ACCUMULATION OF KNOWLEDGE: THE EDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY FROM 1920-1945

by

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ABSTRACT

Research Question: What individuals, institutions and organizations were instrumental in the development of the educational philosophy for African Americans in Southern New Jersey from 1920-1945?

Methodology: This dissertation employed oral history in the qualitative tradition using video recording equipment. Data were gathered from twelve participants representing nine family groups and four southern New Jersey Counties. The data were coded and analyzed to determine common and distinct themes which influenced the participants’ individual and collective educational experiences.

Findings: South Jersey, bordering Delaware, Maryland and Virginia inherited their racial attitudes from their southern neighbors. These southern ideologies were reflected in the types of schools available to black children during that era. The findings were as follows.

1. The participants all attended public schools in South Jersey. The grammar schools were segregated; and those who attended high school attended integrated schools or The Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth at Bordentown.

2. The participants’ parents who had greater socio-economic status than their peers and/or had cultural and social capital were able to orchestrate their children’s education. These parents chose an educational path for their children that included college attendance or attending the manual training school in Bordentown. Parents with capital were able to lay a foundation for success in an era that segregated and discriminated against blacks.

3. The participants, through their lenses as students, were very vocal and exacting about describing their studies, teachers, and events that occurred in the segregated schools, but were very reluctant to describe their high school experiences.

Significance: Black parents who held greater socio-economic status than their peers, and possessed cultural and social capital had great influence over their children’s education. They chose schools that provided their children with a trade or profession.
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DEDICATION

To My Grandmother

Jannie Ruffin Waters
(1899-1986)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of dedication, love and support. First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents, Lillian Waters Allen and the late William D. Allen, and my brother William D. Allen, Jr. for always encouraging me to create and follow my own path. I also would like to thank all of my cousins who assisted with words of encouragement. A special thank you to cousin Vernell Dubose and her neighbor Irene Mayers for helping me type the verbatim interview transcripts.

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Last, but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to the participants in this project. I am humbled by your openness in sharing the histories of your families’ quests for education. The sharing of your memories and personal details will enrich everyone’s understanding of the value placed on education during that era.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of African American education has been riddled with various and often conflicting theories. One of the most respected historians on this subject, James D. Anderson, offers an in-depth analysis of that history from 1860 until 1935. In his introductory chapter, Anderson refers to the “inextricable ties between citizenship in a democratic society and popular education.” According to Anderson,

It is crucial for an understanding of American educational history, however to recognize that within American democracy there have been classes of oppressed people and that there have been essential relationships between popular education and the politics of oppression. Both schooling for democratic citizenship and schooling for second-class citizenship have the basic traditions in American education. These opposing traditions were not, as some would explain, the difference between the mainstream of American education and some aberration or isolated alternatives. Rather, both were fundamental American conceptions of society and progress, occupied the same time and space, were fostered by the same governments, and usually were embraced by the same leaders.

An example of this type of philosophy was demonstrated by the educational proposal of Thomas Jefferson in 1787. Thomas Jefferson, who was the first to express views denoting the relationship between “popular education and a free society,” proposed a system of schooling that would provide three years of public schooling for free white children of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The brightest white male children would go to grammar school and college, supported by the public purse. During Jefferson’s era, however, approximately 40 percent of Virginia’s children were black and enslaved, and any rights to education were denied. Nevertheless, during the eighteenth century schools

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2 Ibid., 1.
3 Ibid., 1.
The education of African Americans in the United States has evolved through persistence and struggle. After the Emancipation Proclamation, blacks, as Freedmen, remained oppressed through political and economic subordination and disenfranchisement. Although there were laws that prevented the teaching of literacy to blacks, the first system of education for them developed from the interest of the Freedmen to establish an educational philosophy that would ensure that their emancipation would be solidified. In an effort to do so, they formulated a philosophy of education that would aid them in controlling their own lives.

The institutionalization of black education developed through the efforts of various groups: black individuals, religious and social organizations, white philanthropists, religious organizations, and governmental agencies. Regardless of the educational impetus, most of the research characterizes the foundations of this education as a struggle of divergent philosophies and goals. During the early American period, there were three major “principles” that guided the educational direction for blacks.

The first and primary principal was to educate slaves for Bible reading, to make them Christian. The second principle – supported by mostly by Quakers – informed that all people should be free and should support Christian efforts to abolish slavery. With slavery abolished, there would be a need for educated blacks to protect their own interests. Another principle rested on a sense of fairness that in the character of the country emerged from a concept of individual freedom. Therefore, slavery should be abolished to enable Africans to take their rightful place among us. This ‘rightful place’ implies civil rights, not necessarily equal status.

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The educational philosophy that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century and continued into the first part of the twentieth century grappled with the concepts proffered by the two opposing social systems – the development of the promotion of an underclass of peasants or promoting “capitalism and free labor.”\(^7\) The freedmen desired a system of education that would allow them to have control over their lives. This however, was not the goal of other organizations that were interested in assisting in the education of the freedmen. Religious organizations, regardless of their stance towards slavery, were interested in providing for the spiritual and moral uplift of blacks.\(^8\) Northern Philanthropists, on the other hand, wanted to prepare workers to preserve the economy of the south which supported the emerging industrialization era.\(^9\)

During the reconstruction period in the South, the Freedmen were the first to wage campaigns to establish a universal public education system that would be more representative of the New England classical education model. This was in direct opposition to the wishes of the planters who needed laborers for their agricultural system; their concession, with the backing of Northern Philanthropists, was to develop an industrial educational system that would better insure their economic stability.\(^10\) This “Accommodationist” education ensured that an educational system was put into practice that supported the southern class structure.\(^11\)

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10 Ibid., 18-32.
New Jersey, although geographically located in the ‘north,’ has historically had
very strong empathetic and economic ties to the American South; Jersey’s closest
neighboring states. These states were supporters of the old confederacy and their
educational directions and philosophies had a significant influence on the educational
system developed in the New Jersey, as a whole, and South Jersey in particular.

Purpose of Study

This dissertation presents an historical study of the types and purposes of African
American education in South Jersey during the 20th Century prior to the Supreme Court
ruling in *Brown v. the Board of Education*. For the purposes of this study, the time period
was focused on 1920 to 1945. This twenty-five year period was selected because of the
migratory influx of African Americans into New Jersey; political and legislatives shifts in
educational policies; and the development and direction of major African American
religious, social and educational organizations which had the direction of education of
African Americans as one of their primary goals.

The contextual framework of this study includes a summary of the educational
developments of black education in both the southern and northern sections of the United
States, and the laws that shaped educational decision-making. The study of the issues
surrounding these developments provides an understanding of the forces that shaped the
education of blacks during this period. The goal of this study was to provide a picture of
the types of education that were available for blacks in New Jersey through the lenses of
participants, educational records, and other supporting documents.
Statement of Problem

This dissertation attempted to determine what types of educational opportunities were available to African Americans in South Jersey, how they educated themselves, and the purpose(s) of their education from 1920 to 1945.

In keeping with the qualitative tradition, the question in this study was broad in its attempt to capture as many educational opportunities available through various resources. There have been many theorists, researchers and authors who have defined what constitutes an ‘education.’ L. H. Whiteaker stated that the education of slaves began the moment they arrived in North America, through 1) skill training, and 2) the teaching of rudimentary elementary skills such as “reading, writing and other elementary subjects.” Although Darkenwald’s and Merriam’s definition primarily focused on adults, their concepts of “highly informal” and “highly formal” education were also relevant to this study. According to them, an informal education occurred in participants “natural” environment. Informal education was usually not structured or sponsored by an organization but was learned through the efforts of the individuals or in groups. Formal education was usually planned and sponsored by established organization, i.e. school and institutions, and consisted of classes, workshops, lectures, etc Therefore, this study defined ‘education’ as any deliberate training or schooling, whether traditional or non-traditional, formal or informal, available to African Americans in Southern New Jersey during the designated time frame.

Methodology

This dissertation was an oral history project, which some researchers view as a form of qualitative research. This requires that the research is built upon interpretation and analysis of the information obtained from interviews. According to Strauss and Corbin, qualitative research is considered to be an excellent method to attempt to analyze the “meaning or nature” of a person’s experience that may not be available through the more conventional quantitative methods. Qualitative researchers are interested in participants’ responses and their interpretation of how those events affect their lives. The focus of qualitative research is the analysis of interview narratives. The characteristic of qualitative research requires that the research occurs in the “natural world” of the interviewee, uses a variety of methods that are “interactive and humanistic,” is not based on preconceived ideologies, and is based upon interpretation.

Oral historians utilize some of the same methodologies as qualitative researchers, but their primarily focus is to reconstruct past events to supplement historical data or documentation. The outcomes of an oral history project uses a bottom-up approach in its analysis of events based on the information provided in the interviews of the participants. The interviews are transcribed verbatim, summarized, indexed, and deposited in a public library or archive for future researchers. In 1989, The American Historical Association provided the following recommendations for historical research.

15 Strauss & Corbin, Basics of Qualitative Research, P11.
18 Ibid., 1.
19 Ibid., 85.
1. Interviews should be recorded and the appropriate documentation as to the use, rights, confidentiality and disposition be obtained prior to the interview.
2. Interviewer should use “challenging and perceptive inquiry” based on the background of the interviewee.
3. Interviewer should collect data and responses that extend beyond the initial scope of the project for future research and researchers.
4. Interviewer should protect the dignity and rights of the interviewee; and be cognizant of preventing any injury of exploitation of the interviewee.
5. Interviewer must use proper citation.
6. Interviewees should insure that all oral history data be deposited in a place that is available to other researchers.
7. The researcher has the responsibility to train all interviewers including students on the interview process and the American Historical Association guidelines.

In keeping with the purpose of this dissertation – to ascertain the educational opportunities available to African Americans, how they educated themselves and the purpose of their education from 1920 to 1945 – the analysis and findings were based on a compilation of information gathered through both primary and secondary resources. Primary resources consisted of interviews, oral histories and narratives; and records and materials from educational institutions. The secondary resources were collected from newspapers and other supportive literature.

While oral historians use a variety of equipment to record their interviews, the digital camera was the recording device used in the majority of the interviews in this dissertation. Video equipment provided the advantage of allowing the interviewer to capture fine nuances and expressions, and captured more of the interviewees’ personality.\textsuperscript{20} It also clarified which person was speaking during interviews consisting of multiple interviewees.\textsuperscript{21} A VHS recorder was the only equipment available for the first

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 38.
interview because of the immediacy of scheduling the interview. Furthermore, two participants only allowed their voices to be recorded with the digital camera; however they did not have any objections to having their stories transcribed and used in this dissertation. All of the interviews took place in the homes of the interviewee or in homes of their friends and family members who had participated in interviews. The use of the digital camera in these home settings added an additional context to the interview.22

The framework for the questions used during the interviews was based on the gathering of information relative to the individuals, institutions and organizations that were instrumental in the development of the educational philosophy for African Americans in Southern New Jersey from 1920 to 1945. The inquiries consisted of questions concerning their educational experiences, and recollections of the experiences of others in the community (Appendix A). These questions were expanded to include personal demographic information about the interviewee; and demographic and educational information about their families and communities; and other categories that would provide information that would uncover any additional educational resources within their respective communities. The purpose of the interview and the use of the information in the dissertation were explained to all interviewees prior to the interview and written permission was obtained (Appendix B). All interviews were then transferred onto a standard DVD, transcribed, and a copy of the DVD and transcription given to the participants.

