Never Forget Where You Came From: An Oral History of the Integration of a Rural Community

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NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE INTEGRATION OF A RURAL COMMUNITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

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M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 2011
May 2014
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My topic was focused around my narrators, and I would be remiss if I did not thank them for their time, hospitality, and their patience in helping me to discover the story of how Zachary was able to desegregate. All of my narrators welcomed me to their homes, offered drinks and food, and best of all, their stories. I hope they will share my pride in the document we created together.

I would also like to thank my committee, Dr. Roland Mitchell, Dr. Jacqueline Bach, and Dr. Joyce Jackson, for the time that they spent reading my drafts and giving comments to help improve my document.
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Because she will be the last one reading this before it goes to print, my final acknowledgement goes to my editor. Heather Johnston-Durham, who has been with me from the beginning of my general exams, and I am not sure that with my comma aversion I would have made it past that point without her help.

I began this project wanting to know how Zachary integrated their schools, but I came away with many friends and a knowledge base about small rural cities that will stay with me for life. Thank you to the city of Zachary for being so welcoming.
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ABSTRACT

Historians have written much, particularly about large urban cities, on the desegregation of the American school system (Anderson 1988; Fairclough 1995/2008; Watkins 2001; Irons 2004). However, little research has been conducted on the role that small communities played in supporting and influencing the development of desegregated school systems, and how African Americans in these communities experienced education. The focus of this research will be on the oral history of a rural community in Louisiana that desegregated schools in the early 1970’s. Instead of avoiding desegregation, this community, was unique in choosing to create a unified school district in which all children were able to integrate which was unlike large urban school districts. Zachary’s unusual response to integration was the result of the efforts of both Blacks and Whites.

Using the methods of oral history, I examined how the school community of Zachary was able to adjust to desegregation. My primary question was, how did the community experience desegregation? What shaped and constructed an interracial community that struggled with the complexities of race and integration? As these issues were examined, research was conducted by recording oral histories of White and Black teachers, principals, and community members. I examined archival records, including newspapers, yearbooks and documents of the city of Zachary. Together, these data sources painted a picture of how this community created unified school for both Black and White students.

Zachary’s pragmatic choice to unify their schools in order to comply with the federal integration order brought to light the themes of integration as a bitter pill, unintended consequences of integration, and intended consequences of integration. By examining these themes I was able to determine how this small rural community was able to unify their system
with a positive long term outcome when many cities are still trying to gain a handle on integration 40 years later.
CHAPTER 1: DO NOT FOLLOW WHERE THE PATH LEADS, GO INSTEAD WHERE THERE IS NO PATH AND LEAVE A TRAIL

They would instill into us that education was our only hope for ever reaching progress. The less you know, the less you are going to make. So they would always try to instill that in us. They would always teach us to aim at the stars and not the moon. Because if you miss the moon, you hit the ground. If you miss the stars, you could get to the moon. Cepheus Lea – African American Student (Walker, 1996, p. 121)

Zachary

I came to Zachary, a city of 15,000 in the deep south of Louisiana, after living on the East Coast in the larger cities of Raleigh (a little over a million people), and New York (over 8 million people). As someone who had lived in big cities and who had not considered herself a Southerner, I did not have high expectations for what I would find in the small rural schools of Zachary, Louisiana. What I did know is that in 2007 Louisiana was- and still is- ranked one of the lowest out of all of the states in terms of academic performance.¹ I knew that Zachary was the number one school system in the state, but I did not know how the Zachary school system would compare to the academically tough school district that I was leaving in North Carolina (Lussier, 2011). I was also aware of the reputation that small rural cities, especially in the South, have regarding racial relations. The two things that I knew about desegregation in Louisiana were the story of Ruby Bridges, and the East Baton Rouge (EBR) desegregation lawsuit that ended in 2003 and had been the longest running such lawsuit in the country (Lussier, 2011).

When I arrived in my 2nd grade classroom in Zachary I did not know what to expect. I found a rural community with a total citizen population of 35.4% Black, 61.7% White, and 3.5% Asian, according to the 2010 Federal Census Bureau. I found schools that were racially integrated with 48% Black and 52% White and were enthusiastically supported by the community. I was not expecting to find a school system that was racially integrated, given that most school districts in

¹ In 2009, Louisiana was ranked as the 4th lowest in the nation in educational achievement in the Quality Counts report published by Education Week. (January, 2014)
the state were not integrated. East Baton Rouge, the neighboring city, had a racial makeup of 45% Black and 49.8% White, and the schools were 87.54% Black and 12.46% White. The Zachary community has achieved integration through a “clustering” system in which every child goes through the same schools during their K-12 experience. This clustering system has been successful in integrating the school system in Zachary since 1971, far in advance of most Southern school systems.

What I learned during the five years I taught in Zachary is that the schools are supported by the community, and that this support is one reason that the schools are ranked number one in the state. The district has been the number one school system in the state as determined by the Louisiana Department of Education, “earning an A for its entire school district” (Lussier, 2011, p.1) for the past nine years. Everything in the city revolves around the schools. The importance of the schools becomes visible when they are used, instead of the city hall or a large church, as geographic landmarks. Indeed, even though Zachary is small, I got lost when I first arrived, and I noticed that as I was given directions to Wal-Mart or the Post Office, all directions were relative to the nearest school. I would not be told what street to turn on, but how far it was from the nearest school to the building I was trying to locate. This was one of my first insights into how much the school system meant to the city. The city is a self-proclaimed community school district, in which, as the former Superintendent Warren Drake describes, “all stakeholders in the community are committed to ensuring that all students are awarded the opportunity to be their very best” (Zachary Teacher Handbook 2012, p. 4). The schools are supported by the parents, teachers, and community members, as well as the local businesses.

2 “Clustering” is a term that is used when grade levels are grouped together so that the students all go to the same schools in the same order whether they are Black or White.

3 In 2012, Zachary Community School District celebrated its eighth straight first-place ranking in the state for its district performance score.
History of Zachary

Twenty miles north of Baton Rouge, Zachary was established as a railroad town in 1880. The town grew quickly due to the fact that a new rail road stop had been built by Mr. Daniel Zachary. The railroad replaced steamboat shipping that had occurred in nearby Port Hudson and allowed Zachary to build up as a town (Jennings, 1998). Zachary, Louisiana established its first private school in 1887 and its first public school in 1900, both of which were for Whites only. The first mention of a public, White school in Zachary was in the city hall minutes of September of 1900. In December of 1900, $100 was appropriated for the land on which a school building was to be erected. It was not until 1912 that there was a public high school for Whites. The Black school at the time was private and classes were held at the Little Star Baptist Church, which opened in 1905 and housed grades 1-6. The first public Black school building, named the Zachary Colored School, was built by the Rosenwald foundation in 1934. A Black public high school in Zachary did not exist until 1954.

In 1901, the White Masons proposed to the town council a two story public school where the Masons would have access to the top half and the public school would be located in the lower floor. The building costs would be borne by both the White Masons and the community, and so would the cost of upkeep of the roof and the building. The motion was passed, and the town agreed to unite with the Masons to build the school. No taxes supported the school or the two teachers who taught there. The community and the Masonic society supported the school entirely with their donations.

---

4 There are no public records on the Black school; my information comes from my narrators.

5 The Rosenwald foundation was created to help support Black private school by a White Northern Philanthropist. Rosenwald schools were created by a matching a donation from the Black community and the foundation.
Today, Zachary is centered on the community school system. As a former teacher in Zachary, I taught at the elementary school that housed every 2nd and 3rd grade student in Zachary, so trips to Wal-Mart were never quick, but always filled with kid hugs and conversations about how the child I taught two years ago was now doing at his or her new school. Even now, I cannot go to dinner at any of the three restaurants in town without some child saying to her mother, “Hey mom, that’s Ms. Stone, she is so and so’s teacher.” This makes me feel special, and my former students and their parents have a connection with me so that years later they will call and ask for advice or a letter or just to say hello. To me, this is the mark of a community that values education.

The schools in Zachary are cornerstones of the community, and the community supports the schools with their time, money, and dedication. The parents and grandparents, as well as the businesses, take ownership in the education of the students in Zachary. As one business owner said to me recently, “Our taxes are high, but we get it all back with the education of our students” (personal communication, January 1, 2013). This individual is 81 years old and does not even have grandchildren in the schools any longer, but believes that the community should support the system of educating to the best of its ability. Mr. Nezianya, the president of the Zachary Chamber of Commerce used this quote to describe Zachary, “Do not follow where the path leads, Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail” (p. 2). I find this quote fitting, since Zachary, especially in regard to the desegregation of the schools, did create its own path.

I did not realize until I had been in the system for four years that Zachary had a story about desegregation that needed to be told. I am on a journey to tell that story. That story begins in the early 1970’s when the Zachary schools, which were a part of the larger East Baton Rouge
(EBR) school system, went through desegregation. Prior to desegregation the schools were segregated as shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

In order to understand why Zachary, Louisiana is a city that should be given space in scholarly research, and why Zachary is unique, it is important to look at the desegregation of the EBR school system as a whole and then how Zachary is situated within this context. Zachary’s schools were part of the EBR system during the 1950’s and 1960’s; however, since it was 20 miles away, it was able to do things that did not happen within the city limits of Baton Rouge.

Table 1  White Public Schools in Zachary Before Desegregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades Taught</th>
<th>Number Teachers</th>
<th>Number Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Zachary School</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Zachary School</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Zachary School</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Zachary High School (new building)</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Zachary High</td>
<td>4-12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zachary Elementary</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Zachary High</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zachary Elementary</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2  Black Public Schools in Zachary Before Desegregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades Taught</th>
<th>Number Teachers</th>
<th>Number Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Zachary Colored School (Rosenwald)</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Northwestern Middle School</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Northwestern Middle School</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Northwestern High School</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Northwest Elementary School</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northwest High School</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3  Unitary System after Desegregation in 1970-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grades Taught</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Elementary</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Elementary</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Middle</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The isolation of Zachary worked in its favor regarding desegregation of the schools (Appendix D). Zachary, unlike other EBR schools, chose not to find ways to avoid integration; they created a school system for all children. The Chamber of Commerce explains, “The Zachary Community Schools operate in a grade center concept. By the time of graduation a student will have attended all of the schools in the district”⁶ (Chamber of Commerce Website).

In 1969 the Supreme Court decision of Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education, declared that school districts “may no longer operate a dual school system based on race or color” (Irons, 2004, p. 206). This decision was to enforce the all deliberate speed of Brown (1954), and supported with Alexander (1969), that desegregation should be effective immediately. Zachary chose not to pursue other ways to desegregate, like “freedom of choice,” or busing.

The town of Zachary, which created one school for high school and one for middle school during the 1970-1971 school year, approached desegregation differently than the rest of EBR, which, as I have noted, has the longest running desegregation case that ended in 2003 (Lussier, 2011). Interestingly, no other districts in surrounding areas, either rural or urban, unified their schools; some tried the busing approach, and some changed their school boundries to slow integration even further. How did this small rural community differ from the EBR parish

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⁶ Students begin at Northwestern Elementary School. This school serves students in grades PreK through first. Students then move on to Zachary Elementary for second and third grade. They then move to Copper Mill Elementary for fourth and fifth grade. Middle school students attend Northwestern Middle for grades six through eight. Zachary High School, the district's only high school houses, students grades nine through twelve.
school system of which it was a part? Did the community support desegregation? Who in the community did and who did not? The uniqueness of this small rural town can be seen in how the community chose to follow the 1969 mandate of the court to enforce Brown with all deliberate speed, resulting in successfully integrated their schools and today is the number one school district in the state. Zachary Community Schools exemplify the intent of Brown by being both racially integrated and academically successful. In the 2000-2001 academic year the students in the Chicago public schools were 87% Black or Hispanic; in Washington D.C., 94% of children were Black or Hispanic; in Detroit the rate was 95%; and in Los Angeles it was 84% (Kozol, 2005). Given these figures, the story of Zachary schools is worth being told, and with highlights on the resulting effect on the students.

Using the methods of oral history and archival research, I will examine how the school community of Zachary experienced desegregation. Researchers use oral history when there is little or no primary research that has been conducted on the topic. Currently, there is little documentation of the process of integration in rural Southern communities. By creating oral histories of those involved with the integration of Zachary schools, scholarly research on school integration can be expanded to include the experiences of small Southern rural communities.

Path of Educational Desegregation in the United States

Historians have written much, particularly in regards to large urban cities, on the desegregation of the American school system (Adair, 1984; Bell, 2004; Irons, 2004, Bankston & Caldas, 2002; Fairclough, 1995/2008; Watkins, 2001; Culberston, 1972; Garland, 2013; Clotfelter, 2004; Henig, 1999; Baum, 2010; Williams, 2005). These books contain information and stories such as Culberston’s (1972) May I Speak, a diary of a White, EBR, teacher during her first year in a Black segregated school. Baum, (2010) in Brown in Baltimore writes of the
struggles entailed within desegregation, and, describes how politics play a role in complicating and improving urban schools. Even though my focus is on the small rural city of Zachary, Louisiana, understanding the literature of desegregation in large urban cities situates the story of Zachary within the larger context of desegregation during the 1960’s. After Brown II in 1955, the Supreme Court ruled that all school systems should be desegregated with *all deliberate speed*. This decision led to school systems in the South devising ways to impede the mandated integration and even to close some public schools in order to stall integration for the next 15 years. Symbolizing the push against desegregation, billboards dotting Southern highways called for the impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren (Bell, 2004), who was the Chief justice in the *Brown* case. The decision in the Briggs (1955) case, which was decided six weeks after Brown, stated that the Supreme Court

has not decided that the federal courts are to take over or to regulate the public schools of the states. It has not decided that the states must mix persons of different races in the schools or must require them to attend schools or must deprive them of the right of choosing the schools they attend. What it has decided, and all that it has decided, is that a state may not deny to any person on account of race the right to attend any school that it maintains (Irons, 2004, p. 175).

The Briggs decision was used by White school systems to implement freedom of choice\(^7\), pupil placement\(^8\), as well as minority- to- majority\(^9\) plans in individual school systems. Bell (2004) writes, “The Court went along with pupil-placement laws and one-grade-a-year plans that it knew were designed to delay or evade substantial compliance with the principles enunciated in *Brown*” (p. 96). During the ten years after the *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court refused to see

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\(^7\) Gave students the choice to transfer to a White or Black school, the transfers had to be approved by the School Board. Most White transfers were approved while Black transfers were not.

\(^8\) Placement based on intelligence and health and morals. Black students would have to pass tests to be placed in White schools.

\(^9\) Allowed White and Black students to transfer out of a school of their minority race and into a school with their majority race.
cases to guide the *all deliberate speed* decision, and instead placed the onus on the lower federal courts to deal with the decisions (Irons, 2004). This was a time when there was white flight\(^\text{10}\) if schools began the integration process. For example, states such as Arkansas and Virginia closed their schools rather than integrate them. In the case of *Griffin v. Prince Edward County* which began in 1961, the lower court stated that public funds could not be used to support private schools. The Supreme Court heard the *Griffin* case in 1964, ten years after the *Brown* decision. The Court wrote, “The time for mere deliberate speed had run out” (Bell, 2004, p. 96). The Court put an end to the closing of public schools, but it did not address freedom of choice, pupil placement, or minority- to- majority plans.

Central to the Supreme Court’s decision to hear a desegregation case was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act included “pouring more than a billion dollars each year into local schools. Schools with large numbers of students from low-income families qualified for the greatest amount of federal aid” (Irons, 2004, p. 196). Adair (1984) writes, “The influence of the federal government on desegregation has come primarily through grant dollars” (p. 34). Consequently, the Southern states who were badly in need of the federal money had to integrate in order to receive support.

In 1966, Judge Wisdom, a federal judge, outlined a plan in *United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education* to begin a desegregation of school systems, including dismantling the pupil placement and the freedom of choice plans. Wisdom stated, race is relevant, because the governmental purpose is to offer Negroes equal educational opportunities. The means to that end, such as disestablishing segregation among students, distributing the better teachers equitably, equalizing facilities, selecting appropriate locations for schools, and avoiding resegregation, must be based on race. School officials have to know the racial composition of their school populations and the racial distribution within the school district. (Irons, 2004, p. 199)

\(^{10}\)”White flight” is a term that means a mass exodus of Whites out of an inner city.
Wisdom went on to say that federal agencies could not measure the progress of schools without knowing their demographics of their schools. In 1968, the Supreme Court applied the Jefferson blueprint to three of the cases before them. This backing of the Supreme Court added teeth to the Brown and made it harder for school systems to delay integration.

In 1969 the Supreme Court decided the case of Alexander V. Holmes County Board of Education. This case had two major opinions. One was that there would no longer be a method of dual school systems, one for White and one for Black. There was to be one unitary school system. The next was that all motions for additional time to allow for all deliberate speed were denied. The court stated that the time allowed for that was over.

**Path of Educational Desegregation in Louisiana**

After the Brown decision Fairclough (1995/2008) tells of the Louisiana newspapers’ view of the decision, noting, “In a tone of sorrowful resignation, many of the leading newspapers urged compliance” (p. 167). This national spotlight gives insight into the path of desegregation in the state of Louisiana. After Brown II, Federal Judge J. Skelly Wright handed down a decision in Bush v. Orleans Parish School Board (1956) that New Orleans’ segregated school system was unconstitutional. Until this point, New Orleans and other cities in Louisiana had chosen to operate two school systems to circumvent integration. In a survey given to the parents of Black and White parents of the public school children in 1959, the majority of White parents, 82%, wanted to shut down the schools, and 95% or almost all of the Black parents wanted some type of integration (Bankston & Caldas, 2002).

Louisiana also gained national attention in the 1960’s David Duke, the notorious former Klu Klux Klan Grand Marshal, ran for governor. Duke did not win the election, but the winner, Jimmie Davis, threatened to close the Louisiana schools rather than let one Black student enter

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11 This case led to the termination of the dual systems that many cities were using to circumvent integration.
an all-White school (Bankston & Caldas, 2002). In New Orleans, also known as the Crescent City, the infamous “cheerleaders” 12 taunted Black students who tried to enter White schools chanting, “Two, four, six, eight, we don’t want to integrate!” (Bankston & Caldas, 2002, p. 38).

During this time, many White students moved to private schools or were home schooled. Another option for the parents and schools trying to slow down integration was freedom of choice, which was adopted in the Baton Rouge schools in the 1960’s. Freedom of choice 13 remained in place until 1968 when it was ruled unconstitutional. According to Fairclough (1995/2008) freedom of choice “presented parents with a theoretical right to send their children to either a previously all-White or a previously all-Black school. However, this meant that the burden of integration remained on the shoulders of Black parents” (p. 437). The results were that very few Black children applied for transfers, and almost no Whites wanted a transfer to Black schools.

In Zachary integration created unity in school choice, since for middle school and high school students there was only one public school choice. Mr. Boudreaux, the newly appointed principal of the high school in 1970, said during a recent interview, “the superintendent at the time decided that splitting the school would ruin the city, and that Zachary would integrate and have one school” (personal communication, September 15, 2010). The community decided on one high school and one middle school that would be fully integrated. The purpose of this research is to understand how the Zachary community desegregated their system.

Even though the Brown opinion was handed down in 1954, it was historically ignored, and it was not until the 1970-1971 school year that Zachary implemented the Brown decision.

12 “These poorly educated, working-class women vented an unvarnished racism that had rarely been seen before in public” (Fairclough 1995/2008, p. 247).

13 Ability to choose a school whether you were Black or White
Most of the White conservatives were not in favor of desegregation; however, there were those who worked together since they knew in the face of Federal mandates that funding would be cut off to schools without integration. By creating a school district that went from two schools which were separate for Black and White system to one school system, Zachary followed through with not only the letter but the spirit of the Brown decision. During an interview one Black community member told me,

Yeah, separate but equal wasn’t working, but it’s a word, but it wasn’t put into effect because they, one side was getting all the improvement, while the other one was getting all the leftovers. So it wasn’t equal. So the only thing to make it equal was to put all kids in the same environment. (personal communication, January 15, 2013)

To underscore this lack of equality, one can look at Bankston and Caldas (2002), who wrote about the discrepancies in the funding between the Black and White schools (Table 4).

| Table 4  Selected Statistics on Louisiana White and Black Public Schools 1950 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Percent of schools with only one teacher              | 3.3    | 34.1   |
| Percent of teachers with college degrees              | 76.8   | 68.1   |
| Average teacher salary                                | $3,160 | $2,726 |
| Per pupil cost of instructional services              | $147.15| $95.80 |
| Per pupil value of school plant and equipment         | $577.86| $171.52|
| High school graduates as percent of daily attendance  | 4.1    | 1.9    |

(Lankston & Caldas, p. 32)

Lack of equality is also supported by Fairclough (2007) who cautions, “Segregated schools did not symbolize a golden era of community stability and educational progress.

Uncritical celebration of segregated black schools obscures the extent to which white supremacy blighted black education” (p. 13). Fairclough (2007) makes the point that even though there was a community of Black support, and though this led to some academic success, such support did not overcome the fact that segregation was imposed on the Black students. It was not their choice to remain in a situation where they were thought of as inferior and should be segregated.
Samuels (2004), a professor at Southern University who has spent years researching the EBR desegregation case, argues, “The sin of segregation lay in its refusal to treat African Americans as individuals who were entitled to advance socially and economically as far as their talents and work might take them” (p. 21). Zachary has maintained since 1971 schools that continue to be racially integrated and the Zachary School System has, in fact, been ranked\textsuperscript{14} the number one district in the state, and has the highest test scores.

Zachary has maintained its integration for over 45 years, as other school systems have reverted to an “apartheid” system of education. In EBR the student population is 87.54% Black and 12.46% White. In fact, in his book *The Shame of the Nation*, Jonathon Kozol (2005), a former public school teacher and educational activist, writes about how schools that were once working towards desegregation have regressed.

I cannot discern the slightest hint that any vestige of the legal victory embodied in *Brown v. Board of Education* or the moral mandate that a generation of unselfish activists and young idealists lived and sometimes died for has survived within these schools and neighborhoods. (p.10)

With its one system, Zachary has been able to avoid the tragedy of re-segregation that Kozol describes. It is my hope that my research reveals how Zachary was able to create and maintain its schools, whereas other struggling communities’ efforts towards integration have failed, been ignored, or regressed.

My research questions are as follows:

1. How did the community of Zachary experience desegregation?

2. What was the relationship between the community and the schools?

3. In what way does an oral history of the desegregation of Zachary inform our larger understandings of desegregation?

\textsuperscript{14} Ranked Louisiana’s Top Performing School District by the State
These questions have been answered through an oral history which is the method chosen to best fit the research. In this way my narrators told stories of their shared experiences.

**Coming Up**

As a research project, my investigation is significant because it highlights the underrepresentation of a rural community’s implementation of desegregation in the school system. My research sheds light on how parents, students, businesses, and other community members came together to desegregate their schools. Understanding how they have built their schools might give a roadmap to other communities wishing to create a single school system. As hooks (1994) writes, “I think that a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and a common good that binds us. What we all ideally share is the desire to learn” (p. 40). The community that hooks describes is one that this nation has been looking for since integration. In order to have a stronger educational system, we need to create a community of educators, parents and students who have the same goal of a better education for ALL students.

Darling-Hammond (2010) writes about the nation and where we must go,

> As a fate of individuals and nations is increasingly interdependent, the quest for access to an equitable, empowering education for all people has become a critical issue for the American nation as a whole. As a country, we can and must enter a new era. (p. 328)

In this study, I have sought to understand, through an investigation of the rural city of Zachary, Louisiana, how one small Southern community was able to integrate in 1971 and maintain its racial balance and academic rigor. The chapters that follow will show the history of education in the United States, Louisiana and Zachary as well as the route of Black education. Then the method of the research process will be evaluated for this project. In Chapter Two the history of Black education will be discussed. In Chapter Three I will explain how an oral history is completed and how it relates to my study. The history of Zachary and how Black and White education developed will be presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will begin with the years
leading up to the integration of the Zachary schools. The actual year of the integration and the events that happened will be discussed in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven will summarize what Zachary did differently than other areas and how this has led to the success that it has attained in recent years.
CHAPTER 2: THE PROBLEM OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IS THE PROBLEM OF THE COLOR LINE

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other. (Freire, 1970 p. 72)

A Community of Desire

Few people who were not right in the midst of the scene can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race show for education. It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none was too old, to make the attempt to learn. (Booker T. Washington, 1901/1995 p. 13)

Before the end of slavery in April 1865, most states had laws and customs prohibiting slaves from learning to read and write. These laws were enacted so that slaves would not use their education to disturb the power relationship between the master and slave. By keeping the slaves illiterate, the masters kept up the appearance that slaves were chattel and not capable of learning. However, many slaves were determined to learn and taught themselves or found others to teach them in secret. There was a community of underground schools that could be considered the first Black community schools. Taught in pits dug in the woods and covered by sticks, children learned by playing “school” with their young masters and some slaves bribed impoverished Whites with food or other needed items in order to learn. Williams (2005) argues, “Literacy provided the means to write a pass to freedom, to learn of abolitionist activities, or to read the Bible” (p. 7). Becoming literate gave slaves the advantage to write passes for themselves and others in order to gain freedom to the North. They were also able to read about ideas that were overheard in slave quarters or in town on errands for their White masters. Those who knew how to read or write would share their knowledge and teach others and read to them from the abolitionist papers. The slaves formed an insular community to support one another’s quests for knowledge and education which they kept hidden from their masters. Perry (2003) writes about the slave’s community feeling, “Literacy affirmed not only their individual freedom, but also the
freedom of their people. Literacy was not something you kept to yourself: it was to be passed on to others, to the community, literacy was something to share” (p. 14). The determination to gain knowledge was so strong that most slaves carried some type of book for times when their masters were not around, for when they could get someone to teach them. Those who were literate worked to pass on this knowledge to help empower other slaves. This early community of learners encouraged and helped each other in the quest for knowledge for the ultimate goal of creating a more powerful people through education.

Louisiana was unique in the area of education for slaves given that the colony was Catholic and this required that all persons be baptized and instructed in the rudiments of the religion through catechism. Emily Clark (2009) shares the reason that Roman Catholics played a large part in the education of slaves, “the sacramental records of New Orleans reveal that their catechesis of enslaved Africans was perhaps their greatest legacy” (p. 3). Frilot and Hendry (2010) add to this by writing, “not only did the Ursulines challenge the prevailing nineteenth century conceptions of women’s proper societal role, but they also had a specific mission to expand the faith to women of all races and ethnicities” (p. 35). This meant that the nuns were educating females regardless of their race, including those in slavery, as well as free people of color.

Due to the unique situation of the French as opposed to the English controlling the colony, free people of color as well as slaves had more rights in Louisiana than in other areas of North America. In 1742, the colonial government of Louisiana set forth the “Black Code.” Bankston & Caldas (2002) note, “this set of laws required that slaves be instructed in Roman Catholicism and be baptized, and that they be allowed ownership of property and have the right

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15 Catechesis is an oral religious instruction
16 Ursulines are a group of Catholic nuns
to marry” (p. 21). The French colony that became the state of Louisiana had a mix of both culture and ethnicity that has played out in the educational experience of Black children in Louisiana. This is particularly true in the port city of New Orleans.

By having more rights the slaves were able to create a stronger community based on their ability to be seen as more than chattel. Dowdy, (1995/2006) writes that some White Americans, like President Jefferson, said that colonial Louisiana was more focused on flesh than education; however, “other scholars have examined the history of education in colonial Louisiana and found evidence that a significant proportion of colonial Louisianans were interested in education and literacy” (p. 56). The fact that the slaves were allowed to own property and marry also gave them an advantage in the area of education, thereby helping create the opportunity for Blacks to become leaders. Bullock (1967) writes,

Of even greater threat was the literate and articulate Negro leadership that permissiveness had been allowed to develop. This leadership was sometimes crude and bold, at other times more sophisticated and subtle. But at all times it was able to keep the official society off balance and on a collision course with the antislavery sentiments that were developing within and outside the South. (p.13)

Louisiana and particularly New Orleans allowed for a form of education and some rights for Blacks. White lawmakers were so afraid of slaves becoming literate that in 1830 a Louisiana law was passed which punished with death or hard labor during life imprisonment those who wrote about or encouraged the free people of color or slaves to be insubordinate to Whites. Despite such laws Cosse Bell (1997) writes in regard to Afro-Creoles, “The assertiveness and status of these men stemmed from their historical experience in colonial Louisiana” (p.11). The Afro-Creole community supported education as a way to fight oppression. The historical experience of the Black population of Louisiana had given an opportunity for the creation of leaders and these leaders used their power to try to increase the education of Black students.
In fact, it was in New Orleans that in 1841 Horace Mann, an educator and proponent of extending free public education to the masses, was contacted to help develop the school system. DeVore and Losdon (1991) write, “Those first schools inaugurated public schools not only in the city, but also throughout Louisiana and much of the Deep South” (p.1). The schools were not integrated. Though Mann did not believe in slavery, he knew of the strong hold it had over the South and did not want the topic of integration to interfere with creating a public education system in New Orleans. Mann recommended John Angier Shaw to run the school system in New Orleans. Shaw hired teachers from Massachusetts and ordered the books used by Mann. He successfully replicated the common school of Massachusetts in New Orleans. Even though this was not a school system that Black students could attend, it did lay the groundwork for the future of public education, from which all students would eventually benefit.

After Emancipation, many former slaves exhibited a strong desire to gain a public education. The education of Blacks that was happening under the veil of secrecy was now in the open, and the whole Black community yearned to be educated. Perry, Steele and Hilliard (2003) write,

You pursued learning because this is how you asserted yourself as a free person, how you claimed your humanity. You pursued learning so you could work for the racial uplift, for the liberation of your people. You pursued education so you could prepare yourself to lead your people. (p. 11)

The freed slaves believed education was the way for the Black community to uplift itself. Education was important not just to the individual who would lead, but the community of freed slaves who needed to be educated in order to work together to create a better life for all Blacks. Perry, Steele and Hilliard (2003) describe how the slaves and freedmen realized they would be able to create a better life for themselves and their children through their drive for education.

