate was only two percent in late 1930

(White, 1982), but the biggest concern in terms of the failing national economy was the number of transients who came through the city. Big business in the city did reduce the number of workers, but the N&W was still making a profit. Bankruptcies climbed to 501 in the fall of 1932, but the New Deal came along and provided much needed money for various programs. Roanoke received more than \$8 million from the Emergency Relief Administration (White, 1982). By the close of the 1930s, Roanoke was on its way to economic recovery along with the rest of the nation, but a new threat loomed. World War II was beginning in Europe and Roanoke would make its contribution just like many other communities around the country.

The residents of Roanoke became heavily involved in the war effort. According to White (1982), “perhaps never before or since have so many Roanokers been so thoroughly involved in a single pursuit as in the months preceding Pearl Harbor and the war years following” (p. 103). The Roanoke area Red Cross chapter began wartime work even before the United States joined the war. Once the U.S. joined the war, The Civilian Defense program in Roanoke went into full swing (White, 1982). By 1942, almost 7,000 citizens were part of the program. Volunteer efforts soared and many people were involved in scrap metal drives, tin can drives, paper drives, or any other kind of drive that collected materials necessary to the war effort. Men joined various military branches and came through Roanoke by rail on their way to various training camps. Women joined the new corps organized just for them: Women’s Army Corps (WACs), Women Appointed for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES), and Women’s Auxiliary Special Police (WASPs). Bond drives also became popular in Roanoke, the most impressive being a bond drive in 1943 that sought to raise a million dollars to buy three bombers. By the end of the war, approximately 7500 citizens of Roanoke City had participated in the war. 224 of them would not return to Roanoke alive (White, 1982).

After World War II, Roanoke continued to expand (White, 1982). In 1949, a large portion of Williamson Road was added to the city in addition to the area of Garden City. Approximately 12 square miles and 16,000 people joined Roanoke City. Roanoke also saw expansion in the economy and in the medical field. People from all over southwest Virginia, as well as parts of West Virginia, came to Roanoke to do their major shopping. Roanoke Hospital expanded to become the major medical center in the region. 1949 also saw the completion of the Mill

Mountain star. The large neon star atop Mill Mountain earned Roanoke the nickname of the Star City of the South (White, 1982).

The 1950s saw the beginnings of a time of change. For Roanoke, the decade began on a high note with the distinction of being named an All-American City (White, 1982). The 15 accomplishments presented as evidence of the city's growth included a multimillion dollar sewage disposal system, new buildings including churches and a library, a children's zoo, and a multimillion dollar school construction program. Each of these accomplishments had been pursued by citizens of the city rather than the city itself. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruling on *Brown* began to change the educational landscape in the nation and in Roanoke. A group of Southside Virginia legislators came together and decided they were unalterably opposed to integration (Muse, 1961). Their voice unfortunately set the tone for the entire state. As described earlier Roanoke, though, took a somewhat different position than the rest of the state. An interracial committee secretly formed in Roanoke to help with the integration process (White, 1982). Six Black men and six White men, all prominent members of their respective communities, came together to work for a peaceful implementation of desegregation. Their careful planning paid off and in the fall of 1960, nine Black students started school in schools that were previously all White. Newspaper accounts from the first day of school, September 6th, painted a picture of a day without any serious incident ("Parents, Students", 1960). A follow up article in 2011 where some of the students were interviewed about that day revealed that they experienced the day a little differently ("Roanoke School Integration", 2011). A more in-depth look at these students' experiences will likely reveal a more complete picture of that first day of school and the remainder of those days during that school year.

Conclusions

The history of Black education in the United States has been well documented in several sources. Anderson (1988), Bullock (1967), and Spivey (1978) are among the many historians who have documented the development of Black education from before the Civil War through *Brown*. One constant throughout the development was the struggle that Black people faced in trying to attain a quality education. Learning to read and write before the Civil War was illegal for slaves. After the Civil War, Northern philanthropists provided financial support for Black

schools that were never equal to White schools. Without this support though, Black schools would have been almost nonexistent. Additionally, the curriculum that was deemed appropriate for Black students was designed to keep them in the manual labor fields. Higher education was only appropriate for a select few Black students who were needed to be the doctors, lawyers, and pastors for their people. Ultimately, though, these select few organized into a powerful group who were able to work together to topple the separate but equal principle established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

One element that seems to be missing from the extant historical record is the perspectives of the students who were directly involved in the desegregation of schools. The vast majority of desegregation literature deals with the legal aspects of how desegregation came about or how it was implemented. There is also a sizeable body of literature about the academic effects of desegregation, specifically about how academic achievement of Blacks and Whites changed after desegregation. Very little has been written by or about the students who were involved in the actual process of desegregation. A few of the pioneers in school desegregation, such as Melba Patillo Beals, Andrew Heidelberg, and Betty Kilby Fisher have recorded their stories, but these accounts are rare. Andrew Heidelberg (2006) and Betty Kilby Fisher (2002) represented different regions of Virginia; Heidelberg from Norfolk and Fisher from Warren County. Eyewitness accounts to history provide unique views of events from the people who lived them (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The students' perspectives can provide valuable insight about how the desegregation experience affected these students in many different areas. The main goal of desegregation was to eliminate the separation by race in public schools. Additionally, desegregation was supposed to provide Black students with access to the same education White students were receiving. Do the Black students who actually went through this experience feel that they received that equal educational opportunity? Another goal of desegregation was integration. Do the Black students who went through desegregation feel that they contributed to the integration process, or that they were integrated into the White schools? Finally, what was the desegregation process like for these Black students emotionally? This aspect has been virtually ignored in the literature. Society seems to forget that these students were still very young when they went through this experience. Their stories deserve to be told.

As far as this researcher could find, there are no formal accounts from any students who desegregated schools in Southwest Virginia. In a search of dissertations completed at Virginia Tech, the researcher found studies from Danville (Hedrick, 2002), Southampton County (Modlin, 1998), Indian River High School in Chesapeake (Fowler, 1997), Norfolk (Cool III, 1983), and Newport News (Quesenberry, 1977). The studies from Danville, Southampton County, and Chesapeake were about the desegregation of schools in those areas and various people involved in the process were interviewed by the researchers. The studies from Norfolk and Newport News dealt more with the process of implementation of desegregation. An article in the Roanoke Times from 2011 interviewed a few of the nine students who desegregated Roanoke schools in the fall of 1960 (“Roanoke School Integration”, 2011). One of the former students noted that while her experience was nothing like Little Rock, Arkansas, she did remember the day differently than it had been portrayed in the newspaper back in 1960. Her comments suggest that the full story of desegregation in Roanoke has not been told. This in-depth qualitative historical study with these former students as participants provides not only a more complete picture of their experiences, but also an important missing piece of the history of Black schools in Roanoke. As Lichtman and French (1978) have stated, social history “has been a valuable corrective to the predominantly elitist thrust of political history” (Lichtman & French, 1978, p. 111). Finally, the study of these nine students helps provide a more complete picture of desegregation in Virginia.

Virginia was home to massive resistance. The hardline policies set in Southside Virginia seem to be what history remembers of the desegregation period in Virginia. One of the court cases that was combined into *Brown* was *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (1952). After *Brown* was decided, Prince Edward County’s School Board decided to close their schools rather than desegregate them. Black children in that county were denied access to public education for five years. Other localities in Virginia chose to close their schools as well rather than desegregate; Charlottesville, Norfolk, and Warren County schools all closed. The leader of the massive resistance movement, Virginia Senator Harry F. Byrd, even went so far as to try to employ the tactic of interposition in regard to desegregation (Muse, 1961). The idea that a state government can interpose itself between the federal government and the people of a state had not been seen since Civil War times. Virginia politicians enacted several laws designed to circumvent desegregation; the Pupil Placement Board, described above, was one

such tactic. Another tactic employed was the use of a “local option” or “freedom of choice” (Muse, 1961). In this tactic, a local school division could grant students to option of choosing which school they would attend. In reality, few, if any, White students chose to attend Black schools and few Black students chose to attend White schools. Freedom of choice came under attack in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (1968), another Virginia case, when the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that freedom of choice was simply another delaying tactic and ordered New Kent County to convert promptly to a unitary school system, a full 14 years after the initial *Brown* decision. Not all areas of Virginia reacted the same way Southside did, though. The study of the first students to desegregate Roanoke schools provides a more complete picture of the desegregation period in the state.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to explore and document the perspectives of the Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke City schools during the 1960–1961 school year. The study employed qualitative methods, using aspects of historical research and interviews to collect the oral history of the students. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. What were the experiences of the Black students in Roanoke who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools?
2. What support systems assisted these students during their experience?
3. How did their experiences affect these students then and now?

Setting of the Study

The setting for this study is the 1960–1961 school year in Roanoke, Virginia. This was the first year that Black students were allowed to attend previously all-White schools in Roanoke. During the summer of 1960, 39 Black students applied for transfers to all-White schools. At the June 20 School Board meeting, a letter dated May 25, 1960 from Rueben E. Lawson, who was the Roanoke attorney working with the local branch of the NAACP, included the applications for these Black students. Lawson also requested that Roanoke City Public Schools desegregate the school system (Roanoke City School Board Minutes, June 20, 1960). During the August 15, 1960 School Board meeting, the Superintendent, Dr. E. W. Rushton, announced that he had represented Roanoke City Public Schools at a meeting of the State Pupil Placement Board in Richmond that day. The action of the Board had resulted in nine Black students being assigned to previously all-White schools in Roanoke (Roanoke City School Board Minutes, August 15, 1960).

In 1960, Roanoke had six schools for Black students: Lucy Addison High School, Booker T. Washington Junior High School, Gainsboro Elementary School, Gilmer Elementary School, Harrison Elementary School, and Loudon Elementary School. In the days leading up to these students desegregating the all-White schools, Roanoke was still very much a Southern city with its share of racial issues. Potter (1996) described the segregated nature of Roanoke in 1960.

Neighborhoods were segregated. Blacks lived mainly in Northwest Roanoke, while Whites lived in Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast Roanoke. Businesses in the downtown area were segregated as well. Gas stations, water fountains, and streetcars all displayed “Colored” or “White Only” signs.

Mary Hackley was a first year teacher at Hurt Park Elementary School, an all-Black school, in the fall of 1960. She remembered the coming of desegregation to Roanoke schools and recalled thinking about how desegregation was going to affect her personally (M. Hackley, personal communication, January 16, 2013). She remembered attending meetings with White teachers that were orchestrated by the school administration to encourage cooperation and collaboration between them. She also recalled participating in exchange days where she would shadow a White teacher in a White school and then the White teacher would shadow her one day at Hurt Park. Hackley’s observation of the time period was that the success of the interaction depended mainly on the teachers’ attitudes towards the change.

Euphesenia Massey moved to Roanoke in 1956 with her husband, Reverend Raymond R. Wilkinson, when Reverend Wilkinson was called to be the pastor of Hill Street Baptist Church. She described Roanoke as a very traditional town, but also a very friendly town (Massey, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Massey said that Roanoke was a segregated town and that to her, it seemed like a “track town, where (Black) people lived and functioned on one side of town, and the other side of town was for the well-to-do’s” (Massey, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Massey described her then-husband’s approach to bringing the Civil Rights movement to Roanoke. She explained that he did nothing on his own. He worked diligently with the NAACP, his fellow ministers, and the Roanoke City Council to build collaboration, of which one result was the biracial committee.

While the White community in Roanoke might have described themselves as moderates in relation to the issue of civil rights, the Southern segregationist views were evident in the city. In an article that appeared in *Ebony* in February of 1960, author Carl T. Rowan described a letter he had received from a young, White male in Roanoke who claimed to be a moderate. The article was entitled “What White people ask about Negroes” and the young man from Roanoke asked the following three questions:

1. Why do Negroes rely on Supreme Court decisions and legislation for their progress? Isn't it obvious to Negroes that the only way they are going to get any place is to pull themselves up by their bootstraps?
2. Don't you realize that you must learn faster and more than the White man, and that you must invest your money rather than squander it on a Buick out front?
3. Why don't Negroes spend less time griping and more time in libraries and night schools? (Rowan, 1960, p. 93)

Rowan's insightful reaction to these questions was that if these so-called moderates would take the time to get to know Black people and the injustices Blacks faced on a daily basis, these moderates might just be able to stand up and help fight against those injustices.

Newspaper articles from the time period similarly reveal a bias against desegregation that was evident in the wording of the articles. An editorial that appeared in *The Roanoke Times* on September 7, 1960, "Orderly Integration in Roanoke", stated that "race mixing in the classrooms is not approved by the majority of citizens" (pp. A6) and that "it is by no means clear what degree of integration Roanoke will eventually be required to accept" (pp. A6). Other documents from the time period reveal similar bias. One of the steps required by the Pupil Placement Board for transfer of schools was an interview of the parents of the children requesting transfers. A list of questions the parents had to answer included one question that specifically asked if the reason for transfer request was to "enforce a *so-called* (emphasis added by researcher) 'Constitutional right'" (Virginia Pupil Placement Board, 1960).

The Black community in Roanoke was a cohesive unit. Two elements that played a major part in the strong bonds of the Black community were churches and the Black Parent Teacher Association. According to Potter (1996), "the influence of the church was strong and its ministers were leaders" (p. 18) in the community. Reverend Raymond R. Wilkinson, also a member of the biracial committee and father of two of the first nine to desegregate Roanoke schools, was also the president of the NAACP from the late 1950s through the late 1960s. According to Potter, Wilkinson "served as the primary spokesperson for the needs and concerns" (p.27) of the Black community. The Black Parent Teacher Association, led by A. Byron Smith, also a member of the biracial committee, was a strong advocate for the education of Black students in Roanoke. Booker T. Washington Junior High School and Lucy Addison High School were consistently overcrowded and underfunded. As stated earlier, the amount of money spent

on instruction at the Black schools was less than what was spent at the White schools. Between just these two men, a vast majority of the Black community was well represented. Wilkinson and Smith provided valuable leadership during the desegregation process.

Potter (1996) also attributed a relatively peaceful desegregation to Roanoke's economic history. As a city whose focus had stayed mainly on positive economic growth, businesspeople held important positions within Roanoke. These leaders, both Black and White, knew that in order to continue to attract and grow businesses in Roanoke, the city needed to maintain a positive image. The biracial committee described earlier, made up of important businessmen from both the Black and White communities, proved to be the catalyst for a relatively peaceful desegregation process in Roanoke.

Participants

The participants in this study were the nine Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools. The nine students were from only four different families: Cecelia, Rosalind, and Milton Long; Eula and Darlene Poindexter; Charles and Judith James; and Nadine and Cassandra Wilkinson, who were the daughters of Reverend Raymond Wilkinson, who was a member of the biracial committee as described earlier. Cecelia Long and Eula Poindexter were the oldest of the group; they were assigned to Monroe Junior High School. The other students were assigned to either Melrose Elementary School or West End Elementary School.

Access to three of the participants was negotiated by one of the researcher's examining committee members. Dr. E. Wayne Harris is a native of Salem, Virginia; a graduate of G. W. Carver School, which was the Black school located in Salem; and former Roanoke City Schools Superintendent. Dr. Harris is acquainted with the Long family and was willing to serve as a gatekeeper to these potential participants to assist the researcher in securing their participation in the study. An article that appeared in the Roanoke Times in May of 2011, "Roanoke School Integration: I tried to look like everyone else", identified all nine of the students. Four of the students were interviewed for the article and shared some of their recollections of their first day of school. Cecelia Long, Eula Poindexter, and Cassandra Wilkinson were all quoted in the article. Additionally, enough information was provided in the article to facilitate contact with Eula Poindexter. At the time of the article, she was serving as a School Board member in Prince George's County, Maryland.

During the development of the methodology chapter, with the approval of the chair of the examining committee, the researcher made initial contact with some of the participants. After searching the Prince George's County, Maryland website, an electronic mail address was found for Eula Poindexter, who now goes by the name Amber Waller. A message was sent to her by the researcher describing the nature of the study and inquiring if she might be interested in participating (see Appendix C). A response was received by the researcher indicating that Waller was interested in participating and that provided a phone number to contact her. In this conversation, Waller indicated that she either knew directly how to get into contact with all of the other eight potential participants or knew others who would be able to get into contact with them. Additionally, Dr. Harris provided the researcher with contact information for Rosalind Long and Milton Long. A few days after this information was received, Cecelia Long called the researcher to indicate she was also willing to participate in the study.

A secondary set of participants was used in the study as well. People who were directly involved in these events, who were identified by the primary participants, were interviewed as well. These secondary participants served two purposes. First, they helped to verify events the primary participants discussed and they also helped to provide additional context for the study. During the course of the interviews with the primary participants, one of the questions focused on identifying people who were important to the primary participants in some way during the desegregation experience. The primary participants then served as gatekeepers to these secondary participants.

The secondary participants that were identified by the primary participants included Euphesenia Massey, who is the mother of Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty and Nadine Wilkinson Johnson. Massey was married to Reverend Raymond Wilkinson during the time when Roanoke schools were desegregated. Mary Hackley was another secondary participant identified by one of the participants. Hackley's husband, William "Bill" Hackley, was identified by one of the participants as their "go-to" person when they were in junior high school. When the researcher sought out information about Mr. Hackley from colleagues, it was discovered that Mr. Hackley passed away a number of years ago. However, upon contacting Mrs. Hackley, she indicated she was willing to share some of her memories of the time period. Mrs. Hackley was a teacher and administrator in the Roanoke City school system from 1960 until 2003.

Instrumentation

This study was qualitative in nature. As explained by Merriam (1998), in qualitative research “the key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s” (p. 6). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) likewise described qualitative research as using “people’s words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants” (p. 2). As a result, the primary data source was participant interviews. Interviews helped to directly answer the research questions of the study. As Seidman (2006) stated, the purpose of interviewing is to understand “the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). Interviews were supported with documents, such as newspaper articles from the period, and any documents the participants kept from their experience. Additionally, any artifacts the participants shared, including yearbooks and scrapbooks, were examined as well. By using a variety of data sources, triangulation was achieved. According to Rossman and Rallis (2012) using multiple sources helps to “ensure that you have not studied only a fraction of the complexity that you seek to understand” (p. 54). Toma (2006) similarly stated that triangulation is important not only because it helps establish credibility in the study, but it also helps to tell a more complete story.

The historical nature of the study required the use of historical case study methods. Merriam stated that an historical case study uses “descriptions of institutions, programs, and practices as they have evolved in time” (p. 35). Desegregation occurred differently in different parts of the country at different times. Understanding an event means “knowing the context of the event, the assumptions behind it, and perhaps the event’s impact on the institution or participants” (Merriam, 1998, p. 35). Furay and Salevouris (2000) echoed this point by saying that each historical event is unique and the context helps to explain the event. The desegregation of schools represented an important event in American social history. Lichtman and French (1978) described social history, in part, as reconstructing the lives, thoughts, and feelings of ordinary people. This reconstruction helps society to understand how much life has changed over time and deepens “our understanding of the common humanity of people” (Lichtman & French, 1978, p. 111).

Historians generally rely on a variety of sources and evidence when gathering information. The information gleaned from these sources help reconstruct the past (Furay & Salevouris, 2000). As a result, the historian must be careful in selecting and interpreting sources.

Lichtman and French (1978) stated that historians usually classify their sources as either primary or secondary. Primary sources come directly from the time period being studied. Examples include newspaper articles, government records, and eyewitness accounts. Secondary sources are written after the time period being studied, usually attempting to synthesize many sources of information and provide someone's explanation for why the events occurred the way they did. Lichtman and French (1978) advocate that the historian work with primary evidence as much as possible because "the farther removed his evidence from the event in question, the more likely it will be distorted or biased" (p. 18). From participant interviews, documents, and artifacts, a more complete context of the desegregation of schools in Roanoke was achieved. This study helped to depict a more complete picture of the 1960–1961 school year in Roanoke.

Once the examining committee and the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the proposed study, the participants were contacted either by electronic mail, or by phone, as the researcher was provided with phone numbers and electronic mail addresses for the participants. Please see Appendix D, E, and F for copies of the electronic messages and notes from the phone conversations with some of the participants. As described earlier, one of the researcher's examining committee members, Dr. E. Wayne Harris, provided contact information for the Long siblings and the researcher found an electronic mail address for Eula Amber Poindexter Waller. The participants were formally introduced to the purpose of the study and officially asked if they were willing to participate. Once the participants agreed to be a part of the study, a date, time, and location was arranged for the first interview.

Developing questions for the participants was an extremely important task. As Furay and Salevouris (2000) have stated, "the essence of history is explaining how and why some given event happened as it did" (p. 42). Asking questions helps to accomplish this task. The researcher developed a set of questions with advice from the dissertation committee. The questions were arranged in sections that dealt with different topics, such as family, attendance at all-Black schools, the decision to apply to an all-White school, the experience in a desegregated school, if and/or how the students were supported during the experience, and effects of that experience. The questions were open-ended in nature to allow the researcher to identify additional topics that might have been needed to be further explored in the interview. Seidman (2006) suggested the use of open-ended questions is one of the best ways to "have the participant reconstruct his or her experience" (p. 15). Please see Appendix G for a list of interview questions. An additional

set of questions was developed for the secondary participants. These questions focused on the secondary participants' role in the desegregation of Roanoke schools and the secondary participants' relationship to the primary participants. Please see Appendix H for a list of interview questions for the secondary participants.

The interview questions were field tested before the actual interviews began. The researcher had previously interviewed other research project participants about their schooling experiences. The researcher was part of a team from Virginia Tech that interviewed former students who attended Christiansburg Institute, which was an all-Black school in operation in Christiansburg, Virginia from 1866 until 1966. The school was closed in 1966 so that the schools could be desegregated. Even though the researcher had prior interviewing experience, field testing the interview questions for this study provided valuable information to the researcher. The participants in the field test provided information about the clarity of the questions and were asked to make suggestions for improvements to the wording of the questions. Through the course of the field testing, additional questions were added to ensure a complete picture of the participants schooling experience was recorded. Please see Appendix I for the initial set of interview questions. The field test also helped orient the researcher to the logistics of the interview protocol including recording and reviewing the interview and estimating the length of the interview.

The dialogues with the participants consisted of a preliminary meeting when possible and at least one interview session. Yow (1994) recommended a preliminary meeting to help establish rapport with the participant and to put the participant more at ease with the researcher. Yow's other recommendations for the interviewing process included: careful listening, probing questions, and using artifacts during the interview. Careful listening will help reveal important information about the topic being studied. Additionally, if the researcher is listening carefully to what the participant is saying, unexpected information may be revealed as well. The emergent nature of the interview process may bring to light information and/or themes not previously considered. Careful use of probing questions can help the participants provide information they may not believe to be important. Finally, the use of artifacts, such as yearbooks, during an interview can help to jog the memories of a participant. The researcher already had one yearbook from Monroe Junior High School for the 1960–1961 school year that was used during interviews with the two participants who were at Monroe. All of the interviews were conducted in person

except for two. One of the interviews was conducted by phone and another of the interviews was conducted by electronic mail. Once the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, the transcriptions were sent to the participants for a member check for the participants to elaborate or correct information from the interviews. According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), member checking helps to deal with any bias the researcher may have by allowing participants to “ensure that their perspectives have been recorded accurately” (p. 92). Additionally, member checks also may help reveal information the researcher missed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

IRB Approval and Informed Consent

The Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided approval for the study on May 22, 2013 after an application was made to the Board (see Appendix J). Following IRB procedures helps to ensure that participants are completely aware of what a research project entails and if there are any risks to the participants. Additionally, the participants are made aware that they may withdraw from the study at any time they choose. Because the study may have stirred difficult emotional responses from the participants, it was important that they be aware of that risk before the study began so that they could carefully consider whether they wanted to participate or not. An application was made to the IRB after the prospectus examination was approved by the examining committee. Please see Appendix K for the IRB Informed Consent form. The researcher completed the IRB Human Subjects Protection training module on June 18, 2012. Please see Appendix L for the researcher’s Virginia Tech IRB Training Certificate.

Analysis of Data

Once the data were collected from the participants, analysis began. As Furay and Salevouris (2000) pointed out, the collected interview data are simply source materials, not the final product. “Historians must sift, analyze, and interpret oral sources in precisely the same manner as they would” (Furay & Salevouris, 2000, p. 171) other documents. Qualitative data analysis is more inductive than quantitative data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). An inductive approach to data analysis requires the researcher to examine the data, re-examine the data, and then describe what is learned about the phenomenon under investigation with a minimum of interpretation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Findings are inductively derived from the data and “involves examining the meaning of people’s words and actions” (Maykut &

Morehouse, 1994, p. 121). Rossman and Rallis (2012) offer an eight-phase process of analyzing data. These steps include: (a) organizing the data, (b) becoming familiar with the data, (c) identifying categories, (d) coding the data, (e) generating themes, (f) interpreting, (g) searching for alternative understandings, and (h) writing the report. Although these steps seem simple and linear, they are not. Several researchers (Furay & Salevouris, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2012) agree that data analysis is an on-going process.

In organizing the data, the researcher assigned each participant their own hard copy file. This file included contact information, notes from informal conversations, transcripts from interviews, and any related artifacts the participant provided to the researcher. The files were secured in a locked file cabinet that only the researcher was able to access. Becoming familiar with the data involved reading and re-reading the transcripts of the interviews. All of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Rossman and Rallis (2012) believe that the researcher transcribing their own interviews aids in the familiarization process. Becoming more familiar with the data also facilitated the emergence of categories and themes from the data. Rossman and Rallis believe these two stages are inseparable as “categories contribute to creation of themes and themes suggest further categories” (p. 277). As the transcripts were read and re-read, the researcher looked for the repetition of words and experiences from the participants. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) termed this stage of analysis the “discovery” phase. After reading each transcript, the researcher generated a variety of recurring concepts, phrases, topics, patterns, and themes from the interviews. The transcripts of the interviews were color-coded with different colors representing different themes and categories. The themes from each interview were then compared to themes from other interviews. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) described this process as the constant comparative method.

In the constant comparative method, ideas are selected from the data and are categorized into themes or categories. As more data are analyzed, more ideas are sorted into the themes or categories that are developed. When new ideas do not fit into established themes, new themes are created, established themes are refined, or established themes can be deleted. By using this inductive approach, the data itself reveal important patterns or themes, with minimum interpretation from the researcher (Maycut & Morehouse, 1994).

After themes were developed, the researcher interpreted the themes to make meaning of the participants’ experiences in the desegregation process in Roanoke. This process involved

examining the relationships and patterns across the different themes (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As Furay and Salevouris (2000) explained, interpretation is “the act in which one rises above the details of a given experience and makes a statement that characterizes the entire experience according to its principal elements” (p. 184). Giving voice to the students who were the pioneers in desegregating Roanoke schools will help others understand what that experience was like for these former students. Rossman and Rallis (2012) noted the importance of using thick description to illustrate the story of the participants. Using the details from interviews, information from other documents such as newspaper accounts and school board minutes, and analysis of artifacts such as yearbooks, the significance of these students’ experiences came to light. Another event that occurred during the analysis and interpretation processes was the emergence of alternate understandings. The participants revealed thoughts or ideas that had not been presented in previously reviewed literature or that the researcher was not expecting. A major component of the qualitative research process is its emergent nature. The researcher was open to any alternative understandings that came from the data and documented them in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

This chapter details the perspectives of the nine Black students who were the first to desegregate schools in Roanoke during the 1960–1961 school year. The nine students represented only four families: the James family, the Long family, the Poindexter family, and the Wilkinson family. The student perspectives are presented by family, in alphabetical order. Within each family section, a description of the family is presented first, followed by each individual participant’s story with the oldest sibling presented first, followed by the younger sibling(s). During the interviews with the participants, each participant was asked to describe their family and their early life with their family. As most of the family information was similar from each sibling, the researcher decided to combine this information to present a more complete picture of each family.