This dissertation, following the oral histories tradition, was interested in collecting

22 Ibid., 109.
information on events that had occurred in the past. The interviewees were selected based on the criteria required in the proposal for the study. Each person was required to 1) be African American, and 2) have been employed by, involved with or attended schools in South Jersey between the years of 1920 and 1945. Because the dates in the study occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, there were some initial concerns about the retention of and validity of memories. Eligible participants could have been born as early as the first decade of the twentieth century and could possibly be 95 years of age. However, many elders have the capacity to remember past events more clearly than those that have occurred more recent history.\textsuperscript{23} Gerontologist Robert Butler wrote that the details in the memories of older adults were more precise because they have the tendency to continually review their lives. One of the benefits of an oral history interview is the ability of a trained interviewer to enable interviewees to discuss events and expose personality characteristics that may not have been previously shared with others.\textsuperscript{24}

Respecting the fact that this study spanned across several decades and included participants of varying ages, the interviewer was sensitive to the prevailing environmental and social attitudes during the period of question. Therefore, the tapes, transcripts and quotes that refer to racial or other descriptors remained consistent with the terminology used during the interviews and literature of the particular period, i.e. “colored,” “Negro,” “black,” “African American,” etc. After the interviews, the reported events were compared and corroborated by any available sources of documentation. Special care was given to those events in which the details were questionable to ensure the accuracy of an

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 11-14.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 7-11.
account.\textsuperscript{25} Interview data, along with other sources of information on the educational experiences of African Americans were analyzed along with data from national and state census records; available educational reports, official records; and other relevant printed materials.\textsuperscript{26} It is through the use of interviews and review of supporting documentation that the oral historian “weaves” a richer portrayal of events.\textsuperscript{27}

As a historical study, the structure of the list of possible information and data sources was formative. The research attempted to identify and analyze information and data from the following list of possible secondary resources depending on their availability.

1. Literature and records from religious, governmental, philanthropic, social, political, labor, and educational institutions and organizations: including, but not limited to the following:
   a) Records from African American, Quaker, and other religious organizations.
   b) Census records on education and employment.
   c) African American fraternities and fraternal organizations, and literary circles.

2. Newspapers, magazines and other media.


While the “who, what, when, and where” information can be obtained in documents and books, oral history interviews provided valuable information on the “how and why” of historical events.\textsuperscript{28} The rich stories of the participants provided insights on the availability and purpose of education through their eyes. They told the story of their

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 85.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 20-21
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 20-21.
parents’ education, background and views, the schools they and their siblings attended
and what they learned, and other educational and training opportunities that were
available for their perspective communities. Intertwined in their stories were vivid
pictures of race relations, attitudes, and social norms. The result provided an in-depth
understanding of the communities, the world in which they lived, and the politics and
philosophies that shaped their education and their futures.

In an effort to portray the status of the African American education in New Jersey
from 1920-1945, this dissertation included a contextual overview of the history of
African American education in the United States. Each historical period – pre Civil War
and Post Civil War – incorporated separate sections on the educational patterns for
African Americans in the northern and in the southern parts of the country. A separate
chapter was devoted to the educational opportunities available within the state of New
Jersey with particular emphasis on the political climate, legislation, and attitudes that
affected the individuals, institutions, and organizations in their efforts to provide
educational resources for African Americans within this state.

Summary

While there have been articles and books written on the education of African
Americans the United States, and references made to formal and informal educational
resources in New York and Philadelphia, less detailed information has been written or
referenced to such practices in New Jersey, and in particular South Jersey. The purpose of
this dissertation was to paint a picture of the actual educational resources provided to, and
by, African Americans in South Jersey from the periods of the Great Migrations to just
prior to the Supreme Court decision, *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. Nestled between two of the largest northeastern states (New York and Pennsylvania) and three southern states (Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia), New Jersey was influenced by its proximity to the economic, political and social policies of its bordering states. The impact of these states influenced not only how New Jersey viewed its citizenry, but also how it viewed its African American population.

The descriptions and implications of the types of education, and the purposes of that education is important to educators, the general public, and researchers in understanding the development of the State and its educational systems, and in assessing the status of African American education as it exists today. Educators within the state, and particularly in South Jersey, will be enriched by knowing the history of the education of African Americans within that part of the state; and will be able to provide that information to their students. All students should be taught how African Americans struggled and sacrificed to obtain a right to education. Their struggle to promote the concept of a ‘universal education’ eventually led to what is now considered a right for all people in the United States’ public schools. For researchers, this is only one facet of a potentially multifaceted project. While the information that will be derived from this project will provide a general idea of what existed, it is hoped that doors will be opened to intensely study different types of education and the methodology used to impart that knowledge.

Hopefully, this dissertation research will provide a more significant and richer historical perspective on the existence, role, and impact of the educational opportunities provided for African Americans in the State of New Jersey, specifically South Jersey, In
the infancy of this new millennium, it is important to provide insight into the understanding of how New Jersey’s many dualities and contrasting ideologies helped to shape its philosophy for the education of African American children. But equally, if not more important, the timing of this project might be the last opportunity to obtain and record primary source information from those who actually participated in the process. These primary resources unfold to educators and historians a richer view of actual experiences than can be obtained through any chronological historical report.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY

From New Jersey’s inception, it has been a state that has juggled divergent geographical, economic, political and social ideologies. New Jersey, a northern state, had approximately half of the geographical area narrowly missing being located below the Mason Dixon line. That section of the state’s closest neighbors was the southern slave-holding states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. While the southern part of the state retained its agricultural economy, the northern urban centers embraced industrialization while retaining their strong economic ties to the Southern Confederacy. Regardless of their differing views, New Jersey’s strong ties and allegiances to the Southern states influenced its decisions to not re-elect Abraham Lincoln, to be the last northern state to totally emancipate their slaves, and to vote against the ratification of the Constitutional Amendments that granted the protection of citizen rights to freed slaves.

South Jersey was involved in many of the challenges of the state’s divergent ideologies. But they were also engaged in an internal struggle with the state’s views on slavery and how to best deal with the influx of Freedmen after emancipation. South Jersey’s strong Quaker population advocated against slavery; and Quakers were successful in formulating legislation that prohibited the further importation of slaves, as well as ensuring the gradual emancipation of the state’s existing slaves. However, South Jersey’s integration of blacks into the fabric of their communities lagged behind that of the northern part of the state. South Jersey enforced segregationist attitudes, politics and policies within its social structure and educational systems well into the second half of the twentieth century.
New Jersey’s ‘Southern’ Philosophies

New Jersey has historically suffered from an ‘identity crises.’ Located in what is geographically considered to be north, New Jersey maintained a ‘duality’ that provided “a place of oppression and a place of sanctuary” for African Americans.¹ New Jersey has been viewed as a state that "offers contrasting images: a place of hostility and hardship necessitating struggle, and yet a place of succor and opportunity permitting achievement…in its treatment of Afro-Americans, New Jersey has often been likened to the South.”² The concept of “Jim Crow” segregation, which is generally linked to the South, not only existed in New Jersey but was still practiced well into the 1960’s. This segregationist attitude denied blacks access and participation in many public venues for entertainment and recreation, including restaurants.³ The State’s conflicting social and political attitudes towards its black population have been explained by theories regarding its production markets, the influx and settlement patterns of blacks, its “provincial character” and its relationships to its bordering states—whether enslaved or free.⁴

Geography

Geographically, New Jersey is considered a “northern” state; however, few people realize that its southern most part is located below the Mason-Dixon Line. The Mason-Dixon Line, which has been historically associated with the division of the country during the Civil War and the dividing views on issue of slavery, is drawn fifteen miles

³ Ibid., 13-14.
⁴ Ibid., 15.
south of Philadelphia. The Mason- Dixon Line does not actually geographically divide New Jersey because of its Twelve Mile Arc that is drawn southward around the western boundary of Delaware. If the Mason-Dixon Line had not arched it would have divided the State of New Jersey into two distinct parts- north and south.

Map 1: Mason Dixon Line

Given South Jersey’s proximity to the slave holding states of Maryland and Delaware, New Jersey has often had a racial temperament more closely aligned with the south and those of its southern neighbors. African Americans who moved North during

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the Great Migration of the 1930’s referred to New Jersey as the “Georgia of the North”\textsuperscript{7} and to this day, it has often been referred to by blacks as ‘up south.’

Giles R. Wright contends that there are five theories that attempt to explain the “racial conservatism” of New Jersey. The first theory ties this conservatism to New Jersey’s production markets, which were successfully marketed in the southern states. The City of Newark was often referred to as an “essentially southern workshop” because of its production of leather goods, i.e. shoes and saddles, and clothing that were purchased in the south for planters and slaves. The second theory holds that the state’s “Negrophobia” was a direct result of the large number of blacks who lived in New Jersey. New Jersey had the second largest number of blacks in the Northeast; only New York had a larger population. The third theory is based on the “provincial character” of its towns and cities. In 1880, fifty-four percent of New Jersey’s population lived in medium sized towns and cities. Proponents of this theory state that larger sized cities and towns were more metropolitan and therefore were not as restrictive as rural areas.\textsuperscript{8}

These last two theories relate to the geographical location of the state and their impact on its conservative racial views. Therefore, proponents of the fourth theory believe that since New Jersey borders other southern states (Delaware and Maryland); their attitudes towards African Americans greatly influenced the citizens of New Jersey. The fifth theory proposes that the northern part of New Jersey was influenced by the more metropolitan City of New York, while southern New Jersey received its racial cues from Philadelphia. However, it is also believed that these last two theories are the most

\textsuperscript{7} Giles R. Wright, \textit{Afro-Americans in New Jersey}, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 13-14.
prominent and influential. 9 This geographical division in the State had a significant impact on how social policies were developed around the divided issues of race.10

Historically, New Jersey consisted of the two distinct provinces of East Jersey and West Jersey as established in the Quinpartite Deed of 1676.11 East Jersey was dominated by the English settlers and West Jersey by the Quaker settlers. It was not until 1702 that the two colonies were combined, however the divisions between East and West remained.12 East Jersey, “originally comprised of Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties,” was influenced by the “economic and social” life of New York City which was more liberal in its views on the importation of slaves, and thus East Jersey adopted the same philosophies and attitudes. Perth Amboy and Middlesex Counties were the center of the slave trade for the colony.13

9 Ibid., 14-16.
Map 2: East and West Jersey 1664-1702

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The following 1769 map was surveyed and published by William Faden.\textsuperscript{15} It is one of the few maps that included the dividing line between East and West Jersey, and includes its regions and towns.

