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Douglass High School: Students' Perspectives on Attending a Segregated School

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**DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL:
STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON ATTENDING A SEGREGATED SCHOOL**

A dissertation submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University
In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
in
Curriculum and Instruction
by
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Marshall University
December 2017

SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby affirm that the following project meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by my discipline, college, and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With my signature, I approve the manuscript for publication.

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STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON ATTENDING A SEGREGATED SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Douglass High School (DHS), named for the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, was a segregated high school built in 1924 located in Huntington, West Virginia. For thirty-seven years the three-story brick building served as a major academic, social, and cultural resource for African American families in Huntington. Many students considered the school to be the heart of the black community, even given the challenges of segregated schools of the era. This study traces the historical development of Douglass as a segregated African American junior/senior high school in Cabell County, West Virginia. The research focuses on the experience of DHS alumni to gain a better understanding of this historical moment in US education, specifically in regards to quality of education, sense of community within the school, and the role of teachers and administrative leadership.

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Douglass High School: Students' Perspectives on Attending a Segregated School

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

By the end of the American Civil War in 1865, millions of formerly enslaved African Americans, now free, presented a troubling paradox to US educators: should these individuals be treated as full and equal citizens? And should they receive the benefits of American-styled education available to white Americans? While some white Americans embraced the idea, most continued to support and sustain racial divisions, and with it, a segregated society. As is well known, this institutionalized segregation condemned African Americans to second-class citizenship. It also maintained ways for white Americans to keep African Americans in a subordinate status by purposefully denying them fair and equal access to public facilities. As a result, African Americans often resided in separate neighborhoods and attended separate schools (Lawson, 2010). The 1896 U.S. Supreme Court case upheld the constitutionality of segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine (Ficker, 1999), which designated that African Americans were to use facilities or services, such as schools, designated specifically for their race, which, in turn, were to be, in theory, equal to those available to the white population (Ransmeier, 1951).

The literature on African American segregated education in K-12 schools is extensive, but its arguments and findings are mixed. Pellegrino, Mann, and Russell (2013), for example, state that in spite of massive challenges brought about by elements in American society “bent on preventing African Americans from basic and essential access to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (p. 210), many African American schools were centers of community life, and rigorously academic in ways not unlike the schools attended by white students. At the same time, however, scholars such as Siddle Walker (1996) claim that African American schools were extremely inferior because of poor facilities, poorly paid teachers, a lack of quality resources,

racism, and discrimination.

A common theme that has emerged in the research of segregated schools consistently revolves around “the importance of caring relationships within the educational environment” (Siddle Walker, 1993, p. 63), as well as the sense that segregated schools “were also deeply embedded in their communities” (Pellegrino, Mann, & Russell, 2013, p. 210). With these themes in mind, Douglass High School (DHS), a segregated high school for African Americans in Cabell County in Huntington, West Virginia, is the topic of this study. Specifically, this study examines the oral history of DHS as told by former students in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, both socially and academically, at DHS. This study takes a closer look at how DHS differed from many other small, community schools, how DHS faculty and staff prepared its students for the outside world, how the students and faculty made up for any lack of supplies or other issues related to a paucity of resources, how the teachers and administrators were involved in the success of DHS students, and how the overall experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affected the participant. Additionally, this study examines the value of this oral history to contemporary education and educators.

Douglass High School, named for the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, was built in 1924 and served for many years as a major academic, social, and cultural resource of African American families in Huntington, West Virginia. The three-story brick building was built because “of the changing educational needs at the secondary level and an increased black enrollment” (Bickley, 2013, p. 1). DHS quickly gained accreditation from the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges in 1927. Additionally, the school fielded a band, varsity athletic teams, choirs, and dramatic activities. The school also brought other speakers and performers to the Huntington community. After the integration of public schools in West

Virginia in 1961, Douglass High School closed its doors after 37 years (Bickley, 2013).

Problem Statement

This study traced the historical development of Douglass High School as a segregated African American junior/senior high school in Cabell County, Huntington, West Virginia. Preliminary research on Douglass High School suggested that many students considered DHS to be "...more than a school. It was the hub of the black community" (Plantania, 1993, p. 21). This primarily was because DHS was the only high school where African American children from Cabell County and neighboring Wayne County were allowed to attend. At the time, there were 13 other junior and senior high schools, but those schools were for white children. Alumni of DHS claimed "Douglass got us ready for life" (Plantania, 1993, p. 22). When the school closed its doors in 1961, many feared that the black community would lose its closeness and direct attachment and involvement with their children's education. It is not that African Americans were opposed to desegregation; most just hoped integration could come with the same closeness and sense of community. The school, along with churches, was "the glue that held the black community together" (Plantania, 1993, p. 28). As Wartman (2003a) states, even though the school has been closed for over 50 years, the bond between students and teachers still remains strong.

This research, then, focused on the experience of DHS alumni to gain a better understanding of this historical moment in US education: specifically in regards to quality of education, sense of community within the school, and the role of teachers and administrative leadership. As previously mentioned, the literature on African American segregated education in K-12 schools is extensive, but its arguments and findings are mixed. This study determined where DHS falls in regards to the existing literature. Specifically, this study examined the

following: how DHS differed from any other small, community school; how DHS faculty and staff prepared its students for the outside world, how the students and faculty made up for any lack of supplies or other issues related to a paucity of resources, how the teachers and administrators were involved in the success of DHS students, and how the overall experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affected the participants.

Finally, and importantly, this study examined the importance of DHS history to contemporary education, particularly as it relates to issues of contemporary race relations. As Rothstein (2014) argues, there are still, in many ways, segregated schools. The schools that most disadvantaged African American children attend are segregated in locales with high-poverty and segregated away from middle and upper class neighborhoods. Living in such high poverty areas for generations adds to the lack of academic achievement in many African American children today. Rothstein (2013) states that integrating disadvantaged African American students into schools in which more affluent students predominate can close “the black-white achievement gap” (p. 53).

Methodical Framework and Research Questions

This study draws from empirical phenomenology, meaning that the procedures consist of identifying a “phenomenon to study, bracketing out one’s experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). In addition to archival and other research, at least six individuals who have attended Douglass High School were interviewed to gain a better understanding of the school. From there, data was analyzed by condensing the information to significant statements or quotes and then combining those statements into themes. From these descriptions of the experiences, an overall analysis of the experience at Douglass High School was determined and research questions addressed.

This methodological approach guided the exploration of the following research questions:

1. What was it like to be a student at DHS?
2. How did the experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affect the student?
3. How did DHS prepare its students for the world outside of the school?
4. How did students and faculty at DHS make up for any lack of supplies or other issues related to the paucity of resources?
5. How were teachers and administrators involved in the success of DHS students and graduates, and how did they prepare them to live in a larger segregated society?
6. To what extent does the experience of DHS relate to other small, community schools?

Significance of Study

Much of the literature on segregated schools suggests that African Americans received an inferior education because of the lack of academic materials, inadequate facilities, unequal funding of schools and teachers, lack of bus transportation, and the “failure of school boards to respond to black parents’ requests” (Siddle Walker, 1996, p. 1). Despite such shortcomings, Siddle Walker asserts that undeterred by the atmosphere of racial injustice and economic oppressions, “the environment of the segregated schools had an affective trait, institutional policies and community support that helped black children learn in spite of the neglect their schools received from white school boards” (p. 3).

The significance of this study, then, is to contribute to the existing knowledge base and understand the students’ experiences and preparation to live in a larger, segregated society. In addition, this study examined how the experiences at DHS ultimately affected the participants.

This study adds to the genre of largely untold stories of small single-community, Black, segregated and now obsolete high schools that operated in West Virginia. Other studies have

focused on large schools, urban schools, prominent schools, and/or schools in other Southern states. The focus of the study is on a smaller school located in Huntington, WV.

Additionally, this study has the potential to closely examine segregation in today's schools. Now as many of America's schools mirror the segregated schools of yesterday, it is becoming even more important that educational researchers fully understand the successes and failures in those segregated settings. As Newsome Stallings (2008) points out, schools today face "various forms of segregation, declining resources, diminished enrollments and population bases, and challenges in curricular coverage" (p. 11). Insights gained in this study may be used to aid in the creation of productive academic environments. More importantly, the identification of other positive factors that can exist in such settings may be beneficial in all areas of education. Finally, this study not only recalls a voice of an older generation, but it is also encourages the present readers to seek and maintain its voice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

When West Virginia became a state and entered the Union in 1863, the state had abolished slavery. In West Virginia, African Americans never lost the right to vote during the repressive “Jim Crow” days and many were spared the wave of lynchings that quickly swept the country in the 19th and early 20th centuries. More importantly, in some places, such as the southern West Virginia coalfields, African Americans attained political clout by holding many local offices and electing members of the legislature. Ironically, however, West Virginians were segregated by race in public education during most of the state’s history (Stack, 2013).

West Virginia was the first state in the Union to provide separate public schools for African Americans in the South. While African American and white children were not to attend the same school, legislation did make provisions for all students in West Virginia to attend schools of educational equality for free (Greene, 1947). One segregated high school in West Virginia was Douglass High School.

The story of Douglass High School begins in 1893 when a stone and brick building with six rooms was erected to serve as the first school for “colored pupils” (Douglass High School, 2015) in Cabell County, WV. Cabell County, is located in Southwestern West Virginia along the Ohio River and was established in 1809 (Cabell County, 2015). Douglass High School quickly outgrew its six-room building because of an increase in enrollment. In 1924, a new three-story brick building was constructed (Bickley, 2013). This building served as the segregated junior/senior high school for students in Cabell County and neighboring Wayne County until its doors closed in 1961. In its two locations, Douglass High School existed for 70 years. During those years, the school touched the lives of almost all of Huntington’s black families, educating generations of their children.

A Closer Look at the History of Education for African Americans

From the time period of the early 1600s to the early 1800s, most African Americans in the United States were slaves. Laws during this time relating to slavery were sparse and created on an “as needed basis” (Newsome Stallings, 2008). As a result, the Slave Codes took the stance that slaves were in fact property and not servants. In many states it was unlawful to teach a slave how to read and write. Yet despite the dangers of difficulties of learning to read, thousands of slaves did learn to read and write because their desire for education was strong; though very few slaves left traces of their accomplishments.

Because the economic nature of slavery neither promoted nor encouraged time to be spent learning to read and write, literacy was not a priority (Newsome Stallings, 2008). According to Cornelius (1983), literacy was a double-edged sword for slaves. Slave owners offered literacy to increase their control, but resourceful slaves took advantage of the literacy to expand their own powers. For example, those who learned to read and write “gained privacy, leisure time, and mobility” (p. 171) by either writing their own passes and escaping slavery, teaching other slaves to read and write, serving as liaisons with information within a slave communication network, or capitalizing on their literacy skills as a starting point for leadership careers once slavery ceased.

Historians of education, such as Kenneth Lockridge, have noted two main reasons slaves learned to read and write: Bible literacy whose “prime motive was the conservation of piety” and liberating literacy “which facilitates diversity and mobility” (Cornelius, 1983, p. 171). Literacy was as important to slaves as it was for their owners for religious reasons. Slaves who taught themselves to read, then, often did so on their own accord and in a religious context. As a result, many slaves had liberating and limiting results. With the ability to read and write came religious

leadership opportunities within the slave community where “reading and preaching were closely associated” (p. 172). Additionally, literacy provided slaves with the knowledge to not have their masters attempt to restrict Christian teachings to only certain Bible passages. There were, however, many whites who resented the fact that slaves were learning to read and write; some even feared black literacy. Some white communities were divided between those who felt a moral obligation to educate blacks, especially for the purpose of reading and studying the Bible, and those who were adamantly opposed to any education that would raise the status of blacks (Hathaway, 1997).

It is important to note how literacy was viewed during slavery. In many places “literacy was forbidden by law and symbolized as a skill that contradicted the status of slaves” (Anderson, 1988, p. 16). As a result, many slaves often risked their own lives to become literate. As early as 1862, small black private schools were being founded, established, and maintained exclusively by ex-slaves. Ex-slaves, then, came out of slavery with ideas of how to “incorporate education into the broad struggle for freedom and prosperity” (Newsome Stallings, 2008, p. 26).

This issue soon sparked a national debate on whether African Americans should be educated beyond the basic level. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, two of the greatest black educational leaders in the country during this time, ironically took opposing stances on the issue. Washington believed that blacks should receive basic industrial training while Du Bois advocated that blacks should strive for the highest level of scholarship. Washington stated in an address delivered at the “Opening of the Cotton States and International Exposition” in Atlanta, Georgia on September 18, 1895, that there should be an increase in the hiring of blacks in the labor force particularly in “agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service” (Hathaway, 1997, p. 39). Washington’s plan for blacks to start at the bottom as

labor-class status was popular among whites. Washington assured his white audience that “you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and un-resentful people that the world has seen” (p. 39-40). Blacks, who have experienced so much hatred and prejudice, were also hopeful for a program that would bring white approval. Du Bois, who was ignored as supporters flocked to Washington’s beliefs, was eager to attack white hegemony by demonstrating that the Black ghetto in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was a result of poverty and racism rather than “the so-called innate inferiority and supposed criminal tendencies of African-Americans” (Hathaway, 1997, p. 41).

While black leaders debated the question of “How should a Negro be educated?” from a sincere difference of opinion on what avenue would be the best to gain equality, whites primarily supported Washington’s standpoint of basic industrial training most likely seeing the issue from a racist vantage point. This debate subsided when the United States Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* was ruled in 1896 establishing the doctrine of “separate but equal”; however, the Du Bois—Washington debate lasted until Washington’s death in 1915 (Hathaway, 1997).

African American School Facilities

While the school facilities that existed for African American students were separate, the facilities were not always equal. Even though black and white communities existed in the same geographic location for the most part, the entities operated separately from each other (Ensign, 2002). The 1896 Supreme Court decision of separate but equal in *Plessy v. Ferguson* served as an impetus to erect schools with almost religious fervor; however, schools built for African American students were constructed far more sparingly and indeed stingily (Hathaway, 1997). Though Justice Harlan dissented, writing that “our constitution is color blind” (Irons, 2002, p. x), Siddle Walker (2000) claims that schools for African American students in the South were

unequal to schools for white students as far as funding, facilities, materials, and the actual length of school terms. Equipment, textbooks, and supplementary materials in all-black schools were often outdated and inferior to the supplies and materials that were provided at all-white schools (Edwards & Ryan, 2015).

Black schools often consisted of “dilapidated clapboard shacks, with perhaps a pot-bellied stove for heat in the winter” (What Were Black Schools Like, 2010, p. 54). In fact, one black teacher from Atlanta recalls, “that school was in such bad shape you could study botany through the floorboards, astronomy through the roof and weather through the walls” (p. 55). Most of the materials were items discarded from the white schools. One teacher from Virginia complained that the books from the white schools were “so old and dirty I don’t even want to touch them myself” (p. 55). Despite lacking facilities and poor quality materials, black segregated schools offered a good education that made children feel at home and encouraged children to pursue education with a passion. Many teachers and principals “created environments of teaching and learning that motivated students to excel” (p. 56).

According to Patterson (2001), by 1940 public spending per pupil in Southern Black schools was only “45 percent of that in White schools” (p. xvii). Hathaway (1997) states that there was “unequal funding for teacher salaries, school buildings, and teaching materials” (p. 43) which made equality of quality nearly impossible. Furthermore, Negroes in South Carolina represented more than 60% of the school population but only received “22.6% of the school funds” (p. 43). Patterson (2001) also states that white schools had an average per pupil expenditure of \$570 and an average class size of 22.6 students while black schools only received \$228.05 per pupil with a significantly larger class size of 36.2 students. Some elementary schools

were so overcrowded that students were limited to a three-hour school session per day; these schools held two three-hour sessions just to accommodate all of the students.