Interviews were arranged with the participants as the researcher was able to contact each participant and as the participants’ schedules and the researcher’s schedule would allow. Eula Poindexter, who now goes by her middle name and her married name, Amber Waller, was the first participant to be contacted. Waller was interviewed in Roanoke on July 5, 2013, in the researcher’s office. Milton Long was interviewed on July 13, 2013, at his home outside of Charlotte, North Carolina. Cecelia Long was interviewed on July 19, 2013, at her office in Dayton, Ohio. Nadine Wilkinson Johnson was interviewed on August 31, 2013, at the public library in Mt. Rainier, Maryland. A phone interview was conducted with Darlene Poindexter Turner on September 6, 2013. Judy James Jones was interviewed on September 8, 2013, at her home in Roanoke, Virginia. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty was interviewed on September 14, 2013, at her home outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rosiland Long Mitchell responded to interview questions through electronic mail on September 24 and 27, 2013. Finally, Charles James was interviewed on December 6, 2013, at his office in Richmond, Virginia.

While the participants now reside in a variety of places, their common experience as being part of the group of Black students that were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools binds them together. Together, their stories provide valuable insight into a small part of schools and Black family life in Roanoke in 1960. The remainder of this chapter focuses on those stories.

The James Family

Charles James and Judith James Jones grew up on Salem Avenue in Southwest Roanoke. James is the oldest of four siblings, Jones is second oldest, and the family included a younger sister, Cynthia, and a baby brother, David. Their parents were Robert Arrington James, Jr. and Bernice C. James. Mr. James worked for Norfolk and Western Railroad when the children were young and Mrs. James was a homemaker. While working for the railroad, Mr. James began attending seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia, using his railroad employee's pass to ride back and forth to classes in Lynchburg. James remembered their father becoming a pastor when James was about 12 years old, but he continued working for the railroad at night, while attending to pastorate duties during the day (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

Both James and Jones discussed the importance of faith to their family. In addition to their father being a pastor, their grandfather was also a pastor. Jones said they grew up in the church and that she had a happy childhood. She described her childhood as "sort of sheltered" (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013) and that she knew she was expected to "do what God says we need to do" (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). James said he was taught that his identity was based upon "being children of God, and when it comes to that, the rest of it pales by comparison, no pun intended" (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). James described himself and his siblings as "church-attending, obedient kids" (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He laughingly explained that "we had to be obedient because anything we did away from home was known at home before we returned home" (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

The family lived next door to relatives; the Coles family, a great-uncle and great-aunt and their child, who Jones described as her best friend. Jones remembered that "our street was particularly tight and close" (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). She said that most people on the street had the same value system and that "it [the neighborhood] was just happy" (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). James said there was a vacant lot on the other side of their house. He explained that it was overgrown but a perfect place to build forts, dig holes, and a place where they just had fun. James also remembered a family on the block they often played with who had a walnut tree and an apricot tree in their yard. He recalled eating a lot of apricots when the fruit was in season. There was another family further down the street with two daughters, but James remembered that most of the families on the block

were older. He also recalled that Brenson and Jack Long lived about two blocks away, and that he ended up going to high school with them when the Longs were allowed admission to the White schools a year or two after James.

Both James and Jones remembered that two streets behind their street was where the White neighborhood began, on Patterson Avenue. James said that at Patterson, “all the way from there to the Roanoke River was White” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). James and Jones both said they did not interact with any White children that may have lived near them. As James explained, “we lived in separate worlds” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). James did recall that he was allowed to go to the drugstore that was on the border of the Black and White streets and that White teenage boys hung out there. He said he knew he was supposed to go straight to the drugstore and then return directly home, but that sometimes he would linger to observe the “boys with the motorcycle jackets, the Marlon Brando-look . . . ready to run if necessary, but I never did have to run” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

The family’s interactions with White people also included trips downtown to various department stores and Mr. James’s sideline work with Dr. Groseclose, an obstetrician/gynecologist in Roanoke. James remembered “casual, quick transactions” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013) with merchants in stores such as Heironimus and Miller & Rhodes. He said that even though he did not recall ever having negative interactions with merchants, he did believe that his parents had probably protected him and his siblings from any negative comments or interactions their parents were aware of, but that the children never knew about. Both James and Jones recalled their father doing odd jobs for Dr. and Mrs. Groseclose. Jones remembered that the Groseclose family lived in the Belle Aire neighborhood of South Roanoke. She remembered that she and her siblings would go with their father sometimes and that Mrs. Groseclose would serve them tea and cookies. James remembered that it was not unusual for their father to cut the grass at the Groseclose home, shower, and then serve at dinner parties for the family. Jones also recalled that their mother would serve at some of the parties as well. James also stated that when he became a little older, he worked for the Grosecloses as well.

Both James and Jones knew that education was important to their family. They both described how their grandfather, A. L. James, was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute. James also

thought their great-grandfather may have been a Tuskegee graduate as well. James and Jones were taught that a good education was important for success in the world. Jones discussed how her family taught her that “if you’re going to succeed, you’re going to need certain things” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013), while James said, “we understood that at that time, we viewed education as the single most important thing for success; the single most important thing in the secular sense” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). They also saw this lived out for them while they were young when their father was earning his degree from seminary while working another job and raising a family. James and Jones both discussed how they were not surprised when their family decided they would apply to be among the first to desegregate the schools in Roanoke. In addition to the importance their family placed on education, both siblings also described how their family had been involved in civil rights issues for quite some time.

A. L. James, James’s and Jones’s grandfather, was originally from Florida. Jones described how her grandfather moved to Virginia because of racial issues in Florida. She said that her grandfather told her that after he saw one of his family members lynched, he decided to move away from the Deep South. He then became involved in several civil rights issues of the day. James described how his grandfather was actively registering Black people to vote and that he was involved in “integrating the lunch counters and so forth in Knoxville, Tennessee” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). The elder James pastored a church in the Knoxville area for many years. James and Jones both stated that they were aware of the issues Black people faced. Jones said she “did hear stories of what happened and what was happening locally, or what happened on a job, but the real horrid stuff, they kind of shielded me from that” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). James also said he was aware of current events like “George Wallace standing in the doorway, and Medgar Evers, and all those things” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013), but that he never had a sense of fear in Roanoke. He described race relations in Roanoke as good, but that “everybody knew what the rules were; but I would say it wasn’t as stark as it was in other places, for whatever reason” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

James and Jones described a strong, Christian family background where they were taught the importance of religion and education. While their father was the leader of the home, their mother held just as important a role. James described their father as the protector, living up to his

nickname of The Bear. And while their “mother was quiet compared to him outside the house, she ruled the house” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Both James and Jones described themselves as good children growing up. They knew their family was well-known in the community, and as James described, “the whole family’s reputation rested on everything you said and did” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). They also were not strangers to civil rights issues of the day. Being familiar with their grandfather’s involvement in various activities, when the time came for them to be among the first to desegregate schools in Roanoke, they were well prepared.

Charles James

Charles James attended Loudon Elementary School, an all-Black school, for the first through fifth grades. His overall remembrance of Loudon was that “it wasn’t terribly different from West End in some respects” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013) (see Appendix M). He specifically recalled that the outdoor playground areas were similar. He also remembered the principal at Loudon, Mr. Coleman. He stated that Mr. Coleman was “a gentle giant” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013) and that he attended the same church the James’s’ attended, High Street Baptist Church. Two other events he remembered from Loudon included his participation in a spelling bee and trying to write left-handed in a desk meant for right-handed students. James recalled participating in a spelling bee where he was one of the final two contestants along with a young lady. He remembered that his last word was automatic, and that if he spelled the word correctly, he would win the spelling bee. But, he had a crush on the young lady, and he laughingly recalled purposefully misspelling the word so she would win. He also remembered that as a left-handed student, he had difficulty writing correctly because most of the desks in his classroom were built for right-handed students. He believed he must have made mention of the difficulty at home and that his father made a trip to the school to inform his teacher that she needed to find an appropriate desk for his left-handed son. A desk was quickly found for James. James believed this story was just one example of his family’s commitment to education.

James clearly remembered being asked by his parents if he wanted to be among the first Black students to desegregate the schools in Roanoke. James recalled going to one or two meetings where people talked with families who were interested in their children applying to go

to all-White schools. He felt that the people talking to them may have been NAACP leaders and/or pastors from Roanoke. He remembered a presentation being made about why they were desegregating the schools, and what they might expect as part of the process. He did not remember being an active participant in the meeting; he recalled listening to the presentation and then being asked by his parents if this was something he was willing to do. James knew that his grandfather had been involved in desegregation efforts, such as the lunch counters in Knoxville as described earlier, and he felt that being involved in “freedom-related efforts” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013) was “normal and natural; it was not a big deal, actually” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He also stated that he had been known to be somewhat adventurous and that he was not scared of going to an all-White school. So, he told his parents that he would be willing to apply for admission to an all-White school.

James recalled that there was nothing unusual about getting ready for school that first year he was going to West End Elementary School, an all-White school prior to 1960. He remembered going to the school before school started to tour the building, and recalled that his mother went with him for that visit. He also recalled that his father took him to school sometime after the tour and met with the principal. James was 11 years old on that first day of school. He remembered that he rode to school in a car that first day with other children. He believed that it was quite possible that Mrs. Poindexter, Waller and Turners’ mother, drove him to school (see Appendix N). He remembered seeing a crowd of White people on the sidewalk as they approached the school, and recalled there was some tension because his group was not quite sure what the crowd would do when they got out of the car. He remembered the media being there; he distinctly remembered hearing the cameras click as they took pictures, and seeing some of the reporters with microphones. James said as his group got out of the car and walked toward the school, the crowd was not hostile towards him and he then believed that most of them “were just curiosity seekers” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Once he got into the school, James said he went to his classroom, but could not recall if he entered the room before or after all of his classmates. He said the main event that stood out in his memory of that first day of school was going through the crowd to get into the school.

James said he had no apprehension during those first few days of school at West End. He did not remember “anything wonderfully good or terrible” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He felt that he was just going to school and that after the first day with the

media, the novelty wore off and he and his classmates were “just kids; and we did the normal things that kids do” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). James remembered that at recess, the boys would play softball out on the playground. He recalled one game in particular where he was sent to the outfield and that near the end of the game a ball was hit straight towards him. He said the ball went right through his hands and hit him dead center in the chest, but that he was still able to grab the ball. The batter was out, and his team won the game. He then laughingly said “I thought I was out too, because the ball had hit me in the sternum” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). James remembered this kind of interaction with his peers within the school but said that he did not see his White classmates socially outside of school. He felt that the distance between his neighborhood and the neighborhood around the school where most of his classmates lived prevented him from playing with his classmates. He did recall that he interacted socially with White classmates later on, when he was in high school.

James did not participate in any extracurricular activities while he was at West End. He said there simply were not many activities available but his status a “new kid, and, I was (only) there for one year” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013) limited his participation. Additionally, the fact that he lived further away from the school prevented him from staying after school. James’s one year at West End, other than the specific incidences mentioned above, did not stand out in his mind as “anything wonderfully good or terrible. I don’t remember any extremes, so to speak, like name calling or shoving or stares. They all may have occurred, but time has erased them if they were there” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

When James finished the sixth grade at West End, he went on to Monroe Junior High School for his seventh, eighth, and ninth grade years. After Monroe, he went to Jefferson High School, from which he graduated. He remembered that his younger sister, Judy, went to Lee Junior High School when she finished at West End Elementary. He believed he went to Monroe, rather than Lee because Lee had not been desegregated that first year and he very likely would have been the only Black student at that school. At Monroe, Waller and Long were entering their second year of school there when James entered the seventh grade, and a few more Black students were admitted to the White schools for the 1961–1962 school year. James recalled that his junior high and high school career was spent focusing on academics; “I was a scholar, or a bookworm, or a nerd, or whatever” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He

remembered that Brenson and Jack Long convinced him to try out for the basketball team at Monroe one year, to which he hesitantly agreed, but was not surprised when he did not make the team. James said he was more involved in a film club where he and a few other students were allowed to bring movie projectors into the classroom and show movies. He said he did not participate in after-school activities because the distance of the school to his home was again an issue. James recalled that he would often walk home from school in good weather, a distance of about two miles. He explained that there were no school buses that went to his neighborhood and that “in those days, people walked. Cars were a luxury and kids walked” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

James could only recall one negative interaction with a White peer while he was in school. He remembered a boy bullying him and they eventually “had to take it outside, as males do” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He said he knew he could not beat the boy physically, as he was “bigger and stronger and probably quicker than I was” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013), but that he could use his quick wit to outsmart the boy. James recalled asking his teacher if he could leave a few minutes early on the appointed day of the altercation and proceeded to get outside before the other boy did. James caught the boy off guard when he came out of the school and in the ensuing confrontation, was able to get the advantage. After that incident, James did not have to prove himself and no one ever bullied him again.

Other than that one negative interaction, James could not recall any other negative experiences during his schooling career. He said he never experienced any teasing from neighborhood children about attending an all-White school. He did recall that some of his neighborhood friends would chide him about thinking he was better than they were, but he felt that was more from his family’s position in the community, rather than him attending a desegregated school. James pointed to his grandfather’s stature in the community, he served on the Selective Service Board as well as being a pastor, and his father’s position as a pastor as well. James felt that other Black people would not have made negative comments to him about his schooling experience for those reasons. As a result, James did not feel that he needed support from anyone during his first few years at a desegregated school. He said “it wasn’t strange, it wasn’t fearful” (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013) and that his family had always been supportive of him regardless. He felt there was most likely a sense of pride from his

family that he and his sister were participating in the desegregation of schools in Roanoke, especially given their grandfather's civil rights efforts.

James said he was grateful to have been part of the desegregation of schools in Roanoke, but felt that his role was not that influential. He felt interacting with White students and teachers had given him "an early start, a jump, in terms of relating to people who are culturally different" (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013), but that others who had desegregated schools in much more difficult conditions in other areas of the country had done the real work of desegregation. He described his feelings with this analogy:

I am grateful to have been part of it, but I think it was much like plowing the field the second time. The first time you plow a field, you probably break the plow on rocks, hidden rocks, in the ground, so I had it easy. The field had to be plowed, but I was not the first plower, although I was one of the first students. The real work, the hard and heavy lifting, had been done by others and had been done in places where the ground was much harder than it was in Roanoke. (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

When asked if he would characterize his schooling experience as positive or negative, James replied "It definitely was not negative. What could I say that would make it positive? Nothing bad happened, so let's go with positive" (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He also said that he had not given much thought to his role in the desegregation of schools in Roanoke over the years, most likely because he felt he "didn't pay a price. Others paid a price, I didn't, I got a free ride" (James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). James's perception of his role in the desegregation of schools seemed to come from his family's strong belief in the value of education and other family member's participation in civil rights work; what might have been extraordinary for others was commonplace for a member of the James family. James's upbringing instilled in him that his actions always reflected on his family and that he was always expected to do the best that he could. His modest acknowledgement of his part in an important piece of the history of education seems to indicate that he would be carrying on the James family tradition.

Judith James Jones

Judy Jones remembered attending kindergarten at the YMCA in Gainsboro. She recalled that there were approximately 30 students in the class and that everyone, the students and their

parents, was a close-knit group. The year Jones was ready to enter the first grade was 1960, which meant that she would be the youngest of the group of students who would desegregate Roanoke schools. She became the first Black student in Roanoke to attend desegregated public schools her entire school career. As she was preparing for her first day of school at West End Elementary School, Jones remembered shopping with her mother for new clothes and having her hair fixed. She said she knew she wanted to look her best for that first day. Jones recalled being nervous about the beginning of school, mostly because she did not know what to expect. She said she was not nervous about the race issue, but was more nervous about simply interacting with her new peers. She said she thought more in terms of “I just want to find a little friend at school, and who’s going to sit beside me, and where’s my desk going to be; more that kind of tension leading up to school” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013).

Jones was six years old on her first day of school at West End. She recalled her mother helping her get ready, packing her lunch, and her mother telling her how the day was most likely going to go for her, in terms of what was going to happen and when. Her father drove her and her brother to school. This was the second day of school for Charles James as the first graders started a day later than all the other students (see Appendix N). When they arrived at the school, her father accompanied her inside and they went to the principal’s office. She remembered seeing photographers standing on the sidewalk at the school, but that she and her father just quickly walked by them to get into the school. Jones remembered that her father and Bristow Hardin, the principal, met briefly and then her teacher came to the office to meet her and take her to the classroom. She remembered walking into her class and sitting in a desk that was close to the front of the room. Jones recalled that there were “not any incidents; I think I was so nervous about having a desk and pencil box and all that, (but) it went pretty smooth that first day” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013).

Jones recalled that the physical layout of West End was that of a multistory building. She believed there were at least four floors, with the bottom floor being underground so it could serve as a fall-out shelter. She remembered that the cafeteria was on the bottom floor as well and recalled that there always seemed to be a lot of stairs that she had to climb. Jones said the lower grades were on the lower floors while the upper grades were on the upper floors. Jones also remembered a class for children with disabilities being on the bottom floor. She recalled a Black woman named Janie who worked with those students. She could not remember Janie’s last name.

Jones said that as time went on, Janie became her “go-to” person and that she was “the only other Black face I remember seeing” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones remembered that she would go and see Janie first thing in the morning and Janie would ask how Jones was doing and that Janie would come to her classroom and check on her from time to time.

Most of the students in Jones’s class were accepting of her. Jones remembered making friends with peers and the teacher fairly quickly. She said she could not remember feeling as though anyone did not want her at West End. Jones did recall “a few issues with some kids that got straightened out; and mostly it was boys, not girls” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). She remembered one boy in her class in particular that “was calling me names and stepping on the back of my heel in line and he wouldn’t stop” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones said she did not tell the teacher about the incident but that she did mention it to her parents at home. She recalled that her father accompanied her to school the next day and that the boy was brought in to the office and told that his behavior was not going to be tolerated. Jones said she never had an issue with him again after that. She also remembered that there would be issues on the playground sometimes where some of the White children would not play with her but that she did not let that bother her and would go find something else to do. She said “I didn’t really take it to heart; there were enough people and enough kids that would play” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013).

Jones felt that she did not really know how to deal with negative interactions, other than to just ignore them. She said she did not tell her teacher when other children behave negatively, but that her parents told her she would need to do that and not wait until she got home to tell them. She said “I wasn’t a real aggressive person so I just, you know, kept it in, took it home” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). She also believed that she was comfortable enough playing on her own not to let negative incidents bother her. She said she “just went on and did something else; I have kind of a loner personality and I can just do something else and not be devastated” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones said interactions like that occurred throughout her six years at West End “off and on, where people said, ‘don’t play with her, she’s not White, she’s a darkie’” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013) but that she always managed to find peers that would play with her. She did remember that she had very few Black peers while she was at West End. Once her brother left

after the first year, Jones said “it was pretty lonely I had no one that I felt like, I’ve got a brother of a sister here, or a best friend here” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Hurt Park Elementary School was built while Jones was at West End and her younger sister and brother attended there rather than West End with Jones.

Jones recalled that she did develop fairly close friendships with some of her peers by the time she was in the third grade. She remembered an Asian girl, and two White girls. She remembered that these friends lived near West End, right behind the school or in the same block as the school. Jones recalled that her parents allowed her to go visit these friends at their homes but that they never visited her at her home. Jones reflected that she felt the process of building friendships with her peers was more difficult for her in a desegregated setting than it may have been in an all-Black school. She said “I think that that part of integration kind of hurt the African American community because we were dispersed in so many different areas that you lost the bonding and the life-long friendship type of thing, ‘well I’ve been with her since 2nd grade’, I didn’t have that” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013).

Although Jones remembered Janie as one of the adults working at West End, she could not recall any of her teachers’ names from the school. She did remember the principal, Bristow Hardin. She remembered him as “being a very easy person to talk to, he was kind of like a big teddy bear-type of principal. I liked him, I felt comfortable with him” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones believed that her parents had a good rapport with Hardin and that he communicated with them frequently. She felt that he “set the standard for that school and that probably was why that was one of the ones picked” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013) to be one of the first schools to desegregate. Jones also remembered that Hardin checked on her throughout that first year. She remembered that he would ask her how she was doing when he would see her in the hallway and that he came around to her classroom to observe once in a while. Jones felt that Hardin’s presence was felt throughout the school.

Studying and doing well in school were important to Jones while in elementary school and beyond. Jones remembered making good grades in her classes and felt that she had been prepared academically, probably as a result of her kindergarten experience and her family’s attitude towards education. She remembered that her teachers always made positive comments on her report cards. Jones recalled her parents telling her that she went to school to learn and

nothing much else mattered. She also remembered her parents telling her not to expect to learn about her own culture, but to just learn as much as she could. She remembered her mother helping her with her homework in the afternoons and that her mother was very involved in her education, attending PTA meetings frequently. Overall, she believed that her years at West End went well for her. She attributed that specifically to “a lot has to do with, I think, the attitude that you go in with and your own self-esteem that you have when you were put into that situation” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013).

Family provided support for Jones during her first year at West End Elementary. When she experienced negative interactions with peers, her parents helped her by telling her that she should not worry about the incident. She remembered them telling her ““if you haven’t done anything wrong, stand your ground, be respectful, you should tell your teacher, don’t wait til you get home . . . and then if there’s nothing done, then yes, you should go to the principal”” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones also recalled that her father would make a trip to the school to talk with the principal if he felt he needed to address the situation. Jones also recalled that even though she had a few negative interactions, they never made her not want to go to school. She said she would avoid people who had been negative towards her but that she did not let negative interactions bother her. Jones also believed that the principal, Bristow Hardin, supported her as well by making sure that her school year ran smoothly.

When Jones finished the sixth grade at West End Elementary School, the desegregation process had been in effect long enough for Jones to go to the junior high school that corresponded with her residence. Unlike her older brother, who started at Monroe Junior High School during the second year of desegregation in Roanoke, Jones went to Lee Junior High School. Jones remembered that she was able to “meet up with the kids that lived in my neighborhood” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013) at Lee. Jones felt like she had more racial issues in junior high, both with Whites and Blacks. She remembered that when issues arose, she would go to William Hackley, the one Black teacher at Lee Junior High. She felt he served as a liaison for the Black students and would talk to the principal who would work with Hackley to resolve issues. Mary Hackley, William Hackley’s widow, recalled that her husband was the type of teacher that students “just gravitated towards” (M. Hackley, personal communication, January 16, 2014) and was not surprised that he would have assisted Jones while she was at Lee Junior High. Jones recalled having negative interactions with White peers who

did not want Black students at their school. The negative interactions with her Black peers stood out more to her though. She remembered some of her Black peers chiding her about thinking she was better than they were or that she must want to be White. She felt negative interactions with her Black peers were more hurtful to her than negative interactions with White peers.

In addition to her positive interactions with Hackley, Jones remembered other teachers at Lee that she liked but that there were also others who “just were going through the motions” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones said she would just do what was required of her by her teachers and tried to make the best of every situation. She also became involved in sports and other extracurricular activities while at Lee. She was a cheerleader, was the first Black student on the tennis team, and was captain of the volleyball team. Jones recalled that some people tried to dissuade her from playing sports and that others might have felt a Black student would not make the teams, but she said “I was fearless. ‘I’m going to try out, I like sports’” (J. Jones, personal communication, September, 8, 2013). Additionally, Jones was also the first Black Dogwood Princess from Lee Junior High and remembered that she got to ride in a parade through Vinton, a smaller town adjoining Roanoke and host of the Dogwood Festival.

When Jones finished the ninth grade at Lee Junior, she went to Jefferson High School for one year. Her family then moved to Northwest Roanoke and she transferred to William Fleming High School in 1970 for her last two years of high school. Jones said she did not have a good experience at William Fleming. She remembered one racially motivated incident in particular that occurred at the school and that “it was horrible” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). She recalled that Black students from Lucy Addison High School were merging with White students from Breckinridge Junior High School and that “it just all boiled over” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones remembered that there were other race relations issues going on in the country at that time; she said “race relations were really in a bad spot at that point in time” (J. Jones, September 8, 2013). The early 1970s was also the time period when Roanoke City was completing its desegregation process, which may have been the cause of some of the racial issues within the schools.

As Jones looked back on her schooling experience, she said that overall, it was a positive experience for her and she was glad to have been part of the first group of students to desegregate the schools in Roanoke. She did acknowledge though that she saw both a good side and a down side to her experience. As for the good side, Jones said the experience shaped the

person she became and that it made her a stronger person. She also believed that going to school in a desegregated setting helped her to be able to live, work, and develop positive relationships with people of different cultural backgrounds. Jones said she has always had friends from different races than her own. As for the down side, Jones said that she never learned any of the positive aspects of Black culture in school and that she has been able to see, over the years, that she has a different mindset than some of her Black friends who attended all-Black schools. Finally, she believed that Black students lost a lot when they were not taught by Black teachers who could be role models for them and mentor them. Jones wondered if, during the process of desegregating schools, Black leaders considered that there would be losses for Black children. She said, “I don’t know, maybe back then they were just so glad it was going to get the books they need and whatever else, but, you know, you just wonder, where was that voice?” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Jones knew that schools had to be desegregated, she just wished the process had fostered more integration than simple desegregation.

The Long Family

Cecelia Long, Rosiland Long Mitchell, and Milton Long lived on Moorman Avenue in Northwest Roanoke. The Long siblings have a younger sister, Marsha, who was not old enough to attend school when Roanoke schools desegregated in 1960. Their parents were George and Arletha Long. Mr. Long worked primarily for Norfolk and Western Railroad in the foundry, and had a second job at the Hotel Roanoke, serving in the dining room. Mrs. Long was a homemaker until all the children were in school, and then she went to work for Sears department store. All of the Long siblings remembered their parents being hard working individuals who wanted the best for their children.

