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## First Person Perspectives Of The Impact Of Segregation And The Civil Rights Movement On Southern White Racism

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FIRST PERSON PERSPECTIVES OF THE IMPACT OF SEGREGATION AND THE  
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ON SOUTHERN WHITE RACISM

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of History  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## FOREWORD

I recall the impact of growing up in a neighborhood of one predominant skin color. Without a significant presence of non-White persons to talk to or play with as a youth, I remember when I got older feeling ignorant about different so-called races, particularly African American. I know that such conditions influenced the ways I initially considered race. For the first fifteen years of my childhood the only Black people I saw in real life were primarily gardeners, janitors, waiters, housemaids, nurses assistants, or some other type of service employee hired to work in my affluent town of Boca Raton, Florida. Most consequential was the fact that only on rare occasions did I have a peer who was African American or some other so-called ethnic minority such as Latino or Asian American. My limited exposure made me naïve about minority cultures, and I think such conditions brought on certain prejudices that I admittedly still struggle with today.

I believe many people's racial prejudices results from growing up without diversity. This can be illustrated in viewing the layout of American communities and the fact that so many different racial groups are often geographically separated by no more than a few dozen miles of highways and local roads, as in the case of Boca Ration, a predominantly White city that borders with the city of Delray Beach, which is a town made up mostly of lower income African American and Latino citizens.

Unfortunately, where I grew up, seemingly no one from my community or in Delray made any self-motivated effort to travel into each other's towns and befriend one another. And I know for a fact that my parents and the parents of most of my friends during our youth would discourage us from going into those neighborhoods. In part our parents were fearful of their children spending time in poorer areas known to have more crime activities than Boca, but I cannot help to consider that there also was an element of

prejudice on everybody's behalf as a result from those social barriers left over from the segregation era. Years later I learned that many African American parents and children were apprehensive toward entering our town on account of a stereotype that they would be harassed by White police officers. The police were stereotyped as racists that pulled over Black drivers without reason other than a presumption that they did not belong in the White neighborhoods.

Over two generations had passed since the Federal and local governments instituted desegregation policies in southern communities, but in Boca Raton and Delray, there still existed an element of ignorance between the White and Black communities based largely on limited exposures to each other's neighborhoods.

The local government stepped in however when I arrived at high school in 1994. The county mandated a busing program that shipped African American and Latino children from the nearby town of Delray Beach to one of three high schools each situated in the affluent sections of Boca Raton, Florida. Delray has its wealthy areas as well. Yet the Delray kids sent to Boca came from the poorest regions of the city. I never needed to ask why such a program was instituted. I always understood it as a public effort to integrate children from different racial backgrounds as a response to the social gaps established from living in neighborhoods far and separate from each another.

Even as a high school freshman I recognized the program as a noble concept, but I also realized the unfair scenario of obligating low income African American students to wake up hours earlier than White children from Boca and board buses that transferred them forty five minutes across two towns in order to share in the integration experience.

After getting over the culture shock brought on by fifteen years of racial and social class isolation, I became friends with many of the Delray students. As a friendly and athletic student my primary avenue of socialization was sports activities. A majority

of the friends I made came from the physical education classes I took or the soccer and football teams I played on. I was also an honor student, which meant that within four years of school there was one student from Delray in an honors class with me, and I actually knew him first from the football team. There were regular level classes I took as well that naturally had a greater mix of students from different color groups. In each case though I recall in these classes and sports teams an initial barrier set up between each group where, for example, the African American and White students sat apart from each other during the first weeks. Yet by the end of my freshman year, and with each year that passed, there was a greater sense of fraternization between the Boca students and the Delray students.

At the graduation ceremony I remember looking around the diversified auditorium and seeing all the different color friends I made. At that point I realized the county's integration experiment worked to an extreme benefit for everyone at my school. We all probably would have never known one another had there been no mandate for busing. Moreover, we all would not have reduced our habitual prejudices that I personally recall so many of us expressed before and during our first year of high school.

Since that experience I have been fascinated with the concept of bridging people's naïve thoughts toward racial identification with true-rational considerations of the so-called color groups. To me, true understanding of racial awareness is that the color of one's skin is meaningless in comparison to more real social factors such as where a person grew up and how much exposure or realistic understanding he or she has for other color groups. Unfortunately many Americans continue to believe myths related to racial stereotypes. I think this results from a lack of social experiences and empathy with different racial groups. Significant lessons about racial awareness can be attained through an incorporation of social and oral studies in American history classrooms that revolve

more around controversial topics such as segregation and cultural southern prejudice, which I believe have not been fully amplified in traditional American history curricula.

A significant part of my project includes interviews with White southerners from the Civil Rights Era who grew up during segregation and struggled with prejudices in a different way than African Americans. In not ever learning much from my high school and college history classes about the experiences of prejudiced White southerners, I was curious about the southern White reactions to reforms that aimed to change southern culture. As a student it was always implied to me that during segregation White southern citizens were at a total advantage over African Americans and other racial minorities. What I learned through my project though was that no southerner alive during segregation was at an advantage and that the case studies I interviewed, in spite of living more privileged lives than their Black contemporaries, still suffered from segregation.

I talked with several southern White citizens and in my thesis provide two chapters about two of the most interesting case studies I collected. Greg Garrison, a high school science teacher from Sanford, Florida, and Warren Fox, a pastor from Orlando, Florida both grew up during segregation and witnessed the Civil Rights Movement change the rigid race policies that once dictated many aspects of their community lives. In the process of learning from these individuals, I discovered that White southern children from the segregation era were victimized by a system of laws that encouraged many of them to believe in prejudiced ideologies and in turn behave as racists.

The other part of my study on social issues related to southern prejudice and racism comes from extensive research on academic works that focus on cultural elements of southern history with particular focus on the White community. Although few of these sources include oral testimonies from regular southern White citizens alive during

segregation, like Garrison or Fox, I found the authors' approach toward the history of race issues fascinating and useful if incorporated in the general history classrooms.

Initially I was inspired by two works that serve as strong social histories related to White racism in American history. Winthrop D. Jordan's *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (1968) discusses the attitudes of White men toward Black people during the first two centuries of European and African settlement before and at the beginning of the formation of the United States. Jordan analyzes the double standard many White individuals struggled with when they considered the status of African Americans. Christian beliefs prompted slave owners to treat African Americans as human souls entitled to certain rights, while at the same time, mistreat the same people as "corporeal creatures" stigmatized as different from White men. The other work comes from David B. Davis who wrote *Slavery and Human Progress* (1984). Davis' book serves as a penetrating survey of slavery and its progressive impact on societies that range from antiquity to the United States. He shows that slavery, once accepted as a form of human progress, influenced the advancement of the Western world, and that not only until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did certain members of society begin to view the institution as peculiar and morally controversial. He focuses on American slavery's impact on race issues both before and after emancipation and shows the long reaching effects of the American slave system on later race issues in the United States. These works served me as examples of the types of academic social works I want to see incorporated in general level American history classrooms alongside an inclusion of oral testimonies collected among southern White citizens victimized by the segregation system.

As an educator I see the classroom as the prime arena for reshaping students' understanding about race issues in American history. Moreover, I believe the current

problem with different racial groups expressing apprehension to integrate with one another's community can be quelled in the history class provided teachers show more social and oral histories that revolve around all perspectives of the characters once involved in historical scenarios related to racism, prejudice, and integration.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s profoundly changed the lives of many young southern White citizens. Southern racism was a product of traditional indoctrination common in the culture of the Old South. During the generations after slavery to the Civil Rights Era, vulnerable White children were typically exposed to racist and prejudiced influences from families, fellow citizens, education, popular culture, and segregation laws established within their communities. The Civil Rights Movement brought forth elaborate legal reforms that broke segregation and enabled integration programs to take place at schools and other public institutions, which ultimately expanded many southerners' cultural awareness of different racial groups.

Many accounts on the Civil Rights Movement and its relation to southern White racism are generally confined to narrow descriptions that emphasize extreme resistance measures, such as violence or civil disobedience acted out from members of the White community. Many students who do not study American history beyond the high school or college survey course levels unfortunately learn a limited history about White racism and its relation to the Civil Rights Movement. The sources commonly used in these courses include textbooks, films, and documentaries. Based in part by time and budget constraints, oral histories about White racism are often not incorporated in the classroom curricula. The available sources explain the history of White racism to a limited degree and the fact that it contributed to a mobilization effort to gain civil rights protection for racial minorities. However, they leave out other accounts about White racism relative to the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Many southern White children from this time grew up around prejudiced influences and witnessed blatant racist treatment of African Americans. During their upbringing many of these southern citizens developed solid beliefs in White supremacy and justifiable racial prejudice. Oral testimonies told by them

that focus on their racism reveal social, economic, and political details which standard sources do not provide. Their stories demonstrate learned factors commonly found in racism and show how contemporary circumstances, such as living with segregation every day, can impact behaviors.

Many common social factors that relate to understanding the roots of southern White racism are often not provided in sources used in most American history courses. Such works leave out a significant percentage of stories from regular White people from the South, and in particular many young individuals, who throughout the Civil Rights Era showed passive contempt, i.e., remaining silent on issues of overt discrimination and racism, toward African Americans as a result of cultural indoctrination. These White individuals' resistances and their youth illustrate a different aspect of prejudice in contrast to the traditional reports on the topic that highlight hate crimes and more stubborn forms of racism. Passivity expressed by these southern White citizens enabled them to reform their prejudices through the encouragement of the Civil Rights Movement. The impact of the era on their thinking offers an important lens that illustrates Civil Rights Movement and southern segregation history. Yet, generally, such perceptions are ignored in many historical works.

This thesis attempts to bring out the social and evolutionary elements of White racism in the twentieth century South and the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on White prejudiced behaviors once traditionally found in southern culture that date back to the end of the Civil War and the birth of segregation.

In reference to the use of capitalization of certain words I have placed capitals on terms that refer to periods of time such as the Civil Rights Era or events like the Civil Rights Movement. Additionally, groups of people identified with a racial group received recognition with a capital letter.

Some of the sources I used from previous eras do not apply capitalization with specific color group terms such as “black” or “white,” and I have left them as they are printed in their works. As I explain the evolution of racism and prejudice in the first half of the twentieth century, I also want to illustrate the evolution of racial labeling from the past three decades. For example, textbooks from the early 1990s describe African Americans and Caucasians as “black” and “white.” However, texts from the twenty-first century label these groups as either “African Americans” or “White.” The purpose of this is to show that many American historians and authors continue to evolve their understanding of racial identification.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Several individuals dedicated much of their time to me in writing this thesis. I first want to thank my professor, thesis advisor, and academic mentor Dr. Vibert White, who inspired me to write on this subject after taking his oral history course in 2004. His guidance pointed me in certain directions of segregation and Civil Rights Movement history that I had not before considered. Without his help I would not have used certain strategies of approach to this project that I believe solidified my position. Equally significant to his advice, Dr. White was willing to go out of his way to meet with me on weekends, have dinners with me, and discuss issues about the thesis whenever I called him for aid. He is a strong teacher and the University of Central Florida is fortunate to have him on its faculty.

I also want to acknowledge the help of Dr. Ezekiel Walker, my African history professor, who at the University of Central Florida is considered the leading scholar on historical race issues. His encouragement contributed to a successful completion of my degree and gave me enthusiasm to expand this work through additional research and more case studies.

Lastly, I would like to thank my father, Barry Dockswell and my best friend and colleague, B.E. Denton for their efforts to edit my drafts, and suggest new ideas toward the approach of my position. Neither of them were expected or paid to help me, but their interests in advancing my career and education truly enabled me to get through certain rough spots during the writing process. These two individuals are my closest confidants and I aim to return the favor by helping them in any way I can with their projects.

I appreciate the efforts from all of these people. I will never forget what each of them did for me in relation to putting this thesis together. For that I am eternally grateful, thank you.

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## INTRODUCTION

Southern White children from the Civil Rights Era<sup>1</sup> experienced challenging adjustments to the Federal desegregation laws imposed on the South starting in 1954 with the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Discomforts toward integration existed among many of these individuals, and their testimonies reveal what challenges they faced to adjust to new integrated environments. Many historical works and texts on the Civil Rights Movement fail to explore how these people dealt with government reforms and what personal struggles they overcame in order to help them identify with today's southern society that represents new cultural values vis-à-vis integration programs such as the busing projects in north Florida schools during the 1970s. Testimonies from southern Whites of this era contribute to a more complete history of the Civil Rights Movement and provide explanations for the beginning of the end of overt racism in the South as influenced previously through segregation.

History educators and their curricula contribute to shaping students' impressions of American social interactions and race relations. Whatever sources these instructors use to teach their students about racial issues in history leave lasting impressions that contribute to the way contemporary Americans of different skin colors look at one another. Mainstream education on historical race issues, such as ethnic and cultural studies, comes from various sources such as films, television, and books, and of course monographs. These educational organs can be critiqued for the manner in which they have or have not provided a total provision of information about race issues that

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<sup>1</sup> The Civil Rights Era refers to a specific time in American history (1954-1974) when ethnic minority groups struggled to achieve civil rights reforms kept from them as a result of segregation laws applied primarily in the South after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Desegregation laws were introduced throughout this period in an effort to integrate different races with one another in public institutions such as schools, libraries, etc.

surrounded certain historical scenarios such as the Civil Rights Litigation Movement (1936-1954) and the modern Civil Rights Movement (1954-1974).<sup>2</sup> The available sources for the classroom reflect how students will perceive race throughout their everyday lives.

A substantial amount of information that covers the perspectives of racists, i.e., individuals and groups who used extra-legal and legal means to negate Black progression, from the past is not being utilized in American history curricula, thus leaving a void in the education of American history students. As a result, Americans of different ethnic and racial groups remain naive concerning one another's culture. Nowhere is this illustrated more than in the average American community that generally consists of residents of one predominant skin color. A significant reason for these one-color communities points to the imbalance of wealth distribution between different ethnic groups, as is the case of African Americans and Whites. Yet an equally pressing issue that roots from the educational system, is the misleading notion, felt in both communities, that there are real differences between people of different skin shades, indeed we only have to look at the racial divide in cities like Orlando, Miami, and Jacksonville where Black and White boundaries are drawn. Such beliefs in superficial differences between the so-called races arise from manners in which textbooks and curricula ignore certain aspects of historical American race issues.

Little information on the balance or extreme degrees of the history of White racism is offered in the classroom or most American history textbooks. Beyond racist activities highlighted by violence, segregation laws, etc., the roots of American prejudice against African Americans are hardly recognized in many instructors' curricula. Many students graduate high schools and colleges without gaining real insight on why racism

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<sup>2</sup> The Modern Civil Rights Movement began with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and followed with a series of civil rights reforms in the South protected by the Federal government and court system.

and prejudice were popular ideals within large portions of the southern White community before and during the Civil Rights Movement.

Most sources on the Civil Rights Movement focus on the plight of African Americans, those people who worked to improve the status of minorities, and briefly outline some tendencies of White racism without going into detail about the extent of racism in American culture. American history texts teach students that racial tensions existed between Black and White people immediately following the United States government's outlawing of slavery after the Civil War (1861-1865). Students learn that African Americans continued to struggle legally as second-class citizens from this period through the Civil Rights Movement. Within its micro-culture, a significant percentage of the southern White community encouraged and indoctrinated racism to children throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Segregation policies reinforced prejudiced notions by preventing integration between southern White and Black citizens. Historical works on the Civil Rights Movement universally discuss the unhurried efforts made by the Federal and state governments to eliminate segregation. Segregation remained intact through lobbied efforts from many racist southern White politicians. For example, the White Primary of Texas that paralyzed the African American vote when it required Blacks to join a political club in which they were denied entry. Other members of the White community threatened African American voters with violence as a means to block Black southerners from participating in elections. Racist efforts were further reinforced by terrorist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, which remained a consistent influential status in both northern and southern communities during the early and middle twentieth century. In response, the African American community organized various forms of protests that worked to gain social mobility and equal legal status with Whites in the later half of the 1900s. In relation to the historical impact of White racism,

and the perspectives of prejudiced White citizens and their connection to the Civil Rights Era, American students learn little more than this brief synopsis of the Civil Rights Movement and the history of United States race relations between the Black and White communities.

There is, however, another side to the Civil Rights Era that most historians and manuscripts rarely disclose to American students. Many young southern Whites, between kindergarten to high school ages, from the 1950s-1970s struggled with desegregation, but overcame the learned racist tendencies of Old South<sup>3</sup> culture and eventually contributed to a more socially egalitarian South that utilized integration in the post-Civil Rights Era as a means to break common racist attitudes. Their reforms placed a progressive spin on a newer culture, identified with the New South, which brought forth a popular notion that considered racism unethical. Testimonies from southern Whites from the Civil Rights Era are significant in understanding the whole Civil Rights Movement and its impact on the South and the United States. Most sources used in American history classrooms ignore the personal insights from this segment of the population. As a result, their audiences are kept from understanding a total history of the Civil Rights Movement.