An organization instituted to work on behalf of newly-freed slaves was the Freedmen’s Bureau, created in 1865 during Reconstruction (Fairclough, 1995/2008). The organization was
formed by the federal government to protect Blacks against mistreatment by local officials and to introduce a method of formal education to help train Black leaders. The beginning of free education for Blacks increased the awareness for education and showed the community that there was federal support behind the effort. Federal support lasted through the end of Reconstruction. Federal support gave the Black community a better awareness of what they could be receiving, and even without federal support the Black population created a system of schools for Black students. After Reconstruction, when the Northern troops pulled out of the South.

**Struggle for Education**

The Southern problem is simply that of making efficient workingmen out of this material, by giving them the requisite technical skill and the help of invested capital. The problem however, is by no means as simple as this from the obvious fact that these workingmen have been trained for centuries as slaves. They exhibit, therefore, all the advantages and defects of such training: they are willing and good-natured, but not self-reliant, provident, or careful. (Du Bois, 1903/1994, p. 101)

There were a number of Black leaders during Reconstruction in Louisiana and South Carolina, “since those were the only two states with substantial numbers of well-educated people of African ancestry” (Bankston & Caldas, 2002, p. 22). Louisiana was also progressive in the fact that in 1868 Louisiana’s Constitution’s Article 135 stated, “There shall be no separate school or institution of learning established exclusively for any race by the State of Louisiana”. (Bankston & Caldas, 2002, p. 25). According to Cosse Bell (1997), Black education was made possible since “Afro-Creole intellectuals advocated education as a means to counteract the damaging effects of an increasingly oppressive social and political order” (p. 133). Due to the well-educated Black population in New Orleans, Louisiana had Black leaders to help through the tumultuous time.

DeVore & Logsdon (1991) write that the Hayes-Tilden compromise of 1877 “led to the appointment of a new school board, which not only ended school desegregation in New Orleans,
but also brought about the steady deterioration of public education in the city and the state generally, both for black and white students” (p. 81). The system of integrated schools benefited students of both races; however, the powerful Whites against integration believed segregation was more important than education. Working against the powerful Whites, there were Black leaders at the time who worked on creating an educational system and curriculum for Black students.

Unfortunately, the fledgling community of Blacks seeking education encountered great resistance from former Confederates. In his book, *The White Architects of Black Education*, William Watkins (2001) chronicles the Black journey for education by stating, “The formative years of Black education would witness an all-out effort to build a united nation with seemingly irreconcilable forces. As the industrialists involved themselves in educating minorities, they inherited safe ideological antecedents on which to build” (p.15). The “irreconcilable forces” were Southern plantation owners who did not support the Black education movement. Since the Northern philanthropists and the freedmen needed the support of the Southern plantation owners, an environment was created in which Black students would learn to do only the jobs that were available to them such as, plantation work, domestic work, and some low skilled factory jobs. Irons (2004) writes, “With the end of Reconstruction, the white ‘Redeemers’ who returned to power in the South had no desire to give Black children an education that would equip them for more than menial labor as sharecroppers or household servants” (p. 11). The southerners acquiesced to supporting the Northern philanthropists’ goals of educating the Black population only in menial skills where they would not compete with Whites for jobs.

DeVore & Logsdon (1991) write that in New Orleans in the early 1870’s, during Reconstruction, “almost a thousand or about a quarter of the black students, attended integrated
school, and this number grew each year because the integrated schools were judged the best in the system” (p. 70). It is hard to establish the exact numbers of students affected by integration since the new school system that developed during Reconstruction did not make note of students’ races. The school system was able to integrate based on the strength among Blacks and their tenacity in gaining access to an equal education for their children.

After Reconstruction, the plantation owners wanted to go back to controlling all aspects of the former slaves’ lives, including their education. However, the freedmen knew what was possible and fought against the oppression intended to keep them from gaining an education and advancing their place in society. After the removal of Republican troops in 1877, the plantation class tried to impede the movement of Black education. The plantation owners made it difficult for Black students to go to school by shortening the school year in order to accommodate the Southern economic power of the planting season. The schools that had previously been integrated in New Orleans sent Black students to segregated schools.

The Compromise in 1877, also known as the *Hayes-Tilden Compromise*, put an end to the forward momentum of Black progress. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes about the bond that was created by opposing forces in Louisiana, “White Creoles and Acadians made common cause with Anglo-Americans in their struggle to reestablish white hegemony; the free people of color joined with the liberated slaves in a crusade for racial equality” (p. 5). Two months after the Compromise, the New Orleans School Board rushed to re-segregate the schools. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes, “With the overflow of Reconstruction, the tripartite social structure of antebellum days – slaves, *gens de couleur libre*, and whites – gave way to a caste system that admitted two categories only: the superior white and the subordinate black” (p. 5). Even the
uniqueness of the history of education of Creoles in Louisiana was not enough to create an ongoing forward momentum in Black education.

**Black Educational Leadership**

Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter Godwin Woodson were leaders in Black education after Reconstruction. Washington’s belief was in a vocational education for all Black students, which would enable economic independence and a slow growth to Black leadership. Less vocation-minded, Du Bois’s belief was in a more traditional approach to education that would enable a faster transition to power for the Black people with his concept of the talented tenth. In contrast, Woodson believed that the education Black students were receiving indoctrinated them into the dominant narrative of White culture. Each of these leaders had his own opinion on what the aims of the educational experience should be and his own community of followers to support his educational ideas. Du Bois (1903/1994), writes about the Southern problem as needing to transform the minds of the freedmen; this is necessary due to the fact that “the brains of the race have been knocked out by two hundred and fifty years of assiduous education in submission, carelessness, and stealing” (p.102).

Washington’s, Du Bois’ and Woodson’s writings reflected their drive to organize Black communities to support their differing views on education. Washington, a former slave, wanted to ensure that Black students would have the skills necessary to gain employment. Washington’s fear was that too much focus on book knowledge would take away from the time spent learning a skill that would help Black students gain a profession and be able to be productive members of society. He believed that in order to become a strong community, Blacks needed to be accepted by Whites, and he proposed a vocational education to achieve this.

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17 Du Bois used this term to say that 1 in 10 Black men would become leaders of their race.
Washington was not the only teacher or Black leader who emphasized practical skills. In fact, in *A Class of Their Own*, a history of Black teachers in the segregated South, Fairclough (2007) wrote that this was a time when teachers resorted to accommodationism. Fairclough writes, “Accomodationism meant accepting the political reality of white supremacy and abandoning, for the moment at least, the Reconstruction project of civil and political equality” (p.15). Some in the community like Washington supported this idea of accommodationism. He believed that it was more important to gain some form of education, even if meant accepting what the White School Boards thought was appropriate. Notably, the Black community did not all subscribe to this model. One visitor to the Hampton Institute\textsuperscript{18} wrote, “I had rather my boy should grow up ignorant of letters, than attend an Institution to be taught that Negroes, notwithstanding their acquirements, are and must forever remain inferior to the whites” (Anderson, 1988 p. 63).

At the Tuskegee institute started by Washington in Alabama all students were made to do manual labor and to learn about how to assimilate into the White society. Washington (1901/1995) writes about his education, “I sometimes feel that almost the most valuable lesson I got at the Hampton Institute was in the use and value of the bath” (p. 28). Washington instilled into his curriculum this lesson and others, such as tooth brushing and sleeping on a bed which focused more on creating what he considered to be productive citizens than book educated students. Indeed, many students did attend Tuskegee with the understanding that they would learn a trade as well as gain an education based on the Three R’s-- reading, writing and arithmetic. Even though menial labor was hard and the students were not learning trades due to pressures from the White plantation owners, the Hampton students stayed rather than face an uncertain alternative. The plantation owners were concerned about Black students becoming

\textsuperscript{18} Where C.G. Washington went to school.
educated and competing for jobs as well as leaving the plantations, which would reduce the workforce they needed to keep the plantations running.

Around the same time, Du Bois, who was younger than Washington and was raised after slavery, favored a more intellectual approach to Black education. His approach was the ideal of “book-learning”; the curiosity, born of compulsory ignorance, to know and test the power of the cabalistic letters of the white man, the longing to know. Here at last seemed to have been discovered the mountain path to Canaan; longer than the highway of Emancipation and law, steep and rugged, but, straight, leading to heights high enough to overlook life. (Du Bois, 1903/1994, p. 5)

Du Bois wanted to focus on raising the expectations of Black students, especially those who were bound for the teaching profession, in order to create a generation of students who could raise themselves up with their learned knowledge. He wanted the Black curriculum to be based with an intellectual focus and to move beyond Washington’s focus on industrial education. Du Bois believed that the community of freedmen wanted to do more than manual labor with their freedom, and in order to do so, they would need the book learning that the sons of the plantation owners received.

Du Bois believed that the community of ex-slaves would not be content with the industrial training Washington proposed, and that the educational system needed to move beyond this scope and sequence in order for progress to be made between the races. White Southerners were happy with the status quo since it kept Blacks from gaining an education that might enable them to compete with the White laborers, thereby threatening White supremacy. On the other hand, Washington believed that these jobs such as lawyers and doctors were not available to the Black people anyway, and that industrial education provided an opportunity to survive their current situation, even if it was accommodating the desires of the dominant White majority.

Finally, in total contrast to Washington, Carter Woodson (1933/2012) wrote about vocational education as killing the dreams of the Black people.
To handicap a student by teaching him that his black face is a curse and that his struggle to change his condition is hopeless is the worst sort of lynching. It kills one’s aspirations and dooms them to vagabondage and crime. It is strange, then, that the friends of truth and the promoters of freedom have not risen up against the present propaganda in the schools and crushed it. (p. 8)

Woodson was writing about the Northern philanthropists and their willingness to acquiesce to the industrial education models of Hampton and Tuskegee. In *The Mis-Education of the Negro* Goodson (1933/2012) writes,

With “mis-educated Negroes” in control themselves, however, it is doubtful that the system would be very much different from what it is or that it would rapidly undergo change. The Negroes thus placed in charge would be the product of the same system and would show no more conception of the task at hand than do the Whites who have educated them and shaped their minds as they would have them function. (p.20)

Woodson believed that since Black education was structured by Whites who wanted to keep the freedmen in their places (e.g. in the fields and other menial jobs), there needed to be a major reorganization in order for the needs of the Black community to be recognized. Even by giving the appearance of placing Blacks in power of their own educations, the problem lies in the fact that Whites created the positions and then the Whites trained the Blacks who occupied them. It would not be a quick or easy change to create Black leaders by Black leaders who have the best interest of Black education in their minds. This said, not only do Black leaders have the interests of Black education in mind, but both sides need to be considering the same goal of a beneficial curriculum for Black students. Woodson was interested in creating a community which could focus on their strengths in order to gain power. He wanted the Black people to work together to excite and inspire each other to gain access to education they had been denied in the past. Woodson wanted the Black leadership to control education so that it would have the best intentions for Black students in mind.

Washington, Du Bois and Woodson all had their own visions regarding what education for the Black community would look like and what the Black community should support. They
also had a different vision for how the community should work towards its goal. Washington presented the vision of biding time until the Black people would gain power. Du Bois thought that the Black community needed to rise up and help themselves, hopefully with the encouragement of others. Finally, Woodson had even stronger words than Du Bois for the Black community to create a better place for themselves in society. These three Black leaders all had different visions in procuring their mission, but they shared the same goal of creating a better life through education for Black Americans. The writings of Washington, Du Bois, and Woodson highlight the various viewpoints of how education evolved after Reconstruction. In *The White Architects of Black Education*, Watkins (2001) states, “The dynamics of power, control, racial subservience, and class conflict shape and construct education, particularly the curriculum, politically and ideologically” (p. 10). Education is influenced by who controls the power, and thus the curriculum is equally controlled by the few.

Though I have chosen to focus on Washington, Du Bois and Woodson, I need to call attention to the Black women writers of the time as well. One of these, Anna Julia Cooper, a leading Black spokeswoman in the 1900’s, believed that Black women needed an education to end their dependence on men as well as create a benefit for the Black community. Cooper (1892/1988) writes, “There is a feminine as well as a masculine side to truth; that these are related not as inferior and superior, not as better or worse, not as weaker or stronger, but as complements” (p. 60). She believed that educated Black women could bring an empathy and understanding that was missing among Black men. Another influential Black woman leader of the time, Mary Church Terrell (1898) writes of the drive of Blacks to succeed against all odds: “With tireless energy and eager zeal, colored women have, since their emancipation, been
continuously prosecuting the work of education and elevating their race, as though upon themselves alone developed the accomplishment of this great task” (p.8).

**Black Community During Segregation in the South**

Following the Civil War and after the initial push by the freedmen to gain an education for their children, there was a new push by Whites to take public funds meant for the Black schools. Anderson (1988) writes,

> early in the twentieth century Whites all over the South seized the school funds belonging to the disfranchised Black citizens, gerrymandered school districts so as to exclude Blacks from certain local tax benefits, and expounded a racist ideology to provide a moral justification of unequal treatment. (p.154)

Such seizures took the small amount of money available away from the Black schools and transferred it to create public White schools. Blacks subsequently then resorted to making private contributions to finance public schools.” Resulting in the double taxation of the Black community; they paid taxes for schools for White children and then had to raise private money to build schools for their own children. The Black community expanded their own schools with help from Julius Rosenwald, 19 a Northern philanthropist from Chicago who was a proponent of the Hampton-Tuskegee method.

But the Black community also resisted mandatory segregation, especially as it economically burdened many of their members. For example, a group called the Comité des Citoyens (Committee of Citizens) in New Orleans was formed in 1892 to test the constitutionality of Jim Crow Laws, which were laws created to segregate Blacks and Whites. According to Medley (2012), “Their objective was to obtain a United States Supreme Court ruling preventing states from abolishing the suffrage and equal-access gains of the Reconstruction period” (p. 14). The Committee of Citizens tested their objective by having

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19 The Rosenwald fund would match donations by Black families in order to build schools.
Homer Plessy, a shoe maker, buy a first-class train ticket in the “whites only” section from New Orleans to Covington, Louisiana on June 7, 1892.

The famous Plessy opinion written by Supreme Court Justice Henry B. Brown said that the Fourteenth Amendment, which the Plessy argument was based upon, “could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as opposed to political, equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either” (Irons, 2004, p. 26). The court went along with the public opinion of the time that the races should not be integrated using the law against marriage of the races to support their decision. The railroad owners did not agree with the court’s decision and did not want segregation because it took more money to run more cars, and it left the decision of determining the race of a person in the hands of the train workers. The case lasted 8 years, and on January 11, 1897 Plessy was ordered to pay the fine of $25 or to spend twenty days in prison. He paid the fine, and returned to his life.

Du Bois and the group that would become the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) took a cue from the Committee of Citizens, formed in 1892, based out of New Orleans, LA. Their goal was to secure rights for all free citizens in all aspects of their lives. The National court cases, as well as those argued in Louisiana, would work towards this unifying goal of civil rights. In his book The NAACP Comes of Age, Goings (1990) wrote, “The Court’s most damaging decision for black people was the 1896 decision in Plessy v. Ferguson” (1990, p. 2). This decision created a law that made it illegal for Black and White populations to be integrated.

This case gave strength to the Jim Crow Laws running rampant in the Southern United States and gave the segregationists a Supreme Court ruling to back up their goal of segregating all aspects of daily life including railroads, restaurants, churches, and schools. The consequences
of the *Plessy* decision would be felt in the field of education for the next fifty years. The *Plessy* case, which originated in New Orleans, LA, would lead to a decision to set up a system of Black schools that did not have the teachers, supplies, or support of the White community, and thus led to unequal education for Black students. In his dissent to the *Plessy* verdict, Justice John Harlan wrote:

In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott Case… the destinies of the two races, in this country, are indissolubly linked together, and the interests of both require the common government of all shall not permit the seeds of race hate to be planted under the sanction of law. (Medley, 2012, p. 204)

Harlan cited the *Dred Scott Case*, in which the Supreme Court had ruled that slaves were not citizens and had no rights under the Constitution since they were property. His dissent highlighted the fact that he did not believe that separate would ever really mean equal. He was right. The *Plessy* decision had ongoing implications for education in the United States, and lawyers would argue the validity of this decision over the next fifty years. Progressives of the NAACP joined together to try to change public opinion and the law until *Brown v Board* in 1954.

Favrot (1918/1999) writes that during the 1900’s in Louisiana there were “public schools for the white people and the public schools for the colored people, but there was little public school organization, no adequate supervision, and very few trained teachers” (p. 285). A Black student attended school only 91 days as compared to 154 days for White students (Smith, 1992, 343). The superintendents in Louisiana used the money and the resources to build up the White schools during this time and gave little or no attention to the Black schools.

However, this began to change in 1916 when Thomas Harris, the state superintendent of Louisiana, established the Division of Negro Education within the Department of Education to strengthen the supervision of Black schools (Chujo, 1984/1999). Some of the goals of this
department were to watch out for “suitable school houses and equipment; longer school terms; and properly qualified teachers with better salaries” (Chujo, 1984/1999, p. 308). However, two years later when a report was completed to determine if the goals were being met, Harris realized they were not. He found there was resistance from some Whites to improve schooling for Blacks, as well as a lack of money to implement the improvements needed to meet the goals. Figure 1 shows the differences in Black and White Schools in Louisiana from 1920-1940.

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<thead>
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<th>TABLE 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF PUPILS REGISTERED AND TEACHERS IN WHITE AND BLACK SCHOOLS, 1920-40</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pupils Registered</td>
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<td>Pupil-Teacher Ratio</td>
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Figure 1 Taken from Chujo, K (1984/1999). The Negro Division: Public Education Policy for Black Louisiana, 1916-1941. Education in Louisiana (p. 311)

Figure 1 shows that the teacher to pupil ratio was much higher in the Black schools than the White. Walker (1996) writes that Black schools did not have all of the advantages of White schools but that “some evidence suggests that the environment of the segregated school had affective traits, institutional policies, and community support that helped black children learn in spite of the neglect their schools received from white school boards” (p. 3). The Black
community banded together with sacrifice and determination to create the best school system
they could in the face of the lack of federal and state support.

The private Rosenwald Fund facilitated the building of 5,000 Black schools in Louisiana
beginning in 1916; this included the Zachary Colored School built in 1934. Figure 2 shows the
distribution of the schools. The fund would match the money, labor and materials that

![Rosenwald Schools](image)

Figure 2  Taken from Smith, P.E. (1992/1999). Rosenwald Schools in Louisiana: History and
Administration. Education in Louisiana (pp. 347).

the Black community put towards the building of schools. One Rosenwald school teacher,
Marion O’Neal in Louisiana, wrote about the bad conditions in 1902. She told of her
schoolhouse that leaked, had no outhouse, and whose texts were scarce and in bad shape.
However, O’Neal wrote of the children and her effect on them,

how some of the sluggish minds of the children seemed to be waking up, how I had
managed to arouse their curiosity to a certain extent and chiefly the sort of reverence that
the underfed, undereducated held for learning, I knew that I would not be contented and
happy unless I gave them all I had to offer in friendship, understanding, and refinement. How fascinating it was to see how joyfully most of them welcomed me and how eagerly they went to work. (1964, p. 140)

O’Neal continued to work in rural Louisiana, even with the substandard school conditions and the fact that she did not get paid well enough to supply adequate meals for her to live. She wanted to give the students the education she could tell they so eagerly desired.

In another account, Anderson (1988) described one instance when money was being collected, recounting, “One old man, who had seen slavery days, with all his life’s earnings in an old greasy sack, slowly drew it from his pocket, and emptied it on the table” (p. 165). Then the old man said, “I want to see the children of my grandchildren have a chance, and so I am giving my all” (Anderson, 1988, p. 165). Most of the Rosenwald schools were built in poor rural communities where there was no money to donate, but Black citizens, like the elderly man from Anderson’s anecdote, would go into the woods, and cut down trees that could be used for lumber. Those who held the purse strings to the Rosenwald Fund believed that in order for the community to support the schools, they needed to be partially responsible for the building. The fact that so many schools were built with matching support from the community shows the Black desire for education.

Walker (1996) describes the community support of the Black schools, which “provided the community with a form of recreation… the PTA sponsored socials and taffy pull events in which Negro patrons at every level of income could pay a small amount of money and participate” (p. 17). The Black community came together, not only to create an education space for students but also the schools, like churches, gave the Black community a space to have events during Jim Crow segregation. The school Walker describes was able to collect matching funds and apply for Rosenwald funds while creating support from the whole community, not just form those who would send their children to the schools.
The Rosenwald Fund was successful in creating a better educational opportunity for Black children. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes,

In 1915 fewer than half of Louisiana’s black children were enrolled in schools, and on a typical day fewer than a quarter attended. The comparable figures for white children were 79 percent enrollment and 57 percent attendance. By 1940, two-thirds of black children were enrolled, and the daily attendance averaged 60 percent. The equivalent rates for whites were 78 percent and 73 percent. (p. 11)

This data shows a dramatic increase in the attendance of Black children in the school setting, demonstrating that the Rosenwald Fund created a place where Black students would not only enroll, but would continue to attend in order to gain an education. The Rosenwald Fund was the only way that some rural areas in Louisiana had to acquire schools for Black students.

The Rosenwald schools were mainly in rural areas, so in a city like Baton Rouge, Black students had to rely on private schools to gain an education, since the conditions in the public schools were quite poor. Hendry and Edwards (2009) state the schools were in such “deplorable conditions that black parents preferred to pay tuition and send their child to private schools. This meant of course that they were ‘second-taxing themselves’ by paying regular public school taxes as well as the tuition for private schools” (p. 58). The Black community continued to push for a better public education for their students, and in 1927 McKinley High School was built and attended by students from all over the area, including Zachary. McKinley had 20 classrooms and labs for chemistry and other sciences as well as a library and shops for domestic training. Hendry & Edwards (2009) write, “Beyond its pedagogical function, McKinley High School was to become in this period an emblem of excellence as the primary institution for African American success and hope for a better future” (p. 68). This school was a shining light and a beacon of hope of what a public high school for Black students could be. The Black community worked for years to see their vision come to fruition in McKinley High School, and Black students from surrounding areas traveled more than an hour a day to attend.
Despite the success of McKinley High School, Black teachers like Clara Glasper believed that “the only way Black children would have access to quality schools and resources was to attend school with White children” (Miller, 2004, p.146). Despite the gains in Black education there was a desire for equality among the races through integration.

**Path to Equality**

In 1910 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was established. During this time Washington’s idea of a Black subservient curriculum was on a downward trajectory with Du Bois’ idea of a higher education curriculum having found forward momentum. The Black community had begun to lose interest in Washington’s philosophy and was looking for a new leader and a different way to find equality in a manner that would bring tangible results. The Black population began to turn to Du Bois and the NAACP “in urging the higher education of a ‘Talented Tenth’ of the black people who through the broad cultural background could guide the race ‘into a higher civilization’” (Kluger, 1975/2004, p. 94). Du Bois publicized the term “talented tenth” to mean that one out of every ten Black men could become a leader of the race. The philosophy of having Black leadership resonated with Black people and they began to believe that in this way, they would gain the equal rights they were supposed to gain with the 14th Amendment. Washington did not believe in the goals of the NAACP, and his community of supporters dwindled as the base of the NAACP grew.

The focus of the NAACP in 1922 was to find and bring to trial lawsuits that would test the boundaries of the Jim Crow Laws against the backdrop of the 13th and 14th Amendments. The NAACP and its lawyers were on the path of creating equality out of legislation pertaining to education for Blacks. The money for the lawsuits came from the Garland Fund, founded by a Northern philanthropist who inherited the money from his stockbroker father. The suits filed
were supposed to have four areas of focus. The first goal of the fund was to push for a system of Black and White schools that were equal so that the cost would be so great that school systems would abolish segregated schools. The next goal was to encourage Black parents, students, and or community members to bring their own suits to trial. The third goal was to have the cases go to appeal so that higher courts would be forced to hear the cases, which would allow more people to be affected by the cases’ outcomes. The last goal of the Fund was to raise awareness of the “vicious discrimination” Blacks were facing in public spaces.

Within the NAACP there were two schools of thought on the way that the progress for Black education should be accomplished. As with the Washington/Du Bois/Woodson debate, one school of thought was to have the schools be separate but equal; the other path was to pursue integration of the schools. The NAACP, the driving force behind the improvement of Black education, decided that they would work toward integration but at first focus on equality. Kluger (1975/2004) documents, “The goal would be…not to attack the constitutionality of segregation itself but to challenge its legality as it was practiced by showing that nothing remotely approaching equal educational opportunities was offered Negroes in segregating states – and that was unconstitutional” (p. 186). By creating an offensive to show that the schools were not equal, the NAACP thought that Southern states would accept two equal school systems rather than one. This would allow for Black students to gain a better education, after which the NAACP would create an environment more hospitable towards integrating the schools. The process would be slow and cumbersome and would include many court cases on the way to the landmark decision of Brown vs. Board of Education.

In 1938, the Supreme Court case of Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, was argued by Charles Houston, a lawyer for the NAACP. The case was filed on behalf of Lloyd Gaines, who
was seeking admission to the White law school in Missouri. Houston did not challenge *Plessy V. Ferguson* (1896), which was the standard in educational law at this time. Instead, Houston framed his argument that Missouri needed to offer its Black citizens a law school as good as its White citizens attended. Missouri offered to send Gaines to a neighboring state to attend law school, but Gaines turned them down. Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes wrote the opinion, “[H]olding that Missouri could not give whites a legal education in the state and deny blacks that right” (Irons, 2004, p. 55). This was the first case in which the Court acknowledged an equality that needed to be preserved by law. Missouri created a Black law school, so Gaines was not admitted to the White school, but this was a step forward in the creation of equality for Black and White students.

The NAACP worked to increase membership in Louisiana during the 1940’s and wanted to recruit teachers. Many Black teachers were members of The Louisiana Colored Teachers Association (LCTA), which supported the goals of the NAACP. The reason for recruiting from the teaching community was that this was a well-educated group which is what the NAACP was looking to find. The LCTA/NAACP partnership allowed Louisiana’s Black teachers to support the NAACP by joining the LCTA instead of directly joining the NAACP. Bullock (1967) writes, “Negro teachers known to be members of the NAACP found little security in their employment with some school districts of the South, and many of these teachers found it necessary to keep their membership in secret” (p. 219). So the partnership of the two gave Louisiana’s Black teachers a national organization to belong to without fear of reprisal. Those teachers who did join the NAACP were threatened with termination of their teaching positions if they continued their membership.
In 1940, Thurgood Marshall was hired by the joint partnership in the case of *Joseph P. McKelpin v. Orleans Parish School Board* (1941). The case was filed to gain equal pay for Black and White teachers and was settled out of court on September 1, 1942. This case followed the NAACP’s view that they should create cases for equality and not desegregation at this time. With better pay for Black teachers, the *McKelpin* case in New Orleans was a test case for Louisiana being able to recruit and keep teachers at Black schools. There was a settlement and the teachers were given more pay with no admission of wrong doing on the part of the School Board.

Salary equalization continued to be problematic until 1947, when an Iberville Parish judge ruled, “The existing salary schedule, clearly discriminated against blacks, notwithstanding the ‘merit system’ devised by Superintendent of Schools Linus P. Terrebonne” (Fairclough, 1995/2008, p. 107). The decision instead of a settlement that *McKeplin* had given provided more fuel for the NAACP to replicate the case around the state and equal salaries for other Black teachers. This case and the community of Black teacher support of the NAACP helped in the slow progress towards integration in the state.

A litany of lawsuits were filed on behalf of Black students on the way to the decision in *Brown vs. the Board of Education* (1954) of Topeka, Kansas, which began the desegregation of schools in the United States. World War II caused an interruption in the work of the NAACP, but after the war, the battle for democracy in education in America continued.

The New Deal (1933-1936) under Franklin Roosevelt brought some feeling of relief to African Americans because this was the first administration to sponsor assistance for the education of Blacks. However, according to Kluger (1975/2004), “The gains were almost all at the subsistence level, and they were achieved not because the Roosevelt administration had
evidenced any special devotion to racial equality” (p. 216). The gains were due to a trickle-down effect of helping the poor in America, and the African American population was among the poorest. Any help was needed, but what Black Americans needed was a President that did not make promises, but proposed relief. Harry Truman heard this call.

In June of 1947 Truman spoke at the 38th annual conference of the NAACP where he said,

The extension of civil rights today means not protection of the people against the government, but protection of the people by the government…We must make the federal government a friendly, vigilant defender of the rights and equalities of all Americans. And again I mean all Americans. (Kluger, 1975/2004, p. 251)

Truman stood for the rights of all Americans and wanted to protect the rights of African Americans and supported the goals of the NAACP.

Truman’s support set the stage for the Sweatt V. Painter (1950) decision that once again challenged the equity of education of a Black law student. Herman Marion Sweatt was denied access to a White law school in Texas. In another case, McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents (1950), George McLaurin was denied access to pursue his PhD. These two cases were being considered by the Supreme Court in tandem. The decisions of these cases would either have the states create truly equal schools at great expense, or they could overturn Plessy. Irons (2004) writes, “The Court’s decisions would help NAACP lawyers determine their strategy in school cases from the Deep South. Perhaps the time was near for the final assault on Jim Crow education” (p. 57). The court decided that the time had come for a re-interpretation of the separate-but-equal doctrine held in place by the Plessy verdict for over 54 years, which had constrained the growth of Black education. Kluger (1975/2004) writes, “For the first time, the Court had asserted that separate-but-equal education was not a mere slogan. The equality had to
be real or the separation was constitutionality intolerable” (p. 283). This decision showed support for Black education from the federal government for the first time since Reconstruction.

In the 1950’s Thurgood Marshall, the chief lawyer for the NAACP wanted to press the Courts into making a decision that reversed *Plessy*. Marshall knew the NAACP would have to fight for equal rights in many small battles all over the United States unless they could win one big court case. Other members of the NAACP were worried that they would lose if Marshall took another case to the Supreme Court to challenge *Plessy* as unconstitutional. This would mean that all the progress they had made so far would be lost. Marshall gained the support he needed and at a conference in June of 1950, the NAACP stated that all future work would “be aimed at obtaining education on a non-segregated basis and that no relief other than that will be acceptable” (Kluger, 1975/2004, p. 293).