The Long siblings remembered living on Salem Avenue in Southwest Roanoke until about 1959, when they moved to Moorman Avenue. Cecelia and Milton recalled that when they moved to Moorman Avenue, there were some White families who lived along the street. Milton described their neighborhood as in between the 15th and 20th blocks of Moorman Avenue, north toward Essex Avenue and south toward Loudon Avenue. He said this area “was our world . . . and everybody kind of knew everybody” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Cecelia remembered that they played outside a lot as children, primarily because their father would come home and nap in between his two jobs. Rosiland also recalled this, saying that “we

were very accustomed to knowing that we had to be quiet after school, when Daddy was taking his nap” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Cecelia and Milton recalled playing typical children’s games such as dodge ball, jacks, hide and seek, and riding their bicycles around the neighborhood. Rosiland remembered that she “played school all the time at home and forced my younger brother and sister to be my students” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Cecelia also remembered that they had a sandbox that was filled with dirt instead of sand and she and Rosiland would make mud pies. The Long siblings played with other Black children in the neighborhood but did not interact with the White children who lived along their street. Milton recalled that as time went on, several years after school desegregation began, some White children would play with the Black children in the neighborhood, but for the most part, “it wasn’t like that, it was still ‘you got your side, we got our side’, you know, it was still that way in the early years” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

All of the Long siblings remembered that their parents were very involved in their lives. They knew their father worked hard, at more than one job, to provide for them, and that their mother ran an organized household. Rosiland even remembered that once her mother started working, when all of the children were in school, “she made sure we had a home-cooked dinner, and our laundry was clean, our house was clean, and we got our homework done” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). The siblings also recalled that it was their mother that made sure they were at church every Sunday. Rosiland said “I can’t remember a time when she didn’t teach at Sunday school” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013) and Milton laughingly remembered that they would go to church no matter what the weather was like. He recalled her saying, “I don’t care if there’s nobody there, I don’t care if it’s cold; when we get there, we get there. Let’s go!” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Milton believed her attitude towards church was a good representation of her attitude towards life. He felt she had a “quiet resolution about herself that when she said, ‘this is right,’ then this is what you’re going to do . . . her resolve was powerful” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

The Long siblings were also very aware of the difference between adult conversations and children conversations. Each of the Long siblings mentioned that they knew there were conversations going on between their parents about school desegregation, and their ultimate

participation in the process, but that the information shared with them was only what they needed to know and was information that was not to be questioned. Milton spoke specifically about how his mother always told him the reason they were going to go to Melrose Elementary, the all-White school, rather than Loudon Elementary, the all-Black school, was because Melrose was only two blocks from their house, it was closer than Loudon. He later believed that she really wanted the best education for them and felt they could get that at Melrose. Milton felt his mother also was probably not happy with the fact that Loudon only offered a half day of school for first graders because the school was so crowded. He concluded by saying that even though she had all of these reasons, the only reason he was told, as a child, was that he was going to Melrose simply because it was closer to his home. Cecelia explained that “most times we were basically not privy to adult conversations was one thing I knew” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She knew the “adults were up to something, and hey, that’s their thing ... we didn’t focus on that” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) as children. Rosiland explained that “my parents ... just said ‘the schools are closer to our house’, so why shouldn’t we go? We, as kids, just knew we had to go where our parents told us to go” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013).

Education was also very important to the Long family and each of the children knew that. All of the Long siblings reported that they were told “school is your job” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013; M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013; R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013) multiple times throughout their childhood. Milton reported that “education was very, very important to my family; my mother drove that ship” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He said their father expected good grades from them and that they do their best in school. Cecelia remembered that as children, “we had a few little chores in the house, but our job was to go to school” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She also remembered that she was expected to do the best she could do in school. Likewise, Rosiland remembered that “we were to respect the teachers and not give them any reason to report negatively to our parents. A good report card was expected!” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Rosiland believed that the reason why her parents wanted them to get a good education was “so that we could prosper as adults. They always wanted a better life for us than they had” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013).

The Long siblings grew up in a home where they knew their parents expected the best from them. They were expected to get a good education so that they might be successful, prosperous adults. Their mother was a strong influence in their lives. She ran an organized household and made sure they were well provided for even when she went to work outside of the home once the children were a little older. Milton in particular described his mother's strong but quiet determination. He remembered that once she made her mind up that something was to be done, "she didn't have to say another word; we're going to do it and it's just that simple" (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Mrs. Long's determination that her children would attend desegregated schools was realized when three of her four children were among the first Black students to attend desegregated schools in Roanoke during the 1960–1961 school year.

Cecelia Long

Cecelia Long remembered her first day of first grade at Loudon Elementary School. She recalled wearing black and white saddle oxfords, a white shirt, and a skirt that had red, white, and black stripes on it. Long also recalled that she had the same teacher for the first and second grades, Ms. Ida B. McNorton, and that she liked McNorton because she "never yelled and screamed, but always seemed to have the kids in the palm of her hand" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She also remembered her third grade teacher, Ms. Lipscomb. Long recalled that some of the girls in her class had taken an interest in cooking and Ms. Lipscomb invited them to her home where she taught them some basic cooking skills. After the fifth grade at Loudon, the Long family moved to Moorman Avenue in Northwest Roanoke and Long had to attend Harrison School for her sixth grade year. She remembered that she had to try and make new friends, but only being there for one year made that somewhat difficult. Long also remembered that it was during her sixth grade year that her parents decided they would apply for their children to go to desegregated schools. Long recalled that part of the discussion involved the fact that the desegregated schools were closer to their house than the all-Black schools. She also remembered that her parents worked with the NAACP to submit their applications.

When her parents made the decision that Long and her siblings would apply to attend desegregated schools, Long said her parents simply told her they were putting their names in and that was about the end of the conversation. She recalled that her father told her that he thought it

would be better for them to go to a school closer to where they lived. Long said she did not ask many questions about this decision, partly because she knew it was not her place as a child to ask questions of her parents about their decisions, and partly because she knew she was going to change schools at the end of the year anyway, as she would move up from Harrison to Booker T. Washington Junior High. Long also remembered that during her sixth grade year, she was involved with her youth group from church and that they met with other church youth groups from around the city, some of whom included White students. So, she did have some experience interacting with White students. For the most part though, Long just knew that her parents had made a decision and she was going to do what her parents told her to do.

Long was 12 years old in the fall of 1960. She would begin the school year at Monroe Junior High School, along with Eula Amber Poindexter, the two oldest of the group of Black students that were desegregating Roanoke's schools. Long remembered that she wanted to walk to school on the first day, but her mother would not allow that. Mrs. Long made arrangements for Long to ride to school with the Poindexters, at least for the first few days of school. Long recalled that she thought it was odd that the Poindexters would pick her up because "they're coming from Southwest (Roanoke); I'm over here in Northwest, and I thought that was a big difference" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She remembered shopping for new clothes for school and that the dress she chose to wear for the first day was a John Meyer brand dress she bought at Sidney's clothing store. Long also remembered meeting with some adults, possibly NAACP members, who talked with some of the Black students about what they might encounter and that they should not respond negatively if anyone made negative comments to them. She believed that these adults met only with her, Eula Poindexter, and Charles James, as they were the older ones in the group. Long said she remembered thinking "okay, can't say anything back; ... (but) I couldn't think of what people would be saying anyway" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

September 7th, 1960 was the first day of school for Long at Monroe Junior High School. Long said she had set a schedule in her mind of when she believed she needed to leave home in order to get to school on time. She then laughingly described that, according to that schedule, the Poindexters "were late. I had already decided when I was going to leave and when I was going to arrive at that school" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long also remembered that as they approached the school, perhaps a block away, she thought she heard people calling

them names, using racial slurs. She did say though, referring to the picture of her and Poindexter waiting on the steps of the school that appeared in the newspaper (see Appendix O), that the scene looked calm. Long did not remember seeing the photographers at the school; she said “I know we walked up the steps and turned around, somebody must have yelled something, because we turned, we were posing” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) for the photograph. She recalled that no one bothered them while she and Poindexter were waiting on the steps and that they went into the building when the school opened.

Long said she could not recall any of her teachers smiling on that first day of school, or issuing any words of welcome. She remembered that the teachers were very matter-of-fact and simply introduced the students to their classes. Long also recalled that when they switched classes and had to walk through the halls, she noticed that the White students did not talk to her and “they were scooting to the other side and avoiding us like we had the plague; and they’d said, ‘eww, cooties’, or whatever the word was at the time” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long also remembered that “it seemed as though the guys were the ones who pushed more and would agitate a bit more” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) in the halls. And once they were in classes, Long said the White students would “scoot their chairs out of the row so they wouldn’t be right behind, or the chair wouldn’t touch” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Even though her first day was not all that positive, Long remembered she thought, “I was basically okay in thinking ‘okay, this is what you go through to integrate schools’” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). When she returned home after her first day at school, she asked her mother how her younger siblings’ day had gone. When her mother told her their day had gone smoothly, Long remembered thinking:

Well, if nobody ever talks to me, that’s okay, I’ll be alright. I’m still alive and I’m studying, doing my job. And I don’t remember complaining to mother and daddy about, ‘why did you make me go through this?’ I tried not to do that because I knew they wanted what they thought was best for me. Rosiland and Milton were fine. So I really was in, in kind of an isolated situation. (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

Long did remember developing relationships with some of the teachers as the school year progressed. The teachers that stood out to her though were not her classroom teachers. She said “those teachers (the classroom teachers) were kind of just not as friendly anyway, I think. Maybe

that's in the day when teachers weren't supposed to be" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long recalled that she always wanted to get her homework done and get it done correctly in case one of the teachers did ever call on her in class to answer a question, but "I don't think that happened many times" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). The teachers that Long did remember were the librarian, Ms. Rumberg, the Bible Club sponsor, Ms. Carnes, and the speech teacher, Mr. Ayers. Rumberg would allow Long to start reading as many books as she wanted to at one time. Long joined the Bible Club her first year at Monroe (see Appendix P), the only club she joined that year. She remembered Carnes as "fairly nice, kind of a quiet woman, not real loud spoken. But she was sweet; she seemed to have a sweet spirit" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long recalled that Ayers told her that her speech pattern had more of a Midwestern accent, rather than a Southern accent. She remembered that he thought she must have been born somewhere else other than Roanoke. Long also remembered that she encountered Ayers again when she went to Hollins College and he was part of the Drama Department faculty.

In addition to the Bible Club, Long also remembered participating in the Future Teachers Club while she was in junior high school. She recalled sometimes having assemblies at school, and she remembered being excited about those assemblies, one in particular was the Honor Society. She hoped that one day her name would be called during one of the assemblies. Long remembered that in her second and third years at Monroe she did start attending dances when there were more Black students at Monroe. She also recalled that the Black students stuck together at the dances and that "we started doing the dances we saw on American Bandstand because those kids in Philly could dance, I mean, I really thought they could dance" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long said she did not attend basketball games or football games while she was in junior high school. She said she believed that was "because those were after school and I think I just didn't have permission to do that" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long also said she did not try out for any extracurricular activities, like the cheering squad, mainly because "I wasn't really interested in sports at that point" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

When Long completed the ninth grade at Monroe Junior High, she moved up to William Fleming High School for the tenth through the twelfth grades. Long felt that her experience at William Fleming was more positive than her experience at Monroe. She attributed that to the fact

that they were older, the Black students and the White students; the campus style lay-out of the school kept them more spread out, which she felt was better; there were more activities that she became involved in, and, therefore, developed more positive relationships with some of the White students. Long did remember that the beginning of her ninth grade year was somewhat of a repeat of her seventh grade year at Monroe in that students who were coming into William Fleming from other junior high schools that were still all-White had to become accustomed to going to school with Black students for the first time. She also remembered that she had to ride the bus to school as William Fleming was too far a distance from her house for her to walk. She recalled that there were still some instances where White students would not sit with her, or they would sit with her for a time until some of the other White students said something to them and then they would ignore Long. Long felt that this level of interaction though was better than it had been at Monroe. She said “there was just a different level, not of acceptance necessarily, but just experience, more than anything” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

In dealing with some of these negative experiences throughout her schooling career, Long said she did not look to anyone for support and just dealt with her feelings herself. The main reason she did not share the negative experiences with her parents was because she “didn’t want them to be upset about the decision they’d made” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) to send her to a desegregated school. She also had been taught by her parents that people who used racial slurs or called others names were just ignorant. Long did remember that the family would talk about how their day had gone at the dinner table each evening, and that she would give “summary kinds of statements” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) and not ever discuss any negative interactions. Finally, Long also knew that her parents expected her to do well in school, it was her job, and that “I was just supposed to do what I was supposed to do” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

Long knew that her participation as one of the first Black students to desegregate Roanoke schools set her apart from others. She saw both positives and negatives about this distinction. On the positive side, she said “my eyes became open to the fact that no matter what color people were, ... there could be kind people whatever their race was” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). As far as the negative outlook on being set apart, Long said that her experience “tended to separate me out from even members of my family. I couldn’t talk to my cousin about her experience at Lucy Addison (High School); it was just very different from

mine” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She also remembered that when she would talk to neighborhood children about school, she noticed that she was not studying the same topics they were and that they had different textbooks than the ones she was using. She recalled that her neighborhood friends would ask questions about what she did for fun at school and that they would be surprised when she did not have any fun activities to report.

While looking back on her experience desegregating the schools in Roanoke, Long said that she could see that the experience was very valuable to her. She believed that the experience helped to push her “to become part of groups that I didn’t really want to be a part of, maybe, because I knew I would not have any friends if I didn’t make some first steps” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She felt that she had learned that she was always going to have to “do a lot more, no matter where I was” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) and that as a result, she has always worked very hard at every job she has had. Long also believed that the experience helped her to be more cognizant of the plight of other people without even knowing what they may have been through or not being able to relate to their exact situation. Today, Long runs a half-way house for women coming out of abusive situations. She believed that her schooling experience prepared her well for this work, even though she said she has never lived through what some of her residents have experienced.

Long also believed that her desegregation experience forced her to “grow up fast” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long said she felt she always had a rather serious personality but that when she went into a school where everyone but one other person was White, she had to learn that the teachers and students who were not accepting of her were not necessarily rejecting her personally, but were basing their actions on what they knew or felt about Black people in general, based on the way they had lived up until that point. She encountered people who judged her based only on the color of her skin and others who were more open-minded. She said “for each person, the search for the truth took different paths” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long felt that her experiences in a desegregated school setting was “the basis for my having broader views of the world” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). She said she realized what kind of effect words and actions could have on people and that she has always tried to be very careful about what she says to people, especially children. She also laughingly explained that she tends to expect others to act “more adult about each situation” (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) and “when

that doesn't happen, I have to ... go back and think, okay, why? Because that's what my expectations were built from and that's what Monroe gave me I think" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

Finally, Long believed that her experience helped her to want to give back to the community in a way that would help other people experience diversity and help others learn to value that diversity. She said she felt that a lack of understanding about people who are different and an unwillingness to even try to understand others are two issues that prevent "a real coming together" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013). Long said that her "story isn't really exciting, it's not any different from what other people go through" (C. Long, personal communication, July 19, 2013) but that the experience of going through desegregation made her feel that she needed to use what she had learned to encourage people to simply try to understand someone who is different from them in an effort to be able to see a real coming together.

Rosiland Long Mitchell

Rosiland Long Mitchell is the second oldest Long sibling. Mitchell's first memory of school was when she was about five years old and was invited to go to kindergarten with one of her friends. As kindergarten was not required at that time, Mitchell was not attending kindergarten but went as a guest of her friend. She remembered being impressed that they had graham crackers and milk as a snack during the day. She attended Loudon Elementary School for the first through fourth grades. Mitchell remembered that she enjoyed her years at Loudon and she developed a love for learning that extended throughout her schooling career. She recalled that she was always involved in school plays and that she was good at art so her teachers would ask her to draw or paint pictures that would be displayed in the classroom or in the hallways. She remembered being in the choir and that she learned how to play the autoharp and the flute in Music class. She recalled that by the time she was in the fourth grade, she was allowed to answer the school phone while the secretary was on her lunch break. She laughingly recalled "I thought I was grown!" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Mitchell also remembered that she was a good student; she made good grades, she never gave her teachers any trouble, and she loved to read.

During her fourth grade year, Mitchell remembered that her parents began talking with her about how they felt she should not have to walk so far to school when there was another

school that was much closer to their house. Loudon Elementary, the all-Black school, was approximately one mile from the Longs' home, while Melrose Elementary, the all-White school, was only two blocks away. Mitchell recalled that "the summer before my fifth grade year, my mother attended lots of meetings to try to get us in schools closer to our house" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). She then remembered that her mother told her that she and her younger brother would be going to Melrose Elementary School for the upcoming school year. She said she "certainly didn't question the decision; kids were kids to me" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013).

In the days leading up to her first day of school at Melrose, Mitchell remembered that she was excited to get new clothes and new school supplies. She said she "always loved the new packs of notebook paper and newly sharpened pencils; I was easy" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). She also recalled being excited that she would only have to walk two blocks to school and that her mother had told her she was going to walk with Mitchell and her brother to school for the first day "in case there was any trouble" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Mitchell said she could not imagine what kind of trouble her mother could be talking about, but that she did not focus too much on that thought. Mitchell also remembered that her mother told her that some of the students at Melrose "might not be so friendly, but that we should ignore them and just do our schoolwork" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Her father echoed her mother's sentiment by telling her that if some of the White students called her names, she should just ignore them because they were ignorant.

Mitchell was 10 years old on her first day of school at Melrose Elementary. She remembered their mother walking them down the hill, across the street and into the school (see Appendix Q). Mitchell remembered seeing men with cameras at the school, but she said, "it didn't phase [*sic*] me that they were from the newspaper; I thought everyone got their picture taken that day" (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). She recalled that her mother, herself, and her brother all went to the principal's office, and then the principal, Mr. Charles Radford, escorted her to class. Mitchell remembered that her fifth grade teacher was Ms. Bean. Mitchell recalled that Bean treated her like everyone else and at one point during the day told Mitchell she had beautiful handwriting. Mitchell said her new classmates seemed friendly and that she sat with some of the girls in her class when they went to lunch. She also recalled that

the class walked a half block to the park after lunch where they played kickball. Mitchell said Bean divided the class into two groups and that her team won that day; she also recalled that she kicked a homerun during the game and that she could not understand how some of her classmates could not catch a kickball which seemed like an easy task for her. Mitchell remembered her first day at Melrose as “a typical first day of school” (R. Mitchell, September 24, 2013).

At the end of that first day, Mitchell remembered that she met her brother outside the principal’s office and then they walked home together. She recalled that when they got home, she and her brother changed clothes and went to the park to play. When they arrived at the park, she saw several of her classmates from school. She said she remembered “thinking how odd it was that the same kids who talked to me at school and played with me at recess, were now at the park ignoring me” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). But, the next day at school, the same students were friendly to her again. Mitchell said she found out later that the students’ parents had told them they could not play with Mitchell and because their houses were close to the park and the parents could observe them, Mitchell’s White classmates did not disobey their parents. Even though there was this disconnect between school and neighborhood, Mitchell said no one made her feel uncomfortable her first few days at Melrose.

As Mitchell settled into the school year, she said that her White classmates were friendly towards her and when they “saw that I was a good student and good at sports, they always wanted to be on my team or in my group” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). She remembered Ms. Bean as “a great teacher, and she let me grade papers for her; life was good” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 24, 2013). Mitchell enjoyed learning the new routine of a new school year and a new classroom; learning the names of her classmates and “establishing my niche in the whole scheme of things” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She said that in that respect, the newness of school, Melrose was no different than Loudon had been for her. As Mitchell reflected on that first year, she said she did recall times when the principal would come by her classroom and ask her if “everything was okay” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She did not think that was odd, but knew the principal at Loudon had never personally asked her any questions.

Mitchell remembered that there were no other Black students in her class until she went to Monroe Junior High School in the seventh grade. She recalled that the only time she saw other Black students at Melrose was during her second year, when she was in the sixth grade. A few more Black students went to Melrose during the 1961–1962 school year. This was during band lessons that occurred at the school for one hour twice a week. The band director from Monroe would come to the elementary school to give the students lessons. Mitchell said she learned how to play the trumpet and then joined the band when she went to Monroe. She also recalled that she was not aware of any other extracurricular activities at Melrose and that she went straight home after school each day. Mitchell said she felt she did well academically at Melrose, earning good grades on each report card. She remembered that her teacher was nice to her and that “she always told me I was so smart” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). Mitchell also recalled that she had perfect attendance that year, and as far as she was concerned, “it was a normal year for me” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013).

As described earlier, Mitchell completed the fifth and sixth grades at Melrose Elementary before moving to Monroe Junior High School for her seventh, eighth, and ninth grade years. By her seventh grade year, which would have been the third year of desegregation for Roanoke schools, Mitchell remembered more Black students at school with her, and even remembered some of them being in the same classes with her. She also recalled that these Black students who were attending school with White students for the first time said that she “was acting too White and they wondered why I had White friends” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She remembered that this time period “was a confusing time for me” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She knew that some of her other Black classmates had never been to school with White students and likewise, some White students who were coming from elementary schools that were still all-White had never been to school with Black students. She knew that was an adjustment for everyone involved. She remembered that several of the Black students interacted only with other Black students, the ones who had only ever gone to school with other Black students up until that point. Mitchell also recalled that some of the White students who were not accustomed to Black students were “not so friendly, but I had so little contact with them, it didn’t bother me” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013).

Even though some of the interaction was confusing, Mitchell said she still loved school. She continued to do well academically. She did not recall that any of her teachers were not nice to her. She reasoned that “since I did my work and behaved, they had no reason to confront me” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She remembered becoming involved in several activities, including track, tennis, volleyball, and the band. She recalled that she was glad band was a scheduled class that she got to attend every day instead of only one hour, twice a week as it had been at Melrose. She also knew the band director, Mr. William Lee, as he was the one who had come to Melrose to teach the band lessons. As Mitchell moved on to William Fleming High School for her last three years of school, she recalled even more Black students in school with her, but also more White students who had never been to school with Black students. But, similar to Monroe, she had little interaction with those White students as William Fleming’s campus was more spread out, and did not recall any negative interactions with any White students while in high school.

Mitchell characterized her first year at Melrose as a positive experience. She believed that the experience gave her “a backbone for things to come. It showed me that color should not be the issue. It taught me to speak up for what’s right” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She felt that her parents and her teacher supported her the most during that year. She recalled her parents were “always saying what a great job I was doing in school” (R. Mitchell, September 27, 2013) and that her teacher praised her as well during the year. Mitchell knew that her parents’ determination for their children to get a good education had been successful. She said that her parents were “always proud of the way their kids turned out, but without their strength and fortitude to expect fairness, we would not be where we are today” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). Mitchell went on to say that her experience being in the minority at school continued into adulthood. She was the first Black Miss Junior Achievement in Roanoke, one of the first few Black students to attend a small college in Pennsylvania, the first Black to teach at one of the schools she worked at in Pennsylvania, and part of the first Black family to live in a particular neighborhood when she and her husband bought a house. She remembered usually being in the minority in many organizations and work environments. She said though that “it never bothered me. I’ve just always tried to do my best and be a good *person* [emphasis added by Mitchell], not worry about being a good *Black*

[emphasis added by Mitchell] person” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013).

Although Mitchell was part of a group that made history in Roanoke by being one of the first nine Black students to desegregate the schools, she said she had no idea at the time of the importance of her experience. She attributed that to two factors. First, her parents “simply didn’t make a big deal of it” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). Mitchell spoke repeatedly about how her parents expected her to do well in school, that was her job, and that the main reason they wanted her to go to Melrose was simply because the school was closer to their home. Secondly, Mitchell was aware of other civil rights events going on around the country and said she “certainly never put myself in the same category as the Freedom Riders or the many Blacks who lost their lives or freedoms at the hands of Whites. I was just a small cog in the big wheel of justice” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). Mitchell added that as a result of her experience, she thought it was “good *and* [emphasis added by Mitchell] bad that my kids and grandkids did not/will not have to know what it is like to demand equality” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She was glad that the younger generation will expect to be “judged on merit, not on the color of their skin” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013) but could also see a danger in that “they just assume equality is there for the taking” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013). She conveyed that equality should never be taken for granted and that this was one of the lessons she hoped people learned from her experiences with desegregation.

Milton Long

Milton Long’s first schooling experience was at Loudon Elementary School. He remembered that the school was approximately a mile from the Long home on Moorman Avenue and that sometimes he would walk to school with his older sister, Rosiland and sometimes there was a car pool arrangement with one of their neighbors. Long also recalled that the year he went to Loudon that “there were so many Black kids needing to go to Loudon that they had to split the school day” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He remembered attending school during the first half of the day and then “another whole set of kids came in the second half of the day” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Long believed the half-day school schedule and the distance from their home to Loudon were two factors that led his parents

to the decision for him and his sister Rosiland to attend Melrose Elementary, which was much closer to their house. Long did not have a lot of memories about Loudon, but did remember that his first grade teacher was Ms. Pasley, who was actually a distant relative. He remembered what the schoolyard looked like and that all his friends he played with in his neighborhood went to Loudon. He stated that “everybody was heading that way in the morning, seem to be that’s the way the tide flowed” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

During the summer before Long started second grade, he was aware that “something was going on” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013) but he was not directly asked by his parents if he wanted to attend a desegregated school. He laughingly recalled that his mother “always said to me ‘cause the school was there’ versus way over there” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He further explained that he felt his parents always had a way of explaining ideas to him that they thought was easier for him to understand. When his parents told him that he would be going to Melrose for the upcoming school year rather than Loudon, he did not recall that the preparations for getting ready to go to school were any different than they had been the year before. He was excited about getting new clothes to wear for school and he also remembered being eager to see what was inside Melrose Elementary. He explained that he had seen the building often, living so close to it, but had never been inside the building and wanted to know what the inside looked like.

Long was seven years old on his first day of school at Melrose Elementary. He remembered his mother walking him and his sister to school that day. He recalled that “she was dressed; had her bag, she was a beautiful lady anyway, but she dressed herself; high-heeled shoes. We were walking down a rickety old hill, gravel hill at the time, and she walked us to school looking splendid” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013) (see Appendix Q). Long remembered that there were photographers at the school when they arrived. He did not think their presence was odd as his parents had told him that the first day of school was something a little different from normal. He remembered that the photographers kept their distance; they did not try to talk to him, his mother, or his sister. Long remembered that when they got to the building, they walked up the steps to the main doors and then, once inside, walked up more steps to get to the principal’s office. His teacher, Ms. Elizabeth Cooper, met him in the principal’s office and then walked him to his classroom. Long remembered that they went down yet another set of steps and that his classroom was near the boiler room. When they got into the

classroom, all of the other students were already there, seated in their desks. Long took his seat and remembered that the day proceeded fairly normally from there.

Cooper's class ran efficiently, Long remembered. Long felt like she never showed any resentment towards him and that she treated him just like she treated all the rest of her students. He recalled that his new classmates had looked him over when he first entered the classroom, but he knew that he would be able hold his own. Long remembered doing well academically, but the area he felt really helped form a bridge with his White classmates, especially the boys, was at recess when they played different games, such as kickball. Long explained "I thought it was easier for a guy to kind of win acceptance from the other guys in the classroom because they want to win" (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Long went on to explain that he felt that by being good at athletics and doing well academically, he was showing some of his White classmates that whatever their parents had said about Black students "wasn't the way their parents were saying it" (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Overall, Long remembered that he got along with his White classmates while at school but that he did not socialize with them outside of school.

Back in his neighborhood, Long continued to play with his Black friends. He remembered that during the first few weeks of attending school at Melrose, his Black friends began to make comments to him that he felt were not supportive of him going to a desegregated school. He said they would ask him questions such as "Why ya'll going down there? What's so special that ya'll can't go where the rest of us go? Ya'll trying to be better than us?" (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He remembered that he did not completely understand what the issue was and would reply that he was simply going to school just like they were going to school. He felt it was interesting that those comments stood out to him more than any negative comments he might have heard at school from some of his White classmates. He explained that his Black friends "were my running crew; I wanted to make sure I was accepted within that group" (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

As Long continued through Melrose, he remembered learning how to play the clarinet and he joined the safety patrol. Like his sister Rosiland, Long remembered that Mr. Lee, from Monroe Junior High School, came to Melrose to give them lessons. Also like his sister, Long joined the band when he got to Monroe. But the activity that stood out in his mind was when, at the end of his fourth grade year, he was given the opportunity to become a patrol boy. As he

described it, “that was big stuff; that was pretty dag-gone big stuff” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He remembered being given a badge and a white belt that identified him as a member of the safety patrol. He also recalled that there was a progression from private to sergeant to lieutenant to captain and each level had a different color badge. He remembered that “the one that I really wanted was the captain over the whole thing; and I eventually got that when I was in the sixth grade” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He remembered that he knew his rank as captain was a leadership role and a recognition of him being a responsible student.