To make matters worse, black schools received bare minimum resources to make any form of schooling possible. Many people doubted the quality and effectiveness of African American teachers despite the fact that many had training far superior to that of white teachers. A white man would not respect a black male teacher enough to call him “Mister.” It was not a common practice to engage in any type of research to determine what kind of education was actually occurring in black segregated schools. When black schools were given recognition or accreditation, the schools were almost always placed in a category with other black schools (Hathaway, 1997). Because many Southern whites believed that “black people did not need—or desire—much education” (Patterson, 2001, p. xix), very little funds or provisions were made for black education. Even though taxes were collected and designated to schools, the black schools were often left out of these allocations of funds resulting in sorely lacking resources. The lack of equality between the white and black schools was apparent in school facilities, supplies and equipment. Ironically, African Americans provided support, both monetary and physical labor, for school structures and equipment (Newsome Stallings, 2008).

Despite the notable differences between black and white schools, segregated schools for black students also had positive characteristics. While few studies have been done on black schools, three separate studies by F. C. Jones, E. V. Siddle Walker, and Thomas Sowell all found examples of excellence in African-American schools. In fact, all of the studies “emphasize common factors of academic excellence such as strong leadership, discipline, parental support, community involvement and pursuit of academic excellence with high expectations for success” (Hathaway, 1997, p. 44-45). These studies also show that many graduates of segregated schools

attained college degrees. For example, Siddle Walker (2000) reports segregated schools having good teachers, a consistent positive message of the importance of education within the community, strong parental support, and the uniformed view that education was a means to uplift the black community. The power of the entire community supporting a good education and sharing common beliefs about children and their education had a significant effect on students' success in education. Horsford (2009) points out that simply remembering segregated schools solely based on their poor resources paints a historically incomplete picture. Instead, it should be noted that black schools had a "sense of community established through support, caring, and interdependency within and among African American students, parents, teachers, and community members" (p. 173). Additionally, exemplary teachers, curriculum and extracurricular activities, parental support, and leadership of the school principal were all considered valued, consistent characteristics of segregated schools. Add to this that Ensign (2002) posits that the interest in education among blacks during segregated times is attributed to the fact that education was more accessible to blacks than business or politics simply because they were barred from such until after segregation.

Within the classroom, African American teachers valued literacy. In fact, many African Americans saw literacy as more than simply the ability to read, write, comprehend, interpret, and apply text. They viewed literacy as "the ability to understand and participate in the sociocultural and political aspects of the greater society" (Tompkins, 2005, p. 47). Literacy was seen as the gateway to improve African American society. Because of this, many segregated schools exposed children to classical literature, music, drama, and philosophy. This extended or hidden curriculum broadened students' conception of school as the center of the community rather than simply a place to learn. African American teachers in separate segregated settings often relied on

national teacher organizations and regional African American teacher organizations for professional development. While most southern states did not mandate in-service days, many teachers spent their summers attending classes and conferences to improve their skills. As Tompkins (2005) points out, most African American teachers probably disseminated information to other teachers through informal lines of communication such as teacher's meetings, word of mouth, or modeling.

Much like today's teachers, African American teachers in segregated schools were cognizant that all students did not arrive at school with the same school readiness. Rather than blaming students' background or culture for their shortcomings, teachers believed with diligence and persistence on their part, all students could progress academically. Despite meager salaries, teachers provided the best materials that they could and "created a climate of acceptance and nurturance within the classroom" (Tompkins, 2005, p. 50).

Growing Up in the Segregated South

For many youths growing up in the segregated south, the environmental print of early literacy primarily consisted of signs over water fountains, bathrooms, bus stations, and doctors' offices that read "white only" or "colored only." Many, like Patricia Edwards, found it ironic that African Americans were asked to respect a country that did not respect them. Edwards started kindergarten a few years after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision; she attended segregated schools only having black teachers until the 10th grade. Edwards claims her teachers "taught despite the dismal, unfair, discriminatory situations and inferior textbooks and resources" (Edwards & Ryan, 2015, p. 84). Despite poor conditions, her African American teachers refused to allow themselves to become victims of their environments. Instead, these teachers considered themselves trained professionals who encouraged their students to be proud to be black. In fact,

as Edwards recalls, her teachers taught her not to consider her skin color a hindrance, but instead to be proud to represent “a race of people from African descent that came from kings and queens” (p. 84). Most importantly, Edwards’ teachers strongly encouraged the value of getting an education because an education was something that could not be taken away.

Every school day would begin with teachers leading students in the National Anthem, but students would also sing “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (Edwards & Ryan, 2015) a song that was later adopted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as its official song. It is also often referred to as the Black National Anthem (Black Culture Connection, 2015). Black teachers focused on high standards and academic rigor. Much pride was taken on having a curriculum that was comparable with what was being expected of white students.

Things changed for Edwards during her 11th grade year in 1965 when she was transferred to an integrated school. She was a part of the second group of black students to transfer to an all-white high school when her parents received a letter from the school board indicating that a “freedom of choice” (Edwards & Ryan, 2015) plan was in effect. This provided black parents the opportunity to send their children to one of the three all-white high schools. Edwards’ mother was for the integration in hopes for a better education and a chance for a good job later in life. Edwards’ father was against the idea arguing that things were not going to change, and blacks and whites could never be treated as equals. After much discussion and prayer, Edwards’ parents asked what she wanted. Edwards felt that she should go, so she did. Although Edwards felt very confident in her academic abilities, she was not sure she could “deal with the social, political, and cultural struggles that I might encounter on a daily basis at this all-white high school” (Edwards & Ryan, 2015, p. 86). More than anything, she wanted to disprove the stereotypes

about African American's intellectual abilities. Edwards describes her experiences at the all white high school as "victories, setbacks, tensions, overt acts of racism, and hypocrisy" (Edwards & Ryan, 2015, p. 85).

Law Suits Against Separate and Unequal Black School Facilities

By the early 1950s, lawsuits started sprouting against the separate and unequal black school facilities. The 1954 victory of the United States Supreme Court Case *Brown v. Board of Education* reversed the "separate but equal" doctrine. "To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications," the decision read, "solely because of their race generates of feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (National Archives, nd, p. 2). In essence, the court decided that the doctrine of "separate but equal" did not have a place in public education because having separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

This landmark decision initiated much celebration within the black community. Many believed that "racially mixed schools, more than any other institutions, would facilitate the cherished American dream of equal opportunity" (Patterson, 2001, p. xvii); but no one was sure exactly how desegregated schools would operate. The reality of desegregation began to set in, and it was soon realized that this was just the first step of a long journey. Newsome Stallings (2008) notes that contrary to what some believed, there were in fact some African Americans who were not keen on the idea that their children would be going to school with white children. Whites held mixed emotions as well. Some were overjoyed while others were suspicious. A small vocal minority even "began to vow allegiance to segregation and to all for which it stood" (Newsome Stallings, 2008, p. 21). Patterson (2001) called this time period between the two

Brown decisions as “Crossroads, 1954-55” (p. 70), which became a fitting way to characterize this era of political, social, legal and moral crossroads for all (Newsome Stallings, 2008).

Results of Desegregation

School desegregation resulted in a number of unintended consequences. For example, many desegregated school districts did not provide meaningful integrated learning opportunities, which resulted in schools using methods such as ability tracking, specialized programs, and “school within a school” programs that ironically resulted in segregated classrooms and racially separated learning contexts. Additionally, desegregation dismantled the strong sense of community that many African American communities enjoyed (Horsford, 2009)

Because no timeline was given for desegregation to begin, various tactics were used throughout the South to delay the inclusion of African Americans in white schools (Williamson, 2005). Patterson (2001) explores different avenues or plans that were explored and taken to desegregate schools. One plan was the step or gradual plan in which black students were slowly integrated into white schools annually. For example, a handful of black students would be introduced to a white school in first grade. When they were promoted to second grade, more black students would be introduced to the white school in first grade. With this, it would take 12 years for a white school to become completely integrated with only a handful of black students in each grade. This plan was occurring while the rest of the black students continued their education in segregated, inadequate facilities with the same lacking equipment: that which the Supreme Court had ruled unequal. Additionally, because of this gradual plan, many black students who had enrolled in a segregated school in 1954 graduated from that same segregated school and never got the chance to attend a desegregated school.

Another strategy practiced in the South was the option of allowing parents to choose which school they wanted their children to attend. For obvious reasons not many black parents chose to attend white schools, and no white parents chose for their children to attend black schools. While these plans may have had good intentions, in the end, the plans perpetuated segregation. There were, in fact, many miniscule desegregation attempts from 1955 to the early 1960s. These attempts, however, were met “with local or imported resistance, threats, and or violence—and often little ultimate success” (Newsome Stallings, 2008, p. 23).

As a result of evasive integration strategies, very few African Americans attended school with Anglo American children. Some states even went so far as to protest and proceeded to defy the Court and the Constitution. For example, the state of Virginia passed “massive resistance” laws that required the governor to shut down public schools rather than to integrate black students into white schools (Williamson, 2005). By 1964 the Civil Rights Act required the federal government to withhold funds from localities that failed to comply with judicial orders. This served as an impetus for desegregation (Irons, 2002).

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 also marked a turning point for the larger civil rights movement in America (Williamson, 2005). Many black schools and separate white schools ceased to exist over the next couple of years in most of the rural south. The school buildings that housed African American students for decades were closed because the buildings were deemed inferior. This caused significant concern for parents of all races. Assigning students to attend the school that was closest to their home made integration feasible in the lesser popular rural areas, but this was not the case in cities. Because of planned zoning, ghettos, subsidized housing, and white flight, many urban areas across the country still had schools that were primarily segregated (Williamson, 2005).

It would take many more years before equal opportunity existed for all children within American schools. According to Bernard and Mondale (2001), over 90% of black children in the South attended integrated schools by 1972. Some schools, like those in Charlotte, North Carolina, were, in 1970, upheld by the judicial order that schools should be segregated by mandatory busing (Irons, 2002). This ruling sparked national implications and caused riots and civic unrest in many localities. Parents of both black and white children were concerned that their children were being bussed for many miles oftentimes taking over two hours for students to get to a school that was unreasonably far away from their homes and communities. This practice of bussing children across cities to achieve racial balance in the classroom went on for 20 years until the 1990 decision in *Oklahoma City v. Dowell* removed court oversight of desegregation (Irons, 2002; Williamson, 2005).

Some believed that black children should only be taught by black teachers because “it is impossible for white teachers, educated as they necessarily are in this country, to enter into the feelings of colored pupils as the colored teacher does” (Fairclough, 2007, p. 61). These beliefs not only hindered the progression of desegregation but also furthered the emergence of a racially segregated teaching force. With the closing of black schools came an abundance of black, jobless teachers. There was the misconception that white students would have objections to being taught by a competent Negro teacher. However, when students from Louisville, Kentucky were surveyed in May 1950, an overwhelmingly 84% claimed they would have no objection (Thompson, 1951). There were other significant losses that occurred as a result of desegregation. For example losses occurred in the black community and educational leadership, African American teaching and administration jobs, loss of African American educational heritage in the

forfeiture of school names, mascots, mottos, holidays, and traditions, and a decline in student motivation, academic performance and self-esteem (Williamson, 2005).

Not all contemporary black leaders were in favor of desegregation. Patterson (2001) notes that Justice Clarence Thomas believes that all black schools are not intrinsically weaker than majority white schools. In fact, Thomas sees the benefit of African Americans being educated together out of choice and not by force (Williamson, 2005). Yet others, such as Falk (1978), felt that desegregation provided a chance for African Americans to “interact with the people—white—who constitute the majority of both American society and the labor market” (p. 288) which would ultimately help African Americans locate jobs.

The larger story is much more multi-sided and complicated than these two opposing sides may convey, of course. According to Irons (2002), times were changing in the United States especially after World War II. The war provided opportunities for African Americans outside of agriculture and domestic service when white soldiers were called to serve in the military. Many African American veterans who had served in a “Jim Crow” army during the war returned home and pushed for social change. It was disheartening to the black veterans who had suffered and watched many of their comrades die to free people on the other side of the world just to come home and have strict limits to their own freedom. It was also during this time that the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) began to flourish in numbers and activity. Its legal team, spearheaded by Thurgood Marshall who later became a Supreme Court justice, began to carefully plan the assault on the “Jim Crow” laws specifically for the “blatant disparity between the quality of education offered to white and black children” (Williamson, 2005, p. 15). Credit is given to Marshall for “recognizing that for blacks to receive equal

opportunities the education system would have to recognize the equality of children regardless of their race” (Vasilopoulos, 1994, p. 289).

For many black students and administrators, desegregation was viewed as a double-edged sword. While desegregation permitted some black students and teachers to have access to better funded, formerly all-white educational facilities, the cost was often a loss of rich African American traditions as well as leadership positions as segregated black schools closed. Additionally, desegregated schools were often not as supportive of minority students, faculty, and staff (Fade to Brown, 2015).

Case Studies of Segregated and Desegregated Schools

The loss of schools affected more than just its students and teachers. Many black communities were devastated by the loss of their schools. Not only were students being bussed or forced to travel outside their neighborhoods to go to school, but many black businesses lost customers and were forced to close. This is exactly what happened to Douglass School in Parsons, Kansas, a black school that existed in a smaller community outside the South (Patterson, Mickelson, Petersen & Gross, 2008). In fact, the closing of the all-Black Douglass School occurred without much fanfare; the event was not even published in the local paper until well after it had been closed.

Douglass School closed in 1958, but the community of Parsons continued to feel its loss for years after. In fact, Douglass School was demolished in 1962 without regard to saving any of its records, trophies, photographs, or other school-related artifacts. As a result, the African Americans of Parsons, Kansas feel that an important part of their community and heritage died with its closing and demolition. Even though Kansas held the reputation of being a free state, attitudes towards African Americans in Kansas have been through time ambivalent and

contradictory. Ironically, Kansas opposed slavery while at the same time implementing Jim Crow laws. The color line in Kansas was also blurred for the state permitted “segregation in some aspects of public life while prohibiting it in others” (Patterson et al., 2008, p. 308).

Regardless of how leaders in Kansas felt about African Americans, they did believe that all of its citizens should be educated.

African American students from Parsons were initially taught in two rooms located in two of the town’s four elementary schools. Records from a 1906 school board meeting indicated that a new school would be constructed to serve Parsons’ “colored scholars,” (Patterson et al., 2008, p. 308) but the record has no indication behind the rationale for building a racially segregated school. Douglass School, the town’s only black school, was constructed and opened in September 1908 servicing 75 students in K-8. With much anticipation of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the school board voted in 1951 to close Douglass and begin the process of integrating black students into the all-white elementary schools located throughout the city and gradually began eliminating classes. This transition occurred between 1951 and 1958; the school closed its doors in 1958. Because Douglass was demolished without any preservation efforts, the city “initiated an urban renewal effort that essentially destroyed the black business community as well as many of the town’s historical and architectural landmarks” (Patterson et al., 2008, p. 308). Despite the fact that Douglass School and its treasured artifacts were destroyed, the memories of the people who attended and experienced the school remain.