Thurgood Marshall relied on social science to show the court that segregation was harmful to Black students. Kenneth Clark, an assistant professor at City College of New York, created a doll test in his research to demonstrate how Black children felt about their own skin. Clark and his wife Mamie conducted their research with Black and White dolls asking the children to hand them the nice doll, hand them the doll you would like to play with, and hand them the doll that looks bad. The Black children demonstrated a preference for the White doll as the nice doll and the one that they wanted to play with. Judge Waring, dissenting in the case wrote,

There is absolutely no reasonable explanation for racial prejudice. It is all caused by unreasoning emotional reactions and these are gained in early childhood. Let the little child’s minds be poisoned by prejudice of this kind and it is practically impossible to ever remove these impressions … if segregation is wrong then the place to stop it is in the first grade and not in graduate colleges. (Irons, 2004, p. 75)
The results also showed that the Black doll was the one they chose to represent the bad doll. The studies were conducted in Philadelphia, Boston, Worcester, Massachusetts, and in some cities in Arkansas.

In Louisiana, education during the 1930’s was further shaped by Huey P. Long, who ran on a platform of creating better roads and schools. He wanted every child to receive a free textbook. Long’s supporters were comprised of the poor to middle class and included both Black and White. He won his race for governor and drew up a law that would provide children with free textbooks. In his autobiography *Every Man a King (1933/1964)*, Long wrote, “No accomplishment of my career has given me such satisfaction” (p. 114). Long was very proud of his achievement of free books.

Long was supported by the Black population since he did give them more consideration than they had gotten under previous governors. Long presented himself in public as a friend to Black people when it suited his cause. Long told Roy Wilkins, a lawyer for the NAACP,

I’m for the poor man, all poor men. Black and white, they all gotta have a chance. They gotta have a home, a job and a decent education for their children. ‘Every Man a King’ – that’s my slogan. That means every man, niggers along with the rest. (Fairclough, 1995/2008, p.22)

However, though Long would say that he was a friend to all, his policy and opinions did not support what he would say when he was with Black constituents. The support that he received was due to knowing what Long would do and what Black people could expect out of him. He did not go out of his way to regress the Black social movement during his governorship, although he did not improve on it either. During Long’s time as governor, the gap between Black and White schools grew since individual school districts were responsible for dividing up the funding for the schools. This meant that White board members gave the majority of the money to the White schools and the Black schools had to use discarded books from the White schools or raise their
own money. William Ivy Hair (1991) in his book *The Kingfish and his Realm* about the life of Huey P. Long writes,

State-wide, more black children were enrolled than ever before, but their dilapidated, ill-equipped classrooms seldom saw improvements. Many “colored schools” had not blackboards or desks, and their free textbooks were usually tattered one previously used in white schools. (p. 228)

Long portrayed himself as a supporter of education for children, but the children he supported were typically White. There might have been some eventual advantages for Black children, but this was not his ultimate goal in his policy. The Black community did not prosper under Long; it was a time of gaining some advantages through the cast-offs of the White schools. The community deserved and demanded more.

**The Call for Integration**

Five cases culminated into what eventually became *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). *The NAACP* and the Black community came together to support each other monetarily as well as socially during this time. The NAACP worked hard to bring to the national spotlight cases that would change the future of education for Black students. The Black community donated their time, money, and some sacrificed their jobs in order to do what they thought was right for the good of the Black educational system.

*Briggs vs. Elliot* (1952) was one of the cases that Marshall used to challenge *Plessy*. The case was originally filed in 1947 to gain access to bus transportation for Black students. In 1949 the NAACP joined the case and expanded it to include the inferiority of the Black schools in Clarendon County, SC. In this case, Marshall relied on Kenneth Clark and social science to show the court that segregation was harmful to Black students.

*Belton vs. Gebhart* and *Bulah vs. Gebhart*, petitioned in 1951, were two cases that were combined into one that later became part of *Brown*. The case was about the parents of Black
students who wanted a bus to take their children to school. Louis Redding, the local lawyer, said he would help with the case, but only if it was about more than bussing. He wanted to fight segregation. Kluger quotes Mrs. Bulah as saying, “He said he wouldn’t help me get a Jim Crow bus to take my girl to any Jim Crow school… but if I was interested in sendin’ her to an integrated school, why, then maybe he’d help” (Kluger, 1975/2004, p. 436). Redding later joined up with the NAACP to merge the case into their existing integration cases.

*Bolling v. Sharpe* was filed in 1951 and argued that eleven junior high students should be allowed to go to the White school in their neighborhood that had better facilities. The lawyer, James Nabrit, left out “any mention of unequal school facilities or curriculum” (Irons, 2004 p. 103). Nabrit wanted the Court to have to consider integration rather than equality. This case had a separate opinion from *Brown*, because it was filed in the District of Columbia, where the 14th Amendment was not applicable.

*Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* was filed in 1951 after a strike of students at R.R. Moton High School, an all-Black high school in Farmville, Virginia, failed to improve conditions at the school. The students called in the NAACP and were convinced to follow the lead of the NAACP by asking for integration instead of the equality they had originally been seeking. Marshall pursued his plan for social conscience through this case, telling the NAACP lawyers he “wanted the word ‘stigma,’ meaning the wounds inflicted on Black children by the Jim Crow system that taught them they were inferior to whites, to appear in the case record as often as possible” (Irons, 2004, p. 88).

*Brown v. Board of Education* was filed in 1951, and the NAACP recruited participants for their case based on integrating the Topeka, Kansas schools. Marshall and the other lawyers for the NAACP called upon witnesses who would testify to the harm that was being caused to
Black children due to educational segregation. Louisa Holt, a sociology professor, when asked if legal separation had an adverse effect on the development of the Negro, testified that,

The fact that it is enforced, that it is legal, I think, has more importance than the mere fact of segregation by itself does because this gives legal and official sanction to a policy which is inevitably interpreted both by white peoples and by Negroes as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. (Kluger, 1975/2004, p. 425)

**Aftermath of Brown**

W.E.B Du Bois was 86 when the *Brown* decision was handed down. He said that the South would not comply with *Brown* for many years, “long enough to ruin the education of millions of black and white children” (Bell, 2004, p. 67). Du Bois was correct, and Southern states began to find excuses and ambiguities in the law in order to slow down the integration of the schools. Even as the NAACP cheered the hard won battle, Southern states were gearing up to impede the progress that had been made in the courts. Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) wrote,

They could countenance token changes, and they had always believed these would make the Negro content. They were not asking him to stay in his ghetto. They were ready to build a brand-new ghetto for him with a small exit door for a few. (p.145)

King was highlighting that those in control of the educational system would make changes on the surface that looked like progress, but at the root no change was being made. In fact the situation was worse than King had anticipated. Resistance by Southerners led to the growth of private schools and white flight to the suburbs. Bell (2004), writes, “In suburban districts that were virtually all-white three decades ago, serious patterns of segregation have emerged as more and more nonwhites move into suburban areas” (p. 127). Blacks were going into the White schools, but Whites had left the building.

When the Brown decision was handed down on May 17, 1954, the Louisiana newspapers captured the feelings of the state. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes,

The *New Orleans Item* reminded its readers. ‘Wisdom calls for calmness and moderation, for reflection and discussion of ways best to live with the decision.’ *The Baton Rouge*
State-Times urged the ‘level-headed leaders of the two races to work the problem out with the least friction possible.’ (p. 167)

The NAACP had been working towards a decision from the Supreme Court on the topic of desegregation since its foundation in 1910. There were mixed feelings about this decision in Louisiana, and the state as a whole continued to postpone implementation of the decision reached in Brown.

School integration was further slowed by the Supreme Court decision known as Brown II, a case brought before the court by the Southern states in order to request exemption from desegregation. The decision handed down in 1955 was a victory for the South. It gave school boards, run by Whites, decision-making authority on how integration should occur. The decision used the phrases “good faith,” “with all deliberate speed,” and “a prompt and reasonable start” but did not issue requirements for how these terms should be interpreted. Samuels (2004) writes, “The Supreme Court issued no specific decrees, promulgated no minimum steps required to satisfy its mandate, and gave no timetables for the accomplishment of any of its directives” (p. 64). In essence, the Supreme Court made a decision in Brown I, and then in Brown II backed away from facilitating how it should be implemented. Linda Brown, the plaintiff in the Brown case, graduated from a segregated high school, since there was no mandate to integrate.

Louisiana further resisted with The Pupil Placement Laws that were passed two years after Brown I. These laws allowed the local Boards of Education to assign pupils to certain schools based on psychological aptitudes. Louisiana legislation allowed the superintendent of each district to decide where pupils should be placed. Black students were tested based on the White curriculum to determine if a school transfer was in order. Black students were thus set up for failure since the test was created and assessed with a bias to keeping Black students out of the

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20 These were laws that were passed by 10 Southern States to set the standards of assignment for schools in order to offer a way to resist integration (Raffel, 1998, p. 203).
White schools. Nieman (1991) writes, “These criteria were flexible enough to permit white officials to assign black children to all-black schools and to deny the applications of those black children who had the temerity to request transfers to white schools” (p. 155). Superintendents were therefore able to keep segregation under the guise of placing pupils in the correct school for the way that they learned. Louisiana also began requiring all applicants to state-supported universities to submit certificates attesting to their eligibility and good moral character. Samuels (2004) writes, “Not surprisingly, few people chose to sign the required certificates for fear of losing their jobs” (p. 66). Consequently, if Black students overcame the odds and graduated from high school, they would still have the challenge of being accepted into the Louisiana College System.

Louisiana’s lawmakers defied the Supreme Court by passing three laws to condemn and obstruct the Brown ruling. One law was to only give state support to segregated schools, the second allowed for school boards to assign pupils on an individual basis, and the third stated that segregated schools were in the best interest of preserving “public health, morals, better education, peace, and good order” (Fairclough, 2007, p. 169). In 1956, Judge Skully Wright’s desire to break down Louisiana’s corrupt system resulted in his being the first district judge to hand down a school integration decree. Judge Wright’s ruling held the New Orleans Parish school board to admit children on a nondiscriminatory basis “with all deliberate speed” (Fairclough, 2007). However, Judge Wright did give New Orleans time to make changes, and the school board used all the delay tactics they could by appealing every ruling in the courts. In 1960 Judge Wright laid out his own plan, which was the first ever court-ordered integration plan.

Judge Wright issued an order stating that for the school year of 1962-1963 all elementary children should “attend either the formerly all-black school or the formerly all-white school
nearest their homes” (Bankston, 2002, p. 59). The judge also forbade transfers from one desegregated school to another. Judge Wright was given an appointment to the Court of Appeals, and Judge Ellis carried on in his stead by creating a plan for desegregation that would add grades each year to be desegregated from 1965 until 1970, when all grades through high school would be desegregated in New Orleans.

Studies such as the one in published in 1971 in the Journal of Negro Education by Bolner and Vedlitz gives insight into Black students’ understandings of these educational decisions. Bolner and Vedlitz tell of a segregated school in South Louisiana and how the students felt about the “freedom of choice plans” that had been implemented in by U.S. District Judge Gordon West in 1963 in Louisiana. The students revealed a sense of community and enjoyment of their friends and the extra-curricular activities.

Black students and their parents are the ones who were surveyed (Figure 3). They liked the option of Freedom of Choice, but they did not want to be forced to leave their school and its history. The students did not want to be forced into a “freedom” of school choice. The chart includes the findings from Boner and Vedlitz (1971).

In 1968 when Freedom of Choice was no longer an option due to it being ruled unconstitutional, Louisiana relied on a system of voluntary integration, but most of the Blacks and the Whites stayed in their neighborhood schools which were predominantly of their own race (Bankston, 2002).

The next big change occurred in the 1980’s when the federal government stepped in and implemented bussing plans in order to create a more racially balanced system. In 1981, which was the first year of forced bussing, the East Baton Rouge school system lost seven thousand

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21 There other studies that have been done on the positive effects of segregated schools and I want to use this information to help me understand the Zachary desegregation and the effects on the students.
In order to understand how Zachary had not integrated in 1970 one must first look at the path that Zachary took after changes began in the EBR school system. The first mention of a Black public school in Zachary, Louisiana, was in 1934, which was the Rosenwald School that was built inside a church. Its name was the Zachary Colored School. The Zachary Colored School was the only available public education for Black students in Zachary until 1951 when Northwestern Middle School, which was formerly the Zachary Colored High, was opened to grades 1-9. In 1955 this became Northwestern High School and educated students in grades 1-12.
However, the White high school, known as Zachary High School, was approved in 1912 and was the third oldest High School in the Parish. Most Black students in Zachary during this time went to the only Black high school in EBR, McKinley High School in Baton Rouge, which opened in 1927. The students either rode the train or had to find a ride; there was no bus service. Another option was Southern Lab School, which was opened in 1922, but school fees and stringent entrance requirements rendered it inaccessible to many students. The same was true for Leland College in Baker, where there was a fee for attendance.

In the school year 1970-1971, Zachary High School was integrated and became the only High School in Zachary. Northwestern High School became Northwestern Middle School and was the integrated middle school for the town of Zachary. This one-school-system concept called “clustering” began during the 1970-1971 school year and was what made Zachary different, and why I sought to understand through my research what made such a system possible.

**Conclusion**

There was a resistance to educational integration in the nation and specifically in the South. The resistance began during slavery when White owners did not want their Black slaves to learn to read since this would empower them. During Reconstruction after the Civil War there were some gains made towards Black education. These gains were then lost when the federal troops pulled out. At this time the Northern philanthropists stepped in to help with the training of teachers as well as financial donations. It was not all philanthropic though, because they were able to control Southern Black education. The Black educational leaders who took a leadership role after Reconstruction were Washington, Du Bois and Goodson. These three men did not agree on the purpose of Black education, only that Blacks should be educated. When the *Plessy* case was decided the schools were supposed to be “separate, but equal” this equality did not
happen for the Black schools so the NAACP began their legal battle to integrate the schools. Although in *Brown*, *Plessy* was overturned, this did not mean that integration would be embraced. There was a resistance to integrating the schools especially in EBR and while much research has focused on integration in EBR, the story of Zachary has been obscured. It was a story that had not been told, and I believed it added to the literature. Since Zachary was still not integrated in 1970 this is where I will start, but first let me explain my methodology.
CHAPTER 3: WE TELL OURSELVES STORIES IN ORDER TO LIVE

Ah come to collect some old stories and tales and Ah know ya’ll know plenty of ‘em and that’s why Ah headed straight for home. Zora Neal Hurston (1975)

Oral History as Theory

In my research I will use oral history theory to understand how the Zachary community formed to support an integrated school system. Oral history researcher Ritchie (2003) writes that “oral history derives its value not from resisting the unexpected, but from relishing it. By adding an ever wider range of voices to the story, oral history does not simplify the historical narrative but makes it more complex – more interesting” (p. 13). I use the complexities woven into oral history to understand the community in Zachary. Oral history is one way to make educational history more democratic by hearing from those who have so far remained silent.

Describing oral history as a method, Terkel uses “the phrase that explodes” (Grele, 1975/1985, p.12) to signify an answer during an oral interview that triggers an exploration of unintended consequences. This phrase is how I think of theory in regards to oral history. There are many theories associated with oral history, and they are how the researcher makes sense of the project and how it can explode into a critical analysis of the subject. Ritchie (1995) writes, “Properly done, an oral history helps to interpret and define written records and makes sense out of the most obscure decisions and events” (p. 92). Oral history includes two parts, the doing and the interpreting. The practice or actual interview is the doing. Doing an oral history involves preparing for the interview and conducting the interview. The interpreting is the theory, and this is where the researcher reflects on the story the narrator has told, but also on the how, why, and what the narrator is trying to portray. According to Abrams (2010), the theories of self, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, memory, narrative, performance, and power and empowerment
create an understanding and a focus for the researcher. In this section, I will address each one of Abram’s theories and how they relate to oral history.

The theory of self involves the narrator telling his or her life-story with a window into his or her culture. Abrams (2010) writes, “The study of the self is seen not only as a means of accessing subjectivity, but as a way of studying culture and the relationship between the two” (p. 34). Theory of self is used more in the Western world due to popular culture being more confessional in nature. An example of this is the new trend of reality TV where the “actors” talk to the camera about the events of their lives. According to Abrams (2010), “This is constituted by a celebration of the subjective and an understanding that the life stories are complex and revealing narrative performances which can offer an insight into both identity formation and the relationship between that and larger historical forces” (p. 33). The researcher captures the stories from the narrator and interprets them from the researcher’s perspective as well as through the culture of the narrator.

The ethnographer Clifford Geertz writes (1973), “A good interpretation of anything—a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society—takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation” (p. 18). The theory of self is based on understanding the individual or the heart of the matter, and then how it relates to the outside world. The theory of self posits three characteristics which are the continuity of self, the relation of self to others, as well as the reflexivity of self. The continuity of self is the ability of the narrator to situate him or herself in time while telling the story. In the relation of self to other, the narrator is able to separate himself from others in order to create a unique identity. Reflexivity of the self occurs when the narrator can reflect and be aware of him or herself. (Abrams, 2010)
Because oral history is a conversation between two people, Abrams describes these conversations within the theory of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Subjectivity is “the constituents of an individual’s sense of self, his or her identity informed and shaped by experience, perception, language, and culture” (Abrams, 2010, p. 54). In oral history the researcher is interested in how the narrator creates his own identity within the public discourse. Peshkin (1988) writes, “One’s subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed” (p. 17). A researcher must be reflexive and aware of his or her subjectivity when interpreting the narrator’s stories during an oral history.

Abrams (2010) defines intersubjectivity as “the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer” (p. 54). Intersubjectivity is the interaction of the subjectivities of the narrator and the interviewer that occurs between them during the process of creating an oral history. The sociologist George Herbert Mead (1934) writes, “We only know ourselves through a series of interactive moments with others, and we may invent different selves for each moment or interaction” (p.136). Both participants in the process of oral history have subjectivity. When these subjectivities are examined together, the researcher can consider not just the story, but how it was created. Oral historians began with a process to collect information. They “began to conceptualize the self as the outcome of a dialogue process as an individual’s consciousness or subjectivity engages with existing discourses in society” (Abrams, 2010, p.57). When they noted that the self was ever evolving and changing and the individual adapted with their surroundings.

A researcher needs to understand his or her own subjectivity as well as his participants’ subjectivities while completing oral history research. For example, Abrams (2010) writes that

Oral historians must be aware that their respondents draw upon a range of ideas and meanings in order to construct the subject in the particular context of the interview but that this subject is not a static entity. (p. 56)
The researcher must acknowledge and be conscious of the narrator’s subjectivity during individual interviews and know that this may change over time and affect subsequent interviews. The same is true for the subjectivity of the researcher. Peshkin (1998) writes that researchers “should systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research” (p. 17). A researcher needs to have awareness of his or her own subjectivity to better understand the subjectivity emanating from the story of the narrator. The researcher must understand his or her potential bias with regard to the project in order to record what the narrator meant, and not interviewer’s interpretation. This understanding will lead to a more accurate portrayal of the history of the project.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, memory is “the mental faculty of retaining and recalling past experience.” Memory as a theory in oral history came from the fields of psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, and history, and it can be beneficial in understanding the perspective of the narrator and what is important to him or her. In her definition of memory, Abrams (2010) writes that memory is the calling of “images, stories experiences and emotions from our past life, ordering them, placing them within a narrative or story and then telling them in a way that is shaped at least in part by our social and cultural context” (p. 78). Thus, memory is how we navigate our recall and relate the stories to others.

These stories are written about by oral historians, Alice and Howard Hoffman (1994), who write, “My experience in conducting oral history interviews has led me to hypothesize that there might be a special character to the memories that we were tapping into” (p. 109). The theory of memory develops a reflection into the memories that the narrators share and why those were the memories used to tell the story. Another perspective can be gained from the oral historian Paul Thompson (1978/2000), who suggests that “accurate memory is much more likely
when it meets a social interest and need” (p. 132). Thompson gives the example of the tendency of Western women to remember family events with more clarity since it is socially accepted that women are naturally maternal and more family-oriented than men.

Since memory is not a perfect tool, the researcher needs to be cognizant of the limitations and have an understanding that errors are going to occur. This will hopefully help interviewers to identify where and when the possibility of errors might happen. Grele & Terkel (1975/1985) write about the narrator,

> They tell us of what happened but they also tell us what people thought happened and how they have internalized and interpreted what happened. They tell us how individual personalities and social forces reconstruct memory to advance or hinder the development of particular ways of viewing the past. (p. 245)

Indeed, Grele & Terkel consider oral history as another form of narrative. While telling his or her story, the narrator may either embellish or leave out information by chance or by choice, and a researcher needs to be aware of the possibility. This is why oral history needs to be told from more than one perspective and be supported with archival work to create as complete a picture of events as possible. Understanding of the oral history of narrative is defined by Abrams (2010) as “not merely the content of the story, but the telling of it. It incorporates not just the sequence of events of facts but emphases, embellishments, cadences, structure, digressions, silences – in short the arrangement and dramatization of the story” (p. 106). Thus, the elements of a narrative will need to be decoded by the researcher in order to understand the full story the narrator is trying to portray. The analysis explains how people craft and use stories to understand the world.

Closely related to oral history, narrative inquiry is the focus of Clandinin and Connely’s (2000) work, and they write, “For us, life – as we come to it and as it comes to others- is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and
understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities” (p. 17). These fragments are how narrators tell their story and make sense of their lives. The narrator comes to understand their own story through their experiences and how these experiences tell the larger story of their lives. Surely, Clandinin and Connelly did not invent narrative inquiry; in fact, its roots can be located in the educational theorizing of John Dewey. In fact, Dewey (1916/2011) writes, “Classification is not a matter of child experience; things do not come to the individual pigeonholed. The vital ties of affection, the connecting bonds of activity, hold together the variety of his personal experiences” (p. 5). The experience gained through narrative theory within oral history recognizes and then illuminates how the narrator makes sense of the world. As Dewey insists, we cannot take out the instance, but must tell of events with the details surrounding them in order to situate them in our minds.

Another scholar, Munro (1998) writes that narrative is “the primary way in which we organize experience is in its intersection with life history” (p. 6). The narrator and the oral historian use the narrative in order to situate their story with regards to events in their life and the world around them. Abrahms (2010) writes, “Narrative is something we do without thinking; it is part of everyday affairs, a means of communicating what we know about the world and a way of establishing connections with others” (p. 107). The narrative of a life is communication, how a person relates to and with others in his or her daily life. Narrative can come in the form of anecdotes that bond and stories about what a person did the night before.

Often an analysis of narrative includes more than simply the words spoken. Indeed, performance within the framework of the oral history theory, according to Abrams (2010), “is a speech act, a history-telling for an audience which occurs in a public context… it involves not just language but also non-vocal articulation performed by the body, for an interviewer who is
usually both a listener and a viewer” (p. 131). Oral history is developed from disciplines such as folklore research, ethnography, anthropology, linguistics, and performance studies. To analyze the story through the theoretical lens of oral history performance the researcher must take into account more than the words. The audience or the researcher must study how the narrator reveals the story through body language, intonation, and speech patterns.

In agreement, Finnegan (1984/1987) writes, “The oral speaker is by definition a performer and all the arts of drama, rhetoric, display, and verbal facility may be relevant in his performance” (p. 113). The performance includes the dialect, pauses, as well as the volume and the rhythm of the narrator’s words. All of these together paint a picture that is as important and gives as much information about the narrator as the actual content and word choice. Unfortunately, some researchers have been slow to adopt the performance approach.

In the beginning of history there were no written records, so oral historians were trained to perform oral histories as well as poems and songs of the culture. With the advent of a more literate society, these performances have been viewed by the dominant shapers of western culture as peripheral and non-scientific. However, video is changing the way researchers consider performance. Abrams (2010) writes, “Video can maintain the vibrancy, tonal inflections and presence of the original, capturing not only the ‘unworded’ elements of an interview but the very moment when memory is invoked or narrative created” (p. 145). Video allows the researcher to have more than a linguistic copy of the performance, and the performance can be viewed multiple times to gather information on many aspects of the performance; this is giving the field of oral history research more credibility and sustainability.

The theory of power used in the method of oral history has, over time, given voice to those who were silent. Abrahms (2010) describes this theory as “a tool of advocacy for groups
marginalized or excluded from formal channels of power” (p. 151). However, the researcher must be aware of his or her academic privilege and the power relations, as well as the gap in the spoken and interpretation of the words of the interview (Abrams, 2010). Through this critical analysis, the researcher will be able to use the power of the narrator to tell his or her own story.

Critical analysis requires the researcher to be self-aware so that his or her academic power will not overwhelm the interview process. Portelli (1991) writes,

Oral history does not begin with one abstract person observing another, a reified one, but with two persons meeting on a ground of equality to bring together their different types of knowledge and achieve a new synthesis from which both will be changed. (p. xii)

This power can be wielded in the form of the questions asked, the impression the interviewer gives off, or the status of the interviewer. The narrator needs to feel comfortable in order to tell his or her story. The two individuals need to have a conversation that is based on an equal respect in order for them to truly understand each other and for oral history to be a language for change.

The empowerment of the narrator is created by the interviewer creating a space to hear the voice of those who lack the situation or the platform to express their ideas. Educational theorist Paulo Freire, (1970/2000), documented the struggles of the working poor and argued that no grass-roots liberation movement would be successful if it were not lead by those whom it sought to represent. He writes, “No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption” (p. 54). Indeed, in the case of oral history, those who do not have the power must not be given the power but must be able to create it themselves through their words and actions during the oral interview process. The researcher is not there to “fix” them, but to capture their
story. In the process the results of the tale may affect their situation, but the narrator has to have ownership and be empowered in the process for real change to occur. In conducting a critical analysis of the story told, the researcher needs to make sure to hear what the narrator is saying and not impose his or her own beliefs onto the words. To impose would take away the power the researcher was trying to give by having the narrator tell his or her story.

The concepts that Abrams presented in her book *Oral History Theory* (2010) include self, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, memory, narrative, performance, and power and empowerment. She approached these theories as the way to access the oral history interview not just for the content of the words, but to understand the meaning. Oral historians chose these theories due to the fact that the history discipline was ill-equipped to handle the theory of oral history interviewing. Abrams (2010) suggests that the use of theory gives

an entry point from the present into the culture of the past. In order to gain access to that culture we must take notice of and interpret not just the words said but also the language employed, the ways of telling and the structures of explanation. (p. 16)

**Methodology**

In her book *Oral history for the Qualitative Researcher*, Valerie Janesick (2010) states, “Oral history is the collection of stories and reminiscences of a person or persons who have firsthand knowledge of any number of experiences” (p. 2). With this definition in mind, I situated my participants as narrators, the persons telling the story, in Zachary, a small rural city in Louisiana as I strove for firsthand knowledge of the experience of desegregation of the Zachary schools during the 1970-1971 school year. This research examines the history of the people in Zachary who played a part in the larger story of school integration.

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22 The participant in this study will be referred to as the narrator. This is due to the fact that they are taking an active role in the shaping of the story.
According to Dunaway and Baum (1996), “Oral historians are in the vanguard of scholars trying to record and interpret what is variously called ‘grass-roots history,’ or the history of the nonelite, or democratic history, or the history of ordinary people as they lived their ordinary lives” (p. xxi). The bottom-up approach has been adapted over time, not only to challenge the dominant narrative from the perspective of the minority, but also to tell the stories of the less powerful. This approach has brought to light those who were invisible. Oral history has the potential to change the dominant perspective and tell a compelling story encouraging social change. Using this methodology helped me tell the stories of the people in Zachary in a way that tells an untold story of a community, not from the dominant perspective, but from those who were in the trenches, making the decisions on how and what would be the plan for the integration. For my research, I not only relied on the oral histories being told, but also supported my findings with archival research.

On the topic of oral history, Ritchie (1995) writes, “Properly done, an oral history helps to interpret and define written records and makes sense out of the most obscure decisions and events” (p. 92). In my research I collected written records from participants in the form of yearbooks, pictures, awards, or anything else they thought might be pertinent to my research. I further supported oral histories with newspaper articles, city council records, school board records, maps, phone books, and other documents.

Since I relied not only on oral history, but archival documents as well, I am able to look at the two together to give a more accurate picture. Because memory is not a perfect tool, the researcher needs to be cognizant of its limitations. Having the archival documents has helped to identify where the possibility of errors happened. The additional support of archival records
allowed me to question events and show supporting evidence that enhanced what the narrators remembered.

While telling his or her story, a narrator may either embellish or leave out information by chance or by choice, which is why oral history needs to be told from more than one perspective and be supported with archival work to create as complete a picture of events as possible. Understanding the oral history of narrative is defined by Abrams (2010) as “not merely the content of the story, but the telling of it. It incorporates not just the sequence of events of facts but emphases, embellishments, cadences, structure, digressions, silences – in short the arrangement and dramatization of the story” (p. 106). Thus, I needed to decode the elements of each narrative in order to understand the full story the narrator was trying to portray. My analysis explained how the participants used their stories to understand the world.

Finnegan (1984/1987) writes, “The oral speaker is by definition a performer and all the arts of drama, rhetoric, display, and verbal facility may be relevant in his performance” (p. 113). The performance included the dialect, pauses, as well as the volume and the rhythm of the narrator’s words. While conducting my oral histories, I recorded all of the conversations. When transcribing them, I looked for not just what was said, but how it was said and the silence in between. All of these together paint a picture that is as important and gives as much information about the narrator as the actual content and word choice.

**Research Design**

The purpose of this oral history research project was to collect stories of how narrators experienced school integration in the community of Zachary, Louisiana. In order to generate a community oral history, I researched the years of 1968-1973, thereby including the year before and two years after the schools integrated in order to gain a better perspective. I chose the groups
of principals, students, teachers, and community members in order to gain a wide perspective of stories that could be used to tell about Zachary’s integration. By using multiple sources from each group as well as those who are Black and White I painted a picture with a variety of voices.