When Long finished the sixth grade at Melrose Elementary, he moved to Monroe Junior High School then on to William Fleming High School. Long’s main memories of junior high and high school revolved around the athletics in which he was involved. Long ran track and played basketball at both Monroe and William Fleming. He remembered that playing at other junior high schools in Roanoke like Lee Junior High and Stonewall Jackson Junior High, where there were few if any Black students, was usually a somewhat tension-filled event. In high school though, when his teams would travel to places like Halifax and G. W. Danville, Long remembered being scared. He said it was during trips to places like that, where he could see that some people were still very opposed to desegregation. He described it as “a more mature ruthlessness . . . the name calling and the harshness in the words; you could feel that a lot more” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). It affected him in such a way that when he graduated from high school, he decided he did not want to immediately go to college. He said he had offers to go play basketball at a couple of schools but they were predominately White schools. Long began working soon after graduating from high school but soon realized that was not right for him either. So, the November after he graduated from high school, he decided to apply to Virginia State, an historically Black university, was accepted, and began classes the following January. He described that decision as “probably the best decision I ever made in my life” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

In addition to ultimately choosing which college to go to, Long also identified other areas of his life where his experiences with desegregation have affected him. Long felt that going to school with mostly White students prepared him for life in corporate America where he is often the only Black person in the room. Even though he is in the minority, he said he never feels out of place. Additionally, he has been able to see in some of the events of his life where some of his

Black friends who went to all-Black schools are uncomfortable in social situations with White people. Long said he has also seen Black friends who went through completely desegregated school experiences be uncomfortable in social situations that were predominantly Black. Long felt that his experiences enabled him to be comfortable in any situation. He said “I’m bilingual; saying I speak corporate American and I can speak neighborhood. I’m very, very amenable to speaking both” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

Long also believed that his experiences with desegregation caused him to appreciate the sacrifices that others made for him so that he could get an education. He spoke specifically of his parents’ resolve to make a decision to send him to desegregated schools which might have been dangerous for him. He also spoke more generally of NAACP leaders, other Black students who desegregated other schools around the country before he did, and the countless other Civil Rights participants who came before him. Long said “it was only because someone else made a sacrifice that we were in a position to be able to do what we did” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). As a result, he said he always tries to give back to the community in order to maximize the benefits he received as a result of someone else’s sacrifice. And he hoped that whoever he helps will continue the cycle. Long expressed the importance of the cycle continuing; that people recognize the historical perspective of where race relations have been and where they continue to need to go. He knew that “without a historical perspective, you wander around a lot more . . . or repeat the same mistakes” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

While speaking about the sacrifices that others had made in order for him to enjoy certain liberties, Long spoke of people who had supported him while he was attending desegregated schools in Roanoke. He spoke repeatedly of his parents; how their strength and determination helped encourage him to always do his best in school and to never disappoint them. He also spoke of teachers and coaches he had throughout his schooling career that helped to inspire him or who he respected enough to not want to disappoint them by not doing his best. Long also acknowledged the NAACP’s support for people like his parents who ultimately had to make the decision to send their children to desegregated schools. He remembered that his “mother would refer to the group and her involvement as pretty important” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Long believed that an organized voice from groups like the NAACP made

desegregation occur. He felt the task would have been insurmountable for individuals to have accomplished by themselves.

Overall, Long said of his schooling experience “those years, I wouldn’t go back and trade them for anything” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He said he was “very proud and appreciative of my experiences in Roanoke, especially my school experiences” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Long did acknowledge that at times, he wished he had gone to the all-Black schools in Roanoke because “I thought there was a pride in those folks that to some degree, we didn’t have that same pride” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He said he was proud of attending desegregated schools but that sometimes “when you go to church and you go to parties with your people, that’s where you kind of felt like an outsider with your own folks” (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013). He knew though that the experiences he did go through got him where he is today. Long concluded that

Those experiences have enabled me to be successful in the activities I’m involved in. Without those experiences, I wouldn’t be sitting here on this porch, in this environment, with this life that I have for myself; I’d be somewhere else. I don’t know what life I’d have, I don’t know that. I just know the way it worked out. I know it worked out this way because I had been put through some experiences that prepared me to better cope with things that would come in front of me; challenges that would come in front of me (M. Long, personal communication, July 13, 2013).

The Poindexter Family

Eula Amber Poindexter Waller and Darlene Poindexter Turner grew up on Salem Avenue in Southwest Roanoke. Waller is the older sibling by about three years. Their parents were William Clarence and Elizabeth Ann Poindexter. Mr. Poindexter worked for Norfolk and Western Railroad and Mrs. Poindexter was a homemaker until Waller went to school. Mrs. Poindexter then began a carpool to ferry neighborhood children back and forth to school, first to a preschool program at the YMCA, then to the local elementary schools. Mr. Poindexter later worked for Roanoke Photo Finishing, from which he retired.

Waller remembered their neighborhood as a “pretty normal neighborhood” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Both Waller and Turner remembered the families that lived on either side of them, the Lightfoots and the Robinsons. Turner specifically remembered

playing with the youngest Lightfoot daughter, recalling that they would make mud pies and pretend they were cooking. Waller realized later in life that one of her childhood neighbors, from the Robinson family, works for one of the unions in the county where she now resides in Maryland. The girls also rode their bicycles throughout the neighborhood, especially with the two Lightfoot brothers. There was a park across the street from their house where they would play, but they were not allowed to venture too far from the house. Turner also recalled that if their hair was not properly fixed, they were not allowed to play in the front yard, a testament to their mother's belief that they should always represent the family name with pride when they were in public.

The girls were involved in a variety of activities, including tap dancing, ballet, piano lessons, and church events. Turner recalled that her sister had a gift for music, while she "played 'at' the piano" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Additionally, they spent summers with their maternal grandmother, who lived on Long Island in New York. Turner specifically recalled spending time at the beach in New York where White people and Black people would intermingle on the beach. Their paternal grandparents were from Franklin County, Virginia, and the girls remembered spending a good bit of time in that area as well while they were growing up. Overall, they both felt that their parents exposed them to a wide variety of opportunities and activities in an effort to make "our lives better than their life had been" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Turner echoed this sentiment, saying that their parents "had dreams for us . . . they wanted things better for us" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013).

The family also became Seventh Day Adventists when the girls were a little older. Waller felt that their affiliation with the Seventh Day Adventists set them apart from everyone else in the neighborhood, but that the church provided a valuable social outlet as well as support system for the girls. Additionally, the Poindexter family interacted with White families who attended the Seventh Day Adventists church. Waller remembered traveling to Washington D.C. for church events and there being both White and Black worshippers together. She recalled that "we didn't talk about Black and White and didn't make it a point of being with Black people or White people" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller and Turner also recalled that their family interacted with the Schwartz family, the owners of Roanoke Photo Finishing, where their father worked. In addition to working at the photo shop, Mr. Poindexter would occasionally

do odd jobs for the Schwartz family and the girls would accompany him to the Schwartz home. Both Waller and Turner remembered the Schwartzes positively and that they were always treated well when they visited.

Both Waller and Turner felt that their parents had high expectations for their daughters. The girls specifically spoke of how their mother had high hopes and dreams for them. Waller felt her mother was disturbed by the injustices she saw occurring for Black people and that she “knew the struggles of being Black in a White world” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller remembered her mother crying in front of the television as some of the more violent images of the Civil Rights movement were shown. Turner described their mother’s strong faith in God and how she believed that everything “would work out for us” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Waller spoke of her mother’s compassion for others and her perpetual helpful nature. Waller believed Mrs. Poindexter instilled that spirit into her children and that it was important for the girls to treat other people the way they wanted to be treated. Both girls described their family as average, but it is apparent that Mr. and Mrs. Poindexter wanted better for their girls. And one way for the girls to achieve a better life was through a better education; Waller said her parents believed they would get a better education if they went to the White schools.

Eula Amber Poindexter Waller

Amber Waller’s first school experience was at Loudon Elementary School. She attended grades one through five at Loudon and remembered almost all of her teachers at the school. For her sixth grade year, Waller moved to Harrison Elementary School, another all-Black school in Roanoke. She recalled her fifth grade teacher, Mr. Johnson, sending a note home on her report card that she was still doing quite a bit of talking in class. Waller laughingly remembered that her mother’s response to that note was, “I will talk to Eula, but feel free to whip her” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller then explained that her parents took her education very seriously and that they had high expectations for her in regard to her studies. She felt that her parents did not demand that she be an “A” student, but that she was expected to do her best. Additionally, she felt that her parents instilled in her the attitude that if she did not succeed on her first try, then she was expected to figure out an alternate route to be able to get where she wanted to be; giving up was not an option.

Waller described her elementary school experience as uneventful. She recalled that her parents expected to her to participate in all school activities, such as plays, and that as she learned to read, she was content reading for hours at a time. Waller remembered that her mother was involved in the PTA and that she attended many events throughout the girls' school years. Although Waller did not recall any specific experiences from elementary school, she did remember two events that stood out in her mind. She remembered seeing her mother sitting in front of the television, crying, as she watched news stories about civil rights events occurring in other parts of Virginia. Waller also remembered that her mother became tired of what she might have seen as discrimination against the girls at Loudon. Waller described participating in several plays at Loudon while she was in elementary school. She noted that the children who always seemed to get the lead role had lighter skin and "good hair" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller explained that "African Americans can do backlashes on other people if you don't have certain looks" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller believed her mother got tired of that type of behavior, which might have played a factor in the decision to send the girls to desegregated schools.

In discussing what she recalled about her parents telling her about other factors that influenced their decision to send the girls to a desegregated school, Waller remembered her mother telling her that "we were just as good as the White kids, we were smart, we were intelligent" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013) and that she felt the girls could get a better education. Waller remembered feeling excited about the prospect of going to a new school. She recalled going shopping with her mother for her back-to-school clothes and that she chose a green dress that she thought was beautiful. She also got a new book bag for school and remembered being very careful with the clothes and new supplies to keep them in perfect condition for the first day of school.

Waller was 12 years old on her first day of school at Monroe Junior High School, the formerly all-White school. Her mother drove her and Cecelia Long to school that morning. She remembered feeling excited about the first day of school and that she was not afraid at all. When they arrived at the school, Waller remembered that there were what seemed like a lot of people there, students and photographers. A photograph that appeared in *The Roanoke Times* showed Waller and Long waiting outside the school with a group of students (see Appendix O). Waller did not recall any interaction with the students around her while they were waiting to go into the

school. She remembered the day as fairly uneventful in terms of the day being the first one that Roanoke's schools were desegregated. Waller said no one said anything negative to her that day and that the principal, M. G. White, and teachers made her feel welcome. She recalled that "I was not set apart or anything or embarrassed" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013) in front of other students. She did recall that at some point during that first year, some students would chide her about having cooties but she did not let that bother her because she did not know what cooties were.

In describing her feelings about those first few days at Monroe, Waller said, "in my mind, it was school" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013), meaning that going to a desegregated school held no special significance for her other than she was simply attending school. She noted that there were differences though, from her experiences at Loudon and Harrison. Waller recalled that the physical building of Monroe was "nice and clean, and really, really nice" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). She saw a difference in the textbooks they used at Monroe and she also knew that she had access to classes at Monroe that she would not have had access to at Booker T. Washington Junior High. The one class in particular she remembered was archery and that "in the Black school, you would have never gotten to take archery" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller recalled that her mother pointed these differences out to her as well, telling her that better textbooks and a wider variety of class offerings were just some of the advantages of going to a desegregated school.

Waller was involved in some extracurricular activities while she was at Monroe. Her first year, she joined the Bible Club, along with Cecelia Long (see Appendix P). She could not recall the reason she joined that club but none of the other clubs that Monroe offered. Waller remembered that she was in the band during her eighth and ninth grade years at Monroe but recalled that she was not allowed to join the band her first year at Monroe due to safety concerns. She said "somehow it was communicated to me that I could not be in the band because they feared for my life for that first year" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). When she did join the band, she recalled the excitement of marching with the band during the Christmas parade and how "Black people in Roanoke were very, very excited for us" (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013).

Waller also remembered several of the teachers at Monroe. A. W. Hull was the band director. During her time in the band, Waller said she did not have any issues with any of the

other students. She also remembered her science teacher, Robert Farris, and that he was nice to her. Waller remembered her History teacher, Mary Anderson, with whom Waller shared her interest in flowers. Waller remembered that after a conversation about seeds, Anderson brought her some flower seeds and Waller planted them at her house. She also recalled her Physical Education (P.E.) teacher, Claudia Whipple, who Waller described as pretty, nice, and very sweet, but tough. She laughingly remembered “I didn’t like P.E. a whole lot because we had to do gymnastics and that was not my favorite” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). Waller felt that her teachers “made a special effort to make sure that we were included and that I was doing well in school” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013).

As the year went on, Waller remembered that the students at school developed small social groups that interacted together on a daily basis. She said she did not interact with the White students very much during her first year at Monroe. Even though she was fairly socially isolated at school, Waller said she did not feel left out because she was very involved in her church youth group, she was taking piano lessons, and she was playing the piano at several local churches. Waller felt that her extended church family provided her with support during her first year at Monroe. She said that because she was playing the piano at several churches, many people knew of her role in the desegregation of schools and would often make encouraging comments to her. Waller also recalled that some of the other children in her neighborhood did tease her and her sister about going to a desegregated school. She said the children would chide her about thinking she was better than they were. She said this continued through her high school years as she went on to Jefferson High School, which was also desegregated. She remembered that her mother would not allow it to become an issue for the girls though. But, Waller did say that “we were picked out to be picked on from the people that should have been giving us the support that we needed and we didn’t get it” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013).

Waller described her experiences at Monroe as positive. She could not recall any negative memories. She believed that going to school in a desegregated environment helped her to be more compassionate and embrace anyone from any background. She also believed that going to school with mostly White students gave her the ability to be able to recognize inequities and helped her learn how to resolve those inequities, a skill she was able to use in her various work situations. She did come to realize, many years after she was out of school, that her role as one of the first Black students to desegregate the schools in Roanoke was an important one and that she

was proud of that accomplishment. She believed this was a legacy she was able to leave for Black students who came after her and hoped that younger generations of Black students would recognize and respect not only what she did in the name of education, but also what others like her had done as well.

In regards to desegregation, Waller believed that it was necessary. She felt that there had been some discussion that desegregation was not positive and that “some people have said that social values started to go down when we started integrating the schools” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). But, she stated that “without integration and affirmative action, I would not be the person I am today and I would not have had the opportunities that I’ve had” (Waller, personal communication, July 5, 2013). She discussed the many opportunities she had working in corporate America and working in the federal government. She recalled meeting Maryland State Senator Gwendolyn Britt when Waller was working as a campaign manager in 2002 and Britt told Waller she was a Freedom Rider. It was at that time that Waller began to realize how important her role in desegregation was and that younger generations do not necessarily understand what desegregation has afforded them. Today, Waller is a school board member in Maryland. She tries diligently to spread the story of what she did as a seventh grader in Roanoke and help young people appreciate how far society has come since she was in school.

Amber Waller looked back on her desegregation experience as a positive one. She knew her parents wanted a better life for her and that they believed her attending a desegregated school was the best way for her to get a good education. She acknowledged that, at times, attending a desegregated school was more difficult than attending an all-Black school; for instance, when she had to deal with neighborhood children teasing her about attending a desegregated school, but that her parents had instilled in her that it was for the best, they expected her to do her best, and that representing the Poindexter name was important. Waller was able to see that she did have access to better textbooks and a wider variety of classes at Monroe than she would have had at Booker T. Washington. She also spoke about how she did not interact much socially with her White classmates, but, because she was so involved in church and music activities, she did not really miss the interaction at school. Her family’s involvement in church activities played a prominent role during her schooling years, both in terms of social activities and the support they received for attending a desegregated school. Waller’s final observations on her role in the desegregation of schools in Roanoke were that she was proud of being able to be part of the first

group of students who desegregated the schools and that she hoped younger generations would be able to learn from her experiences and appreciate what she and others from her generation had done to contribute to the way our society had progressed since the 1960s.

Darlene Poindexter Turner

Darlene Turner remembered attending a preschool program at the age of four years old. She recalled that her mother developed a little business of carpooling children to the program at the YMCA on Orange Avenue in Roanoke and that her mother took her along as well. She remembered that the teacher's name was Miss Hale, who was a friend of the Poindexter family. Turner then began attending Loudon Elementary School in the first grade. She attended Loudon for the first, second, and third grades, and while she did not recall her teachers from Loudon, she did recall that they used corporal punishment. She laughingly recalled that "the teacher would smack you with a ruler!" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013).

Like her sister, Turner remembered their mother being actively involved in activities at Loudon. Turner recalled that her mother attended parent-teacher conferences, made sure that the girls completed their homework, and attended events at the school, one time bringing food in for a party they were having at school. Also like Waller, Turner repeated that their mother had high hopes for the girls, that "she wanted things better for us" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Turner remembered that when her parents made the decision that the girls would apply to attend desegregated schools, the one aspect that stood out to Turner was her mother's desire for the girls to be able to have access to the library at school. Turner implied that the only public library they had access to was a segregated library that was all the way across town. Turner remembered that there were other places they were not allowed to go, such as certain movie theaters and Lakeside, the amusement park in Salem. Turner said there was no anger in not having access to certain places, but she knew her mother wanted the girls to be able to go wherever they wanted to go.

In the days leading up to her first day of school, Turner remembered being excited about getting new clothes and supplies for school. She was assigned to West End Elementary School, formerly an all-White school, for her fourth grade year. She recalled getting a new dress to wear, a new book bag, and a new lunch box. Turner did not feel any fear or anxiety about attending a new school. She remembered that her mother "had a lot of faith that it would work out for us"

(Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Turner said her mother told her and her sister that they would do well and that they should just do the best that they could. On the first day of school, Turner's mother drove her to school (see Appendix N). Turner recalled the excitement of pulling up in front of the school and seeing all of the reporters there. She remembered walking into the school and getting into her classroom. She said that as fourth graders, "we're innocently young and you're sitting in your room, in your seat, and it's very structured" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). She remembered getting her books that first day of school and that her classmates were kind to her. She said that "the little girls were just little girls, and there was no name calling" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013).

As Turner reflected on her first day and first year at West End, she believed that everything went very smoothly because of the efforts of the principal and the teachers. She remembered the principal, Mr. Bristow Hardin, as being very visible in the school. She described him as caring and felt that he had specifically chosen the teachers the Black students would have that year. Turner's fourth grade teacher was Ms. Pollard. She felt Ms. Pollard had been able to develop a positive relationship with her and therefore, her year had gone very smoothly. Turner also recalled that at the end of the first day of school, as she and Charles James were leaving the building, reporters were once again there, taking pictures and filming. (see Appendices M, R, and S). She remembered being excited about being quoted in the newspaper but also mortified that the picture in the newspaper showed her slip hanging down from her skirt.

Turner remembered several experiences from West End Elementary. She remembered that within her classroom, she interacted with the White students without incident. She could not recall any specific classmates that stood out to her, but remembered that she would play with her peers on the playground during recess. She recalled playing hopscotch, jacks, and tic-tac-toe with some of the girls in her class. She reflected that if her White classmates had not played with her, she would have been completely isolated as there were no other Black students in her class. She also remembered that there was a White male classmate who lived a couple of blocks from her and that they would ride bicycles together in their neighborhood. She explained that her house was on the edge of the Black community and that the predominantly White neighborhood began just a street or two over from her house.

The library and music class were two other areas of the school that Turner remembered. She could not recall the librarian's name but remembered that she was wonderful. Turner described herself as "a real bookworm" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). She loved going to the library and remembered that she had become interested in science fiction books while she was in elementary school. She recalled that the librarian would recommend different books for her. Turner said that the library was "one of my go-to places and things to do" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Turner also remembered that she enjoyed going to music class. Coming from a musical family, both girls took piano lessons and Turner recalled that she enjoyed playing other instruments in music class like the bells and the triangle. In addition to these classes, Turner also remembered that there was a Tumbling Club that met after school that she became involved with during her fifth and sixth grade years. She remembered that Mr. Hancock was the sponsor of the club and that they did gymnastics. She said that she loved this activity and that she believed the club was a good example of how many of the teachers at West End provided extra opportunities for the students. She remembered that the club did a performance for the parents and that was the first time she had been involved in a public performance like that for her parents. She remembered that event standing out as "the end-all, be-all thing" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013).

Turner described her first year at West End Elementary School as "positive; challenging, but positive, it made me who I am" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). When she finished her elementary years at West End, she moved up to Lee Junior High School. Turner remembered that her years at Lee were more difficult in terms of name-calling and bullying. She believed the White students were more resistant by then because there were more Black students attending Lee Junior and "as I look back on it, that middle school age is a rough age" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Turner did state that one very positive experience she had at Lee Junior was when she was in the band. She played the saxophone because her sister had played the saxophone as well. She remembered that the band would practice on Saturdays and that the band was involved in different parades around Roanoke. She recalled that her parents were very proud of her accomplishments in the band.

In addition to having some negative interaction with White students at Lee Junior High, Turner also recalled that while she was in junior high some of her Black peers in her neighborhood would make negative comments to her about attending a desegregated school. She

recalled that most of the comments revolved around the other kids saying “you think you’re better than us; that kind of attitude” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Even though there were negative comments about her attending a desegregated school, Turner also remembered that her extended family was proud of what she and her sister were doing. She said that “they didn’t make a big deal out of it” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013) but that she knew her extended family was aware their mother had high expectations for the girls.

Mrs. Poindexter provided the most support for Turner during her first year at West End. Turner remembered conversations with her mother where Poindexter would tell Turner she needed to do well in school because she was representing the family. She reiterated, similar to statements her sister made, that the girls knew their mother had dreams for them and wanted a better life for them. Turner remembered that her mother was involved in school activities and that she attended parent-teacher conferences often. She also recalled that her mother always made sure the girls got their homework done after school. Turner remembered that spelling became an important subject for her because her mother wanted her to get “that perfect score on a spelling test” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). She laughingly recalled that she would sleep with the spelling book under her pillow in the hopes that it would help her do well on the tests. Turner remembered that these talks influenced her to always do her best while she was in school so that her mother would be proud of her.

Today, Turner is a teacher. She said she liked to “think that my early school experiences connected me to what I’m doing now and what I’ve done for the last 40 years” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). She works in a school that is culturally diverse and she believes that her experience in a desegregated school gave her a foundation to treat all people the same, no matter what their skin color, culture, or religion. She said she has tried to pass these lessons on to her children and her grandchildren, teaching them to be open and accepting of others. In talking about her experiences with desegregation, Turner said at the time, she was not aware of the historical importance of what she was doing. But, that her mother had collected articles from the newspaper about her and her sister’s role and “put them in the piano bench, that was like the archives” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). She recalled that over the years, the family would look at the articles and they would discuss the girls’

participation in desegregation. She believed that she gained an understanding of how important what she had done was after those discussions.

Overall, Turner believed her experience at West End Elementary School was positive. She described teachers who she believed cared about her and helped her. She also was able to interact with her White peers without any negative interactions. She recognized that she would have been completely isolated if the other students had excluded her, but described normal social interactions for elementary school-age children. Turner, like her sister, spoke many times about her mother's support and involvement in their schooling. Turner knew she was expected to do well and that her mother had high aspirations for her. She discussed her mother's strong faith and how her mother believed that everything would work out for the girls. As Turner described a school year that was "very calm and smooth for us" (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013), it would appear that her mother's faith paid off for both the Poindexter girls.

The Wilkinson Family

Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty and Nadine Wilkinson Johnson lived on Staunton Avenue in Northwest Roanoke. The Wilkinson family included a younger sister, Danita, who was not born until 1959. Lighty is the oldest of the sisters, by 15 months, followed by Johnson. The family moved to Roanoke from Rocky Mount, Virginia, in 1958 when their father, Reverend Raymond R. Wilkinson was called to be the pastor of Hill Street Baptist Church. Reverend Wilkinson and his wife, Euphesenia, had both graduated from Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia, in 1952. Reverend Wilkinson led Hill Street Baptist Church until he retired in 1991. Mrs. Wilkinson was a teacher when the family lived in Rocky Mount but became a homemaker, and served the church as the pastor's wife as well, when the family moved to Roanoke. In addition to being a pastor, Reverend Wilkinson was the president of the Roanoke branch of the NAACP from 1959–1969 and was also a member of the biracial committee referenced above (Massey, personal communication, September 14, 2013).

Lighty described their childhood as an adventure. She remembered their house on Staunton Avenue, the church parsonage, as big, with a big yard and a big basement, and said that she felt "safe in that environment" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Johnson described the Wilkinson home as the gathering place for neighborhood children, laughingly stating that "we were the popular ones on the block" (Johnson, personal

communication, August 31, 2013). The girls had sleepovers and cookouts in the backyard at their house frequently. Lighty recalled riding bicycles through the neighborhoods with her sister and some of their friends. Even though her parents told her not to ride too far, Lighty remembered riding several blocks away from their house, explaining that she “wanted to know what was around” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Lighty knew they were testing their parent’s rules, but also remembered that the girls were encouraged to talk about their adventures with the family at dinner time around the table. Lighty would tell stories of how White people yelled racial slurs at them and that her father would tell them that incidents like that were going to happen, but that they should not pay any attention to the words. Lighty believed this taught the girls to not be afraid of racial situations.

As the children of a church pastor, the girls were involved in many church activities. Both Lighty and Johnson recalled participating in Vacation Bible School, Sunday school, and the Sunbeam Choir at church. The girls were also in the Girl Scouts, the local troop met at their church each week. Lighty also recalled traveling with the family, often as part of their father’s ministerial duties, and that he would often keep the girls close to him when they went into gas stations or stores along the way. Lighty remembered not being able to use certain bathrooms at gas stations and that sometimes their father would hurry them along, getting back into the car quickly after filling up on gas.

Growing up during the Civil Rights Era, and having a father who was the president of the local NAACP branch, the girls were made aware of civil rights issues. Johnson recalled the mass meetings that were held at various churches in Roanoke during the time period. Mrs. Wilkinson would often tell the girls their father was going to be on television, speaking at one of these meetings. Lighty recalled hearing her father talk about issues that confronted Black people and why those issues upset him. Both girls were aware that there were certain places they were not welcome, but, as their father began to lead the Civil Rights effort in Roanoke, he would take the girls to various places to test the work he was doing with the biracial committee. Both Lighty and Johnson laughingly described their roles as “guinea pigs” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013; Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013). Lighty recalled that she often wondered why they had to go places “we weren’t supposed to go and they looked at us all funny” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013) and that she was aware that White people didn’t like them “because of the color of our skin” (Lighty, personal

communication, September 14, 2013). She also knew, though, that her father told the girls it was not right for someone to not like you just because of the color of your skin and that “they’re (White people) no better than you are” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013).

In addition to formulating a plan for the desegregation of schools, the biracial committee worked on other issues such as moving the Washington Park dump out of the middle of the Black community and desegregating public businesses. Once the committee had met and decided that they would try to solve an issue, the White members of the committee would negotiate with White business leaders while the Black members of the committee would convey the information to the Black community. When the issue was settled, Reverend Wilkinson would take his family on outings to see if the committee’s work had indeed been successful. Lighty and Johnson remembered two specific incidents where they went with their father on such outings. The movie theater in downtown Roanoke, the American Theater, allowed Black patrons to watch movies there only at specific times and then only from the balcony. After the committee had negotiated with the theater owners to integrate the theater, Reverend Wilkinson took his daughters to the movies. Johnson recalled that they went to the theater and their father told them to go on up to the ticket counter to buy their tickets while he stood back to observe. She remembered the movie that was playing was Flipper. Johnson recalled looking back at her father after they had successfully bought their tickets and seeing a big smile on his face. The girls also remembered their father taking them to Lakeside Amusement Park in Salem, Virginia, a neighboring community, right outside the Roanoke city limits. Lighty remembered that when her father told them they were going to Lakeside, she remembered thinking that was forbidden. But he took them and “we got a couple of ugly words, I remember, but we still did a couple rides and then we were gone” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013).