Others, like 15-year-old Gwendolyn Adams, were flat out angry about desegregation. In 1955, Adams was a sophomore from Kansas City, Missouri, dreading her first day at a formerly all-white school, Central High School. She missed what many African Americans at all-black institutions described as a “feeling of comfort and belonging, a sense of community” (Poos,

2014, p. 94) from the segregated school. While her transition to an all-white school was difficult, it was not violent. Adams described her new teachers as being “aloof.” She got the impression that the teachers did not want to be there because “of the way they interacted with [us] (Poos, 2014, p. 95). There was also a teacher shortage in the Kansas City Missouri School District that resulted in substitute teachers in full-time assignments. The teacher shortage was in part seen as an issue of teacher pay. Many black teachers across the country lost their jobs after the *Brown* decision despite the fact that many of these teachers were better educated and more experienced than their white counterparts. Ironically, black teachers were the first to be dismissed and the last to be hired; this was certainly the case in Kansas City. African Americans were not brought into the school system in the numbers that white teachers were. Those black teachers that were hired were given “reserve” status, which meant they worked all year without a contract. Many slights of hand were implemented to keep African American teachers out of the classroom, such as having them sign a new contract monthly—which empowered the school district to dismiss black teachers at will. In Kansas City, most black teachers were placed on “reserve,” not offered a contract, and simply dismissed. It is estimated that between 125-150 black teachers in Missouri lost their employment as a result of initial desegregation by 1961 (Poos, 2014).

Where are we now?

Patterson (2001) points out some rather pessimistic statistics regarding the legacy of African American slavery and segregation. Unemployment is higher for African Americans than it is for whites, the poverty rate is three times greater, and the average income for an African American family is only 55% that of white Americans. Equity in education has also not been guaranteed since the 1954 ruling of *Brown v. the Board of Education*. In 1990 in Selma, Alabama, 200 white students were pulled out of honors classes when the classes became open to

African American students (Williamson, 2005). Despite the reality of those numbers, though, Patterson is optimistic about the progress America has made thus far. Considering how life was for African Americans in 1950 to now, the change has been significant notes Patterson; that “a portrait of a separate America for blacks is no longer valid” (p. 197).

Of course, issues in schools oftentimes reflect issues in the greater society. According to Ravitch (1985), the conflict in our democracy between those ideas behind the melting pot, on the one hand, and cultural pluralism, on the other hand, is the true tension behind school integration. Two questions come to mind 1) Should schools have policies where all children attend the school closest to their homes and admittance to programs follow equal criteria regardless of race? (2) Or should policies be instilled that ensure a racial mixture of children within schools? For those supporting racial balancing, the choices are either integration or segregation. But Ravitch (1985) argues that:

From this perspective, the ideal school system would be one in which blacks and whites were evenly dispersed throughout a large metropolitan area so no school could be stigmatized as a one-race school...The underlying social ideal is the melting-pot theory, the belief that in a truly free and nondiscriminatory society people would tend to settle in racially and ethnically mixed neighborhoods. Wherever they have not, runs the argument, it is only because of the workings of overt or covert patterns of discrimination, which government must remedy. (p. 221)

Williamson (2005) states, “the pluralistic position is that free people must be allowed to group however they want, even if the result is some single-race schools” (p. 39). Schools should not be considered segregated in the legal sense as long as the racially distinct neighborhoods and schools are not the direct result of government actions. Those who do not want their children to

be educated with or live near blacks can utilize pluralism. Those who imply that black schools are inferior and that black children cannot learn without a white student majority support the dispersion position (Williamson, 2005). Ravitch (1985) claims that schools are “torn between pressures to enforce unity and pressures to reinforce diversity” (p. 222), but that schools with some diversity can better teach common understanding.

Educational theorist E.D. Hirsch argues that while diversity in children’s social and culture backgrounds is important, the widening gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students as they pass through grades in American schools is the greatest problem for education today. As Williamson (2005) argues, African American students are more likely to attend schools that educate poor students. Schools have made and will continue to make us who we are as Americans. A school’s worth must be based on its record of recognizing the individual worth of each child and not merely on its academic standards.

With this social and cultural backdrop, for 37 years, Douglass High School served as a segregated high school for African Americans in Cabell County in Huntington, WV. In addition to serving as the major academic resource for black students in the Huntington area, Douglass also provided social and cultural resources to its community. Preliminary research on Douglass High School suggests that many students considered DHS to be “...more than a school. It was the hub of the black community” (Plantania, 1993, p. 21). This primarily is because DHS was the only high school where African American children from Cabell County and neighboring Wayne County were allowed to attend. At the time, there were 13 other junior and senior high schools, but those schools were for white children. Alumni of DHS claimed “Douglass got us ready for life” (Plantania, 1993, p. 22). This study further explores how former DHS students’ experiences compare to the known research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This study examined the education of a very particular group of African American students who attended the segregated Douglass High School, located in Cabell County in Huntington, West Virginia. Specifically, this study examined the oral history of past Douglass High School students in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, both socially and academically. In this way, this study is meant to examine the value of their schooling and experience to contemporary education and educators. This chapter includes a description of the research questions, methods, research design, population, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

Research Questions

This study draws from empirical phenomenology, meaning that the procedures consist of identifying a “phenomenon to study, bracketing out one’s experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). In addition to archival and other research, at least six individuals who have attended Douglass High School were interviewed to gain a better understanding of the school. From there, data was analyzed by condensing the information to significant statements or quotes and then combining those statements into themes. Once textural and structural descriptions of the experiences were made, an overall analysis of the experience at Douglass High School was determined and research questions addressed.

With both the literature and the study’s empirical phenomenological framework in mind, this study guided the exploration of the following research questions:

1. What was it like to be a student at DHS?

2. How did the experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affect the student?
3. How did DHS prepare its students for the world outside of the school?
4. How did students and faculty at DHS make up for any lack of supplies or other issues related to the paucity of resources?
5. How were teachers and administrators involved in the success of DHS students and graduates, and how did they prepare them to live in a larger segregated society?
6. To what extent does the experience of DHS relate to other small, community schools?

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), qualitative research covers a range of research strategies that share common characteristics. These common characteristics include the collection of data that focuses on the description of people, places, and conversations (Newsome Stallings, 2008). Rather than starting this study with a preconceived hypothesis to test, this qualitative research study is more concerned with “understanding behavior from the subject’s own frame of reference” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 2). More importantly, this study thoroughly examined the understanding and meaning people have constructed through in-depth interview and analysis. In this way, the researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998).

This interview approach, then, sought understanding of African American experience in one particular segregated K-12 public school in West Virginia through oral history. Through oral history, “memories and personal narratives of individuals are collected and interpreted to create

archival records and to restore a past that has been lost” (Patterson, Mckelson, Petersen & Gross, 2008, p. 309).

After obtaining IRB approval, former students of Douglass High School were asked to respond to open-ended interview questions. Each interviewee’s perspective provided a deeper understanding of the two common themes that emerge in prior research of segregated schools—“the importance of caring relationships within the educational environment” (Siddle Walker, 1993, p. 63) and the sense that segregated schools “were also deeply embedded in their communities” (Pellegrino, Mann, & Russell, 2013, p. 210). As a result of several first-hand accounts, this oral history “bring[s] out new and previously unknown information,” to “correct or provide new insight into existing information or clarify confusing accounts,” and “uncover complexities and add new dimensions to what was generally perceived” (Sommer & Quinlan, 2002, p. 3) in the past.

While this oral history study focused on African Americans who attended the segregated Douglass High School in the small town of Huntington, West Virginia, this study may also prove relevant to and contribute insight to contemporary curricular issues associated with cultural diversity. Additionally, this oral history may also provide insight into experiences of those who have not spoken or written about their personal histories or for those who have “little or no written record or for whom the written record is distorted at best” (Sommer & Quinlan, 2002, p. 2). Creating an oral history on Douglass High School may have other unanticipated results, such as correcting misconceptions about segregated schools and developing and establishing community pride in telling the community’s story.

On Oral History

While the extensive modern use of “oral history” as a research approach is a relatively new phenomenon, the act of oral history is as old as history itself. In fact, oral history was the first kind of history (Thompson, 2000). In the past, history was primarily passed down through oral tradition. While history can be obtained through a wide variety of primary sources such as newspapers, census data, diaries, letters, photographs, and memoirs, these sources omit the perspectives of those everyday individuals who might not otherwise appear in the historical record. Oral history offers unique benefits that no other historical source provides. For example, oral history allows the interviewer to learn about the participant’s hopes, feelings, aspirations, disappointments, family histories, and personal experiences (Walbert, 2002). Interviews may also lead to the discovery of other written documents and photographs which would not have otherwise been traced (Thompson, 2000). Participants also have the opportunity to participate in the creation of the historical retelling of their lives. Most importantly, oral history provides a rich opportunity for human interaction which is something that has taken the back burner in this digital age. The researchers and participants have the opportunity to come together in conversation about a commonly shared interest. This human interaction has the potential to be extremely rewarding for all involved parties (Walbert, 2002).

Every historical source that is derived from human perception is inherently subjective; however, the oral source is the only source that allows that subjectivity to be recorded, interpreted, accepted or challenged. Oral history allows the hidden layers of the truth to be extracted through thorough interviews and questioning while transforming both the content and the purpose of history. Oral history “can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open

up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers...[and] it can give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place” (Thompson, 2000, p. 3).

Memory is a vital concern for oral historians. Interviewers “provide an opportunity for the participant to remember, to convey details, to provide explanation, and to reflect” on experiences (Vow, 2015, p. 41). Charlton, Myers and Sharpless (2006) define memory as “the capacity to store experience and then to recall or retrieve it” (p. 275). This is essential in the ability to function as human beings. Most cognitive psychologists classify memory in one of three categories: short-term memory, sensory memory, and long-term memory; however, in 1972, the Canadian psychologist Endel Tulving classified long-term memory in two categories: “episodic memory, which is the ability to remember personal events over time, and semantic memory, which is the memory for learned material” (p. 290).

In relation to memory, for some oral history practitioners, the primary purpose of an interview is to obtain information about an event of historical significance. For these practitioners, the issues of reliability and validity of the participant’s memory play a significant role in the research. Other practitioners view the interview “as a tool to document an interviewee’s account of his or her experiences in a given setting at a given time” (Charlton, Myers, & Sharpless, 2006, p. 294). Regardless of how the practitioner conceptualizes the purpose of an interview, the interview is more than likely to consist of both episodic (personal) and semantic (social) memories. Thompson (2000) points out that most people hold memories which, when recalled, release powerful feelings. Expressing these strong emotions not only have proven to be positive; they also add depth and richness to how history is experienced through time.

Understanding how memory works, or doesn't work, is also extremely important when conducting oral history research. Numerous advances in the analysis of memory have surfaced over the years, but our understanding of how memory works continues to evolve and change. For example: Daniel L. Schacter summarizes, condenses, and explains some of these findings in his book, *The Seven Sins of Memory*, by describing ways that memory can become distorted or fail. He argues that things such as “the sin of transience” (p. 12) (the way in which episodic autobiographical memory changes with the passage of time), “the sin of misattribution” (p. 88) (the inability to properly recall the source of the recollection or memory), “the sin of persistence” (p. 161) (memories that refuse to fade cause regret, trauma, or some other negative emotion to the extent where it is intrusive and interferes with normal activity), or the “sin of blocking” (p. 61) (the inability to recall information, such as one ages) may inhibit recall of actual experiences. Other scholars of memory, though—such as oral historian Valerie Vow (2015)—argue that many such findings are at odds with what oral historians have encountered in the field. One's advanced age, for example, does not always correspond with memory loss.

Most researchers of memory recognize, as do Charlton et al. (2006), who cite the work of psychologist Eugene Winograd, who has argued that “while memory research by psychologists has focused on memory failures and distortions, research should not be misunderstood...recall is usually reasonably accurate” (p. 290). Indeed, our memory would be of little use to us if this were not so. In line with these findings, scholars like Vow (2015) argue that “human memory is both fallible and trustworthy” (p. 42). And oral historians should take this into account whenever doing oral history research.

Memory and story are, of course, closely related. It is clear now that humans construct narratives from memories. Even preschool age children make stories of their experiences. These

stories are used “not only to make sense of our experiences, but also to justify decisions, to profit from past experience in making current decisions about present and future, and to reassure ourselves that we have come through life’s challenges and have learned something” (Vow, 2015, p. 41). Humans can only remember what our brains have encoded or recorded at the time of experience.

Given the role of interviews in capturing these stories as oral history, oral historians must be aware of several concerns when conducting oral history interviews. One concern is the phenomenon known as “false memory.” A false memory occurs when a person is certain a particular event occurred because the scene and details are remembered vividly; however, when sources are checked, it becomes evident that the event never happened at all. According to Vow (2015), the human brain “not only registers what we actually see in the world around us but also what we imagine seeing” (p. 55). Because perception and image are in the same general area of the brain, people often intercept the two and believe an event happened when it in fact did not. Vow suggests that no matter how vivid the memory is, double check on it if something does not seem quite right.

Another concern: researchers also like to pinpoint precise times of events so that a proper sequence of events can be established when conducting oral histories. But researcher William Brewer discovered that “personal memory typically contains information about actions, location, and thoughts, but rarely precise information about time” (Vow, 2015, p. 55). When researchers have information indicating that offered time in an interview is false, it is important to ask what need the narrator had. Events in which narrators participate themselves will be better recalled than secondhand information. Events in which there were high levels of mental activity and emotional involvement will be remembered.

So, in summary, while the use of oral history as a research approach is a rather new development, it is important to keep in mind that oral history is as old as history itself because oral history was in fact the first kind of history (Thompson, 2000). Through oral history, participants have the opportunity to aid in the historical retelling of their lives. Even though the oral source is subjective and first-hand, it is often the only source that allows for the data to be recorded, interpreted, and evaluated. Memory, for obvious reasons, is a vital concern for the researcher. The primary purpose of an interview is to obtain information from a historically significant event; therefore, it is important to have an understanding of how memory works or does not work (Vow, 2015). Some researchers interview for the sole purpose to gain information about a historically significant event, while others interview to obtain a person's account of his or her experience only (Charlton, Myers, & Sharpless, 2006).

Given the drawbacks of oral history, its potentials for capturing the role of experience in history far outweighs those potential pitfalls. Among them include the discovery of other written documents or photographs that might not have otherwise been discovered about Douglass High School. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to help piece together local history through the retelling of their stories. Most importantly, oral history provides a rich opportunity for human interaction which is something that often takes the back burner in this digital age. The researchers and participants had the opportunity to come together in conversation about a commonly shared interest. This human interaction had the potential to be extremely rewarding for all involved parties (Walbert, 2002).

Population, Instrumentation and Data Collection

The sample for this study consists of six individuals who attended Douglass High School. Interviewees were found through word of mouth, social media, and local newspapers.

Interviewees have agreed to participate on a volunteer basis. Using this sample as the basis, the primary data collection strategy in this study is the use of semi-structured, individual interviews with former students of Douglass High School. Two or more interviews with six former students took place in person, and when this was not an option, on the telephone. According to Glogowksa, Young and Lockyer (2011), telephone interviews can be as credible as face-to-face interviews, especially because some people may feel more comfortable sharing personal information over the telephone rather than in person. And in this way, may be more apt to share their perspectives. Wilson and Edwards (2003) echo this, and point out the advantages of cost and flexibility of interviewing a person via the telephone can sometimes outweigh the disadvantages of establishing rapport and other limitations. In any case, both in-person and telephone interviews were recorded on a digital recording device and later logged and/or transcribed.

Interviews

Knox and Burkard (2009) elaborate on the complexities of interviews in qualitative research. Before any interviews are completed, the researcher must spend ample time and consideration on the very questions that will be asked because ultimately the interview is the researcher's way of showing an interest in understanding not only the experience of other people but also the meaning they make of experiences. When accessing these experiences, the researcher should take the unstructured, open-ended question, friendly conversation approach rather than a specific data-gathering, highly structured approach with preset and standardized questions from which there is little variance. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews provide an equal balance of control and authority to both the interviewer and the interviewee (Campbell & Lassiter, 2015).