**Data Collection**

**Oral Histories**

Oral history involves a series of steps: the pre-interview or context, interview, processing, and data analysis. All of these steps are equally important for the oral history researcher. Hoopes (1980) writes, “The greatest advantage of oral over written documents is that the historian actively participates, as interviewer, in creating the oral document, and therefore he can try to get the information he needs” (p. 7). Active participation leads to a filling in of spaces in past research in which written documents were the only resources available. Since I also conducted archival research, I looked in archives before I began the interview process as well as during and after interviewing so that I could gain a more complete picture of the story of desegregation in the Zachary schools.

**Pre-Interview/Context**

Oral history cannot be effectively compiled by someone who does not have an understanding of the context of the experiences of the culture he or she is studying. To this point, it is important to complete archival research before the interview process begins. This is why I have completed a substantial literature review on race and education in the nation dating from the antebellum period. According to Hoopes (1980), “The oral historian must not only engage in interviewing but must also do other sorts of research in order to imaginatively recreate the historical context to which the interview refers and without which it will not often have much meaning” (p.14). Without a background of archival research, I would not know what to ask to
begin the conversation and would not know what follow up questions should be used. I have also researched the community of Zachary, how it started and grew in order to understand the context and my narrators better before beginning to record oral histories.

Thus, before the interview process even began, I prepared by understanding who my narrators were. I wanted to know basic information such as their race, their connection to the schools, and their connections to Zachary. Brady (1976) writes, “Experienced writers agree that for every minute spent in an interview, at least ten minutes should be spent in preparation” (p. 37). If a researcher goes into an interview with only the basic questions of who, what, and where, he/she risks the chance of alienating the narrator. I learned that the more I knew going in, the more at ease my narrators would be, and the better story they would tell based on my informed open-ended questions. I also reduced the risk of missing out on critical answers about questions I did not know I should ask. I believe that preparing for the interview is as important a process as the interview itself.

Interview

Through my tenure as a teacher in the Zachary school system I have met people who were integral in the desegregation of Zachary schools. I have chosen to interview principals, teachers, students and community members who were in Zachary during integration in order to get a larger understanding of the story. I have chosen to focus on the high school and the middle school for the purpose of this dissertation. The interviews included 20 people so that I included a cross-section of the community. The participants were interviewed at least once; sometimes a second or third interview occurred. By having people from many different groups and races, the goal was to capture many points of view that gave a unique insight into Zachary that has not been written about before now.
Another aspect that enabled a more accurate equal representation of the community makeup is my use of snowball sampling. I have gained access to my participants from my pilot interviews, which were conducted with participants recommended by co-workers who thought these individuals would be valuable to my research. During these pilot interviews my participants mentioned others who would be good resources to collect information. Snowball sampling allowed me to gain access to more people and have a broader scope for my research. Leavy (2011) writes that in snowball sampling, “each participant may lead the researcher to other potential participants” (p. 34). Since I am a member of the Zachary school community, I have access that someone coming to the project from the outside may not have as easily. The pilot interviews occurred at schools as well as in the homes and businesses of some participants. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. Each participant was able to choose the place for the interview, keeping in mind that we needed a quiet place where we would not be disturbed. The interviews began with a list of open-ended questions that allowed the participants to lead the tone and the theme of each interview. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed, and a copy was given to my narrators. My archival research helped to facilitate some questions, and I showed yearbooks and newspaper articles in order to trigger memories of my narrators and to facilitate an open discussion of events. Table 5 shows the groups and races of the narrators.

Table 5 Race and Group of Narrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers – High School and Middle School in 1968-1973</td>
<td>2 Narrators</td>
<td>3 Narrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students – High School and Middle School in 1968-1973</td>
<td>5 Narrators</td>
<td>4 Narrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City or Community- With ties to High School or Middle School in 1968-1973</td>
<td>3 Black</td>
<td>2 White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals – of the High School or Middle School in 1968-1973</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above information I was able to conduct multiple analyses of the teachers, students, community members, and principals across race lines as well as analyze the differences in what the different groups said and felt about the way Zachary was integrated.

When arriving for the interview, I tried to establish a rapport before pulling out the tape recorder and beginning the interview. This gave the narrator a chance to get used to me and be more at ease during the process. The narrator was given an explanation that I would be tape-recording the interview and asked if that is ok. The IRB (Internal Review Board) form was also clarified and narrators were asked to sign so that the interview could be used for my research. (See Appendix B) The interviews were held in a quiet place where the interviewer and the narrator were able to focus on our conversation. Hoopes (1980) instructs interviewers to “pay attention to the immediate environment and do what you can to make it conducive to free discussion” (p. 88), which is what I endeavored to accomplish by establishing a comfortable rapport with the participants. The tape recorder was placed where it would not distract the narrator, but where his or her voice could be heard. Before I started, I asked them to sign the IRB.

During the interview I took notes in my field journal on body language or other things that would not be apparent when reviewing the tape recording. Ives (1995) reminds researchers to “remember that a tape recording has no visual aspect, and many things that will be clear to you, since you were there at the time will not be clear to someone else who was not there” (p. 46). I also remembered that silence is fine; the researcher should make sure not to talk over the narrator. The narrator is the one doing the talking during an interview (Dean, P., Daspit, T., & Munro, P., 1998).
My open-ended questions were individually created for each narrator. The questions began with the background of the narrator and his or her relationship to his family and community. Then they moved into specific questions that helped to investigate my research. I knew that my topics were difficult as they dealt with racial identity, racial relations, and personal beliefs, and leaving them open gave the narrator more room to voice his or her own opinion. As Creswell (2009) suggests, I “began the research questions with the words what or how to convey an open and emerging design” (p. 130). This required a more qualitative answer from my narrator as opposed to a why question that might give me a cause-and-effect, which is a quantitative style. By creating a series of questions that are open-ended, I set the stage for hearing the story of the narrator. (See Appendix A)

I remembered Leavy (2001) writing that “this interview format involves a process of storytelling: the researcher guides a process where each participant narrates his or her story…the researcher and research participant are co-creators in the knowledge-building process” (p. 9). Therefore, I asked short, non-leading questions that gave room to each narrator to tell his or her story. If there is a part in the answer where I had a question, I took a note and asked when they were finished answering.

Moreover, I looked to Alessandro Portelli, an Italian scholar and oral historian in his book The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories (1991) about writing oral history and its sense of fluidity, of unfinishedess, of an inexhaustible work in progress, which is inherent to the fascination and frustration of oral history -- floating as it does in time between the present and an ever-changing past, oscillating in the dialogue between the narrator and the interviewer, and melting and coalescing in the no-man’s land from orality to writing and back. (p. vvi)

Here, Portelli expresses the variability and the openness that can be found while collecting oral histories. In the oral history practice, the interviewer must be willing to become a
part of the background and let the interviewee take on the main role of sharing. This helped me
to determine how many times to interview my participants to ensure that I could accurately tell
their story. There is also no concrete end during a collection of interviews. One can be
interviewed multiple times on topic. Before I left, I thanked my narrator, asked them if they
knew of anyone else that might be helpful to my research.

Processing

As I reviewed the tapes and transcriptions, I shared each one with the corresponding
narrator for his/her final approval. Sharing materials allows the narrator to correct
inconsistencies or misstatements. Also, having the interviewee read the transcripts can help him
or her catch mistakes or misstatements reflected in transcription of the recordings. Baum (1977)
refers to this as “historical authenticity.” In the Handbook of Oral History, Charlton, Myers, &
Sharpless (2006) writes, “Interviewees need to know the intended use of the interview as well as
possible future use” (p. 138). It was important for me to make sure that each narrator have a
complete understanding of the project, including what the project was about, who would have
access to the interview, and what rights the narrator would have to amend the interview after he
or she reviewed it.

Regarding transcription, Baum (1977/1991) writes,

Transcribing is a work of art, a little akin to translating from one language to another, but
with less latitude allowable. The spoken word has many dimensions with which to
convey fact and feeling: pitch, loudness, strength, speed, pronunciation, sounds that are
not words. (p. 26)

Transcribing is not only a work of art, but it is also time consuming. Many decisions needed to
be made: Should the “ums” be left in? Should the transcription correct grammatical errors or
mispununciations of words? After making these decisions, I created a style sheet to help me
maintain consistency throughout the project.
While I archived the interviews, I needed to keep in mind the ability to situate the interview with regards to the narrator as well as historical significance. Fogerty (2006) writes, “An interview should never become a ‘found object,’ stripped of the story of its creation and without any record of its context, except that intuited by an eventual cataloger or user” (p. 209). I needed to make sure that each interview was historically significant and added to the knowledge base of the desegregation in Zachary. By coding the transcript in this way it may be relevant for a related investigation, even if it is not used in my current research. Therefore, I need to strive to give an accurate translation of not only what occurred during the interview, but also what occurred outside of the narration. As I process the collection, I gained permission to use the stories and personal documents through a consent form. In regards to my study I have already spoken to Hill Library, and they welcome my interviews from my study. The Zachary Historical Society has also asked to be a repository.

Archival

I used both primary and secondary archival sources. Including: notes from field journals, letters to the editor from 1968-1972 in The Plainsman (Zachary Paper), articles from The Plainsman and The Advocate (Baton Rouge Paper), yearbooks from Zachary High School from 1970-1972, East Baton Rouge School Board Documents from 1969-1972, Zachary City Council documents from 1969-1972, documents for the Zachary Historical Society, maps from the 1950’s to the 1970’s, census records from the 1950’s to the 1970s, and documents or other materials supplied by the narrators.

Field Journals

Between the interviews and during my archival work, I kept field journals that helped me to organize my thoughts, comments and questions. The journals also helped my memory when I
went back to analyze the data from my interviews. I took notes during my interviews and made notations while researching in the archives. The interviews were all transcribed, and a formal analysis began upon their completion. Themes were identified upon reading the transcripts multiple times. Themes were color-coded and tagged with a text feature in MS Word to make them easily searchable.

**Data Analysis**

The first thing I did during analysis, as learned from LeCompte & Preissle (1984/1993) was “a review of the original research proposal which also reacquaints the researcher with the varied audiences for whom the study originally was intended and permits their needs and interests to be addressed as analysis proceeds” (p. 236). Going back to the beginning stages of the process allowed me to determine if my research question strayed from the original proposal and, if this was the case, why.

Next I read through the data in order to sort it into themes. When the patterns of themes began to emerge, I looked for subheadings that could be used to break down the data even further. During this process of sorting the data from the interviews, I needed to also be aware of the supplemental materials of newspapers, photographs, journals and other written documents that were collected while conducting interviews. These also needed to be sorted according to themes of the project.

After I coded the data, I needed to determine which theory lent itself to explaining the data in a way that would help the audience understand the results of my research. Most research could be supported by more than one theory, and it was up me to choose the correct theory to clarify my research. The theory that fit best was oral history.
Method

The reason that I chose to complete an oral history for my research method was the potential for giving a voice to those who were otherwise unheard. The 1960’s was a decade of social change in the United States with the Civil Rights movement, Vietnam War protests (often referred to as the student movement), and the feminist movement, sometimes independently and sometimes in concert, working against the oppression of marginalized populations. Oral history became a way for those struggling against the status quo to voice their stories. Historian Allan Nevins (1960’s) began using oral histories to tell about the powerful; however, during the 1960s, the focus of historians adapted to “explore the interests of a multiracial, multiethnic population with an emphasis on class relationships” (Charlton, Myers, & Sharpless, 2006, p.25).

Oral histories have also been used to describe communities that have so far remained silent in the mainstream. Some examples are Greene’s (2006) book about Community and Change in the North Carolina Mountains, which gives oral histories of the way of life in Watagua County 100 years ago. Barnett’s (2005) edited book, Oral History and Communities of Color, gives the reader an insight into the culture within the communities of people of color. Another edited volume is African Words, African Voices, edited by White (2001) that uses a critical eye to restore African expression to African history.

Historians began to realize that oral history is a way for them to document local history and “is a place to look for individual reactions to historical events” (Kammen, 2003, p.4). The groups that are highlighted using oral histories are usually marginalized or disenfranchised, and their stories have not been part of the dominant narrative. I believe that using oral history to explore the stories in Zachary, Louisiana can show how a rural Southern community experiences desegregation in their schools, which is a story that until this time, has been untold.
Data Collection

I have conducted oral interviews with teachers, students, city or community members, and principals in Zachary who experienced desegregation in Zachary from 1969 to 1971. I interviewed Black and White members of each group. I asked the participants about their personal educational experiences and about their experiences of desegregation in Zachary. By casting a wide net of four groups as well as both races, I sought to capture the feeling and tell the story of integration in Zachary. The process of interviews also included follow-ups, and I visited archives and used historical documentation loaned to me by the participants of my study to broaden my understandings of their experiences of desegregation. Finally, I kept a field journal in which I used to I take notes during interviews, when I visited the archives, as well as when read other oral histories. Together, these data sources paint a picture of how this community created a single school system in Zachary for both Black and White students.

As I worked through the interviews I created indexes and filed the transcripts, photographs, and letters which accompanied materials in the oral depository. I asked my narrators for permission to use the documents. The more time I spent looking for themes and working to understand the data, the stronger my research was. Keeping good notes as the project progressed helped during the curating part of the process. This is one important reason to keep a good field journal. By looking at Table 6 one can determine the path of my research and how I collected my data.

Table 6  Timeline of Research Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview (20) –High School and Middle School: teachers, students, principals and community members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archival Collection – Hill Memorial, Zachary City Council, Zachary Historical Society, personal Records, Plainsman offices, Advocate, EBR School Board Office</td>
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(Table 6 Continued)

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Interview (20) – High School and Middle School: teachers, students, principals and community members</td>
<td>Archival Collection – Hill Memorial, Zachary City Council, Zachary Historical Society, personal Records, Plainsman offices, Advocate, EBR School Board Office</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Defended Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>Interview (20) – High School and Middle School: teachers, students, principals and community members</td>
<td>Archival Collection – Hill Memorial, Zachary City Council, Zachary Historical Society, personal Records, Plainsman offices, Advocate, EBR School Board Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2013</td>
<td>Data Analysis, Coding, Generating Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2013</td>
<td>Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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<td>August 2013</td>
<td>Archival Collection – State Library, Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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<td>September 2013</td>
<td>Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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<td>October 2013</td>
<td>Archival Collection – State Library, Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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<td>November 2013</td>
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<td>December 2013</td>
<td>Archival Collection – State Library, Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>Follow Up Interviews, Drafts of Results and Conclusions</td>
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**Ethical Considerations**

I had to make sure that my participants knew what the goal of my research was and how it might affect them. As an oral historian, I had the added concern that my subjects of research were living beings as opposed to archival papers or documents.
Moreover, the field of education has a history of being held to a high moral standard, and my focus was educational. Janesick (2010) writes, “Those of us in public work, such as the field of education, have even more sensitivity to the notion of what it means to work in a public arena. We have to answer to many publics” (p. 52). The publics that educational researchers have to regard are accrediting bodies, federal regulations, state regulations, and institutional review boards (IRBs). The main goal of these bodies is to follow the rule _do no harm_. I needed to make sure to take all possible precautions and follow procedures in order for this to happen.

One way that I followed the rule of doing no harm was to complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. The IRB is made up of committee members who approve, monitor and review research when there are human participants. This approval process was the first step to begin my study. I had to explain to the board that I understood my ethical obligation to the narrators. I needed to clarify what the interview would be used for, that there would be transcripts, and that I would store the information at Hill Library and the Historical Society in Zachary.

I also had to take into account that for purposes of this study, I needed to consider myself an “insider” since I worked and have lived in Zachary. This information was given to my narrators as well as made apparent during the analysis of the research data. I needed to make sure that my own subjectivity was apparent in terms of my research. As a young, white female I am dominant in terms of the one who is structuring the interview process. Meaning that I needed to be as transparent as possible when it came to my own limitations and really inspect how these could affect my research. I also needed to take into account that I was telling a story about how Blacks were integrated into a White high school, so my race was a factor as well.
As someone living in the community I was able to access narrators through my connections as a teacher. This helped me to gain access to people who were willing to talk candidly with me and tell me their stories. I also had the added benefit of my mother working for the high school and then the school board, so she helped me gain access to narrators as well. Some people who were recommended that I speak to chose not to participate. Some of them I called five times and they just did not want to take part in the study. My connections to the community did help me gain access to my narrators, but I still had to be cautious that I was an insider and that I would need to detail that in my study.

Being prepared allowed me to understand my subjectivity while asking the narrators to be reflective and forthright with open-ended questions. Hoopes (1979) writes, “Interviewing is inevitably a two-way social process, and the idea of neutrality is not to abolish but only to reduce the interview’s complex subjectivity, in order to increase communication and understanding by making interpretation easier and more accurate” (p. 137). By reflecting on my own subjectivity, I was able to create a story where the biases of the narrator and my own point of view were minimized.

Lancy writes (1993), “The sharpest debates, and those most difficult to resolve, have revolved around matters of interpretation” (p. 252). Interpretation can always be reduced to a matter of subjectivity, so researchers should follow the path of a typical analysis and be able to back up their findings with their research. Data analysis should allow a researcher to determine if the oral history collected adds to the dominant historical narrative by supporting or contradicting current research.
Conclusion

I believed that the method of oral history supported by archival research was the best way to complete the research for my dissertation because it gave those who were actually there and participated in the event a way to tell their stories, which have not been told until now. I also believed that supporting these narratives with archival research would add to the validity, and had the potential to raise questions that can remind the participants of events that took place over 40 years ago. My interviewees belonged to various groups, including various racial identities, which added strength to my results. By interviewing so many people, I was able to collect a variety of different stories to tell the tale of Zachary’s integration process. I was able to use this information to analyze my results to determine the answers outlined in my proposal.

My primary questions were as follows:

1. How did the community of Zachary experience desegregation?

2. What was the relationship between the community and the schools?

3. In what way does oral history of the desegregation of Zachary inform our larger understandings of desegregation?

Oral history is a growing field, and the field is expanding in the international arena as well as expanding local community histories. This is what I hope to capitalize on with my Zachary research. Rina Benmayor (1991) writes about the social empowerment that can be created while conducting oral histories. Benmayor writes, “Testimony, life history, and other forms of oral history researcher often lead to a reexamination of theory and methods” (p.160). Benmayor discovered that the traditional methods of researchers and participants created a power imbalance that was affecting the results; thus, I want to use oral history as a way to understand the previously untold stories and give the power to the narrators who have previously not had a strong voice. I believe this involvement and connection to the inner workings of the narrators’
lives can help to reduce the power dynamic and lead to a better understanding of the story the narrators are trying to express.

I have researched the advances in oral history and have found that they have been used to cultivate and grow the field of community history. Ritchie writes, “Oral historians have helped to broaden traditional notions of what constitutes a community’s history by looking not only at its political and institutional structures but at its economic development and the ethnic and occupational composition of its population” (p. 186). Conducting this research with the method of oral history supported with archival research gives the community of Zachary voice, as well as spotlight for their story. These histories needed to be preserved as they can give the community a sense of self, and to show how Zachary schools were unique in terms of the desegregation of the schools.

“The whole purpose of oral history is to establish connections between discrete individuals (the subject of their own history) and larger historical events or processes that these individuals may have experienced or been part of.” (Steinberg, 1993 p.71)
CHAPTER 4: IF WE STICK TOGETHER FOR THE RIGHT THING, IT ALWAYS WORKS

Zachary

It was wonderful growing up here. I lived on a dairy farm and we had good neighbors and we (Whites) have an excellent hospital – always has been excellent – and good churches. Everybody’s friendly. It was like family and it still is like family (personal communication, February 28, 2013). Mary, a White community member, aged 60.

Well, it was nice growing up. We (Blacks) played together. We went to church together. We worked in the fields. So it was a nice experience growing up in the country area of Zachary. (personal communication, February 28, 2013). Lacey, a Black student who was in the first graduating class from Northwestern High, who is now 81.

As the quotes above point out, both Black and White residents enjoyed relative peace and happiness, despite the widespread segregation in Zachary. Churches, restaurants, hospitals, and schools had been segregated before and after Reconstruction in 1877. Since segregation was a way of life in Zachary, both ideological and physical changes were required to integrate the segregated schools into one system. In order to understand how dramatic these changes were, it is necessary to have background knowledge of the history of Zachary; Jim Crow on a national level; and the Jim Crow Laws as they impacted the unique rural school setting in Zachary, Louisiana. To understand the effect of the Jim Crow laws on education in Zachary, I examined the history of segregation in education both nationally and locally, specifically in Zachary. Within that framework I examined the way EBR Parish began the integration of their schools, and specifically how the people of Zachary and their Bi-Racial committee helped with the process.

History of Zachary

Zachary can be found to the east of the Mississippi River and west of the Pearl River, in an area which in 1763 was known as The West Florida Republic and was controlled by Spain (Faces Places, 1975) (Appendix E ). The Spanish West Florida Republic also included East Baton Rouge, the Feliciana Parishes, and the Florida Parishes. According to Davis (2011), this
was significant because “Despite being one of the new nation’s smallest territorial acquisitions, Spanish West Florida, controlled the Mississippi River, and whoever held the Mississippi governed the commerce, settlement, development, and defense of more than half of the continent” (p. xiv). In 1789 revolutionaries against Spanish rule in Spanish West Florida were inspired by the United States Declaration of Independence and proclaimed, “We the undersigned inhabitants of that part of the dominion called West Florida, have resolved to throw off the galling yoke of tyranny, and become FREE, by declaring ourselves a FREE and INDEPENDENT PEOPLE” (p. 36). Spanish West Florida did gain its independence for 90 days beginning in June of 1810. However, Napoleon sold Louisiana during the Louisiana Purchase, (Figure 4). The United States gained control of the area in the Louisiana Purchase in October of 1810. The path to becoming the 18th state was not smooth; Congress and the Senate had many heated discussions over the border of what would become Louisiana, as well as concerns over the racial makeup and the culture of those who lived in the area. It took until April of 1812 for Louisiana to become a state. It was the 18th state and the first state to the west of the Mississippi River (Chapman, 2012).
Zachary became known as the hub of Plainsland. This hub ran “from Bayou Manchac to the Felicianas” (Faces and Places, 1975, p. 4). According to Know Louisiana, an encyclopedia on Louisiana, the change in the hub came into existence when the Mississippi River changed course. Then the Mississippi River flowed away from the more established town of Port Hudson. When the river changed course, farmers needed other means of transportation to move their goods. This occurred in 1883-1884 when the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railroad began to lay a track that went right through the middle of Darel Zachary’s land. For one dollar, Zachary sold the railroad a slice of land that was fifty feet wide and six hundred and fifty feet long for a railroad station. The station was named Zachary Station. The town later became Zachary. Figure 5 shows the current railroad sign found by the tracks in Zachary. The railroad trains caused contention in Zachary because cows and pigs were getting struck by the trains. Daryl Zachary eventually sold his 160 acre farm to George Brown and moved.

With the introduction of the railroad, shops and businesses sprang up to accommodate the needs of the constant traffic in and out of the railroad station. At one time there were seven saloons in Zachary; the area was known for being “‘rough and wild” and a “place where a lady

Figure 5  Picture of the original Zachary Train Station Sign. Personal archive, 2013
didn’t care to traverse the Main Street” (Faces and Places, 1975, p. 3). The incorporation of Zachary into a town happened on August 2, 1889. The first census was completed in 1910, when there were 419 inhabitants. The census did not record the number of White and Black residents, only the total population. Trains in Zachary were used by ladies who went on daily outings to shop; men rode a work train to a Standard Oil company installation in Baton Rouge; and White and Black students rode on segregated trains to Baton Rouge to attend high school. During this time most White residents had farms and the Black residents were sharecroppers.

When not using trains, people drove their wagons for miles to come to the hub of Zachary. The land was primarily farm land; however, when the boll weevil epidemic occurred during the early 1900’s and wiped out the crops, the farmers replaced their crops with livestock and built dairies on their land.

The National Impact of Jim Crow

Segregation was not abstract to black people living in the South; it was about everyday life. It touched every corner of southern existence imaginable – movie theaters, hospitals, libraries, taxi-cabs, restaurants, schools, jobs, buses, stores, parks, water fountains, churches, cemeteries. (Levine, 1993, p.3)

The Jim Crow laws were a result of racism and white supremacy after Reconstruction. According to Bankston and Caldas (2002), after Reconstruction, “Life and politics in the South were driven by the perception of the world as divided into mutually incompatible interest groups along lines of race” (p. 23). Hendry and Edwards (2009) explain that “signs denoting ‘whites only’ and ‘colored’ appeared over the entrances to parks, theaters, boardinghouses, waiting rooms, toilets, and water fountains” (p. 54). These signs were more than a perception; they were given a stronghold by the Jim Crow laws.

Levine’s (1993) book Freedom’s Children is a compilation of interviews of young civil rights activists telling their stories of segregation. In the book Roy DeBerry, from Holly Springs,
Mississippi, explains, “Growing up I knew the rules. It was clear. You went to the courthouse and there was the ‘colored’ bathroom and a ‘white’” (p. 10). Levine also includes the voice of Larry Russell, from Birmingham, Alabama, who speaks about the water fountains at the local store. “They had one water fountain for whites, and one for us (Black). I used to think, “What’s the difference between colored water and white water?” (p.14). These examples show that segregation caused by Jim Crow was inserted into the everyday life of both Blacks and Whites.

The separations caused by the Jim Crow laws also filtered down to the schools. Bullock (1967) states,

It was clear that the two races would constitute distinct castes, neither crossing over into the domain reserved for the other; the white and black children would be trained in two different kinds of schools – indeed, in two distinct sociocultural worlds; and Negroes, though obligated to the same flag, would become two different kinds of peoples. (p. 147)

By law Blacks and Whites had to use separate facilities, which lead to a system where Whites had access to parks, schools, buses, churches and cemeteries, and Blacks had access to what was left. For example, on the buses Whites sat in the front, and Blacks had to sit at the back of the bus demarcated by a piece of wood. The piece of wood could be moved further back if more Whites came onto the bus, and Blacks would have to keep moving to be behind the wood. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes about the aftermath of Reconstruction, arguing that it “gave way to a caste system that admitted two categories only: the superior white and the subordinate black” (p. 5).

**Zachary Community Life under Jim Crow**

If we stick together for the right thing, it always works. Sometimes it’s hard. It’s a bitter pill to swallow. Once you stick with it you see the end results. It’s all part of it.

(Jim – Black-Age -86, October 16, 2012)

Black and White narrators shared with me their experiences about growing up in Zachary and about the town’s segregation before integration. Blacks and Whites in the city of Zachary, prior to the federal mandate, did not attend the same social, academic, or religious organizations.
When interviewing Henry, a White teacher during integration, I asked if the churches or neighborhoods were integrated. He responded, “Churches and neighborhoods were not ‘officially’ segregated, but in fact they were, as very few neighborhoods were mixed, and I don’t know of any churches that were mixed.” (personal communication, September 24, 2013). This separation sentiment was echoed by Jim, a Black community member who told me, “Restaurants were segregated by having a room in the back by the kitchen where Blacks would eat; they did not really have a table, just a place to stand and eat” (personal communication, September 28, 2013).

The history of the Jim Crow system (described above) that was officially “separate- but-equal” occurred between 1877-1965 and established in Zachary a norm of separate facilities for Black and White. In the one restaurant in Zachary the Blacks had to go in the back door and take their food home to eat it. The movie theater in Zachary had an upstairs where the Black patrons sat in order to watch a movie. As the narrators illuminate, segregation occurred in Zachary until the 1970’s. William, a Black teacher at Northwestern, said of Zachary during segregation: “everyone knew which side of the fence you was on. And as a result, we didn’t have – I don’t remember a big racial problem at all” (personal communication, October 14, 2013). Likewise, Henry, a White teacher at the high school after integration who had lived in the town before integration told me that,

“We were friendly with co-workers and people in the community who were a different race. We did not socialize, nor go to their houses. We would have been let in if we showed up at their door, but we never showed up at their door” (personal communication, September 24, 2013).

The Zachary community described by the narrators illustrated both segregation and integration of the community. The Whites lived and went to church with Whites, and the Blacks lived and went to church with Blacks. However, since Zachary was so small, the businesses in
town did cater to both a Black and White clientele. Edward, who is 81 and White, told me about growing up with his father owning the hardware store in town:

See, growing up in a store, I was not isolated from Blacks. I had friends even in the sixth grade that were Black. You know, they were constantly in the store. And the one thing my parents told me is it’s not about who – what color you are, it’s about how you are as a person. And that’s kind of the way my mom and dad raised us is that you don’t pre-judge people, that people are people. Just ‘cause you’re White and they’re Black, you’re no better than they are and that’s – I think that’s why my daddy’s been so highly successful in his business over all these years (personal communication, February 27, 2013).

Since Zachary was (and still is) a small city,23 Black and White citizens depended on each other for goods and services; therefore they knew and interacted with each other before the mandated integration. This was different from Baton Rouge, where Black and White neighborhoods had their own stores and businesses, preventing the kind of regular social and business interactions between Blacks and Whites that occurred in Zachary. Even though Whites and Blacks rode the same train, Jim, a Black community member, told me about the train station in Zachary. “If you was White, you bought a ticket in this window. If you were Black, you had to buy a ticket at the other window. It didn’t make sense, but that’s what happened, and so I’ve been a pioneer for integration” (personal communication, October 16, 2012).

During another interview, Henry, a 64 year-old White male, shared this sentiment, “Being a small community like Zachary, the goings-on with the school, it was so much different than being in Baton Rouge, ‘cause life revolves around the school and the churches in Small Town, USA” (personal communication, February 5, 2013). Taylor, a Black 49 year-old, voiced the same sentiment about Zachary when she said, “Back then the community was surrounded around the churches and stuff. I can remember getting our shots at a church right down the street when we were growing up” (personal communication, February 28, 2013). Since Zachary was separated from other big cities, the main focus was on church and school. This focus played a

23 The 2010 census had a population of 14,960 people.
part in the later integration of the schools. Church and school were an integral part of this small town community. There was not a Black owned business until the 1940’s; it was called Claude’s, and it was a small grocery store. (personal communication, October 14, 2013). Blacks did work in the back of restaurants cooking, and they could go to the back to order, but they were not allowed to be served in the front like the White patrons. However, this co-existence of the Whites having their areas and the Blacks having theirs was addressed by the lawsuits about the equality of the schools. Jim Crow pervaded everyday life in Zachary; it was most evident in the public schools.