In the classroom, students use texts and certain academic works that teach about the social drawbacks of racism, but offer little insight on southern White racism from the perspectives of racists and ex-racists. Their information contributes to a more rounded history of the era. Additionally, most of these sources do not completely cover the social and circumstantial backgrounds of racism and do not specifically explain how so many southern Whites developed racial prejudices through family and community influences

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<sup>3</sup> The “Old South” is a term many southern Whites used after the Civil War (1861-1865) and into the twentieth century to represent the memories of southern prosperity and social order that relied in part on slavery for economic mobility. “Old South culture” refers in part to the racial prejudices common within the southern White community before and during the Civil Rights Movement.

based on an evolutionary process of cultural molding through prejudiced rhetoric, education, popular culture classics, segregation, family pressures, etc. This information is significant in understanding the rise and devolution of popular racism in the South and the current status of American race relations. Without these insights, students may not gain a full explanation for White racism or the tendencies of contemporary racism in the United States, thus prompting many of them to contemplate their own ideas without any professional direction. In the process, the texts and certain other sources that ignore explanations from participants of racism encourage students to have contempt for southern White racists without empathizing with them or understanding their cultural resistance to integration.

This thesis attempts to explore the unreported attitudes expressed by southern White children from north Florida during the Civil Rights Era between 1960-1974, where the last southern schools were desegregated by the United States government and courts. A directed review of texts used in American high schools and universities will show how the teaching of race and racism in American history has evolved and where information about racism in history continues to be lacking in classroom curricula. Additional works on this period explain measures in which the study of White racism and historical race relations in the history classroom are incomplete. Following the review will be a chapter detailing the evolution of racism in the twentieth century South, how southern White citizens, and in particular children, learned to develop prejudiced habits via their southern culture. In the process, they witnessed other people's racist behaviors and routinely experienced segregation, which in turn solidified their own racist attitudes. The chapter will serve as an example of southern White racist history that could be utilized in textbooks and classrooms for high school and college students. The thesis will conclude with an interpretation of oral testimonies from southern White adolescents from north

Florida. These oral histories contribute to the understanding of racism in the South and explain the impact of civil rights reforms on their lives. Ultimately, these testimonies will illustrate how oral narratives explain historical issues effectively and are a necessary part of Civil Rights Movement and segregation history that American history textbooks and curricula neglect.

## CHAPTER 1

### The fallacious teachings of southern racism in texts

In 1995, author/scholar, James W. Loewen put together a critique of twelve American history textbooks, analyzing their fallacious contexts and arguing for an overall revision of texts. Loewen's book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, shows how textbooks misinform students about certain aspects of history by not mentioning social factors relevant to historical circumstances. On the subject of racism in history, Loewen states that most texts skew accounts about race relations by not including broader social information related to different color communities and their interactions, or lack of interactions, with each other. These books clump together general facts supported by only certain types of evidence such as statistics or outsiders' reports. Secondary resources and academic interpretations provide evidence for topics like school desegregation or civil rights, but left out are specific perceptions and cultural ideals of individuals either involved or who lived during the time of the subject in discussion. Loewen argues that the authors of textbooks must incorporate more social descriptions, community information, and testimonies about race and racism in history from a broader range of narrators in order to provide readers with a better understanding.

Textbooks hardly include oral testimonies from American citizens that show social information related to conditions of the citizenry. Thus, they keep students from gaining total perspectives of past American people's community conditions as described in testimonies about racism and segregation, which in turn are significant to understanding the history of the South. Because they are not exposed to all the involved characters, readers learn to see history as a collection of hard facts without understanding how to apply evidence and reason based on the significant social factors related to a

topic.<sup>4</sup> None of the texts Loewen writes on connects social history and racism. These texts only skim the surface of race relations in American history without offering deeper explanations for the complexities of prejudiced attitudes, the problems with racism that commonly existed within the White community, integration, and the eventual reduction of prejudice in southern culture.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately Loewen argues for textbooks to incorporate oral testimonies that best illustrate social aspects of race relations in history as witnessed by the average citizen. He believes that use of such evidence can fill up more of the historical pictures texts attempt to draw.

Other modern academics acknowledge that the history of race relations in the United States can be more appropriately understood through personal narratives. Oral history is useful in exploring accounts experienced by individuals not often mentioned in traditional historical studies. Neglecting the typically unknown participants from the majority of a population creates a “sketchy understanding” of a topic.<sup>6</sup> Oral testimonies reveal evolved attitudes of people because they generally speak on various stages and phases of their lives. They also deconstruct presumed stereotypes many students have toward historical subjects because every narrative is a unique glimpse into an individual’s past and a reevaluation of it.<sup>7</sup> The story of southern Whites who grew up during the Civil Rights Movement include testimonies about struggling with racist habits learned at an early age, and learning how to reduce prejudice through integration, prompting a more egalitarian South. Such testimonies can teach today’s students how to empathize and understand the circumstances of the history of the Civil Rights Era. Rather than connect one cold fact to another about violence or legislation, narratives from common southern

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<sup>4</sup> Loewen, James W., *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (New York: The New York Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, Paul, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History, Third Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 94.

<sup>7</sup> Grele, Ronald J., *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History* (New York: Greenwood Publishing, 1985), 42.

White citizens who struggled with racist habits more thoroughly explain their evolutionary processes of integration with the African American community. Their narratives describe issues about southern prejudice that most textbooks fail to mention. Moreover, they add further clarification of American race relations during recent history and the modern period.

Loewen declares that texts present race relations in history without showing any meaningful depth toward the history of racism or its devolvement. He writes:

...half formed and uninformed notions rush in to fill the analytic vacuum textbooks thus leave. *Adventure's* [a text he reviews] contains but a few pages on racism, and implies that it is natural to exclude people whose skin color is different. White students may conclude that all societies are racist, perhaps by nature, so racism is all right. Black students may conclude that all whites are racist, perhaps by nature, so to be anti-white is all right.<sup>8</sup>

He also stressed that textbooks do not explain effectively the changing variations of racism in the United States or the peculiar and bogus character factors related to race identification as acted out by Americans from past generations. The author argues that students can learn how to reduce racism with the inclusion of social and cultural descriptions of race and racism in reference to American history and culture.

Textbooks manipulate American students with implications that their culture is “naturally racist” instead of explaining through historical examples how racism is only a learned concept. Their reports on racism in the South do not include the educational, family, and social pressures related to young southern Whites. Sections on White racism paint totally violent pictures of Whites who struggled with prejudice. Many of today’s texts fail to mention historical-learned factors of racism experienced by vulnerable

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<sup>8</sup> Loewen, 35.

children before and during the Civil Rights Era. As a result, students are left with an implication that racism maintained itself by means of inborn behavior rather than social indoctrination, supporting a notion that racism cannot become extinct.

In the South, where segregation was a way of life for everyone, children that became racially conscious and biased were encouraged through their segregated communities to believe that legitimate differences existed between the races. Those differences prompted prejudiced behavioral-habits for everyone.<sup>9</sup> Before and during the Civil Rights Era, young southern Whites witnessed African Americans' second-class public facilities such as schools, buses, theaters, parks, and restaurants. Additionally, and sadly, children in the South grew up with limited access to these public facilities because of their race, ethnicity, and color. Prejudiced ideas developed at an early stage and were mediated by social structures and processes.<sup>10</sup> These children were victimized by a post-Reconstruction system that attempted to recognize people of different colors as biologically different from each other. A prime case is the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision that separated races by color on the railroad system, which ultimately extended to race patterns for the first half of the twentieth century.

Textbooks that present accounts of racism and White resistance without incorporating social explanations, which are provided from oral histories, push students into defining corners that solidify beliefs in racial myths which enhance dichotomy styles of thinking and hinder further efforts for social integration. In the modern United States, most neighborhoods remain occupied by one predominant ethnic group. While in the desegregated schools, children are often seen socializing mostly with students of the same color or from the same neighborhood.<sup>11</sup> Textbooks that imply racism was a natural

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<sup>9</sup> Feagan, Joe R., *White Racism* (Charlotte, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 29.

<sup>10</sup> Holt, Thomas C., "Explaining Racism in American History," from *Imagined Histories* (Princeton: New Jersey, Princeton University Press), 110.

<sup>11</sup> Educational Systems Theory, Property: Segregation, SIGGS (Set, Information, Graph, General Systems Theory), from University of Indiana website, [www.indiana.edu/segregat.html](http://www.indiana.edu/segregat.html), 1996.

aspect of American history simultaneously present it as a natural aspect of human tendencies.

Yet an incorporation of oral histories from southern Whites who explain elements of their racism, and in some cases, the eradication of it further clarify the understanding of racism in American history. The use of oral history provides new accurate insights into the understandings of ordinary people and further contributes to more conventional evidence as traditionally seen in textbooks.<sup>12</sup> To readers, narratives from common southern White citizens, who struggled as racists, humanizes their stories and creates a chart for historical empathy, rather than encourage contempt for historical southern culture and its race related issues before it was rescued by the Civil Rights Movement.

Fallacious histories of racism found in American history textbooks only emphasize perceptions of the martyr or “good-guy” characters of the Civil Rights Era and those persons who helped mobilize the movement, for example, the Earl Warrens and the Stokely Carmichaels. Neglect to mention the experiences of individuals that hindered civil rights progression maintains a student’s unawareness of the reasons behind such figures’ actions. Narratives from such individuals change both the content and texture of history. With them readers can understand the other end of the story once not disclosed to them. And it becomes possible to answer previously closed questions related to social, economic, and educational influences.<sup>13</sup> Textbooks must emphasize racism as always a product of social circumstances and, particularly in the case of prejudice against African Americans, fueled by perceived socioeconomic status’s common in the Black community, which many prejudiced Whites used as a platform for racism. Assumptions about jobs, income, and community positioning contributed to negative myths applied to

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<sup>12</sup> Blee, Kathleen, “Evidence, empathy and ethics,” from *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 333.

<sup>13</sup>Thompson, 305.

African Americans.<sup>14</sup> In texts, recognized popular myths about Black people proclaimed by southern Whites from history can reveal the ignorance burdened within the southern White community at that time and further educate today's students about racism in American history. Explanations for southern White racism do not excuse the problematic elements many southern White persons created against the Civil Rights Movement or the Black community, but their stories fulfill a complete historical understanding of the topic, which students look for in their classrooms.

The 1986 text entitled *The Essentials of American History* by Richard Current, T. Harry Williams, and Frank Freidel recognizes in detail the plight of African Americans leading up to the Civil Rights Era. The authors show poverty as the main factor that plagued the Black community and encouraged White racism. They also recognize the little effort made by the Federal and state governments to equalize rights for African Americans in the South, until 1964 when President Lyndon Johnson started to pass a series of civil rights legislations that further reduced segregation in the South and legitimized the Black vote. The text however is vague in its explanations of White resistance to Johnson's new laws on anti-discrimination voting:

Early in 1965 violence erupted in the South, especially in Selma, Alabama, where masses of Blacks and a few white sympathizers demonstrated against registration procedures that kept blacks off the voting rolls. The state police brutally broke up the parade, and assassins murdered two white civil rights workers from the North.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Howell, Martha and Prevenier, Walter, from *Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca: New York, Cornell University Press: 2001), 135.

<sup>15</sup> *The Essentials of American History: Fourth Edition* (New York: Borzoi Publishers and Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1986), 1100.

The authors do not provide any insight on the immediate roots of the White people's agitation activities, nor do they address any cultural explanation for the behavior of the community. Instead they recognize Johnson's continued efforts for civil rights issues and move onto another section of American history.

In 1990, six academics published a text called *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* that makes similar vague descriptions committed by Current, Williams, and Friedel. In a section entitled "The Other America," the authors discuss briefly the ignorance of White America toward the plight of African Americans during the 1950s. They state:

Few white, middle-class Americans did perceive the extent of social injustice in the United States of the 1950s. Most never realized the pervasiveness of hunger and deprivation and ignored the racism around them. The popular culture focused overwhelmingly on affluent Americans enjoying the "good life" and depicted blacks and Hispanics almost exclusively as servants, criminals, or figures of fun.<sup>16</sup>

The section then concludes with some arguments from the pro-civil rights community [Whites included], such as historian Richard Hofstadter. Yet readers are left without any explanation as to why so many southern Whites [children in particular] misunderstood the ethical reasoning of equality for minorities. Neither is evidence provided to show how such prejudiced notions were learned during earlier periods of southern children's lives.

Another example from *The Enduring Vision* in a later section on the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956 discusses at length the actions of the civil rights hero Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat to a White gentleman in the front of a public bus:

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<sup>16</sup> *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1990), 688.

Early in December 1955, Rosa Parks, a strong-willed black woman who had worked for the local chapter of the NAACP, refused to get up so that a white man could sit. She was arrested. In protest, Montgomery's black leaders organized a massive boycott of the buses.<sup>17</sup>

To understand southern White racism from the 1950s, the authors might have included a testimony from a White person who rode or drove public buses during that era.

Illustrating both primary and hindsight perspectives from such an individual would inform readers on why people once behaved in that manner, but instead the passage leaves readers to come up with personal conclusions about southern racism from the 1950s. The authors finish the section with additional insight on the boycott's advocates with quotes from some of its organizers such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Five years after the publication of *The Enduring Vision*, Paul Boyer, a history professor from the University of Wisconsin, put together an eleven hundred-page text entitled *The American Nation*. Boyer presents the history of the Civil Rights Movement without recognizing certain social aspects of the southern community. He limits his descriptions of events by leaving out significant social factors, such as segregation's impact on the White community or Old South cultural indoctrination that contributed to the various reactions from southern Whites during that era. Instead he describes general reactions from Whites in response to events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the protests against the "Little Rock Nine."<sup>18</sup> Boyer recognizes both the backlash these movements received from certain southern Whites and their realization that the Federal government would continue to impose changes against the Old South system. Yet Boyer is brief in his descriptions about racism and leaves a vacuum for readers that keep them

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<sup>17</sup> *The Enduring Vision*, 689.

<sup>18</sup> In 1957, nine African American students enrolled in Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas as the first Black students to enter a desegregated Arkansas public school.

from further understanding how southern Whites dealt with interference in this toward desegregation in contrast to their accustomed way of life.

Boyer recognizes only the violent aspects of White reactions to Civil Rights Movement events and the way in which the Federal government enforced changes. He describes the Civil Rights Act of 1957, signed by President Eisenhower, as a response to the “Little Rock Nine” incident and concludes the chapter with an answer in large-bold font to one of his “Focus” questions which his Civil Rights section opens with that asks, “What did the Central High School crisis demonstrate about some white southern attitudes toward desegregation?” The answer states, “The Central High crisis in Little Rock showed that some southern whites were not willing to comply with desegregation.”<sup>19</sup> Then Boyer goes into the impacts of rock and roll on American youth culture. He leaves readers without a complete understanding of White resistances and implies that violence totally represented the southern White community.

The textbook, *Liberty, Equality, Power* (1996) also focuses its section on the Civil Rights Movement and southern White reactions with primarily the political and violent aspects of the era. Two authors, Emily and Norman Rosenberg [who both specialize in historical fields unrelated to Civil Rights and social histories] wrote the Civil Rights chapters. Emily S. Rosenberg teaches U.S.-foreign relations and finance history at Macalester College, while Norman L. Rosenberg teaches legal history also at Macalester. They each present the Civil Rights Movement as a string of events linked together without any social defining of southern culture or the roots of White racism and its effect on the Civil Rights Movement beyond certain violent incidents. Additionally by not mentioning how Whites dealt with the changes, Rosenberg and Rosenberg imply that the solution to civil rights issues for African Americans came solely through Federal

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<sup>19</sup> Boyer, Paul, *The American Nation* (Austin, Texas: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston: A Harcourt Classroom Education Company, 1995) 823.

intervention and legislation. However, the authors do not describe the ways in which southern Whites learned to accept changes and evolve their thinking tendencies about integration or race.

In the chapter entitled, “The Politics of Civil Rights,” the authors recognize the southern Democrats’ strong stance against anti-discrimination policies in Congress and that President Eisenhower was a “gradualist on racial issues.”<sup>20</sup> Following examples of some southern politicians’ racist policies the authors report on the violence that erupted during the Civil Rights Era as a result. They discuss the Emmett Till case of 1955, in which two White southern men murdered a fourteen-year-old Black child from Chicago while visiting his uncle in Mississippi, and were acquitted by an all-White jury before later confessing to the crime. They also describe some examples of White resistance against desegregation after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, and mention racist interest groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Council.<sup>21</sup>

In the following chapter, “From Civil Rights to Black Power,” Rosenberg and Rosenberg note the struggling efforts from the African American community during the Civil Rights Era to gain abrupt changes for their rights. Following these examples are various responses from the Federal and state governments and the measures taken to improve or hinder civil rights for non-Whites. Riots broke out in the mid-sixties in response to the government’s division over race policies. In Los Angeles, Baltimore, and many other urban areas Black tensions poured into large expositions of civil disobedience and rage toward crimes committed by White racists. In Alabama, state troopers brutally beat civil rights marchers under permission from state authorities. By 1964 abrupt changes in civil rights laws became the Federal government’s most effective option to quelling American race tensions that Malcolm X referred to as “a powder keg” that

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<sup>20</sup> *Liberty, Equality, Power* (New York: Wadsworth Thompson Learning, 1996), 985.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 984.

would eventually “explode.”<sup>22</sup> Through pressures from civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, President Johnson passed a series of civil rights acts that attempted to equalize the legal and social statuses of African Americans and protect them against White racist-criminals.<sup>23</sup>

“From Civil Rights to Black Power” concludes without any discussion of Americans becoming accustomed to integration or those responses from the larger population of more rational-minded citizens. Historian Howard Zinn notes in his book *The Southern Mystique* that most citizens from the South during the 1960s were comfortable with their middle class lifestyles and did not want to disrupt their lives in order to resist desegregation. The work place was one illustration of southern White rational reactions to the civil rights changes. When African Americans entered the working place with Whites, a substantial number of southerners snickered and felt awkward from the change. Yet not before long, everyone got back to work and racism was reduced among the White workers by means of integration.<sup>24</sup> When the Carnegie Library in Atlanta was desegregated in May 1959 Zinn writes that some Whites threatened a civil suit. Hostile letters and phone calls followed from various extremists, but the “general reaction was an enormous silence.” His position claims that money and rational behavior ruled over the “segregation initiative.” Jobs and comfortable living enabled most southern Whites to see beyond acting stubbornly against change.<sup>25</sup> They did not resist desegregation as the texts imply with violence or other crimes. Instead, most people discouraged by integration reacted passively as shown in their voting or everyday rhetoric among other White southerners.