This particular qualitative study involved face-to-face interviews as well as phone interviews. According to Knox and Burkard (2009), little research has compared the benefits of these means of data collection; however, some ethnographers, like Annette Markham, state it is “difficult to know people” without interaction (Campbell & Lassiter, 2015, p. 100). Markham elaborates to note that this does not necessarily make the interview less interesting. People’s emotions can still be understood through written text and phone interviews. In fact, phone interviews have become quite common because it enables researchers to include participants from virtually any location without the researcher or the participants traveling. This is appealing to researchers because it offers an efficient and economical means to capture experiences from nonlocal participants. Additionally, phone interviews may offer participants more anonymity and may minimize disadvantages of face-to-face interviews. On the other hand, face-to-face interviews allow the researcher to observe nonverbal data in addition to verbal data (Knox & Burkard, 2009).

Another concern with this study is the effect the participants’ cultural background and values have on interview relationships. According to Knox and Burkard (2009) theorists and researchers have noted the influence of cultural differences in communication styles “particularly with regard to how information is communicated with others. For instance, some culture groups (e.g. Africans, African Americans, Arabs, Latin Americans) prefer to have physical closeness with communication with others, whereas other cultural groups (e.g. European Americans, Germans, Scandinavians) prefer more physical distance” (p. 11). A potential problem that lies within this study is the participants’ hesitation to talk about their experiences of attending a segregated school with a middle-aged white female.

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions have been archived in Special Collections at the Marshall University Library.

Data Analysis

A generic in-depth interview with pre-selected open-ended questions was conducted to address the participants' views of their educational experience. While interviews were recorded on a digital device, logs and/or interview transcripts of the interviews were also completed. Notes were taken on the transcripts to determine the general topics covered. Topic blocks, or categories, were created based on any themes that emerged within the interview logs and transcripts. From this basis, the determinations of how the descriptions and themes were represented in the qualitative narrative were made. Because the purpose of this study is to gain the participants' perspective on events, processes, and experiences, the interviewees' views are privileged in the following narrative (Newsome Stallings, 2008).

Archival documents, of course, were critical to this study, as they are in most qualitative research (see, e.g., Merriam 1998) For this study, reunion memorial books and class yearbooks were used to supplement interview data.

Summary

This study examined the education of African American students who attended the segregated Douglass High School, located in Huntington, West Virginia. Specifically, this study examined the oral history of six past Douglass High School students in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, both socially and academically. In this way, this study is meant to examine the value of their schooling and experience to contemporary education and educators. With both the literature and the study's empirical phenomenological framework in mind, this study guided the exploration of the following: how Douglass differed from other

small, community schools; how Douglass prepared its students for the real world; how the faculty and students made up for any lack of supplies or other resources; the involvement of the teachers and administrators in the success of Douglass students and graduates; how the experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affected the student; and what contemporary educators can learn from past student experiences at Douglass.

Through a qualitative approach, I thoroughly examined the understanding and meaning people have constructed through in-depth interview and analysis. This depended on participants' stories that provided insight into experiences of those who have not spoken or written about their personal histories.

CHAPTER 4: SETTINGS AND PARTICIPANTS

In this chapter, I will introduce the settings and participants for this study in order to provide context for the reader. I embarked on this project to further explore the educational experiences of Douglass High School (DHS) alumni, and to gain a better understanding of African American segregated education in K-12 schools.

According to directory information located in the central office at Cabell County Schools, when Douglass High School opened its doors in 1924, 13 teachers taught 184 students. By the 1941-1942 school year, enrollment had blossomed to 400 students employing 16 teachers. When Douglass closed its doors in 1961, there were 206 students and 13 teachers.

Specifically, I focus on the quality of education, the sense of community within the school, and the role of the teachers and administrative leadership. I interviewed six individuals, three men and three women, who attended Douglass High School. Two of the participants attended DHS, but spent their last two years of high school at the integrated Huntington High School.

Participants

There are a variety of ways in which participants can be identified in qualitative research. For this oral history study, I utilized snowball sampling, a process in which research participants help to recruit other participants for a study. I began my search through social media. I am in a Facebook group titled “You Grew Up in H-Town If...” I posted in the group about my research and requested names of individuals who attended Douglass. A handful of responses hit my inbox, which gave me a great starting point for my literature review. I received several articles, links, and other resources related to Douglass as a result of my inquiry. I also received an email from Craig Harris. Craig informed me that his father, David Harris, was a Huntington historian

and would love to help me out. Craig provided me his phone number. I called Mr. David Harris and he helped me out tremendously. Through this process, I found out that Harris actually had attended Douglass. He was more than willing to talk to me. In fact, he met me at Huntington High School one day after school so I could interview him. In addition to providing me an interview, David also provided me the name of Roy Goines, another Douglass High School alumni. Roy currently lives in California, so a face-to-face interview with him was not feasible; we spoke on the phone.

Working at Huntington High School in Cabell County, West Virginia, also gave me some leads. I reached out to the superintendent of Cabell County Schools, Mr. Bill Smith. Smith suggested I talk to Sylvia Ridgeway. Sylvia is a retired school teacher from Cabell County Schools. She does a lot of substitute teaching at Huntington High School, as well as at our two feeder middle schools. One morning when Sylvia happened to be subbing at Huntington High School I asked her if she would be willing to sit down with me and talk about her experiences at Douglass. During our face-to-face interview, Sylvia was extremely generous: she not only agreed to meet with me, she also provided me the names of two other individuals who attended Douglass High School—Emma Williams and Dr. Dolores Johnson—who she thought I should interview. Sylvia, Emma, and Dolores were childhood friends. The three grew up together and have remained dear friends. With Sylvia's help, I was also able to successfully interview Emma and Dolores. Emma actually came to Huntington High School for her interview. Because she is now the DHS reunion historian, she also brought with her a plethora of DHS artifacts. She had yearbooks, reunion agendas, photographs, and a couple of articles about DHS. These visuals aided her recollection of DHS.

My sixth participant was literally right across the hallway, in a sense. One day I noticed one of our faculty members, BJ Chappelle, examining the framed athletic photos that are displayed in the gymnasium concourse at Huntington High School. There, on the wall, are pictures from the old Huntington High School, Huntington East High School, and Douglass High School. I approached BJ and we started discussing the photos. BJ began showing me pictures of his father that were in that hallway. I talk to BJ every day and consider him a friend, but never knew his dad attended Douglass. Needless to say when I told BJ I was working on a dissertation about Douglass High School, and was interested in talking to his father about his experiences at Douglass, BJ immediately provided me his father's phone number. That is how I was able to successfully interview Harry Chappelle.

In the end, I was able to successfully interview six participants. The sections below introduce the six oral history participants, their stories, and, in particular, their experience at Douglas.

Roy Goines

Goines was born and raised in Barboursville, West Virginia, which is a neighboring city of Huntington. According to Goines, at that time, "there were only three black families in Barboursville. I spent my whole summers there except for spending a day or two or three in Huntington. It was white Barboursville where I grew up." Because Goines was from Barboursville, I was curious how he actually got to Douglass considering it is at least a twenty-five-minute car ride today. Goines explained:

Now mind you I came from Barboursville the first nine years of my education. So we were bussed from Barboursville to Douglass then bussed back to Barboursville from Douglass. Now, back in those days when they bussed us they picked us up first at quarter

to 7 in Barboursville. School didn't start until 8:30 a.m., but they picked us up at quarter to 7 and carried us to Douglass. Then they came and got us after they delivered all the white students. After school they taken them home then came back and got us and carried home. So I got out of Barboursville first and early in the morning and came back to Barboursville after everybody else was delivered at night. We had long trips back and forth from Barboursville to Huntington back to Barboursville. We had long days and nights.

In 1949 Goines started at DHS as a 7th grader. He attended DHS from the 7th grade until graduation. In fact, Goines was first in his class from 7th grade all the way to graduation in 1955. Goines has fond memories of his high school experience. He stated that he “was probably a little spoiled” at Douglass because “the teachers and I had a good time interacting. A good time. I was not difficult to teach because I was probably a step ahead of my classmates.” Goines simply stated that “the books came easy to me.”

In addition to being strong in academics, Goines was also an athlete. His last three years of high school “were filled with sports because I was one of the better athletes there.” Goines

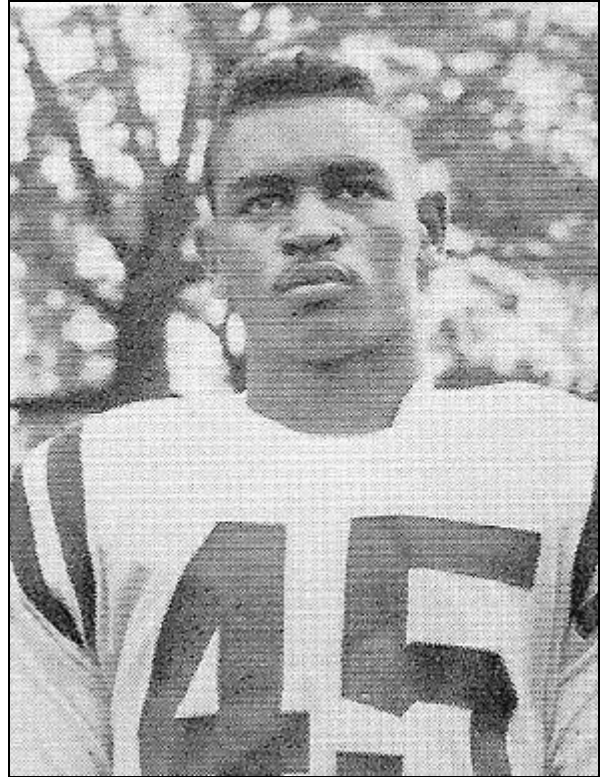
played football and basketball at Douglass.

Specifically, Goines remembers having a small gymnasium at Douglass. In fact, he described it as “a cracker box. To seat 1,000 people it would not. Might be able to get 100 people in the gym when initially I got to Douglass. In 1949 we didn’t have a gym that was sufficient to accommodate a crowd. It just wasn’t very big and didn’t have a lot of seating capacity.”

Goines, however, especially excelled in football. After graduating Douglass, Goines attended Marshall University and majored in business. In fact, Goines was the first black varsity football player to wear the green and white for Marshall in 1956. “I broke the color barrier there if you will. In football. Hal Greer did it in basketball, and I did it in football.”

Goines included that he and Greer played football together at Douglass; however, when they got to college, Greer went on to be the first black basketball player at Marshall while Goines was the first black football player at Marshall. It was evident during the interview through Goines’ tone and voice inflection that he was especially proud of this accomplishment.

Douglass provided its students with a tight community. Goines used the phrase “family type relationships” several times throughout the interview. Not only was he close with his classmates, but he was also close with his teachers. He spoke of his English teacher, Ms. Fairfax,



Roy Goines broke MU football barrier

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(Woodrum, 2006)

in depth. Goines stated that he “really really appreciated the way she taught. I was kind of like her favorite between me and you. Always made A’s in her class.” Goines’ passion and respect towards Ms. Fairfax continued even after he graduated from Douglass and attended Marshall. In fact, his first semester of his freshman year at Marshall, Goines made the Dean’s List and an A in English. He was extremely proud of this accomplishment and went back to Douglass High School to show Ms. Fairfax his grade card. “Boy did that make her proud seeing me there with an ‘A’ in English first semester,” Goines said.

While Goines did attend and graduate from Douglass High School, he had no problems with integration in college and his adult life because he “grew up all the way through first grade in a white environment” meaning that while he attended segregated school, he lived in a white neighborhood. Goines stated that “the whites [he] came in contact with at Marshall had a problem adjusting. But I did not have a problem adjusting to them because my background was Barboursville.” While at Marshall Goines had no black professors; all of his professors were white. He did take a particular liking to one of his professors, Dr. Harvey. Dr. Harvey taught English. Goines stated the following memory about Dr. Harvey:

I kind of took to Dr. Harvey and she kind of took to me. You know I was a football player. And here I am traveling and taking her class and making an “A” in her grammar class. Here’s what she did one time. We were taking a trip. Gone somewhere to play football over the weekend, and I had come back and made an “A” on her test that she had given the next week. And when she was returning the grades she passed down one end of the aisle and on the other she passed my paper back so everybody could look and see that I made the best grade in the class and was a football player. Surprised some of them I

know. Being black and a football player making the best grade in the class. [Goines chuckles] Dr. Harvey. She was my English professor in college.

Even though Goines excelled in English, he majored in Business in college. Even though not all of his classes in college came easily to him, Goines was able to build and maintain positive relationships with his professors who were all white. Goines attributes this to his childhood in Barboursville and the soft skills he acquired while at Douglass. Goines continued:

Oh let me tell you about another teacher I had! Her name was Goins. Mary Goins. She taught college Algebra. Anyway. I'm a football player. I got her class, and I'm not doing well in her class at all. I think my first six week mark I think I had a "D." And I'm playing football. My name is Goines, and her name is Goins. And I'm not a bad student you see. I just couldn't catch on to the college Algebra you see. I had a hard time with it. Anyway, after the first six weeks I'm playing football and I don't have a passing mark. I have a strong "F" that I got going. [Goines chuckles]. Anyway she knows I'm trying, so after football season was over and it Thanksgiving weekend first semester first year I went to her and said I'm having a problem catching on. She said I know you are young man. You have a good head on your shoulder, but you've got to put that football down and concentrate on your studies. Well football and this head is putting me through school, and I like playing football. But I said "I will do better in your class." I said "Do you have some time this weekend?" She said, "What do you mean?" I said, "It's Thanksgiving weekend, and you probably have family or something you're involved with, but I would surely like if you had some time on Saturday or Friday after Thanksgiving if I could come in so you can help me?" She said, "Come on! Come on! When do you want to come?" She was snappy, but she liked me. She knew I was trying.

After serving in the U.S. Army, working for years with Ford Motor Company as a Human Resource Director, and working as an adjunct professor at the University of Laverne, Goines is now enjoying retirement with his wife in California.

Sylvia Ridgeway

Ridgeway attended DHS from 7th to 12th grade and graduated from Douglass in 1957. As



Ridgeway during the 1950's
Child Development &
Improvement Recital (Smith,
2017)

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a student, Ridgeway was very active in school participating in the band and taking part in dancing and art. She was academically inclined and was very competitive. Ridgeway said, “The kids were easy to get along with. I studied hard, and I made good grades. I can’t really say my years as a student were negative years. They were fun years.” Ridgeway described Douglass as “crowded” but went on to say that “it was a small

school so it seemed more crowded.” Never once did

Ridgeway feel she lacked anything because she attended Douglass. “We had our own spelling bees,

our own band festivals. But we were happy. We knew

there was a difference, but it didn’t bother us because we were happy. We had everything we needed.” She continued to point out that “the problem came with integration. It was good in some ways as far as the facilities of the school and that. But the teachers were not really ready to teach black students.” Ridgeway’s younger cousin attended Huntington High School after Douglass had closed its doors. Ridgeway said she understood from her cousin that “they felt

inferior a lot of the times. They were always in the back.” Another problem Ridgeway noted as a result of integration was the decline of the black community. Businesses went under because money was no longer coming into the black community.

Ultimately, Ridgeway felt as though attending Douglass affected her in a positive manner. She stated:

I knew that I had to be better than the white kids because I didn't have the same facilities or the same resources as the kids at the white schools had. My father always told me, because you are a little black girl you cannot be just as good as. You have to be better than right now. So that's what I kept in my mind. And that's what I worked towards the years I was in high school. I knew that when I got out I couldn't just go out into the streets and get a job. I couldn't just go to college and make mediocre grades. I had to do the best I could at all times. And that's what I've tried to do.