As Irons (2004) writes, “These Jim Crow schools were ‘public’ in name only, and often received so little funding” (p. 13). William, a Black teacher in Zachary during segregation, told me about looking for text books for his class,

by trying to operate a dual school system, somebody had to suffer. And it was the Black schools I can remember when it was time for school to start, I knew what I was going to teach. I’d have to go down on Old Choctaw Road. They had a book depository down there. And I’d have to walk around in those rooms where they had books that had been discarded when they got new books. And the Whites had gotten new books, and they were discarding those. I had to walk among those books, get the books that looked like good enough for my students to use. I’ll never forget. It was most difficult to get a new Louisiana History book. Most difficult. And I don’t know – I said, “They had to do that because they couldn’t get new books for White and Black.” So that’s the system they used. (personal communication, January 31, 2013)

This quote from William described some of the discrepancies that were in place during the Jim Crow era in Zachary and gives an example of how the White schools were getting better access to materials than the Black schools. I will show that the disparity between Black and White education, continued to draw criticism from the Black population of Zachary. Jim, a Black community member, told me that the first graduation from high school for Whites was in 1914 at Zachary High School, while a full forty-one years would pass before Blacks were able to
graduate from high school at Northwestern. Indeed, though the races were co-existing, the spirit of separate but equal was not being upheld.

**Zachary as a Rural Educational Setting**

When the Civil War ended in 1865, there were few public or private schools in the Baton Rouge area, and we know from the Report from the Superintendent of Public Education, which is contained in the Louisiana Legislature documents from 1858, that “from the few and imperfect returns made to me by the Directors of the Public Schools in this parish, I am not able to report fully upon the condition of the schools or the qualifications of the teachers” (Louisiana Legislature Documents, 1858).

One thing that I found interesting is that there were pages and pages in the legislature’s documents that pertained to convicts including what they ate, what they were arrested for, and why they went to the hospital, but the School Superintendent stated multiple times in his report that he did not have enough data to compile his report on the schools. The state of Louisiana does not have school records before 1941-1942, according to the Department of Education. However, Jim Anderson (1988) reports data on high school enrollment which is shown in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment of children ages 14-17 in Louisiana Schools in 1930</th>
<th>Enrollment in secondary grades in Louisiana in 1933-34</th>
<th>Percentage ration of enrollment to # of children in Louisiana in 1933-1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109,951</td>
<td>65,304</td>
<td>62,836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wilkerson, Special Problems of Negro Education, p. 36.

Private schools were crucial to the education of Blacks “since before 1910 there was little or no public education available” (Hendry and Edwards, 2009, p.58). Also according to J.M.

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24 This included Zachary.

25 These can be found at the State Library of Louisiana
Frazier’s (1937) research for his master’s thesis, the conditions in the public schools were so deplorable that Black parents chose to pay for private school. This meant they were paying taxes for public school as well as tuition for private school.

Anderson’s (1988) research on the Black schools in Louisiana shows the following data collected for 1900. (Table 8)

Table 8 Black Students and Graduates in Public and Private Normal Schools, High Schools, and Colleges in Southern States, 1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The data in Table 8 shows that most of the Black students in the early 1900’s attended private and not public schools. It also shows that the graduation rates were higher in students from the private schools than those in public institutions. The only Black private high schools could be found in churches, houses, or at Baton Rouge Academy.

In Vanessa Siddle Walker’s book *Their Highest Potential* (1996), Walker documents, “(School)Board responses to Negro(parent) requests included agreeing to provide the request if the Negro community made some type of personal sacrifice…but making no monetary commitment of its own; agreeing to grant the request ‘if money [was] available’” (p. 20). White schools were given the top priority, and Black schools had to do with what was left over or what they could raise for themselves to help support their schools.26 As Hendry and Edwards (2009) write in *Old South Baton Rouge*, “Until the 1920s blacks attending high school did so for the

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26 This is reminiscent of the Rosenwald Schools were the Black parents had to match donations.
most part at private schools. Later in that decade black, civic leaders continued their push for the expansion of black public education” (p. 68). Blacks chose to go to private schools due to lack of access to a public school near them or due to the fact that the available public schools were in such disarray that the family sacrificed and used money for private school instead of necessities.

**White Education in Zachary**

Many of the White children in the Baton Rouge District went to public school, took their lessons at home, attended private schools or even boarding schools. The repercussions from this imbalance can be seen in a 1910 census that states that in Louisiana almost 49 percent of Blacks were illiterate as opposed to 14 percent of Whites (Lovell, 1961). Zachary did not have a public elementary school for Black students until 1934 (Appendix C).

In the beginning of the East Baton Rouge school system, both Black and White pupils walked many miles to school each way unless their family had a horse, or they were able to catch a ride on a buggy filled with other children (Figure 6). This changed over time until most Black students had to walk to their schools while the White communities provided public transportation for students. Walker (1996) writes that in the Black community, “There was no recognized public transportation system, [so] these early buses were purchased with Rosenwald aid and private donations” (p. 36). Lunches and supplies were furnished by the students themselves; they consisted of a tin bucket with a biscuit and leftovers from the family dinner. The school supplies were slate and pencil, or scratch paper with a lead pencil.

The first mention in the East Baton Rouge School Board 27 minutes of a Zachary School for White students was in April, 1887 (*Faces and Places*, 1975, p. 33). The teacher, Mrs. Dorance Penny, held school in her house and in the church near her home. It is interesting that this was a public school held in a private residence. When student enrollment began to rise,

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27 Zachary was a part of the East Baton Rouge School system until it split off in 2006 into an independent district.
the School Board approved the purchase of a plot of land where a two-story building was erected. On the top floor was the Masonic Lodge and on the bottom was the Zachary School. (Figure 7). This school was for Whites grades 1-10. If a student wanted a high school diploma, he or she had to take a train to Baton Rouge each day or live with a friend or relative in Baton Rouge during the week to attend high school. The school he or she could attend depended on where the relative lived. The options were Istrouma High School in Baton Rouge or Baker High School in Baker, both opened in 1942. The Zachary School Masonic Lodge building was used until 1916 for grades 1-11. Then a new school was built and the students were moved to the
current site of Zachary High School. In 1926 the population of Zachary had grown to 524, and the enrollment of Zachary School was 165 students in grades 1-11.28

In 1939 a new brick building to house Zachary High School (ZHS) for Whites began construction. The cafeteria at ZHS began operating in 1950. For the first time, students had the option of buying a hot lunch at school. The lunches were planned and organized by the Future Homemakers of America Club at the school. Mr. McVea was the principal at this time. When asked why Zachary was different, he stated, “We had a small school in a small town. Our teachers worked, lived, socialized and went to church in Zachary. They knew their students and their needs, their fathers and mothers and their aunts and their uncles” (Faces and Places, 1975, p. 48).

Since Zachary was growing, a new school had to be built to support the White student population. ZHS’s White student body grew so much that in 1961 the grades 1-6 moved to Zachary Elementary while ZHS had grades 5-12. This meant there was an overlap of 5-6th grades. (Appendix F). Zachary schools remained segregated until the 1970-1971 school year. (Appendix G).

Black Education in Zachary

The first private school for Black students grades 1-6 in the Zachary area was at the Little Star built in 1905 (Figure 8). The students would attend school for six months out of the year, and they would walk from miles around to attend.

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28 There is no data available from the State Department of Louisiana until 1941, so information collected is from Faces and Places in the Education section on Zachary and does not contain as many facts as the later information from the state department.
Jim, a Black community member who attended the Little Star School in 1933, spoke to me about walking 4 miles each way to school when he was 6 years old. The only day someone went with him was his first day because the rest of his family had to work. The lunches at Little Star were brown bagged since there was no kitchen.

During another interview Lacey, a Black student during the time of segregation, spoke about her experience as a student at another private school called the Holy Grove Church School in Zachary in the 1930’s. She told about having about 15 students and the boys who would build the fire each day on which the students would heat up their meals.

Lacey stated,

They didn’t have but one teacher. And she would give the older students their assignment, and they would get off – and one part of the church was their area. And the next grade level would get off on the other side of the church, and they would have their assignments. And through the process, she would leave you doing your work. (personal communication March 20, 2013)

A Rosenwald School\textsuperscript{29} was built in 1934 and was named the Zachary Colored School. Figure 9 shows the water fountain which is all that remains of the school.

\textsuperscript{29} See (Anderson, 1988) for further information on Rosenwald Schools
Jim, who had attended the Little Star School, switched to the new Rosenwald School. He told me that the number of children went from 10-15 to about 100 kids since students from many smaller schools like Little Star and Holly Grove Church came together when the larger Rosenwald School was built. When asked if the teachers taught more than one grade he said, “They had different teachers, or they had a teacher that would maybe teach more than one grade. But at the time you were doing second grade learning, you had that teacher.” (personal communication, October 14, 2013). He went on to tell me that if a teacher had more than one grade, the students would do PE, or “play in the dirt,” as he called it, while the teacher was teaching the other grades.

During the 1949-1950 school year, the Zachary Colored School, which was a former Rosenwald School, was taken over by the state, (Figure 10). It began with classes for grades one through nine, and then a grade was added each year after until they had twelve grades. There were 9 teachers employed at the Zachary Colored School. The next year the name was changed to Northwestern Junior High as part of a push to implement a junior high, which would become a high school. Linda, a Black student who was in the first class of graduates from Northwestern High School in 1954, said, “The books they had were hand-me-down-books. They did the best with what they could offer. The promotion policy was strict. You didn’t learn

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30 A private Black school
something, you didn’t go to the next grade.” (personal communication, January 31, 2013).

William, a Black teacher at Northwestern High School told me that,

> When you try to operate a dual system, it’s too expensive. You’re going to have neglect both or neglect one and push the other one. By trying to operate a dual system, somebody had to suffer, and it was the Black schools (personal communication, January 31, 2013).

Before 1954, Black high school students in Zachary had to travel to the Southern University Laboratory School, which was grades 1-12, or McKinley High School, which was 10-12th grades, in order to gain a high school education. The building of a new Black high school shows an example of the national philosophy of trying to create a separate but equal school system in Zachary. Northwestern Elementary was built in 1969 in order to ease the overflow of the White population of students. Fairclough (2007),

> Every educational innovation had to be first started in the white schools; a decade or two then went by before whites considered extending it to black schools. Every year, total spending on public schools increased, but the black schools did not catch up (p. 263).

In neighboring Baton Rouge, African Americans were pushing for integration. On December 1, 1950 the *Morning Advocate* reported, “Louisiana State University accepted a Negro student for the first time in its 90 year history.” The student was Roy Wilson and he registered at the LSU law school. The University was ordered to accept him after a federal court case. Then in 1953 A.P. Tureaud enrolled as the first Black undergraduate student at Louisiana State University. The wheels of progress were slow to turn. According to the *Morning Advocate* in
May 1956, the East Baton Rouge School Board outlined 21 Negro school districts. This was two years after Brown vs. Board of Education when “separate but equal” had been declared unconstitutional and the school board, according to federal law, should have been moving towards an integrated rather than a more segregated school system. In 1959, Rumley reports in the Morning Advocate that “the NAACP filed a motion for summary judgment designed to bring about the immediate integration of the white and colored races and the parish school system” (1959). However, the EBR School Board voted in a unanimous resolution to keep the schools segregated, stating there were “progressive and peaceful relations between white and colored races in the parish,” and “facilities for both white and colored that are fully equal in all respects, (p. 1A, 1959).” They complained that “the NAACP has filed a suit seeking to destroy the excellent school system now available to both races, (p. 1A, 1959). “Therefore, be it resolved that this board does hereby declare its resolution to maintain its public segregated school system, the NAACP to the contrary notwithstanding” (p. 1A, 1959). At the higher education level there was some progress being made on the integration front, but for K-12 education in the public forum in Louisiana, Brown vs. Board did not mean an integrated education for students.

Unified Education in Zachary

In the 1970-1971 school year, Zachary High School and Northwestern High School merged into a unified Zachary High School. Northwestern High and the middle grades that were at Zachary High School became a unified Northwestern Middle School (Figure 11). The modern Zachary High School was opened at a cost of $2,500,000 in 1973. The enrollment in the 9-12 school was 730 students. What follows is a detailed explanation of how this occurred.
Even though the *Brown* decision was handed down in 1954 and called for the integration of the schools, Louisiana, including Zachary, remained segregated. The case of *Clifford Eugene Davis Jr. et al. vs. East Baton Rouge Parish School Board* was filed in 1956 by the NAACP and became the longest running suit about desegregation in the country. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes, “Governor Davis insisted that he would keep the schools segregated and open” (p. 236). In 1960, when he could not maintain segregated schools, Davis tried closing all of the public schools instead of having them integrate. The federal judge overruled him and stated that the schools could not be closed, and they would be integrated according to his orders.

In 1960 the case (*Davis et al.*) prompted U.S. District Judge J. Skelly Wright to order EBR schools to desegregate with “all deliberate speed,” which was the same language that was used in the Brown II case under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Judge E. Gordon West took over for Judge Wright in 1961. No more directives were given to the case until March 1963, when West gave the School Board until July 5th to produce a desegregation plan.

In June 1963 the EBR School Board adopted a plan to begin desegregation with the 12th grade with a plan to move down to a grade each year. The plan, however, had limitations: “availability of space, scholastic ability and a number of other personal qualifications a student must meet” (*Sunday Advocate*, August 30, 1981). The NAACP objected to the plan proposed by the school board. Judge West decided to go ahead with part of the plan, that the schools would
begin desegregation with the 12th grade, but that “any 12th grade student can apply to attend the school of his choice” (Sunday Advocate, August 30, 1981). Even in 1968, resistance to integration was still in play. The State Times on November 11 quoted East Baton Rouge board member in as saying,

I am absolutely opposed to closing schools. I would prefer them open and segregated, naturally. But having worked very hard on the many knotty problems that have come up I am not willing to do anything that would destroy the public school system. As for the committee, (the East Baton Rouge Bi-Racial Committee) I feel they are not fully aware of the situation they are getting into ("EBR In Favor Of," 1968).

This shows that some were still considering how the schools could be closed instead of integrated.

Integration did not trickle down to the small town of Zachary until 1969 when those opposed to segregation, including the Baton Rouge branch of the NAACP, were getting even more frustrated with the lack of movement toward the equality of education for Black and White students. The threat of integration also led to white flight from the Baton Rouge Schools, as shown in Figure 12, which comes from Bankston and Caldas (2002) about racial shifts in East Baton Rouge Parish, 1965-2000.

Figure 12  Racial Shifts in East Baton Rouge Parish, 1965-2000
Finally, in January of 1970, Judge West approved a new desegregation plan for both students and faculty. Students would attend neighborhood schools, and the faculty would be 65% White and 35% Black. This ratio was determined by the overall student ratio in EBR at the time.

In the *Morning Advocate* on July 24th 1970, Judge West approved a neighborhood school concept stating that,

the plan provides, ‘as far as is practical under existing circumstances,’ for complete desegregation of faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities, student body composition and school facilities. ‘as required by the most recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth District (Tillman, 1970).

I will discuss more about how EBR and Zachary integrated differently in the next chapter. The court case continued in EBR until 2003, but since Zachary became a Unitary School System during the 1970-1971 school year, they were able to opt out of following suits filed by the NAACP as well as other plaintiffs suing for the desegregation of the schools. The unitary system in Zachary was facilitated by the formation of a Bi-Racial committee.

**Zachary Bi-Racial Committee**

The superintendent of the EBR schools from 1937-1976 was Robert Aertker. According to the narrators, it was his idea to create a unitary system in Zachary. He had support of the EBR Board member from Zachary, Donald Hunt. They both thought that it would split the city if they tried to comply with desegregation in another manner. The other ways that were discussed, according to Mr. Boudreaux, were keeping two high schools in Zachary and changing some students who were at Zachary to Northwestern and vice-versa.31 During my interview with Mr. Boudreaux he had this to say about Mr. Aertker,

He was a very sharp person and he was a coach and he was the principal and he was assistant principal. He was everything in our system and when Mr. Aertker finally

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31 The records from EBR during this time were lost in a flood so there are no secondary sources about what happened in the board meetings about what occurred during the meetings to discuss desegregation.
decided what he wanted he'd rub his nose. "Shut up. I'm fixing to tell you what we're gonna do." He was just that way. ” (personal communication, December 19, 2013)

Mr. Boudreaux also told me that Aertker spoke to the EBR School Board during this time and he said,

People, do you know what you're about to do? To those 12 board members, he said "You're fixing to mess up a city to no end.” We weren't a city at the time. We were a town until 1976. (personal communication, December 19, 2013)

Once the decision had been made by the EBR School Board, under the guidance of Mr. Artker and Mr. Hunt, to have unified schools in Zachary, Mayor Jack Breaux of Zachary formed the Bi-Racial Committee in 1969. The purpose of the committee was to help ease the transition for both the Black and White community. The committee\(^{32}\) included the Mayor, Black and White representatives from the community who were actively involved in the schools, and the principals and students from Zachary High School and Northwestern High School. The plan was to create a unitary system\(^{33}\) in which Zachary was only going to have one high school. This meant that the community of both Black and White citizens had a choice to get behind the federal mandate to integrate, or they would have to move or go to local private schools. Details about the committee are hard to obtain since no written records were kept, and my participants had a hard time remembering exactly what they did in the meetings or who was there.

Jim, a member of the committee who is Black and age 86, spoke regarding how he felt about what the committee was proposing with the integration,

And when I started listening at how they intended to run the system, I saw no indication whatsoever that there was any indication that they would try to slip in a little segregation here and there. When I saw how the system was going to operate, where they were going to arrange the schools and grade clusters, I said, “Wait a minute. A child who goes to school in Zachary – he’s going to have to go to every school in Zachary. He’s not going

\(^{32}\) The IRB on this project states that these participants will remain anonymous

\(^{33}\) Unitary means the previous dual school system has been disbanded
to have a chance to go to any segregated schools.” (personal communication, January 31, 2013)

The clustering system that he was speaking of meant that every child, Black or White, would go to the same school for the same grade. This would not allow for neighborhood schools, which would still be segregated because Black and White families lived in different neighborhoods. The clustering system, which was supported by the Bi-Racial committee, enabled Zachary to create a unitary system where the schools were fully integrated. This was different from the other small towns around, as well as the bigger city of Baton Rouge, which did not adopt the clustering system. Baton Rouge decided to integrate its schools through bussing and a series of magnet schools placed in inner city areas to increase White attendance in these areas. Maggie, a White teacher, had this to say about the committee, the community, and how Zachary was different than Baton Rouge:

They (the Bi-Racial committee) were in agreement with how the rules were gonna be. They were in agreement with what was gonna happen in each of these situations. They were in agreement if there was a problem at the school, we're gonna sit down as a community and deal with this, and that's part of why Mr. Boudreaux (the principal) went and visited everybody because they were determined that it was going to work. And I don't think it would've worked any other place in Baton Rouge because we came to this one school, everybody's gonna go to the same school, which is the philosophy that we've still kept, but everybody else in Baton Rouge could move someplace else. The only way you could move someplace else in Zachary was to leave Zachary completely, and they weren't gonna do it. (personal communication, October 11, 2012)

The committee was created to help the integration of the schools with as little fanfare as possible. One way that they did this was by keeping the press in Zachary quiet about the upcoming integration. When looking through editions of The Plainsman (dated from 1968 to 1972), I noticed that there were letters written to the editor about integration on a national level, but no articles on the local level. One example of this in the January 16th issue of The Plainsman entitled What happened to Massive Resistance? The author, Jon J. Synon, a community member, writes, “Are our public school systems, today, more nobly serving our young people, or are they
serving them less well? Can the races, with justice to both, be educated communally?” (The Plainsman, January 16th, 1969).

When I asked Henry, a White teacher age 64, he stated,

For some reason I think they thought it best, I think it was just irresponsible press on their part to not write it up. You know, these kinds of things, the gossip around town, it spread far enough. I think if they ever put that in writing, you write about it then you’ve got to say who was responsible, whose fault was it. You got to start placing blame, where if you don’t state it yourself then the townspeople, they’ll fill in the blanks for you. So they always left that out. (personal communication, February 5, 2013)

Jim, a Black committee member age 86, also spoke to the lack of press attention to the integration in Zachary.

The point was that with the committee that the transition would be moved into easily without fanfare after, because knowing that a lot of the public would be against it. So knowing this is why the media was performed. To make sure that we could move into it with less fighting as we possibly could. (personal communication, October 16, 2012)

When I asked Jim what he meant by “without fanfare,” he told me that the local press would not report on negative things that were happening at the school so as not to fan the flames and create a problem. This showed me how powerful the committee was, that they could ask the local press to leave out information and the committee would oblige. Since the owner of the paper was also a community member, I gathered that he thought it was better for the community not to print articles about an issue that was so controversial.

In 1969, not everyone in the Zachary community was in favor of the integration of the schools. The Whites who were against it did not want Blacks coming to Zachary High School, and the Blacks that were against it did not want to leave their school of Northwestern, fearing they would lose their history and their heritage if they did. Everyone may not have been in full agreement with the decisions, but the alternative was leaving Zachary, which was not considered an option by either the Black or the White community. They did not want to leave their homes and their community.
Both Black and White members of the community felt a connection to their town, and they wanted to continue to live in Zachary even if they were not in support of the integration of the schools. Some thought of integration as a “bitter pill,” and some were for it, but through my research I discovered that they were all in support of the community of Zachary, and especially the schools.

A White teacher, aged 66, says this about the integration process,

> To have change you've got to burst the boil. That boil's going to keep festering and festering and festering until you open it up, and then starts to heal. As horrible as it was at that time, I don't see any other way. (personal communication, March 5, 2013)

The boil that burst was the creation of a unitary system in Zachary. Jim, a Black community member age 86, said that,

> the Zachary school system maintains that if you put a kid in pre-K in Zachary, he’s gonna go through every school and he’s gonna go all the way and come out and he’s gonna maintain the same friends from the beginning to the end there. It eliminates peer pressure. That’s one of the key things. It eliminates peer pressure. (personal communication, October 16, 2012)

When I asked what was meant by “eliminating the peer pressure” Jim explained that the Black and White students would get to know each other if they went to the same schools, and that they would be less likely to harbor grudges about a child just because they were a different race if they knew them from school.

Taylor, a Black student in the first integrated Kindergarten class, remembers her cousin who lived with her at the time of integration and her feelings on it: “now all of a sudden she is forced to go to Zachary High. They didn’t like it. I know she didn’t like it. She didn’t like it because one of the things was that they could not interact like they normally could at pep rallies and stuff” (personal communication, February 28, 2013). Phyllis, a White student at the high school, remembered how her whole family was affected,
At the time, my dad was on the school board, and it was a really hard, hard time for our family as well as him because, as you know, most of the people were not for it. East Baton Rouge Parish was told at that time that they had to integrate. Well, all the other schools, you know, his area was the one that he voted yes, we’ll do it. We need to do it. It’s a city. We’re perfect for it. So he pushed for Zachary to be integrated (personal communication, October 12, 2012).

This shows how the decision to integrate the Zachary schools did not have everyone on the same side. Some Black and some White community members were against the change.

About 20 White students did choose to go to the private schools, but many of them returned to ZHS within the first year. According to the principal of ZHS at the time, the breakdown of Black students to White students was 40%-60%. According to the Louisiana Department of Education Annual Report for the year the state breakdown was 38.2% Black students and 61.8% White students in the East Baton Rouge Schools. The Black students could not typically afford the private schools, or to move, so they went to Zachary High School. The reason for the White students’ return was that the students wanted to graduate from Zachary High School, and the parents realized that there were no major discipline problems. The committee had a lot to do with the return of the White students by getting the word out about what was going to happen and what did happen in the schools.

During an interview I asked Jim, who is an 86 year old Black community member, if the discussions of integration started the summer before the decision to integrate was given to Zachary. He explained,

Mm, no that wasn’t the first mentioning of it but that’s when it really come down to a head ‘cause it had been mentioned throughout the years that maybe integration would be the best thing because ‘separate but equal’ wasn’t working. Yeah, ‘separate but equal’ wasn’t working but it’s a word, but it wasn’t put into effect because they, one side was getting all the improvement while the other one was getting the leftovers. So it wasn’t equal. So the only thing to make it equal was to put all kids in the same environment. (personal communication, January 1, 2013).

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34 Zachary was not pulled out of the system so the principals numbers cannot be verified
This sentiment was echoed across the country with the mandate of ‘separate but equal’ not working since the White schools would have more access to equipment and funds than the Black schools. The reason that it came to a head was the result of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision handed down from the Supreme Court in 1954. Bell, 2004, shares a quote from W.E.B. Du Bois, at 86 years old about the decision,

> no such decision would have been possible without the world pressure of communism that rendered it simply impossible for the United States to continue to lead a ‘Free World’ with race segregation kept legal over a third of its territory. (p. 67)


> If the first decade had seen little change in interracial contact in the South’s public schools, the next decade witnessed a great deal. Through the effort of all three branches of the federal government, school districts in the South were forced to go beyond the token steps of the first decade. (p. 25)

This “Revolution” was needed to help the prediction of Du Bois finally run its course. Zachary was not immune to the slow progress of the integration of schools as explained in the last chapter. However, the focus of the next chapter is to examine how Zachary did get on board and adapt to the inevitability that change was coming, and how its citizens would implement change into their schools.
CHAPTER 5: TOO MUCH DELIBERATION AND NOT ENOUGH SPEED

Zachary Integration

When they started talking integration, everybody was a little skeptical as to what kind of a peaceful integration we were going to have in Zachary and in Baker. Turned out that the integration in Zachary worked better than the integration in Baker or in East Baton Rouge Parish as a whole. And that’s the thing that I look at with every day. (personal communication, January 31, 2013). William, a Black teacher aged 89

From my viewpoint there wasn’t a lot of racial tensions because the community wasn’t too large and we had known Blacks almost all our lives, you know. And I think as result of that when we did get ready to do this it made it somewhat easier because we knew one another. That it wasn’t just going in and dealing totally with strangers in a tense situation, you know. So I think that helped, I really do. I think that part of it helped. (personal communication, January 23, 2013). Edward, a White community member aged 81

The first narrator’s statement above explains to the reader that there were skeptics as to whether the integration into a Unitary system, which would mean creating one high school out of a previously Black and White high school would work. The second narrator explains why he thinks that Zachary was able to accomplish this monumental change without as much fanfare as surrounding small towns of Baker and the larger East Baton Rouge Schools. This chapter examines the larger context of integration and draws on oral histories to illuminate how Zachary, a rural town, differed in its approach to integration. The oral histories will convey how multiple constituents (the principal, teachers, students, and community members), experienced integration in the small city.

Integration in the Nation, District, and Zachary

National Integration

On a national level, changes to segregated schools were slow to happen. Tate, Ladson-Billings, and Grant (1993) write, “The Supreme Court’s decision could not be immediately translated into action or acceptance. The shortcoming in Brown is that the court proposed an essentially mathematical solution to a sociocultural problem” (p. 33). The Supreme Court wanted
things to become “equal;” this was not going to happen without some cultural acceptance first.

Rist, (1979) explains that,

prior to 1964, no systematic data on the implementation of Brown were collected, tabulated or analyzed. The general consensus among those who have studied this period is that fewer than one per cent of all black children in the 11 southern states attended desegregated schools. (p. 4)

In 1964, the case of Griffin vs. Prince Edward County was brought before the Supreme Court. This case was about districts being able to close the schools in order not to integrate. Irons (2004) writes about Justice Hugo Black stating, “There has been entirely too much deliberation and not enough speed in enforcing the constitutional rights which we held in Brown v. Board of Education had been denied the black children” (p.193). Justice Black was saying that integration was taking too long and that Black students were being denied their constitutional rights. The Supreme Court held in Griffin that a county could not abandon public schools unless there was a constitutional issue, and race and opposition to integration did not qualify as constitutional issues. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 also helped create movement on the integration front since under this Act federal funds could be cut off for non-compliance. Irons (2004) writes,

Schools with large numbers of students from low-income families qualified for the greatest amount of federal aid, and many districts in the Deep South were eligible for badly needed funding. But the tempting carrot of federal money came with the stick of mandated integration, enforceable by the federal courts. (p. 196)

The Southern States had to choose whether to lose federal funding for all schools or integrate the ones that they had. According to Bankston and Caldas (2002), The 1964 Civil Rights Amendment stated,

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. (emphasis added by author) (p. 39)
The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave the federal authorities what they needed to enforce the Brown vs. Board ruling. During this time in the South, former “White only” schools began opening their doors to Black students. This did not mean that with the steps of integration came equal numbers. School districts often opted for “freedom of choice schools” to abide by the amendment and keep funding.

The courts chose to let “freedom of choice” stand until the Green vs. County School Board case in 1968. The Supreme Court in this case ruled that “freedom of choice” was unconstitutional and ordered the school board to come up with another way to integrate their schools. The Court suggested that the school systems use geographic mapping to determine the boundaries of where students would go to school. However, the geographic boundaries did not solve the problem since most Whites lived in White neighborhoods and Blacks lived in Black neighborhoods. Bankston and Caldas (2002) write that “drastic, and in some cases quite draconian, attempts were made not only to ensure the abstract right to attend a school without regard to race, but to ensure that schools actually enrolled both white and black students” (p. 40).

Busing and redistricting were the two methods used to create integrated school systems and these were both used in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System during this time.

Louisiana Integration

The NAACP had “dynamic” chapters in both Baton Rouge and Monroe. Hendry and Edwards (2009) describe the strong sense of activism coupled with caution in the Baton Rouge Black community. Blacks wanted a strong chapter but did not want to alienate support by being too radical.