Lighty and Johnson grew up in a household where they were encouraged to experience life to the fullest, have no fear in doing so, and to share those experiences freely with their parents. Their mother, who now uses the last name Massey, explained that she did not teach her children to be fearful of anything (Massey, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Lighty especially frequently mentioned that she had no fear growing up, as exhibited by her bicycle riding past the boundaries her parents set for her, even into the White neighborhoods. Their father, pastor, NAACP branch president, and biracial committee member, taught the girls that they were just as good as White people and encouraged them to talk about their experiences.

Likewise, he was open with the girls about civil rights issues and they were very aware of their role as “guinea pigs.” Johnson described their participation with their father in desegregating various places as: “it was like one challenge after another; once something got done then he’d move on to something else” (Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013). Their first experience with school desegregation was at Melrose Elementary School.

Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty

Cassandra Lighty began her schooling experience at Loudon Elementary School, an all-Black school, in the first grade, right after the Wilkinson family moved to Roanoke. She remembered being happy at Loudon and made friends quickly. She especially enjoyed riding the bus to school because she was able to socialize with her friends. She remembered that she loved her teachers at Loudon, but could not recall her first or second grade teachers’ names. She also remembered being excited about the reading program which advanced students from one level to another by the color of the book they were reading. Lighty did not remember much about the physical layout of Loudon but did remember that when she finished the first grade she would go across the hall to the second grade classrooms.

At some point during her second grade year, Reverend Wilkinson began to explain to Lighty and her sister that they would not be going to Loudon the next school year but would instead be attending Melrose Elementary, which had been an all-White school but was much closer to their home. Lighty remembered her father telling the girls that they were going to try to integrate the schools. She did not completely understand exactly what he meant, but did understand that she was going to have to leave her friends at Loudon. She said “I know I wasn’t happy at all, I was not happy about going to another school; all my friends were there, and it wasn’t working for me” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Lighty remembered that it seemed like the closer the beginning of school got, the more her parents talked with her about the importance of what she and her sister were going to be doing. Her father told her they were going to be pioneers and that the girls could walk to school rather than have to ride the bus. But, Lighty said she preferred riding the bus because she enjoyed the time with her friends. She said that she eventually accepted the move because it was what her parents expected her to do.

In the days leading up to the first day of school at Melrose, Lighty remembered her mother making the girls' outfits. Lighty said at that time her mother was dressing Lighty and her sister alike and that many people thought they were twins. She also recalled that her father told her he was not going to be in Roanoke for that first day of school. She thought that was strange, but her mother later explained that Reverend Wilkinson was attending the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention as one of his pastoral duties. She remembered that her father, in preparing her for that first day at Melrose, told her that if people said "ugly things to us, just keep going" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Lighty also recalled that her father "pressed in our head: 'you're just as good as anybody else and this is very important'" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013) in regard to the girls going to Melrose. When asked about her feelings in the days right before school started, Lighty remembered that she was not scared, but was bothered that her father was not going to be there. She described the feeling as partly from wanting her father to be there to protect her, but also partly because she felt her father was the one that usually took the girls into unfamiliar situations and oversaw that everything was alright.

Lighty was eight years old on her first day of school at Melrose Elementary. Massey recalled that she initially was going to let the girls walk to school that day, but, at the last minute, thought better of it and decided to walk with them (see Appendix M). She laughingly described how her decision to walk the girls was so last-minute that she "hopped immediately up and put my things on and rolled up my pajama legs (under her dress) and strutted down there holding one by one hand and one by the other hand and made sure they got in the door and then went back home and rolled my pajama legs down" (Massey, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Lighty remembered that their mother walked them most of the way to school and then the principal, Charles Radford, escorted the girls the remainder of the way into the building (see Appendix T). Lighty believed this was because there were several reporters in front of the school covering the event. She remembered "all those people just gawking at us" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). She wondered why they were all there, but remembered that her father had told her to just keep going.

Lighty remembered going into her classroom with her new White peers and thinking how different it was from Loudon, being with only White classmates; she described it as "this is not my comfort zone" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). She said that

everyone was polite to her that first day and she did not remember anyone showing any resentment toward her. Lighty reflected that this might have been because she was the daughter of Reverend Wilkinson. Lighty also recalled that one of her coping skills for meeting new people was that she associated them into characters. She recalled one boy who was funny, so she characterized him as the class clown; there were two little girls who were very close to each other and she characterized them as “a little clique” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). She also recalled that when she had the chance to interact with her new classmates, some of them showed curiosity towards her in terms of her skin color and hair being different from theirs. Lighty also felt that once that curiosity was satisfied, her new peers began to see her as basically the same as they were, just with different physical characteristics. She said she developed friendships as the year went on, but began to realize that she was not going to be able to interact with her new classmates outside of school the way she had interacted with her friends from Loudon.

Lighty described her interactions with friends from Loudon as occurring inside the school as well as outside the school. Many of her classmates at Loudon also attended church with Lighty. As a result, she saw them and interacted with them in school as well as outside of school. Lighty explained that it was normal for her to call her friends from Loudon on the telephone and for them to all play together outside of school hours. She recalled two specific incidents with peers from Melrose where she realized she was not going to be able to develop relationships outside of school with her new classmates. In one instance, Lighty had become friends with a girl in her class and decided to go visit the girl at her house. When she knocked at the friend’s door, the girl’s mother came to the door and told her “No, you cannot play with them, no, no, that’s not going to happen” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). Lighty went home and told her mother about the incident; her mother’s response was that some people were just prejudiced and that Lighty would run into situations like that occasionally. On another occasion, Lighty recalled seeing a classmate at a store. She spoke to the peer but “the parents would kind of jerk them back” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013) to prevent the peer from coming over to speak with her. As she reflected on these incidents, she said she was glad she maintained relationships with the children in her neighborhood and at church; otherwise, she believed it would have been detrimental to her to not have been able to develop any relationships outside of school with her classmates.

Lighty did not recall any of her Black friends ever teasing her about attending a formerly all-White school. She said the only reaction she did get from her Black friends was sadness that they were not all in school together anymore. She felt that as she and her sister attended that first year at Melrose, more Black parents began to see the value of their children attending a desegregated school. As a result, more Black children began attending Melrose the next school year. Lighty also reflected that none of her Black friends would have said anything to her about attending a desegregated school because of her father's stature in the community. She laughingly recalled that her friends probably thought "well, that's what they have to do, that's their dad ...they ain't got no choice!" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013).

Lighty could not recall what her grades were when she was at Melrose. She did remember that she felt like she was behind her classmates academically and that "they seemed to know a little more" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013) than she did. This bothered her because she "always felt like I was behind, I didn't know as much as they did" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). She wondered why she did not have some of the same skills her new classmates had and that, as a result, she tried to fade into the background and just do the best she could do. Lighty also felt the White students "were more confident about the way they did stuff" (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013) because they were getting good grades while she felt like she was struggling academically. She also recalled that she was excited about getting to learn how to play the flute when she got to the fourth grade. She knew that was a skill she would not have learned at Loudon. But even with learning how to play the flute, she felt the White students picked up the skill faster than she did.

Lighty attended Melrose Elementary through the sixth grade. At that time, in 1964, Reverend and Mrs. Wilkinson divorced and the girls moved with their mother to Portsmouth, Virginia. Mrs. Wilkinson began to use her maiden name, Massey, after she and the girls left Roanoke. Lighty said she remembered being excited about the prospect of attending Monroe Junior High School in Roanoke for her seventh grade year, but that when her parents divorced and her mother made the decision to move to Portsmouth, she realized she was going to have to switch schools again. Lighty attended S. H. Clark Junior High School in Portsmouth, and all-Black school, as Portsmouth had not desegregated yet. After junior high, Lighty then went to I. C. Norcom High School, which was also an all-Black school. At the end of her tenth grade year, Portsmouth began to desegregate, primarily using busing. Because Lighty had already started

high school, she did not have to participate in the desegregation process and went on to graduate from I. C. Norcom. When asked about comparing her experiences in a desegregated school to her experiences in an all-Black school, she said "I was happy, I felt comfortable being back with my people and I didn't regret not going back into an integrated school" (Lighty, personal communication, September 13, 2013). She explained that she still had access to desegregated events; her younger sister was attending a desegregated school and Lighty would sometimes attend those events with her sister and other friends. But, she did not miss attending a desegregated school. Lighty went on to attend an Historically Black University but did go to a primarily White graduate school.

Lighty acknowledged that her parents were very supportive of her during those first few years at Melrose. She recalled time spent at the dinner table where she and her sister were encouraged to discuss the day's events with their parents and her parents would give them feedback on what had happened during the day. Lighty said her parents often conveyed to her that her attending Melrose was important and that they wanted the girls to talk about anything that was going on. She felt that her parents did not put a lot of restrictions on them in terms of telling them they could not do certain things. As a result, Lighty felt their adventures were encouraged and developed her free spirit. She also believed this adventurous attitude was one of the best effects of her attending a desegregated school.

In addition to her adventurous attitude, Lighty believed her experience desegregating Melrose Elementary gave her a no-fear attitude as well. She believed these attitudes and her experiences helped her immensely in her job working for the government ensuring civil rights legislation was being followed by various businesses. Lighty worked mainly in New England during the 1970s. She discussed that many times she was the only Black person in, what felt like to her, a vast area and that she knew some people might not receive her well. But, with her no-fear attitude and having been through her schooling experience, she knew she had a job to do and she made sure that job was done to the best of her ability whether people liked her or not. She also felt that being in a desegregated school had helped her learn how to work with anyone, no matter what their race. Lighty also believed that her desegregation experience, combined with her parents' encouragement, taught her that she should not feel any boundaries on what she might want to do or accomplish. She gave the examples that during her life she lived where she wanted to live, even if some people might have considered her neighborhood a White

neighborhood; she listened to music she liked, whether Black, White, alternative, or however else someone might have characterized the music.

Lighty appreciated that she was part of the movement to desegregate the schools. She knew that the goal behind desegregation was to give Black children equal access to a quality education and ultimately to help integrate society. But, as she has grown older and reflected more, she wondered if those goals were achieved. She felt that the all-Black schools that “were treasures in the community for Black people, are no longer there. The White ones are still there.” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). She went on to say that in regard to her part in the desegregation movement, she “did that to have a better education, we did that so we could be more integrated; but did that really happen overall?” (Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013). She lamented that she felt civil rights were no longer being taught in the schools and that Black children were suffering for that in terms of not being able to recognize the history of what earlier generations of Black people had to go through to get where we are today. She wondered what our society would be like today if the schools had remained segregated.

Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty presented an interesting schooling experience. Having first attended an all-Black school, being among the first to attend desegregated schools in Roanoke, and then returning to all-Black schools to finish her schooling career provided her with the rare opportunity to be able to compare both types of schools. In the end, she found that she preferred to attend all-Black schools. Two of the most prominent drawbacks for Lighty of attending a desegregated school were that she was not able to interact with her White classmates outside of school the way she was able to interact with her Black classmates and that she felt she was behind her White peers academically. Lighty was thankful she maintained her social activities with neighborhood children and her church friends; otherwise she felt she would have had no social contact with other children if she had only to rely on her White classmates. She also felt that she trailed her White peers academically when she came to Melrose. Additionally, she observed that when she returned to all-Black schools in Portsmouth and would then talk with friends back in Roanoke, she noticed she was not doing the same type of work they told her they were doing at the desegregated junior high school they were attending. She knew her role in desegregating schools in Roanoke was important to the Civil Rights movement and believed the experience helped her develop skills she would use later in life. But when asked to describe her experience at Melrose as positive or negative, Lighty replied:

Looking back, and from what I remember, I would call it different. I guess because of the era, I really couldn't connect with the White kids in my class because we could only interact in the classroom at school, but I remember being sad when those I did connect with in school moved away. I feel now I never established long-time relationships with the kids in my classroom because we weren't allowed to because of their parents. I remember each of them and their personalities when I look at our class photo, but outside my Melrose experience, I walked home with my best friends who were Black. They were my neighborhood friends; we were in Girl Scouts together, attended the same church and social affairs and it was their homes I visited and spent the night, ate dinner, and whose parents became second to mine. Today, kids who attend school do so with all races and nationalities and they interact outside of school socially and become long-time friends despite any interference from their parents. We were not afforded that opportunity. (Lighty, personal communication, November 7, 2013).

Nadine Wilkinson Johnson

Nadine Johnson's first schooling experience was at Loudon Elementary School. She attended only the first grade at Loudon but remembered being very excited about going to school as her sister Cassandra had started school the year before. Johnson remembered that her first grade teacher was Ms. Clark, who had a twin sister teaching at Loudon as well. Johnson remembered having a good experience at Loudon her first year. She also remembered feeling sad when her father told her that she would not be attending Loudon for her second grade year but would be going to another school instead. She recalled that her father explained to both her and her sister what integration was and that there was a purpose behind their move. She remembered that "we didn't understand it too much, but we were told what was going to happen" (Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013).

In the days leading up to Johnson's first day of school at Melrose Elementary School, Johnson knew that the first day of school was going to be a big occasion, but more in the sense of a new beginning of the school year, not a major historical event. She did not recall her parents talking to her much about preparing to attend a desegregated school. Her mother confirmed that she and Reverend Wilkinson did not talk to the girls much about what they might encounter attending school with White students (Massey, personal communication, September 14, 2013).

Massey believed that doing so would have instilled fear in the girls and she did not want them to be afraid. Johnson remembered being nervous on the first day of school. She recalled her mother walking the girls part of the way to school and then letting them continue on their own alone. She also recalled the media being at the school when they arrived and that made her more nervous. When she referred to the picture of herself and her sister that appeared in the Roanoke Times from that day, she said she was smiling but that the smile was a nervous one (see Appendix U).

Johnson was six years old on the first day of school in the fall of 1960. She has a September birthday, so she turned seven shortly after the beginning of school. Once she got in to her classroom, she remembered the day as going smoothly and that everyone treated her well. She did recall one incident with a male classmate. When the children had an opportunity to interact with one another, this peer came up to her and used a racial slur in asking her if she was one of these. Her response was, “being my father’s child, I rhymed it; I said, ‘well, if I’m a nigger, you’re a figger’” (Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013). Johnson explained that her father was always joking around the house, using rhymes to entertain the girls. She remembered that the rhyme became a running joke between her and the boy and that they actually became good friends. When she reflected on the incident, she believed that the classmate was not being mean, but that the word was one he had heard at home and he was simply repeating what he had heard. Other than this incident, Johnson could not recall any other issues with racial slurs while she was at Melrose.

For the remainder of her time at Melrose, Johnson felt that she had better opportunities than she would have had at Loudon. She specifically mentioned learning how to play the clarinet in the third grade and felt she never would have had that opportunity at an all-Black school. She also believed that the condition of the books she had access to at Melrose was better than the ones she had used at Loudon. When asked if other children in her neighborhood made fun of her for attending Melrose, Johnson affirmed Lighty’s memories that no one ever made any negative comments about the Wilkinson girls attending a desegregated school. Also, similar to her sister’s beliefs, Johnson felt that the reason no one ever commented negatively was perhaps because of the role their father had in the community as a pastor and president of the local branch of the NAACP.

Johnson felt that her father and members of their church supported her the most during her first year at Melrose Elementary. She remembered the family discussions around the dinner table where the girls discussed events from their day and that her father would always comment on the day's happenings, providing support for the girls or offering his opinion on what was going on. She felt like the members of their church encouraged her because they supported what her father had done in terms of desegregating the schools. She remembered parishioners at their church making comments to her that her father was proud of her for what she was doing. She also recalled that her father's best friend, Reverend Enos Glaspie from Salem, Virginia, provided the family with support during that first year of desegregation.

As described earlier, Johnson, her sisters, and her mother moved to Portsmouth, Virginia in 1964. At that time, Johnson returned to an all-Black school as Portsmouth had not yet desegregated its school system. Johnson attended the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at Truxton Junior High School. At the end of her eighth grade year, Portsmouth began to desegregate and Johnson was once again put into a pioneering role. Johnson described how the bus zones went into effect and she had to attend Craddock High School. Her older sister, because she was already in high school, did not have to change schools and remained at I. C. Norcom, the all-Black high school in Portsmouth. Johnson remembered feeling more uncomfortable at Craddock than she did when she desegregated Melrose Elementary School. In addition to Craddock being a high school and a very different environment, Johnson felt that some of the White teachers at Craddock treated her unfairly. She recalled being told she was late to class as she crossed into the room while the bell was ringing. She also felt some of the White teachers graded her more strictly than they did the White students. Johnson described how desegregation was not strictly enforced in Portsmouth and after a couple of years, students started to attend the school of their choice, rather than where they were told to go. As a result, Johnson went to I. C. Norcom for her junior and senior years, graduating from an all-Black high school after going through the desegregation process two different times. She remembered feeling more comfortable at Norcom than she had at Craddock.

When reflecting on how her experience in the desegregation of schools had affected her, Johnson described three specific effects. She believed that her role in the desegregation of Melrose Elementary had taught her how important it was for all people, no matter their color, to be able to respect each other and be able to work together. She stated that this was a principle she

had tried to instill in her own children as a result of her schooling experience. Secondly, Johnson felt that her role had helped to open more doors for younger Black students who followed behind her and that these younger students would have more opportunities than she had. She recalled a newspaper article that had called her and the other eight students pioneers (see Appendix V). She expressed pride in being able to serve in that role. The last effect dealt more with her experience in Portsmouth. She expressed the hurt and pain she and her classmates felt at being split up when desegregation occurred in Portsmouth. Not only was Johnson split up from her friends, she was also separated from her sister, who was allowed to stay at the all-Black high school, as students older than Johnson were not made to change schools. Johnson described that even today at her high school reunions, her class invites students who attended the all-Black junior high together but were then split up and attended different high schools.

Johnson had a unique schooling experience. Desegregating schools in two different cities at two different grade levels gave her an interesting perspective. When comparing the two experiences, Johnson felt attending Melrose Elementary in Roanoke had been a much more positive experience than when she attended Craddock High in Portsmouth. She felt there were more instances of discrimination in Portsmouth than there had been in Roanoke; specifically, she mentioned the teachers in Portsmouth making her feel uncomfortable. There are several factors that could account for these differences. Reverend Wilkinson's stature and influence in Roanoke had perhaps played a part in the smooth experience at Melrose; Johnson's older sister being in the same school with Johnson most likely helped ease some anxiety; and the differing levels, elementary versus secondary, surely played a part in the different experiences in Roanoke and Portsmouth. Additionally, as described earlier, Roanoke's biracial committee wanted to ensure that the desegregation process was as smooth as possible. Portsmouth did not experience the desegregation process in the same manner.

Nadine Wilkinson Johnson provided a multifaceted description of a small piece of the history of the desegregation of schools in Roanoke and in Portsmouth. Her parents instilled in her that she should not be afraid of any situation and that she was just as good as the White students with whom she would attend school. She recognized that she had better opportunities at the desegregated schools she attended, but also realized that there was some camaraderie lost with her fellow Black students when she began attending desegregated schools. During her interview, Johnson expressed great pride in being the daughter of Reverend and Mrs. Wilkinson,

and was excited that her story was going to be told. Although she had some sense of how important her role in the desegregation of Melrose Elementary was at the time, Johnson said that later, “when I saw that word, pioneer, it made me proud, because I was like, yeah, I sure am!” (Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013). She repeatedly laughingly referred to her father using her and her sister as guinea pigs, but, in the end, acknowledged that she was proud she had played a small part in creating opportunities for the next generation of Black children.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to explore and document the perspectives of the Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke City schools during the 1960–1961 school year. The study employed qualitative research methods, using aspects of historical research and interviews to collect the oral history of the students. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. What were the experiences of the Black students in Roanoke who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools?
2. What support systems assisted these students during their experience?
3. How did their experiences affect these students then and now?

The participants in the study were the nine Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools in the 1960–1961 school year. These nine students represented only four families: Charles and Judy James; Cecelia, Rosiland, and Milton Long; Eula and Darlene Poindexter; and Cassandra and Nadine Wilkinson. In addition to these primary participants, secondary participants also provided valuable information to the study. Euphesenia Massey is the mother of Cassandra and Nadine Wilkinson. Additionally, she was the wife of Reverend Raymond Wilkinson who was a member of the biracial committee and the president of the Roanoke chapter of the NAACP in 1960. Massey was able to provide a number of facts including a description of Roanoke in 1960, several details about Reverend Wilkinson’s work, and the perspective of the mother of two of the first Black students to desegregate Roanoke schools. Mary Hackley was identified by one of the participants during their interview. Hackley was a first-year teacher in Roanoke in 1960 at Hurt Park Elementary School, one of the all-Black schools in Roanoke. Hackley provided information about the desegregation process on teachers in Roanoke City as well as provided information about her late husband, William “Bill” Hackley, who was a teacher of some of the participants when they moved to the junior high school level.

Interview questions were developed with the assistance of the examining committee and were field tested before the study began. The researcher interviewed Black students who were among the first to attend Andrew Lewis High School in Salem, Virginia, a town adjoining Roanoke. Field testing helped to orient the researcher to the interviewing process and gave the researcher insight into adding additional questions to the interview protocol. Additionally, the

researcher rearranged some of the questions and deleted others. The researcher transcribed and analyzed one of the field tests to practice those processes as well. Once these processes were complete, the researcher began data collection from the nine Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools.

Data collection took place between the months of July of 2013 and January of 2014. Of the nine primary participants, who were the first nine Black students to desegregate schools in Roanoke, only one of them still lives in the Roanoke area. The other eight participants live in Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, or another part of Virginia. Locating and making contact with all nine participants moved quickly with several of the participants but slowly with others. Additionally, arranging schedules mutually agreeable to the researcher and the participants took weeks of planning in some cases. In several instances, travel arrangements for the researcher had to be made as well. Data collection procedures consisted of face-to-face interviews with most of the participants. In one case, the work schedules of the researcher and one of the participants did not allow for a face-to-face interview, so a telephone interview was arranged. In another case, the participant suffers from a vocal cord disorder that rendered the participant's voice weak, which would not allow for a long conversation. As a result, that interview was conducted through electronic mail with the questions being sent to the participant and responses sent back to the researcher. All of the interviews included member checks where the transcript of the interview was sent to the participant for them to verify. Most of the interviews included follow-up questions, sent to the participant by electronic mail, after the researcher had transcribed and reviewed the interviews. Additional data collection included interviews with secondary participants, newspaper articles, documents from the Pupil Placement Board records, yearbooks from Monroe Junior High School, and artifacts the participants possessed, such as photographs and brochures.

Once the researcher had completed a family set of interviews, the transcripts were coded to describe the family's story and then were coded again to analyze each individual participant's story. Transcripts were read and re-read. Patterns and categories emerged from each interview transcription. Individual patterns and categories were compared from one interview to the next until a set of themes began to emerge. This analysis method is the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The themes that emerged from the data helped make meaning of

the participants' experiences desegregating the schools in Roanoke during the 1960–1961 school year.

Overview of Findings

Five common themes emerged from the interviews with participants. They were: (a) rejection by White and Black peers, (b) family support, (c) preparation for life in a desegregated society, (d) a sense of loss related to not attending all-Black schools, and (e) the reflective meaning each participant made of their experience. These themes were similar to the experiences of other Black students who were among the first to desegregate schools. Additionally, some of the themes were also similar to the literature dealing with the value of all-Black schools.

Description of Findings

Rejection by White and Black Peers

Warren Simmons (2004) was one of the first elementary school students to desegregate the public school system in New York City's Upper East Side in 1960. Simmons described the advantages of going to a desegregated school, but also discussed one of the main challenges he faced. Navigating a classroom of mostly White peers and a White teacher was complicated for Simmons; he felt he stood as the token Black person and was "routinely called on to serve as the white person's lens on the Negro experience" (Simmons, 2004, p. 22). He then went on to explain that returning to his Black neighborhood was equally challenging because he felt he had lost time "in the complex negotiations required to maintain one's social status – that is, being considered someone who could hold his own in sports, street games, adolescent verbal jockeying, and the occasional physical confrontation" (Simmons, 2004, p. 22). Simmons called this process "maintaining dual citizenship" (Simmons, 2004, p. 22). Each of the nine students in Roanoke experienced a similar dual citizenship.

All but one of the participants in this study experienced some form of verbal abuse from White peers. Additionally, none of the participants described any significant social interaction with White peers outside of school and five of them specifically mentioned that they noticed this lack of social interaction. In regards to interaction with their Black peers, six of the participants remembered negative comments from their Black friends about their attending desegregated

schools. The majority of the comments the participants heard dealt with their peers accusing the participants of thinking they were better than their Black peers. Interestingly, the three participants who did not receive negative comments from their Black peers were all the children of pastors. All three of these participants believed that this was specifically related to their father being a pastor.

The negative comments that eight of the nine participants heard ranged from comments that they should go back to where they came from to name calling to racial slurs. The two participants who were in junior high school both reported their White peers said they had “cooties.” One of them reported that she sometimes would hear racial slurs directed toward her as she walked back and forth to school. The other participants, all in elementary school, reported that they heard racial slurs from their peers. Some of them reported that they did not recall hearing any slurs in elementary school, but, when they moved up to junior high school, they heard more negative comments from their peers. The participants’ reaction to these negative comments was mostly to ignore them. The Long siblings all discussed how their parents had taught them that if someone called you something you were not, then they were not talking about you and you should just ignore them. One of the Wilkinson siblings, Nadine, reacted to one of her White male classmates calling her a particularly offensive racial slur. As described earlier, she said she rhymed it back to him and said if she was that term, then he was a ‘figger.’ She concluded though that she believed the boy was just repeating what he had heard at home, as the two of them became friends.

When compared to the experiences of other Black students who were among the first to desegregate schools, the Roanoke students were both similar and different. Beals (1994), Fisher (2002), Heidelberg (2006), Simmons (2004), and Stevenson (1978) all described incidents of verbal abuse ranging from ignorant slights to offensive racial slurs. The Roanoke students also reported hearing racial slurs, but noted that the frequency intensified when they moved to the junior high school level. Seven of the nine Roanoke students were in elementary school the first year they desegregated schools while the remaining two were in junior high school. Beals, Fisher, Heidelberg, and Stevenson were all in high school when they desegregated school. The social differences between elementary and high school age children, and what each age level is capable of, most likely accounts for these differences.

In addition to dealing with negative comments from their peers, the nine participants also had no significant social interaction with their White peers outside of school. Five of them specifically mentioned that they did not interact with their White peers while the other four did not describe any social interaction with White peers outside of school. The only interaction that any of the nine participants described was that of Darlene Turner's recollection of riding bicycles with a White male classmate on occasion near her home. One of the reasons for the lack of interaction was likely that most of the Black students did not live near the White students with whom they went to school. The Long family lived along a street that was becoming desegregated, but as Milton Long described, they were not interacting with White neighbors on a day-to-day basis; they played with their Black neighbors. The Jameses, the Poindexters, and the Wilkinsons all lived in Black neighborhoods that, in some cases, were close to a mile away from their desegregated school. Charles James believed the distance was the main reason why he did not interact with his White peers outside of school.