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<sup>22</sup> Malcolm X, in a speech entitled “Ballots or the Bullets,” presented in Detroit, 1964 that the United States was a “powder keg” ready to “explode” if full citizenship was not extended to African Americans.

<sup>23</sup> *Liberty, Equality, Power*, 1018.

<sup>24</sup> Zinn, Howard, *The Southern Mystique* (New York: Simon and Schuster Publishers, 1964), 54.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-54.

The manner in which Rosenberg and Rosenberg present Civil Rights Movement history teaches readers only about government intervention and the violence that erupted out of the movement. Social history is invisible in their writing. Instead of describing the more rational or passive responses to civil rights changes that the majority of White citizens showed, the authors skew the history of the Civil Rights Era by only highlighting scenarios that illustrate major occurrences such as violent crimes or legislation; both actions committed by a minority of characters in comparison to the whole South. Even the section about Martin Luther King focuses largely on his assassination and concludes with a quote from his killer, James Earl Ray proclaiming his innocence and labeling himself “a pawn of a racist conspiracy.”<sup>26</sup> A total picture of the assassination and its impact would include contemporary reactions from both common Black and White citizens who are available today for oral testimonies. Showing violence as a factor in Civil Rights Movement history without mentioning other sorts of reactions is a fallacious explanation of the history of racism in the United States. Violence was a significant part of the civil rights struggle for African Americans, and many southern Whites were guilty of committing hate crimes, but an even larger percentage of prejudiced White people never broke any laws and therefore more readily adapted to reforms through integration.

As a result from such changes, American cultural tendencies evolved to illustrate new ideals that emphasize fair treatment for all people. Such ideals continue to enhance themselves today. However, textbooks do not teach these concepts, and in fact mask their existence by presenting violence as a monopolized factor of the Civil Rights Era without mentioning other descriptive aspects in relation to changes in prejudiced behaviors within the Southern White community.

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<sup>26</sup> *Liberty, Equality, Power*, 1019.

*United States History: In the Course of Human Events* (1997) only discusses the violence committed by Southern Whites during the Civil Rights Movement. The three authors, Matthew T. Downey, James R. Giese, and Fay D. Metcalf present a choppy history of the era by showing simply one violent event after another and not incorporating more peaceful responses by other southerners. Additionally their contextual use of the word “white” creates a tone that implies the entire White community carried out the violence:

Many confrontations did occur [during the “Freedom Rides” of May, 1961]. In Anniston, Alabama, a white mob burned a bus. In Birmingham, an angry white crowd pulled the riders off a bus and beat them. Another mob seized the terminal. Sheriff Eugene “Bull” Connor lost his temper and ordered the police to attack the nonviolent demonstrators with clubs, police dogs, and high-pressure fire hoses.<sup>27</sup> Similar to the sequence of events in *Liberty, Equality, Power, United States History* then goes directly into the Federal government’s actions taken toward the upheaval and then moves on to an entirely different topic, the Vietnam War.

Around the publication of *United States History*, seven other academics wrote *The American Journey: A History of the United States* (1997). This book goes haltingly into some social aspects of Civil Rights Movement history in comparison to those texts written in previous years, yet still falls short of providing a total history of the movement.

The text offers a section on the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling of 1954 that opened the path for desegregation in the United States. The authors show the story of Linda Brown, a third grader from Topeka, Kansas, whose parents wanted to send her to a nearby all-White school. However the state law required Brown to attend an all-Black school farther away from her home. In protest, Brown’s parents

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<sup>27</sup> Downey, Matthew T., Giese, James R., Metcalf Fay D., *United States History: In the Course of Human Events* (New York: West Publishing Company, 1997), 1005.

demanded their daughter be allowed to go to the closer school and eventually won a favorable decision from the Federal court.

Members of the White community protested the decision, and the authors explain: Racial segregation by law was largely a southern problem, the legacy of Jim Crow laws from early in the century. Few southern communities desegregated schools voluntarily, for to do so undermined the entrenched principle of a dual society.<sup>28</sup> At this point in the section the authors ought to mention the cultural explanation for the resistance from the White community as influenced by segregation, cultural rhetoric, and various other forms of social indoctrination. To empathize with southern resistance, they might recognize the sensitivities of ignorant parents who felt afraid to send their children to school with African Americans who they had falsely perceived as a negative influence. There also was a common fear among White parents of daughters that Black boys were perverse and might influence or endanger their children in sexual acts.<sup>29</sup> Such perceptions were based on years of race manipulation produced by segregation and popular culture.

The authors could also recognize that southern culture had traditionally been conservative and adamant toward keeping changes from happening to the southern way of life. Fear further motivated prejudice among many Whites who believed that African Americans were dangerous elements of society as illustrated in D.W. Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and David O. Selznick's *Gone With The Wind* (1939), which suggested that the South would collapse under integration because of an African American inability to operate as equal community contributors.<sup>30</sup> Over the generations that followed Reconstruction, segregation accustoms manipulated southern Whites to believe that the separation of races was necessary based on believed myths against

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<sup>28</sup> *The American Journey: A History of the United States* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 1009.

<sup>29</sup> Henry Hampton, *Eyes on the Prize*, PBS documentary: 1987.

<sup>30</sup> D.W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation*, 1915 and David O. Selznick, *Gone With The Wind*, 1939.

African Americans that in turn were solidified through legally enforced separation. These sentiments became an integral aspect of a predominately conservative culture uncomfortable with rapid reforms. Yet the authors conclude their explanation by only recognizing the violence and protests carried out by members of the southern White population:

The following year, 101 southern congressmen and senators reinforced southern denial by issuing the “Southern Manifesto,” which asserted that the Court decision was unconstitutional. Farther south, African American children often met taunts and violence from enraged Whites.<sup>31</sup>

Again, the authors do not provide any cultural explanation, and they leave readers with a false impression about many southern Whites from the Civil Rights Era.

Each of the social elements these textbooks fail to or at least hardly include can be explored through a study of oral interviews given by southern White citizens alive during the Civil Rights Movement. An explanation of their experiences and struggles to integrate with African Americans reveals the depths of southern White racism in American history, but also serves as an example that proves racism and prejudice are learned concepts, generally taught to young vulnerable individuals.

Some academics might argue that textbooks serve a general purpose of introducing base information to students who attend survey courses in either high school or college. Students take away from texts introductory information on historical topics that other academic works discuss in greater detail. Topics about passive resistance against integration or other nonviolent reactions from the southern White community may not fit in the allotted space made available in the Civil Rights Movement sections of American history textbooks, let alone may there be room for an inclusion of oral

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<sup>31</sup> *The American Journey*, 1010.

testimonies from numerous case studies. Yet the significance of this history at least requires a section dedicated solely to the issue of race relations in American history and the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on White racism, while recognizing the more representative majority of White southerners who did not commit violence in the interest of racism, but did struggle to transfer racist beliefs to more supportive ideas about racial integration and equal acceptance of African Americans in the southern community. Despite limited space in the texts, the incorporation of oral testimonies on the topic should be encouraged in the American history classroom. Moreover, students can be persuaded to interview their own case studies, and textbooks can offer suggestions about utilizing oral history as an interviewer.

Contexts within textbooks and teachers' curriculums are also significant aspects that influence students to think about history in a specific way. Universally, students in classrooms do not specialize in American history. For most students who have a limited knowledge of America's past, a textbook and a teacher are primarily what they rely on for a real understanding of race relations and racism in American history. Both the teacher and textbook are responsible for explaining the roots of racism, the evolution of race equality in the United States, and where matters of race integration continue to need improvement. A teacher is in a position to discuss racism as a problem that can be fixed as proven through the examples of many White southern individuals after the Civil Rights Movement. Students' ideas about race and racism are based in large part on the type of information they receive from the classroom through texts and a teacher's curriculum. More social information and primary narratives about racism in American history enable students to further understand the meanings behind race relations, integration, and the breakdown of racial prejudices in the United States.

## The trends and criticisms of race issue reports in textbooks

Like all academic writers whose manuscripts are referenced, textbook authors must answer to the influences of a larger stratum of administrative bodies that determine the final publication of their works. Anyone who writes for the textbook business is expected to follow a list of guidelines that outline the material to be placed into the book. Publishers establish their guidelines through recommendations made by public committees made up of or influenced by various educational lobbyists who represent either the liberal or conservative camp. Officials from each state then make final selections for which texts will be purchased by school boards. They base their decisions on criteria of appropriateness that coincide with the established national guidelines.<sup>32</sup> In order to sell most texts, publishers obligate their authors to write historical accounts with information and tone that satisfies these guidelines that are influenced by political attitudes relevant to the time of publication. An example is the fact that most textbooks from the 1990s provide sections dedicated to marginal African American history as a result of the Civil Rights Movement's accomplishment to demand Black history in the curriculum.

Over the course of the twentieth century guidelines were altered based largely on political and social factors that prevailed in the United States. During World War I (1914-1918) there was an outcry from many conservatives that textbooks lacked patriotism. They lobbied for text revisions that would present historical accounts written in styles that encouraged greater senses of nationalism to American students. A decade later, during the Great Depression (1929-1941) when the political right was weak, concerned liberals argued that American history texts were too inflated with patriotic

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<sup>32</sup> Moreau, Joseph, *Schoolbook Nation* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 21.

anecdotes and authors should disclose more socially controversial issues related to American history as illustrated by the Depression. Finally, the subject went full circle during World War II (1941-1945) and into the time of “McCarthyism”<sup>33</sup> as persuasive conservative-lobbyists motivated committees to require texts reinsert more nationalistic tones.<sup>34</sup> The ever-changing political and social climate of America impacted its educational culture to change almost every ten years. Liberals traditionally demanded that textbooks report on American social conditions, compare the statuses of economic classes, and disclose information about minorities from history. Conservatives traditionally argued for emphasis on American liberties, tales of overcoming foreign tyranny, and the government’s efforts to protect its citizens’ freedoms.

Regardless of which political faction influenced textbook guidelines, African American and other ethnic minority histories were almost totally neglected in the public classroom before the Civil Rights Movement. Textbooks essentially “made [Black] people [and other ethnic groups] disappear” and even liberal educational lobbyists ignored the need to incorporate ethnic minority histories in spite of their argument for more recognition of class minorities and their struggle to mobilize as in the case from the Progressive Era (1890-1913).<sup>35</sup> The debate over what social issues to include in guidelines still did nothing to reduce cultural biases toward White American history.

However, during the Civil Rights Era, advocates of multiculturalism became more vocal in their denunciations of texts’ exclusions of minority perspectives in response to the overflow of recognition for White American accomplishments.<sup>36</sup> For example,

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<sup>33</sup> During the early 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy (WI) conducted a series of anti-Communist “witch hunts” against members of the Hollywood, journalistic, and political communities. Initially, his activities were popularly endorsed by many Americans and in turn created a wave of anti-Communist hysteria within American culture throughout the decade.

<sup>34</sup> Giordano, Gerard, *Twentieth-Century Textbook Wars* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 59.

<sup>35</sup> Appleby, Joyce, and Hunt, Lynn and Jacob, Margaret, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 294-295.

<sup>36</sup> Moreau, 13.

Native Americans and Asian Americans argued for a fair and balanced treatment of illustrating Whites as aggressors in the encroachment of their societies. Historical accounts about race and racism in textbooks had evolved over time from publishers making no demands about issues related to minorities to entire sections being dedicated to subjects like the Civil Rights Movement. Movements for civil rights during the 1960s and 1970s fostered a reexamination of racism in American history. Descriptions about race relations now incorporated recognitions of social qualities and institutional aspects of minority statuses.<sup>37</sup> Sections that once played down slavery and African American plight were revised on behalf of the Civil Rights Movement's achievements, and many major Black historical figures such as Malcolm X or W.E.B. DuBois gained presences in textbook sections.

Before the Civil Rights Era texts painted the history of the United States with heroic actions carried out solely by White Americans. Their stories centered on righteous deeds committed in the name of freedom, justice, and equality.<sup>38</sup> After the 1960s more culturally aware lobbyists encouraged educational committees to redesign text guidelines to deal with issues related to all American groups and racism. These new requirements in public education were a direct accomplishment of the Civil Rights Movement and an illustration of a new trend in text writing where publishers would check their authors for fair mention of minority plight at the extent of racism. Moreover, for the first time on a mainstream level, students were made aware of different cultural heritages and some of the ugly truths about ethnic discrimination in American history as shown in histories about Antebellum America (1800-1861), the Reconstruction period (1865-1877), and the Jim Crow South (1896-1964).

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<sup>37</sup> Holt, Thomas C., "Explaining Racism in American History," from *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 109.

<sup>38</sup>Moreau, 139.

In spite of this evolutionary step, there arose new concerns over race reporting and fallacies in texts. Beginning in the late 1980s, some historians like Arthur Schlesinger and many critics like Newt Gingrich from the conservative camp argued that the pendulum had swung too far in terms of mentioning certain minority points-of-view without stating perceptions from the majority. In 1991, Schlesinger published an essay entitled “The Disuniting of America: Reflections of a Multicultural Society” where he focuses on Afro-centrism<sup>39</sup> in textbooks. Schlesinger found that many texts made attempts at “racial uplift” through the vilification of White Europeans and Americans. He also found some books that suggested that ancient Greeks “stole” their mathematics and philosophy from Black Egyptians.<sup>40</sup> A prime example is *Stolen Legacy* by George G.M. James. The textbooks Schlesinger used present the Civil Rights Movement with highlights of White violence without covering other impacts on the White community as a result of the era.

Schlesinger expresses concern that these trends in text writing are most consequential in an America that remains racially segregated. He describes modern history texts as being employed to build racial pride in a nation made up of non-integrated communities so that only the textbook speaks for members of ethnic groups who do not sit in the classroom. Such trends he warns have the potential to maintain in American culture a “preservation of diverse alien identities” instead of encouraging a more unified American or human identity.<sup>41</sup>

In a 1994 essay published in *Education Week*, educational critic Diane Ravitch shows concern that recent standards established for textbooks emphasized too much of an unfavorable light toward histories related to majority groups such as Whites or males.

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<sup>39</sup> This view was led by Professors Ron Kareng and Molifi Asante. Both argue that Afro-centric education is one that centers on Black thought and omits other ethnic groups’ perceptions.

<sup>40</sup> Moreau, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

She believes textbooks fail to balance American ideals and accomplishments with national failures, leading readers to gain a gloomy view of the past where “the Ku Klux Klan and Joseph McCarthy loom too large.”<sup>42</sup> Modern methods of history text writing:

... aim to enhance the self-esteem of racial minorities and women, but those who seek a common identity might well conclude that the founding, settling, and growth of our nation were shameful events.<sup>43</sup>

University of Pennsylvania professor Walter McDougall agrees stating that new standards in text writing incorrectly present the histories of “minority and female struggle versus white male resistance as a centerpiece of American history,” while treating the idealism of American founders and leaders as foolish or hypocritical.<sup>44</sup> Both critics present that this sort of historical reporting will further divide Americans over ethnic issues by giving false impressions about racism and its place in American history.

Concern within the historical community sparked investigation into the guidelines and new trends of text writing. During the mid-1990s various panels of historians set up by the Council for Basic Education found that many textbooks and teachers’ curriculums presented a “disproportionately pessimistic and misrepresentative picture” of the American past.<sup>45</sup> Author and textbook critic Gerard Giordano states in his work *Twentieth Century Textbook Wars* that texts from the 1990s and twenty-first century include a plethora of negative and controversial racial information while omitting many positive accomplishments of integration.<sup>46</sup>

C.E. Finn, another text critic, and Diane Ravitch feel that the one sided tendencies of race reporting in modern texts prompt “banal generalizations” about American families and communities. They argue that textbooks are repetitive with their allusions to

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>46</sup> Giordano, 87.

White violence as a product of White racism, and they believe publishers should push authors to write on more critical investigations that focus on social scenarios more comparable to students' own experiences with race and integration. Ravitch and Finn also want to see textbooks develop exercises that facilitate role-playing, promote dramatization, encourage personalized chronologies and produce community-based investigations. Their ideas follow the suggestion from editor, Peter Wolfe, who in the 1960s [when textbooks were known for nationalist propaganda] mentioned texts' "banal" tendencies kept students from enthusiastically learning how to think like historians in learning to apply critical thinking skills.<sup>47</sup>

The Civil Rights Movement prompted mandates for fairness and recognition of minority histories in texts, but in the process newly established guidelines neglected to obligate publishers to ask their authors to incorporate histories about White racism/prejudice beyond incidents of violence or legislation. The consensus among many textbook critics and historians is that guidelines in reference to historical race issues are incomplete, in part because only in the past few decades has there been an effective movement to report on historical accounts related to race. Histories about racism are minimized into stories of violence and martyr characters fighting the crusade. Critics are primarily concerned about the manner in which texts manipulate students and fail to teach them how to consider issues critically based on the incomplete histories they provide. The incorporation of oral interviews, social interpretations, cultural icons, symbols of racism, and reports on new issues related to race that are currently ignored in textbooks would enable students to understand history in the way which professional historians understand it and further enrich the education of the American youth.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 86.