35 Freedom of Choice meant that Black and White students were “free” to choose which school they went to. However this placed the burden on the parent to fill out the correct paperwork in the time allotted to make it happen.
Many, including state officers of the NAACP, did little to encourage more radical strategies. They feared that civil disobedience would only result in a backlash against all blacks and erode the racial diplomacy that they had worked for decades to achieve. (p.80)

Many of the same tactics that were slowing the progress of integration on a national level were also being used on a state and local level in Louisiana. Fairclough (1995/2008) writes, “to analyze the path of school integration between 1964 and 1969 is to arrive at an inescapable conclusion: unrelenting white opposition meant that the schools (in Louisiana) were integrated in the worst possible circumstances” (p. 435). Before 1964 the burden was placed on Black parents to gain access for their children to formerly White only schools. Though the NAACP helped, it had limited resources. Fairclough (1995/2008) goes on to say that, “in 1965, when HEW (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) issued its first set of compliance guidelines, most school boards simply refused to submit plans, preferring to wait until they were hauled into federal court” (p. 436). Because freedom-of-choice plans were the predominate form of integration, most of the schools stayed segregated, since few Black students applied for transfer to White schools and no Whites applied for transfers to Black Schools (Fairclough 1995/2008).

To show how little movement was made, Fairclough (1995/2008) points out that by “1967 only 6 percent of Louisiana’s black children attended schools alongside whites” (p. 438). Judge Gordon West, a federal judge seated in Louisiana, did all he could to slow integration. When speaking about Brown West stated, “As far as I can determine, its only real accomplishment has been to bring discontent and chaos to many previous peaceful communities, without bringing any real attendant benefits to anyone” (Fairclough, 1995/2008, p. 437).

The next positive step toward desegregation was the decision in Louisiana’s Eastern District court case of U.S. vs. Jefferson County Board of Education, handed down in 1966. Judge John Minor Wisdom declared “that school boards had an ‘affirmative duty’ to bring about
integration and that integration meant a ‘unitary school system in which there are no Negro schools and no white schools- just schools’ (Fairclough, 1995/2008, p. 439). This decision took a few years to take root, but by the 1968-1969 school year nine percent of Black students were going to school with Whites.

East Baton Rouge Integration

East Baton Rouge School System, which included the Zachary schools at the time, had the longest running desegregation case in the Nation. The case ran from 1956-2003 and had three federal judges attached to it. The EBR School Board was similar to the rest of the country when it came to dragging their feet to slow the progress of integration. The EBR school board was complacent in keeping segregated schools by not making any real progress until after the 1963 mandate by Judge West to create a desegregation plan. This freedom-of-choice plan was the same as used in the rest of the Deep South to have the façade of integrated schools.

This policy of freedom-of-choice continued until added pressure from the NAACP and then in January of 1970 the Baton Rouge Bi-Racial Committee named some of the problems integration would cause in the EBR school system. The two biggest areas would be the student and teacher desegregation plan. More specifically, the school board would need to be concerned with “space utilization, transportation, districting, emotional effects upon students and extracurricular activities” (Morning Advocate, March 19, 1970). With regards to the teachers the school board would need to consider transfers and the emotional effects of such transfers. These were all matters that the Bi-Racial Committee was tasked with discussing and coming up with options to present to the board.

In the middle of 1970, there was some movement when there was a unanimous vote by the Baton Rouge Bi-Racial committee to have a neighborhood plan for zone integration. Judge

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36 Specific information about the cases involved in the EBR battle can be found in the previous chapter.
West approved the plan by saying, “All constitutional requirements for operation of a non-discriminatory public school system” (Morning Advocate July, 24, 1970) had been met. He also added that school facilities should be 65% white and 35% black. According to the State Times, “Nathan Mensia, chairman of the subcommittee on student desegregation, said Negroes wanted a plan which would provide maximum integration of the races and one which would not result in the closure of Negro schools” (State Times, April 2, 1970). The article went on to say that some of the neighborhood schools would create a “substantial number of all-white and all-Negro Schools.” Since this had been deemed constitutional in Florida and other Southern states, the zoning committee would take this under consideration when drawing up the new boundaries for the individual neighborhood schools. In the fall of 1970, the State Times reported that of the 774 White students that were supposed to have moved to predominately Negro inner city schools only 19 had registered (Sunday Advocate, August, 20, 1970). The Times reported that in two schools, Valley Park (379 White and 223 Black) in Baton Rouge and in Northwestern Junior High (254 White and 334 Black) the schools had integrated with no “unusual problems” (Sunday Advocate, August, 20, 1970). The school board would not comment on where the White students went, speculating only that they might be out of district or attending private schools. One of my narrators, Robert, a Black man aged 75, told me,

The white kids didn’t get on the buses and go to the formerly black schools. And neither would they readily accept the black kids coming to the formerly white schools. So a lot of them left to the other parishes, which is illegal, but they did it anyway.
(personal communication April 24, 2013)

This plan was in effect until 1974 when the NAACP filed a “motion for further relief” because the NAACP did not believe that the student and teacher assignments were creating an integrated system.

37 Black to White ratio in 1970 was about 33% Black and 67% White according to the Morning Advocate January, 1, 1970.
Zachary Integration

The town of Zachary followed the policy of freedom-of-choice that was set up by EBR. However, no Black students chose to go to the White schools, and no White students chose to go to the Black schools. When the boundary lines were disclosed for the neighborhood schools in EBR in 1970 the *Morning Advocate* reported,

The Zachary area, which will have almost a 50 percent white and 50 percent black ratio of students because of division of the area’s two major schools into Zachary High School for grades 9-12 and Northwestern High for grades 6-8. (*Morning Advocate*, May 15, 1970)

This was the first mention of the full integration of the Zachary Schools that I could find. The overarching sentiment was that Zachary was able to create a true unitary system (by having only one high school and only one middle school for all students) in their area. Because the schools were isolated from the rest of East Baton Rouge Parish School System, and since the town was small, the Blacks and White citizens knew each other or at least knew of each other since Zachary was over 16 miles away from Baton Rouge. Connor, a White student, stated, “We were almost an island up here. We were far enough to the north end of the parish that we didn’t have bussing, any bussing. Everybody went to community schools.” (personal communication, February 27, 2013). Jim, an 86 year old Black community member said, “Every day you crossed White and Black paths. You was gonna meet the same people all the time. The boundaries wasn’t nothing. Some of these tell me Zachary been integrated a long time as far as housing concerned” (personal communication, October 16, 2013).

These two viewpoints support what other narrators said, that Zachary was its own entity even though it was part of the EBR School District during the time of its desegregation. The distance separating Zachary from EBR allowed Zachary to come up with its own plan that was

38 The EBR School Board Records of this time have been lost to a flood.
then supported by the EBR School System. Phyllis, a White student whose father was an EBR Board member, told me what her father said at the time. “His area was the one that voted yes, we'll do it. We need to do it. It's a city. We're perfect for it. So he pushed for Zachary to be integrated” (personal communication, October 12\textsuperscript{th}, 2012). Since Zachary was a town that had enough schools to create a unitary system, it had the structure in place to make the desegregation efforts a success.

Other narrators echoed Jim’s sentiment of the town being a community where Blacks and Whites knew each other from around town which made the transition easier. Edward, an 81 year old White community member told me, “A lot of us were friends before that happened; we knew one another and got along with one another. After that of course we worked more closely together during this time” (personal communication, January 2\textsuperscript{d}, 2013). Lacey, an 81 year old Black student during segregation shared with me,

> When I bleed red, you bleed red. You know? And even though you’re white, we’re still human beings together. So I couldn’t understand why they put so much emphasis on segregation. You know? Integration. Segregation and all of that kind of stuff. All of it is just mind boggling. (personal communication, March 20, 2013).

Lacey told me that too much emphasis was put on the integration efforts, and that we should just all realize that we are mostly the same and integration should just happen. Edward, the 81 year old White community member who told me about Blacks and Whites being friends before desegregation, also expressed this sentiment about why Zachary was able to achieve a unitary system,

> It was because of the people. And I think you’ll get that answer more than just from me. That the people were real unique. I think the people just decided that this is what we need to do to Zachary. And this is what we gonna do. (personal communication, January 23, 2013).
William, an 89 year old Black teacher during the time of integration, told me how the people were unique in that they were thinking towards the future,

That’s when Zachary realized that if we’re gonna have to accommodate the student population, and we’re gonna have to do it so that the people in Washington would not look up on us suspiciously thinking that we’re trying to organize our own segregated system. So that is when the influential people, whites and blacks, got together and decided how to organize the system. And in the ‘70s, in 1970 all of this was worked out, and that’s when the Zachary system was really integrated. (personal communication, October 14, 2013).

Since Zachary did create a unitary system they were not a part of the desegregation lawsuit that plagued the East Baton Rouge Parish School System for more than 47 years. This enabled Zachary to focus on the process of integrating the schools and creating academic success for all students instead of being tied up in court. One person whom every narrator that I spoke to mentioned was Jerry Boudreaux, the man who became principal one month before the integrated high school was opened. Most of my narrators stated that without Mr. Boudreaux the integration would not have been as smooth, and there would have been a lot more problems with the races in the small town.

Jim, aged 86 and a Black community member, shared how the Bi-Racial committee in Zachary decided to make Zachary High School the unified high school and Northwestern High School the unified middle School.

At the particular time, Northwestern school was in better shape than Zachary High. But what was on the table was the building of a new school at Zachary High. So therefore, we had to have that conversation and decided that the new building is gonna be better than the old building. So therefore, that made Zachary High become the high school and Northwestern become the middle school. (personal communication, October 14, 2013)

Not everyone was happy about the decision, though. Taylor, a Black 49 year-old, voiced this concern of Black students from the time.

They (her cousins) really have bad feelings of having to go from Northwestern High to Zachary High School. They have bad feelings still about it, about what happened. They
felt like the rug was pulled from under them and what made them who they were – they couldn’t express it anymore. (personal communication, February 28, 2013)

Another Black student, Patrice, a high school student at the time, shared her recollection of being told about the change to Zachary High School.

And so at the end of the year, somewhere around the end of the year, we were told that there would be no more Northwestern High School, and everybody was really crushed because that school was like a pillar for the black folks in the community. (personal communication, April 15, 2013)

When I asked Phyllis, aged 59 and White, who was a student at the time, she told me, “To be honest, I don’t remember thinking anything about it. It just was. I do remember thinking that it was a shame that the Northwestern students lost their high school and the mascot.... etc...” (personal communication January 26, 2014).

Henry, aged 64, who was a White teacher at the time, had this to say about the unification of the schools.

The Black students really preferred being Northwestern High School and having their own mascot, and they were forced into Zachary High School, and the white school had been the Broncos, and so then all the students were the Broncos, like it or not, and they didn’t envision themselves as Broncos. And then the white students felt like people had invaded their turf, so there was resentment. (personal communication, February 5, 2013)

White students felt bad for the Black students for what they had lost from their schools.

The Black students lost their mascot as well as the entire culture of the school and the White students got to remain within the same place with their mascot and name and groups they had before the unification.

**Principal Boudreaux Integration Experience**

Mr. Boudreaux, the principal of Zachary High School (Figure 13), was hand-picked by Mr. Aertker, the Superintendent of the EBR School System, to take on the responsibility of the first fully integrated school in the system. Mr. Aertker had been Mr. Boudreaux’s coach since 1945 and had been following his career. So when this particular challenge came up, he called
him. At the time Boudreaux lived in Zachary but was an assistant principal of Baker Middle School. When Boudreaux asked Aertker why he did not make the current assistant principal at Zachary High school the principal, Aertker said, “Well, Billy will become a principal, but I don't feel, Jerry that it's the right time at this point to do that” (personal communication, January 19, 2013). When I asked Mr. Boudreaux why he took the position he said, “The experience. It was just a challenge to see what it would be like” (personal communication October 16, 2012).

Boudreaux was the principal of Zachary High School from 1970-1995 when he retired. When he finally retired from Zachary High School in 1995, his children were thankful, saying that they would finally get to see their father again, because until then he had been the father of all of the students who had walked the Zachary High School halls.

Boudreaux faced an uphill battle with the teaching staff when he was hired in Zachary. More than half of the staff left when the school was mandated for integration. This included the previous principal, which was why Boudreaux was hired. Jim, 86, and a Black community member told me about the former principal,

You see in that transition the principal of Zachary High School didn’t agree to it. He didn’t agree to it; he resigned rather than be the principal of an integrated school. And therefore then we had to get a principal for that particular school. And that principal was Jerry Boudreaux. (personal communication, January 15, 2013)

Mr. Boudreaux was hired to replace the principal who did not want an integrated high school, but then he also faced the challenge of hiring new teachers since staff left rather than teach at an integrated school. When Mr. Boudreaux was hired in July, he had 10 faculty
members instead of the 34 he needed to run the school. When I asked where the previous teachers went, he told me that they transferred to other schools in the EBR system. When asked why he said,

Well, I don't know that – just integration in some people's mind was a bad word, but they requested a transfer somewhere else, but those that the school board would recommend to me and let me have a choice were good people. They knew that there weren't gonna be militant people there, not perfect because you're not gonna find that anywhere anyway. (personal communication, December 19, 2013)

Both Black and White community members respected him then and now for his fairness, attention to detail, and his drive to make the integrated high school a success. Barbara, a 66 year old White teacher at the time of integration said, “He's (Boudreaux) the one who pulled it together. And he did it by being firm; he was not wishy-washy, not at all. It was going to be this way whether you were Black or White” (personal communication, February 5, 2013). Likewise, Jim, an 86 year old Black community member, echoed the same sentiment saying, “Boudreaux was a fair man and if you'd, if you done wrong, regardless of your color, the principal would equalize – that, that was the key to it. You know favoritism has a lot to do with how you treat other people” (personal communication, January 15, 2013). This feeling of non-favoritism echoed throughout my interviews. I could tell from the community, the teachers and the students that Mr. Boudreaux was a man of structure, and if you as a student or teacher went outside of the structure then Black or White you paid the consequences.

A White teacher during integration told me, “If he hadn't been principal, I doubt seriously that this would have worked because he went overboard to make it work. He tried to be as fair as possible about everything” (personal communication, October 11, 2012). This included visiting both Black and White students’ houses with other members of the community and having a discipline regime that was implemented regardless of one’s race. William, 89, a Black
teacher during the time of integration, told me a story about going to a board meeting after the school year had started,

When I got there, everybody else was there, and they were talking. And when I peeked in the door, I heard, “Yeah. The principal is letting the Blacks do whatever they want and holding the Whites to the book – right to the letter. I said, “Wait a minute. That’s not what I heard.” Jerry Boudreaux was the principal then. I said, “I heard just the other way around – Blacks talking about he was more positive to the Whites.” I said, “He must be a pretty good principal.” (personal communication, January 1, 2013).

Mary, a former White student, told me, “He (Boudreaux) approached the problem head on and I don’t see where he could have done anything different. I think he did good for what he was facing and I know a lot of our teachers were gone. They walked out and he had to hire” (personal communication, February 28, 2013). This lead to the hiring of a young staff, many of whom had never taught before.

Barbara, one of the first- year White teachers, said this of her principal,

What a better person to have in that position: no foolishness. He dealt with the kids as though they were his own, you know, like he was their daddy, away from home, and this is how he would treat his own children. He would not put up with the foolishness. (personal communication, March 5, 2013)

William, 89 and a Black community member, told me of a situation that happened between Mayor Jack Breaux and Principal Boudreaux. The mayor told Boudreaux, “Whenever you have a problem between the races, the chief will be available for you, call him.” Mr. Boudreaux replied, “Well, I thank you, Mr. Mayor, but I was hired to run this school. And when I get to where I can’t run it, I’m giving it up.” At this meeting the superintendent of the East Baton Rouge Schools was present and he said, “That’s what I want to hear” (personal communication, January 31, 2013). Mr. Boudreaux held to this and only called for the support of the Chief of Police one time when there was a walk-out of 150 students that will be discussed later.

Upon interviewing Mr. Boudreaux, he told me of meeting a former student in a store recently,
I guess they used to say it was more military than it was a regular civilian school, but today, they loved it. They love it today when I see them, when I talk to them. I saw one the other day, and I betcha I hadn’t seen her since the early high school years. The former student told Boudreaux, “That’s the toughest guy (Mr. Boudreaux) I’ve ever seen in my life,” The store worker told the former student, “I had kids there, he says, and he said, “Oh, Mr. Boudreaux wasn’t that tough. My kids had him. They never complained.” She (the former student) looked at him and she said, “Mister, thank God he was or we wouldn’t be here today.” Now they realize that a little bit, that it was such a big change. You’ve gotta remember, it was tough. (personal communication, October 16, 2012).

These comments exemplify the community’s perception of Boudreaux as a fair principal, and the narrators who I spoke to believe that this was one of the main reasons for the smooth transition to an integrated high school. Another focus was his attention to detail that narrators told me about Mr. Boudreaux. He was known for pulling out a tape measure and using it on girls’ skirts, and if he thought a boy’s hair was too long, he would call the barber shop and send the student over right then. He did not allow for any student, Black or White, to disregard the rules that he had set out. He kept this up by noting all of his students and what they were wearing and doing. In a school of over 600 students this was a big task for one man to accomplish.

I think that his fairness and his attention to detail in his position as principal culminate in the dedication that he had to the students of Zachary High School during his long tenure at its head. This dedication is illustrated in the home visits that occurred. When I asked Mr. Boudreaux about the home visits he said:

I visited homes. I went to some homes and told them everything we had in school and it didn’t matter whether it was academics, sports, or whatever. I was there. I mixed with the people in town. I mixed with you whether you were black or white. I made it my business to know those with kids and those without kids and the ones that you can be friendly to was a tremendous help because even if they didn’t have kids, they’d tell the others their opinion of Jerry Boudreaux, what kind of guy he was and what he was gonna do, and it would be good for you. (personal communication, October 16, 2012)

By getting to know the community of Zachary, those who had kids and those who did not gained him the support that he needed to help ease the integration of the schools. The narrators I
interviewed talked about this support that was due to his dedication. Barbara, 66, a White teacher said,

I believe the community really backed him, Black and White, the parents and the grandparents. They knew it had to be done and they knew that he was going to be fair, most of them. Like I said, some of them probably -- there are always going to be that few that will blame you for something that you didn't do or whatever. (personal communication, March 5, 2012)

So even though there were some dissenters to his style and way of running the schools, the narrators that I interviewed believed that Mr. Boudreaux was well liked and respected within the community, and this was shown through the support of the parents and the students. Overall, they knew what he was trying to do and that this was a chance for Zachary to have one unitary system instead of the two that it had previously supported. Though there was some contention with his style, as there always will be when big changes are made, the majority believed in him and supported his methods of integrating Zachary High School. When asked about how he approached integration, he told me that it was like being a coach and that you needed “organization and discipline” (personal communication December 19, 2013).

Zachary Teachers, Community Members, and Students Integration Experiences

When I saw how the system was going to operate, where they were going to arrange the schools and grade clusters, I said, “Wait a minute. A child who goes to school in Zachary – he’s going to have to go to every school in Zachary. He’s not going to have a chance to go to any segregated schools. And it’s operating just beyond what everybody dreamed. We’re stripping Baker. Poor Baker. I feel sorry for them. And they can’t get together and operate like Zachary. (personal communication, January 1, 2012) William, a Black teacher, aged 89

And so there’s no division there on the east side, west side, or whatever. Don’t have that, I mean you just have school, Zachary schools. And I think that’s important, I really do; I think that’s real important. There’s no juggling for which school you’re going to get into (personal communication, January 23, 2013) Edward, a White community member, aged 81
The quotes above explain how some of the Black and the White citizens of Zachary felt about the unitary system that was implemented in the 1970-1971 school year. William, age 89 and a Black teacher during the time of integration stated,

When they (Bi-Racial Committee) started talking integration, everybody was a little skeptical as to what kind of a peaceful integration we were going to have in Zachary and in Baker. Turned out that the integration in Zachary worked better than the integration in Baker or in East Baton Rouge Parish as a whole. (personal communication, January 1, 2013)

Both Black and White citizens of Zachary were unsure how the unitary system was going to work and if it would cause chaos as it had in East Baton Rouge. Art Adams wrote in the Morning Advocate (1971) the article Lee High Fracas Ends in 25 Arrests. Lee High is a school in the East Baton Rouge District. Adams writes, “City police arrested 25 students Thursday after a series of fist fights at Lee high School between white and black students and a walkout by some 100 of the blacks shortly before noon” (January 29th 1971). With further investigation, one White student was arrested and twenty-four Blacks during the altercation.

Though there were disagreements during the integration of the high school in Zachary the police never came to campus to arrest students during the school day. During my research when I asked my narrators why this was so, they all told me it was due to the structure and the discipline that Mr. Boudreaux had established at the school, as well as it being a smaller town where everyone knew your family and had easy access to them if needed. This will be further explained in the next section under the differences in the schools. These differences are important to note since the differences are what made the new integrated Zachary High School function as a unitary school.

Connor, aged 54 and a White student during the time of integration, told me that in fact, integration was not always easy; it was a struggle. “It was just hard times when we first
integrated. But like I say, you had that core group of people that was bound and determined to make it work” (personal communication, February 27, 2013). Connor went on to tell me why he thought Zachary worked as an integrated system,

I think it was the leadership in the community where education had always been important. And it was a community school. You gotta remember that there were – even in Baton Rouge, I mean the big high schools, you know, people didn’t know each other. They didn’t all know everybody. But at Zachary, everybody did. Everybody knew each other. (personal communication, February 27, 2013).

Phyllis, aged 53 and a White student spoke of the principal, Mr. Boudreaux during our conversation and said,

It was kind of a good thing that they brought in a principal from the outside because he didn't have the same style that you found at either one of the schools 'cause I think the Zachary High School kids were used to, "It's a pretty day to go hunting. Can I check out and go hunting" type of thing, and the Northeastern kids were used to, "Oh, it's a beautiful day. Can we go sit in the stadium instead of going to class?" And Mr. Boudreaux was straight down the line, "You're in class. We're gonna have 50 minute classes. No, you may not check out. No, you may not do this. We're having school." And so it was kind of good that it was different like that. (personal communication, October 10, 2012).

Maggie, a White teacher shared with me her views on why Zachary was different,

I always thought it was good thing because we were 50/50 or very close to it, and the rest of the schools was minority White or minority Black, so I always viewed it as a good thing because you get along or you have another half of the school that you can't fool around with. It forced the issue in Zachary, which I don't think if you had done it a little piece at a time it would've ever happened here. And I don't think it would've worked any other place in Baton Rouge because we came to this one school, everybody's gonna go to the same school, which is the philosophy that we've still kept, but everybody else in Baton Rouge could move someplace else. The only way you could move someplace else in Zachary was to leave Zachary completely and they weren't gonna do it. So they had a choice of staying with the public high school or busing their kids to a Catholic school or busing their kids to one of these fly-by-night schools that opened up on Plank Road which some of them did, but then they realized they were not getting a good education, and they were coming back, or Silliman39. Silliman got a big crowd from Zachary until kids realized that we were having school and it was a good school and that there were no big problems here. (personal communication, October 11, 2012).

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39 A private school in Clinton, Louisiana
Connor also spoke about the choice his family made in sending him to the integrated high school, “I think my parents felt like that (integration) was gonna be part of life from now on, and you know, might as well get – dive right in and get used to the fact.” This showed the understanding by the community that integration was happening and that to help their schools become unitary was good for their community.

The narrators, including teachers and students, noted during interviews that Zachary was able to create a unitary system due to the close-knit community and the fact that Zachary was “an island” that could function without the interference of EBR once the decision had been made to merge the schools.

Through this chapter I discussed how the nation and district of East Baton Rouge were slow to integrate schools even after the Brown decision. I then described through my narrators how Zachary was different than schools on a National or district level. The differences I found during my research were that Zachary had a true Unitary system, the town was isolated from the rest of the parish, and the Blacks and Whites knew each other from around town. I completed my research by interviewing teachers, students, community members, and the principal in order to situate Zachary’s integration into a larger picture. In the next chapter, I will delve deeper into what specific events happened during the integration and how these events affected the unification of the high school due to Black agency.
CHAPTER 6: IF YOU LET THE STUDENTS INTERACT, LET THEM GET TO KNOW EVERYONE, YOU CAN PULL PEOPLE WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF THE ADULTS

Year of Integration

In order to better comprehend some of the specific events that happened in 1970-1971 when Zachary unified the high school and middle school, some background needs to be given on the events that surrounded the desegregation of the schools. Adair (1984) writes about what could happen during the unification of schools,

Unlike in the past when Blacks presided over their own Black educational system, Whites now practically reign over the entire educational system from top down to the classroom level. Thus Blacks are rapidly losing the meager control that they once enjoyed under the dual education system. (p. 33)

This loss of control can be seen in Zachary in the fact that it was the White high school that was chosen over the Black high school to be the unified high school. Also, the Black high school students lost their mascot and the names of their clubs in order to become unified into Zachary High School with its traditions, logo, and mascot. Table 9 shows the breakdown of the schools the year before integration and the year of integration:

Table 9  Breakdown of Schools Before and After Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Elementary School</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Northwestern Elementary School</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern High School</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Zachary Elementary School</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Elementary School</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Northwestern Middle School</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary High School</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Zachary High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows that Black students in Zachary before unification had two schools Northwestern High School for 7-12 and Northwestern Elementary School for Grades 1-6.
The White students started in 1\textsuperscript{st} grade at Zachary Elementary School and then moved on to Zachary High School.

As my narrators have mentioned previously, Northwestern High School, the Black school, was more than a school but also a cultural space where the students felt safe. They lost this when they were integrated in the previously all White Zachary High School. Taylor, a Black student, told me how her brothers felt about integration, “They felt like the rug was pulled from under them and what made them who they were – they couldn’t express it anymore. They had to just act like this one way, which is outside of their culture” (personal communication, February 28, 2012).

One of the consequences of desegregation was the loss of Black educators. According to Linda Tillman (2004), after the Brown decision there were about 82,000 Black teachers nationwide and in 1965 that number was reduced to 44,000. In Baton Rouge teachers that were reassigned to a previously all-White or all-Black school were called crossover teachers. In the book *May I Speak, Diary of a Crossover Teacher* (1972), Manie Culbertson, who was a White “crossover” teacher in Baton Rouge, journals about her experience during her first crossover year. She writes, “I wonder if I will have to go-or if I would refuse to go if my name were chosen” (p. 12). Culbertson goes on to share how she was chosen and describes the angst that she and other White teachers felt about the decisions and how they were made. She did go to a Black school and stayed for one year, and was then transferred back to her original school as a coordinator rather than a teacher. She does not say why this transfer happened, only that a letter was sent by the school board.

In Zachary there was crossover at both the middle and the high school levels. Table 10 shows the breakdown of Black and White staff.
At Zachary High school after integration there was 1 White principal, 1 White assistant principal, 25 White teachers and 9 Black teachers for a total of 34 teachers. The White principal was brought in from another district during the first year of integration, and that White assistant principal remained in his position. There were 10 Whites that chose to stay after integration. The others retired or were transferred to other schools. The 15 White teachers who were new at Zachary High School were transferred in from other schools in the district or were hired as brand new teachers. There were 428 White students and 292 Black students at Zachary High School during the first year. The Black teachers at Zachary High school crossed over from Northwestern or they came from Cheneyville, or Pride, Louisiana.

At Northwestern Middle School there was 1 Black principal, 1 Black assistant principal, 254 White students and 334 Black students. Mr. Glover, the Black former principal of Northwestern High School, became the new principal of Northwestern Middle School. Mr. Adams remained the assistant principal at Northwestern. The Black teachers who were certified in middle school had the option to stay at Northwestern, and those that were certified in high school had the option to transfer to Zachary High School. Zachary teachers did not lose their jobs; they had the opportunity to transfer with their students to the new school.

Zachary showed a difference than other places in Louisiana. J. K. Haynes, the executive secretary of the Louisiana Education Association (LEA), is quoted as saying,

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40 These numbers are from 1971-1972 School Year. The 1970-1971 numbers could not be located.
Dissolving the separate Black and White school systems has not led to true integration but has resulted in demotions of Negro principals and the transfer of the best Negro teachers into White classrooms. In nearly every instance in the unitary school system the assumption is that a Black principal, regardless of his qualifications, is not to serve as administrator in an integrated school. (“Veteran Educator Bemoans Loss of Negro Teachers and Principals,” The Advocate, October 6, 1968)

It is unique that Zachary, a small rural town, chose to keep a Black administrator at the newly integrated Middle School, as well as a Black assistant principal. Also, the ratio of Black to White teachers, though not equal, showed progress towards integration of staff as well as students. The Black teachers in Zachary did not lose their jobs, though some did have to change schools since the high school was becoming a middle school.

Some of the discrepancies in the hiring of Black teachers can be related to training. This is shown by looking at Table 11, from the 1970 US Census, it shows the number of Black and White students who graduated from high school and then college from 1940-1970 in Louisiana.

**Table 11  Trend in Educational Attainment of Adults-Louisiana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed College</td>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 11 shows the small number of Non-Whites, (predominately Black), through the 1940’s and 1970’s who completed high school, and the even smaller number who completed college as compared to Whites. This disparity played a significant role in hiring Black teachers for classrooms. A Black teacher needed to be trained, and with the small number that was graduating, it was hard to fill Black openings with qualified teachers. One thing that did help
Baton Rouge and the surrounding areas in finding Black teachers, was that Baton Rouge was home to Southern University, which graduated teachers and some of these stayed close to home.

**Private School Flight**

I think they found out that it was working over there. Mr. Boudreaux had control over it and they let their kids come back. (personal communication February 28, 2013)

From my narrators I learned that not everyone in the community supported the idea of the integration of the high and middle schools. An article printed in *The Plainsman* (the Zachary paper) in May 1970, entitled *Unitary plan alters school balance here*, discusses the numbers of Black and White students and the increase in calls to private schools.