Specifically, Ridgeway felt there was a strong sense of “intimacy” between the student body and the teachers at Douglass High School which aided in the success of students. While Ridgeway attributes the close-knit community to students' success at Douglass, she also points out that it was not just the school raising students; the whole community was a part of student success:

We always had the parents, and the rest of the community, and the churches all of this was wrapped into one ball. For instance, my second grade teacher was also my Sunday school teacher. They took advantage of the same circles. Because it was a black circle. And so you ran in the same circle and everybody knew everybody. And if you misbehaved you better watch out because your momma is going to know before 3 o'clock when you get home you're going to get it. And that's the way it was. It was a community

raising all of the kids. So whenever there was something going on at Douglass everybody knew that. Everybody knew that.

Ridgeway felt that her teachers at Douglass took the extra time to ensure student success. Her teachers held high expectations and required students to reach those expectations. Ms. Fairfax, an English teacher at Douglass, had a profound impact on Ridgeway. Ridgeway had this to say about her teachers at Douglass.

I think she was the reason I became an English teacher. Her name was Ms. Fairfax. She was never married. Never had kids. We were her kids. And she did not take slack at all. I mean, if she felt you were capable of making an "A" you made an "A." A "B" was not acceptable. And I know it because it happened to me. She called my mother. And I got on the ball and I got that "A." And I had one that I was simply terrified of. And that makes sense. I was so terrified of this science teacher that I made "A's." It was like I'm so scared I got to make that "A." I have to make that "B." I wasn't an "A" student in science and math, but it was because of something it was just the vibes that I got from her. I just had to do it. And I did. But Ms. Fairfax is probably the one who is responsible for me, and I'm glad she did.

While Ridgeway has fond memories from Douglass, she vividly remembers when she was told to pursue work with her hands rather than with her brain.

There was a company that came to our school every year and they gave us these dexterity tests. And they time you. You know? And I've never been one to do something right now. You've got to let my brain absorb it, then I can do it. Knowing I was being timed I could never get those things fast enough. I could get them in there, but not fast enough. And so the results were that I would be better at doing a job that required me to work with my

hands. Like piece work, or an assembly line, or something like that. And I thought about that . . . and I thought about it. And I thought that doesn't say anything about my brain. It just says something about using my hands. Well anybody off the street can do that.

Ridgeway went against her passion and majored in secretarial administration in college so she could “use her hands”; however, she was not satisfied. Ridgeway continued:

I thought if I could use my hands and become a secretary, why couldn't I be a teacher and teach? Or why couldn't I be a teacher and use my hands that way? So that's when I changed over and decided I wanted to be an English teacher because that was actually my best subject. And that's what I did.

When Sylvia graduated from Douglass, she attended West Virginia State College on a scholarship for two and a half years. She transferred back to Huntington to attend Marshall University because her scholarship at West Virginia State College ran out. Sylvia stated it was “just easier and more accommodating for me to go from my home to Marshall than to go out of state and pay fees and travel expenses and all that.” In the interim, Sylvia got married and started a family which was another reason she wanted to attend Marshall. While taking classes at Marshall, Sylvia worked as a secretary for six years to the Associate Dean in the College of Education at Marshall. Her boss was accommodating to her school schedule which permitted her to work, attend class, and raise her family. Sylvia graduated from Marshall University with her English Education degree. She taught at Huntington High School for 24 years.

Even though Sylvia is currently retired, she can still be seen at Huntington High School or one its feeder middle schools working as a substitute teacher. In addition to subbing, Sylvia is very active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

David Harris

Although Harris attended Douglass High School for the majority of his junior/senior high school experience, he actually graduated from the integrated Huntington High School in 1962 because Douglass closed its doors in 1961 forcing him to attend Huntington High.

In 7th grade, Harris had the opportunity to dress and travel with the varsity basketball players. While technicalities prevented him from playing, junior high students could not participate in varsity sports, he very much enjoyed being a part of the team as a 7th grader.

Harris came from a big family; he has four sisters and three brothers. His grandparents lived behind him growing up, and he had 13 aunts and uncles. Not only was Harris extremely close with his family, but he was also close with his classmates at Douglass High School. He described Douglass as a “close-knit community” where students had the opportunity to “know your teachers intimately.” This was seen as an advantage as a student at Douglass because the sense of community was not at Huntington High. Harris said had Douglass not closed its doors 13 students would have graduated from Douglass. Instead, Harris was part of a graduating class of 469 students at Huntington High School. Harris described the two schools as “two vastly different worlds.” Harris said that “at Douglass you were one on one. Every teacher viewed it that way. That’s one of the things that hurt me the most” when he transferred to Huntington High School. The teachers at Douglass ensured that students were disciplined and that they completed their work. For example, Harris said when he was at Douglass, even as a junior high school student, “not a day went by that some teacher would say ‘have you made any plans for your future? What do you want to do? What college are you going to?’” Those conversations did not occur at Huntington High School because of the sheer number of students in the building. In fact, Harris recalled a specific incident that occurred with his counselor.

Then I got to HHS. I had a friend there, and we competed for grades; [a] white friend. And so we got this little competition with grades. Our grades were about the same. We became seniors and he said, "Where you going to school?" And I said, "Marshall." You know [saying to me, the interviewer], I've been working part time saving up money. That's why I didn't play baseball. I quit to work to get money for school for Marshall. \$25 a semester. [Harris laughs.] So I had the money. No student loans. But I could pay my tuition because I worked. So I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to Tufts." I said, "What's that?" He said, "It's up in New England. And I'm getting a scholarship." I said, "My grades are as good as yours. How did you do that?" He said, "The counselor told me." (I'm not going to say her name.) He said, "Haven't you talked to the counselor?" I said no. My friend said, "Well, she called me in and I've been in there three or four times." So I go in there and make an appointment with the counselor. So I said, "yeah." I sat down. I asked if there was a way I could get a scholarship. She said, "Well I can probably get you a scholarship. I can get you in the vocational school. The trade school. It won't cost you a penny." I said, "No, I want to go to college." She said [that] "no colored boys should go to the trade school" and [to] use your hands. Now that's not a put down on her because one of the most outstanding black people in our country felt that way. You get a trade it could never be taken away from you. Booker T. Washington felt that way.

Harris did not want to work a trade. He wanted to attend college. Years later, he ran into that counselor while shopping. He recalled:

Years later there was a grocery store right out here on Hal Greer called Big Bear. And I was shopping at Big Bear, and that counselor came in with a friend of hers. They were

living in the high rise. She said, "Oh David I remember you! Do you remember me?" I said, "Yes ma'am I do." She said come here to her friend: "I want you to meet David Harris. He was one of my best students. Bright as bright can be. And I helped him all I could." Now her recollection was totally different than mine. And I don't mean that to put her down. Because I think she meant well. She was just going along with what she thought was best for an African American.

Even in his recollection of this experience, Harris did not seem disgruntled or mad at the counselor. He stated that she did what she thought was the best thing for him at that time.

It was interesting to hear Harris' comparisons of Douglass and Huntington because he attended both the segregated and the integrated school himself. While the sheer volume of students between the two schools was drastically different, Harris also noted the lack of supplies at Douglass. Harris specifically addressed books.

I always wondered at Douglass: Who is this Bobby Joe and Ruthy Ann? They must have been the smartest white kids around. You say, what's that mean? Well, every book they had they were dog eared and frayed and torn. They were hand me downs from the white schools. And you would always see "Bobby Joe loves Ruthy Ann" with little hearts drawn all through the books. [Harris chuckles]. We never had new books. We always had used books. I don't think I ever saw a new book until I got to HHS. And we had books that were at least ten years old. I guess it was by the Board of Education when new books were in for the white schools. They would take the older ones and ship them off to Douglass and Barnett. Never even knew there was such thing as a new textbook until I went to HHS.

Harris continued, speaking about how his teachers at Douglass made up for the lack of supplies, oftentimes by spending their own money “to make sure everybody had what they needed.” Harris also pointed out that the teachers at Douglass always had a creative way to teach. He did not see as much of that at the integrated Huntington High School.

Harris also alluded to the fact that while at Douglass, the community involvement was just as crucial to students’ success as his teachers. Harris explained:

We grew up where any adult could tell you what to do, could discipline you. And not only would you get in trouble with them—and I’m talking punished by them—but when you got home you got it again. And so it was kind of like that close community where they looked out for you not only as a student but as a person. To make sure that you knew the rules of the road, that you knew how to navigate the system.

Harris did not view integration as necessarily a bad thing. As he eloquently put, “integration was not a bad thing, but it certainly wasn’t the best thing that ever happened to us.” One disappointment that occurred as a result of integration was the closing of black businesses in the black community. The Bisons, for example, was a coat and tie club downtown. Harris could not wait until he was old enough to attend; however, by the time he was old enough to enter the establishment had closed because of integration.

After graduating from Huntington High, Harris attended Marshall University. While in college he signed up for ROTC. Upon graduation he was told that he was going to go to Vietnam. Harris did not want to go to war so he turned in his commission. About a week after he turned in his commission he received a letter in the mail stating that he was drafted into the military not as an officer but as an enlisted person. Fortunately, the military was impressed with his college degree and wanted to make him an officer, so Harris attended officer school. He was

the first black company commander and spent three years in Germany. Harris was in the Army for four years.

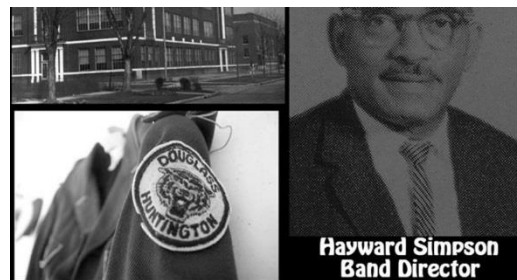
In addition to fulfilling a career at Special Metals, which is a nickel alloy production plant in Huntington, WV, Harris taught at Marshall University as an adjunct professor for 25 years as well as teaching at a local community college. He has two Master's degrees. Today Harris can be found at the youth little league baseball fields in Huntington coaching and mentoring children.

Dolores Johnson

Johnson entered Douglass High School in 1954 as a 7th grader and immediately felt like she had a place. When she was in the 5th grade, the band director from Douglass, Hayward Simpson, came to Barnett Elementary to recruit students for the band. She began practicing the clarinet at that time, so when Johnson started school at Douglass two years later she was immediately a part of the marching band participating in football games and parades.

In addition to being a member of the band, Johnson was also in other clubs such as Future Homemakers and Y Teens. She was not interested in sports. Johnson did not graduate from Douglass. At the start of her junior year, the 1957/1958 school year, Johnson attended the integrated Huntington High School. She went to

Band Director of Douglass High School, (Urbahns, 2017)
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HHS “kind of by choice but also because [her] parents agreed that it was alright for me to go. I think there were a group of parents that decided it was ok for some of us to go.” Johnson

explained that the transition to Douglass was easier than that transition to Huntington High School.

Attending the segregated school was a happier experience than switching over to the integrated school when we moved in to HHS from Douglas my junior year simply because you were part of everything. . . . There were plays, dances, any extracurricular activities, ball games, you know, and all that stuff. You were always a part of that in some part of way. Like I was in the band: so we played at all the games and stuff like that. But going to the integrated school was a different experience because you weren't "a part." There was a very definite social strata at HHS. And there were the "ins" and the "not ins." [Johnson chuckles]. The ins and the outs—and the ins were all from Southside, and the outs were from everywhere else in the city. It was just a totally different experience. . . . You could tell that it was an experience or a practice that had become set within the cultural system of the school and that way.

While the initial transition into integration was difficult for Johnson her junior year of high school, she does not regret her decision. Johnson graduated from Huntington and continued her education at Marshall University with ease. Her friends who had graduated from Douglass and attended Marshall faced the "culture shock" that came with the integrated environment their freshman year in college where Johnson had that experience her junior year in high school. As Johnson put it, "it made it easier for me then, but it was hard in the 11th grade."

Johnson also felt that she had more academic support at Douglass than at Huntington High School. The teachers at Douglass encouraged her and expected her to do well. She elaborated:

At Douglass you always had support. You felt supported by the teachers and all the people that worked with the school and were a part of it there. They expected you to do well. So that was not true at HHS. They did not expect for the black kids to do well. They did not expect them to live up to the standards of the school or what have you. They had very poor expectations... So the experience of being at Douglass—when you got out, you felt that you could do anything. You've been taught that. It was part of the unspoken curriculum of the school, that you can go from here and do great things—and we expect you to do that. . . . So you had those kinds of things, and when you got to HHS, HHS did not prepare [us]. It prepared African American students to feel like they had to fight harder, do better—or it took all the fight out of them.

Johnson felt as though the academics were equal at both schools. She did not necessarily think one school was academically more challenging than the other. What Johnson did say was dramatically different was the home life. For example: Johnson recalls students in her social studies class at Huntington High talking about politics and world events and that was not discussed much in her home or at Douglass. This was not necessarily a school issue as much as what was brought into the classroom from the white students at Huntington High. Johnson was also shocked to learn that her classmates' mothers at Huntington High did not work. That was not the case at Douglass and in her black community. All of the mothers she knew worked.

After high school Johnson went on to college where she majored in French and Spanish. I asked if she spoke all three languages. “I don't speak all three,” Johnson said, “I speak English, Appalachian English at that.” [We laughed.] She actually took her first French class at Douglass. Johnson spent many hours in the classroom as both a teacher and a student. She continued her education earning a Master's in English and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Linguistics. Johnson taught

for two years at Oley Junior High School, taught for 20 years at Huntington High School, and taught for 17 years as an English Professor at Marshall University.

Johnson is currently retired and enjoys quilting and traveling.

Harry Chappelle

Harry Chappelle attended and graduated from Douglass High School. Chappelle graduated from DHS in 1947. He describes his experience as “one of the best experiences that I had.” In fact, Chappelle excelled in both athletics and academics. He graduated salutatorian from Douglass. After high school Chappelle continued his education at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where he played football and ran track. He majored in medical administration in college.

What Chappelle valued most about his teachers from Douglass was their diversity:

Most of the teachers that we had were not out of West Virginia or Marshall-like most schools. Most of our teachers were from black colleges or black universities. We had a professor for biology and chemistry who was out of Michigan, and we had people from Ohio State, because at that time to get your master’s degree you couldn’t go to Marshall. So they went Ohio State and colleges like that. So when we compared the two schools, we were way ahead, and I thought the education, if not better, was just as good.



Douglass High School entrance (Smith, 2017)

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He describes his teachers as “very knowledgeable” and willing to give “you the material that you needed if you were interested in going into higher education.” In fact, Chappelle said if any students ever had any questions about their homework that they could just stop at their teachers’ house since they lived in the neighborhood. Teachers also encouraged students to get

involved in activities that were available in the black community. Chappelle credits his neighborhood for preparing him for his social life and Douglass for preparing him for the outside life such as academics.

When asked about a particular memory from Douglass, Chappelle talked at length about the lack of a laboratory facility:

In fact: in the biology/chemistry area we lacked the laboratory facility. And that hurt me when I went to college a little bit—because I did not have a lot of laboratory experience that I would have had had I gone to the white school, because the fact that we had no laboratory experience. Very little laboratory. And what experience we had in the laboratory was very minimal. It didn't help me any...The science teacher would do the experiment himself. And you would follow that rather than having done the experiment. He would do the experiments. There were very few experiments because we did not have

the equipment to do many of the experiments that they wanted. So that handicapped me for a little while because when I got to college it was a laboratory thing more than a lecture thing. I had to spend much, much, much, much time catching up. It would have been much easier had I had that in high school. But I got through it.