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## CHAPTER 2

### 20th century southern white racism: where did it come from?

After the Civil War (1861-1865) and the declaration of victory by the North, the southern way of life and culture was impacted significantly by a series of radical political periods. The next hundred years consisted of various social revolutions that included Reconstruction (1865-1877), a segregation era (1896-1954),<sup>48</sup> and the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1974). Throughout each period African Americans remained a permanent social underclass and targets of White racism in the South.

Southern segregation laws, first introduced in 1896, produced habitual beliefs and behaviors related to racial categorizing and White supremacy. Such habits were inherited among many southerners at very young ages throughout the next three generations. For these children, separation from the Black community reinforced racial stereotypes expressed to them from parents and other adults. Partly out of fear, most parents discouraged their children from visiting African American neighborhoods or befriending Black children. The lack of social relationships between African American and White children limited opportunities for members of either racial group to disprove believed stereotypes expressed against one another. Also in the White community, most jobs available to Black people were low-income service positions such as housekeeping or railroad porters under the administration of White employers, and therefore most White children were hardly aware of African American owned businesses or Black operated ventures. In the process, many White children were socially duped into the belief that racial classification predetermined an individual's professional capabilities.

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<sup>48</sup> In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld an 1890 Louisiana statute that mandated racially segregated but equal railroad cars, and ruled that equal protection warranted from the Fourteenth amendment dealt with political not social equality. The ruling enabled Southern states to establish segregated public facilities under protection of their state constitutions.

Twentieth century southern White racism rooted from the conclusion of the Civil War and was initiated through paranoid reactions expressed by ex-citizens of the terminated Confederacy during Reconstruction. Their paranoia sparked from rapid changes brought into their communities as a result of the Union victory. In the twelve years that followed the Confederate Army's surrender in 1865, the northern Civil War victors, most of them supporters of the Republican Party, held much of southern White racism in check through enforcement of new equal opportunity laws passed in the legislative houses (13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15th Amendments). Under protection from Federal military zones set up in the physically devastated South, slavery was outlawed in 1865, African Americans gained the Constitutional right to citizenship in 1868, and the right to vote in 1870. Within a few years, the Black community of the South began to socially mobilize as a direct result of these legislations. In response, many southern White citizens, discouraged by the Confederacy's defeat, protested the civil rights bills lobbied by northern Republican politicians. However the proposals to grant civil rights protection to African Americans were passed as laws in both legislative houses while some Republicans from the North moved to the politically weakened South to enter politics themselves. Once they were elected they were able to oversee continued efforts to lobby for civil rights reforms on a more local level. Known as "carpetbaggers," many White southerners developed real fear and contempt against these politicians who came from a region that recently defeated them in an ultra-destructive war.

A majority of Republicans decisively defeated most Democratic candidates in the 1866 Congressional election and carried their reforms into the South without significant opposition from the Democrats. Since before the Civil War, the Democratic platform sympathized more with Old South ideals in relation toward race policies and slavery. After the war its leaders had lost reliability in President Andrew Johnson (1865-1869),

also a Democrat, who was alienated in Washington by a Republican controlled Congress and a Republican cabinet left over by his predecessor, Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865). Johnson's isolated status as a Democrat in Washington made him an ineffective Republican opponent who could, at best, slow the civil rights reforms applied in the South in part through pardons granted to participants of the ex-Confederate government. The weakness of Johnson and the strength of the Republicans in reference to the issue of racial policies suggested to southerners that reforms toward civil rights laws would soon allow African Americans to integrate into southern White society.

New civil rights amendments passed after the Civil War marked the opening phase of race integration in the South, but also born was a new era of racism identified in post-slave America. Many White southerners were uncomfortable with the reforms and presumed real problems if African Americans received the right to vote. One gloomy North Carolina politician, Leander Gash, advised southerners to “get out of the way [or] otherwise be overtaken and run over by the political storm of fanaticism that is sweeping over the land.”<sup>49</sup> Emotional soreness over the Union victory already prompted resentment toward northern Republicans, but now the insertion of reformed local laws passed by an overwhelming Republican majority heightened frustration and paranoia within the White southern community against both the Republican Party and the group targeted by the debate over civil rights reforms, the African American community.

Many weakened Southern politicians were susceptible to Republican intentions. Alabama Governor Robert Patton assured Alabamians he would never consent to the “absurd project of conferring the right of suffrage upon an ignorant and semi-barbarian population of suddenly emancipated slaves.” He declared Alabama a “white man's state”

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<sup>49</sup> Leander Gash to Wife, March 1, 1867, in Leander Gash Papers, NCA. Gash, a state senator from western North Carolina, wrote 28 letters to his wife between February 4, 1866 and March 1, 1867. The letters provide insight on the Southern White reaction to new civil rights legislations during the earliest years of Reconstruction. From: Carter, Dan T., *When the War Was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South, 1865-1867* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana University Press, 1985), 134.

with a “white man’s government.” Yet in the following year the division of Johnson and Congress, soon illustrated in Johnson’s impeachment by Congress, prompted Patton to retain adherence to the dominant party. He no longer stood in the way of civil rights reforms, and urged his legislature to do the same. Patton and other southern politicians were politically vulnerable and forced to depend on support from northern Republicans. Around when Patton reversed his opposition to Black civil rights reforms he traveled to New York in an effort to get loans for his state and his business investments.<sup>50</sup>

Anticipated integration between African American and White southerners permeated a new type of racism among Whites. Their racism was based in part on fears rooted from premonitions about socially mixing with a group of people culturally stigmatized as uncivilized, or as the racist Governor Patton described a “semi-barbarian population.”

Reconstruction ended, however, with the Compromise of 1877 made between northern Republicans and southern Democrats. In light of a confused and debated outcome with the 1876 Presidential election, Republicans gained the Presidency under their candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881), in exchange for the local majority of southern Democrats to regain control of their state laws.<sup>51</sup> This marked the beginning of post-Reconstruction and the Jim Crow system.<sup>52</sup> Newer forms of institutionalized racism emerged that encouraged southern White people to think bigoted thoughts and, in numerous cases, perform racist crimes with legal protection. The Federal government and northern Republicans gave up much of their ability to protect African Americans against local racist policies that emerged in the South. Two decades later, segregation was solidified legally when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of “separate but equal” racial policies determined on state levels in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Furthermore, Jim

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<sup>50</sup> Carter, Dan T., *When the War Was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South, 1865-1867* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 258.

<sup>51</sup> Boyer, Paul, *The American Nation* (Austin, Texas: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: A Harcourt Classroom Education Company, 1995), 527.

<sup>52</sup> “Jim Crow” refers to racial discrimination laws used in the South after *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Crow conditions culturally stigmatized racism for many southern Whites, while segregation forced racial isolation and embedded various prejudiced habits passed down throughout future generations.

Political and economic conditions of the late nineteenth century provided opportunities for racism to become solidified in southern culture as well. During the remainder of the century, freedmen and Black farmers mostly worked as sharecroppers or tenant workers on another person's land. The dependency of supplies, land, and work that developed between the tenant and employer expanded the White landowning class's economic influence and social status within the South. Post-war plantation owners were not collectively as wealthy as the slave owning class from the Antebellum Era, but the enlarged number of White citizens put in control of African American labor expanded the authority of White citizens over so-called free Black people in both the working and social environments. Since before the Civil War, somewhat suspended during Reconstruction, but enhanced after legalized segregation, the White southern social order was nurtured with a constant sense of superiority connected to the constant subordination of African Americans. Color became a badge of distinction and in the minds of many White southerners; Black people were present to gratify the needs, desires, and egos of White men.<sup>53</sup> Stereotyped community roles expected from each southern ethnic group enabled racism to remain fixed in southern culture and as each generation passed, prejudice became difficult to eradicate.

Dependency on the landowner class empowered the status of wealthy Whites and ultimately increased their legal authority and influence over the southern community.<sup>54</sup> Added influences on the agrarian economy enabled White landowners to secure votes

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<sup>53</sup>Franklin, John Hope, "The Great Confrontation: The South and the Problem of Change," from *Myth and Southern History, V. 2: The New South* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 106.

<sup>54</sup> Oakes, James, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), 199.

among their constituents based on local financial and employment control in their respective regions. Their control over the labor of most African American farmers additionally paved a new tendency in the South to exploit Black workers with meager labor conditions and low wages in contrast to the lucrative ventures for landowners.

Sharecropping and the rise of the White landowning class in the South even reduced assets and income for many common White farmers, or “yeomen.” Yeomen represented the majority of White southern farmers. They never owned enough land to lease to sharecroppers. Based on the devastated conditions of southern lands and the economy that followed the Civil War, many yeomen became reliant on credit provided by merchants in order to maintain their lands. Merchants loaned out supplies and money in exchange for a share in profits or a percentage of crops. The poor land conditions of the post-war South made it difficult for many yeomen to satisfy their loans and as a result their farms were foreclosed on by the lenders, which forced them into states of tenancy the same as the sharecroppers functioned in.<sup>55</sup> Most southerners became paralyzed by the weak economy, and quite naturally, these White farmers also developed a dependency on the landowner class.

Yet the South had been so terribly devastated by war that even certain landowners struggled to maintain their properties. Defeat in the Civil War and Reconstruction disabled much of the southern economy, and in many cases, landowners applied for credit from merchants. However, some of them were unable to keep up with payments. As a solution the merchant class merged with the southern landowner class around the turn of the century. Now merchants were guaranteed a percentage of the crop production and landowners would continue to control sharecroppers and maintain influence within the southern economy alongside their creditors.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, African American and

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<sup>55</sup> Oakes, 200.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

White sharecroppers were now exposed to added financial bombardment from merchants who demanded higher interest rates and imposed liens on the tenants.

Once involved with the ownership of southern farmlands, the merchant class of the South possessed an even stronger political position than before, and to the benefit of landowners, they likewise represented the interests of the southern wealthy class and the Democratic Party, which traditionally protected the labor and social system that exploited African Americans. In contrast, Republicans often showed more support to industry and corporate buildup as illustrated by the superior number of erected factories in the North during the 1800s. To compete with the strong Republican position in the North, both merchants and landowners in the South wanted to solidify support for the Democrats in order to enhance their own regional influences.<sup>57</sup> One effective strategy was a continual social division pitted between the less wealthier and more dependent White and Black communities.

To gain support from the majority of White voters in the South, White citizens with political aspirations expanded on the fears of racial integration expressed during Reconstruction. To gain support from the yeomen, the merchant-landowner class attempted to block any possibilities of biracial alliances between African American and White citizens.<sup>58</sup> Through slanderous efforts and racist propaganda, yeomen and other White citizens learned to fear racial integration.

Myths played a significant role in the promotion of southern White racism and fear toward African American civil rights. Careless historical reports and other prejudiced anecdotes made their presences felt in the early twentieth century White community. Southern historian, George B. Tindall, notes the connection between myth and its psychological determinants in southern racism. He argues the southern mind after

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 201-203.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Reconstruction and during segregation was resistant to pure abstraction and more receptive to the dramatic or romantic images of society and therefore is “usually susceptible to mythology.”<sup>59</sup> Southern prejudices expressed against Black people fed from myths, and to understand the solidity of southern White racism, the vulnerable nature of early twentieth century southerners to believe in mythical concepts must be considered.

During the early twentieth century, slavery and its memory became defined by many historians of the time as a form of “race control” rather than a system of labor. Black people were presented as a threat to society. According to myth, control of their rights and labor status were essential in preserving the “perfect” social order enjoyed by southern White men. Southern historian, John Hope Franklin, believes that under slavery, and afterwards, the sharecropper system, “the South’s political system was, in the eyes of white southerners, a remarkable achievement. White men, relieved of the cares and drudgery of manual toil, were free to give their attention to the problem of governance.”<sup>60</sup> Negative myths about the Black race remained popular in the South. Certain White southerners must have felt like royalty within their community whenever in the presence of African Americans. Those myths maintained the racial hierarchy and preserved the social and political integrity of a system that favored one ethnic group. Moreover, they created a priority for southern elites and other White citizens to prevent Black enfranchisement, which created further advancements in popular racism in the South. In the process, many southern Whites rallied around preventative measures that kept African Americans off the voting rolls, and as a result, the Democratic Party strengthened in the South under a banner of White supremacy.

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<sup>59</sup> Tindall, George B., “Mythology: A New Frontier in Southern History,” from *Myth and Southern History: V. 2: The New South* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 3.

<sup>60</sup> Franklin, 104.

Another contributing factor to southern White racism was a popular ignorance of Black plight in the South. Following the Civil War southern patriots established the “Lost Cause” ideology toward memories of the Confederacy. Lost Cause histories discussed southern policies related to race and slavery before the Civil War. They were written with specific ethnocentric tones that excused any recognition of morality crimes committed against African Americans. Lost Cause historians such as William A. Dunning (1857-1922) and James Ford Rhodes (1848-1927) wrote along skewed descriptions of the Old South and misled readers into the belief that freedmen were incapable of governing themselves. Their works painted Reconstruction as a curse on the South and identified White southerners as martyrs of new civil rights policies that favored minorities.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, racism in the South, during and after the Civil War was not recognized in Lost Cause works. Emphasized only were positive elements about the South and race relations. Authors during this period were more preoccupied with a theme of national unification in contrast to the divided climate during the Civil War years. Focused on the political aspects of national development in American history, Lost Cause authors aimed to tell positive histories that glorified the Old South and the Confederacy. Apprehensions toward integration with Black people and, by the turn of the twentieth-century, an increased influx of Eastern European immigrants prompted prejudiced styles of historical reporting.<sup>62</sup> Ex-slaves never gave formal testimonies until 1936 during the Works Project Administration (W.P.A.) interviews that asked for testimonies from ex-slaves still alive at the time. The Lost Cause approach to Confederate history became etched into southerners’ historical perceptions not only to justify the war, but also to uphold second-class treatment of African Americans.

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<sup>61</sup> Blight, David W., *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 358.

<sup>62</sup> Gleason, Phillip, “Crevecoeur’s Question: Historical Writing on Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity,” from *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 121-123.

Historical reasoning which martyred the Confederacy further elevated southern pride and, moreover, White supremacy well into the twentieth century. The shaping of this selective form of Civil War memory enhanced negative prejudices against Black people and produced White injustices against African Americans that included torture, lynchings, and false rape accusations that led to prison convictions.<sup>63</sup> During the early 1900s, racism relied on a combination of scientific reasoning suggested through social Darwinism, the recent memory of slavery, and a general threatened feeling of integration with minorities proclaimed by significant portions of the American White community. Historical curricula on the Civil War, slavery, and race relations in the South was incompletely taught in southern schools and numbed student's attitudes toward African American plight in southern history. Southern racism was reinforced by new proclamations about race described in the early 1900s. Social Darwinism placed humans into different categories of species and gave favorable recognition to people of European decent. Racism adopted a scientific reasoning that many Americans understood as truth.<sup>64</sup> Combined with school curricula's lessons about race-based slavery in the South, many White southerners were led to believe they were genetically superior to Black people.

Out of Lost Cause ideals emerged newer forms of southern regionalism and prejudice in response to messages that suggested White southerners were victimized by northerners and their imposed laws which favored African American equality. During the late nineteenth century, the Lost Cause movement illustrated itself in heroic novels about southern White martyrdom. These works glorify the Old South as a pre-industrial "model of grace" that portrays Black slaves as happy and loyal to their White masters.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Blight, David W., *Memory and American History* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 42.

<sup>64</sup> Howell, Martha and Prevenier, Walter, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 136.

<sup>65</sup> Blight, 44.

Many of these stories' settings cross over into Reconstruction where innocent southern White characters become victims of wealthier northern aggressors who invade all aspects of southern life, and most significantly, policies concerning race. The authors of these novels portray African American figures as greedy, irresponsible, and inclined to carry out civil disobedience or violence against all southerners. The causes for these social conflicts collectively point to northern control over the South during Reconstruction.<sup>66</sup> These clearly defined protagonist/antagonist stories influenced southern readers to believe they were once victims of northern hegemony and therefore were within their right to uphold traditional institutions such as the second class treatment or perception of African Americans.

By the turn of the century the Lost Cause no longer received popular recognition. Yet the stories based on the ideology remained valid and well known among southerners. American pop-culture now illustrated itself more widely through Hollywood productions. The classic works of Lost Cause writings converted into films for mass audiences to view. A famous novel by southern author Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman* (1905), made into a movie entitled *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), became popular for its revolutionary cinema technique and plot establishment. The story, by D.W. Griffith, is summarized as a romantic saga where vice driven African Americans in the Reconstruction South take control over the local House of Representatives via the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Using political influence backed by an all-Black Federal militia they violate the rights of White citizens through harassment and intimidation. In response the ex-Confederate hero, Ben Cameron, organizes the Ku Klux Klan to save primarily White women from hordes of rapist African Americans and Mulattos already making their villainous presence felt in the community. The film was renowned in 1915 for its supposed historical accuracy. In

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

praise, President Woodrow Wilson commented that Griffith was, "...writing history with lightning. My only regret is that it is all so terribly true."<sup>67</sup> Griffith received national acclaim as a gifted director and a historical authority on Reconstruction. His movie created a nationwide craze for the Klan that contributed to its twentieth century rebirth.

Linda Williams, author of *Playing the Race Card*, mentions the impact *Birth of a Nation* had on the southern community as comparable to what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) did for northerners persuaded to sympathize with slaves:

*Birth of a Nation* converted American audiences to sympathize with the South.