Another reason why the participants did not interact with their White peers outside of school was because of the influence from the White peers' parents. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty described a time when she went to a White classmate's home to play with her friend only to be turned away by the friend's mother. Lighty also described times when she would see her White classmates in public and speak to them only to have them pulled away from her by the White peer's parent. Darlene Poindexter Turner remembered thinking it was odd that her new White classmates would interact with her at school but not at the park after school. She said she later learned that because the White peers' parents could observe the park from their homes; the peers would not play with her because they had been told not to do so and their parents could easily observe them. This lack of social interaction with their schoolmates did not seem to make the participants feel completely socially isolated though. All of the participants described maintaining their social interactions with church activities and Black friends in their neighborhood.

Social isolation from White peers outside of school was another similarity between the Roanoke students and other Black students who desegregated schools. Beals (1994), Fisher (2002), Heidelberg (2006), Simmons (2004), and Stevenson (1978) reported little to no interaction with White peers outside of school. One difference, though, between these students and the Roanoke students was that all of the elementary age students reported having what

appeared to be normal interactions with their White peers while at school. Simmons likewise reported interacting with White peers at his elementary school in New York. The two Roanoke students who were in junior high school reported little interaction with their White peers while at school, similar to the experiences of Beals, Fisher, Heidelberg, and Stevenson, who were all in high school during their desegregation experience. Once again, the social differences between elementary and secondary age students seem to have made this difference.

Maintaining social interactions with their Black peers was not always easy. Six of the nine participants described negative interactions with their Black peers in regard to the participants attending desegregated schools. The majority of the comments the participants heard from their Black peers revolved around their peers accusing the participants of thinking they were better than their Black peers. Additionally, one of the participants said her Black friends asked her why she had White friends. She remembered being confused by this question and told her Black friends that her White friends were her classmates so why would she not be friends with them. Another participant said her Black friends would ask her what she did at the White school. When she would tell them about the types of extracurricular activities she went to, her Black friends would chide her that those activities did not sound like fun and that they were having much more fun at their school. Four of the participants reflected that these negative interactions with their Black peers were more hurtful to them than the rejection they experienced from their White peers. Judy Jones said she felt “more of a loss by your own people rejecting you, versus another race rejecting you” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). Milton Long, as described earlier, said he was more concerned with acceptance from his Black peers as they were the ones he interacted with on a daily basis.

Interestingly, the three participants who said they did not have any negative interactions with their Black peers about attending desegregated schools were all the children of pastors. The Wilkinson sisters, whose father was Reverend Raymond R. Wilkinson, also president of the local NAACP chapter, believed the lack of negative comments was directly related to their father’s role in the community. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty, as described earlier, believed that because her Black peers understood her father’s roles, none of them would have dared to say anything negative to her about her attending a desegregated school. Nadine Wilkinson Johnson echoed her sister’s comments saying “maybe that’s why we didn’t have problems; because they knew who our father was” (N. Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013). The third participant

who did not experience any negative comments from his Black peers, Charles James, felt that because everyone in the Black community knew him as a pastor's son and grandson, that negative comments would not have come his way. James's sister, Judy Jones, who did have negative interactions with Black peers, did not comment on her family's role in the community preventing her from experiencing negative comments, but the negative interaction with her Black peers did occur once she was a little older and was more involved in extracurricular activities at her school. This higher degree of involvement in activities at a desegregated school may have caused Jones to stand out more to her Black peers, thus attracting more attention.

Family Support

Vanessa Siddle Walker (2000) described parental support of education by Black parents during the 1930s to 1960s as a continuation of parental involvement by Black parents after the Civil War to see that their children received an education. Walker described how Black parents routinely contributed a variety of resources to their children's schools, including classroom materials, building supplies, labor, and items for fund raising events. She also described that another main form of parental support of their children's schooling was attendance at school events such as PTA meetings, concerts, and athletic events. Finally, another example of parental involvement in education that appeared in the 1960s was parents who were willing to become involved in court cases designed to achieve desegregated schools. This high level of involvement in school functions often led to the all-Black schools being the center of the Black community.

Similar to the descriptions of family support in Walker's (2000) work, all nine of the participants in this study relayed information about their family's support for them during their schooling experience. Each of the nine participants spoke of their family's high regard for education, how their mother in particular was very active in their education, and how, because of their family's support, they had no fear of going into a desegregated school. All of the participants described parents who wanted their children to get a good education so that their lives could be better than their parents' had been. Additionally, each participant spoke about how their mother was very involved in their schooling, helping to complete homework and being involved in school events. They also spoke of how they considered this normal that their mother ran the house as their father was out working. Finally, six of the participants specifically

mentioned that they were not fearful of going into a desegregated school because their parents had instilled confidence in them as a result of their full-fledged support.

Each of the participants discussed how important a good education was to their family. The James siblings talked of their grandfather's schooling experience at Tuskegee Institute and that education has always been important to their family. The Long siblings all reported that their parents impressed upon them that school was their job and that they were expected to do well. The Poindexter sisters spoke of their mother's belief that education would afford them a better future. The Wilkinson sisters spoke of their father's desire for them to get as much education as possible and their mother's background as a teacher that helped them succeed in school. Each of the participants spoke of their parents' educational background; a few of their parents had attended college, three of the eight parents, while the remainder had all completed high school. All of the participants also spoke about how they understood that they were a reflection of their family while they were at school; another reason they were expected to do well and cause no trouble.

In addition to a strong value placed on education by their family, each participant spoke specifically about how their mother in particular was very involved in their schooling experience. One of the reasons for this could have been the time period; as Darlene Poindexter Turner pointed out "back in those days, the mom ran the things; the dad was the breadwinner, kind of, but that was just society" (D. Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Even though most household duties, including the children's education, might have fallen to the mother in the 1960s, each of the participants spoke of how their mother was fully involved in their education. These mothers made sure homework was completed, attended PTA meetings and Parent-Teacher conferences, and brought food to school for various celebrations. The Poindexter siblings in particular spoke multiple times about how their mother had dreams for them and believed that an education in a desegregated school would help them achieve a life that had been better than hers had been. The Long siblings also spoke of their mother's quiet determination that once a job had begun, there was no question that it would be finished. She made sure her children understood this philosophy included all of their academic endeavors.

One of the results of their family's strong support was that the participants were not afraid of going into a desegregated school. Six of the participants specifically mentioned not having any fear or being afraid of going to school with White students. The other three

participants did not make any mention of fear. There were two different descriptions of this lack of fear. Four of the participants described their lack of fear as a result of their parents never having made an issue of being around White people. Charles James spoke of how his family had been involved in civil rights activities so his going to a White school “wasn’t strange, it wasn’t fearful” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). The Poindexter siblings also spoke of how their parents had never taught them to be fearful of White people, so the girls were not afraid to go to school with White students. The other two participants spoke of their lack of fear in terms of their attitude of fearlessness. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty described that she was never afraid to do anything and that she was scared of no one. Judy Jones spoke of her fearlessness in trying out for sports teams when she was in junior high school even though there were no other Blacks on any of the teams.

Support from their family would seem to be a logical source of support for the Roanoke participants. The two oldest participants were only 12 years old when they began attending a desegregated school. The youngest of the group was just six. It seems to follow that this young group of students would rely on their families to be their main support system. Family support represented a difference from the experiences of other Black students who were the first to desegregate schools. Fisher (2002), Heidelberg (2006), and Stevenson (1978) all reported the importance of relying on others for support during their experiences but Fisher and Stevenson reported that they relied on other Black students who were going through the experience with them while Heidelberg reported that the meetings the NAACP held for him and his cohort in Norfolk, Virginia provided the most support for him. Fisher, Heidelberg, and Stevenson were all in high school during their desegregation experience, teenagers who tend to gravitate toward their peers rather than their parents.

Preparation for Life in a Desegregated Society

Andrew Heidelberg (2006) was one of the first Black students to desegregate the public schools in Norfolk, Virginia. His years at Norview High School were similar and different to the nine students in Roanoke; similar in that he went through many of the same experiences the students in Roanoke did, but different in that his experiences were more pronounced and he was a high school student whereas the Roanoke students were mostly elementary school age. Heidelberg described verbal harassment on a daily basis, feelings of loneliness at the social

isolation, and being befriended by a White student only to learn that the White student was reporting Heidelberg's every word to the principal of the school. Even though his high school years at Norview were difficult for him, Heidelberg was later able to reflect that the experience had been good for him in two ways. The first positive that Heidelberg was able to glean from his experience was that he felt he learned "a lot of good lessons about life" (Heidelberg, 2006, p. 42). He said he learned how to laugh at certain situations rather than become angry about them. Secondly, Heidelberg believed that even though his experience had not been positive, his interaction with White students, and their interaction with him had been good for both of them in terms of learning how to deal with members of a different race. All of the nine Black students who attended desegregated schools in Roanoke echoed Heidelberg's belief that interacting with Whites had helped prepare them for life in a desegregated society where they were often in the minority.

Upon reflection of their experiences, all nine of the participants in this study believed that their attending school with White students had better prepared them for a life in a desegregated society. The two main areas of their lives where they were able to see the benefits of their schooling experience were their ability to more easily work and live with people from different cultural backgrounds than their own and the effect their experience had on them in terms of how they treated other people, especially people who were different from them. Eight of the participants specifically discussed how they have been able to be in situations where they were often in the minority, sometimes the only Black person in a group, and be able to feel at ease in the group. Three of the participants also discussed how their schooling experience had taught them an important lesson about how they should treat other people, a lesson that they in turn tried to pass on to their children and even grandchildren in some cases.

The majority of the participants spoke of work and social settings throughout their lives where they were, in many cases, the only Black person in the group. They spoke of being able to be comfortable in those settings even though there was no one else that looked like them. They all attributed this comfort to having gone to school with White students. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty spoke of her job working for the government in the 1970s enforcing civil rights laws and how she worked mainly in the New England region where there were very few Black people. She said that she never had any problems at work because she always dealt with people fairly and respectfully. Milton Long spoke of his job working for a Fortune 500 company in their

finance department where he was the only Black person for quite some time. He said he was never uncomfortable working in that environment because of his schooling experience. He also observed that he had seen some discomfort in his White friends when they were in predominantly Black social settings or in some of his Black friends who had attended all-Black schools when they were in predominantly White social settings. Charles James felt that his schooling experience had given him a “jump start in terms of relating to people who are different culturally” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

Another lesson some of the participants felt they had learned by attending school with White students was how they should treat other people, especially people who were different from them whether that difference was race, religion, or anything else. Three of the participants spoke about how their experiences had given them a foundation for treating people with kindness and respect. Cecelia Long believed that her experiences had helped her to be able to “stop and listen to people who were very hate-filled without responding hatefully and vindictively to them” (C. Long, personal communication, January 22, 2013). She also said that she was always very mindful of how she spoke to children because she knew the power of words and how they could affect young people. Darlene Poindexter Turner believed that her schooling experiences had been her “foundation of how to treat people, and to love people, no matter what color their skin, their religion, or whatever” (D. Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Finally, Nadine Wilkinson Johnson relayed that her schooling experiences, which included desegregating schools twice, once in Roanoke and again in Portsmouth, Virginia, taught her to try to “love everybody and respect everyone” (N. Johnson, personal communication, August 31, 2013). She believed this lesson to be so important that she passed it on to her own children and has continued the lesson with her grandchildren.

As noted above, several of the participants directly spoke about their experience in a desegregated school, their working environments where they were often in the racial minority, and how they felt their schooling experience had helped them be somewhat more comfortable in that environment. In addition to the participants who spoke directly about their work experience, all of the other participants also at least mentioned their roles in a desegregated society. Six of the participants went on to college after graduating from high school. Several of them chose to attend Historically Black Colleges or Universities. The nine participants went in to a variety of fields including the communications field, teaching, politics, and civil service. They have served

in roles such as teacher, school board member, campaign manager, customer service agent, director of a half-way house, accountant, human resources manager, federal compliance agent, and administrator in a state government agency. Also as noted above, only one of the nine participants remained in the Roanoke community. The other eight participants have lived and worked in a variety of other areas in the United States including Illinois, Maryland, New England, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. Each of the participants continued to display a characteristic of no fear of going into any kind of setting.

Sense of Loss

Several researchers have looked at what has been termed the unintended effects of school desegregation. Dingus (2006), Hudson and Holmes (1994), Irvine and Irvine (1983), Milner (2004), and Roach (2003) all investigated the impact of the closure of all-Black schools on Black students. Black schools were often closed as a result of desegregation (Walker, 2000). White schools were rarely closed. These researchers identified several factors within all-Black schools that contributed to the success of Black students. Some of them were a sense of community, Black teachers serving as role models, a sense of empowerment and enabling that was fostered in all-Black schools, and strong interaction between Black teachers and Black parents. Irvine and Irvine point out that many of these factors were destroyed because of the way in which *Brown v. Board of Education* was implemented. They, along with Roach, stated that these positive factors simply did not transfer to Black students in desegregated schools. Hudson and Holmes stated that the loss of Black teachers had a negative impact not only on Black students but also on Black communities. Black teachers were role models for Black students but also stood as esteemed members of the Black community. After desegregation, many Black teachers lost their jobs and fewer Blacks went into teaching overall. Finally, the closure of all-Black schools, once the cultural center of Black communities, represented another loss for Black communities.

Seven of the nine participants in this study reflected on what they considered a loss for themselves personally or what they saw as a loss for younger generations as a result of desegregation. Three of the participants said they personally felt a loss and could see implications for younger generations. Two participants felt they had personally felt a loss from desegregation, while the remaining two participants voiced concerns over what they saw as a loss for future generations. Each of the participants who described a personal loss discussed not

being able to form strong bonds with their classmates or a feeling of separateness from their Black peers who were still attending all-Black schools. The participants who discussed implications of loss for younger generations spoke of how Black students today are missing the mentoring and learning about their culture from people who look like them. Additionally, some of the participants spoke of the danger of young people not understanding or having an appreciation for what had been done in the past for them to be able to have the freedoms they enjoy today. Finally, two of the participants also discussed what they felt was a loss of the Black community when many of the all-Black schools were either closed or repurposed as a result of desegregation.

Judy Jones was the youngest of the nine Black students who were the first to desegregate the schools in Roanoke. As a first grader, Jones never attended an all-Black school; she was the first Black student in Roanoke to attend desegregated schools for her entire schooling career. Jones believed that she was not able to form life-long friendships with her White peers in a desegregated school the way she has seen some of her Black friends who attended all-Black schools have. Jones also discussed how she believed it was unfortunate that she did not have any Black teachers in elementary school that she could look up to as a role model. She said she felt a sense of loss about not receiving that mentoring and learning about Black culture that she believed her Black peers in all-Black schools received. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty described the same feeling of loss as Jones over not being able to form life-long friendships with her White classmates. Lighty said that it was not until the third grade, when a few other Black students joined her class that she was able to develop strong friendships at school.

Another personal loss that several of the participants described was a feeling of being different from their Black peers who were still attending all-Black schools. The participants spoke of this difference in two ways. One difference was that the participants felt they could not discuss school with their Black peers because their experiences were so different; the participants described learning different topics, using different books, and having access to different social events than their Black peers. Cecelia Long said that she found it difficult to even relate to her own cousin because the cousin attended Lucy Addison High School, the all-Black high school in Roanoke. The participants used terms like separate, split up, scattered, and outsider when describing how they felt about being different from their Black peers. A second difference the participants described was that they did not have the same bond with their classmates after

graduation that they saw many of their Black peers who had attended Lucy Addison High School exhibit. A few of the participants related that they had not attended any of their high school reunions because they did not feel close enough to any of the other alumni to do so.

The sense of loss that the participants felt for younger generations of Black students could be termed the unanticipated effects of desegregation (Hudson and Holmes, 1994). Judy Jones, in relating her own experience of not having any Black teachers in elementary school, felt that Black students today need someone that looks like them in leadership positions that they can look to as mentors and role models. She lamented that a more integrated approach to desegregation was not taken when the schools were desegregated. Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty also voiced concerns about today's Black students not learning about civil rights and Black culture in school. She lamented that she felt many young Black people today have to learn about their history and culture in popular culture, such as movies like *The Butler*, because they were not learning about those topics in school.

Another sense of loss that some of the participants felt for Black students today could be described as what the participants see as a danger related to rights and freedoms. Amber Poindexter Waller spoke of the impact desegregation and affirmative action had made on her life. She said she knew she would not have been able to accomplish her goals, go the places she had gone, or had some of the jobs that she had if it had not been for desegregation and affirmative action. Waller was afraid that today's Black students did not understand how important desegregation and affirmative action were in helping our society get to where it is today so that today's Black students did not have to worry about these rights. Rosiland Long Mitchell echoed these sentiments by saying that she thought it was both good and bad that her children and grandchildren just expect to be afforded equality today. She did not want to see the younger generation ever take being treated equally for granted.

The last sense of loss that two of the participants described was sorrow over the closure or repurposing of all-Black schools in Black communities. Interestingly, these concerns came only from the Wilkinson siblings. Both of the sisters had a little different experience than the rest of the Roanoke participants though. When they moved to Portsmouth, Virginia in 1964, they returned to all-Black schools as Portsmouth had not desegregated yet. Then, in 1965 when Portsmouth began desegregation, the younger sister, Nadine Wilkinson Johnson, had to go into a desegregated school while her older sister was able to remain at the all-Black high school

because she was there the year before. Johnson especially was able to feel the difference of attending segregated and desegregated schools. She had personally experienced, twice, having to leave Black classmates to go to desegregated schools where she was the minority. She expressed a great sense of pain and hurt at being separated from her Black classmates. As she finished high school, she noted that when the time came for reunions, her former Black classmates at the all-Black high school held joint reunions where they invited all of the Black students who had been scattered to the desegregated schools. Johnson said their conversations at these reunions were often about how the all-Black high schools had been closed or repurposed for another use while the White high schools remained intact and how they felt a sense of loss at that fact. Johnson's sister, Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty, also mentioned that the all-Black high school she attended in Portsmouth, I. C. Norcom High School, as well as other all-Black high schools, had been torn down. She expressed sadness that "all the schools that were treasures in the community for Black people are no longer there" (C. Lighty, personal communication, September 14, 2013).

Reflective Meaning Participants Made of Experience

Of the few recorded accounts from the early pioneers of desegregation, each of them was able to give a reflective meaning to their schooling experience. Beals (1994), Fisher (2002), Heidelberg (2006), Simmons (2004), and Stevenson (1978), given time and experience between their schooling experience and when they wrote their accounts, were all able to find some positives from their experiences even though most of them suffered a great deal of abuse in desegregated schools. As their experiences were as different as snowflakes, so too were the positives each was able to take from their situations. Beals said the experience gave her courage and strength. Heidelberg reported that he felt a sense of freedom; that he knew he could do anything after going through those years in Norfolk. He also said he thought the experience had been good for both Black and White students because each side was able to see the other as human beings. Fisher believed that the experience helped her develop a closer relationship with God. Simmons was grateful for the exposure to successful adult role models who were the parents of his new classmates. Similar to these accounts, the first nine Black students to desegregate schools in Roanoke were able to give a reflective meaning to their schooling experience.

Seven of the nine participants in this study characterized their desegregated schooling experience in Roanoke as positive. One of the participants described their experience as positive only because it was not negative, while the remaining participant characterized their experience as neither positive or negative, but different. Just as the positives that each of the recorded accounts described earlier was different, so to were the positives that each of the Roanoke participants was able to take from their experiences. The seven participants who described their experience as positive spoke mainly of how they have been able to see that their experience shaped their personality and helped them deal with different situations in their adult life. Even though the remaining participants did not describe their experience as positive, both did say that they knew their experiences were important to the civil rights movement, and for that, they were glad they had been part of the process.

Of the seven participants who characterized their schooling experience as positive, five of them believed the experience had shaped their personality. Judy Jones described being able to “live amongst all kinds of people and have all kinds of friends; all different races are in my family” (J. Jones, personal communication, September 8, 2013). She believed that were it not for her having gone to school with White peers, developing relationships with people of different races most likely would have been more difficult for her. Cecelia Long knew that her experiences influenced how she came to interact with people, especially people who did not agree with her. She also believed her experiences enabled her to be able to empathize with people no matter what their situation was. Rosiland Long Mitchell said her experiences “gave me a backbone” (R. Mitchell, personal communication, September 27, 2013) and taught her to speak up for what is right. Darlene Poindexter Turner simply said her experiences “made me who I am” (Turner, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Finally, Amber Poindexter Waller said that her experiences affected her in that she was able to embrace anyone, no matter what their race was.

Four of the participants who characterized their experience as positive also identified their ability to deal with certain situations as a direct result of their desegregated schooling experience. Nadine Wilkinson Johnson felt she was able to take advantage of more opportunities that she would not have had were it not for her desegregation experience. Cecelia Long knew that her desegregated schooling experience propelled her in to the job she has today, assisting women coming out of abusive situations. She believes that because of her experiences, although

different from the situations of the women she helps today, she is able to empathize with them to help them deal with their experiences. Milton Long believed that his schooling experiences gave him the confidence to be able to be comfortable in work environment where he was often the only Black person in his department. As a result, he was appreciative that his schooling experiences enabled him to have a successful career. Finally, Rosiland Long Mitchell was able to use her experiences to help her confront situations that she felt were unfair. She also believed her experiences gave her the strength to weather difficult situations, believing that right would win in the end.

The remaining two participants who did not wholeheartedly describe their experiences as positive were still able to be appreciative of their experiences. Charles James said his experience “definitely was not negative. What could I say that would make it positive? Nothing bad happened, so let’s go with positive” (C. James, personal communication, December 6, 2013). He did say however that he was grateful to have been part of the desegregation process in Roanoke, but felt that his role had been very minor compared to others actions during the Civil Rights Movement. Finally, Cassandra Wilkinson Lighty described her schooling experience in Roanoke as “different and important to the civil rights struggle” (C. Lighty, personal communication, November 7, 2013). She did acknowledge however, that her experiences had shaped her into the person she was today, mainly in the way she was able to mingle with people of all races and not feel uncomfortable. She concluded by saying that “people are people, regardless of the color of their skin” (C. Lighty, personal communication, November 7, 2013).

None of the Roanoke participants characterized their experiences as negative or described any negative effects of their desegregation experience. This was one of the main differences from the recorded experiences of other Black students who went through the desegregation experience. Beals (1994), Fisher (2002), Heidelberg (2006), and Stevenson (1978) all reported feelings of inferiority or invisibility. The negative interactions with White peers certainly took a toll on these students. One of the reasons for these differences between the Roanoke students and the recorded experiences of other Black students could once again be the age difference between the two groups of students. Another more likely reason could be that overall, desegregation in Roanoke was a fairly calm process. Beals and Stevenson desegregated schools in Little Rock, Arkansas; Heidelberg desegregated schools in Norfolk, Virginia. The reaction to desegregation by the people in both of these areas was much more negative than it was in Roanoke. The

negativity in places like Little Rock and Norfolk seemed to easily find its way into the school setting with regard to its effect on those students. Likewise, the relative calm reaction to desegregation in Roanoke led to the Roanoke students having fairly calm schooling experience in desegregated schools.

Summary of the Findings

Five common themes emerged from the interviews with participants. They were: (a) rejection by White and Black peers, (b) family support, (c) preparation for life in a desegregated society, (d) a sense of loss related to not attending all-Black schools and (e) the reflective meaning each participant made of their experience. These themes helped to answer the three research questions that guided the study. First, in regard to what the experiences were of the Black students in Roanoke who were the first to desegregate the schools, each of the participant's experiences was unique but similar patterns still emerged from their stories. Secondly, one of these similar patterns was how each of the participants felt supported by their family. Finally, each of the participants was able to attach reflective meaning to how their experience affected them then and now.

Similar patterns emerged within each of these themes as a result of the data analysis process. The participants experienced a different type of rejection by their White peers than their Black peers, but rejection in both areas of their lives made their schooling experience difficult in some regards. Within the Family Support theme, each of the families represented in the study had a high regard for education and their mothers were a strong, determining factor in their education. Additionally, because of their family support, many of the participants expressed no fear at the prospect of going to school with White students. All of the participants were able to identify ways in which their desegregated schooling experience had helped to prepare them for life in a desegregated society. They felt that they were better able to interact with people who were different from them, learned how to treat other people, or both of these qualities. Each of the participants was also able to identify areas of loss related to their schooling experience. These losses were described as either a personal loss or a sense of loss for today's Black students. Finally, each participant, upon reflection, was able to assign some meaning to their schooling experience. Most of the participants described their experiences as positive, while the two who did not use the word positive were able to be appreciative of their experiences.

All of the findings were able to be related to findings found in the literature regarding student experiences in all-Black schools or the recorded experiences of other students who went through the school desegregation experience. Vanessa Siddle Walker (2000) identified several strengths of all-Black schools including a spiritual foundation, high expectations from teachers and administrators, and parental and community support. The importance of parental or family support could easily be seen in the experiences of the nine students from Roanoke. Other researchers such as Hudson and Holmes (1994) identified unanticipated effects from desegregation including a sense of loss by Black students and the community. These results were also evident with the nine students from Roanoke. Additionally, the participants in this study had similar experiences to other students who were among the first to desegregate schools such as a rejection by White and Black peers, preparation for life in a desegregated society, and the reflective meaning they were able to make of their schooling experiences.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the perspectives of the Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke City schools during the 1960–1961 school year. School desegregation in the United States represents an important part of not only American history but of the Civil Rights Movement as well. The education of Black students is also an important part of the history of education in the United States; from its beginnings before the Civil War to the landmark court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the process of educating Black students has been an ever-evolving story. Missing from that story though are the perspectives of the students who lived through the process of school desegregation. As a result, the research questions that guided this study were:

1. What were the experiences of the Black students in Roanoke who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools?
2. What support systems assisted these students during their experience?
3. How did their experiences affect these students then and now?

Historical context for the study was framed with an examination of the history of Black education on the national level, state of Virginia level, and City of Roanoke level. A history of Roanoke was also provided as context for the setting in which school desegregation for the nine Black students in Roanoke took place. Black education in the South was helped considerably by the financial contributions of Northern Philanthropists who subscribed to the Industrial Education model championed by Booker T. Washington. When W. E. B. Du Bois began to challenge an educational system for Blacks that kept them in subservient roles, a theoretical debate began about the purpose of Black education that ultimately ended with the desegregation of schools in 1954. In Virginia, the birthplace of the Industrial Education model, state legislators held firm to their belief in segregated educational settings. The state was the leader of the Massive Resistance movement that dominated the early opposition to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Roanoke represented an area of Virginia that did not oppose *Brown v. Board of Education* quite as vehemently as other parts of the state. The schools in Roanoke never

closed as they did in Farmville or Charlottesville. Additionally, Roanoke had the biracial committee working behind the scenes to make the desegregation process run smoothly.

Roanoke in 1960 was a typical Southern town in many ways. Schools were segregated as were neighborhoods in the city. The White residents of Roanoke would have described themselves as moderates and the city had a long history of being focused on economic stability. The Norfolk and Western Railroad Company provided many jobs for both Black and White residents. The Black community was a cohesive unit, bound mainly by a network of pastors. Reverend Raymond R. Wilkinson, pastor of Hill Street Baptist Church, also served as the president of the local branch of the NAACP. The biracial committee, made up of six prominent White businessmen and six prominent Black men, worked on several issues including desegregating downtown businesses, removing the Washington Park dump from the Black community, and school desegregation. Their efforts most likely solved these issues with far less divisiveness than if the committee had not been in existence.