Map 3: Province of New Jersey (1769)
"The Province of New Jersey, divided into East and West, commonly called the Jerseys" (1769)\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} Mostly Maps.Com, William Faden ((1750-1836),http://www.mostlymaps.com/reference/Map-Makers/william-faden.php. William Faden was a prominent cartographer and publisher who was known for his cartography of North America. He also published the “north American Atlas”.

Other historians recognize the division within the states, but identify which counties belonged to the north and to the south, or for some ‘east’ and ‘west,’ differently. According to Harold F. Wilson’s map on the inside of the cover of his book, the dividing line began at Egg Harbor and continued in a straight line through Sussex County. Thus, the Western section of the state included parts of Monmouth, Somerset; Morris, Sussex counties; and all of Hunterdon County. One of the more recent historians, Giles R. Wright, divides North Jersey and South Jersey as follows from 1790 to 1870.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Jersey</th>
<th>South Jersey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bergen, Essex, Hudson,</td>
<td>Atlantic, Burlington, Camden,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex,</td>
<td>Cape May, Cumberland,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth, Morris, Passaic,</td>
<td>Gloucester, Ocean, and Salem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset, Sussex, Union, and</td>
<td>Warrent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Settlement and Slavery

Of all of the colonies in the seventeenth century, New Jersey was considered the most diverse. The colony consisted of the Lenni-Lanape natives, Swedes, English, Dutch, French, and immigrants from Ireland. The earliest settlers of the colony were the Dutch, later followed by the English. Slaves were “conceivably present” in New Jersey by the 1620’s. It was the Dutch who introduced slavery into New Jersey and were encouraged to do so by the “Concessions and Agreements” which gave additional land to the settlers for each slave imported. Most of the slaves brought to the colony were from Jamaica and Barbados, and in the mid-eighteenth century slaves also arrived directly from Africa.

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18 Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 81.
20 Ibid., 1.
West New Jersey, which also had slavery, depended heavily on the use of white labor. The highest proportions of slaves were located in Burlington, Gloucester and Salem counties. According to statistics, those counties represented twenty-three percent of the State’s population, but only had three percent of the slaves. The lower percentage of slaves in West Jersey was attributed to the large number of Quakers residing in the area. The Quakers, also known as the Society of Friends, did not allow their members to hold slaves. They were also strong advocates for legislation to 1) make it illegal to import slaves to the colonies, 2) teach slaves to read and write and 3) abolish all acts of slavery.\(^2\) In 1776, the Quakers denied membership in their Society to any slaveholder. Their powerful lobbying forced the State to enact laws that would eventually emancipate the slaves and protect their civil rights. The constant campaigning of the Quakers led to three major enactments during the colonial period: a) the 1786 Act prohibiting the importation of slaves; b) the 1789 Act calling for the seizure of slave vessels which denied the movement of Negroes without their consent, demanded equal punishment for Negroes and whites for crimes committed, and provided for the teaching of Negroes to read and write; and c) the 1804 Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery which freed the children of slaves and provided for the gradual freeing of all slaves.\(^3\)

Throughout its colonial period and into statehood, the state’s attitude towards slaves and Freedmen was more aligned with those of the South than the North. New Jersey was the only northern state that not only did not vote to re-elect Abraham Lincoln, it failed to ratify the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the

\(^3\) Ibid., 16.
Constitution. New Jersey’s political leaders also took their cues on emancipation as a ‘gradual process’ from Pennsylvania and New York. Pennsylvania passed an act in 1780 that officially ended slavery and slightly elevated those who were enslaved to a position of “indentured servant.” New York followed suit in 1799 and New Jersey in 1804. However, the actual end of slavery occurred in New York in 1827 and in Pennsylvania around 1845. By contrast, New Jersey did not totally abolish the system of slavery until 1865.25

The delay in the actual emancipation of slaves in New Jersey can be attributed to the 1804 Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery which established a ‘servant status’ for children born of slave, and later ‘servant’ mothers, until the age of twenty-one for females and twenty-five for males. The Act also had provisions for monetarily rewarding or fining owners pursuant to the registration these births. If an owner elected not to register a birth, a notice of abandonment was issued and the child was moved to a county poor-house. Eventually, the child would be bound out as an indentured servant until they reached the legal age for emancipation. This system of indenture benefited the owner by allowing him to collect wages without any financial responsibility for the upkeep of the slave, yet enabled the owner to collect the slave’s compensation for labor during this period of indenture..26

In 1818 New Jersey outlawed the exportation of slaves; however there were no provisions that prevented slave owners from selling their slaves into states that still

24 Giles R. Wright, Afro-Americans in New Jersey, 14.
26 Price, Freedom Not Too Distant, 80-82.
supported slavery, or to contract them into indentured arrangements in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{27} New Jersey was opposed to the expansion of slavery into the western territories. The strong abolitionist Quakers in the southwestern part of the state provided safe havens for runaway slaves in the Underground Railroad.

Nonetheless, New Jersey still had strong links to the South. Not only were some of its residents related to and had social relations with people in the southern bordering states, its industry was linked to the South. The Civil War, as it related to slavery, “polarized” New Jersey’s politics and its economic transformation.\textsuperscript{28} In the 1860 Presidential Election, New Jersey’s Opposition Party, which was created in early 1850’s, supported Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln, the Republican candidate, won four electoral votes, while his opponent, Douglas, won three votes, thus making New Jersey the only northern state where Lincoln did not receive all of the votes. New Jersey felt that the Southern states had a right to secede from the Union during the Civil War.\textsuperscript{29}

At the culmination of the Civil War, the conflicts raged over Reconstruction and the rights of the new Freedmen. Although the State initially ratified the Fourteenth Amendment which gave the Freedmen the rights to citizenship through a special legislative in 1866, it then revoked the Amendment in 1867. After a veto by the governor, which was overturned by the legislature, the resolution was sent to the Congress; they thought the resolution was “disrespectful and scandalous.” New Jersey also battled over the Fifteenth Amendment, which provided the Freedmen with the right to vote. The Amendment was initially delayed in the legislature and only ratified after it


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 43-50.
had already been adopted nationally.\textsuperscript{30}

By 1870 African Americans in New Jersey found themselves relegated to low-wage jobs and were stationed at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. In the urban areas they worked in unskilled labor jobs, or the domestic and service trades. In the southern part of the state they either farmed their own land or worked as farm laborers, sometimes on Quaker owned farms or wealthy estates.\textsuperscript{31}

According to Giles Wright between 1870 and 1910 there were two major developments that affected the lives of blacks in New Jersey. The first development was the tripling of the black population in the state due to the influx of black immigrants from the Southern states. The number of blacks not born in New Jersey in 1870 was 43 percent and in 1910 that figure increased to 58 percent. The second development was the migration to the cities. In 1910, 75 percent lived in the urban areas in Central and Northern New Jersey. They were not migrating from the Southern States to South Jersey, as in the past. The two largest South Jersey cities were Atlantic City and Camden. Although Camden’s black population was the largest in the state in 1890, it ranked third in 1910 even though it had the largest increase in the number of blacks living in that city. Blacks were attracted to Atlantic City because of the need for labor and service oriented employees to support the seaside resort industry; blacks filled 95 percent of the “hotel-recreation” jobs.\textsuperscript{32}

The Great Migration of blacks into New Jersey began the development and incorporation of social institutions – service organizations and black owned businesses within their communities to support their needs. Churches that were in existence before

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 50-52.
\textsuperscript{31} Giles R. Wright, \textit{Afro-Americans in New Jersey}, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 45-46.
the Civil War were renovated and expanded and new churches were built. There was also a move to provide recreational facilities for the young, like black YMCA’s. Other organizations were being established that would meet social and service needs such as chapters of national Greek letter organizations, women’s clubs, the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs (1915), and alumni association chapters of black colleges and universities. There were twelve black newspapers established between 1870 and 1910; only two were in existence after the turn of the Twentieth Century. Black communities had entrepreneurs that developed their own businesses. Most of these businesses were small and provided “personal services – for example, barber shops, caterers, restaurants, and shoeshine parlors.”

During the 1880’s and 1890’s the state also experienced an increase in immigrants of European decent – Hungarians, Poles, Swiss, Russians, French, Czech-Slovakiens, Lithuanians, and Scandinavians. Because of the state’s “geographical diversity” these new immigrants felt at home in the state. In the northern mountain areas were iron mines, forests, dairy farms and the “estates of the wealthy.” Central Jersey, a fifteen mile belt” was the “heart of New Jersey industry.” South Jersey included 127 miles of beaches, and pine lands. However, white “native born” New Jerseyans were adversarial to allowing the immigrant groups to having any rights. They also opposed giving any rights to any “native born” African Americans.

In 1903, the State Bureau of Labor and Industries published a report entitled, *The Negro in Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries*. In that study of 398 manufacturing

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33 Ibid., 46-50.
34 John T. Cunningham, *This is New Jersey*, 3rd ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1978), 4-5.
companies, they found that only 83 employed blacks, “963 out of 38,420” employees were black and 80% of blacks were employed as “common labors, stablemen, or wagon drivers.” There were also 292 companies that did not employ any blacks. In 1903 there were only 54 blacks that were in the New Jersey trade unions and of those, one-third were barbers and “seven carpenters, seven steam engineers, five rubber workers and three musicians.” In 1910, employers and labor unions were still resistant towards the hiring of black employees and hostile to the inclusion of blacks in unions. 36

During World War I the number of blacks migrating into the state for higher paying jobs increased dramatically. In 1910, there were 88,000 blacks residing in New Jersey; by 1930 that number had more than doubled to 200,000.37 The vast majority of blacks were centered in the northern urban areas and the southern cities of Atlantic City and Camden.38 They were entering the labor force in increased numbers and being included in some organized labor unions, i.e., the longshoremen and the “clothing industry.” But being included in a few of the unions did not solve all of the issues surrounding the lack of employment opportunities and low wages. In some cases, blacks organized protests and strikes against employers and unions for unfair practices. Examples of these protests were the dock workers in Port Newark, the textile workers in Lodi and the brick makers in Sayreville.39

The increase in the migration of European immigrants and blacks resulted in the growth of segregated ghettos. While some of the immigrants were able to ‘melt’ into communities outside of their prescribed ghettos, this was not the case for the black

36 Ibid., 225.
37 Giles R. Wright, Afro-Americans in New Jersey, 54.
38 Ibid., 54.
39 Ibid., 54-57.
population. Segregation for the black population defined and mandated where they lived and what recreational activities were permitted for their racial group. But within their own communities, blacks were enriching their lives through the further development of black owned businesses, religious organizations and social and service organizations and networks. One of the largest and most successful of the black owned businesses was the Apex Beauty Products Company in Atlantic City. Apex, established in 1919 by Sara Spencer Washington, manufactured nationally distributed black hair care products, employed over 80 employees, and owned 11 beauty culture schools. Her estate, upon her death in 1953, was worth over one million dollars.40

In creating an expanded community focus, the number of social and civic organizations increased to accommodate the number of black migrants. Blacks established their own glee clubs, literary societies, social clubs, and Girl Scouts and Boy Scout Troops. They also established black “lodges” which provided opportunities for social interaction, activities, charity drives, volunteerism and civic services, and leadership training.41

Perhaps the most important organizations were the black lodges – the Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, Knights of Pythias, American Woodmen, Sons and Daughters of Africa, Order of Moses, Good Samaritans, Eastern Star, Queen Esther Court, Court of Calanthe, Household of Ruth, and others.42

By 1940, there were more than 30 black newspapers in New Jersey. The increase in population helped to establish a demand for black newspapers to help keep people informed of the people, events, and issues that affected their lives. They, provided

40 Ibid., 60.
41 Ibid., 62.
42 Ibid., 62
information about black the businesses established within their communities and in the state.⁴³ The most popular newspaper was the *New Jersey Herald News* which was later renamed the *Newark Herald News*. Other widely read papers in the state included the *Afro-American* and the *Record*.