The movie forged a new sense of national identity and false historical awareness out of the sexual threats of Black villains toward defenseless White women.<sup>68</sup>

Griffith himself was a product of Lost Cause ideology. During his youth he listened to his father, Col. Jacob "Roaring" Griffith, tell heroic war stories about defending the Confederate South and its traditional institutions. Behind his father's testimonies was an even larger backdrop of hyper-romantic novels such as *The Clansman* or *The Leopard Spots*, which created simplistic viewpoints about race that validated the Confederacy's slave culture.<sup>69</sup> These novels concentrate on specific racial themes that portray freed African Americans as threats to a civil southern society administered by sophisticated White citizens.

*The Leopard Spots*, also written by Dixon, and *The Clansman* show central focuses on real time fears commonly expressed by southern White men toward protecting White females. A popular prejudice was that African American men were perverse and eager to copulate with White women. Miscegenation played on the fears of many southern White men through the Civil Rights Movement. Ironically, some of the same

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<sup>67</sup> *The Ku Klux Klan: A Secret History*, The History Channel documentary: 2001.

<sup>68</sup> Williams, Linda, *Playing the Race Card* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001) 99.

<sup>69</sup> Williams, 102.

White men took advantage of their social statuses and the statuses of African American females in order to satisfy their own sexual desires.

According to author John Dollard, this double standard roots from an Old South tradition of White patriarchal dominance against all other members of southern citizenry that dated back to slavery times.<sup>70</sup> In 1937 he published *Caste and Class in a Southerntown* to educate American readers on the tendencies of White prejudice in the South. After he interviewed numerous southerners of all genders and races in an anonymous “Southerntown,” Dollard concluded that in the South, Black men were only able to sexually interact with African American women without retribution. White women could have relations exclusively with White men without social consequences. Yet White men were excused from any restrictions as to whom they wished to see intimately.<sup>71</sup> A White man having intercourse with a Black woman might have been seen as taboo, but no severe punishments were administered in comparison to the other scenarios.

Dollard also notes that most White adolescents in “Southerntown” lost their virginity to African Americans. Sex between White men and Black women was not uncommon in contrast to the so-called White adamancies toward segregation. One White woman mentioned to Dollard that all White men in her town have “had to do [sex] with Black girls.” She emphasized how easy it was for such circumstances to occur in her town.<sup>72</sup> The absence of consequences for mistreatment or exploitation of African Americans encouraged many Whites to continue this behavior and reinforced age-old habits of White male dominance passed down through generations.

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<sup>70</sup> Dollard, John, *Caste and Class in a Southerntown* (Charlotte, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 137.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Another cinematic example of southern numbness toward Black plight is the 1939 film *Gone With The Wind* by David O. Selznick and Victor Fleming. Like Griffith's film, *Gone With The Wind* shows remnants of Lost Cause beliefs in its application to the memory of the Civil War and Reconstruction. The plot is set in post-Civil War Atlanta, where White planters are characterized as victims of an invasive Northern force that shakes up the traditional racial-caste system. The African American characters fall into one of two camps. Some of them are loyalists to the southern cause. They are willingly servile to their ex-masters turned employers. In contrast to them are other freedmen, independent of White employers, who celebrate the Constitutional changes related to their new civil rights. To vilify them, the film highlights their taking for granted new freedoms bestowed on them along with abusive behaviors toward southern Whites.

The loyalists imply in their monologues an appreciation for White people taking care of them. They also ignore the fact that their former masters remain in control of the economy while still determining the lifestyles of their ex-slaves. When the main African American character, Ma'my, moves with her family onto her employer's new husband's plantation, she comments, "We rich now!" Ma'my is a domestic servant and gets to live inside the big house. Her contentment illustrates what Malcolm X referred to as the "house slave mentality" in contrast to the "field slave mentality."<sup>73</sup> Ma'my works in appealing slave conditions by serving masters inside the cool home in comparison to those slaves working at intense labor jobs in the fields. Throughout slavery and during segregation, many African Americans who worked in indoor conditions expressed a greater sense of appreciation and loyalty to White administrators. Those working under

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<sup>73</sup> Malcolm X illustrated the contrasted attitudes of Civil Rights Era African Americans who wanted civil rights reforms in opposition to White racism to African Americans who were complacent with their second-class status and continually dependant on White employers in spite of exploitation. During slavery, the same two attitudes were sometimes stated by slaves who worked inside the home in contrast to slaves that worked outside in the harsher conditions of the field.

harsher conditions were more apt to rebel or at least show contempt for White dominance in the working arena.

For a 1939 audience, however, Ma'my merely represents the ideal-content African American service worker as previously applied in Lost Cause memory. Regardless of where on the plantation Ma'my works, the contemporary audiences of *Gone With The Wind* see her and others behaving as humble and happy to serve their White bosses. Acting constantly obsequious, Ma'my runs to open and shut every door for anyone who is White. She compliments all White people and then returns to the background until her simplistic services are called upon again.

Such misperceptions encouraged White southerners to believe and pass down myths about slave master's benevolence while preventing considerations of the immoralities of caste placement of Black people either during slave times or in the newer South. Servile roles were where African Americans in movies remained and real time southern society continued to prevent Black citizens from attaining more sophisticated jobs with higher wages.<sup>74</sup>

Characters opposite to Ma'my are freedmen enjoying racial policy changes brought to Atlanta during Reconstruction. The film's director, Fleming presents these figures as crude and abusive toward Whites. They harass the main character, Scarlet O'hara, in a scene where she is traveling by horse-drawn carriage with her African American driver. In other scenes these antagonist-characters act lazy or drunk and portray urges to cause problems for White southerners.

The dual portrayals of loyalist Black characters and the abusive freedmen serve a mutual purpose in that they encourage prejudice. Southern audiences took away from *Gone With The Wind* a notion that African Americans depended on White people and

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<sup>74</sup> Williams, 201.

therefore could never be perceived as racial equals no matter which time period was considered in historical memory. These perceptions interwove into southern culture and were passed down and explained to southern White children during the Civil Rights Era.

The central theme of southern racism relied on the segregation initiative, in part, taught to many southern White citizens through historians. Separation of the so-called races consumed everyday life for all southerners. Historians of the South reported around a theme of divided worlds each occupied by one-color groups of people. In 1934, Ulrich B. Phillips, the leading historian on the South during that time, published an essay entitled “The Central Theme of Southern History,” in which he argued the main component of “Southernism” rested on the intention of southern Whites to uphold biracialism, or as he stated, “shall be and remain a white man’s country.”<sup>75</sup> Phillips claimed the South and its racial policies were forever embedded into southern culture. Yet he never presented racism as a byproduct of the southern system, and therefore, never explored the social drawbacks of prejudice. Even more consequentially to his readers, Phillips suggested that integration efforts within the South would always fail because of the consistent existence and demand of the Black field hand. The demand for such labor on plantations and farms further maintained that African Americans, based on a stereotype that labeled them incapable to perform certain duties, needed to remain under the administration of White people.<sup>76</sup> Phillips believed that segregation would always survive in order for the South to survive. In his numerous historical works on the South he never repudiated southern racial policies or segregation, and in fact argued for preservation, which so many White southerners endorsed through the Civil Rights Era.

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<sup>75</sup> Potter, David M., “The Enigma of the South,” from *Myth and Southern History*, v. 2: *The New South* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 38.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

Since the dawn of the twentieth century and leading up to the Civil Rights Era, many historians played a significant role to legitimize both segregation and indirectly the continued second class status of African Americans. Southern historian, David Goldfield argues these historians' inability to "rectify memory with history" had twisted facts sought out by southerners during the first half of the twentieth century and gave them historical information that in many cases enhanced their racism and prejudice. During the 1920s and 30s when Margaret Mitchell researched southern histories to write her novel, *Gone With The Wind*, she consulted the works from the leading scholars of the time such as Ulrich B. Phillips.<sup>77</sup> Around the same time, Louisiana State University Press produced its 1939 History of the South series in which one scholar considered by L.S.U. for the project, Francis Butler Simkins, warned his colleagues to reconsider "the innate inferiority of blacks" and reject "the gloomy generalization that southern blacks must continue in their present inferior roles." In spite of his enlightened view, another southern historian and candidate, Wendell Holmes Stephenson warned the editors that Simkins, although "quite familiar with the field" would "undoubtedly prevent the judicious handling of certain important questions, especially the race issue."<sup>78</sup> The University eventually elected not to use Simkins.

Racist films, books, and histories from the first half of the twentieth century indoctrinated prejudiced ideas into the minds of the grandparents and parents of White southern children from the Civil Rights Era. Over the decades prejudiced lessons taken from these works filtered through the next generation of southern society. Segregation prevented consideration of alternative explanations to counter the messages propagated by these forms of information. Without an alternative to the Lost Cause style of histories

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<sup>77</sup> Goldfield, David, *Southern Histories: Public, Personal, and Sacred* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2003), 15.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-17.

presented to young White southerners, prejudiced beliefs and racist deeds were a learned product of southern society going into the Civil Rights Movement. In spite of the guilt or responsibility prejudiced southerners bore for their behaviors, these culprits of racism and prejudice were also victims of a system never effectively checked by outside authorities such as the Federal government or historians. A vacuum for egalitarian thinking remained locked into southern culture for many generations following the emancipation of African American slaves, which in turn solidified prejudiced habits among millions of White southerners.

## Early desegregation: children are the pawns

Institutionalized racism continued to plague White southerners during the middle of the twentieth century. Half a century after *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), segregation was still a permanent fixture on southern society. A counter effort developed within the African American community to fight for civil rights and desegregate public institutions. The first battle line was drawn in the public schools and by 1954 the Supreme Court ruled to allow Black children to attend an “all-White” school in Topeka, Kansas. Fear spread throughout the southern White community. Specific paranoia related to the thought of White daughters sharing classrooms with Black boys.<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile desegregation of schools occurred within a year in other regions in Delaware, Missouri, and Washington D.C.

The counter movement against desegregation in the South from some members of the White community stepped up its effort through political rhetoric and terror. After the 1954 court decision, over one hundred members of the United States Congress, mostly influential leaders from the South, signed the “Declaration of Constitutional Principles,” which condemned the Supreme Court’s declaration of segregation as “unconstitutional.” The manifesto praised the “separate but equal” determination of segregation decided in 1896. They additionally declared they would, “use all lawful means to bring about a reversal” of the ruling, and they vowed to “refrain from disorders and lawless acts.”<sup>80</sup> Senator Harry F. Byrd (D-Virginia) vowed to develop a massive political plan that would return segregation to southern schools. Rhetoric such as this from southern leaders established a resistance movement aimed at keeping White people separate from different

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<sup>79</sup> Hampton, Henry, *Eyes on the Prize*, PBS Documentary: 1987.

<sup>80</sup> Franklin, John Hope, “The South and the Problem of Change,” essay from *Myth and Southern History*, v. 2: *The New South* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 117.

racial groups. Alternative solutions included student placement, the closing of certain public schools, and the opening of private all-White schools. Elevated resistances were exercised by white citizens' councils, which attempted to block African American freedom protests throughout the South.<sup>81</sup> Memberships in the Ku Klux Klan rose again in the late 1940s and 1950s out of the South.<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile various Southern politicians like segregationist Governor George Wallace of Alabama condemned integration as northern encroachment on southern society.

*The Southern Case for School Segregation* (1962) by southern author James Jackson Kilpatrick served as an explanation for how many White southerners preferred resistance to change instead of integration. The grandson of a Confederate captain, Kilpatrick's book defends segregated southern culture by noting its traditional racial policies that ingrained themselves over a period of three hundred years into an already conservative society. According to the author, conservative cultural tendencies were placed along thinking patterns known as the "Cavalier Ideal:"

The South maintains conservatism and faith by showing respect for the Church, individual variations, class, order and rank; all these are implicit in the Cavalier Ideal. Also, graces, elegance, nepotism, and tradition remain significant.<sup>83</sup>

Russel Kirk, author of *The Conservative Mind* (1960) adds to Kilpatrick's position in stating that southern conservatism specifically revolves around distaste for change, love for local rights, and an ingrained sense of social order that benefits both races.

Kirk and Kilpatrick also highlight the impact popular agrarianism had on the development of conservatism as a staple tendency of most White southerners. The pace of life is slower in the South. Kirk comments on the South's determination to preserve

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> *The Ku Klux Klan: A Secret History*, History Channel Documentary, 2001.

<sup>83</sup> Kilpatrick, James Jackson, *The Southern Case for School Segregation* (Richmond, Virginia: The Crowell-Collier Press, 1962), 39.

agriculture in response to heavy American industrialization and urbanization during the 1950s.<sup>84</sup> Kilpatrick expands on agricultural lifestyles having an influence on southern philosophy and preferences toward reform. He states:

We are by nature a contemplative people and I am inclined to believe this stems from agrarian tradition, meaning we prefer to keep change slow. Life in the country is slow, where diversions are few and hasty reforms are nil.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, many southerners expressed a continuous glorification of the past while embracing a strong sense of an unchanged community, local institutions, and class structures.

Age old thinking patterns such as these found in popular southern White culture no doubt impacted inclinations of White southerners to protect traditional institutions from integration with African Americans, who under the stigma of White prejudice, were perceived as dangerous to the fabric of the White community.

Raised in New Orleans, Kilpatrick describes his childhood conditions where he always remained separate from people of different color. “The Negroes were; we were. They had their lives; we had ours.” Kilpatrick describes the many limitations imposed on him by his parents in relation to race integration. He was not allowed to ask about Black institutions or befriend anyone who was not White. He of course could not explore the conditions of “Colored Only” designated areas. He describes how he and other southern children were taught to feel invisible fences and sense unwritten boundaries.<sup>86</sup>

Segregated conditions influenced Kilpatrick at a young age to see a need to remain separate from people of different skin colors and show contempt for those White individuals who integrated with African Americans.

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<sup>84</sup> Kirk, Russell, *The Conservative Mind* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1960).

<sup>85</sup> Kilpatrick, 28.

<sup>86</sup> Kilpatrick, 23.

These racial conditions combined with southern conservative attitudes naturally created a backlash of White resistance against change, particularly in the school system where children were the opening experiment in the integration project. Like pawns in a chess game, many southern children were used as the initial examples of desegregated environments during the early stages of integration. Some African Americans chose to attend predominant White schools that offered better resources and higher paid teachers based on the uneven distribution of wealth that benefited White communities over Black communities. Many other children [Black and White] were forcefully bused to institutions once segregated by color. Protective of the segregation system, and even more protective of their children, many White parents in the South rallied against the Federal government's intentions to desegregate the schools. But ultimately they could not stop integration for it was backed not only by influential politicians now, but also by a momentum driven Civil Rights Movement.

The experiences gained by these children were invaluable to their attainment of cultural awareness of other ethnicities. Long overdue, the integration program of southern schools enabled many White southern children to reduce their prejudiced habits and learn to accept changes applied to local race policies. The entire transition of all southern schools to be legally desegregated took over twenty years. In such time, different children gained different experiences toward integration. However, most White southerners of the Civil Rights Era attained awareness of African Americans as a part of their community, which broke down those "invisible boundaries" that Kilpatrick describes from his childhood.

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## **ABSTRACT FOR CASE STUDIES ON SOUTHERN WHITE CHILDREN FROM THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA**

In the course of revisionism of the history of the Civil Rights Movement within the context of secondary education and college survey courses I have included a brief sample of interviews to illustrate how oral history from another perception can be used to understand the complexities of a historical event. Out of four case studies I incorporate two timely interviews that I believe are most relevant to Florida history and the idea that many southern White children reformed their prejudiced perceptions toward race as a result of the reforms from the Civil Rights Movement.

Their testimonies provide insights on Civil Rights history and the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century southern White racism that I believe are not as commonly understood by American students in comparison to race crimes committed by other members of the southern White community.

The messages from these two interviews serve as examples of thousands of southern White individuals from the Civil Rights Era who were passively resistant to racial integration, but were omitted from textbooks, American history curriculums, and other works used in today's classrooms.

## CHAPTER 3

### Greg Garrison and his earliest impressions

The public schools in Jacksonville, Florida were among the last southern educational institutions to be desegregated by the Federal court. Eighteen years after the Supreme Court ruled segregation in public schools as unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*; a twelve-year-old Greg Garrison would finally experience racial diversity in his classroom through a school integration program enacted in the city. The experiences he gained were a product of the Civil Rights Movement. Once a victim of prejudiced indoctrinations, Garrison became culturally aware of others and learned to appreciate diversity in spite of his early upbringing.

Garrison was born in a segregated Jacksonville in 1958. He grew up around prejudiced and racist attitudes expressed by his family, friends, and community. His family had Old Southern ties from South Carolina. Many of his relatives had served in the Confederate army and passed down to their children resentful attitudes toward northerners. “When I was a kid, you know, whenever they talked about my navel they said, ‘That’s where the Yankees shot you’.”<sup>87</sup> Stereotypes and generalizations toward different groups of people became an everyday part of life for Garrison as a child.

Additionally his caste environment encouraged the belief that legitimate differences existed between him and African Americans. Before his junior high school was desegregated, his exposure to Black people was limited to a few servicemen at a local restaurant and a maid named Katrina who came to clean his home during the week. Garrison recalls, “A lot of people had a ‘Katrina’. I do remember [also] Wednesday evenings was known as ‘maids’ night out’. The ones [White families] who had the maid

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<sup>87</sup> Greg Garrison, interview by author, tape recording, Sanford, Florida, 13 October 2005, 3.

that stayed all week; those women went home on Wednesdays, and we would go by on the [school] bus, and you would see thirty or forty Black women in their uniforms. And they would all stand there at the bus stop on Roosevelt Boulevard waiting to go back to the 'Black' part of town.”<sup>88</sup> Constant separation from African Americans impacted young Garrison to think he only belonged with a specific looking group and had no reason to see non-White folks as part of the same entity.