In addition to lacking laboratory facilities, Chappelle also said that Douglass received secondhand musical instruments and textbooks from the white school.

After college Chappelle went into the Air Force for four years, and in the reserves for four years. After his stint in the military, Chappelle attended Marshall University where he earned his Master's degree in Business Administration. He worked at St. Mary's Hospital for five years and Cabell Huntington Hospital for 25 years. He is currently retired and loves music, particularly jazz and the saxophone, football, and his grandchildren.

Emma Williams

Emma Williams attended Douglass High School and graduated in 1959. She was very active in the extracurricular activities offered at Douglass such as cheering, future nurses, Glee Club, and drama. In fact, Williams stated “[I] just [participated in] everything that they offered. I enjoyed school and took part of [it].” When discussing the academics at Douglass, Williams stated that she:

Would not have traded my time at Douglass for any school in West Virginia. Our teachers were top professionals you know. Most of them had their masters. Oh yes. And their aim in teaching was to . . . prepare us, because at that time we didn't have ACT test so you had to take placement tests. And I was so thankful, because when we entered Marshall it was a breeze you know.

In addition to having top notch teachers, Williams said that Douglass was instrumental in letting students know who they were, and that they had just as much a right to an education as everyone else. She pointed out twice how teachers would “go out of their way or stay after school to help you if you had a problem. It was just like an extended family. If you had a problem you could always go to them and they were not reluctant about staying to help you or get you information.” Williams stated that the teachers and principal felt that grades were a top priority, even if a student was an athlete. As Williams put it, “You had to meet the grade or you didn’t play ball.”

Mr. Slash was the principal during Williams’ time at Douglass. She described him as a “father figure.” Prior to becoming the principal, Mr. Slash was a math teacher and coach at Douglass High School. In 1977, Mr. Slash became the Superintendent of Cabell County Schools. He was the first African American school superintendent in West Virginia.

When Williams was in tenth grade she had the opportunity to attend the integrated Huntington High School. She felt that she “had what she needed” at Douglass and decided to stay. She feels as though she did not miss out on anything by staying at Douglass. In fact, Williams said that she “wouldn’t trade my education from Douglass for anything today.” She felt that Douglass was a wonderful experience where students had an identity. She elaborated that:

You knew who you were. You didn’t have to feel that you wanted to be anybody else. You were proud to be African American. And if you strived to select whatever field you wanted to go in we had the resources. Maybe



Principal Slash (Casto, 2017)

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not always the technology as far as all the books and things, but we had the resources to explore and expand our horizon.

Williams's first experience with integration occurred when she attended Marshall. She recalled that her experience was not a pleasant one. While some at Marshall were receptive of integration, everyone was not, and that had a negative impact on her experience there.

After graduation Williams attended Marshall University for a couple of years. At the time she already had her Associate's Degree in Early Childhood and was working in Cabell County Schools. She took classes "on and off" because she "wanted to continually improve for the children's sake." Williams worked for Cabell County Schools for 27 years. When her son was an early teenager her husband was offered a job in Denver, Colorado. She and her family moved, and Williams worked in the school system in Denver until her son graduated from high school. At that time her mother-in-law became ill so she and her husband moved back to Huntington while her son attended Georgetown.

Williams currently resides in Huntington and is still close with a handful of her fellow Douglass classmates.

Summary

This chapter introduced the oral histories of the six particular study participants with a particular view on DHS. Both men and women were interviewed. Individuals who graduated from Douglass, as well as individuals who graduated from the integrated high school, were interviewed. I learned about the experiences and perceptions that these six participants chose to share with me. Many hours were spent interviewing the participants, transcribing their interviews, studying their responses, and hearing their stories. Their recollections of Douglass offered several emerging themes that will be discussed in the following chapter. This study will

shed light on the quality of education, the sense of community within the school, and the role of the teachers and administrative leadership at Douglass High School.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This research study explores the experiences of individuals who attended Douglass High School (DHS), a segregated junior/senior high school in Huntington, West Virginia. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What was it like to be a student at DHS?
2. How did the experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affect the student?
3. How did DHS prepare its students for the world outside of the school?
4. How did students and faculty at DHS make up for any lack of supplies or other issues related to a paucity of resources?
5. How were teachers and administrators involved in the success of DHS students and graduates, and how did they prepare them to live in a larger segregated society?
6. To what extent does the experience of DHS relate to other, small community schools?

This chapter briefly summarizes the research questions, outlines themes that surfaced from the oral history interviews, analyzes how these themes relate and compare to other small, community schools, and shows how they are also unique in their experience. It also reviews some of the personal evaluations of shifts from segregation to integration; suggests strengths and limitations; and closes with some thoughts about possibilities for future research.

Summary of Research Questions

What was it like to be a student at DHS? All participants in this study provided positive experiences from DHS. No one had anything negative to say about the school. A common theme

that emerged throughout the interviews was the participants' love for Douglass. All participants relayed the message that their time at Douglass was enjoyable and memorable. Ridgeway described her time at Douglass as "fun years." When discussing Douglass, Chappelle stated that "it was one of the best experiences that I had." Goines recalled his time at Douglass as an "enjoyable experience." Williams declared that her experience "was absolutely wonderful. I dearly loved Douglass." Johnson also described her time at Douglass as wonderful, and Harris spoke in length about the close-knit community of the school.

How did the experience of attending a segregated school ultimately affect the student? As the interviewees describe, attending Douglass affected the participants in a positive manner. Harris stated that his experience at Douglass provided him lessons not only with academics, but also how to behave in life. Williams, Ridgeway, and Goines specifically mentioned the life-long friends they acquired while at Douglass. These family-like relationships are still treasured and valued 60 years later. Johnson, who attended both segregated Douglass and integrated Huntington High said that "attending the segregated school was happier experience than switching over to the integrated school...because you were a part of everything." There was always something for students at Douglass to participate in such as a play, a dance, or a ball game. Ultimately, attending Douglass was a positive and uplifting experience.

How did DHS prepare its students for the world outside of the school? Douglass prepared its students for the outside world by showing students the cultural differences between the black society and white society in Huntington. It made students aware of what the world was all about during that time. Specifically, it opened students' eyes to prejudice and segregation. Most importantly, teachers at Douglass instilled in students confidence, so when they did graduate and encountered integration, Douglass students could show people just how intelligent they were. As

Johnson put it, “when you got out [of Douglass] you felt that you could do anything. You were taught that. It was part of the unspoken curriculum at the school. That you can go from here and do great things and we expect you to do that.” In addition, attending Douglass “prepared African American students to feel like they had to fight harder and do better” in all facets of life.

How did students and faculty at DHS make up for any lack of supplies or other issues related to the paucity of resources? Resources at Douglass were described as second class. Textbooks were outdated, visibly used, and oftentimes hand-me-downs from the white schools in the county. Science laboratories were lacking materials and space. Rather than the students completing the experiment, the teacher would complete the experiment and students would watch. The gymnasium was not large enough to accommodate a crowd because it lacked a proper seating capacity. Any musical instruments that were given to the school were used instruments from the white schools. Despite a lack in funding and facilities, teachers at Douglass made up for the lack of supplies. Many teachers made do without while others went out and purchased supplies for students with their own personal money.

How were teachers and administrators involved in the success of DHS students and graduates, and how did they prepare them to live in a larger segregated society? Even though the school lacked supplies and resources, it did not lack caring teachers and administrators. Williams stated that teachers encouraged students to “explore and expand their horizon” both in and out of the classroom. All adults, even the custodians, were involved in student success at Douglass. Teachers followed up with students and their parents during home visits as well as at church. They wanted students to succeed in whatever dreams they may have. Goines and Ridgeway specifically pointed out their English teacher, Ms. Fairfax, as truly going above and beyond both in and out of the classroom. Ridgeway said that Ms. Fairfax, among other teachers,

would “take money out of their own pockets to buy something they wanted to use [in class].” This sense of community is what made experiences at Douglass so memorable. Additionally, teachers set high expectations and expected students to reach those expectations.

To what extent does the experience of DHS relate to other small, community schools?

The experiences at Douglass relate to other small, community schools in a couple of ways. Students at Douglass had inadequate supplies. Equipment, textbooks, and supplementary materials were second class compared to the supplies provided in white schools. This was also a trend in other small, community schools. Secondly, it was a common misconception among many white Americans that African Americans did not desire to have an education. Many of the students who graduated from Douglass pursued post secondary education despite being encouraged to find a profession that encouraged them to “work with their hands.” And finally, like many small, community schools, teachers at Douglass encouraged and motivated students to excel in academics.

Thematic Analysis

Interpretation and analysis of interviews began once each interview was transcribed. From there, each transcription was thoroughly read and reread for similarities and differences. Four themes emerged that are worth noting:

1. A sense of community and family at DHS.
2. Secondary resources and facilities.
3. Strong teacher and principal involvement.
4. A love and affection for DHS, its experience and memory.

Theme 1: Sense of community and family

All six participants mentioned during their interviews that Douglass had a strong sense of community. Because the teachers also lived in the neighborhood, the parents and students both saw teachers not only at school but also at church and other social activities. Harry Chappelle, for example, stated the following, that the school was a

. . . very close community. Everybody looked out for everybody. And the teachers especially were interested in students, and they had a very good understanding with parents. As far as that relationship, I thought it was one of the best that you could have because the teachers kept in touch with the parents. The parents kept in touch with the teachers. I thought that was one of the better things. Most of the teachers at Douglass lived in the neighborhood, and so the parents received the teachers at school, at church, at various activities. Most of them were friends with each other, so it was like a human force that operates from one person to another person . . . so everybody knew what was going on. Everybody took care of the kids. So if you did something wrong you were in trouble with the other. But it was good. The teachers had a good rapport with the parents. I think most kids at Douglass had a very good education.

In a similar vein, Dolores Johnson remembered that their school community was small and that “because it was small, everybody knew everybody. Your parents knew your teachers. Your teachers were friends with some of the parents, and there was a real community of people who supported you educationally as well as socially within the community. It was wonderful.”

Sylvia Ridgeway mentioned the intimacy of the student body and teachers. Recall as mentioned in chapter 4, she elaborated that:

...we always had the parents, the rest of the community, and the churches: all of this was wrapped into one ball. For instance, my second grade teacher was also my Sunday school teacher. They took advantage of same circles because it was a black circle. You ran in the same circle and everybody knew everybody. And if you misbehaved you better watch out because your momma is going to know before 3 o'clock when you get home, and you are going to get it. And that's the way it was. It was a community raising the kids, so whenever there was something going on at Douglass, everybody knew that. Everybody knew that.

In ways that echoed the others mentioned here, Emma Williams described her teachers at Douglass as “your extended parents” and Roy Goines stated that he “enjoyed the family type relationships that I had with everybody...growing up in Douglass and graduating Douglass was like being with family.” In fact, Goines said that his fellow classmates from Douglass “are like my family right now.” He talks on the phone with his former classmates about two to three times a week to this day. When David Harris was asked what it was like to be a student at DHS he responded, “If I were to characterize it in a word I would use the word community. It was really a close-knit community. Everybody knew everybody.” In fact, Harris repeated the phrase “it was really a close-knit community” two other times during the interview thus emphasizing its importance. Harris went on to say the following:

It's more community than anything. They were your teachers, but they were also your neighbors. We grew up with any adult could tell you what to do. Could discipline you. And not only would you get in trouble with them, and I am talking punished by them, but when you got home you got it again. So it was kind of like that close community where

they looked out for you not only as a student but as a person to make sure that you knew the rules of the road. That you knew how to navigate the system.

Theme 2: Secondary resources and facilities

My research on African American school facilities indicated that while African American students were separate and segregated in their education, the facilities were often far from equal (Ensign, 2002). As is well known, equipment, textbooks, and supplementary materials in all-black schools were often outdated and inferior to the supplies and materials that were provided at all-white schools (Edwards & Ryan, 2015). My interviews confirmed this, and more than a few times talked about how they dealt with this lack of resources at Douglass.

Related to this was the lack of new resources and materials, which was another point brought up by all participants. In fact, the word “secondhand” was often mentioned; each interviewee brought it up in one way or another. Johnson recalls having “hand me down books.” Williams remembers having books with missing pages; but she also remembered that “fortunately, [teachers] were able to compensate for it, so we did well.”

As recalled by Williams, teachers did the best they could, and often went far beyond expectations. Ridgeway, for example, remembered that:

We definitely did not have adequate resources. I think it was the time when our teachers were so dedicated that they made sure that we had even if they had to take money out of their own pockets and buy something they wanted us to use. But we always had secondhand textbooks. We always got the hand-me-downs from Huntington High School and probably Huntington East High School, too. I don’t know. But they were used. So what I’m saying is anytime there was a textbook adoption, that’s every seven years, we

got those used textbooks when the new comes came out for the white school. So that means we were constantly at least seven years behind.

Like Ridgeway, Harris also recalled never having new books:

We always had used books. I don't think I ever say a new book until I got to Huntington High School. We had books that were at least ten years old. The new books were for the white schools. They would take the older ones and ship them off to Douglass and Barnett.

Never even knew there was such a thing as a new textbook until I went to HHS.

Despite lacking supplies, Harris noted that the teachers "always had a creative way to teach you." Recall that in chapter 4, Harris often "wondered at Douglass who are this Bobby Joe and Ruthy Ann? They must have been the smartest white kids around. You say what's that mean? Well, every book they had they was dog eared, frayed, and torn. They were hand me downs from the white schools. And you would always see 'Bobby Joe love Ruthy Ann' with little hearts drawn all through the books."

Chappelle also commented that the textbooks were secondhand books the white school had. He said "when they were issued new books we got the old ones." Chappelle elaborated on the lack of labs in science class. As recalled in chapter 4, "the science teacher," said Chappelle, "would do the experiment himself. And you would follow that rather than having done the experiment. He would do the experiments. There were very few experiments because we did not have the equipment to do many of the experiments that they wanted. So that handicapped me for a little while because when I got to college it was a laboratory thing more than a lecture thing. I had to spend much much much much much time catching up. It would have been much easier had I had that in high school. But I got through." As discussed in chapter 4, Chappelle also noted

that other materials, such as musical instruments, were also handed down to Douglass from the white schools.

In addition to mentioning the out-of-date books, among other things, Goines also discussed in detail the lacking gymnasium. He stated the following:

Our resources were second class. The books a lot of times were behind... The gymnasium was a cracker box. To seat a thousand people it would not. Might be able to get one hundred people in the gym when I was first there. When I initially got to Douglass in 1949, we did not have a gym that was sufficient to accommodate a crowd. It just wasn't very big and didn't have a lot of seating capacity. And of course the books I felt were not as modern as the books that might have been at the white institutions. I always had the feeling that our books were not first class.

Despite the lacking and second hand resources, teachers at Douglass High School did their best to ensure students learned and did not lack supplies. Harris, Williams, and Ridgeway all recall teachers spending their own money to ensure students had adequate supplies. This leads into the next theme that emerged from the interviews.

Theme 3: Strong Teacher/Principal Involvement

When asked how teachers and administrators were involved in the success of DHS students and graduates all participants told a story of how a teacher and/or the principal went out of his or her way to ensure their success.

Goines recalled being the champion speller and progressing to the next level of the spelling championship. The principal, Mr. Glover, took Goines to that event. Goines also spoke very highly of Mr. Slash. Mr. Slash was Goines's football coach, math teacher, and then

principal. The teacher who probably made the biggest impact on Goines was Ms. Fairfax, his English teacher. He described her as “very, very good.” Goines said:

When I graduated from Douglass and went to Marshall that first year I took pride in making an “A” in English my freshman year. So the first semester when I brought my honor grade my Dean’s List grades I went back to school and saw Ms. Fairfax, and said I want to show you my grade report. I had an “A” in English. And boy did that make her proud seeing me there with an “A” in English first semester.