An increase in private school enrollments was reported this week after the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board released its “unitary” school plan Monday that plans major makeup changed in many parish schools including Zachary High and Northwestern High here. Following the announcement of the plan Tuesday over the various news media, it was reported that several local private schools began getting enrolment calls. No exact figures were available at press time Tuesday. (Volume 17, No 24, May 14, 1970)

Enrollment of private schools for Whites did increase due to the decision to integrate the schools. In March, before the final decision was made, there were plans to build a new private school building on Plank Road across from the airport. In an article from *The Plainsman*, “Construction begins on private school building,” published on March 19th 1970, there are details about a new school; Robert Livingston Academy in order to ease the load on already established private schools. “The Academy came into existence as a private school last fall to meet the needs of those in the area who objected to the various desegregation proposals now in effect” (Volume 17, No 28, May 19, 1970). *The Plainsman* (1970) also mentioned the plans for another private school.

Area citizens are being urged to hear plans for a new private school to be presented Thursday night at Zachary High School. Barksdale, as spokesman for the group, urges all adults to attend the informational meeting whether they have children in school now or not. He pointed out for such a school to materialize the group must have some immediate index of local interest (Volume 17, No 9, January 15, 1970)
This school did not end up with enough support and never opened its doors. There were other church schools that tried to start up at the time too, but they did not get the support they needed. Most White students that wanted to leave Zachary High School went to Silliman Institute or they tried out the Robert Livingston Academy.

As I have shown previously, some Black students did not want to leave Northwestern which was so ingrained in their lives. Not all White students did not want to have Black students on their campus, some of them chose to go to private schools. This can be shown in white flight that occurred during the year of integration. In the year before the unification at Zachary High School, there were 480 White students. During the 1970-1971 school year there were 438 White students. Even some members who were on the Bi-Racial committee to integrate the schools left the committee and pulled their kids out of the Zachary schools rather than have them at an integrated school. White flight happened in other areas around the country and especially in the South when integration began occurring.

Jim, a Black member of the committee, shared with me that for some White members, “in the finalization (of the unification) meeting we had members who could not take the transition and would move out of the committee ‘cause they wanna, they gonna send their kids to private schools” (personal communication January 15, 2013). He went on to tell me that when these White members realized that integration was going to go through and they could not stop it, they left the committee and took their children out of the Zachary schools and put them in private schools.

But not all White students left or even wanted to leave. Phyllis, aged 59 and a White student at the time, told me how the flight affected her since her father was on of the Board

41 A private school in Clinton, Louisiana

42 A private school built on Plank Road, expanded during the year of integration of the Zachary Schools.
members who had made the decision to integrate the schools.

A lot of our (families) friends went other places, and when you grow up in a real close community you have very, very close friends, and some of the ones that left, their parents were very racial and they would call us names and say things that were very hurtful, but we still had our little group of friends and we’re still very good friends. But I’m not as close of friends as the people that I was close to prior to this, so I guess you could look at it like that, it did split up a lot of people, you know, whether it was worth it, I guess it was. (personal communication October 12, 2013)

Later, when speaking to Taylor, a Black student aged 49, about her recollection of what Black students chose to do during the unification year, she shared with me,

I don't believe there were other choices for Zachary students (Black). Transportation would have been an issue. The city bus at that time didn't go past Scotlandville. However, some probably went to Scotlandville, or McKinley-in South BR- which were still in predominantly Black communities. Most Black teenagers did not have cars in those days. (personal communication January 28, 2013).

Tim, another Black student aged 54 told me that,

Number one, back then, once your family had a home, that was home. And you tend to want to stay home. It wasn’t moving around that much. That’s one thing about being up here in Zachary. Your family home was your family home, and you stayed with it. (personal communication February 4, 2014)

This is feeling of home is another reason that Black students did not choose to go to a school in East Baton Rouge Parish.

While Black students were choosing to stay in Zachary, some White parents were trying to build new segregated private schools or gain access to the already-built private schools. The Blacks had to go to the integrated school or find their own transportation to Baton Rouge to Black public schools.

Connor, who is White and aged 57, said his parents asked him about going to a private school and then they all decided as a family,

I think my parents felt like that was gonna be part of life from now on, and you know, might as well dive right in and get used to the fact. So I think that had a lot to do with it. But some of those people came back before we graduated. You know, by the time they
were juniors or seniors, they were back in Zachary. (personal communication February 27, 2013)

Connor mentions that the Whites who left came back during their junior or senior year; I heard this during many of my interviews. One reason given for this can be seen in the opening quote of this section that Mr. Boudreaux had it under control and the students and parents felt safe coming back to the school. One of the White teachers, Maggie, echoed this sentiment,

They had a choice of staying with the public high school or busing their kids to a Catholic school or busing their kids to one of these fly-by-night schools that opened up on Plank Road which some did, but then they realized they were not getting a good education, and they were coming back, or going to Silliman. Silliman got a big crowd from Zachary until the kids realized that we were having school and it was a good school and that there were no big problems here. (personal communication October 11, 2013)

Silliman, a private school in Clinton, Louisiana, did gain a number of Zachary students; however, according to another of my narrators Mary, a White student age 60, told me one of the main reasons White students came back was to graduate from Zachary,

We lost a lot of our Whites at the beginning. They signed up for Silliman, but in January we had a lot of them that came back because they wanted to graduate from Zachary High School, where they had started from, and that’s where they wanted their diploma from and – and the parents did let them come back.

Maggie, a White teacher, had a unique perspective on why it was good those White students who had a problem with integration left.

The people that took their kids out that was probably another big help because those would be the ones that were against it, so their kids weren’t here and they weren’t here to stir things up. The kids that didn’t get to go to Silliman or wherever and were here were outnumbered. And the Black kids that were here, I don’t think that they had as much choice about where to go, so this was it for them. (personal communication October 11, 2012)

What Maggie shared with me makes sense if those Whites that were vehemently opposed to the integration moved on to other schools then they were not in the school to cause trouble.

Jim, a Black community member, sums up the unification like this,
I told you integration was not about Black people going to school with White people. A lot of Black people didn’t want to go to school with White people. All right then, but to make the system work, for you to get equal opportunity, you had to conform to that system. (personal communication October, 16, 2012)

Zachary was different from other places in the nation because once the white flight began in other places it did not stop. Caldas and Bankston (2007) write about a school in Lafayette, Louisiana, that can be used as an example of what was going on in Louisiana. In this case, federal money was targeted at the predominately minority school that was located in a “new, modern facility incorporating all the most modern educational and technological innovations available”; however, since the population was 90 percent Black and almost all students are at-risk and high-poverty, middle class White parents did not want their students at the school (p.115). Caldas and Bankston (2007) go on to talk about Baton Rouge and how 7,000 White students left in the first year of court ordered busing, this number continued to rise until almost 50% of White students in the district were attending private schools.

The percentage of White students in the East Baton Rouge public school district who attended nonpublic schools had been going down from 1965 until 1980, from just under one-fourth of White students to well under 20 percent just before the judge’s decree. From the early 1980s onward, however, this proportion went steadily upward, so that nearly half of White students in the district were in non-public schools by 2000. (p. 144).

Before the schools in Baton Rouge desegregated, the White population in private schools was decreasing, and after the mandated busing the White students chose to go to private schools, or they chose to move out of Baton Rouge altogether. The White population of Livingston and Ascension Parishes increased right after the mandate (Bankston & Caldas, 2002, p. 144). This was because those parishes were predominately White, so integration would not have as big as an effect.
Fights/Walk Out

During the first year of integration there was one incident that could be considered a fight or a walk out that all of my narrators remember, and it was caused by racial issues between Black and White students. Most of my 20 narrators brought the event up themselves during our conversation or remembered the two days surrounding the events described below. This tells me that it is an important part of the story and needs to be told. As I spoke to each narrator about the events leading up to the actual event, as well as the aftermath, all of the stories that they told me were different. This reminds me of what Alessandro Portelli (1991) wrote in The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories when talking about truth and what it means for narrators.

I was attracted to the stories of Luigi Trastulli’s death because of their (narrators) imaginative errors expressed the shared subjective dreams, desires, and myths of the narrators. But the first step I took when I began to study those stories was to check the archival and printed records, and to attempt as faithful and minute a reconstruction as possible of what had actually happened. This reconstruction, however, was not an end in itself, but a step toward the reconstruction of the subjective truths implicit in the tales and the creative “errors” they contained. (p. ix)

From the details that I have been able to gather, it began on Monday, January 25, 1971, when an altercation between a White student, who pushed a Black student during a class change, occurred. Both students were suspended. However, the Black students did not agree with the punishment of the Black student and 150 of the 292 Black students refused to come into the school building the next day. The Black students came to school and passed by the gates to come into the building, but they would not enter the school. Mr. Boudreaux came over the loud speaker and asked for them to come in, but the students refused. Then Boudreaux asked for a representative to come talk to him so they could figure out why they were out there, but the students still did not comply. Mr. Boudreaux unlocked the gates to the fence surrounding the
and told the students they were all suspended. The police were called and the students dispersed off of the campus. The 150 students were suspended for two days, and then Mr. Boudreaux or the assistant principal Mr. Honeycutt had to meet with a parent of each student that was suspended so that they could come back to school. However, each narrator had a little different version of the story. The next morning after the event Mr. Boudreaux told what happened,

I looked outside and all the Black kids are still standing. I told Mr. Honeycutt. I said, “Billy (Mr. Honeycutt), I think we may have a problem because the Black kids are not moving.” He says, “I see that.” So the tardy bell rang and they’re all standing outside. There was 380 or so by that time.

The students would neither disperse nor send a representative in to talk to Mr. Boudreaux, so this is what he told me happened next.

I said, “Well, I’m fixing to open the gates.” We had locked the gates (from the inside when school opened) and he said, “Well, do it,” and I had the janitors go out and open the gate and told all the ones that were standing, “You’re suspended for two days. You refused to obey what I’m telling you and nobody wants to come in and talk. Nobody wants to do that.” One parent had to come to school. I had to do some fast thinking about what to do and they either had to speak to Mr. Honeycutt or I. (personal Communication, October 16th, 2012)

According to Mr. Boudreaux, the incident happened due to a small altercation between a White student and a Black student that ended up with the White student suspended. However, the Black students did not know what happened to the White student and did not think anything was done about it, so they were angry. The next day when they would not come in to class when the bell rang, Mr. Boudreaux suspended all students that were not in class for two days. He also made the stipulation that they could not come back to campus after those two days unless he or the assistant principal had spoken to a parent. This meant that he and Mr. Honeycutt were at the school all weekend with parents waiting to speak to him and get their students back into school.

43 The fence was installed during the summer before integration. It enclosed the entire property, and was locked during the school day.
Others had a less egalitarian view of the week’s events. For example, when I spoke to Maggie, a White teacher at the time, she told me her version,

The riot was over the stupidest thing ever. I think there was a fight, if I remember right because I heard all this second hand. I didn't actually see it. There was a fight at lunch, at one of the lunch shifts, between a Black kid and a White kid. They pulled them in. I think the Black kid got suspended and the White kid didn't, so there was a protest. They refused to come in from lunch one day.

Then Maggie shared with me what occurred the next day when school was about to start.

Then next day, all the Black kids met some place and when the first bell rang a lot of them weren't in class, most of them weren't in class, so they marched in, and that's when the big bad part of it came about. That day though, it was really fun if you were in class. When he told them they had to leave – and he was on the loud speaker. (personal communication, October 11, 2012)

Maggie’s version of the story differs in regard to who started the incident. Maggie also states that the event happened at lunch and not at the end of the day, like Mr. Boudreaux remembers. Maggie is able to share with us how her students, who were all Black, reacted to the incident. Where the stories do overlap is that Mr. Boudreaux met with each parent of a student that was suspended in order for them to be able to return to school. Portelli (1991) mentions that he not only relies on his narrators, but on archival research as well, so I found the article below in the local paper to support facts from my narrators.

*The Plainsman* published a January 28, 1971 article, *Zachary High suspends 150 who refuse to go to class*, written by H. S. Camp, which tells of the details that happened during the protest of the Black students,

ZHS principal Jerry Boudreaux confirmed Tuesday afternoon that some 150 students were expelled after they refused to go to class this morning. He said further that he would press charges against a Black student who “hit a White boy with a stick,” and would investigate further an incident to which he was an eyewitness wherein two or three negro girls attacked a White girl, pulling her hair and clothing. (Volume 19 No 9)

I was also able to find this court case that is mentioned in the article; it is *State of Louisiana vs. London* December 30, 1971. London, the defendant,
Was charged in the Nineteenth Judicial Court of Louisiana with violating Louisiana R.S. 14:34, i.e., having committed aggravated battery by hitting one Terry White with a broomstick on January 26, 1971 during the course of a confrontation between Black and White students at the recently integrated Zachary High School. (Court Case File)

London alleges,

that the statute under which he was being arrested is being selectively applied as part of a policy of racial discrimination so as to deny his right to pursue an education on an equal basis with Whites, as guaranteed by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. (Court Case File)

In the legal document there was a defendant Ralph Moore, who was a Black student at Zachary at the time and his testimony was this:

On January 26th, 1971 a confrontation occurred at the High School between Black and White students. According to his testimony, most of the school’s Black students had remained out of class that day protesting school policies. He said that the brawl was initiated when a Black student grabbed a stick from a group of White students who had appeared around the side of a building holding sticks. Eventually both Black and White students had sticks, and there was quite a lot of hitting by both groups of students. The altercation eventually eased and the Blacks began to leave the school. About this time the police arrived. (Court Case File)

This narration is closer in scope to the remembrances of the teacher Maggie about what happened leading up to and on the day of the incident. In this case, Terry White, who was a White student, was allegedly hit by a bat during the turmoil. Howard London, the Black student, stated that he was being discriminated against and denied his right to an equal education as Whites. The judge did not agree with London’s allegations and remanded the case to a higher court.

Taylor, 49, a Black student during the time of integration who had older siblings, remembers her sister being upset about how things were handled, but her grandmother said, “Girl, you better go over there and just do what you’ve got to do and not upset those White people because you’ve got to finish school” (personal communication, February 28, 2013).
Though this incident included a large number of students, the police and many parents, it was the only one that happened during the integration of the Black and White high school. Jim, a Black community member, said,

And in the beginning we had a conflict. We had a conflict where kids got fighting against one another and we had to shut the school down for a day. But when it was all finalized everybody went on and – the mayor and the principal and myself and some of the other people stood firm and said, “We gonna have school tomorrow.” And from that day we have not had another confrontation. (personal Communication, January 15, 2013)

William, 89, a Black teacher at Northwestern Middle School, said about the incident, “I don’t know – they might have had one or two racial incidents over there. But it wasn’t anything to turn the school out. It could have been. Because nothing big was made of a little incident. You know?” (personal communication, January 31, 2013)

Connor, 57 and a White student at the time, said he remembered,

Mr. Boudreaux came over the intercom system and said, in his way, that anybody that has walked out today is welcome to stay gone for three days because you’ve all been suspended. And I do remember that. So yeah, it – and I don’t remember it ever happening again. (personal communication, February 27, 2013)

Even though Zachary did have racial tensions in the school due to the unification with the two high schools becoming one, there were administration policies in place to minimize the potential for conflicts, violence, and disruption. If you compare this to the incidents in Baton Rouge, you will see that Zachary was able to maintain a controlled environment for their students. Art Adams (1971) writes in the Morning Advocate about a fistfight that happened at Lee High, which is in Baton Rouge, in which 25 students were arrested. Adams writes, “Those arrested included a White youth accused of hitting a Black student with a miniature baseball bat” (January 1, 1971). This level of unsettlement was not found in Zachary, and that is why many of the White students decided to return to Zachary High School instead of staying in the private schools where they had fled after integration.
Indeed, Connor, 57 and a White student during integration, told me he did not remember a lot of violence or animosity at the school,

No, I don’t remember that at all. It just seemed to be very smooth. It was – and especially when you were like I say when you were watching the news every night and they were having massive fights and police on every campus and everything like that and we’re, like I said, we did have some issues. But it was – it just was not what everybody else seemed to be going through. (personal communication, February 27, 2013)

Likewise, Taylor, 49 and a Black student during integration shared a similar impression with me,

We fared a lot better than other places did. So for us to do this you did have a certain amount of people that came together to make it happen. You had to. You had to have community leaders to make it happen. That still didn’t negate the feelings of the bitterness that some people had. And for us, again, we didn’t have all the drama and all the stuff that other places had, so maybe that worked best for us at that time. (personal Communication, February 28, 2013)

Despite this one event, there were really no other big fights or altercations in Zachary. Mr. Boudreaux chose to meet with all of the parents and have a discussion about the events. This one instance of unrest is why I chose to focus my research on how they integrated their rural schools during the 1970-1971 school year. However, Taylor does mention some feelings of bitterness, and some of those came from the extracurricular events that I will discuss next.

### Extracurricular Activities

When Mr. Boudreaux took over Zachary High School during the first year of integration he brought with him his attention to detail and his discipline when it came to running a school. This can be shown in the article from *The Plainsman* on August 20, 1970 entitled *At Zachary High School: Rule Clampdown* where Mr. Boudreaux announced to parents that students must abide by school rules\(^{44}\) and a copy of the rules was mailed to each house with a student registered. Some of the rules that Boudreaux mentioned in the article were,

Boys are expected to come to school with hair neatly combed; hair must not be over the ears or over the shirt collar in back. Shoes with laces must be laced and tied. Socks

\(^{44}\) A copy of these has not been located.
should be worn every day. Clothing with too loud or distracting designs may not be worn. Girls must wear dresses no shorter than four inches above the knee while standing. Beehive haircuts are against the rules. No student will be allowed tobacco alcohol, knives or matches. Students found with either of these will be suspended on the first and every other offense. (Volume 17 No. 38)

These rules displayed in The Plainsman were also detailed by my narrators, Connor, age 57 and a White student, told me that if Mr. Boudreaux noticed a student’s hair was too long,

They would send us to Miller and Day Barber Shop; he would call ahead and say, “I’m sending Mr. Connor down to get a haircut.” If it touched your collar or your ears back then, you went to get a haircut and they would literally call one of the barbers and say, “I’m sending Mr. Connor over. He needs a haircut.” (personal communication, February 27, 2013)

Steve, a Black student aged 56, shared with me more about how the strictness at the school kept things in line.

I think you had to be strict at the time. You had to be strict. It was a trying time. And tension was high. The White kids didn’t know many Blacks, just as the Blacks didn’t know many White kids until that happened. And so you had to be strict. You had to have a certain line that you wanted them to tow. Cause if they did that, you kinda keep down some of the confusion. And so can’t blame him. I know other people blame him for being strict. But hey, it probably was the thing to do at the time. (personal communication, February 4, 2013)

Another student, Mary, age 60, and a White student, told me about some of the changes the year that Mr. Boudreaux took over as principal. She shared with me, “We saw a lot of changes. We had an assembly program and when we were leaving, Mr. Boudreaux had Mr. Honeycutt (Assistant Principal) with a yardstick measuring girls’ skirts to make sure they came to the knee” (personal communication, February 28, 2013). All of these rules and structure factored into the extracurricular activities at the school which included the cheerleaders, pep rallies, and even prom.

Henry, age 64, and a White teacher, shared with me about the how students were chosen for activities,
For instance, at that time the cheerleading squad, there were eight cheerleaders, and when you elected the cheerleaders, you had to elect four White ones and four Black ones. In the band, there were two baton twirlers – one was White; one was Black. We had two drum majors, and one was White and one was Black. They tried to keep balance. The athletic teams it kind of worked out, but I don’t think that they had to have exactly a balance, but it sort of worked out. You know, looking back there wasn’t really a good way to do it, I suppose. It’s like getting your teeth fixed. It’s going to be painful, but you’re better off eventually for having gone through it. (personal communication February 5, 2013)

Another teacher, Maggie, shared how students were chosen for student council,

We would have class meetings. The first class meeting we would have would be seniors and sit row by row. The seniors would nominate and they would elect a president. If the president elected was White, then the vice president had to be Black, the secretary had to be White, treasurer had to be Black. The next class would have to have a Black president and it would go like that so that everybody had exactly the same thing. (personal Communication, October 11, 2012)

The reason for the equal ratios was so that both Black and White students would be equally represented in the school. When I asked Taylor, age 49, a Black student, if she thought ratios were the best way to accomplish the goal of equality she shared this,

I think if you let the students interact, let them get to know everyone you didn’t need that. I was led to believe if you can get up there and speak and do the best, you can pull people. I think it would have worked out without the interference of the adults. I really do. I don’t think they believed that the kids would elect anybody Black. I don’t think they believed that, so they set it up so that there would be some kind of representation. So as a result of that you had a tendency. Whenever there was a Black person running for office, all the Black people would vote for him. They would pool their votes. That’s how you’re going to get elected because of that. We’re going to pool our votes. Come on, y’all. We’re going to get them in there because that was the only way, and that was the belief down there. So even voting, you had clear this and that because of that kind of stuff. (personal communication, February 28, 2013)

Taylor believed that the racial equality would work itself out in the voting and the administration did not need to set it up so there was no option but for it to be equitable. Choice was thus removed from the hands of the students and united them against the administration. The students did not feel that the best people got the positions, but those that had the correct color for the position.
Phyllis, age 59, and a White student, had the same opinion as Taylor,

They (the administration) were just making choices of things that just weren't really good, you know, cheerleaders you had to have four White and four Black. And we were like, "No, choose the ones that make it 'cause you're gonna have the same number," and if they'd done it that way it probably would've come out the same way anyway. I missed out on cheerleader 'cause I was the fifth White to win. So those kinds of things I can think of that were not done correctly. (personal Communication October 12th, 2013)

Both the Black and the White students would have liked there to be less command from the administration and more of a chance to let nature take its course and see what happened. The next thing that the students all remember missing out on was pep rallies.

Before the unification, both Zachary High School and Northwestern High School enjoyed their own types of pep rallies, and though they were different from each other, they were a part of the school. However, when the schools integrated, the administration put a stop to pep rallies.

Maggie, a White teacher, shared this with me,

Mr. Boudreau tried pep rallies, and that's where you started seeing the first of it because of the two different styles of pep rallies. The White kids were used to pep rallies where you would sit in the bleachers and you would watch the cheerleaders cheer and you would cheer with them and they would have dance team things and all that. The Black kids were used to pep rallies where you chanted, you stood up the whole time, you chanted for your team, you swayed from side to side, you did all this kind of stuff, so it was a culture shock at the first pep rally 'cause all the Black kids were standing up and shouting and all, and White kids where sitting there just gawking.

Then Mr. Boudreau asked them (the Black students) to sit down and they didn't, so he went ballistic and ended the pep rally, so they all go back to class, and that's where I had my first experience of the anger that was hidden because the kids were just furious. And they were tenth graders, they were furious because he cancelled the pep rally and "Why can't we have a pep rally?" and "Why do we have to sit down?" and that kind of stuff.

The Black and the White students had different cultural views and expectations on what a pep rally should look like. When I spoke to Taylor, age 49, a Black student at the time she told me,

In the pep rallies, student-led, the students were participating. They would clap and they would sing and they would dance and they would do that. But now they’ve gone over here to the high school and all of this that’s in your culture – it’s what we do, we dance and all that – they couldn’t do it anymore. (personal communication, February 28th, 2012)
However, when I spoke to Mary, age 60, and a White student she told me,

He (Mr. Boudreaux) had shut it (pep rallies) down because when we’d play the music they (Black students) would go crazy, go nuts. They would dance and everything. So you’ve never seen such craziness on music that they did, so we had to just quit doing pep rallies. (personal communication, February 28, 2012)

It is interesting that the Black student was just talking about clapping and singing and dancing, and the White student talked about how crazy they would get. This shows the different cultures that were being brought together in the unified high school. The last big extracurricular event that many of my narrators spoke of was the prom. Prom is a rite of passage in any high school, and both the Black and the White students had to make adjustments when they came to the unified Zachary High School.

Phyllis, age 59 and a White student, told me,

Well, the proms were split. That was one of the things they said, "No, we can't do that." Which I can understand. I mean that would’ve been hard, but we, as a group, the White kids had a prom and the Black kids had a prom. Our prom was at the Lion's Club Park, the big pavilion thing. 'Cause you had to raise money on our own. (personal communication October 12th, 2012)

The year before the Black and White students had been able to have the proms at their schools, and then this year, they had to find a place that was off campus as well as raise all of the money to put on the prom. Tim, a Black student aged 54, shared with me that his senior class in 1978 was the first Black class to actually have a prom since the unification. He told me that

The Southern University Alumnae, Zachary Chapter, sponsored us to have a prom. And we had our prom on Southern University campus at the Newman Center. And the only thing, we didn’t have a band. We had a more of a record spinner DJ. But it was good. Everybody – the guys rented their tux and everything, and girls had formals, and it was good. (personal communication, February 4, 2014)

The White students had a prom every year after integration. Henry, age 64 and a White teacher, was asked to chaperone for the dance and he shared this,

Well, the proms, they were not part of the school. They were strictly off the school campus, totally unofficial. Now I got asked once to chaperone one of the dances, for the
White prom, and I declined. I got asked, “Why don’t you chaperone for the Black prom once?” Being the band director, I had a lot of Blacks and Whites both, and I tried to be fair. I had friends at both, but it wasn’t an official school thing, and I just didn’t get involved in it. I just declined both. (personal communication, February 5, 2013)

Not only did the students have to find a place and financially support their proms, they also had to find chaperones that were willing to attend. Henry told me that he just did not want to be in the middle of it since it was not an official part of the school in case something happened. I would imagine he is not the only one who felt that way.

Curriculum

Another focus on how Zachary High School worked during the first year of integration was how the school assigned classes. When I spoke to previous students, teachers as well as Mr. Boudreaux they told me that the students choose their own classes during the summer. In other words, students were not assigned to classes based on their race; they could sign up for the classes that they needed in order to get the credits required to graduate. According to the yearbook “The Corral” both Black and White teachers taught English, Science, and Social Studies. There was a racial mix of teachers for the main subjects as well as the electives.

Mr. Boudreaux told me that “they had to take a PE, and a general Math, English and Civics” (personal communication, February 22, 2014). I asked Tim, age 54, a Black student at the time, about the integration of his classes, and he said, “There was a mix of Black and White students since the students could sign up for their own classes” (personal communication, February 23, 2014). When I asked him about gym class he told me that the only separation at the time was between the girls and the boys that had different gym classes. A White student, Connor age 57, told me that in some of his classes, “I was the minority; there were only two or three White students in there” (personal communication, February 23, 2014).
I did hear from my narrators that the lunch room as well as the open spaces used before school were self-segregated by the students. The Black students would sit on one side of the room and the White students would go to another. Steve, a Black student age 56 said, “Most of the Black kids got on one end, White kids on another end” (personal communication, February 4, 2014). Mary, aged, 60, a White student told me that most of the White students would not even go into the cafeteria, “If you brought your lunch you could eat anywhere on campus, and that’s what they (White students) did – go under the shade trees out at the front and eat” (personal communication, February 28, 2013). So the students choose their own classes, and when they were assigned, they were integrated based on the classes that the students needed. At that time there were no Honors classes, and all students needed the same number of credits to graduate. However, when the students had a choice about mixing with another race they tended to stay within their own race for downtime on campus.

**Conclusion**

This chapter discusses the first year of integration, which entailed white flight, A Fight at Zachary, as well as Extracurricular Events and how the curriculum was structured at Zachary High School. Through the narrators, one can begin to see how life was for the principals, teachers, and students who lived through this historic time. There was a big culture shock for both the Black and the White students since none of them had been involved socially in the past, and high school is a social time in a teenager’s life. The administration chose to limit the choices of the students as well as the interaction in order to make this a more peaceful transition for the school. The teachers went along with what the administration wanted, as they were mostly new teachers. The students longed for more choice in the decision-making process. In the upcoming
chapter, which will be the summary of my findings and my conclusion, I will discuss how Zachary did things differently than other surrounding towns.
CHAPTER 7 THERE’S NOBODY BETTER THAN ME

When they started talking integration, everybody was a little skeptical as to what kind of a peaceful integration we were going to have in Zachary and in Baker. And that’s the thing that I look at with wonders every day – to see how – well, it worked. (personal communication, William, Black, 89)

Summary of the Findings

The story of Zachary and how this small rural town was able to unify their schools in the 1970-1971 school year is unique, and it needed to be told. Three themes emerged through my research: integration as a bitter pill, the unintended consequences of integration, and intended consequences of integration. The EBR School Board was following the federal mandate to integrate the school system. However, they left it up to the community of Zachary as to what integration would look like for them. This meant that Zachary had a choice to make. Since it was a small community and only had two high schools, two middle schools, and two elementary schools, the community had to decide how they were going to integrate. The Bi-Racial committee in Zachary, which comprised a group of principals, community members, and students, came to the pragmatic decision that they would unify all of the schools. Then they worked to make it happen as smoothly as they could. At a time when on national and local levels, school boards were having huge fights and interruptions to education, Zachary seemed to be an island to itself. Indeed, one of my narrators, Connor, White and aged 57, shared this sentiment with me, “It (Zachary integration) just seemed to be very smooth - and especially when you were watching the news every night and they (Baton Rouge) were having massive fights and police on every campus” (personal communication, February 27, 2013).

This is not to say that there were no problems or that everyone was in favor of desegregation. However, the community, guided by the Bi-Racial committee of Zachary, which was prompted by the EBR school board, made the pragmatic choice to unify. The Bi-Racial
committee could have continued to stall like EBR, or work to make the town lines of the district
to segregate their schools like Baker (the community south of Zachary) did. By looking at
Baker, and Central (another community close to Zachary) one can see how Zachary is unique in
how integration was handled as well as the end results of racial equality and academic success.

In Baker, a city south of Zachary, the Black students in the years before the integration of
the school were bussed to Zachary to go to school. Though it was also a small rural community
Baker did not have a dual system, so the Black students were bussed to Zachary to go to school.
The Black students went to Northwestern High School and Northwestern Elementary. When
integration happened in the 1970-1971 school year these students began to go to the Baker
Schools which integrated as well. In the 2013 school year both Baker High School and Baker
Middle School had a school rating of a D as opposed to the A that Zachary had. Integration was
different for Baker since the Black community had not been a part of the community before the
unification of the schools as had been the case in Zachary. Integration may therefore have
fragmented the Baker community in a manner unlike in Zachary, where my narrators spoke of a
close community.