The Depression Era hit the black population in New Jersey harder than any other race or ethnic group. Black unemployment was disproportionate to the numbers living within the state. Twice as many blacks were unemployed as whites and they remained unemployed longer than whites. While black families represented only 5% of the total family population they comprised 26% of the relief role. In urban areas the black relief cases were even a higher percentage of their population. Blacks were also being pushed out of jobs that were historically prescribed for them – “waiters, hotel workers, elevator operators…janitors”⁴⁴ – and were being replaced by whites. The Depression and low wages encouraged the exploitation and “humiliation” of workers to the extent that some compared the employment environment to the “slave markets” – “black women waited on street corners for white women to drive up, casually survey them, and then offer them a day’s work.”⁴⁵ However, during the Depression, blacks continued to unite, using their collective efforts to earn better wages and gain political power. They would boycott the goods and services of employers that did not hire blacks through campaigning amongst each other to “Buy Where You Can Work.” In the 1930’s blacks also changed their political party affiliation from Democrat to Republican based on their acceptance of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s concept of the “New Deal” and “social reform.”⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid., 60-62.
⁴² Ibid., 63.
⁴³ Ibid., 63.
⁴⁴ Ibid., 63.
⁴⁵ Ibid., 69.
⁴⁶ Ibid., 69
The United States entrance into World War II bought blacks some relief by providing industrial jobs with decent wages and new skill development. Black women also benefitted by transitioning from domestic work into industrial employment. Jobs became more plentiful and the influx of black migrants from the south increased – and blacks continued to relocate to urban areas in New Jersey. The state’s black population increased 40% during the war years, and by the end of World War II blacks comprised 7% of the population.47

In 1945, New Jersey passed the Fair Employment Practices Act which was revised in 1949 to include anti-discrimination legislation in public accommodations.48 In 1947 the New Jersey State Constitution included laws prohibiting discrimination based upon “race, color, sex, and national origin,”49 this included discrimination in public schools and the National Guard.50

South Jersey

The theories regarding the racial attitudes of South Jersey, which maintains some of the same geographical areas as West Jersey, adhere to the concept that it adopted its attitudes from Philadelphia and the neighboring southern states. During the Colonial Period, South Jersey was the forerunner in the state in advocating for the rights of slaves. It is believed that the strong Quaker presence in South Jersey and Philadelphia minimized the number of slaves. However there does not seem any extant research on social movements in South Jersey that would explain its role as the as the primary motivator of

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47 Ibid., 70.
48 Ibid 69-70.
49 Cunningham, *New Jersey: A Mirror on America*, 306
50 Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 70.
the abolitionist movement through its Quaker influence. Eventually, South Jersey became more racially conservative than its northern counterpart. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, life for blacks in South Jersey was not as harsh as in the northern part of the state. However, it should be noted that, “Quakers were not free of racist and paternalistic attitudes and did not view blacks as their social equals.” During the twentieth century, the urbanization of North Jersey, which was less segregated, even in its school systems, developed an environment that was more acceptable and attentive to the needs of black people than their southern counterparts.

It is important to examine the migratory patterns of blacks and immigrants into the state, and the effect of the increase in those populations had in the areas in which they settled and the work they obtained. In 1880, 11,184 “Negroes” had migrated into the state, of those, 8,393 had arrived from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. These immigrants were more acceptable of the lifestyle for blacks in South Jersey due to the similarity to the lifestyles they had in their previous domiciles.

Researchers generally agree that there were two other major migrations of blacks into New Jersey from 1890 to 1930. The first migration occurred between the years of 1890 to 1900 and resulted in a 46.6% increase in the black population. Blacks during the first migration came primarily from Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The second migration occurred between the years of 1910 and 1930; the black population increased 133.8 percent, whereas the increase for whites was only 55.9 percent. In 1930,
for every one thousand blacks in the State; approximately one-quarter were born in the State, approximately one-half came from the southern states of “Virginia, Georgia, and North and South Carolina”; approximately one-tenth were from other states; and two were not born in the United States.\textsuperscript{56} The fact that there was such a large influx from the southern states during the two migration periods probably influenced the racial attitudes that were emerging in the state.

Understanding New Jersey’s population data provides important insight into the distribution of blacks and the resultant attitudes that developed in the southern part of the state. In 1860, blacks in North Jersey represented 3.1\% of the total population, which included 18 slaves; and in South Jersey the figures were 5.5\% and 0, respectively.\textsuperscript{57} In 1900 and 1920, the total population of Blacks constituted 3.7 percent of the population, and 5.2 percent in 1930.\textsuperscript{58} In 1900, the five highest percentages of blacks resided in the southern counties: Atlantic, Salem, Camden, Cape May and Gloucester. This pattern was repeated in 1930; the highest percentages were Atlantic, Salem, Cape May, Gloucester and Burlington; the highest for the northern counties was Monmouth.\textsuperscript{59} By 1950, the county figures for the total percentage of blacks, changed to reflect a rise in the northern industrial counties. Essex, Monmouth and Mercer counties are in the top five categories. Interestingly, both Monmouth and Mercer counties border a southern county.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 86
\textsuperscript{58} The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work, \textit{The Negro in New Jersey}, 78.
\textsuperscript{59} Giles R. Wright, \textit{Afro-Americans in New Jersey}, 93.
\textsuperscript{60} Note: Clement Price references Monmouth County as one of the “original” Eastern counties in 1676 but makes no mention of Mercer County. Giles Wright places Monmouth and Mercer Counties as a Northern Counties in population charts which begin in 1790. Harold Wilson’s map places parts of Monmouth and all of what is now known as Mercer County in the Eastern section of New Jersey. (see footnotes 22, 23, and 24) However, Monmouth and Mercer Counties both border the southern county of Burlington.
Education of African Americans in South Jersey

Table 1: Percentage of Blacks of the Total Population\(^{61}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Counties</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>Southern Counties</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunterdon</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Cape May</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Southern Average</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Average</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, New Jersey was also experiencing a significant influx of white, foreign-born immigrants. This immigration increased the population and changed the ‘ethnic composition’ of the state. According to Mahoney, in 1870, these new immigrants formed 20% of the state’s residents. By 1900, the foreign born immigrants’ numbers doubled to represent 22.5 % of the population, excluding the native born children and grandchildren of the immigrants who still identified with their “ethnic group.” \(^{62}\)

The increase in the migration of blacks and immigrants into the state influenced the types of work available to both groups. In 1900, North Jersey dominated the industrial and manufacturing enterprises in the state; the major industrial areas were Essex, Hudson, Camden, and Passaic counties. When the counties of Mercer and Union are included, the

\(^{61}\) Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 90-95. Adaptation

percentage of industrial workers increased from 64% to 77%. From 1900 to 1930, most of the farming in New Jersey was located in “Cumberland, Hunterdon, Gloucester, Monmouth and Burlington counties.”

From the period between 1920 and 1930, the highest percentage increases of male and female workers in New Jersey were black males at 71.1% and black females at 77.7%. Black males also led in the percentage increase in agriculture (124.2%), and manufacturing and mechanical industries (66.3%); the increase in agriculture for foreign born males was 115.5%. Although the largest increase in the area of domestic and personal services was attained by white males (79.4%), the second largest increase was that of black females (66.9%). In 1930, 63% of Negroes 10 years old and older were “gainfully employed;” of that for every 100 Negro males employed, “8 are in agriculture, 41 in the manufacturing and mechanical industries, 15 in transportation, 8 in trade, 3 in public service, 2 in the professions, 22 in personal and domestic service and 1 in clerical positions.” For Negro Women, 86% were working as personal assistants or domestic workers.

While North Jersey was the dominant industrial center of the State, South Jersey became the largest agricultural producer and developed a thriving resort industry. After the establishment of Cape May as a resort community, blacks were employed as household staff in the resort hotels during the summer months. In 1910, Atlantic City, also a resort community, experienced “the most phenomenal flux” of blacks in the state. With over ten thousand blacks, Atlantic City had the largest black community in New

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63 Ibid., 62.
64 The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work, *The Negro in New Jersey*, 25
65 Ibid., 15.
Jersey and employed blacks as “maids, cooks, butlers, and porters.”67

While the state, at least on paper, seemed to present a safe haven for both black and foreign immigrants, it was not without the turmoil that was affecting the nation as a whole.

By 1900 the South’s black population was more powerless than at any other time since the death of slavery. The rapidity and thoroughness with which white Southerners destroyed the Reconstruction order and replaced it with white supremacy left many blacks stunned, confused, and demoralized. The North’s acquiescence in white supremacy heightened their sense of isolation and vulnerability.68

Whites in the north were reassessing their strategies for dealing with the influx of blacks to lessen the potential impact on their standard of living.

An era of ‘shifting’ seemed to be best phrase to define first half of the Twentieth Century. There were shifts in the demographics in the state with the influx of blacks, the increase in the arrival of foreign immigrants, and the change in the industry in the state. While South Jersey maintained a largely agricultural and service industry, North Jersey was evolving into an industrial/manufacturing dynamo. The increase in the Northern industry resulted in its taking over the lead in providing a better or ‘more accommodating’ lifestyle for blacks in the state. In the midst of this era, racial issues affected the nation as a whole with the return of the World War I Veterans, and blacks throughout the country seeking equality.

The education of blacks in New Jersey was a long and arduous struggle. As with other states, the teaching of blacks to read and write was low on the list of priorities. But the persistence of blacks to have access to education was eventually successful through their own efforts with the aid of religious organizations, philanthropic groups and determined and creative individuals. Legislation and industrialization help to move the northern parts of New Jersey in the direction of schooling for blacks and eventually integration. South Jersey, not as industrialized, but heavily dependent on agriculture and tourism, remained resistant to an inclusive educational system and remained so well into the twentieth century.