Goines was not the only one who was fond of Ms. Fairfax. Ridgeway also spoke very highly of Ms. Fairfax. Ridgeway said Ms. Fairfax was the reason she became an English teacher herself. Ridgeway, as noted in chapter 4, said that Fairfax “never married. Never had kids. We were her kids. And she did not take slack at all. I mean if she felt you were capable of making an ‘A,’ you made an ‘A.’ A ‘B’ was not acceptable. And I know it because it happened to me. She called my mother. And I got on the ball and I got that ‘A’.”

In a similar vein, Chappelle also mentioned that he did not “think that you could find any better instructors than we had because they were very knowledgeable.” Chappelle continued: “you could go and visit [the teachers] at their office or you could really just stop by their house and they would help you. And they really encouraged you to get into other activities that we had in the black community.” Additionally, the teachers at Douglass would always go the extra mile to help students even if it meant after school hours. Williams recalled teachers going out of their way or staying after school to help if there was a problem. The teachers and principal “were not reluctant about staying helping you or getting information.” Williams also stated that grades came first; extracurricular activities came second. She said, “even though you play ball they did care about what you played or what you did. You had to meet the grade, or you didn’t play ball.”

If students missed school because of an illness, Williams said that teachers would bring the homework to the students. “They would go to the eighth degree to extend any possible help to improve your education.”

Both Johnson and Harris mentioned the fact that the teachers and the principal expected students to do well. Recall Johnson’s words about this from chapter 4: at “Douglass you always had support. You felt supported by the teachers and all the people that worked with the school and were a part of it there. They expected you to do well.” Harris, too, remembered being asked early on by his teachers on a daily basis about his future. He said, “Not a day went by that some teacher would say ‘have you made any plans for your future?’ I’m talking about an 8th grader, and 9th graders, a 10th grader. Have you made any plans for your future? What do you want to do? What college are going to?”

Theme 4: A Love and Affection for DHS, its experience and memory

Each participant reminisced about his or her experiences while attending Douglass High School. A common theme that emerged throughout the interviews was the participants’ love for Douglass. Four participants smiled ear to ear while recalling stories from their high school careers. These non-verbal cues from the participants reinforced the fact that their time spent at Douglass was in fact positive. Not a single participant mentioned anything negative about the school. All participants relayed the message that their time at Douglass was enjoyable and memorable.

All participants spoke very highly of Douglass High School. Ridgeway described her time at Douglass as “fun years.” When discussing Douglass, Chappelle stated that “it was one of the best experiences that I had.” Goines recalled his time at Douglass as an “enjoyable experience.” Williams declared that her experience “was absolutely wonderful. I dearly loved

Douglass.” Johnson also described her time at Douglass as wonderful, and Harris spoke at length about the close knit community of the school.

How Douglass Relates to Other Small, Community Schools

The rich discussions with individuals who attended Douglass High School led me to consider how their experience related to other small, community schools. They do so in at least a couple of ways. First of all, the participants in this study all touched on the fact that they had secondhand or inadequate resources. Participants alluded to the fact that they were provided secondhand materials that were discarded from the white schools. Literature on other black segregated schools confirmed this. Despite lacking facilities and poor quality facilities, my interviewees suggested that black segregated schools nonetheless offered a good education that made children feel at home and encouraged children to pursue education with a passion. Many teachers and principals “created environments of teaching and learning that motivated students to excel” (What Black Schools Were Like, 2010, p. 56). Students at Douglass had inadequate supplies; however, their teachers were willing to pay for supplies out of pocket. Additionally, teachers and administration at Douglass were encouraging students to learn and make the most of themselves. Teachers encouraged and almost expected students to further their education past high school. This is similar to other small, community schools where many teachers and principals, “created environments of teaching and learning that motivated students to excel” (What Were Black Schools Like, 2010, p. 56). The literature states equipment, textbooks, and supplementary materials were often outdated and inferior to the supplies and materials that were provided at all-white schools (Edwards & Ryan, 2015). Douglass students report that they received hand me down books from the white schools in Cabell County. Athletic facilities as well as science labs were also lacking compared to their white counterparts.

Many white Americans believed that “black people did not need—or desire—much education” (Patterson, 2002, p. xix). Because of this misconception, very little funds or provisions were made for black education. Even though taxes were collected and designated to schools, the black schools were often left out of these allocations of funds resulting in lacking resources. The lack of equality between the white and black schools was apparent in facilities, supplies, and equipment. This theme surfaced specifically in Ridgeway and Harris’s interviews. Both alluded to the fact that they were encouraged to “use their hands” rather than pursue a higher education. Ironically, both Ridgeway and Harris furthered their education beyond high school. Hathaway (1997) highlights studies that show many graduates of segregated schools attaining college degrees. Siddle Walker (2006) reports segregated schools having good teachers, a consistent positive message of the importance of education within the community, strong parental support, and the uniformed view that education was a means to uplift the black community. Before interviews were conducted, much time was spent reading articles and yearbooks on DHS. Within that research DHS alumni claimed “Douglass got us ready for life” (Plantania, 1993, p. 22). The recollections of this particular group of my study solidified the idea that the teachers and administration encouraged their education and were involved. Hathaway (1997) emphasized “common factors of academic excellence such as strong leadership, discipline, parental support, community involvement and pursuit of academic excellence with high expectations for success” (p. 44-45). This is also true for Douglass. At one point in our conversation, Chappelle said: “So I think most kids at Douglass had a very good education, and I believe that probably about 75 -80% of students who graduated could have gone to college. It was just that good.” Ridgeway, Goines, and Harris all mentioned specific teachers at Douglass who pushed them to do their best.

It was not just the teachers and administrators who encouraged students at Douglass to do their best. Many of my interviewees mentioned that it was often the entire community as well that emphasized student success. Ridgeway, Harris, Johnson, and Williams discussed how the community also played a major role in not only their education, but also upbringing. For example, if a student got in trouble at school, there were consequences at home as well. Oftentimes, parents were aware of a child's behavior before he or she even made it home from school. Horsford (2009) points out that black schools had a "sense of community established through support, caring, and interdependency within and among African American students, parents, teachers, and community members" (p. 173). This support was not only at school, but also at home, church, and local businesses. The power of the entire community supporting a good education and sharing common beliefs about children and their education had a significant effect on students' success in education. As a result of this continued and linear support, students had an enjoyable experience at Douglass.

Stories Participants Will Never Forget

Throughout the interviews, stories emerged that were not necessarily related to Douglass High School, but were related to segregation. While discussing extracurricular events offered at Douglass, participants also discussed other activities they participated in that were not school related. These stories are shared because they shed light on the social, political, and cultural struggles the participants faced while growing up in segregated Huntington, WV.

The Theatre

Each participant also vividly recalled going to the theatre and having to sit in the hot balcony while the white patrons sat in regular seats. The old orphan theater was described as having two doors--one for the balcony which was a cut in the wall in the door for the black

patrons and a second regular door downstairs for the white patrons. Harris told stories of how he and his friends would sneak in when the attendant would turn around to take a ticket.

The Keith Albee is a theatre in downtown Huntington. Goines explained when he was growing up he could not go to the Keith Albee. He stated

As a matter of fact, couldn't go to the Keith Albee when I left there, so I've never been to the Keith Albee because I couldn't go when I was there. Couldn't go. When I come back to visit I'm usually too busy visiting with family or attending the reunion to go to the movie theatre.

It seems as though Goines has no desire to attend the Keith Albee.

Prejudice

During my conversation with Ridgeway she told me three stories that she said she would never forget. Well actually, she said, "Those are the kinds of experiences you never forget, and I am seventy-seven years old now." I would like to share those stories because I believe the stories shed light on this topic.

The first story is detailed in Chapter 4, but I will summarize it here. While in school at Douglass, a company came to school to assess students and determine what type of job they thought she would be best suited for. Ridgeway, who admits to taking her time when given a task to allow her adequate time to think something over, became nervous and could not complete the assessment in the allotted time. The results of the assessment determined that Ridgeway would be better suited at a job that required her to work with her hands such as piece work or an assembly line. Ridgeway became discouraged because the results made no mention of her academic abilities. While she did pursue a career that required use of her hands after high school, she was not satisfied. Ridgeway went on to college to become an English teacher where she

could use both her hands and her brain. Ironically, Ridgeway retired from teaching from Huntington High School—the school Douglass High School students attended when its doors closed.

The second experience Ridgeway shared involved an incident that happened at her summer job during college. Ridgeway stated:

I do remember the time when I first went away to college and came back home during the summer to work at the style shop. Now you're too young to remember the style shop, but it was down at the corner of 10th Street and 4th Ave. And I was working during a friend of mine's vacation. I had two years of college education behind me. The boss wanted me to go across to the arcade in the back to get her a cup of tea. It had to be fixed a certain way, and they knew how to fix it. She said be sure you go in the back door. I thought the back door? But that's what I had to do. White people could go in the front door, but black people had to go in the back door. So she told me to make sure to go in the back door. I will never forget that incident.

Ridgeway went on to explain how she was chosen to work at the courthouse assisting with voter registration because of her exceptional typing skills. Because she enjoyed that so well she decided the following year that she would try for a job at the courthouse that did not involve any voter registration typing. At the time, Ridgeway's mother was a domestic for a wealthy family. Ridgeway explained:

He was an attorney. I asked my mom, "Hey mom ask him if he can give me a reference letter maybe they that will help me get a job working at the courthouse over the summer." So she did. He wrote it. I went down and picked it up. He didn't seal it. He didn't seal the envelope. And you know how kids are. I had to go in and see what was in the envelope.

The letter said "To Whom It May Concern: Please give this poor little black girl a summer job." First of all, I didn't know I was poor! I was poor and didn't know it. We didn't have much always had what we needed. Poor little black girl? I tore it up. I put it in the first trash can I could find. I got on the bus and came home. That was beginning my first serious look at discrimination. Racism. Because to me if a white girl came out of high school to the court house to get a job over the summer why couldn't I with a college background go down there and get a summer job?

I asked Ridgeway if she tried to get a job at the courthouse without his reference. She said, "No. That was the end of that. I said ok. Times will get better. And I'll show him."

Earlier in the interview Ridgeway mentioned something her father told her when she was a little girl. He told her "because you are a little black girl you cannot be just as good. You have to be better than." And that is just what Ridgeway did. She did her best at all times. She did not settle for mediocre grades. She knew she just could not go out into the streets and get a job. She pushed her way through those obstacles with her intelligence, mannerisms, and optimism.

Harris attended both Douglass High and Huntington High. He went to Huntington High his junior year when Douglass closed its doors in 1961. At Douglass, Harris was one of 13 students in his class; when he arrived at Huntington High he was one of 469. Harris was academically inclined and very competitive. He, like Ridgeway, also had an experience at school where he was encouraged to "work with his hands." His experience occurred at Huntington High School. While this story is detailed in Chapter 4, I will summarize it here.

While at Huntington High School Harris had a good friend, a white friend, who he was very competitive with. The two were in a healthy competition with grades. One day their senior year his white friend asked Harris where he was going to go to college. Harris, who had been

working part time to save up to attend Marshall, proudly answered “Marshall.” His friend told him how he was going to Tufts on a scholarship. Harris, confused as to why he was not aware of scholarships, approached his counselor to inquire about scholarships. His counselor responded that “colored boys should go to the trade school and use your hands” and that it would not “cost you a penny.”

Like Ridgeway, Harris wanted to pursue college. Years later, Harris ran into his counselor one evening at the grocery store. She was shopping with a friend and immediately recognized Harris. She told her friend that Harris was “one of my best students” and that she “helped him all I could.” Even in his recollection of this experience, Harris did not seem disgruntled or mad at the counselor. He stated that she did what she thought was the best thing for him at that time. Harris went on to say that he never once thought his counselor was demeaning or anything like that. She believed that if an individual got a trade and the need was great that he or she would always have a job.

While Harris thoroughly enjoyed his time at Huntington High School, he prefers the smaller, community schools. In fact, Harris is currently raising his two grandsons who attend St. Joseph High School a small private school, because he wants to make sure they get the small school experience like he had. Harris said that was the main difference between DHS and HHS. He said, “It was just so personal at Douglass. Everybody personalized. You were important. At HHS you were seen as just another student.”

It appears that for both Harris’s counselor and for the company that came to Douglass to administer the dexterity tests had the best of intentions in mind for African American students; however, it is not what the students wanted. It is almost as though the students’ voices were never heard.

Integration

Interviewees had mixed feelings about integration. Johnson, for example, remembered that:

It was 1954 that they passed the decision to integrate the schools, and I graduated in 1959 so it was that five-year period when things were changing. There was so much going on. The whole civil rights movement was going on. You were reading about it all the time and hearing about it all the time. And I think to us it was exciting. To the students it was exciting because it sounded like a new day and a new way. Things were going to be changing. Not that we knew that much about what was going to be changing.

Because Johnson integrated in high school, her transition to Marshall was a fairly smooth one. She noted that her fellow classmates who graduated from Douglass then attended Marshall “had to face that culture shock that came with coming with the integrated environment” in college while she had that experience in high school. Johnson noted that it made college easier for her but high school was more difficult. Williams, who graduated from Douglass, did not attend an integrated school until she entered Marshall University. Her experience at Marshall was not a positive one. She mentioned coming home and crying in the evenings because of her experience at Marshall. Her mother would not let her transfer schools because she had a scholarship at Marshall. Williams did note that it “improved in time.” Harris said, “... integration is not a bad thing, but it certainly wasn’t the best thing that ever happened to us.” Goines, growing up in white Barboursville, did not have issues adjusting to integration. In fact, Goines said “the whites that I had in contact with at Marshall they had a problem adjusting.”

While all participants spoke very highly of Douglass, Ridgeway and Harris spoke at length about the lessons they received from their parents at home. Ridgeway credits her intelligence, mannerisms, and determination “...from home. That didn’t come from school. That

came from home. My father always said get all the education you can get because it's something no one can ever take away. And that's what I've always told myself."

Harris received lessons on how to behave from his parents when traveling over the summer. His dad worked for the railroad, and as a result he and his family would travel by train for free. He had family in Georgia, so Harris spent many summers traveling and learning how to behave. He remembers his dad telling him the following:

Like whatever you do, do not go into the white section. Do not drink from the white water fountain. Don't even go in the colored section. Stay outside and wait on your aunt and uncle to pick you up. Make sure you are on the sidewalk. If a white person, I don't care how old they are, you don't look them in the eye. You get off the sidewalk and let them pass. So you don't get in trouble. It was survival. I didn't know at the time that those were crazy rules.

Between his experiences traveling and playing little league baseball with whites and blacks alike when he was younger, Harris recalls never seeing major problems. He said, "I think I think primarily we didn't have problems in Huntington that were evident across the country. Because one there wasn't a lot of us. And I also think we are pretty progressive people here that made a difference like Dr. Smith at Marshall."

Not only did integration affect schools, but it also affected businesses. Black establishments in Huntington disappeared. The barber shop, the eateries, the grocery stores, the shoe repair places, they all disappeared. Harris mentioned how he could not wait to get old enough to go to The Bisons which was a coat and tie club on 8th Avenue and 16th Street. By the time Harris was old enough to go the establishment had closed because of integration.