Garrison’s exposure to African Americans at a young age was mostly limited to encounters with service people. He and his family would go out on Wednesday nights to Morrison’s Cafeteria in town where Black men brought White families trays of food and entertained the children for tips. Garrison specifically remembers that they “always wore gloves so they didn’t touch your food.”<sup>89</sup> In elementary school the only African Americans present were working as maids or food attendants in the back of the kitchen during the children’s lunch period. Garrison only saw them at lunch and once a year when they came to his class to fill out paperwork for their insurance. “I knew they were illiterate because the Black maids, we called them ‘colored’ back then, came into our classroom and lined up at Ms. Davidson’s desk so she could fill out their paperwork for them. And they had to tell their age and weight, and [one woman] said, ‘499’. We all howled in the room [because] she was a big girl, but not that big [of] a girl. I mean when you find people who are illiterate, they look stupid even though they may be of high intelligence. So it is easy to draw those [prejudiced] distinctions.”<sup>90</sup> The only African Americans Garrison saw on a regular basis were those individuals who worked in service industries such as table waiting or school custodial work. His lack of exposure to Black persons who worked in higher paid industries persuaded him to believe Black people

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<sup>88</sup> Garrison Interview, 7.

<sup>89</sup> Garrison Interview, 8.

<sup>90</sup> Garrison Interview, 8.

could only provide simple tasks for White individuals. Simultaneously he only witnessed White individuals work in higher wage jobs where they applied more scholastic skills in their work.

In his earliest memories of African Americans Garrison recalls his initial impressions. He saw them as fixed into servile status roles throughout the community in spite of his limited exposure to them. By age eight, he knew only those individuals working at Morrison's cafeteria, his school, and Katrina. Early understandings led him to view himself as automatically advantaged because of his skin color. He recognized too that his color matched the skin tones of people who worked in more prominent positions such as his teacher or his middle class father. Ironically, Garrison knew no African American children by this time, yet he was accustomed to receive respect from dark skinned persons who served him. He remembers, "the maids at school because the teacher would call them 'Bertha' or 'Clara' or whatever, and they would call her 'Ms. Davidson'. Katrina would call me 'Mr. Greg'."<sup>91</sup> Casual factors such as this influenced Garrison's child subconscious and soon encouraged him to view Black people as socially inferior to him or others designated as "White."

The caste environment Garrison was born into taught him that prejudice was a regular aspect of southern culture used to define the abilities of everyone. "A long time ago I was asking my father about Black people. And the inherent philosophy that Black people were not as smart as White people was very pervasive in my home. Including my mother up until the time she became a teacher. And probably the people they were exposed to who were Black were not very quick or learned."<sup>92</sup> The Garrison family sometimes hired a man named Satchel to work in their yard. Often he would show up drunk, but Garrison's father continued to provide Satchel with work, and gave him extra

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<sup>91</sup> Garrison Interview, 9.

<sup>92</sup> Garrison Interview, 11.

money whenever Satchel claimed he needed to go to his sister's funeral in South Carolina "for the eighteenth time."<sup>93</sup> Here was a case where Garrison's limited exposure combined with his parents' information, and this one real time example, Satchel, influenced him to look at African Americans with a fixed negative stigma that naturally enhanced his increasing prejudice.

Further preconceptions came from numerous casual-everyday experiences and hearsay from other White people in Garrison's neighborhood. "When I was a kid we told 'nigger' jokes in elementary school, [but] I had never seen a Black kid. Where'd we hear them? From uncles or from men on the street, or it got filtered down. Some boy told it who heard from his father. I've got tape recordings of my Uncle Slim singing to me as a child." Garrison sings his uncle's song, "Some people say that a 'nigger' won't steal, but I found Greg in my corn field."<sup>94</sup> He remembers that everyone in his home would laugh at the song, but his mother scorned Slim and said, "Slim, don't say that on the recorder."<sup>95</sup>

Garrison describes how his parents were more liberal than most of their contemporaries. After World War II, the Navy gave his father a promotion in the civil services department, which enabled the Garrison family to have a larger house and more money than most people in the neighborhood. Garrison believes that his parents' success encouraged them to not discriminate against their community's African Americans. "I think the poorer and less educated people were, the more they tended to not treat the Black domestics with [the] respect that my parents did. I think everybody has to feel better than somebody. And my father was the most successful person on our street."<sup>96</sup> As an administrator, Garrison's father was able to promote the first African American to

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<sup>93</sup> Garrison Interview, 11.

<sup>94</sup> Garrison Interview, 11.

<sup>95</sup> Garrison Interview, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Garrison Interview, 10.

a civil service supervisory position. Certain people in the neighborhood expressed their disapproval and rage in response to his father's gesture. They poured sugar in the family car's gas tank and others placed a rattlesnake in their mailbox. "It was a big deal when they had the first Black supervisor in the largest employer in Jacksonville. [But] people that worked around our house, my parents were better to them than the other people in the neighborhood were to the Black folks who worked for them. Katrina ate in our kitchen. In other houses the maids ate somewhere else. She sat down in my bedroom and played checkers with me. Other [White] people were different."<sup>97</sup>

Garrison remembers his father as one of the more sympathetic minded members of the community. "[He was] definitely prejudiced, but not discriminatory. In my own little definition, prejudiced people have pre-judgments about things. Discriminating people make actions based on those prejudices, and often those actions are incorrect in terms of their effect because their prejudices were incorrect."<sup>98</sup> The promotion of an African American to a supervisor's position threatened many of the White workers from Jacksonville. In such a case, however, their racism was merely a reactive measure in response to a greater fear that their jobs were at risk. "When things were segregated, people felt safe that the supply of cheap labor wouldn't come over and impinge on their ability to earn a living. And so the tool-workers in my neighborhood were much more prejudiced than the white collar-workers in our neighborhood."<sup>99</sup> Garrison illustrates here the divide between rational minded White southerners who primarily represented the middle to upper class professions, and those southerners who struggled for work and had more reason to fear competition for labor.

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<sup>97</sup> Garrison Interview, 10.

<sup>98</sup> Garrison Interview, 9.

<sup>99</sup> Garrison Interview, 12.

For Garrison, segregation was a way of life as it was for everyone in Jacksonville. He describes this period as a time when White people felt immediate safety from the invisible barriers established between them and African Americans. Real time barriers such as the river structure of the city gave a tangible feel to the segregation system. In spite of instant security felt against the feared Black community, White children like Garrison were part of an ongoing trend of youths that misunderstood race as a concept of superficial factors. Such a manipulation of human understanding victimized his generation and kept everyone boxed into specific undiversified environments.

## Confined to one world

During the Civil Rights Era, Jacksonville was segregated by nature in addition to the laws. The city is cut by numerous rivers and canals which then divided neighborhoods of specific classes from each other. Most African Americans went without their own personal forms of transportation, which made it difficult for them to cross into White neighborhoods. Such restrictions forced many of them to live in lesser-developed areas of town where they could purchase materials affordable to them. 'Poverty' was long associated with many White southerners' prejudiced stigmas of African Americans, and thus encouraged many Jacksonville citizens to think Black people were a threat to civil order. Natural and legal segregations helped quell White people's fears but also reinforced cultural myths, especially for children such as Garrison, who witnessed first hand enforced separations of the two so-called races in his community.

Before desegregation, Garrison remembers that he rarely saw African Americans. "For example, when I was a kid you'd go to the beach, and in Jacksonville they had a 'Black beach', and here's a fan. (He pulls out a waver fan given out at the beach and reads a slogan from it). 'American Beach',” he reads. Then he flips over the fan and reads, "Negro Ocean Playground, colored only. No Whites allowed. We couldn't go there. And this is one of their fans. It was like an advertisement for that beach. And look at the back.” The caption on the back reads, "Last one in is a nigger!"<sup>100</sup> Garrison comments on this one fan, its slogan, and the telling impact on his youth culture. "So when I was a kid and you went to the [community] pool you'd hear someone scream, 'last one in is a nigger!' And we all would jump in the pool because you didn't want to

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<sup>100</sup> Garrison Interview, 13.

be a ‘nigger.’ You [didn’t] know what one was. You never met one, but it was something you didn’t want to be. Sunday was the day the colored people got to go to the pool. That was ‘colored day.’ And [after Sunday] they drained the pool. In the summer, after Black folks swam in it, they drained the pool, refilled it, and re-chlorinated it. It’s a coincidence that right after the ‘colored day’ they’re refilling the pool. And on Monday the chlorine level was pretty damn high, I’ll tell you that.”<sup>101</sup> Black children were phantoms to Garrison. Segregation blocked many potential interactions with Black children while prejudice influenced him to associate their status as negative in comparison to him and his White contemporaries.

Commenting in hindsight about the ridiculous tendencies of the Jacksonville community in regard to racial policies, Garrison again recalls him and his friends with the ‘nigger’ jokes. “They had these fans, [that said] ‘Last one in is a nigger!’, and these are the ones they gave to Black people at the beach because it was hot out there. This was like all my life. When I was a kid, the Blacks still didn’t go to Jacksonville Beach, and certainly not Atlantic Beach. They went to American Beach because it was their beach.”<sup>102</sup> Such restrictions on both White and Black children enabled Garrison and his contemporaries to perceive race with superficial factors. Segregation rules established in his community encouraged rigid climates where emphasized color-codes ultimately shaped people’s beliefs that real human differences existed between people with different skin shades.

Garrison then ponders how some circumstances of racial interaction have changed little in his world today. Now a high school teacher, he states, “Just like you see now in my classroom, you know we’ve done a lot over the years, but I still walk into my room on the first day and there’s five Black people in one corner, [or] there’s six Hispanic

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<sup>101</sup> Garrison Interview, 13.

<sup>102</sup> Garrison Interview, 13.

people in the other corner.”<sup>103</sup> Groups of adolescents that continue to segregate themselves illustrate the consequence of unhurried efforts from American communities to integrate different ethnic groups. Throughout the South and the United States, neighborhoods usually consist of one predominant ethnicity. Limited exposure among different culture groups maintains prejudices among many of today’s American youths, which concerns Garrison.

He recalls during his own upbringing stories told to him about family restrictions against interactions with African Americans that filtered down to his own parents’ rules against certain forms of integration. “I remember my Uncle Marion told me that he was playing with one of his little [Black] friends because back then the Black ladies would bring their little ‘picaninnies’ [children], they were called, would bring them to work with them if it was acceptable. And they got to be about eight or nine years old, and my grandfather told my Uncle Marion he could no longer play with his friend because that wasn’t acceptable. And then my grandfather caught my uncle playing with him and beat him mercilessly for it. [My grandfather] took him to the woodshed, tore him up, which was not uncommon. People got tore up back then. My grandfather had feared for his developmental safety if in fact he continued to be friends with the Black people [and] that other White people would not accept that. He had to protect them from the prejudices that would be bestowed upon a White child that played with the Black children. Very similar to what you would see when a father might discipline a boy my age if he wanted to hang out with a Black girl.”<sup>104</sup> In spite of his parents’ more liberal tendencies, Garrison still knew that limits were set toward what social relationships he could or could not have with African Americans. Bringing a Black friend home or dating an African American female was never an option for him.

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<sup>103</sup> Garrison Interview, 13.

<sup>104</sup> Garrison Interview, 12.

Integration with different races was long overdue, especially in Jacksonville, but ultimately would be the solution for reducing Garrison's misconceptions. Moreover, he would find that African Americans were not inferior to him once he was put in a position to interact with them up close in a scholastic environment. He learned that ethics, common sense, rationalism, and human understanding or empathy dictated him to judge people on individual bases rather than make collective assumptions about people of certain colors. Ultimately, Garrison's integration experience made him more culturally aware but also enabled him to befriend more people from whom he previously was restricted.

## The busing project and its impact on Garrison

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision faced natural obstacles since most African American and White children continued to live in areas divided from one another. In order to encourage integration among American citizens, Federal courts throughout the United States ordered certain children to be part of a nationwide busing project that obligated students to board school buses at earlier times in the mornings in order to travel to schools in distant communities where a different predominant racial group resided and attended the school. The strategy here was to break down those invisible barriers between races established from segregation. Even in the North where communities were segregated by choice, and not law, the busing program was a hopeful experiment that could create more cultural awareness between White and Black students. While in the South, the program was a necessary step for children such as Garrison, who during his earliest years was legally separated from children of a different color, and therefore had developed deep prejudices that were quelled through the busing program.

Many Black and White parents criticized the program itself. They felt their children were unfairly placed in positions that obligated them to wake up extremely early in the morning to attend schools that seemed too far away from their homes. Throughout the Civil Rights Era, places in North Carolina, Michigan, Colorado, California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Garrison's Florida, and other areas experienced the busing project. Garrison's father complained that, "children shouldn't be agents of social change."<sup>105</sup> He felt it impractical that children were loaded onto buses at six o'clock or even earlier in the morning. He wondered too why the courts would not mandate

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<sup>105</sup> Garrison Interview, 14.

integration programs in the work place instead of using young students as the primary guinea pigs of a social experiment.

In Boston, where the program was instituted during the early 1970s, one anti-busing mother observed, “Some parents would keep their children out of school for five years to stop the busing.”<sup>106</sup> The Massachusetts busing experiment required its students to have police escorts dressed in riot gear and armed with rifles to escort them into their schools. Even Linda Brown Smith, daughter of the man who filed suit against the Topeka, Kansas Education Board in 1954, expressed conflicted views toward the program. She believed in the idea of attaining “racial balance in the school system.” She commented, “That is what my father was fighting for more than twenty years ago.” However, she felt apprehension because of a more immediate concern for her children’s safety. In her state, when the program was introduced in Louisville, also during the early 1970s, Black children were escorted by dozens of armed state troopers into the suburban Valley High School from county school buses. After they were dropped off, the same buses loaded a number of White students and drove them to the formerly all-Black Shawnee High School over on the west side of Louisville.<sup>107</sup> Armed guards around these students became a regular aspect of everyday school life in certain American cities that instituted busing programs. Safety for the students was a primary concern of the state governments who poured large funds into daily school bus escorts and crowd control measures. Nonetheless, these experimental ventures in integration created mass panic among numerous parents from both the African American and White communities.

In 1972, the Federal Court in Atlanta ordered the Jacksonville school system to begin its busing program. Unlike the extreme climates of tension and police protection that existed in other cities, the Jacksonville schools made a smoother transition with

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<sup>106</sup> Time Magazine Archive Articles, “The Busing Dilema,” Time Magazine, 22 September 1975, 8.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 1.

integration based primarily on the advanced planning which took place during the first half of the school year in the fall of 1971.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, only African American and White teachers exchanged schools at first. Students would not be part of the program until the following school year. Yet the Black teachers sent to Garrison's junior high school still faced difficulty when they taught only White children. Many of these students showed contempt for the new teachers based on those prejudiced habits developed through traditional community and family influences. Garrison recalls, "I remember the day the Black teachers came in. That was a heck of a way to do it because [they] were incredibly substandard to the White teachers at the time. They'd gone to third and fourth grade schools, had worked with group[s] of students who were significantly below the White students, so that the goals and curriculums were much less challenging at a Black school than a White school at that time."<sup>109</sup> Both the teachers and students had difficulties in adjusting to this new and abruptly imposed system of integration.

For Garrison and his peers the situation was awkward. Their school year was a division between one perceived normal fall semester followed by what was considered an extremely unusual spring. "And then all of a sudden in the middle of a school year, you go to Christmas break, and you come back, and your English teacher [is] gone, and there's this Black lady sitting there with a dialect that was not much different from the lady that cleans your toilets at home. It was an opportunity for mockery."<sup>110</sup> He expresses a belief that mockeries were a product of the lack of accustomed situations southern White children possessed in the face of African American culture. The way Garrison's new teacher spoke was something he and his peers were not used to in a

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>109</sup> Garrison Interview, 15.

<sup>110</sup> Garrison Interview, 15.

formal classroom setting.<sup>111</sup> The lack of understanding for some of the tendencies in Black culture created an uncomfortable climate for Garrison and made the remainder of the school year difficult to get through based on his lack of respect for his new African American teachers.

There were fearful emotions that worked against Garrison as a result of the abrupt change that took place that year. To combat those fears, he and his friends commonly made racist jokes about their teachers in private. “I think our prejudice came from the fact that the English teacher’s dialect was ‘Black southern’, and you know it could be made a lot of fun of. We used to tell jokes, you know, and made up stories about our English teacher saying, ‘flow’ instead of ‘floor’. [Her] giving a spelling test or somethin’, you know, and ‘flow’. [We’d pretend she’d say], ‘You kids can’t spell flow. F-l-o-w, flow, flow! But you stand on it everyday.’ We used to do those kind of jokes all the time. And so the prejudices developed because we were mad that folks up North were comin’ down here and shaking up something that wasn’t good and fair. And the changes came so harshly and abruptly that it caused a lot of fear. The Black teachers that I remember were very nice people, but I didn’t learn a lot during those years.”<sup>112</sup>

Garrison allowed himself to be distracted by his racist contempt and in turn did not succeed to the best of his potential in school during the 1972 spring semester.