During the Colonial Period, the education of blacks and slaves was initiated primarily through organized religious sects. In 1701 the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (an arm of the Church of England) was the first to consider the education of slaves during the Colonial Period. This was not done to challenge the institution of slavery, but rather to encourage “spiritual salvation.” It was their belief that all candidates for baptism were required to have the ability to read the Anglican Catechism. The Society was not as expansive in New Jersey as in other colonies; however it was sometimes the only access to literacy for some blacks. The Society began the first school in the province and reached its peak between 1744 and 1774, but only lasted until the beginning of the Revolutionary War. This was the first attempt at providing organized education for blacks in the state.69

Although religious and philanthropic interests in the education of blacks

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69 Marion M. Thompson Wright, *The Education of Negroes In New Jersey*, 6-7
continued throughout the 18th century, there were also movements within by blacks within their own communities to develop schools to educate both children and adults. Some of these schools were located in Newark, Princeton, and New Brunswick. There were also two schools established by women: Betsy Stockton in Princeton, and Mrs. William Middletown in Bordentown.70

Most of the schools attended by blacks were segregated. The state was aware of the issues surrounding segregation within the various school systems and began passing legislation to eradicate the separate school practices. In 1844, the new State Constitution implemented a provision to provide annual funding to schools that would be accessible to all people. This new funding base was successful in eliminating separate school systems in North Jersey, but had little effect in changing the policies and practices in the southern counties of the state.

In 1881, the state passed legislation that prohibited discrimination based on “nationality, religion, or color”71 as a result of events that had occurred in Fair Haven. In Fair Haven, black children were not allowed to attend the white grammar school. This new legislation mandated that all children be allowed to attend the schools within the districts in which they resided. While Blacks in other towns, particularly in Northern New Jersey were protesting segregated school districts, Fair Haven and Long Branch, both located in Monmouth County, remained split in their views on the merits of integrated schools. There were also issues regarding integration in several other school districts, including Asbury Park, Matawan, Burlington, Atlantic City and Camden. The acceptance of, and support for segregated schools by some blacks, particularly those in

70 Ibid., 6-7.
71 Ibid., 4-5.
Fair Haven and Long Branch, was counterproductive to the pursuit of integrated schools for blacks living in South Jersey. While schools in North Jersey became integrated, the schools systems in South Jersey continued their practice of segregated grammar schools.\textsuperscript{72}

In 1896, the US Supreme Court decision in \textit{Plessey v. Ferguson} endorsed the concept of “separate but equal” based on previous court cases which involved segregated schooling in eight different states between 1849 and 1890. The determination in this case was a harsh blow to integrationist and supported the views of segregationists.

\textit{…the opinions in these cases all shared three assumptions: first, that judges should defer to the judgments of elected lawmakers and school officials that segregation was in the ‘best interest’ of all children, black and white alike; second, that the Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of the ‘equal protection of the laws’ to every person did not apply to education, which was solely a state and local affair; and the third, that the ‘prejudices’ of white voters and parents were ‘not created by law, and cannot be changed by law.’ The \textit{Plessey} majority easily transferred these assumptions from schools to railroad cars; thus, the long-standing existence of Jim Crow schools in both the South and the North became the justification for segregation in virtually every facet of daily life.} \textsuperscript{73}

The decisions in \textit{Plessey} had a national affect by legalizing separate but equal facilities for black and white citizens. By remanding the decisions on segregated school systems to the individual states, the 1881 New Jersey legislation which prohibited discrimination within the public school systems retained its legislative precedent. However, most of the towns in South Jersey maintained segregated schools. While the institution of segregation in the school systems was usually imposed by the school boards, the parents of black children in the South Jersey cities of “Penns Grove, Cinnaminson, and Camden”

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 160-180.
petitioned for segregated schools as an alternative to the ill-treatment that their children received in integrated schools.\textsuperscript{74}

In 1886, Old Ironsides, which was eventually renamed The Manual Training and Industrial Schools for Colored Youth, was established as an “alternative school.” This school, commonly referred to as “Bordentown”, provided its students with a learning environment that was free of discrimination.\textsuperscript{75} In New Jersey, blacks favored the development of a school for industrial training. They looked to Booker T. Washington’s model which included academic training. In 1886, The Technical Industrial Educational Association of New Brunswick, which changed its name in 1990 to The Colored Industrial Educational Association of New Jersey, signed an article of incorporation for the development of such a school. Bordentown, originally supported by private contributions, was an ideal prospect, and in 1900 the supervision and control of the school was transferred to the State.\textsuperscript{76}

In 1900, the transfer of the control of the Manual Training and Industrial Schools for Colored Youth from a private institution to a public institution occurred four years after \textit{Plessey}, which further weakened the argument against the abolishment of separate schools for blacks.\textsuperscript{77} The school was placed under the control of the State Department of Public Instruction. Notably, there were some blacks who were critical of the southern model of industrial education in the early 1900s because they felt that it sustain a “caste condition” which kept black students “…socially isolated, provided limited occupational

\textsuperscript{74} Wynetta Devore, \textit{“The Education of Blacks in New Jersey 1900-1930”: An Exploration in Oral History”} (Ed.D. diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1980), 192.
\textsuperscript{75} Ezola Bolden Adams, \textit{“The Role and Function of the Manual Training and Industrial School at Bordentown As an Alternative School”} (Ed.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1977), 131.
\textsuperscript{77} Devore, \textit{“The Education of Blacks in New Jersey 1900-1930”}, 192-3.
\textsuperscript{76} Marion M. Thompson Wright, \textit{The Education of Negroes in New Jersey}, 160-180.
choice, and reinforced obedience to caste rules.” 78

In a 1928 publication by Dr. E. George Payne, Assistant Dean of Education at New York University, Payne stated the following.

The situation in New Jersey is by no means typical and represents in general the method of bringing about segregation artificially in cases where natural means do not turn the trick… It may, therefore, be said that the various factors leading to segregation do not allow the Negro to be exposed to the same educational or cultural situations to which the whites are exposed to in the North. 79

The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work with the cooperation of the State Department of Institutions and Agencies published a survey entitled The Negro in New Jersey in the 1932. That publication included a historical analysis of black education between 1919 and 1930. During that period, the number of segregated schools for black children increased 26 percent and the number of black teachers increased 123 percent. In 1930, the report estimated that the States northern counties had 58 percent of the total black population, 54 percent of the daytime back pupils, and 8 percent of black teachers. 80 The Southern counties, which had 42 percent of the population, had 48 percent of the black day students and 92 percent of the black teachers in the state.

The dramatic increase in the number black teachers was the direct result of the growth of separate schools for black children primarily in the southern counties. The reason for the disproportionate distribution of teachers was the fact that in most of South Jersey, black teachers could only teach in black schools; whereas in North Jersey, black

80 Ibid., 37.
teachers were assigned in schools that were fully integrated, as well as schools that were segregated by building divisions.\textsuperscript{81} While the northern counties were more liberal in its placement of schools and teachers, they were not totally ‘free’ all forms of segregation and separation. However, in South Jersey, it was the norm to have segregated facilities for black children and teachers. Lester B. Granger\textsuperscript{82} found that in 1925 the influences of the neighboring states on North and South Jersey resulted in the following:

Northern New Jersey had felt no need for separate schools and was not interested in them. But from Princeton southward to Cape May, every city or town with a considerable Negro population supported a dual system of education for Negro pupils of the grammar grades. In the high schools the races were mixed. In no town south of Elizabeth was there to be found a colored teacher in charge of a class including white pupils, but classes that were wholly colored sometimes had white teachers.\textsuperscript{83}

The literacy rates for blacks were another issue. Regardless of previous legislative attempts to make public schools inclusive and available to all children, disparities still existed in the literacy rates for blacks who lived in the southern counties in 1930. The U.S. Bureau of the Census’ Population Statistics for 1930, provides comparative data on the education of blacks with the total population of each respective county for people ten years of age and older. These data are based on the number of illiterates per 1,000 blacks. In this report, the data showed that of the twenty-one counties in New Jersey, seven out of the fourteen that had the lowest literacy rate for blacks were located in the southern

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 37.
\textsuperscript{82} Lester Blackwell Granger (1896-1976) was born in Virginia and raised in Newark, NJ. and was a graduate of Dartmouth College. He served in the US Army during WWI, was the assistant executive secretary of industrial relations for the National Urban League from 1940-1961, and served as president of the National Conference of Social Work in 1952. He was the Amistad Scholar in Residence at Dillard University in 1976.
\textsuperscript{83} Marion M. Thompson Wright, The Education of Negroes in New Jersey, 183-186.
counties of Ocean, Camden, Burlington, Mercer, Gloucester, Cape May, and Cumberland. Cumberland County had the lowest rate of literacy in the state. Salem County did not have data computed for the census survey. However, the average literacy rates for blacks when compared to those of the total population placed all but Atlantic County below the literacy rates for the state. Atlantic County not only had the highest rate of literacy for blacks in the state, but was the only southern county that was above the state average for the literacy of that group; it also ranked fourth with Sussex County for the rate of literacy for the total population in the state. 84

Summary

Slavery had existed in New Jersey since 1620. Although the state had a relatively small number of slaves compared to its bordering southern neighbors, their influence had a profound effect on how the state, especially its southern half, adapted its attitudes towards slavery and freedom. Not only was New Jersey hesitant to free enslaved people, for political, economic and social reasons, it was the last northern state to do so. However, the Quaker advocacy influenced the enactment of laws that would abolish the importation of slaves and establish a gradual emancipation of slaves in the State. The Quakers were also one of the religious sects that believed that blacks needed to receive an education in preparation for moral and religious development as well as for their preparation for freedom.

The establishment of schools for blacks began in the colonial period by religious sects and philanthropists; and by blacks themselves. The schools initiated by the former

84 The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work, The Negro in New Jersey, 95.
were developed to promote spiritual salvation and morality. In 1844 and 1881 the State passed two important laws designed to provide better educational direction. The first law, under the new state constitution, provided for the public funding of schools; the second forbade discrimination based on one’s nationality, religion or color. Even after the enactment of those laws, South Jersey, a proponent of separate schooling for whites and blacks, continued in their tradition of operating separate schools.

Whites were not the only population that questioned the necessity of integrated schools. Some of the black populations were reluctant to give up their separate schools because they felt they provided a better environment for developing their children’s minds and their self-esteem. This stance was in opposition to the dictates of State’s legislation but concurred with the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Plessey v. Ferguson*, and further reinforced the continuation of segregated schools in South Jersey. While the public schools in North Jersey moved towards a system of integration, South Jersey’s school systems maintained segregated public schools until the 1960s.85

These quests for freedom and education in New Jersey were shaped by both internal and external factors. However, to comprehend the development of black education in New Jersey, it is important to understand the issues surrounding the politics of slavery, freedom and education in the Southern and Northern Colonies and then States.

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CHAPTER III

EDUCATION OF BLACKS AND FREEDMEN – PRE CIVIL WAR

The voyage of blacks went from the strict confines of the slave ships to the strict confines of slavery. Once deposited on the shores of the Colonies, blacks were purchased as slaves for whites solely as a means of supporting the growth of the agricultural economy. For masters, slaves provided cheap and plentiful labor to maintain their crops, plantations and lifestyles. To sustain a master-slave relationship required absolute control over the lives of the slaves. This need for absolute control resulted in the development and legalization of Slave Codes. These codes mandated how slaves’ behaved, traveled and communicated; and made it illegal for any slave to receive any type of education. The possibility of blacks becoming literate threatened the very core of slavery. Education would enable slaves to communicate amongst themselves and with others who might oppose the institution of slavery. The results could lead to dissatisfaction and insurrection.