Summary and Conclusions

Douglass High School, named for the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, was built in 1924 and served for many years as a major academic, social, and cultural resource of African American families in Huntington, WV. The school fielded a band, varsity and junior varsity athletic teams, choirs, and dramatic activities. Douglass closed its doors after 37 years after the integration of public schools in West Virginia in 1961. Preliminary research on Douglass High School suggests that many students considered the school to be "...more than a school. It was hub of the black community" (Plantania, 1993, p. 21) and that "Douglass got us ready for life" (Plantania, 1993, p. 22). When Douglass closed its doors, many feared the black community would lose its direct attachment and involvement with their children's education. It is not that African Americans were opposed to desegregation; most just hoped integration could come with the same closeness and sense of community. The school as well as the churches were considered "the glue that held the black community together" (Plantania, 1993, p. 28).

The purpose of this study is to focus on the experience of Douglass High School's alumni to gain a better understanding of this historical moment in United States education: specifically in regards to quality of education, sense of community within the school, and the role of teachers and administrative leadership. While the literature on African American segregated education in public K-12 schools is extensive, the arguments and findings are mixed. The purpose of this study is to determine where Douglass falls in regards to the existent literature. Additionally, the study examines the importance of Douglass High School's oral history to contemporary education, specifically how it relates to issues of contemporary race relations.

This study draws from empirical phenomenology, meaning that the procedures consist of identifying a "phenomenon to study, bracketing out one's experiences, and collecting data from

several persons who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). In addition to archival and other research, six individuals who attended Douglass were interviewed to gain a better understanding on the school, and to address the six research questions introduced and briefly summarized at the beginning of this chapter.

Implications

In consideration of the emerging themes and related findings of this study, the following recommendations for further research on small, community and/or segregated schools come to mind:

1. Comparing the DHS student experience to other black schools in the state and in Appalachia. It would be interesting to determine how DHS compared to other segregated schools.
2. Comparing student success such as GPA, percentage of college acceptance, percentage of college completion, careers post high school, etc., at DHS to student success at HHS (Huntington High School) and HEHS (Huntington East High School). The particular participants from this study claimed that the small, close-knit community aided in their academic success. The consolidated high schools had well over a thousand students enrolled. Closely examining student success between DHS and the integrated schools would help researchers determine if students' academic success correlated with school size.
3. Comparing the level of success such as high paying jobs, number of jobs post high school, early retirement, etc., in life between students at DHS and students at HHS and HEHS. The particular participants from this study all had academic success. All six participants furthered their education after high school; five participants received

Master's degrees and one received a Ph.D. Examining the level of success of students from HHS and HEHS could provide insight on the relationship between student success after school and school size.

4. Comparing the overall number of black schools in West Virginia to the number of black schools in other Appalachian areas to determine how West Virginia fared in offering an equal education to black students. The participants in this particular study thought very highly of DHS. Everything from academics to sports to extracurricular events aided in a well-rounded education. It would be interesting to note the similarities and differences between DHS and other black schools in other Appalachian areas.

Summary, Recommendations, and Final Reflections

One cannot, of course, generalize the experiences of individuals into a single homogenized experience. Yet the experiences and perceptions discussed by these six particular participants speaks to the experiences of other individuals who have attended a segregated school. Edwards and Ryan (2015) discussed at length the value and importance of African American students receiving an education. Great teachers help students unlock their potential and develop the habits of mind that will serve them for a lifetime. This was the mindset students received at Douglass. Ridgeway stressed this at the end of our interview. She said, “my father always said get all the education you can get because it’s something no one can ever take away. And that’s what I’ve always told myself.”

These stories are important to share because they allow us to understand the experiences of people who lived through a critically important educational transition in our country’s past. Specifically, these stories of Douglass High School allow individuals to share their experiences of living in segregated Huntington, WV and attending a segregated school. Such memories shed

light on how these participants' lives were shaped as a result of attending a segregated school. Not only do these stories help illuminate the individuals' experience, but also add to the body of research on this particular historical period. These stories are important to share so that the participants' voices are heard and preserved. To date, no other oral histories have been documented on Douglass High School. Individuals who attended Douglass are in their seventies and eighties; time is running out on recording their stories. This study adds to the genre of largely untold stories of small, single community, black, segregated, and now obsolete high schools that operated in West Virginia. Other studies have focused on large schools, urban schools, prominent schools, and/or other schools in Southern states.

The focus of this study is on a smaller school located in Huntington, WV. Four themes emerged from this study that can guide future research in this area. These themes include a sense of community and family, secondary resources, strong teacher and principal involvement, and the love of Douglass could guide research to closely examine segregation in today's schools. Now as many of America's schools mirror the segregated schools of yesterday, it is becoming even more important that educational researchers fully understand the successes and failures in those segregated settings. As Newsome Stallings (2008) points out, schools today face "various forms of segregation, declining resources, diminished enrollments and population bases, and challenges in curricular coverage" (p. 11). Insights gained in this study may be used to aid in the creation of productive academic environments. More importantly, the identification of other positive factors that can exist in such settings, such as the implementation of smaller, community schools, may be beneficial in all areas of education.

The findings in this particular study add to the limited body of research on the topic of African American segregated education in K-12 schools, specifically those schools in West

Virginia. This study also expands on the biographical stories that have been shared by other African Americans who have attended segregated K-12 schools.

Despite the lack of an “equal” education at DHS, the particular participants in this study were able to flourish, thrive, and succeed in the world outside of DHS. Having encouraging and supporting teachers supersedes any new textbook, bigger gym, or elaborate laboratory. Educators today who work in districts lacking school amenities may be quick to blame not having the latest technology to poor student achievement and/or behaviors. However, as this study has demonstrated, it is not the building, or even the supplies, that educates students. It is the teacher. According to Fisher, Frey and Hattie (2016), the number one indicator for student success is having a good teacher. Having high quality teachers who are passionate about their job is what is needed to push students to become the best.

Educators today can also consider deconsolidating districts. In community schools like DHS, the entire community is responsible for student success. Like David Harris stated, “Oftentimes I would come home and I knew there was real trouble if one of my teachers was sitting in my living room. Drinking my coffee. Talking to my parents. And sometimes the principal would be there, too.” Additionally, the teachers and parents ran in the same social circles. Sylvia Ridgeway said, “my second grade teacher was also my Sunday School teacher. They took advantage of the same circles. And everybody knew everybody.” Building and maintaining these relationships served as the glue that held the close-knit community together.

The six individuals interviewed shared their stories, experiences, and perceptions of attending Douglass High School, a segregated K-12 school in Huntington, WV. Their responses indicate that positive experiences were had at Douglass and that the transition to integration was rocky.

All of the participants were extremely gracious with their time, and with sharing their stories. In fact, I think it is safe to say that all six participants were excited to be heard. Working through this project has given me a greater perspective of their individual and collective experience, as well as the school's history. This research has truly given me a deeper understanding of segregation. As Harris put it, "Integration was not a bad thing. But it certainly wasn't the best thing that ever happened to us."

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APPENDIX A: Office of Research Integrity Approval Letter



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Office of Research Integrity

Institutional Review Board One John Marshall Drive Huntington, WV 25755

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205 IRB2 #00003206

January 29, 2017

Eric Lassiter, Ph.D. Graduate Humanities Program

RE: IRBNet ID# 1002108-1 At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2
(Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Lassiter:

In accordance with 45CFR46.110(a)(7), the above study and informed consent were granted Expedited approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire January 29, 2018. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Lee Ann (Hvizdak) Porter.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/ Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Protocol Title:

Expiration Date: Site Location: Submission Type: Review Type:

[1002108-1] Douglass High School

January 29, 2018 MUGC New Project APPROVED Expedited Review

- 1 - Generated on IRBNet

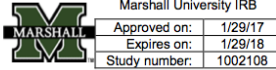
APPENDIX B: Consent

Page 1 of 3

Informed Consent to Participate in an Oral History

Douglass High School

Lee Ann Hvizdak Porter, EdD candidate, Co-Investigator
L. Eric Lassiter, Ph.D., Principal Investigator (Dissertation Chair)



Introduction

You are invited to be in an oral history of Douglas High School as part of a dissertation oral history research project being carried out by Lee Ann Hvizdak Porter. Oral histories are designed to gather historical information that may help other people in the future. You may or may not receive any benefit from being part of the oral history. Your participation is voluntary. Please take your time to make your decision, and ask your interviewer to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

Why Is This Oral History Being Done?

The purpose of this oral history is to gain perspectives from those individuals who attended Douglass High School. Specifically, this oral history will examine how the experience of attending a segregated school affected the student and how DHS prepared its students for the world outside of the school. Additionally, this oral history is being done to determine the involvement of teachers and administrators in the success of DHS students and graduates. Finally, this oral history will determine to what extent the experience of DHS relates to other small, community schools. It is believed this oral history will contribute to the information of small, segregated community schools, create awareness for segregation, and open the dialogue among others about current segregation in education.

How Many People Will Take Part In The Oral History?

About 6-10 people will take part in this oral history.

What Is Involved In This Oral History?

You will participate in one to two interviews with the co-investigator. Interviews will be held either in person or via telephone. You will be provided copies of all signed documents. The co-investigator will use telephone and/or e-mail for all communications, reminders, and scheduling of interviews; the co-investigator will provide her e-mail and cell phone number to participants. Should your interview be digitally recorded, you may request a recorded copy of your interview at any time.

How Long Will You Be In Oral History?

You will be in the oral history for about twelve weeks during the Spring and Summer months of 2017.

You can decide to stop participating at any time. If you decide to stop participating in this oral history please notify the co-investigator, Lee Ann Porter, as soon as possible.

Participant's Initials _____

Also, please note that oral history co-investigator may stop you from taking part in the research at any time if he/she believes it is in your best interest; or if you do not follow the research rules; or if the research is stopped.

What Are The Risks?

There may be these risks:

- There may be a risk to your reputation if you disclose something that may be detrimental to you. You may ask the interviewer at any time to erase or remove details from your recorded interview should you decide that information disclosed may be of potential harm to you.

There may also be other side effects that we cannot predict. You should tell the researchers if any of these risks bother or worry you. You have the right to withdraw your oral history interview from the overall collection should you choose to do so.

Are There Benefits To Taking Part In the Oral History?

If you agree to take part in this oral history, there may or may not be direct benefit to you. We hope the information learned from this oral history will benefit other people in the future. The findings in this oral history will contribute to the body of information on small, community segregated schools in West Virginia.

What About Confidentiality?

As this is an oral history, the oral history methods carried out in this dissertation will follow best practices as outlined by the Oral History Association's "Principles and Best Practices for Oral History" (<http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>), which states "it is the practice in oral history for narrators to be identified by name." Per these guidelines, participants will have the option to be recognized for their contributions to the larger collection (see signatures below). Should you choose not to be recognized for your contribution, we will do our best to make sure that your personal information is kept confidential. However, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Federal law says we must keep your study records private. Nevertheless, under unforeseen and rare circumstances, we may be required by law to allow certain agencies to view your records. Those agencies would include the Marshall University IRB, Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the federal Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP). This is to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.

How will you be identified in the Oral History?

You will be identified in the oral history by your first name only.

What Are The Costs Of Taking Part In This Oral History?

There are no costs to you for taking part in this oral history. All costs, including any tests, supplies and procedures related directly to the oral history, will be paid for by the oral history project staff.

Participant's Initials _____

Will You Be Paid For Participating?

All participants who complete the oral history will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card.

What Are Your Rights As A Research Study Participant?

Taking part in this oral history is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or you may leave the oral history collection at any time. Refusing to participate or leaving the oral history will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide to stop participating in the oral history we encourage you to talk to the investigators or study staff first.

Whom Do You Call If You Have Questions Or Problems?

For questions about the oral history or in the event of a research-related injury, contact the oral history principal investigator and doctoral dissertation chair for Lee Ann Hvizdak Porter, Dr. L. Eric Lassiter at (304) 746-1923. You should also call the investigator if you have a concern or complaint about the research.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Marshall University IRB#2 Chairman Dr. Christopher LeGrow or ORI at (304) 696-4303. You may also call this number if:

- o You have concerns or complaints about the research.
- o The research staff cannot be reached.
- o You want to talk to someone other than the research staff.

You will be given a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

SIGNATURES

You agree to take part in this oral history and confirm that you are 18 years of age or older. You have had a chance to ask questions about being in this oral history and have had those questions answered. By signing this consent form you are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled.

Participant Name (Printed)

Participant Signature

Date

I would like to be recognized for my contribution to this oral history and be identified by name: _____
Initial

Person Obtaining Consent (Printed)

Person Obtaining Consent Signature

Date

Participant's Initials _____

APPENDIX C: Resume

Lee Ann Hvizdak Porter



11 Prince George Court □ Barboursville, WV 25504 □ Phone: (304) 374-6657 □ E-Mail: lhvizdak@k12.wv.us

Objective

Dedicated, nationally certified secondary education teacher eager to obtain administrative position. Self-directed and enthusiastic. Possesses outstanding communication skills; presents information in a variety of ways. Active team member who effectively collaborates with all levels of staff members and establishes quality relationships with students and colleagues.

Experience

- Huntington High School 7/2014-current
Assistant Principal. Facilitates communication between personnel, students and parents. Implement policies and procedures. Intervenes in occurrences of inappropriate behavior.
- Huntington East Middle School 7/2013-7/2014
Sixth grade Special Education teacher and Department Chair. Worked with general education as well as special education students within a mainstreamed, inclusive classroom.
- Enslow Middle School 6/2010-7/2013
Seventh grade Language Arts teacher. Integrated technology into curriculum supplementing class lectures and developing students' word processing and researching skills.
- Brooke High School 8/2007-5/2010
English 9 and 11 teacher. Produced student learning through mastery of subject material by utilizing valid teaching techniques to achieve curriculum goals within the framework of the school's philosophy.
- Morgantown High School 8/2006-8/2007
Special education teacher. Modeled, trained, and consulted teachers on modifications and accommodations to instruction and materials ensuring the diverse needs of every student were successfully realized.

Education

- Marshall University Fall 2011-December 2017
Doctor of Education (December 2017)
Masters of Arts in Leadership Studies (Summer 2014)
Educational Specialist (Fall 2014)
- West Virginia University Spring 2007-Summer 2008
Masters of Arts in Reading (K-Adult).
- West Liberty University Fall 2002-Spring 2006
Bachelors of Arts in English Education (5-Adult), multi-categorical special education (MI/LD/BD) and Autism.

Skills

Outgoing and self-directed. Superb time management skills. Goal oriented and good at multitasking. Worked as a tutor for both community students and medical students at the HELP Center at Marshall University.

Accomplishments/Professional Trainings and Workshops

PLA (2014-2015)
Cabell County Leadership Series (2014, 2015, 2016)
AMLE (2014)
ASCD (2014)
National Conference on Girl Bullying and Relational Aggression (2014)
Presented at International Conference on College Teaching and Learning (2013)
Presented at International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (2014)
Presented at the WV State Technology Conference (2013)
Cabell County Administrator Apprenticeship Program (2013)
National Board Certified Teacher (2011)
Holocaust Workshop Conference (2012)
IPI Data Collector (2012)
Leadership Academy (2012)
Teacher Institute (2012)
Candidate Support Person for NBCT candidates (2012)
Bartol Conference (2012)
Model Schools Conference (2011) (2013)
Differentiated Instruction (2011)
CPI/Passive Restraint (2011)
Managing Anti-Social Behavior (2011)
Online IEP (2011) (2013)
Organizational Health (2011)
Gold Seal Lessons (2011)
Marine Corps Educator Workshop (2010)
Teaching with Primary Sources (2010)
CPR/First Aid (2010)
School Culture (2010)
Learning Focus (2010)
Professional Learning Communities Seminar (2009)
Community College Teacher Expo (2009)
Chaperone with People to People to Europe (2007)