In Central, another rural city south of Zachary, the White students were bussed to EBR
and Black students were bussed into Central after integration, in order to create a racial balance
in the school system that was predominately White. This was different than in Zachary since
Zachary already had a racial balance in the community. The bussing was hard on the student; one
of my narrators shared with me that “in the 1970’s kids right across the street from a school had
to be bussed an hour each way to go to school” (personal communication, April 4, 2014). In the
2013 school year Central High School had a school rating of a B and Central Middle School had
a school rating of an A.
The differences in the Baker and Central show that the leaders in the Zachary community had a hard choice to make. Those who stayed during integration showed their determination to have good schools and for students to gain a great education in order to make Zachary what it has become today, which is the #1 system in Louisiana for 10 years in a row, according to Louisiana’s Department of Education web site (Appendix H). Zachary is not just a city for the middle to upper class which some may claim and use this as a correlation to their academic success. The last School Report Card has Northwestern Middle School with a 43% Free and Reduced Lunch rate and Zachary High School with a 39% Free and Reduced rate.

The experience of integration was difficult for Zachary. My first theme of integration as a bitter pill examines how neither Blacks nor Whites were completely in favor of integration of the schools. In the theme of unintended consequences of integration, events such as what was lost when the students had to leave their schools, what happened with social activities, as well as looking at what happened to Black males is explored. My last theme of the intended consequences of integration will look at the curriculum, Black and White teachers, and students, as well as the academic equity of the students.

Integration as a Bitter Pill

The first theme that I discovered was that integration was thought to be a bitter pill that needed to be swallowed to comply with and follow the integration orders of 1969. Both Blacks and Whites resisted integration. In order to understand how Zachary’s integration was a bitter pill, one must look at the current research in education. Derrick Bell is one of the current researchers who is questioning whether Brown vs. the Board of Education was the panacea that it was touted to be. Bell (2004) writes,

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45 The site can be found at: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/
A noble image, dulled by resistance to any but minimal steps toward compliance, has transformed *Brown* into a magnificent mirage, the legal equivalent of that city on a hill to which all aspire without serious thought that it will ever be attained. (p. 4)

Bell wants us to wonder whether Brown was the cure for segregation. This question is still being pondered after over 50 years of litigation where many schools still have disparities in their Black and White student ratio.

In looking at Bell’s work with regards to what Zachary did, the town did need the Brown decision in order to create the unification that was achieved. This is because the *Plessy* verdict was not truly upheld. The Black students did have separate schools, but they were not equal to what the White students had in Zachary. Even if the schools had been equal, my research shows that the unification of the schools, which built a stronger community, is part of what has made Zachary the academic district that it is today. This example demonstrates you need a truly unified school system to accomplish an equal and honest integration of schools.

When I asked my narrators why they thought Zachary was able to make the unification process smoother than surrounding areas, I received this answer from a Taylor, age 49, a Black student at the time,

> We fared a lot better than other places did. So for us to do this you did have a certain amount of people that came together to make it happen. You had to. You had to have community leaders to make it happen. That still didn’t negate the feelings of the bitterness that some people had. And for us, again, we didn’t have all the drama and all the stuff that other places had, so maybe that worked best for us at that time. (personal communication, February 28, 2013)

Maggie, a White teacher, had this to say,

> I don't think it (unification) would've worked any other place in Baton Rouge because we came to this one school, everybody's gonna go to the same school, which is the philosophy that we've still kept, but everybody else in Baton Rouge could move someplace else. The only way you could move someplace else in Zachary was to leave Zachary completely and they weren't gonna do it. (personal communication, January 11, 2012)
The explanation that Maggie gives us shows that the bitter pill or the practical necessity of integration was to make it work so Black and White residents could stay in Zachary. Since the town only had two high schools, the residents had fewer choices than those within the city of Baton Rouge for how they would comply with integration. Baton Rouge was able to implement busing as well as create neighborhood schools.

Busing was the primary way in which schools were forced to integrate, and it was commonly resisted. Clotfelter (2004) writes, “Indeed, a parent of any race did not have to ascribe to deep-seated racist beliefs to have misgivings about sending a child to a distant school in an unfamiliar neighborhood” (p. 94). Louisiana Governor McKeithen is even quoted in the *Morning Advocate* (1970) during a speech in New Orleans stating, “I will not allow my children to be bused…to be handled like cattle” (McMahon p. 1). McKeithen told parents not to comply with the order to bus their children in order to integrate. He did not tell them what to do instead, though. Busing was not something that parents in Zachary were eager to do, so they had to work to come up with another solution. Since Zachary was not big enough to have more than one neighborhood, the idea of neighborhood schools was not an option available to them. So, unification of the schools was the most pragmatic choice that the Bi-Racial committee could come up with to integrate the schools.

Jim, a Black community member, aged 86, told me that “they (Zachary) was never gonna get out of it, integration” (personal communication, January 15, 2013) and that this is why they decided to unify the schools. This is another example of how the community, and specifically the Bi-Racial committee, realized that integration was not going away so they had to decide what was going to be the best for Zachary.
At the present time in Zachary, the schools are still unified so that each student goes through the same public schools during their academic career. This system of clustering does not allow for schools to be segregated. However, there are other ways in which one can segregate a school which will be discussed later in this chapter. Jim, aged 86, and a Black community member, shared these words on the practical aspect of integration, “It might have felt like they lost something, but what we understood is that at the time integration was supposed to bring us where we're going to have some of the new” (personal communication, February 4, 2014). The loss that Jim mentions is detailed in the next section of unintended consequences of integration.

**Unintended Consequences of Integration**

After the decision was made to unify the system the implementation resulted in unintended consequences. This entails what events were accidentally or unintentionally caused by the unification of the schools. These occurrences included what was lost when the Black and the White schools were merged, what happened with social activities, as well as how the integration affected Black males.

In previous chapters the mascots of the Black high school and the White high school have been discussed, the Black high school’s mascot became the new middle school’s mascot and the White high school’s mascot became the new high school’s mascot. However, the school songs also remained at the schools they were originally part of, so the White high school song became the song of the unified high school. The same was true of the song at the middle school. This led to feelings of loss from the students and teachers who felt an attachment to the song of their school. Tim, age 54, a Black student shared this with me, “I know most of the Black kids kinda withdrew, cause they didn’t want to sing it” (personal communication, February 4, 2014). Steve
said the main reason is that the Black students did not feel as though it was theirs to sing, and another reason was that the Black students did not know the words.

Other things that were lost that have been previously discussed was the prom which was lost to the Black students between 1971-1978 when the Black students worked with Southern University to have a prom for the first time since the integration of the schools. The White students lost out on the ability to have prom on campus, which had been their tradition. After unification proms were not integrated and had to be held off campus until 1979.

Another example of an unintended consequence is something that one of my Black narrators, Steve, age 56 who was a student at the time, said to me,

Mr. Glover (the Black principal of Northwestern) understood some of our struggles, by him being Black. He understood boys will be boys. But the overall goal is for you to get an education so you can move on in life and become productive. So, I don’t think they (Black students) would have been weeded out if we would have stayed all Black (personal communication, February 4, 2014)

Steve went on to tell me that since Mr. Boudreaux was White, he did not understand the Black culture, and one did not get as many chances to remain in school if he or she were not following the rules. This reminds me of Ladson-Billings’ (2002) idea of “permission to fail, (p. 110),” which means the Black students were being left behind by teachers and not pushed to their potential.46

Walker (1996) quotes a Black principal as saying,

He was very concerned about the [desegregation of the schools]. He felt that our boys and girls would not be treated fairly or would be taken advantage of, in terms of calling names and not getting the attention, love and care they got in the Black school. They would get low grades, although they excelled in their work. The environment of the school would not be beneficial for maximum learning. (p. 195)

This sentiment from the Black principal is similar to what Taylor, a Black student, age 49, who had older brothers and sisters at the middle school shared about integration,

46 There is a continued high rate of drop out and suspension of Black Males today.
They (Black students) lost all their other teachers that they grew up with. Some of those same teachers taught them in middle. Then they got to the high school. So none of those teachers that were their mentors, that help keep you out of trouble that knew you, that knew your family and you went there. And so you lost all that when you came over here and you had a whole new set of teachers that didn’t know, may not have known your condition, may not have known your family, may not have been able to talk to you like the others could have. (personal communication, February 2, 2013)

Delpit (2006/1995) echoes this sentiment of what Black students are leaving behind with a concern about what will happen because of this,

I also do not believe that we should teach students to passively adopt an alternative code. They must be encouraged to understand the code that they already possess as well as to understand the power realities in this county. Otherwise they will be unable to work to change these realities. (p.40)

Delpit wants Black students to understand both codes and be able to use these to advance in the world. This was made harder by having an administration and teachers who did not understand black culture.

**Intended Consequences of Integration**

The last theme of the intended consequences of integration was those that were planned or expected. In Zachary these were the curriculum, the Black and White teachers being evenly distributed, as well as academic equity for the students.

As I interviewed my narrators, I wanted to understand whether integration of the schools was de facto segregation,\(^\text{47}\) which was on the surface, or whether the school really did embody the spirit of integration. In some schools de facto segregation was the norm; they would have schools that were racially integrated, but the classes were not. This was not the case in Zachary. For example, when I spoke to Connor, a White student, age 57, he told me that his classes were racially mixed and that when you registered for classes you chose what you wanted to take

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\(^\text{47}\) Raffel, (1998) De facto segregation is generally the result of housing patterns, population movements, and economic conditions often reinforced by governmental policies not aimed at segregation but having that effect. (p. 233)
(personal communication, February 15, 2014). The only requirements were that you were taking the classes needed to graduate. The same sentiment was echoed by Tim, a Black student age 54, who told me that the students had a choice in what classes they wanted to take and none were assigned for them (personal communication, February 4, 2014). Students therefore perceived no possibility that the administration was trying to separate the Black and the White students.

One more intended consequence was that Black teachers from Northwestern and White teachers from Zachary High School had to change schools to follow the subject and grade levels in which they were, or they could move to another school in the system, or leave the system.

William, aged 89, and a Black teacher at the time, shared this about not having to leave Zachary,

But I remember they wanted to transfer me to one of the inner-city schools down there (Baton Rouge). But I knew, at the time, that I wouldn’t like that. They wanted to send me to a senior high school down there. I wouldn’t accept it. I stayed right there. (personal communication, January 1, 2013)

Such was not the case in many integrated schools. The Advocate published an article in 1969 that reported on a National Education Association (NEA) investigation that stated, “At meetings held in Livingston and Baton Rouge the NEA team heard reports that some Negro teachers had been demoted to the point where they were assigned some of the janitorial duties of a school” (“Five Negro Educators,” 1970). This did not occur in Zachary, and the Black teachers at Zachary High School and Northwestern Middle taught a variety or core subjects from English to Science.

Both Black and White teachers continued to teach the subjects in which they were certified and had been teaching before the integration of the schools. Mr. Boudreaux, the principal, believed in having the most qualified teachers for his school (personal communication, December 12, 2014). Looking at “The Corral” (which is the name of the Zachary High School yearbook) for the 1970-1971 year, one can see the teachers’ races as well as their subjects, and Zachary had both Black and White teachers for all subjects. See Figure 14 for details.
Figure 14  Faculty at Zachary High School, 1970-1971

In Table 12 the teachers, their race and the subject that they taught is listed for Zachary High School. The same is true for Figure 15 and Table 13 that shows the breakdown for Northwestern Middle School.

Table 12  Teacher Breakdown from *The Corral* 1970-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Teachers</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Black Teachers</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Nick Ashmore</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mrs. Carolyn Brown</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Terry Boyd</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Mr. Wilson Doucet</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas Brantley</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Mrs. Katherleen Foster</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Betty Breaux</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Mrs. Modesta Jackson</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Joe Calloway</td>
<td>Head Coach-Social Studies</td>
<td>Mrs. Eunice Pavageau</td>
<td>French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Marjorie Chaney</td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>Mrs. Jeanette Snowden</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Micheal Deshotels</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Miss Bobbie Toston</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Table 12 Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Katherine Dougherty</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Miss Julia Ware</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Kathy Flowers</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Mrs. Georgia Williams</td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Annette Geroy</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Mr. Floyd Yancey</td>
<td>Horticulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Pam Goblowsky</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Judy Guillot</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Margaret Holt</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Mary Joffrion</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Kathleen Mier</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Pat Palmer</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Huey Payne</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Catherine St. Amant</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Paula Shiver</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Pat Small</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Billy Williams</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Linda Zablocki</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15  Faculty at Northwestern Middle School, 1971-1972
The Tribe is the name of the Northwestern Middle School yearbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Teachers</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Black Teachers</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach Wayne Allison</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Mr. Alfred Bernard</td>
<td>Band Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Marcia Amy</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Mr. Joseph Cornelius</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Vivian Anderson</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Mr. Theodore Devall</td>
<td>Industrial Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Ethel Brown</td>
<td>Sixth Grade</td>
<td>Mr. Alvin Francois</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Remi Bruneaux</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Miss Cassandra Green</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Anetha Davis</td>
<td>Sixth Grade</td>
<td>Mr. David Horton</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Patricia Dieterich</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Mr. Freddie Jackson</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Sandra Green</td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>Mrs. Alma Johnson</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Betty Hughes</td>
<td>Sixth Grade</td>
<td>Mrs. Mildred Thomas</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mary Jo Kelly</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Marjorie Maggiore</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Stella Michelli</td>
<td>Sixth Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Barbara Netherland</td>
<td>Sixth Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Shirley Reado</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Larry Robertson</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bess Sessums</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Phil Speeg</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Eva Stamper</td>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Kay Veach</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Brenda Williams</td>
<td>Vocal Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the current yearbook for Zachary one sees a different picture than in the 1970 yearbook. The clubs and sports teams do not have equal numbers of Black and White students. Neither do the superlatives, or the student council. There is an integrated prom each year. Today the administration allows students to self-select without regard to forcing racial balance. The dynamic of the teachers has also changed. At Zachary High School there are a total of 9 Black and 60 White teachers and staff members. Northwestern Middle School has a total of 92 total teachers and staff of whom 15 are Black and 77 are White.
While racial equity has held over the course of 40 years since the integration of the schools, the same cannot be said for the teacher ratio between Blacks and Whites. In 1970 there were 26% Black teachers and 74% White teachers at the high school. In 2013 there were 13% Black teachers and 87% White teachers at the high school. At the middle school there were 16% Black teachers and 84% White teachers in 1970 and in 2013 there were 32% Black teachers and 68% White teachers at the middle school.

The last of the intended consequences is the academic equity which involves the graduation rates as well as class offerings to students. These lead me to the long-term effects that can be seen at Zachary High School in their graduation rate as it relates to race as well as the racial makeup in the classroom. Zachary graduates 87.5% of their students, according to the Louisiana Believes Website.48 In 2013 the graduating class was made up of predominately White and Black students with a few Hispanic, Asian and Native Americans as can be seen in Table 14.

Table 14  Graduation Broken Down by Race at Zachary High School in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>USA Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JPAMS Report from Zachary Community Schools

The District demographics of the schools are 51% White and 45% Black, according to Louisiana Believes (2013). In East Baton Rouge, the racial makeup is 87.54% Black and 12.46% White as of the 2010-2011 Financial and Statistical Report by the state of Louisiana (2012). This shows that if there are 45% Black in Zachary and 42.3% are graduating, then there is a drop before they graduate. With the White results there is a 54.9% rate of graduation and 51% in the schools. As with the other data, this does not tell us how or why these changes have occurred or what future implications this could have. This could be due to drop out, or transfer. That data was not

48 This is the website for the State Department of Education.
accessible to me. I would have liked to have tracked Black and White students from the 9th grade academy until graduation to see what those percentages would have been. However, I was able to gain the data of those students in 2013 that enrolled in college in the fall after their senior year. This data is shown in Table 15, which shows that the percentage of Black students going to college is higher than the percentage of White students.

Table 15 Student Enrolled in Colleges in the Fall after Senior Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students in Cohort</th>
<th>Students Going to College</th>
<th>% Who Went to College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other place long term effects can be seen in the unification of the schools is in the ratio of Black and White Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams at Zachary High School Zachary as compared to in the state of Louisiana shown in Table 16.

Table 16 Students by Race taking AP Exams at ZHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Zachary Students Taking Exams</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Zachary Students Taking Exams</td>
<td>23.55%</td>
<td>76.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Louisiana Students Taking Exams</td>
<td>3,779</td>
<td>13,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Louisiana Students Taking Exams</td>
<td>22.26%</td>
<td>77.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference of Exams taken in Zachary vs. Louisiana</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2013 The College Board

Zachary currently has a larger percentage of Black students that are taking AP exams than the rest of the state. Black students in Zachary have a higher percentage of exams taken by 1.2% than those in the rest of the state. White students in Zachary actually have a lower percentage of exams taken than the rest of the state by -1.2%. Some schools needed to create a
way for the integrated schools that were not unified to have a better way to increase academic performance for both Black and White students; EBR did this by creating magnet schools and Beal and Hendry (2012) researched Old South Baton Rouge, and how they implemented magnet schools (Figure 16).


Other data that I used included the school report cards for Zachary as compared to the rest of the schools in the state. These can be seen in Table 17 and 18. Zachary had a greater percentage in the higher brackets of the test whether they be advanced or mastery for the middle school or excellent or good for the high school. One more data source were the Leap iLeap

Table 17 Northwestern Middle School 2012-2013 School Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zachary</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching Basic</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>&lt;5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18  Zachary High School 2012-2013 Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zachary</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

results for the middle school (Appendix I). These results show that Black and White students in Zachary do better on the Leap/ileap tests than compared to the rest of the state. The results also show that White students in Zachary have higher overall scores for Advanced and Mastery than Black students. The End of Course can be found in Appendix J. These results are for the high school tests and they show that there is a larger gap between the Black and White students at the Excellent rating and this decreases at the Good rating for the students (Appendix K). The results cannot be compared to those from the state at this time since I am still waiting on the results.

**Implications for Further Research**

Based on this study, how can one rethink the history of desegregation with the method of oral history? In this dissertation I created a snapshot of how the community desegregated as a whole reacted to the unification of the schools. Data from this study can be used for further research, in order to look at just Whites or Blacks, or just teachers or students, and the picture might look different. My dissertation was a panorama, but in the future I would like to take a candid look at specific events that did not receive enough attention for this project. For example, it would be interesting to look at how a teacher with prejudice can help students reach their full academic potential. Every teacher has his or her own backstory, and I would like to look at how these stories affected their teaching styles. However, I would like to gather even more data that would give insight into academics as well as equity in the schools.

Another topic that could stem from my research is with the current upswing of breakaway districts that is occurring. Current local events make me consider the role that Zachary’s
historical and present-day success play as other communities grapple with their own feelings of dissatisfaction regarding their local public schools. In particular, the creation of Zachary as its own school district might be contrasted with the creation of St. George\textsuperscript{49} in Baton Rouge. In this case which is on-going, a group of residents in Baton Rouge, who live outside the city’s limits, propose to break off from Baton Rouge and then create their own city, and then, their own school district. While many of those in favor of creating the city of St. George are looking to Zachary as a model, the contexts between the two are strikingly different. According to Will Sentel, who writes for the Baton Rouge paper *The Advocate*, “Breakaway backers always cite Zachary” (2013). The break away for Zachary occurred in 2001, but it was set in motion by the unification of the schools in 1970. However, many inner city schools like EBR which are predominately Black, are underfunded and are not given equal access to education for all students. In his book *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathon Kozol (1991) writes,

> The state, by requiring attendance but refusing to require equity, effectively requires inequality. Compulsory inequality, perpetuated by state law, too frequently condemns our children to unequal lives. (p.56)

Kozol wants us to think about the tax base of the inner cities, and how this low tax base affects the schools. Meaning, if the properties and businesses with a large tax base are removed from public education, the funding of public schools will decrease. The argument against St. George is that it would take a large part of the tax base needed to support public schools.

**Conclusions**

In my dissertation, the goal I set was to answer the three questions in my proposal, but I wanted to go broader than that and tell the story of how Zachary unified their schools. In the process of completing my research for this project, I would like to make some recommendations

\textsuperscript{49} The proposed City of St. George is trying to break away from Baton Rouge for the main reason of creating their own school system.
on how to use what I have gathered from my narrators as well as archival sources about the community of Zachary.

When I began my research, I realized that it was difficult to find information on the history of Black education in Zachary. The White history of education in Zachary had more archival information that was readily accessible. As I combed through the archives at the state library, the main branch of the public library, as well as documents lent to me from my narrators, I realized I was uncovering a story that has not been told. The education in Zachary was not just one-sided when it began; it was all White, and Black education was not even mentioned at the Historical Society in Zachary.

In addition, my research can be used as a road map for how to complete an Oral History in a rural community on a racially charged topic. The way that my narrators who were both Black and White and drawn from the community at large, the administration of Zachary High School, and teachers and students of the high school was done so with deliberate fairness in mind is an important part of the process. While I must acknowledge that, as a White researcher, I cannot fully understand the lived experiences of my Black narrators, I made a conscious choice to incorporate as many Black narrators as possible in my research and keep their narratives as intact as space and time would permit.

In his book *Metahistory* (1973), Hayden White describes the many ways one can be a historian: one may work to look at the change in the historical process, while yet still another may evoke the “spirit” of the past in a lyrical way; some historians see their work as a way to illuminate current social problems, and lastly others in which way a historical period and how this differs from their own. My research style does not fit into any one of these ways to be a historian, but more than one. Completing an oral history can bring forth the “spirit” through my
narrator’s voices; in addition, one can illuminate current social problems by looking at what has happened in the past.

White also stated that “the aim of the historian is to explain the past by ‘finding,’ or ‘uncovering’ the ‘stories’ that lie buried in chronicles” (p. 6). I hope that through my research and willingness of my narrators to share their stories, I have uncovered stories that have, until this point, remained dormant in the memories of my narrators and the dusty archives. These discoveries can now be shared with future generations who will come to call Zachary their home. Further research is needed to see if my study on Zachary, Louisiana could be replicated. However, even though Zachary is only one small rural, Southern city it shows progress towards desegregation.
REFERENCES


Five Negro Educators file Motion in District Court. (February 17, 1970). *The Advocate*.


APPENDIX A: STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Study Interview Questions:

Name:

Date of Birth

Location of Birth

Educational Background

1. What was your own experience in school like?

2. How did you get into teaching

3. Where were you teaching during the 1970-1971 school year? Why were you at this school?

4. If this was a change in school did you notice a change in the curriculum? If so, what kind of change?

5. How did you experience integration in the schools?

6. What was your Zachary experience?

7. Follow up with questions about personal experiences teaching, curriculum, social situations.

8. What was impacted by integration?

9. Describe what curriculum was like before integration and afterwards.

10. What can you tell me about the community of Zachary with regards to the schools?

11. What do you think makes Zachary a unique community?

12. How do you think that Zachary has maintained such a great school district?
APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST

TO: Petra Hendry
Curriculum & Instruction

FROM: Robert C. Mathews
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: November 26, 2012
RE: IRB# 3337

TITLE: An oral history into how the community of Zachary, Louisiana was unique in its integration of the school system


Review type: Full ___ Expedited X ___ Review date: 11/27/2012

Risk Factor: Minimal ___ X ____ Uncertain ______ Greater Than Minimal ______

Approved ___ X ___ Disapproved ______

Approval Date: 11/27/2012 Approval Expiration Date: 11/28/2013

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 10

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Robert C. Mathews, Chairman

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING – Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU’s Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
8. SPECIAL NOTE:
   *All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU’s Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsu.edu/irb
Application for Approval of Projects Which Use Human Subjects

This application is used for projects/studies that cannot be reviewed through the exemption process.

-- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include two copies of the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below. Once the application is completed, please submit to the IRB Office for review and please allow ample time for the application to be reviewed. Expedited reviews usually takes 2 weeks. Carefully completed applications should be submitted 3 weeks before a meeting to ensure a prompt decision.

-- A Complete Application includes All of the Following:
(A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of part B thru F.
(B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1&2)
(C) Copies of all Instruments to be used.
   *If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
(D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
(E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB. Training link: (http://ohs.pediatrics.upenn.edu/hsctraining)
(F) IRB Security of Data Agreement: (http://research.lsu.edu/files/IRB/CYMS6774.pdf)

1) Principal Investigator* Dr. Petra Munro Hendry
   "PI must be an LSU Faculty Member"
   Dept: Curriculum and Instruction
   Ph: 225-578-2352
   E-mail: phendry@lsu.edu

2) Co-Investigator(s): Please include department, rank, phone, and e-mail for each.
   Heather Stone, Curriculum & Instruction, Graduate Assistant, 225-315-4626, hstone2@lsu.edu

3) Project Title:
   An oral history into how the community of Zachary, Louisiana was unique in its integration of the school system.

4) Proposal Start Date: 11/1/2012
5) Proposed Duration Months: 10

6) Number of Subjects Requested: 10
7) LSU Proposal #:__

8) Funding Sought From: None

ASSURANCE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR named above:
I accept personal responsibility for the conduct of this study (including ensuring compliance of co-investigators/co-workers) in accordance with the documents submitted herewith and the following guidelines for human subject protection: The Belmont Report, LSU’s Assurance (FWA00003892) with OHRP and 45 CFR 46 (available from http://www.lsu.edu/irb). I also understand that copies of all consent forms must be maintained at LSU for three years after the completion of the project. If I leave LSU before that time, the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Signature of PI: [Signature]
Date: 11/14/2012

ASSURANCE OF STUDENT/PROJECT COORDINATOR named above. If multiple Co-Investigators, please create a "signature page" for all Co-Investigators to sign. Attach the "signature page" to the application.

I agree to adhere to the terms of this document and am familiar with the documents referenced above.

Signature of Co-PI (s): [Signature]
Date: 11/13/2012

LSU Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
131 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/irb

Study Approved By: Dr. Robert Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
225 Bascom Hall
Date 11/24/2012
An oral history into how the community of Zachary, Louisiana was unique in its integration of the school system.

Study Approved By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Approval Expires: 11/26/2013

Study Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how the community in Zachary, LA helped to integrate the school system. We are asking you to take part because you were a part of the Zachary School System during integration. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn if and how the community was involved in the integration process of the Zachary schools. The community will include teachers, administrators, and community leaders.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about teaching during integration as well as your thoughts on curriculum changes during this time. The interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits:

There is the risk that you may find some of the questions about your job conditions to be sensitive. However, I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

There are no benefits to you.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your involvement.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with LSU. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researchers conducting this study are Heather Stone and Dr. Petra Hendry. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Heather Stone at hstone2@tigers.lsu.edu or at 1-225-315-4626. You can reach Dr. Hendry at phendry@lsu.edu or 1-225578-2352. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 225-578-8692 or access their website at http://lsu.edu/irb. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.
An oral history into how the community of Zachary, Louisiana was unique in its integration of the school system.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Your Name (printed) ________________________________________________

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.

Your Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Signature of person obtaining consent ___________________________ Date ______________

Printed name of person obtaining consent ___________________________ Date ______________

*This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on [date].*
APPENDIX C: ZACHARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS BEFORE AND AFTER DESEGREGATION

White Public Schools in Zachary Before Desegregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Opened</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades Taught</th>
<th>Number Teachers</th>
<th>Number Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Zachary School</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Zachary School</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Zachary School</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Zachary High School (New Building)</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Zachary High School</td>
<td>4-12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zachary Elementary</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Zachary High School</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zachary Elementary</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Black Public Schools in Zachary Before Desegregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades Taught</th>
<th>Number Teachers</th>
<th>Number Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Zachary Colored School</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Northwestern Middle School</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Northwestern Middle School</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Northwestern High School</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Northwestern Elementary School</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northwestern High School</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unitary System after Desegregation in 1970-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades Taught</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Elementary</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Elementary</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Middle</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: CURRENT BATON ROUGE ZACHARY AREA MAP
APPENDIX E: OLDEST KNOWN MAP OF ZACHARY
APPENDIX F: ZACHARY MAP FROM 1960
APPENDIX G:  ZACHARY MAP FROM 1967
APPENDIX H: CURRENT ZACHARY MAP
APPENDIX I: SPRING 2013 ILEAP/LEAP CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST

State Subgroup/Education Classification Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Black</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Zachary</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language Arts – Grade 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math – Grade 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts – Grade 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math – Grade 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts – Grade 8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math – Grade 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX J: END OF COURSE TESTS

District Subgroup – December 2012 & May 2013 Combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black State</th>
<th>Black Zachary</th>
<th>White State</th>
<th>White Zachary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Test - U.S. History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Test - English II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Test - English III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Test - Biology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Test - Algebra</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Test - Geometry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K: REPORT CARDS

Northwestern Middle School 2012-2013 Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zachary</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching Basic</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>&lt;5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zachary High School 2012-2013 Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zachary</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VITA

Dr. Stone completed her dissertation in the spring of 2014. Her doctoral degree is in Curriculum and Instruction granted by the Department of Educational Theory, Policy, and Practice at Louisiana State University. Specifically, her program of study and research support scholarship in the areas of student development: theory, curriculum and instruction foundations, and oral history. Dr. Stone’s undergraduate degree is from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her K-6 Certification is from Duke University. She also has a Master’s in Educational Leadership granted by Louisiana State University. Complementing her academic work, she has five years teaching experience at the 2nd grade elementary level, as well as one year as a Reading Specialist in grades K-6. In addition, she has gifted and administrative certification K-12.

In addition to her academic training, Dr. Stone has over ten years of web experience working on and building web sites for e-commerce and news sites in New York City. These experiences have allowed her numerous opportunities to incorporate her technical savvy into her academic career, both in the elementary classroom and at the college level. She knows that teaching is a social career to which she is very well suited. Dr. Stone enjoys sharing her ideas with other teachers and hearing what they are doing in their classes as well. She has always collaborated with other teachers since she believes that we can do better for our students when there are more minds working on a problem.