While masters suppressed education for slaves as a necessary measure to maintain the status quo, slaves found education highly desirable. Slaves saw education as a vehicle that would secure their rights to freedom, independence, self sufficiency and citizenship. Just having the ability to read and write could enable them to communicate outside of the plantation and forge documents that might aid in traveling to freedom. Therefore, hope, determination and clandestine schooling were the solutions for the slaves. They found creative ways to learn how to read and write, and used every available source including teaching themselves, secret meetings, bartering and eliciting the aid of white children and supportive masters and mistresses.
For Freedmen, education was more accessible in the North and Northwest than in the South. Southern Freedmen who could afford to provide education for their children would send them to private black schools in states that provided schools for black children, usually located in the south. There were schools that existed for black children in the Northern states, and there were also a few white schools that admitted black students even though it went against all the social mores of the era. In the Northwest Territories, Freedmen and runaway slaves were building schools for their children within their own communities. But racism, bigotry, and the threat of the loss of employment opportunities to blacks by whites shaped the availability, quality and curriculum of education for Freedmen. Finally, restrictions on and destruction of educational facilities built by Freedmen or that admitted black children were common.

Whether one was slave or free, education was seen as the means to obtaining and maintaining freedom. Education was believed to be a valuable instrument that would impart the knowledge and ability to secure and protect their freedom and earn their rights as informed citizens. Those who were able built and supported their own schools, and blacks sought and received learning from any individuals, missionaries and organizations that advocated for their education.

Slavery & Freedmen Prior to 1863

Most people are under the assumption that, with very few exceptions, slaves in the United States were largely illiterate and had no interest in obtaining an education. While the first part of the assumption may be true if one is looking at the percentage of slaves who could read or write, the general assumption that slaves had no desire to obtain
an education is inaccurate. Evidence of the desire to become literate can be found in narratives and publications provided by those who learned to read and write, and often under perilous conditions. These authors include Frederick Douglass,¹ Phyllis Wheatley,² Hanna Crafts,³ and Mattie Jackson.⁴ There are also records of the educational endeavors of military and religious organizations, and educational records that are archived in libraries, colleges, and religious and historical associations.⁵

Although research on the education of slaves and Freedmen prior to the Emancipation Proclamation has been limited, V.P. Franklin, Carter G. Woodson, Charles Anderson and Heather Andrea Williams, are four scholars who have conducted research in the areas of the meaning and value of education to slaves and Freedmen, as well as the sources and types of education that were available to them. They have agreed that even prior to the Civil War the black populations in the colonies not only wanted to be educated but that they equated education with obtaining and maintaining their freedom and with helping them to become full participants in society as bone fide citizens.⁶

Through testimonies and transcripts, V.P. Franklin studied the concept of self-determination in African Americans during the early nineteenth century to the late twentieth century and concluded that “freedom, resistance, education, and self-determination” were major objectives of blacks during that period.⁷ Therefore, directly

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⁵ Ibid., xii-xiii.
refuting the beliefs that blacks had no interest in education, researchers have discovered that education and/or literacy was seen as the most important means to cultural “advancement”\textsuperscript{8} and that “wisdom and knowledge”\textsuperscript{9} were associated with obtaining freedom,\textsuperscript{10} citizenship,\textsuperscript{11} and real control\textsuperscript{12} over their lives.

That said, obtaining precise information or statistics on the education of black people, enslaved or free, prior to the Emancipation Proclamation is a difficult—if not an impossible—task. The 1850 US Census’ educational statistical reports include education data charts; however, many of the reports were compiled from self-reported information and therefore impossible to validate the accuracy of the data. According to that Census, families reported the following for numbers attending schools (Table CXLVII) – 4,063,045 native born whites (as opposed to white immigrants and native Americans), and 26,461 Freedmen. These statistics also reported the enrollment rates by states/territories for Freedmen; Georgia and California only had one; Pennsylvania had the largest number (6,499) and was closely followed by New York (5,477); New Jersey reported 2,326. Mississippi, New Mexico and Utah did not have any data of Freedmen enrollment. The 1850 Census also contained the self-reported ratio for illiteracy (Table CLVII) as 4.55% of native born whites, 8.71% foreign born whites, and 21.03% of Freedmen.\textsuperscript{13} Unfortunately, the 1860 Census (Appendix C) which occurred three years prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, did not address the issue of education and literacy but did report that 12% of the total population was enslaved and 1% were

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., ix
\textsuperscript{10} V. P Franklin, \textit{Black Self-Determination}, 165.
\textsuperscript{11} Anderson, \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South}, 31
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 3.
Given the questionable status of “educating slaves,” finding information in official records may not give a clear picture of the number of slaves, or for that matter the number of Freedmen, who had access to literacy training. Heather A. Williams seems to have chased down almost every possible lead available to her. While she began her research in the traditional arenas such as the archives of missionary associations, she found that she had to overlook the paternalistic tendencies of white missionaries to discover the lives of the individual people described in the records. Her research evolved into a journey that not only included the traditional white sources, but records and references of efforts made by slaves and Freedmen. “Reading between the lines” was less frustrating and a lot more insightful, and told a story about the desire and search for literacy through the eyes, lives and journeys of those individuals embedded in the documents.

In general, the education of blacks was forbidden in most of the colonies during the Colonial period and prior to the Emancipation Proclamation. However, through sheer determination and the assistance of others, some blacks, including slaves, during that period were literate.

Education of Slaves in the South

Differing goals shaped the education of the slave population depending on whether you were the slave or the master. Slaves saw education as the path to freedom.

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15 Williams, Self Taught, 1-6.
16 Irons, Jim Crow’s Children, 44.
Literacy would enable them to read the Bible for spiritual uplift, to write passes that allowed them to escape, and to learn about the activities of abolitionists.\textsuperscript{17} For masters, literacy for slaves endangered the foundations of the slave-based economic system. Allowing the slaves to gain the ability to read and write meant that they could then communicate with others and obtain knowledge from outside of the slave system. This ability to learn and to communicate posed a mortal threat to the institution of slavery.

The deterrents to providing any education for slaves were intentional, if not always effective; and the cost to a slave of obtaining an education could be very high. If caught, the very attempts to read and/or write would often result in dire consequences that included beatings, amputation of limbs, or death. One slave reported that although he considered his master to be a “pretty good man” if any of his slaves were even suspected of trying to become literate, the master would “beat the daylights out of us.” This slave also reported mutilations via the cutting off of fingers and/or thumbs for such transgressions.\textsuperscript{18}

The research literature addresses two major deterrents to the education of slaves; both of these were intended to support the system of slavery. The first was the increase in the number of slaves and the suppression of the education of those enslaved to maintain the status quo. Enforced illiteracy was a key factor in ensuring that slaves were unaware of the means of improving their condition.\textsuperscript{19} The power the masters exerted over slaves was inherent in their ability to keep them isolated and silent. Isolation provided absolute control of the thoughts and actions of slaves, and denied their access to information. The ability to read and write would not only provide the skills to obtain knowledge about

\textsuperscript{17} Williams, \textit{Self Taught}, 6.
\textsuperscript{18} Irons, \textit{Jim Crow’s Children}, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{19} V. P. Franklin, \textit{Black Self-Determination}, 161.
abolitionist movements but also allow them to “expose” the myths surrounding slavery to the world. The very act of communication had the potential to create leaders that could destroy the institution of slavery.\textsuperscript{20} For example, Denmark Vessey and Nat Turner, both literate, were leaders in insurrectionary movements. Frederick Douglass, also literate, was prominent in abolitionist movements and produced literature that expounded on the notorious ills of slavery.\textsuperscript{21} Literacy would prove to the world that slaves had the ability to learn, think, and have emotions, thus elevating their status from chattel to human.\textsuperscript{22} The second important deterrent was the emergence of global industrialization. The mechanization of spinning and weaving increased the manufacturing demand for more cotton. This demand resulted in an increased need for slave labor to support the agrarian economy in the South and manufacturing economy in the North. Ironically, northern industrialization created a “plantation system” for the South. Wealthy planters knew that to allow slaves to be educated jeopardized the survival of their farms and plantations.\textsuperscript{23}

Thereafter rich planters not only thought it unwise to educate men thus destined to live on a plane with beasts, but considered it more profitable to work a slave to death during seven years and buy another in his stead than to teach and humanize him with a view to increasing his efficiency.\textsuperscript{24}

The education of slaves depended on the political influences of the times. Ideologies on the education of slaves were more liberal during periods when the value of slave labor declined; suppression of education was popular when the value of slaves and

\textsuperscript{20} Williams, \textit{Self Taught}, 7.
\textsuperscript{21} Irons, \textit{Jim Crow's Children}, 5.
\textsuperscript{22} Williams, \textit{Self Taught}, 7.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 7-8.
their labor were high. The political influence on the education of slaves fell into two distinct periods. The first period began when the first slaves arrived in the United States until the onset of the insurrectionary movement, circa 1835. During this period there was a positive response to the question of whether or not slaves should receive some type of education. The second period began with the industrial revolution which; along with insurrectionary movements that were fostered by the efforts of the educated and enlightened blacks, and abolitionists; changed the views of the previous period to one that did not support the education of slaves. The industrial revolution “changed slavery from a patriarchal to an economic institution.” Slavery became even more closely tied to the South’s economic health.

In the South, from approximately 1800-1825, there were two attitudes supporting the prohibition of educating blacks, 1) growth of industrialization which increased the need for more labor to produce cotton, and 2) slaveholders’ fear of an insurrection resulting from “intelligent Negroes” communicating the evils of slavery to other slaves, and reports of slave insurrections in other locales. In particular, the activities of Toussaint L’Ouverture along with the increase in the number of Haitians entering some of the colonies continued to stoke fears of slave insurrections.

However, massive insurrections such as those of L’Ouverture, were not the only concern of slave masters; there were also the small scale or individual acts of “resistance”

26 Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 2.
27 Ibid, 2.
28 Ibid, 2.
29 Ibid., 7-8.
that could disrupt the status quo. One such example of this type of resistance is the story of Ellen Turner and her daughter Mattie Jackson who were slaves in Missouri. Ellen Turner was married twice and had four children; two from each marriage. Both of Ellen’s husbands escaped to the North just prior to them being sold and transferred to another owner. After the escape of her first husband to Chicago, Ellen tried to flee with her two children but the burden of trying to escape with children led to her capture and she was returned to her master. Not only were slave women handicapped by fleeing with children, but their positions in slavery did not give them many opportunities to leave the plantation or understand the lay of the land. After four years she remarried only to have her second husband escape. But Ellen Turner and her daughter Mattie had a secret, not only did they use the typical means of eavesdropping on her master’s and mistress’ conversations which enabled them to understand important events surrounding the Civil War—they could read.30

Ellen used literacy, the ability to read the newspaper and other materials, as a “as a mechanism for destabilizing the master-slave relationship.”31 Since slave owners equated literacy as resistance, both Ellen Turner and Mattie Jackson used their literacy and access to information as methods to exert power over their master via a “domestic civil war” by questioning their owners’ authority and running away to Union camps for sanctuary.32 After several failed attempts, Mattie finally succeeded in connecting with the Underground Railroad and she eventually settled in Indiana. When she was twenty-one (1866), Mattie published her dictated narrative in an effort to fund not only her education, but also to help other emancipated slaves improve their lives by learning to read and

31 Ibid., 6-7.
32 Ibid., 10-12.
Controlling the slaves’ ability to communicate and access information was formalized via the introduction of Slave Codes which prohibited slaves from obtaining any semblance of literacy. These Codes were established to be repressive and maintain the slaves in a subordinate position. However the Slave Codes also attempted to eliminate any communication that might threaten the status quo, and especially any transmission of information on slave rebellions and the interference of outsiders, particularly correspondence, pamphlets and literature that were distributed by impudent Northerners.