Prior to the 1960 school year, 39 Black students applied for admission to White schools for the upcoming school year in Roanoke. As was required by the Pupil Placement Board, the applications were forwarded by the administration of Roanoke City Schools to the Board for review. Only nine of the applicants were granted admission to White schools, most likely based on the recommendations of the superintendent. The nine applicants came from only four families: the James family, the Long family, the Poindexter family, and the Wilkinson family. The group consisted of two boys and seven girls and ranged in age from six to twelve. One of the students was in first grade, two were in second grade, one was in third grade, one was in fourth grade, one was in fifth grade, one was in sixth grade, and the remaining two were in seventh grade. These students were scheduled to go to Melrose Elementary School, Monroe Junior High School, or West End Elementary School.

Interviews were conducted with each of these former students. All of the interviews were conducted face-to-face except for one phone interview and one that was conducted by electronic mail because the participant suffers from a vocal cord disorder. The interview questions were designed to elicit answers to the research questions. The transcriptions from each interview were then analyzed and themes emerged from the data. The five themes were: (a) rejection by White and Black peers, (b) family support, (c) preparation for life in a desegregated society, (d) a sense of loss related to not attending all-Black schools and (e) the reflective meaning each participant

made of their experience. These themes were found to be similar to themes that occur in the literature about the value of all-Black schools or similar to the experiences of other students who were among the first to desegregate schools elsewhere in the United States.

Discussion

As Lichtman and French (1978) described, reconstructing the lives, thoughts, and feelings of ordinary people helps to deepen “our understanding of the common humanity of people” (Lichtman and French, 1978, p. 111). The Black students who desegregated schools in the years following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision can provide a first-person account of an experience that few others lived through. Examining these stories helps to add depth and richness not only the body of knowledge about one aspect of the Civil Rights Movement but also to our understanding of the effects of legal decisions on individuals. Very few of these former Black students have recorded their stories. As time passes, fewer and fewer of these stories will be available for preservation. The goal of this study was to record the stories of the first nine Black students who desegregated schools in Roanoke, Virginia during the 1960–1961 school year.

Providing an overview of the history of Black education prior to desegregation in the South, in Virginia, and in Roanoke, described the development of the eventual context for the schools attended by the nine participants in Roanoke. This history revealed the many compromises that were often made to Black education in the South. Industrial Education, promoted by Booker T. Washington, was a White-approved education plan for Blacks that would have kept Blacks in subservient jobs in the economy such as masonry, barbering, and farming. W. E. B. Du Bois began to challenge the Industrial Education model in the early 1900s. The intense debate that Du Bois’ challenge ignited eventually culminated in the NAACP fighting for an equal education for Black students through the court system.

Examining the desegregation process in Roanoke resulted in the discovery of an interesting approach to desegregation. The biracial committee that secretly formed in Roanoke to help solve issues related to race demonstrated a willingness by at least twelve men to develop solutions that would lead to smooth transitions in a time period when very little related to race relations went smoothly. The committee was successful in developing plans that led to desegregating businesses in downtown Roanoke, moving the Washington Park dump out of the

Black community, and desegregating the schools with minimal disruption to the community. These men provided a valuable service to the city of Roanoke. The careful planning and execution of the committee's decisions about desegregation certainly helped maintain a relative calm in Roanoke when compared to other communities like Little Rock, Arkansas, and other Virginia localities where massive resistance was preached and practiced. It would also seem that some of this careful planning was adopted by Roanoke City Schools in the fall of 1960. Some of the participants mentioned that they believed their teachers might have been purposefully selected for them as to create minimal disruption. The selection of the schools the students were assigned to might have also been carefully selected as to make the transition to desegregated schools easier on both the Black and the White students. The relative ease of the desegregation of schools in Roanoke could certainly have been seen as another victory for the biracial committee.

The first nine Black students who desegregated the schools in Roanoke recounted experiences that were as varied and unique as the students were. Each of the participants shared openly with the researcher their thoughts and feelings about their experiences. Their stories provided previously unknown and valuable details about the desegregation process in Roanoke. More importantly, the participants shared how the experience affected them personally. Very little attention has been given to the Black students' perspectives of desegregation. Acknowledging and examining their perspectives pays respect to the sacrifices these students made in order to advance the ideal of an equal education on a broader scale.

The themes that emerged from the participants' experiences were both similar to and different from the themes that appear in the literature about the value of all-Black schools. Additionally, the experiences of the students in Roanoke were similar to and different from the recorded experiences of other Black students who were among the first to desegregate schools. The similarities included support from others while going through the desegregation experience, rejection by both Black and White peers, preparation for life in a desegregated society, and the reflective meaning each participant was able to give to their experience. The differences included a different source of support for the Roanoke students, the intensity of the negative interactions with White peers, social isolation outside of school but not inside school, and a lack of negative effects on the Roanoke students. The two main reasons for these differences seem to be the difference in the ages of the students and the community's reaction to desegregation. The

majority of the students in the literature of recorded experiences of Black students who were among the first to desegregate schools were in high school when they first attended desegregated schools. All of the Roanoke students were 12 years old or younger with the majority of them being in elementary school. This age difference, coupled with the differences between elementary schools and high schools certainly made a difference in the experiences of all of these students. Likewise, the reaction to desegregation by the community where the students attended desegregated schools seemed to make a difference in the experiences of the students. Communities with more negative reactions to desegregation, such as Little Rock, Arkansas, and Norfolk, Virginia, seemed to produce students who had more negative experiences. The students in Roanoke, where desegregation was a fairly calm process, reported fewer, less intense negative experiences and did not report any negative effects of their desegregation experience.

One of the themes that emerged from the interviews, the sense of loss that some of the participants felt, has been termed one of the unintended effects of desegregation. When, in 1950, the leadership of the NAACP under the direction of lead legal counsel Thurgood Marshall began to challenge the separate but equal principle (Patterson, 2001), their intent was to show the inherent inequality in segregated schools (Bullock, 1967). Their goal was to see an end to segregated schools. Several of the participants in this study felt that no one could have anticipated the unintended effects of desegregation, but that they experienced those effects nevertheless. Five of the participants in this study acknowledged personal losses in terms of not being able to form close friendships with their White classmates and/or not being able to interact with them outside of school. Both of these activities are likely to be considered normal, expected activities for school children. It would seem these participants sacrificed that part of their schooling experience in the name of desegregating schools. Interestingly, while the participants did feel a sense of loss about not being able to form these friendships, none of the participants expressed bitterness about this sacrifice or even described the loss as a sacrifice. Most of the participants also spoke of maintaining social interactions with Black peers at church or in the neighborhood; so, they were not completely socially isolated. None of the participants expressed any regret about their participation in desegregation and several of them specifically mentioned that they knew their part in desegregating their school was important to the Civil Rights movement. It would seem that, overall, while the participants did experience this sense of loss, they accepted the loss as something they had to do in order for desegregation to be achieved.

And while they might not have liked the loss, they were willing to bear the loss for the greater good.

The story of desegregation was only just beginning in 1960 when nine Black students began attending formerly all-White schools. 39 students applied for admission to all-White schools in 1960. Only nine were granted admission. Of the 30 who were denied admission, 28 of them, along with their parents, filed suit against the Roanoke City School Board seeking admission to White schools and an injunction against the continued operation of segregated schools in Roanoke. *Green v. School Board of City of Roanoke Virginia* (1970) took a long and winding road before being settled on July 21, 1971 when the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division, finally approved the Roanoke City School Board's plan for a unitary school system. Black students had intermittently begun attending formerly all-White schools during the decade the case was being decided, appealed, and decided yet again, but all-Black and all-White schools continued to exist in Roanoke until the plan for a unitary school system was approved. In the fall of 1971, the original vision of *Brown v. Board of Education* was finally realized in Roanoke.

In the appellate ruling on the *Green v. School Board of City of Roanoke Virginia* (1962), the court outlined the school district's normal plan for assigning students to schools. The court said that "the scheme employed by the school officials in Roanoke City in making their recommendations is aptly called the 'feeder' system" (*Green v. School Board of City of Roanoke Virginia*, 1962). The city was divided into six sections. Each section was assigned an elementary school, a junior high school, and a high school that every student within that section would attend. Most students attended the elementary school that was closest to their home. Black students however, were assigned to the elementary schools only in Section 2. No White students attended any schools in Section 2. If any student desired to transfer to a different school, they had to go through the transfer process which included an application to the Pupil Placement Board, providing a variety of information to the Board, and the student's parents were subjected to an interview (see Appendix W, X, and Y). The Court ruled that Roanoke City's initial placement of students was based solely on race. Additionally, the Court stated that a White student living in the same area as the Black student would not have to go through the transfer process to attend the neighborhood school that the Black student might want to attend. In other words, if the two students, one Black and one White, were similarly situated in the same section,

then it was a violation of the Black student's rights under the Fourteenth Amendment to require the Black student to have to go through the transfer process while the White student did not have to do so. The appellate court reversed the district court's decision and remanded the case for proceedings consistent with their opinion.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further study, based on the findings of this study, would be to continue to document the experiences of other Black students who desegregated schools. The small number of documented accounts from the students begs for more inquiry into their experiences. There is a sense of urgency related to this recommendation as the passage of time threatens to silence the voices of these former students with each passing day. The participants in this study, seven of whom were in elementary school at the time of desegregation, were all in their 60s when they were interviewed about their schooling experiences. Fading memories will continue to make preservation of these experiences more difficult. Additional documented experiences would add to the history of desegregation and the localities where the experiences occurred.

Because the passage of time is a limitation to this topic, further research could be conducted with students who were not in the first wave of Black students to desegregate schools but attended desegregated schools during the second or third years of desegregation. As was the case in Roanoke, most localities in Virginia and the rest of the South did not completely desegregate their schools immediately, but rather held out with token desegregation for as long as possible. As a result, even in the second, third, or fourth years of desegregation, there would not have been a large number of Black students in formerly all-White schools who may have had similar experiences to the students who were the first to desegregate schools.

Finally, Roanoke's path to school desegregation was made somewhat smoother by the work of the biracial committee. A study to investigate the methods that various localities used to achieve school desegregation might reveal methods that localities could use to solve issues that could potentially be divisive even today. Historically, the localities that had a difficult time desegregating received more attention than localities that desegregated somewhat more peacefully, like Roanoke. Communities like Little Rock, Arkansas, with its images of National Guardsmen enforcing desegregation orders and Prince Edward County, Virginia, which closed

its schools for four years rather than desegregate are more well-known in the history of desegregation than are localities where desegregation was accomplished more peacefully. An examination of these lesser-known localities specifically might reveal methods similar to those of the Roanoke biracial committee, which was able to accomplish a difficult task with what appeared to be relative ease. Additionally, an in-depth study of Roanoke's biracial committee would likely reveal a great deal of information about the benefits of such a collaborative group as well as more information about all of the activities of the committee related to the advancement of civil rights in Roanoke.

Personal Reflections on the Research Process

Once this study was completed, the researcher took time to reflect on the research process. In an attempt to offer guidance to future researchers who may pursue this topic, or any historical topic, there are a few suggestions for consideration. First and foremost are patience and persistence. Tracking down details and searching out every possible lead can be exhausting and frustrating at times. Taking a short break from the process at times in order to start fresh again later and the willingness to do justice to an important story will help fuel patience and persistence.

Second, paying special attention to the participants and the interview process will yield extremely valuable data for the study. Developing a rapport with the participants was essential to this study. The researcher began each conversation with each participant with an honest explanation of interest in this topic. Acknowledging the differences between the researcher and the participants, such as race and age, also helped to convince the participants of the researcher's interest in their stories. During the interviews, the researcher concentrated on making the interview feel more like a casual conversation rather than a formal interview. Putting the participant at ease resulted in rich interview data that helped the researcher not only better understand each participant's experience, but also assisted the researcher in developing a thick, rich description of each participant's experience.

Additionally, field testing was extremely valuable to the researcher. In addition to all of the benefits of the field test discussed previously, the researcher began to gain an understanding of what the desegregation process was actually like for participants. The information gleaned from the field test participants helped the researcher have some context and background

information of the desegregation process before interviewing the Roanoke participants. The researcher also reflected on the field testing experience. Upon reflection of the field testing process, the researcher was reminded of the importance of not going into any interview with any preconceived ideas of what sort of information the participants might reveal. Being open to any and all information the participants provide will ensure that a true picture of the participants' experiences is revealed.

Finally, the dependence on others for support throughout the research process cannot be understated. The researcher relied heavily on advice and guidance from the committee chair, Dr. Wayne Tripp. While the study remained the researcher's project, the experience, expertise, and positive reinforcement from Dr. Tripp made this study the best it could be. Additionally, the researcher worked closely with a fellow doctoral cohort member who was considered a critical friend. Being able to gain support from, and at times commiserate with, someone else who was going through the same process helped to provide the endurance to complete the project. Finally, the support from family and friends who encouraged the researcher and provided valuable breaks from the research process helped the researcher commit to finishing the project as well.

REFERENCES

- 30 Negroes apply for Fall entrance (May 26, 1960). *Roanoke World-News*.
- Adams, M. (2008, September 12). Roanoke honors filmmaker. *The Roanoke Times*.
- Alston v. School Board of City of Norfolk, 112 F.2d 992 C.A. 4 (1940).
- Anderson, J. D. (1988). *Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Barzun, J., & Graff H. F. (1992). *The modern researcher*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Beals, M. P. (1994). *Warriors don't cry: a searing memoir of the battle to integrate Little Rock's Central High*. New York, NY: Pocket Books.
- Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
- Buck, J. L. B. (1952). *Development of public schools in Virginia, 1607–1952*. Richmond, VA: State Board of Education.
- Bullock, H. A. (1967). *A history of Negro education in the South from 1619 to the present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chittum, M. (2005, August 14). When segregation ruled the streets. *The Roanoke Times*.
- Cool III, F. W. (1983). *A study of the Norfolk Public School desegregation process* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Corbin v. County School Board of Pulaski County, 177 F.2d 924 (4th Cir. (VA) 1949).
- Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia, 103 F. Supp. 337 (D.C. VA 1952).
- Dingus, J. E. (2006). Doing the best we could: African American teachers' counterstory on school desegregation. *The Urban Review*, 38(3), 211–233.
- Dotson, R. (2007). *Roanoke, Virginia, 1882 – 1912: Magic City of the New South*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1973) *The education of Black people*. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Egerton, J. (1994). *Speak now against the day: The generation before the Civil Rights Movement in the South*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Fairclough, A. (2001). *Teaching equality: Black schools in the age of Jim Crow*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.

- Fisher, B. K. (2002). *Wit, will & walls*. Euless, TX: Cultural Innovations, Inc.
- Fowler, L. V. (1997). *School integration: A case study of the 1971–1972 school year at Indian River High School* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Freeman v. County School Board, 82 F. Supp. 167 (D.C. VA 1948). (Ashley v. School Board of Gloucester County and Smith v. School Board of King George County)
- Fura, C., & Salevouris, M. J. (2000). *The methods and skills of history: A practical guide*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc.
- Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, 391 U.S. (1968).
- Green v. School Board of City of Roanoke Virginia, 304 F2d 118 (1962).
- Green v. School Board of City of Roanoke Virginia, 428 F2d 811 (1970).
- Guild, J. P. (1969). *Black Laws of Virginia* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Negro University Press. Haddock & Bailey Publishers and Compilers (1888). *Roanoke, Virginia City Directory*. Richmond, VA.
- Hedrick, J. E. (2002). *A case study in the desegregation of George Washington High School and Langston High School in Danville, Virginia during the 1970–1971 school year* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Heatwole, C. J. (1916). *A history of education in Virginia*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.
- Heidelberg, A. I. (2006). *The Norfolk 17: A personal narrative on desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia in 1958–1962*. Pittsburgh, PA: RoseDog Books.
- Hill, O. W. (2000). *The big bang Brown v. Board of Education and beyond: The autobiography of Oliver W. Hill, Sr.* Winter Park, FL: Four-G Publishers, Inc.
- Hudson, M. J., & Holmes, B. J. (1994). Missing teachers, impaired communities: The unanticipated consequences of *Brown v. Board of Education* on the African American teaching force at the precollegiate level. *Journal of Negro Education*, 63(3), 388–393.
- Irvine, R. W., & Irvine, J. J. (1983). The impact of the desegregation process on the education of Black students: Key variables. *Journal of Negro Education*, 52(4), 410–422.
- Kagey, D. (1988). *When past is prologue: A history of Roanoke County*. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Press, Inc.
- Lichtman, A. J., & French, V. (1978). *Historians and the living past: The theory and practice of historical study*. Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing Corporation.

- Macy, B. (2006, February 5). She touched on us to eternity. *The Roanoke Times*.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. London, England: The Falmer Press.
- Meagher, M. (1939). *A history of education in Richmond*. Richmond, VA: Works Progress Administration.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McClure, P. (2011, April 7). Negro Education Society. Retrieved November 16, 2012, from *Encyclopedia Virginia*: http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Negro_Organization_Society.
- McMillan, J. H., & Wergin, J. F. (2010). *Understanding and evaluating educational research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Milner, H. R. (2004). Black teachers, Black students, Black communities, and Brown: Perspectives and insights from experts. *Journal of Negro Education*, 73(3), 410–420.
- Modlin, C. C. (1998). *The desegregation of Southampton County, Virginia schools: 1954–1970* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Muse, B. (1961). *Virginia's massive resistance*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ollie, A. F. (2003). *African American history in Roanoke City: A compilation of records*. Roanoke, VA: Author.
- Orderly Integration in Roanoke. (1960, September 7). *The Roanoke Times*. pp. A6.
- Parents, students happy over first integration. (1960, September 6). *The Roanoke World-News*. pp. A1.
- Patterson, J. T. (2001). *Brown v. Board of Education: A civil rights milestone and its troubled legacy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Pearson v. Murray, 169 Md. 478 (1936).
- Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).
- Potter, L. H. (1996). “We went about it peacefully”: *Biracial leadership in the movement for Black equality in Roanoke, Virginia, 1954–1968* (Unpublished senior honors thesis). Hollins University, Roanoke, VA.
- Quesenberry, G. H. (1977). *A study of the Newport News pupil desegregation process*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

- Richardson, A. G. (1976). *The development of Negro education in Virginia, 1831–1970*. Richmond, VA: Phi Delta Kappa.
- Roach, R. (2003). A rich, but disappearing legacy: Remembering Black boarding schools: A tradition obscured by desegregation's impact. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 20(13), 18–23.
- Roanoke City School Board (1937). *Third annual report of the public schools*. Roanoke, VA: Roanoke City School Board.
- Roanoke City School Board Minutes. (November 26, 1940).
- Roanoke City School Board Minutes. (August 17, 1945).
- Roanoke City School Board Minutes. (June 20, 1960).
- Roanoke City School Board Minutes. (August 15, 1960).
- Roanoke school integration: I tried to look like everyone else. (2011, May 29). *The Roanoke Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/288124>
- Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2012). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Rowan, C. T. (1960). What White people ask about Negroes. *Ebony*, 15(4), 89–95.
- Samuel Chapman Armstrong (2012). *Hampton University.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.hamptonu.edu/about/armstrong.cfm>
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Shareef, R. (1996). *The Roanoke Valley's African American heritage: A pictorial history*. Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company/Publishers.
- Simmons, W. (2004). A Stranger in Two Worlds. *Education Next*, 21–25.
- Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma, 332 U.S. 631 (1948).
- Spivey, D. (1978). *Schooling for the new slavery: Black industrial education, 1868–1915*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- State ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, 305 U.S. 337 (1938).
- Stevenson, S. (1978). Reflections on Little Rock. *Theory Into Practice*, 17(2), 179–182.
- Stone Printing and Manufacturing Company, J.W. Beard, Compiler (1898). *Directory of the City of Roanoke*. Roanoke, VA.
- Sweatt v. Painter, 339 U.S. 629 (1950).

- Toma, J. D. (2006). Approaching rigor in applied qualitative research. In C. F. Conrad & R.C. Serlin (Eds.), *The Sage handbook for research in education: Engaging ideas and Enriching inquiry* (pp. 405–423). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tripp, N. W. (2006). Percy Casino Corbin. In S. B. Bearss et al. (Series Ed.) *Dictionary of Virginia of biography: Vol. 3. Caperton to Daniels* (pp. 465–466). Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia.
- Tushnet, M. V. (1987). *NAACP's legal strategy against segregated education, 1925–1950*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Vaughn, W. P. (1974). *Schools for all: The Blacks and public education in the South, 1865 – 1877*. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Virginia Pupil Placement Board (1960). *List of questions for each personal interview*. Records of the Virginia Pupil Placement Board. Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.
- Walker, V. S. (2000). Value segregated schools for African American children in the South, 1935 – 1969: A review of common themes and characteristics. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 253 – 285.
- Washington, B. T. & Brundage, W. F. (2003). *Up from slavery: With related documents*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- White, C. (1982). *Roanoke: 1740 – 1982*. Roanoke, VA: Hickory Printing.
- Works Projects Administration (1942). *Roanoke: Story of Country and City*. Roanoke, VA: Stone Printing.
- Yow, V. R. (1994). *Recording oral history: A practical guide for social scientists*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A

ROANOKE TIMES ARTICLE SEPTEMBER 7, 1960

Editorials

WEDNESDAY MORNING, SEPT. 7, 1960

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Mistrust the man who finds everything good; the man who finds everything evil; and still more the man who is indifferent to everything.—Lavater.

Orderly Integration in Roanoke

Integration of two public schools in Roanoke took place yesterday in a manner that scarcely distinguished the beginning of the term with any other routine opening day. Negro pupils are to enter a third school today. The good order with which the transition was accomplished speaks well for the temper of the community. Race mixing in the classrooms is not approved by the majority of citizens, but the public generally is convinced that education must go forward with the least possible disruption. This belief in the overriding importance of maintaining educational opportunity for all the children of Roanoke encourages the hope that the city will be able to handle its problems with calmness and good sense.

The few Negro pupils who have entered the formerly all-white schools were admitted under the criteria applied by the State Pupil Placement Board, which has sole authority to assign students. Whether Roanoke will be permitted to hold integration at the limited level with which it has begun—the Placement Board granted requests for only nine transfers—is a matter of uncertainty. The Negroes have gone into Federal court with a challenge of the board's action. They want a substantially larger number of Negro pupils admitted.

What Virginia is attempting to do now is to control integration

under procedures that reject pupil transfers except for logical and acceptable reasons other than those of race. Residence closer to a Negro school and lack of academic fitness are among the rules the Placement Board applies when it denies Negroes admission to white schools. No one, of course, can now predict how far the Federal courts will go in sustaining the board's application of such criteria.

Thus it is by no means clear what degree of integration Roanoke will eventually be required to accept. It is to be hoped, however, that the courts will take cognizance of what has been done as a token of good faith and not require mixing on a scale that might increase the difficulty of orderly adjustment and militate against the processes of effective education.

We are confident, in any case, that Roanokers intend to approach whatever future difficulties that may arise with reasonableness and a clear conception of what is required for the welfare of both races. The dignified way in which limited integration has taken place in two schools is a welcome token of that. Now that integration is a fact, it is incumbent upon both races to exercise moderation and restraint so that the task of educating the youth of the community can proceed with the least hurt.

APPENDIX B
LIST OF 39 APPLICANTS

The names of the students denied in each category have been redacted. The numbers in parentheses appear at the end of each student's name and indicate which grade the student would attend during the 1960-1961 school year. Note that eight students who were "at or only slightly above the median" were denied entrance for the 1960-1961 school year.

AZG

Applicants - 1960

<p>39 applicants - 4 because of residence (</p>	<p>(7) ✓ (7) ✓</p>	<p>(7) ✓ (7) ✓</p>
<p>35 - 2 retained (</p>	<p>(7) ✓</p>	<p>(6) No</p>
<p>33 - 9 below the median of the class (</p>	<p>(7) ✓ (7) ✓ (9) ✓ (2) ✓ (5) ✓</p>	<p>(8) ✓ (7) ✓ (5) ✓ (7) ✓</p>
<p>24 - 1 aptitude very low (</p>	<p>(7) ✓</p>	
<p>23 - 6 sibling relationship (</p>	<p>(3) No (4) ✓ (4) ✓</p>	<p>(1) (3) ✓ (3) ✓</p>
<p>17 - 8 those at or only slightly above the median (</p>		<p>(6) ✓ (8) ✓ (5) ✓ (2) ✓ (2) ✓</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Cecilia Long (7) Monroe Milton Long (2) Melrose Rosalind Long (5) Melrose Eula Poindexter (7) Monroe Cassandra Wilkenson (3) Melrose Nadin Wilkinson (2) Melrose</p> <p>Darlene Poindexter (4) West End Charles James (6) West End Judith James (1) West End</p>	<p>(2) ✓ (7) ✓ (5)</p>

APPENDIX C
INITIAL ELECTRONIC MAIL MESSAGE TO AMBER WALLER

Hello Ms. Waller,

My name is Beth Poff and as you can see from my signature, I am the Assistant Principal at Fallon Park Elementary School here in Roanoke.

Additionally, I am currently pursuing my Ph.D. at Virginia Tech in Educational Leadership, and this is why I am writing to you. For my dissertation, I have been looking at the desegregation process here in Roanoke. Specifically, I am interested in the experiences of the nine students who led the way during this process, as you did. I believe you guys have an amazing story to tell. I read the article from 2011 in the Roanoke Times and have also looked at some of the articles from the 1960-61 school year and believe there is much more to the story.

At this point, I am trying to convince my committee to allow me to continue with the study, but they are not sold on the idea that I will be able to talk with enough of you all to make a valid study. My advisor thought it might be a good idea for me to see who I might be able to make contact with, see where everyone is, and if anyone would be willing to participate in the study. You were the easiest to find contact information for....so I am starting with you. :)

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you!

Beth Poff
Assistant Principal
Fallon Park Elementary School
502 19th St. SE
Roanoke, VA 24013
(540) 853-2535

NOTE: This e-mail transmission may contain confidential or legally privileged information that is intended only for the individual or entity named in the e-mail address. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution, or reliance upon the contents of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail transmission in error, please reply to the sender, so that arrangements can be made for proper delivery, and then delete the message from your inbox and trash.

APPENDIX D

INITIAL ELECTRONIC MAIL MESSAGE TO NADINE WILKINSON JOHNSON

Hi Ms. Johnson!

I hope this finds you well on this Friday morning! Amber Waller gave me your email address in order that I might be able to contact you. I'm not sure if she has been able to touch base with you or not about the project that I'm working on.

I am a doctoral student at Virginia Tech working on my degree in Educational Leadership. I also currently work in Roanoke City Public Schools as an assistant principal.

I am currently in the data collection phase of my project and wanted to see if you might be willing to participate in the study. I am looking at the desegregation experiences of those of you who were the first to desegregate Roanoke City Schools. I have been interested in the topic for quite some time, I believe you guys have an important story to tell and that it needs to be formally documented.

If I can answer any other questions, please do not hesitate to email or give me a call. My cell number is (540) 915-2999.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Beth Poff
Assistant Principal
Fallon Park Elementary School
502 19th St. SE
Roanoke, VA 24013
(540) 853-2535

NOTE: This e-mail transmission may contain confidential or legally privileged information that is intended only for the individual or entity named in the e-mail address. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution, or reliance upon the contents of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail transmission in error, please reply to the sender, so that arrangements can be made for proper delivery, and then delete the message from your inbox and trash.