Further resistance came from the White teachers who were ordered to travel to the all-Black schools on the other side of town. Many of them simply decided to quit their jobs and stay home rather than leave early to travel much farther away from their homes. Garrison remembers, “A lot of them didn’t even drive. A lot of them walked to school.

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<sup>111</sup> Stewart, William A., “Observations on the Problem of Defining Negro Dialect.” *The Florida FL Reporter* IX, Nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Fall, 1971), 47-57.

<sup>112</sup> Garrison Interview, 18.

You're talkin' twenty and thirty mile commutes [to these farther schools]. So their husbands would say, 'Just stay home, it ain't worth it.'"<sup>113</sup>

By the following school year, the integration project fell onto the students of Jacksonville's junior high schools. Certain White and Black areas of the town were now ordered to send their students on buses to travel to distant schools. In terms of becoming more culturally aware and less prejudiced, Garrison simply states, "It worked." After years of segregation and never really communicating on an even level with African Americans, he started to befriend some of them. His junior high school was the initial platform for his enlightenment. Seats were assigned by alphabet and so Garrison sat behind Michael "Tip" Gamble in one of his classes. He remembers how he and Tip got along "handsomely". In his yearbook, Tip wrote, "To my friend Greg, who is wise and intelligent. Be a great professor in the future. You coach and friend, [signed] Mike Gamble."<sup>114</sup> Tip was one of Garrison's first learned examples of how he and Black children were equal to one another. Moreover, Garrison realized that he could befriend people of different colors without negative consequences, and in doing so, become more culturally aware of other people.

Garrison recalls how during this time so many parents from his community complained and protested while he befriended these new kids. Yet the relationships he formed led him to ignore those disgruntled parents, and rather continue to focus on making more friends, which ultimately led to him to understanding the ridiculous aspects of his prejudice. "See we had a lot of fun with it 'cuz we still told the 'nigger' jokes. We still had fun with these kids and they had fun with us. There wasn't this racial tension at the school. It was just a bunch of kids. Listen to this (Garrison turns to a page in his

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<sup>113</sup> Garrison Interview, 16.

<sup>114</sup> Garrison Interview, 20.

yearbook). Here's from a Black girl named Rosina Hicks. And she and I used to tease each other all the time. She was pretty smart. She was in my class and I would pretend like I was for Governor Wallace. He was running for election. I have a pin that I used to wear at school to make her mad because she was, you know, 'Black power', and all that stuff, and I would pretend I was like the pig-headed southern White Dixiecrat,<sup>115</sup> but we had fun with it."<sup>116</sup> Garrison highlights the sarcasm and laughter, which developed between him and this student, and most of the Black and White children from his school. He reads the note written in his yearbook from Rosina. "Greg, you are the most irritating, disturbing, nauseating, pain in the neck-prejudiced friend ('friend' is triple underlined) I will ever know. Good luck, Mr. Know-it-all, [signed] Rosina. P.S.: Black is beautiful."<sup>117</sup> Garrison mentions here how these friendly and casual yearbook responses were a positive result in the initial reduction of his prejudice after only six months of integration.

To this day, Garrison appreciates his experience with the busing program. He feels that the integration that took place in his school was an initial persuasion in realizing the superficialities of race. He also notices the extreme limitations set upon his social world before junior high school when his community restricted him from interacting extensively with African Americans. In spite of the protests from some parents during the time, Jacksonville's busing program enabled Garrison and his peers to break down prejudices influenced into their psyche at younger ages. Southern racism was not completely eradicated; however, projects such as school integration opened the potential for a more egalitarian southern culture, which Garrison believes his southern community is closer toward in the twenty first century.

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<sup>115</sup> "Dixiecrat" is term initially referred to from a 1948 splinter group of the Democratic Party in 1948 that represented White southern interests for segregation.

<sup>116</sup> Garrison Interview, 20.

<sup>117</sup> Garrison Interview, 20.

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## CHAPTER 4

### The “southernization” of Warren Fox

At ten years old, Warren Fox and his mother escaped from Mount Morris, Pennsylvania and migrated into the South. The year was 1960 and Warren’s alcoholic father had recently burned down the family home one night after drinking heavily. An ongoing string of physical and mental abuses his father inflicted on the family prompted Warren’s mother to flee to her parents down south in Americus, Georgia. Yet the secured home life Warren’s maternal grandparents provided was countered by their prejudiced habits encouraged upon young Fox. The southern cultural climate that surrounded Warren further influenced a development of prejudiced habits. As he witnessed segregation applied in his home and community, his ideas toward race and Black people turned rigid with contempt. A “southernization” took shape within the mind of this northern newcomer when he adopted common White southern ideals of racial prejudices taught through community rhetoric and a new lifestyle where he witnessed the second-class treatment of African Americans.

Before the migration Warren had no negative thoughts against African Americans. He knew some Black people in the North, but was indifferent toward their color. He recognized them as regular people just as he saw himself and others with light skin colors. “In 1960 my opinion of Black people began to form. At first my opinion remained indifferent until I saw how my friends, relatives, and other White adults looked at them. And so I began to form similar notions, and my perceptions began to turn negative.”<sup>118</sup> The move to Georgia transformed Warren’s perceptions of race. Segregation was the primary persuasion that formed his new opinions. “I’m not going to

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<sup>118</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, interview by author, tape recording, Orlando, Florida, 27 October, 2004, 1.

say that the people in our town hated Black people. That wasn't it at all. 'Segregation' was the right word. White people didn't feel like they were discriminating [Black people]. If you said [to a White person], 'Why are you discriminating [against] Black people?', they would have a puzzled look on their face because to them they were not discriminating; they were segregated from the Black race. The Black people had their own churches. The White people had their own churches. The White people lived in a certain part of town. The Black people lived in another part of town. So it was very much segregated."<sup>119</sup> Warren's racism was a product of the local southern legal structure designed to reduce interracial interaction. His transformed ideas were based on the geographical relocation from North to South, thus illustrating the significance of location as related to racial opinions during the Civil Rights Era.

Warren recalls the immediate impact his new home and community had on his mental transformation. Segregation was everywhere in Georgia in 1960. "I saw it right away. We arrived after sundown at my grandparents' home, and the very next morning we arose for breakfast, and we were sitting around the dining room table having breakfast, and there were two Black maids in the kitchen fixing breakfast for us. Yet it never crossed my mind that they would not join us. Not one single time did they walk into the dining room, and when they fixed their own breakfast, they ate in the kitchen. I noticed immediately the segregation that was taking place. It wasn't paramount at first, but after witnessing it a series of times I began to understand the circumstances."<sup>120</sup>

Soon after Warren noticed acts of White supremacy casually carried out right in front of his grandparents' maids. "The 'N' word was used quite often, in front of them even. I can remember one of my relatives referring to Black people with the 'N' word with them

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<sup>119</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 1.

<sup>120</sup> Warren Fox Interview II, interview by author, tape recording, Orlando, Florida, 10 November 2004, 3.

listening in the kitchen, and that making me feel very uncomfortable at first.”<sup>121</sup> Initially, his maternal family’s references to their African American maids confused Warren. He concealed his discomfort mainly out of respect for his elders, but also in appreciation of their care for him and his mother.

The relatives he felt closest to, and those who sheltered him from his father, showed attitudes of superiority against African Americans never witnessed before by Warren. But the situation he and his mother were placed in pushed Warren’s sentiments closer toward his southern relatives and soon led him to mimic their behaviors. “You have to understand that I had deep respect for my relatives. Aunts, uncles, and grandparents, to me, were my saviors. They got us from a mean-alcoholic father. They gave us a home. They bought us shoes. They bought us clothes. If we didn’t have lunch money, they’d make sure we did. I think most of my prejudices came from people who I respected and loved who expressed certain attitudes toward Blacks.”<sup>122</sup> Their love combined with their racism fostered the development of Warren’s prejudice.

His father’s abuse played a role as well. Six months after Warren and his mother moved south, his father joined them in Americus, Georgia. Still an alcoholic, Warren’s father continued to hit him and his mother whenever drunk. Warren states that his father was never prejudiced to the degree his southern maternal relatives were. “I don’t think my dad was prejudiced. When he would drink I was always curious to find out where he would get drunk. Back in Georgia, “moon-shining” was a big thing. One of his sources was a Black man, and I know my dad would go to his house and they’d drink together. I remember when [he] would get moon shine I could always tell because it would heighten his drunkenness and his meanness would just be terrible.”<sup>123</sup> Warren emphasizes that his

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<sup>121</sup> Warren Fox Interview II, 3.

<sup>122</sup> Warren Fox, Interview II, 4.

<sup>123</sup> Warren Fox, Interview II, 2.

father's drinking friendship with an African American did not impact his own prejudice. However, the abuse inflicted on Warren developed certain insecurities, which he feels pushed him further toward a development of contempt for Black people. "I think sometimes we have to find ways to express our insecurities. And being raised by an alcoholic with all the physical and mental abuse that we had [made] our whole family insecure, and maybe that led to me trying to boost my ego or my security a few years later when I became a prejudiced kid toward non-Whites."<sup>124</sup> Meanwhile, his entirely southern maternal family nourished Warren whenever he needed to avoid his father, and so a close bond formed between him and these relatives.

Outside his home, Warren witnessed a real social divide between African Americans and White people in everyday community settings such as the grocery store or the bus stop. "Whenever I went into [the] store I saw White and Black people both there. There was nothing overt, but you could tell that the lines were drawn. They were in the same store, yes, and purchasing the same things, but there was still a division there and Blacks would stay to themselves. The Whites would stay to themselves. When they'd walk outside, the Blacks would take a place on one of the benches by themselves and the Whites would be by themselves."<sup>125</sup> Warren also recalls segregation in the movie theatres he attended as a child. The policy in his town, as in many southern towns, only allowed African Americans to sit in the balcony, which many southerners referred to as the Jim Crow Theatre Gallery. "The theatres I went to had a downstairs where Whites sat and the balcony where the Blacks sat." He assumes, "there was never a problem as far as the Blacks wanting to sit with the Whites or vice versa. [And] I remember thinking how fortunate I was to sit in the bottom in the larger auditorium."<sup>126</sup> Scenarios such as these

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<sup>124</sup> Warren Fox, Interview II, 2.

<sup>125</sup> Warren Fox, Interview II, 3.

<sup>126</sup> Warren Fox, Interview II, 1.

persuaded Warren to believe he and other Whites must remain separate from African Americans and eventually encouraged supremacy notions.

Early on Warren recognized the differences in quality of materials and properties made available to Black and White people. As a child he did not understand the far-reaching negative impacts of segregation on African Americans. He noticed a continual pattern of racial separation, but was unaware of the mistreatment of Black people in the South. Instead, his childhood logic told him that these people did not take as good care of their materials or properties as White people took care of their things. The rhetoric of many White southerners toward these conditions further encouraged Warren's prejudice. "I could see the difference in the quality of the water fountain, or the quality of the school. However, there was this concept that was paramount in the White community that White people took care of everything better than Black people. All kinds of slang terms and phrases were used to describe how Black people didn't care for their property as well as White people did. So this became a concept that I adopted pretty quickly."<sup>127</sup> One common phrase referenced to the condition of African American materials was "nigger rigged." The term was so casual that many White southerners even applied it to anything considered as junk. "If you fixed something and you didn't do a very good job at maintaining it, we would use the term 'nigger rigged.' And please understand I don't like using that word now. But that's the term I adopted when I was young because it described for us the difference between what we had as being better, and what the Black man had being not as good."<sup>128</sup>

In reflection of this part of his life, Warren pauses for a moment, and on his face arises a discouraging look. He turns gray as if he is ill. "When I look back I can see how victimized I was as a child. Moving out of a northern area where I had no opinion

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<sup>127</sup> Warren Fox, Interview I, 1.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

whatsoever about Black people. They were just like everybody else in my perception until moving to a deep southern community where within three years I had a very strong opinion about them. I wish that I could tell you as a young boy that I knew the difference between right and wrong, and I would have walked away from any kind of prejudiced perceptions. But I can't say that. I fell right in line with probably 99.9% of other people in my age category. In fact I didn't know one person or have a single friend that wasn't prejudiced to some degree. The interesting thing is that I think they were victims too, and I think their parents were victims as well. I don't know how far back we can go. [But] we can only claim victim-hood to a certain age and then I think we become responsible for breaking away from doing what is wrong."<sup>129</sup> Warren sees the South during the Civil Rights Era and before as a setting of suffering for all Southerners. He believes African Americans bore the harshest brunt of southern problems while White people like Warren developed racist ideas which devolved their ethical understandings.

In summary, Warren Fox's story is a product of time and location. First raised in the North, he had "no opinion about Black people." If he had remained in Pennsylvania he would not have grown up around segregation and not developed such strong racist sentiments. The rhetoric expressed by his southern family and peers, whom he respected in contrast to his father, entrenched prejudices into Warren's mind throughout his adolescence. The situation with his father gave his mother no choice but to move to the South where it was safe. She needed help from her family to protect her and Warren from an abusive man. Warren's development of prejudices was an accident of circumstances, meaning that his "southernization" indirectly resulted from the need to escape from danger into the arms of loving family members who themselves were a product of Old South culture.

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<sup>129</sup> Warren Fox, Interview I, 2.

## Integration on the tenth anniversary of *Brown V. Board*

In 1964, Warren first felt the effects of the Civil Rights Movement when four African American children enrolled in his high school. Until this period he experienced little contact with southern Black people. Four years had passed since his migration. Limited exposure and generalized myths about African American inadequacy embedded many common southern prejudices in his child mind. Influenced to be adamant against integration, Warren was extremely agitated at the idea of attending school with African American children. However *Brown v. Board of Education* obligated the state of Georgia to protect the rights of minorities. When four Black students chose to attend Americus High School, Warren had no choice but to become part of the integration experience where every day he considered ways to maneuver himself away from these non-White children.

Today Warren recognizes that fear motivated his contempt for integration. He believes too that fear commonly motivated many of his southern White contemporaries' contempt during the Civil Rights Era. "I think racism primarily is the result of fear, fear of the unknown. What will my life be like if I go to school with Black kids? I well remember going to school in southwest Georgia where it was the first year that four Black students enrolled in our high school. It was two young ladies and two young men. And you know I looked at them with such contempt. What right do they have coming in and breaking up what we have here? I didn't engage them in conversation. I didn't know them. I saw them at a distance."<sup>130</sup> His fear paralyzed all inclinations to befriend them or understand their struggles to integrate into a White school. The distance he maintained reinforced racist notions and prevented him from overcoming a common White southern

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<sup>130</sup> Warren Fox, Interview I, 5.

cultural fear of change.<sup>131</sup> In the South, many White people expressed conservative reactions to reforms that encouraged Warren to resist opportunities to experience new relationships with African Americans in his school.

His contemptuous attitude followed to northwest Florida when the family moved to Niceville the following year. Warren's father received a job opportunity, which transferred his family to a military community. A year before the family's relocation, the increased number of African American servicemen prompted Niceville to integrate Black and White students into its school system. Thus the climate here was different from what Warren was used to in Georgia. Less racial tension existed in the schools after the community became more accustomed to changes toward race integration as first exercised in local military jobs. Many of the children at Warren's new school accepted interactions alongside students with different skin colors. Warren felt out of place. He dealt with two awkward situations; the fact that he was a newcomer with no friends and that so many White children acted friendly toward Black children.

In the first semester he joined the football team, where some of the Black students already had a place. "Now I had to deal with playing football on the school team, which some Black guys were on before me. So now I'm on the same team, whereas before [in Georgia] I could kind of stay away from them and not worry about the situation too much. But now I'm playing football with them. I'm eating in the same cafeteria with them. They sat where they wanted to sit with Whites. It didn't matter to them. But now there's a prejudiced kid from southwest Georgia coming in without any reinforcement behind me."<sup>132</sup> In hindsight, Warren frowns upon the mental hurdles he placed in front of himself to avoid racial interactions. He regrets that he never wanted friends who were

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<sup>131</sup> Kilpatrick, James Jackson, *The Southern Case for School Segregation* (Richmond, Virginia: The Crowell-Collier Press, 1962), 27.

<sup>132</sup> Warren Fox, Interview I, 6.

not White. Resentful thoughts blocked the potential to enjoy his high school experience. However, he laughs now at some of the ridiculous behaviors he showed to avoid contact with any African American student or teammate. “I had to quickly align myself with some sort of strategy to know what to do if a Black kid ever sat down next to me. I’m thinking how can I maneuver this [to] where I won’t be caught in a situation where I would be sitting somewhere that a Black person might come and sit with me?”<sup>133</sup> Each day Warren struggled to satisfy his avoidance strategy.

More comfortable with segregation, his Georgian culture stood opposed to policies common in the Niceville military community. Many opportunities to interact with African American students presented themselves, but Warren was too nervous to try to understand change. “You see Black kids and White kids from southwest Georgia just didn’t do that. So now I need to know what to do if that [integration] occurs. Quite frankly I was confused. Usually I would become embittered whenever I came into contact with a Black person that attempted to encroach my space.”<sup>134</sup> In contrast, Warren was able to find many White students who shared his sentiments and so he stayed close to them. “I did begin to see that there were some White kids who had a problem with integration.” These students represented the Old South manner of thinking toward race. After a few months he engaged himself mostly with these students and felt somewhat more comfortable at his new school. Yet their rhetoric helped maintain Warren’s racism throughout the remainder of his adolescence.