South Carolina, a leader in the development of Slave Codes, instituted this legislation as early as 1686 and served as a model for the Codes in other colonies. These 1686 Codes encompassed a wide range of activities and behaviors. Slaves were forbidden from engaging in any type of trade, prevented from carrying any weapons without a permit, and forbidden from leaving the plantation without written permission. Masters feared that literate slaves would write bogus passes which would allow them to leave the plantation and/or assist with their escape. Slaves could also be legally searched and whipped by patrols if they were suspected of breaking the Codes or engaging in activities that would be dangerous to planters’ best interests. Obviously, literacy threatened the maintenance of slavery and the planters’ benefits from slavery.

After slave uprisings in Charleston (1720) and the Cato Conspiracy (1739), South

33 Ibid., 28-29.
35 Margaret Douglass, Educational Laws of Virginia: The Personal Narrative of Mrs. Margaret Douglass, a Southern Woman, Who Was Imprisoned for One Month in the Common Jail of Norfolk, under the Laws of Virginia, for the Crime of Teaching Free Colored Children to Read (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 21-22.
36 Williams, Self Taught, 22-23
Carolina revised its Codes. The Cato Conspiracy involved twenty armed slaves who were determined to destroy the institution of slavery and fostered an uprising that resulted in the death of thirty whites and forty-four blacks. Also in 1720, some of the slaves that were suspected of being involved in a revolt near Charleston were burned alive by whites; the others were banished from the area. The comprehensive revision of South Carolina’s Slave Codes, which were instituted prior to the Revolutionary War, was considered to be the most restrictive legislation in the colonies.\(^\text{38}\) The new Codes included legislation that prevented groups of seven or more slaves from congregating without being chaperoned by a white person and prevented slaves who were allowed to carry firearms to carry them from Sunday evening until Monday morning.\(^\text{39}\) In addition, these new Codes also contained the following language that made it illegal to engage any slave in the pursuit of literacy.

And whereas the having of Slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing may be attended with great Inconveniences; be it therefore enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all and every Person and Persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach, or cause any Slave or Slaves to be taught to write, or shall sue or employ any Slave as a Scribe in any manner of Writing whatsoever, …every such Person and Persons shall, for every such Offense, forfeit the sum of One Hundred Pounds current Money.\(^\text{40}\)

Georgia, adopted the South Carolina Codes, and like South Carolina, experienced the same pattern of explosive slave population growth – slaves consisted of over three-quarters of both states’ population. However, the adopted Codes did not necessarily reflect Georgia’s experience relative to the threat of slave rebellions; Georgia did not have a history of fearing resurrection and in fact had slaves enlisted into their militia.\(^\text{41}\)

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 12-13.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 13.
\(^{40}\) V.P Franklin, Black Self-Determination, xi
Notwithstanding the change in the laws to prohibiting the education of slaves, there were three classes of advocates who still supported the education of slaves. Supporters of teaching slaves were planters who felt that educating them would increase their efficiency; persons who were sympathetic to the plight of the oppressed slaves; and missionaries who believed in spreading “divine love” were intent on teaching the slaves the English language as a precursor to religious instruction.\(^{42}\)

Prior to the Civil War, the only states that allowed slaves to be educated were “Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee.”\(^{43}\) Nevertheless, a small percentage of slaves gained at least a modicum of literacy. In states that enforced Codes preventing the education of slaves, masters were the most frequently engaged vehicle for their mental advancement.\(^{44}\) However stringent the Codes were in denying slaves access to literacy, these laws were rarely enforced against Southern slave holders who taught their slaves in an effort to make them better workers or those who did so discretely.\(^{45}\)

Masters who understood the economic value of teaching slaves trained them to be proficient in almost all of the skills necessary for the building and maintaining their home, business, family, and other needs. Some slaves, although a minority of the population, were taught the basic rudiments of reading, writing and math which they used to keep records and assist in the oversight of the plantation. Some masters also thought it important to teach the slaves enough reading for them to be able to read the Bible in an effort to teach them the values of Christianity.\(^{46}\) The mistress of the house was a major

\(^{42}\) Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 2.
\(^{43}\) Irons, *Jim Crow’s Children*, 5.
\(^{44}\) Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 2-3.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., 13.
\(^{46}\) Irons, *Jim Crow’s Children*, 3-4.
source of religious literacy training on the plantation.47

Although both masters and slaves might have practiced the same religion, interpretations of the doctrines by slaves could lead to serious “moral challenges” of the institution. For example, one such slave, James Curry would sneak into the master’s library and read the Bible. During such readings he found that slavery was not God’s intent.48 Consequently, slaves generally thought of Christianity as liberating and therefore felt that to rebel against enslavement was righteous and acceptable in the eyes of God.49

Aside from the religious teachings of the slave-holding communities, many Christian sects were involved in the advocacy and promotion of the education of slaves. Most of the sects had conversion to Christianity as their major goal. The Church of England’s Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen in Foreign Parts sent missionaries to educate and proselytize to slaves.50 Some of those teachers were, in fact, slaves that were owned by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.51

The Spanish and French missionaries had perhaps the greatest influence and provided the example for the education of slaves in America. Catholics were originally proponents of not enslaving Native Americans, but providing them with an education. White Catholics did not object to the enslavement of blacks but eventually became interested in educating slaves as a means of fostering their enlightenment. The Spanish and French missionaries of the Catholic Church were advocates of the non-enslavement and education of the Indian population. Although advocates of the black enslavement, they were also interested in bringing the blacks into Catholicism. The Catholics did

47 Williams, *Self Taught*, 19
48 Ibid., 22-23.
49 V.P Franklin, *Black Self-Determination*, x. Forward by Mary Francis Berry.
provide education for the mixed heritage offspring of slaves, and provided them with the same education as those of the higher class. Similarly, the Anglican Church formally embraced educating slaves. The Anglican Bishop of London assisted colonists pursuing the education of slaves, against those who believed that it would lead to insurrection or freedom, by issuing the “abrogation of the law that a Christian could not be held as a slave.”

The education of slaves was even controversial amongst the two sects of Puritans; those who considered themselves liberal and those who were considered bigoted. The Liberal Puritans were convinced that slaves should receive instruction. In contrast, the sects that were considered to be bigoted not only saw the teaching of slaves as unnecessary, but also thought that slaves were undesirable persons and should not be included in their church.

By contrast, the Quakers were considered to be strong advocates for the education of slaves and even provided systematic efforts to educate the slave population. They were the first to grant slaves with the same privileges as whites within their sect when it came to education and religion. However while the Quakers were great advocates of the brotherhood of man, they did not always consider blacks to be their “social equals.” Nonetheless, their convictions regarding the Universal Brotherhood in Christ lead them to the belief that all men should be able to read the Bible. The Quakers established monthly meetings as well as schools for blacks. In the South where “instruction” of blacks was mostly restricted to rote memorization of the Bible, Quakers and Catholics

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52 Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 3.
53 Ibid., 3.
defied the law by teaching them how to read and write.\textsuperscript{56} The Quakers had been interested in the education of slaves since 1672 with a concentrated effort on teaching them the principles of Christianity. In 1693 the emphasis was on teaching and preparing those enslaved for emancipation. By 1713, Quakers had developed a plan to free the slaves and return them to Africa in the role of missionaries on that continent.\textsuperscript{57} Their beliefs and liberalism towards the black population was not always welcomed, particularly in the South. Southern slaveholders found the Quakers beliefs “subversive of the institutions of the aristocratic settlements.” In 1762 the Virginia slave holders enacted legislation that prohibited Quakers from including blacks in their meetings. In 1678, Virginia prevented anyone from forming a school that that had not “taken the oath of allegiance and supremacy;” taking oaths violated the Quakers’ religious creed. In North Carolina a law was enacted that prohibited anyone from teaching that did not obtain a “license from the Bishop of London.” Some of the slaves instructed by Quakers in this colony had been literate since 1731.\textsuperscript{58}

Regardless of the educational sentiments of the slave owners and society, slaves who were literate were recognized for their skills, but were not trusted by southerners. Yet, at the same time, slaves were stigmatized as not having the mental ability to be educated.\textsuperscript{59} Not only were slaves prohibited from obtaining a formal education, but the laws forbade the teaching of slaves by other blacks or whites. In many states the laws were expanded to make it illegal for slaves who were literate to teach their own

\textsuperscript{56} Woodson, \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861},10.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 43-46..
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, p. 10.
Contrary to the intent of the laws, education and literacy training became one of the most important objectives for African Americans. Slaves equated education with freedom and believed that obtaining an education would provide them with the knowledge to be free and full participating citizens in the colonies, and then later, the states. Slaves who were intent upon becoming literate would sacrifice being brutally punished and even losing their lives to learn.

Slaves used their wits and determination to become literate by using whatever method that was available. Some of the ways they received their “clandestine learning” was through the help of other slaves who were literate. In her narrative, Mattie Jackson explained how her mother learned to read, but admitted that her mother taught her at night in the house of her master. Others on the plantation would “steal” their education by obtaining books and bribing whites, especially children, to teach them. Bribery might include the trading of items, skills, food, and money in exchange for lessons. This tactic was utilized more by male slaves than females because their work more frequently required them to leave the plantation.

Sundays were also an opportune time for slaves to get together to learn when their masters left the plantation to attend Sunday services or visit other plantations. On Sundays, when slaves had a little free time, they would congregate and exchange knowledge. In 1845, Frederick Douglass, who at one time was a slave, and later an abolitionist, teacher and proponent for the education of slaves, wrote the following

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60 Ibid., 9.
63 Ibid., 20.
rational for his involvement in the teaching of slaves.