APPENDIX E

INITIAL ELECTRONIC MAIL MESSAGE TO CASSANDRA WILKINSON LIGHTY

Hi Mrs. Lighty!

Your sister, Mrs. Johnson, gave me your contact information and I just wanted to try and touch base with you. I'm not sure if you also might have heard from Amber Waller; she has been serving as a contact for me as well.

I am currently working on my doctorate at Virginia Tech and, as you can see below, am also an assistant principal in Roanoke City. I am studying the desegregation process in Roanoke and have been doing a good bit of research into the 1960 school year here in Roanoke. I am interested in recording the experiences of those of you who were the first to desegregate Roanoke's school system. I believe you all have an amazing story to tell and that it needs to be preserved for its historical significance.

I am at the point where I am now ready to being interviewing you guys if you are willing. I know everyone is all spread out but I am willing to travel to you or, if you are planning a trip to Roanoke anytime soon, could meet you here as well. Your sister mentioned that you guys might all like to converge in Baltimore, which would be perfectly fine with me.

If I can answer any other questions, please do not hesitate to send me an email, contact me at the school's number below, or call my personal cell (540) 915-2999,

I look forward to hearing from you!

Beth Poff
Assistant Principal
Fallon Park Elementary School
502 19th St. SE
Roanoke, VA 24013
(540) 853-2535

NOTE: This e-mail transmission may contain confidential or legally privileged information that is intended only for the individual or entity named in the e-mail address. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution, or reliance upon the contents of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail transmission in error, please reply to the sender, so that arrangements can be made for proper delivery, and then delete the message from your inbox and trash.

APPENDIX F

NOTES FROM INITIAL PHONE CONVERSATION WITH JUDY JAMES JONES

9/3/13

Judy James Jones

- VT student + A.P. in Roanoke City
- Recording experiences of students who were 1st to deseg. schools
- Importance of preserving history

-
- willing to participate
 - Charles is in Richmond area
 - can interview Sunday afternoon

9/8/13

1:30 pm

Her house

APPENDIX G
REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (AFTER FIELD TESTING) FOR
PARTICIPANTS

1. Please tell me a little about your family and your early life with them.
2. Where did you live growing up?
3. What was the first school you attended? How many grades did you complete there? Tell me about your time there.
4. What was your family's attitude towards education? (Follow up, why did your parents place this value on education; what was their schooling experience; what was their role in the community?)
5. When the decision was made that you would apply to attend an all-White school, were you involved in that decision? When was the decision made? If you were involved in the decision, why did you decide to go? If someone else made the decision, do you know why they made the decision? At which school were you placed?
6. What do you remember about desegregation going on in other parts of the state and/or country?
7. What had been your experience with the White community before you began attending a desegregated school?
8. What do you remember about the days leading up to your first day of school at (answer from #5)?
9. How old were you on the first day of school?
10. Please describe your first day of school at (answer from #5), from beginning to end, as much as you remember. (mode of arrival, time, lunch, recess, dismissal)
11. Do you remember if the media (tv, newspaper, etc.) was at your school on the first day? If so, what do you remember about that?
12. Do any specific teachers, administrators, or other students stand out in your mind from the first days of school? Why? (Follow up, did anyone at the school make you feel particularly comfortable or uncomfortable?)
13. Please describe your feelings and/or how you felt about those first few days of school.
14. What do you remember about your classes at your new school? Were any other Black students in any of your classes?

15. What other events were memorable from that first year of school?
16. Did you participate in any extracurricular activities at your new school? If yes, which ones and what was that experience like? If no, why not?
17. If the participant indicates that there were negative experiences, ask what got them through the difficult times.
18. How long did you attend this school? Which other schools did you attend, through graduation? Please describe your experience at this/these schools as compared to your experience at (first desegregated school).
19. How did your family and friends react to you attending a formerly all-White school?
20. Did the NAACP or any other organizations play any role in your schooling experience?
21. Who do you feel supported you the most during that first year? Please describe how this person/group supported you.
22. How would you say that your role in the desegregation of your school affects you now?
23. Would you say that your first year at (new school) was a positive experience or a negative experience for you? Why?
24. Did you have a sense of how important what you were doing was historically?
25. Is there anything else from this experience that you would like to share or that I did not ask you about?

APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SECONDARY PARTICIPANTS

1. Please tell me a little about yourself. (Follow up, where did you grow up, where did you go to school)
2. Please tell me what you remember about Roanoke in the 1950s and '60s. (Follow up, what do you remember about segregation, who were the leaders (official and unofficial) in your community, what was the climate in regards to the Civil Rights movement)
3. What do you remember about the desegregation of schools in Roanoke? (Follow up, what was the community reaction, how was it portrayed in the media)
4. Please tell me how you know (primary participant).
5. What can you tell me about (primary participant)'s experience as one of the first Black students to attend a previously all-White school in Roanoke? (Follow up, do you remember their first day of school, what was their reaction, what did they tell you about the experience).

APPENDIX I

INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS

1. Please tell me a little about your family and your early life with them.
2. Where did you live growing up?
3. What was the first school you attended? How many grades did you complete there? Tell me about your time there.
4. What was your family's attitude towards education? (Follow up, why did your parents place this value on education; what was their schooling experience; what was their role in the community?)
5. When the decision was made that you would apply to attend an all-White school, were you involved in that decision? Please describe what you remember about that decision being made. At which school were you placed?
6. What do you remember about the days leading up to your first day of school at (answer from #5)?
7. How old were you on the first day of school?
8. Please describe your first day of school at (answer from #5), from beginning to end, as much as you remember. (mode of arrival, time, lunch, recess, dismissal)
9. Do any specific teachers, administrators, or other students stand out in your mind from the first days of school? Why? (Follow up, did anyone at the school make you feel particularly comfortable or uncomfortable?)
10. Please describe your feelings and/or how you felt about those first few days of school.
11. What other events were memorable from that first year of school?
12. Did you participate in any extracurricular activities at your new school? If yes, which ones and what was that experience like? If no, why not?
13. How long did you attend this school? Which other schools did you attend, through graduation? Please describe your experience at this/these schools as compared to your experience at (first desegregated school).
14. How did your family and friends react to you attending a formerly all-White school?
15. Did the NAACP or any other organizations play any role in your schooling experience?

16. How would you say that your role in the desegregation of your school affects you now?
17. Would you say that your first year at (new school) was a positive experience or a negative experience for you? Why?
18. Is there anything else from this experience that you would like to share or that I did not ask you about?

APPENDIX J
VIRGINIA TECH IRB APPROVAL FOR STUDY

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 22, 2013
TO: Wayne Tripp, Marietta Poff
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)
PROTOCOL TITLE: School Desegregation in Roanoke, Virginia: The Black Student Perspective
IRB NUMBER: **13-489**

Effective May 22, 2013, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol. This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**
Protocol Approval Date: **May 22, 2013**
Protocol Expiration Date: **May 21, 2014**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **May 7, 2014**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee. The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required. IRB Number 13-489 page 2 of 2 Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Date* OSP Number Sponsor Grant Comparison Conducted?

* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

APPENDIX K
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
PROJECTS INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Title of Project: “School Desegregation in Roanoke, Virginia: Stories from the Black Student Perspective”

Investigators: Dr. N. Wayne Tripp, Marietta E. Poff

Purpose of this Research/Project:

The purpose of this project is to document the experiences of the nine Black students who were the first to desegregate Roanoke schools during the 1960–1961 school year. These students attended Monroe Junior High School, Melrose Elementary School, or West End Elementary School. Participants will be asked to share their experiences and remembrances of their school year by way of interviews.

Procedures:

Participants will be contacted first by e-mail or by phone to explain the purpose of the study and to inquire if they would be interested in participating in the study. If the participant is willing to participate in the study, a mutually agreed upon date, time, and location for the interview will be decided. The interview will last approximately one hour and a follow-up interview may be scheduled if needed. The interview date, time, and location will be confirmed with either an e-mail or a letter to the participant.

Risks:

There will be minimal risk to the participants. The interview questions will be designed to access the participant’s memories surrounding their participation in the desegregation of Roanoke schools. Some of the answers to the questions may evoke some emotional distress for the participants. The participants may refuse to answer any questions that may cause them distress.

Benefits:

The benefits of this study are an increased understanding of what the desegregation process was like for these students. Additionally, the historical account gained from the study will contribute to preserving a piece of the history of Roanoke and the experiences of these students.

There is no promise or guarantee of benefits for the former students to participate in the study.

Upon completion of the study, the participants may request a summary of the study’s results.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:

The participants will be identified and quoted in the study unless they request that they not be identified or quoted as the source of any or all of the information they provide. Pseudonyms may be used upon request by the participant. At no time will the researchers release the results of the

study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without the participant's written consent.

Interviews will be digitally recorded and stored with the researcher. Only the researcher and lead investigator will have access to the recordings. The participants will be provided with a transcript of their interview to do with as they wish. Once the study has been completed and approved, the researcher's recordings will be destroyed.

It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

Compensation:

Participants will not be compensated for their participation in the study. The participant's participation in the study is voluntary.

Freedom to Withdraw:

Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time they may choose. Additionally, participants may refuse to answer any question(s) during the study at any time they choose as well.

Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study, "School Desegregation in Roanoke, Virginia: Stories from the Black student perspective". I have the following responsibilities: 1) To participate in all scheduled interviews 2) To review transcripts of interviews and provide feedback to the researcher.

Subject's Permission:

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date _____
Subject Signature

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

Ms. Marietta E. Poff, *Study Investigator*
(540-915-2999; mpoff@vt.edu)

Dr. N. Wayne Tripp, *Dissertation Committee Chair*
(wtripp@vt.edu)

Dr. David M. Moore, *VT Institutional Review Chair*
(540-231-4991; moored@vt.edu)

APPENDIX L
VIRGINIA TECH IRB TRAINING CERTIFICATE



APPENDIX M

WORLD NEWS ARTICLE SEPTEMBER 6, 1960

Parents, Students Happy Over First Integration

By Bob Fishburn and
Glenn Lemon
World-News Staff Writers

Roanoke's first day of public school integration went off without a reported incident.

What appeared to be a routine first day brought pleasure to the parents involved, the principals, and particularly to the students who paved the way.

Charles James, 11 who entered the sixth grade at West End, has nothing but praise for his new school, his teacher and his fellow pupils.

"It was about like going to Loudon (Elementary School) only this school is nicer," Charles said.

★ ★

"I met some very friendly people and everyone was nice to me," he continued.

Charles entered the sixth-grade classroom a little late and sat down in a front row seat. The only display toward him was typical sixth grade curiosity.

"They asked me my name, my age and where I was from; then we learned about our books and the schedule," he said.

Charles, who compiled a record of "mostly E's and G's" at Loudon, said he thought the school year was going to be "a lot of fun."

To his father, Robert E. James Jr., of 1870 Salem Ave., SW, the day was one of the "biggest in my life." "I knew that Charles and the pupils at West End would come through; we couldn't be happier," he said.

"I would particularly like to commend the principal of West End, Mr. Bristow Hardin, for all his cooperation and for the way in which he handled the whole event," James said.

Mrs. Raymond Wilkinson, who took her daughters, Cassandra and Nadine, to Melrose, said "I was very pleased this morning."

★ ★

"I was impressed with the re-



THEY'RE AMONG FIRST—Two of the four Negro children whose enrollment at Melrose Elementary School integrated the formerly all-white school walk to the building with their mother. They are Nadine Lauvania Wilkinson, 6, and Cassandra Romana Wilkinson. Their mother is Mrs. Raymond R. Wilkinson.

action of the principal and teachers to make it a very routine thing," she said.

"I think in weeks to come things will move right on in place," Mrs. Wilkinson said.

Darlene Poindexter, 8, the other Negro child entering West

End, had a short but expressive comment on her first day. As she left the school about noon today, she looked back at her teacher standing in the doorway, smiled and said "Goodbye, Mrs. Pollard; I'll see you tomorrow."

APPENDIX N

WORLD NEWS ARTICLE SEPTEMBER 6, 1960

2 Roanoke Schools Integrated Quietly

Integration came quietly in Roanoke City public schools today.

The city schools "opened completely without incident and very satisfactory," said E. W. Rushton, superintendent.

★ ★

Some 17,000 students in the city attended school today to open the

1960-61 school year. More than 12,000 are enrolled, but some will not go until tomorrow.

Only six of the nine Negro children who are to attend previously all-white schools were in their classrooms today. Four Negroes entered Melrose School and two went to West End.

Tomorrow two seventh graders will go to Monroe Junior High School and a first grader will go to West End, Rushton explained.

Negro parents, students happy over first integration ... Page 13

that the Monroe seventh graders were orientated Friday and won't go to classes until tomorrow. All first graders will go to classes for the first time tomorrow.

Rushton said he does not think any white children stayed away from classes today because of integration.

As a matter of fact, principals at both Melrose and West End said attendance was above what they anticipated.

All of the Negro pupils were ordered admitted to the Roanoke schools by the State Pupil Placement Board.

The principals of West End, Bristow Hardin, and of Melrose, Charles Radford, said the white children were well-behaved as their schools were integrated. All was quiet outside both schools as children arrived to attend school.

Two Negro children, Charles E. James, 11, and Darlene K. Poindexter, 8, entered West End about 8:45 a.m.

They entered quietly through a side door of the school approximately 10 minutes after the school bell had rung.

The children were brought to the school in a station wagon and driven directly to a side door through the rear of the school grounds.

Near silence accompanied integration at Melrose.

Four Negro children entered the formerly all-white school when doors opened for the regular fall session.

★ ★

First to enter were Milton Randolph Long, 8, and Rosalyn Sheri Long, 11, who walked to the

See 2 ROANOKE, Pg. 4, Col. 6

2 Roanoke Schools Integrate Quietly

(From Page One)

school a little before 8:50 a.m. with their mother, Mrs. G. R. Long.

A couple minutes later Mrs. Raymond R. Wilkinson brought her children, Cassandra Romona Wilkinson, 8, and Nadine Lavinia Wilkinson, 6, to the school on foot.

The Wilkinson children came most of the way to school by automobile but approached the school grounds on foot.

Neither group was slowed on its way into school, although approximately a dozen photographers and newsmen were present. Both sets of children and their mothers were met outside the school by the principal.

Only about a half dozen other Roanokers witnessed the coming of integration to Melrose. They kept a distance.

And white children entering the school did not loiter on the grounds.

Mothers of the four children left by separate doors a few minutes after entering them. They paused briefly on 16th street, NW, near Melrose avenue to exchange smiles and a few words before driving off together.

At about 9 a.m. two women who had been watching quietly from their porches opposite the school gossiped a bit. Then a Negro postman delivered the school's mail.

Integration had been effected peacefully.

The Long and Wilkinson children formerly attended Loudon School. The Longs live at 1621 Moorman Rd., NW, less than three blocks from Melrose School. The Wilkinsons reside at 1302 Staunton Ave., NW, more than four blocks away from Melrose.

A sister of two of the Negro children who entered Melrose today will start classes at another

formerly all-white Roanoke school tomorrow. Cecelia Morene Long, 12, who attended Harrison School last year, will enter Monroe Junior High School.

★ ★

Both Mrs. Long and Mrs. Wilkinson returned to Melrose School at noon today to take their children home. Mrs. Long, who arrived on foot, entered the school, but Mrs. Wilkinson remained outside in her automobile.

No incidents resulted when Melrose children were dismissed for the day.

Radford was visibly more concerned after school with getting commuting Melrose children on their proper busses than he was with the exits of the four Negroes.

A teacher, however, found herself in a dilemma about whether to let the Wilkinson girls jaywalk to get to their mother's car across the street from the school.

The children finally jaywalked, climbed into the car, and quickly and quietly departed.

APPENDIX O

WORLD NEWS PICTURE SEPTEMBER 6, 1960



—World-News Staff Photo by John Cook

Students Wait to File in at Monroe

This is the way it looked today as the first bell sounded at Monroe Junior High School. New students Cecelia Long and Eula Poindexter, two of the nine Negro students admitted to white city schools by the State Pupil Placement Board, stand facing the camera, awaiting their turn to go in and begin the new year. Both

girls are 12, both seventh graders in Mrs. Alta Stricklin's room 101 next to the principal's office. The two girls had a quiet day in the 875-pupil school, officials reported. Only a couple of spectators were on hand as the girls went inside to inaugurate classroom desegregation at Monroe. Story on Page 1.

APPENDIX P

BIBLE CLUB AT MONROE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, 1960-1961



Bible Club

President--Dottie Nelson; Vice-president--Becky Robinson; Secretary--Glenn Reedy; Treasurer--Peggy Blackman; Song Leader--Chuck Hess; Pianist--Joyce Light; Historian--Danny Baker; Sponsor--Miss Karnes.

Library Club

Sponsor--Miss Rumburg

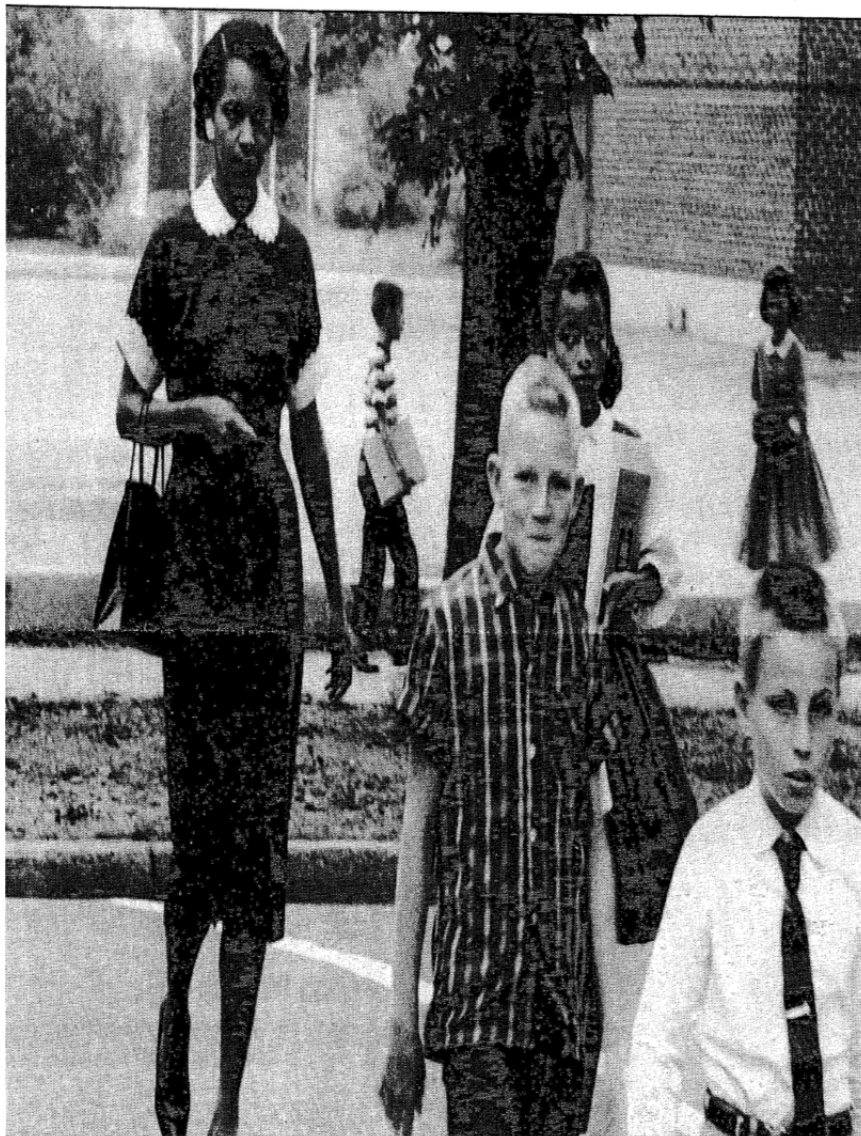


APPENDIX Q

ROANOKE TIMES & WORLD NEWS PICTURE FEBRUARY 27, 1988

Roanoke Times & World-News Feb. 27, 1988

EXTRA



APPENDIX R

ROANOKE TIMES PICTURE SEPTEMBER 7, 1960



(Times Photos)

Darlene Poindexter, 8, and Charles E. James, 11 . . .
. . . Leave West End School After Morning of Classes

APPENDIX S

WSLS CHANNEL 10 NEWS COVERAGE SEPTEMBER 7, 1960

<http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/uva-lib:2221268>

APPENDIX T

ROANOKE TIMES PICTURE SEPTEMBER 7, 1960



Nadine, 6, and Cassandra Wilkinson, 8, Are Escorted . . .
. . . Across Street By Melrose Principal, Charles Radford

APPENDIX U
ROANOKE TIMES PICTURE, SEPTEMBER 7, 1960



APPENDIX V

ROANOKE TIMES & WORLD NEWS ARTICLE FEBRUARY 27, 1988

Black pioneers on a white frontier

By SARAH PARSONS

IN family photo albums, the first day of school is usually marked with a snapshot or two of new shoes, new dresses, new lunch boxes and brightly scrubbed faces.

But nine former Roanoke public school students have albums complete with newspaper clippings to mark a first day of school in September 1960. They were the children who first integrated the city's public schools.

The nine were selected by the State Pupil Placement Board from 39 applications. The students were admitted based on the location of their homes, their background and their academic records.

The students entered Monroe Junior High, Melrose Elementary and West End Elementary schools on Sept. 6 and 7. Newspaper reports called the day "uneventful" and "quiet."

The passing years have brought changes. Monroe is now Northwest Elementary School. Loudon Elementary, the all-black school some of the children were transferred from, has been torn down, as have Melrose and West End.

But those changes haven't erased the importance of that day. Twenty-eight years later, seven of the nine talk about their impressions and experiences.

Although Milton Long was only in second grade in 1960, he says he knew what was happening.

At Loudon, where he had gone to first grade, "we only went half a day . . . because it was so crowded," he said. "It didn't seem logical to me to have to go with a neighbor who had a car when there was a school" — the all-white Melrose — "two blocks away."

The placement board selected Long as one of four students to attend Melrose.

Long, 35, said the day was not as peaceful as the newspaper made it sound.

"It wasn't that we weren't threatened," he said. "It wasn't that we didn't receive threatening phone calls and yells from cars, but you didn't let it upset you."

"My parents made me think that . . . when someone said the word 'nigger,' they weren't referring to me. Looking it up in the dictionary, that wasn't me."

Long said the experience helped him later on.

"It better prepared me for the real world," he said. "Segregation doesn't prepare you for the real world. I'm in the same environment now that I was then, and I was prepared to handle it because I'd been through it before."

Long thinks having two older sisters going through the same thing made it easier for him.

Long attended Virginia State College

(now a university) in Petersburg. He is marketing manager for H.O. Penn Machinery Co. Inc. in Armonk, N.Y., and is married with two children.

Milton Long's sister, Cecelia, entered seventh grade at Monroe Junior High School, now Northwest Elementary School. She thinks her experience was different from that of the younger children.

"Teachers are more protective of the younger ones, and [children] don't know as many four-letter words," she said. "Junior high kids are so busy trying to show how adult they can be by being rude and crude."

Long, 39, said there were no fights, but discrimination existed.

"It's the subtle things kids do," she said. "They don't sit with you and don't talk to you."

PLEASE SEE PIONEERS/3

APPENDIX W
PUPIL PLACEMENT BOARD APPLICATION

1957-58 Jan

TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN: Please complete the application below, sign and return to your local school.
 Be sure not to write on lower portion reserved for use of Boards only.

P.P.S. FORM NO. 1

School Division (City or County): _____

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
PUPIL PLACEMENT BOARD
APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT OF PUPIL

(NOTE: A birth certificate or photostatic copy thereof shall be attached to the application of each pupil who has moved to Virginia from another state for whom application is made for enrollment in Virginia schools for the first time.)

I, the undersigned parent/or legal guardian, or other person having custody of the child named below, request that this child be placed by the Pupil Placement Board of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the school in the County/or City of _____ which the Board deems most appropriate in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 70 of the Acts of the General Assembly (Extra Session 1956), and submit the following information:

FULL NAME OF CHILD: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POST OFFICE: _____

SCHOOL YEAR FOR WHICH ENROLLMENT IS REQUESTED: _____

NAME OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED: _____ WHEN: _____

ADDRESS OF SCHOOL: _____ COUNTY/OR CITY: _____

YEARS IN SCHOOL: _____ GRADE: _____ BIRTH DATE: _____

(EXCLUDE YEAR FOR WHICH THIS APPLICATION IS MADE)

SEX: _____ CONDITION OF HEALTH: _____

PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HANDICAPS OR DISABILITIES: _____

PARTICULAR APTITUDES: _____

NAME AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA IN WHICH ANY OTHER CHILDREN OF YOURS ARE ENROLLED: _____

The foregoing is certified on oath or affirmation to be true and complete.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

(FOR USE OF BOARDS ONLY)

INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

If child is entering school for the first time is date of child's birth on application same as on birth certificate? _____

Comments concerning pupil: _____

Recommendation as to school to which pupil should be assigned: _____

Principal or Head Teacher: _____ LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

By: _____ (Title)

ACTION BY STATE BOARD

The above-named pupil is hereby assigned to _____ school in the County (City) of _____

FOR THE PUPIL PLACEMENT BOARD OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

APPENDIX X

LIST OF INFORMATION REQUIRED BY PUPIL PLACEMENT BOARD

LIST OF INFORMATION NEEDED ON ALL TRANSFER PUPILS

1. From the cumulative school record or file for each child, give all pertinent information in the following areas:
 - a. Personal data on both child and parents which would include family background and the deportment of the child in school and community.
 - b. Complete health record which would include teacher's observation record and medical nursing record (if such is available).
 - c. Test record which would include aptitude tests, etc., and a comparison of the child's record with the average of the same grade in the school both to which and from which transfer is sought (if such a comparison is available).
 - d. Complete academic record.

NOTE: In addition to a copy or transcript of the complete cumulative record or file, an analysis of the above information from the cumulative record of file setting forth the most pertinent information on the child would be extremely helpful to the Pupil Placement Board.

2. The age of the child as compared with the average age of the same grade in the school both to which and from which transfer is sought.
3. An interview with the parent and child should be held by the local school officials for each transfer request and a complete record of the interview to be furnished the Pupil Placement Board. Attached is a suggested list of questions for both parents and child. Also, attached are some suggested procedures for conducting the interviews.

NOTE: In addition to the complete record of the interview, an analysis of the interview record setting forth the most pertinent information would be very helpful to the Pupil Placement Board.

4. If the School Division is divided into geographical school districts, does the child live within the geographical school district to which you recommend his assignment for 1959-60?
5. Relative facilities for and the situation as to the transportation before and after transfer, as to which also consider safety of the child and exposure to avoidable hazards.

APPENDIX Y

LIST OF PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FROM PUPIL PLACEMENT BOARD

LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR EACH PERSONAL INTERVIEW

TO EACH PARENT:

(If both parents are present, should be propounded to both, but one parent should complete all questions first and then go to the other.)

1. What do you think about and what is your attitude toward the school your child is presently attending?
2. Are you satisfied with the teachers there?
3. With the principal there?
4. The instruction your child is getting there?
5. Is your child progressing generally well and in an orderly manner there?
6. Would the change away from former friends or teachers be really for the benefit of your child?
7. If answer is "yes" - why?
8. Is the application for transfer being made solely to enforce a so-called "Constitutional right"?
9. Just what are all the reasons you desire the transfer?
10. What is your occupation?