In spite of the more integrated Niceville environment, there still existed a climate of southern conservatism common throughout North Florida that encouraged adamancy among much of the South’s White population. Warren did not move too far from Georgia and still resided in a community where Old South tendencies, such as support for

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

segregation, continued to thrive among its citizens. He and many people from his town resented changes toward racial policies as a result of their cultural teaching. Many White southerners struggled to avoid integration based on being used to a system that remained intact and unchanged since the end of Reconstruction in 1877.

Many White southerners wanted things kept the same. “I think what southerners resented most were Whites from the North who came down and tried to force us to integrate with Blacks. At the same time, we southerners had a fair respect for Black people that knew where the lines were drawn.”<sup>135</sup> Segregation encouraged prejudice while federally enforced desegregation reinforced contempt for both African Americans and the Federal government. Warren disapproved of lobbying efforts by politicians who wanted integration, as shown in their support for the Civil Rights Act (1964) or the Voting Rights Act (1965). He and many White southerners during the Civil Rights Era grew enraged at President Lyndon Johnson and new liberal Democrats from the North such as Senator Robert Kennedy (NY) who advocated integration, with particular focus on the South. Warren recalls, “We looked at Lyndon Johnson with disdain. The Republican Party seemed to be the party that best represented our views.”<sup>136</sup> His conservative views, shared by many White southerners at the time, could not prevent the momentum of reform, however in the face of the Federal government’s initiative to integrate the schools.

By the mid-1960s, segregation entered a phase out stage where both Federal and state governments encouraged institutions such as Warren’s school to allow integration. The courts validated desegregation policies and White southerners in favor of segregation could do little to stop new laws which eventually molded a newer southern culture that promoted egalitarianism among the different so called races. Warren’s upbringing

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<sup>135</sup> Warren Fox, Interview I, 8.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

prompted him to align with anti-desegregation ideals. He preferred the older system and so did many of his White southern contemporaries. His contempt grew in response to the changes, and after high school he allowed his lifestyle to spiral into a continual series of negative behaviors and attitudes.

## Salvation through faith: Warren discovers Christianity and loses his racism

School integration never helped Warren to consider the superficialities of prejudice nor to befriend the tiny minority of African American students who attended his high schools. His school allowed anyone to attend regardless of skin color, but his adolescent life continued along a segregated social path where he only associated with White people. After high school he developed a drinking and drug problem. He was angry because of his family situation. His father remained an abusive alcoholic figure whose lack of parenting led to confusion and misbehavior. Warren describes himself during this period as “lost” without any sense of purpose or ethical values. Yet after he turned twenty-one, Warren experienced a day in which his aberrant behaviors transformed into a meaningful philosophy guided by religious and spiritual virtues. This transformation Warren describes occurred “in a twenty-four hour period” where he ridded himself of his addictions and his racial prejudices. He became a true believer in Christianity. The philosophies of Jesus led Warren to a discovery of new meaning in ethical perceptions that strictly dictated egalitarian notions toward all people. His awakening terminated his racism and helped him accept African Americans as equal people in his community.

Warren’s disruptive home life and relationship with his father contributed to his detrimental habits. “I was very bad at that time. Prior to knowing Christ as my Lord and Savior I was into drugs. I was drinking a fair share of alcohol; the very thing I said I would never do because of my father’s example. I was doing other things too that were certainly against my upbringing.”<sup>137</sup> His racist ideals, encouraged by the upbringing he received from his maternal relatives, increased as well as his father’s treatment of both

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<sup>137</sup> Warren Fox, Interview II, 6.

Warren and his mother. He suffered a harsh adolescence at home because of the relationship with his father and believes, “I needed a stimulus in my life to get me thinking that there were other people that just weren’t as good as us.”<sup>138</sup> The combination of his father’s abuse, maternal relatives’ influences, and the culture of the White South during the 1960s solidified Warren’s anger and racist perceptions toward African Americans.

After he turned twenty one-years old, Warren remembers a specific night that changed the way he looked at all people. A series of Christian revival sessions took place in Niceville in 1970. Warren developed an interest to attend a few of these services at his nearby church. He and his parents always considered themselves Christian, however Warren admits that neither he nor his family were ever real believers in the faith. After hearing a pastor speak, Warren returned a few nights later to learn more about the philosophies of Jesus. “I went to a church service. We were having a revival service in our hometown. We had a very typical situation taking place where we had an evangelist come to our town and share about the gospel of Jesus Christ. I went a couple of nights prior to that just out of interest. And then on Wednesday night I went, and for some reason what he was saying really identified with me. He was talking about who Jesus Christ is and what he did when he came to the Earth. [He mentioned] the fact that he lived a perfect life, and he certainly didn’t deserve to die on the Roman cross, but he did.”<sup>139</sup> Here Warren reflects on his own mistakes made as a young man. “The scripture teaches that he took the sins of the world upon him, and I saw that night all my sins and all my prejudices and acts of unrighteousness being taken by him up on the cross. And I realized I had a debt to pay for all of the unrighteousness that I experienced in my life. And that night I prayed to Jesus to forgive my sins and come into my life and be my

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<sup>138</sup> Warren Fox, Interview I, 6.

<sup>139</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 3.

Lord. When I walked out of the church that night I walked out a completely changed person.”<sup>140</sup> Warren emphasizes that a transformation of his ethical thinking took place here, and over a “twenty four hour period” he became self-improved through the guidance of his new faith and the philosophies of Jesus, his new Lord.

His opinions about race and African Americans did not change immediately after the service or during that night. Warren admits that his racial prejudices were well embedded into his mindset, and he needed to first develop a better understanding of Christianity in order to understand the value of applying egalitarian beliefs to race. “I didn’t walk out wondering how my opinion about Black people was going to change because that wasn’t foremost on my mind. But as I began to think about my new life in Christ, I eventually began to think about other people of course. Probably for the first time in my life I realized that Christ died for all the people of the world, not just the White people. He died for the Black people, the yellow people, the red people, everybody, the human race. He took the sins of the human race upon himself. I saw my sins as part of that without the White race having any advantages whatsoever. And so my entire concept of people of different color changed.”<sup>141</sup> Warren went home and read the Bible. He looked at the examples written about Jesus, which illustrated divine equality applied to all people. These Biblical accounts persuaded Warren to see White people in the same light he now viewed African Americans and all other people.

Warren recalls the story that most significantly changed his racial prejudices. He enthusiastically read the Bible every day soon after the revival session and came across the story where Jesus traveled to Samaria. “In the gospel of John, Chapter Four, it’s very clear that Jesus did something that was unheard of during his time. He went to an area of Israel called Samaria. The Jews in southern Israel (Judea) and the Jews in northern Israel

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<sup>140</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 4.

(Galilee) were very prejudiced toward the half-blooded Jews that lived in the middle section called Samaria. And Jesus went to Samaria where he stopped at a well. A woman came to draw water and he engaged her in a conversation. Now, number one, Jews didn't walk through Samaria routinely. Instead they walked around Samaria. They were that prejudiced. Number-two, Jesus spent a considerable amount of time talking to a woman of Samaria, which was very taboo. He went out of his way to show his disciples his willingness to break down social barriers."<sup>142</sup> Warren took away from this story the need to integrate himself with more people and not allow skin color to factor into his consciousness. Christian philosophy convinced him that all people were equal, and prejudice was a sin he bore throughout his youth in the South. He now felt determined to rid himself of all of his sins and attempt to live a better life without anger or racism.

Warren also learned through Christianity the need to forgive himself and others such as his father, in order to attain a better life. He felt that salvation could only come if he accepted responsibility for his own actions, understood the actions of others who harmed him, and realized the need to forgive and forget whatever wrongs he was subjected to in his youth. "The Apostle Paul wrote in chapter three of *Romans* [that] all of us have sinned, and we've all come short of the glory of God. And that night I prayed a simple little prayer. I said, 'Lord Jesus, I've tried and failed many times. But tonight I place my confidence, trust, and faith in you. That you bore my sins on the cross I don't have to pay the price of them in eternity. So I ask you to come into my heart. Give me eternal life. Make me the kind of person I've not been able to be myself.' And that was my religious experience."<sup>143</sup> Warren lifted the weight of his troubles off of his consciousness. He knew he was not perfect and he realized he was not a superior human

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<sup>142</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 4.

<sup>143</sup> Warren Fox Interview II, 5.

being to anyone. With these anguishes out of his mind, he became able to live a more pure life without contempt for any person, be it an African American or his father.

Looking back, Warren reflects on those difficult years during the Civil Rights Movement. He understands that the 1960s necessitated social transformation in the South in terms of race relations, desegregation, and the ways in which many White southerners viewed African Americans. He recognizes too his own need as a youth to change his racial perceptions. “There was a great deal of shame, regret, and even guilt for the way I felt at a younger age. For the way I felt in high school, worrying about a Black person sitting at my table. I’m fifty five years old and I still am ashamed that I did that.”<sup>144</sup> In looking back, Warren feels appreciative of the changes that took place in his community that in turn changed his own thinking. He remembers when the idea to integrate Niceville’s churches came up in various congregation meetings. “After the race riots of the 1950s and 60s occurred,<sup>145</sup> and the emphasis was put on civil rights, we saw many Blacks coming out and wanting to go to White churches. And I think that was healthy for us. It’s kind of like having a bad tooth extracted. You know what I mean? You have a cavity, and the longer you put it off, the worse the pain becomes. Eventually you got to have something done with it. And I think the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was the extraction of that bad tooth. I’m certain America is being mended today. It’s healing from the pain that we suffered in those days.”<sup>146</sup> For Warren, the Civil Rights Movement ran parallel to his religious awakening and helped him recognize the contempt he showed for African Americans, which he realized contributed to his suffering as an angry-racist person during his youth after moving to the South.

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<sup>144</sup> Warren Fox Interview II, 7.

<sup>145</sup> During the Civil Rights Era, a series of riots occurred in various American urban areas such as Chicago (1951), Los Angeles (1965), and Detroit (1967) as a result of African American tensions toward American White racism which hindered their social status’s in the urban communities.

<sup>146</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 3.

Today Warren serves as a pastor at a neighborhood church in Orlando, Florida. The religious awakening he experienced at twenty-one years old carried over into a career. He reads the Bible everyday and considers the value of inclusiveness of all people. On Sunday mornings he sometimes glances at his congregation and is disturbed by the predominant color of the people at his service. At times he will encourage people from different cultures to attend his church. From that he feels he is playing a part in the modern culture of the South that welcomes integration. “It feels wonderful because I feel like I’m having a big part to do with that. Here’s a man, fifty five-years old, having very strong prejudiced feelings as a young boy, yet now a man, having learned the lessons of life. Having shucked off the bad teachings, I’ve had three children and six grandchildren, and I’m able to teach them that God loves people of every race. So I’m glad that it all happened and that I have an opportunity to help justify and to correct the wrongs that I’ve experienced in my life.”<sup>147</sup> In 2006 Warren is a complete reverse of who he was before 1970. In addition to his changed views about race he has also developed a felt purpose as a human being who only wants to help all people in his community, while never judging them based on their skin color.

Warren illustrates how geographical location, family influences, and education can transform a person from the North into a southern White racist. He moved to the South at age ten where certain family members encouraged him to think negatively about African Americans. Southern culture and segregation further amplified his prejudices, which turned him into a racist. But education in Christian philosophy and the teachings of Jesus reshaped Warren’s old thinking into an open-minded application of egalitarian ideas toward his fellow human beings. Skin color disappeared as a significant factor in determining character and thus helped Warren become a happier and better individual.

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<sup>147</sup> Warren Fox Interview I, 5.

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## CONCLUSION

If ever an elephant stood in a room a person could not see it entirely from one place. To get a full image of the creature that person would need to walk around the room to understand that more information exists beyond one space. The Civil Rights Movement's history traditionally presents an exclusive perception. Most of its historical reports introduce accounts from individuals who experienced harm, generally southern African Americans who suffered under segregation for over a century following emancipation. Additional accounts from information related to those persons who helped quell segregation, such as civil rights workers, often follows in the reports. To complete the history of this period, historians must seek all those individuals who were participants in the struggle for civil rights, which includes White southerners who resisted desegregation during the 1960s and 1970s. In order for students of history to see the entire elephant, historians are responsible for delivering a total history by providing all relevant information, evidence, and testimonies available to them that relate to their topic. Otherwise, history students remain less informed and less able to appreciate or understand the full contemporary historical environment.

Textbooks are the beginning point of information for students. The generalized reports often found in texts, which are mostly based on limited space, budgets, and political pressures, glosses over many significant facts, figures, and characters that are vital to understanding the history of the Civil Rights Movement. The most practical solution is for text authors to include new sections dedicated to White prejudice in American history that explain social, economic, and cultural factors which contributed to many White people's sentiments toward race. Specific attention on this topic is needed on the history of the South and the manner in which the Civil Rights Era transformed and

continues to transform many White southerners, some of whom grew up around racist indoctrination. Their struggle to reduce prejudice and learn to appreciate egalitarian values has yet to receive its deserved attention in most texts distributed in American high schools and college survey courses.

Young Americans who did not live during the 1960s and 1970s are at a slight disadvantage, in comparison to many contemporary authors and teachers, when trying to know what conditions were like and how people dealt with the time period's climate and controversies. The courses that students take during their adolescence and the textbooks they read are the foundation for understanding in depth the Civil Rights Era.

Through listening or reading recorded interviews from White Southerners alive when reforms of racial policies were inserted into their community lifestyles helps students further explore other southern perspectives. When students witness these narrations in any number of forums, such as in a classroom or on television, they will learn about the impact of change brought to the White South as a result of desegregation.

The account on busing in Greg Garrison's adolescence illustrates how a social experiment can influence a young prejudiced child, who never really knew an African American, to change his perceptions of race. His story presents an argument that today's students, some of whom experience twenty-first century busing, can analyze and consider the benefits in comparison to the negativities of such projects. Does the government have the right to mandate children to board school buses at earlier times in the morning and travel to distant school districts in order to develop their appreciation for racial integration? If so, is it the province of the judicial, the legislative or the executive branch of government to mandate such change? How did it benefit Garrison? How would it hinder a student who is obligated to travel to a farther school? These are questions that naturally enter a student's mind when studying such an issue. But the issue is more fully

developed when the topic of White southern prejudice during the Civil Rights Movement is brought to students' attention. Like many of his contemporaries, Garrison never threw bricks at people or bombed a church. His resistance was passive, yet many textbooks exclusively present extreme accounts without showing another more common side of southern prejudice that involved non-violent responses from the southern White community. Learning about the transformation of people like Garrison will broaden a student's understanding of the impact of the Civil Rights Movement while also enhancing an appreciation for integration.

Warren Fox's story proves that geographical and cultural influences impact prejudices, thus discrediting racism as a natural behavior. A human being taken out of his initial environment and placed into a world of segregation and popular prejudices against African Americans illustrates the fact that racism is a product of indoctrination. Warren's southern family, friends, and community helped develop his beliefs. Negative myths about African Americans solidified Warren's racial sentiments as a child. The social barriers placed in front of him, which kept him from integrating with Black children, further enhanced his racism. Unlike Garrison, he could not benefit from a busing program, and might not have discovered the superficial realities of racism as a young adult had he not discovered a faith that preached love, self forgiveness, and respect for all people. Just as his relocation changed him a decade prior, Warren's religious awakening quelled his racism. His account proves prejudice is but a learned concept.

Historians of Nazi Germany write volumes on German propaganda from the 1930s and 1940s. They emphasize the nature of its influences on the German people from that time and the manner in which films, books, and articles contributed to popular anti-Semitism within the Third Reich. Similarities can be seen between Nazi propaganda

and American race propaganda following Reconstruction (1865-1877) and through the first half of the twentieth century.

Southern racism toward African Americans was indoctrinated within the fabric of 20<sup>th</sup> century southern culture. Beyond segregation were books, articles, and films from this period that depict African Americans in servile or disobedient roles. Those Black figures' content with their status in a White-dominant society showed total loyalty to their employers/masters. Characters like Ma'my from *Gone With the Wind* are obsequious to White individuals. They express no dissatisfaction with their secondary social status, nor any inclination to socially mobilize within their southern community. The portrayal of disobedient African American characters, such as the freedmen in *Birth of a Nation*, implies that Black people during Reconstruction wanted to injure White southerners and break up the organized structure of the South. Historical works such as these films impacted twentieth century southern thinking. Prejudice and racism were their byproducts, which relatives passed down to their children going into the Civil Rights Era.

A significant percentage of America's students graduate high schools and colleges without learning the impacts of the Civil Rights Movement on White southerners. The southern White population from the 1960's is recognized for its prejudiced and racist behaviors toward African Americans. However, only specific incidents are emphasized. Racial hate crimes often dominate sections about White racism in Civil Rights histories. As a result, many students fail to understand what other types of resistances took place, let alone the racial confusion experienced by southern White children.

Learning about Civil Rights history with such additional insights enhances awareness for the topic and thus proves to students that racism and prejudice are learned concepts based on culture, geography, and social influences. From such an education

students will then understand that prejudice is not a natural human behavior and racism can be reduced through understanding its history and hearing testimonies from people who experienced it.

A total history of the Civil Rights Movement and race relations in American history necessitates the perceptions of those racists who significantly motivated the struggle for minorities to achieve equality in the South. Students in high schools and early college level history courses are not provided with effective materials that properly disclose information about racism in history in relation to its social and cultural factors as revealed in certain academic works and oral histories. Testimonies from southerners from the Civil Rights Era, revision of textbooks and other elements in curricula that specifically address the background and evolution of White racism in the South will enable students to understand more thoroughly the history of the Civil Rights Movement and other race related issues in American history.