The work of instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed...These dear souls came not to Sabbath School because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged. Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was that the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the conditions of my race.64

The act of slaves interacting in groups became so menacing to slave owners in South Carolina that a law was passed instructing whites to bear arms and dispatch any blacks who were congregating.65 Therefore, slaves would sometimes meet secretly in the morning before the sun rose and their work began, and at night, after their work was done.66 There were also “pit schools” established in Mississippi where large holes were dug in the ground in the woods and covered with leaves and bushes where slaves would steal away at night to learn.67 Often it was the white mistresses and children who were instrumental in teaching slaves to read, as was the case of Frederick Douglass. White children were often asked questions about words and letters.68

One of the unsung heroes of advocating for and providing educational assistance to both enslaved and Freedmen were those blacks who enlisted in the Union Army. Although it was not President Abraham Lincoln’s intent to free blacks living in Southern slave-holding states, the potential threat of slaves being forced to serve in the Confederate army turned the tide. During the Civil War era, not only were slaves pursuing freedom, they were also aggressively seeking ways become literate and numerate. When slaves

64 V. P. Franklin, *Black Self-Determination*, 147.
67 Ibid., 20.
68 Ibid., 24-25.
were aware of Union troops in their vicinity, they would “petition for protection” and try
to gain asylum. By the third month of the war, in Virginia alone, there were over 900 ex-
slaves who were under the protection of the Union army at Fort Monroe. Fort Monroe
was considered as the “Freedom Fort” by blacks. However, the struggle to reach a Union
threshold was not always successful. Runaways faced the perils of being rejected,
returned to their masters or even killed by the Confederate Army during their flight.69

Male slaves typically sought sanctuary with the Union Army and as such were
used for their skills as “teamsters, blacksmiths and wheelwrights.” They also served as
builders and common laborers, and did the jobs that the white soldiers did not want.
Women who made it to the camp were employed as cooks and in the laundry. Whatever
their assignment, the ex-slaves were not only intent on maintaining their freedom, but
made it known their aspirations to obtain an education for their children and for
themselves.70

The great desire for literacy was not only apparent from their first flight to Fort
Monroe, but appeared in many camps and places where the ex-slaves established
themselves. The desire was so great that Colonel James Stowe, who was the brother of
Harriet Beecher Stowe,71 and his wife Frances Stowe set up a school in Jacksonville,
Florida to teach black soldiers to read. They noted that literacy was so important to the
soldiers that they carried their books with them and sought instruction whenever they
could. Not only were the camp newcomers seeking an education along with their
freedom, but many of the enlisted soldiers also sought literacy. Those soldiers who

69 Ibid., 32-34.
70 Ibid., 34.
71 Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) was born in Connecticut and was an abolitionist and a writer. Her
most famous novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1852, depicted the horrors of slavery through the lives of her
characters.
escaped from slavery and could read and write, like Elijah Marrs from Kentucky, were often thought of as leaders in their slave communities as well as by the black enlisted men, and were considered teachers for the enlisted black soldiers.  

Black soldiers not only felt that education would empower them within their respective communities but they also aided in establishing schools in the areas in which they served while enlisted. Some of the troops built schools for children and even went as far as providing contributions for funding educational institutions. Fisk and Wilberforce Universities were two of the recipients of contributions to keep them operating. The Sixty-Second and Sixty Third unit of the Colored Infantry contributed over six thousand dollars to Lincoln Institute, which is now known as Lincoln University.

In 1861, Union General Edward L. Pierce was transferred to the Sea Islands in South Carolina. While stationed there he observed a school of approximately 16 black students being taught by a white missionary and three black teachers. He petitioned religious societies in the North to send more teachers. But these were not the only places where schools existed. In June 1863, the Freedmen’s Commission stated that there were ex-slaves in various areas of the South who had established schools to teach both adults and children. The Commission also noted that once slaves were freed, one of their top priorities was to establish schools – which they built and financially supported.

When the tide turned in the Southern states against the education of blacks, many, enslaved and free, fled to communities in the Northwest and Northeast through the

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73 Ibid., 56-58.
74 Ibid., 35.
75 Ibid., 36.
assistance and support of the abolitionists and southern sympathizers.\textsuperscript{76} Unfortunately, the migration of fugitive slaves and Free People of Color to these areas left those who remained in the south in an even more vulnerable position. It was the “most enlightened” blacks who left the South, thereby draining the resources of those who could assist in the educational process.\textsuperscript{77} Slaves wanted to reach territories where slavery did not exist. Freedmen were also seeking a place of sanctuary where they could live in free communities with less oppression. The Legion of Liberty’s “moral map of US” in 1847,\textsuperscript{78} illustrated both the slave and free colonies. The Northwest Free States were listed as Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio; the Eastern states were Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Main, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Jersey – New Jersey did not totally abolish slavery until 1863. These colonies were also stops on the Underground Railroad.\textsuperscript{79} Between the years of 1815 and 1850 many blacks settled in “Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Greenwich, New Jersey; and Boston, Massachusetts.”\textsuperscript{80}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{76} Woodson, \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861}, 230.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 7-8.
\textsuperscript{79} The Underground Railroad was the term used for established routes and safe houses for slaves escaping to the free colonies and Canada.
\end{flushleft}
Education of Slaves in the North

Slavery, the Slave Codes and the reactionary period were not merely Southern phenomena. Historically, New Englanders supported the institution of slavery, but since the growth of slavery within their colonies grew at a much slower rate, their interest was not so much the aspect of labor, but geared more towards the economic advantages of selling slaves to other colonies. In the 1700s, there were only 1,000 slaves out of a total population of 90,000 in those colonies. By 1774, Rhode Island, which was the biggest slave holder in New England, had 3,761 slaves out of a total population of 54,435. However, the relatively small slave population did not prevent their legislators from instituting codes that limited the rights of slaves in individual colonies. In 1670, Massachusetts enacted laws that permitted the selling of children born to slaves. In 1680,

Massachusetts passed laws that not only restricted blacks from enlisting in the military but also restricted their movement within the state without a pass; Connecticut also had the same restrictions.\(^\text{82}\)

Unfortunately, I was unable to locate any information on the education of slaves in the north. This may be due to the small number of slaves in those areas compared to the multitudes in the south. This is a topic that would benefit from further historical study.

Education of Freedmen

In 1790, there were 757,881 blacks residing in the United States, and of those 59,557 were not enslaved and were classified as free people of color or Freedmen.\(^\text{83}\) Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, almost one-seventh or “a half million” blacks, in this country were considered to be free.\(^\text{84}\)

In his book *Free Negro Owners of Slaves*, Woodson used the 1830 Census in his calculations of the number of Freedmen because he felt that free blacks had reached their zenith as a “distinct class.” Woodson explains in his book that there were blacks that owned slaves, although the numbers were miniscule compared to whites. Most of the ownerships were “philanthropic” in nature, and many of the ownerships were the result of the purchase of relatives, spouses and/or children who had been in bondage. Once purchased, if the slave was not emancipated, they still held the distinction of being a slave. Of course there were some blacks who purchased slaves as a means of labor, but

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\(^{84}\) Morgan, *Historical Perspectives on the Education of Black Children*, 3.
most eventually emancipated them. These slave-owning blacks held the same “social standing” as white slaveholders and often had the advantages of participating in the same activities. However by the next decade, 1840, the status of the Free Negro in the North and South was reduced to one of degradation even in those slave states that had previously been considered benevolent.

The statistics on the number of Free People of Color in 1850 and 1860 indicate that a small percentage of that population attended school. In 1850, the population of blacks who were ‘free’ was 423,245, and of those 25,990 attended school. In 1860, out of a population of 481,674 that number increased to 28,269, which equals an increase of 2,279 students. An interesting point is the number of females attending schools. In 1850 there were 1,350 more males attending than females; ten years later a reported 3,274 more females were in attendance than males. In 1850, the number of adults that were unable to read was 84,298, in 1860 that number also increased by 2,516 to 86,814.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>423,245</td>
<td>13,586</td>
<td>12,236</td>
<td>25,990</td>
<td>39,610</td>
<td>47,685</td>
<td>84,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>481,674</td>
<td>16,278</td>
<td>19,552</td>
<td>28,269</td>
<td>42,279</td>
<td>54,759</td>
<td>86,814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Statistics of the Free Black Population in 1850 and 1860

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86 Ibid. pp. v-viii
88 Ibid., 240.
Education of African Americans in South Jersey

Education of Freedmen in the South

In South Carolina and Virginia, some blacks were not only free, but owned property and thus were considered to be wealthy. And reportedly, a “considerable number” of free Negroes owned large plantations and were owners of slaves. Wealthy free people of color sent their children to either church or private school, which were supported by well-to-do blacks located in such cities as “New Orleans, Mobile, and Charleston.” There were some wealthy black families who were able to enroll their children in white schools. Other options included sending their children to schools that were located outside of the Southern realm. Those few public schools established in the South were primarily for white children. In 1838, Virginia went so far as to enact a law that prohibited the return to that state any blacks educated in the North.

Education of Freedmen in the North

There were far more educated blacks living in the North than in the South. By 1840, most blacks who had received an education lived in Northern communities. The education provided was primarily in churches and elementary schools. However their education was often attained through the sacrifice of those who sought and participated in the enlightenment of Free People of Color.

After 1760, with the new interest in a “social doctrine” of liberty, some colonists,

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92 Woodson *Free Negro Owners of Slaves*, v-viii.
94 Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 232.
95 Ibid., 15.
96Ibid., 23.
like Patrick Henry who fought for liberty from the British, felt that slaves “were entitled at least to freedom of body.” This resulted in acts of manumission and emancipation, which created a population of freed people who needed an education on the “duties of citizenship.” Religious organizations aided in the development of educational facilities and curriculum for the Freedmen. The Baptists and Methodists were “co-laborers” in the movement to create churches, missions and school. The education of blacks netted positive results and they became better workers and demonstrated promise in the management and administration of some of the plantations as a “stepping-stone to higher attainments.” Appreciating the rewards that could be netted through education, schools were established for Freedmen that would provide the ‘perceived’ necessary and relevant curriculum. This new education was no longer just religious, but provided them with practical and cultural education consisting of industrial arts, literature, math, and science. Girls who were interested in being seamstresses were also encouraged to take classes in French.

From 1800-1835, the North, like the South, was involved in a reactionary political period marking a very tumultuous time for race relations. The mass migration of blacks to the Northeast and Northwest generated fear in the white communities in which blacks settled. In some areas, the reaction to the migration led to anti-abolitionist riots. In Philadelphia a white mob drove blacks away from a Fourth of July Festival. In the 1830’s and 1840’s black-owned homes, churches and establishments were destroyed by rioting whites in Philadelphia, “New York, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Providence”

\[97\] Ibid., 5-6.
\[98\] Ibid., 6-7.
\[99\] Ibid., 10-11
\[100\] To Make Our World Anew: Volume I: A History of African Americans to 1880, ed. Robin D.G. Kelley,
The educational restrictions on blacks were not as great as in the South and many blacks did have opportunities to learn to read and write. Nevertheless, there were also roadblocks in some attempts to provide such schooling. The backlash against blacks and abolitionists reduced financial support for schools for slaves and Free People of Color, prevented them from opening schools, and many of their existing schools were burned or closed. The impact was so great that even those who were engaged in the teaching of blacks were removed from their positions.

Bigotry and violence were not just directed towards schools owned and operated by blacks for black children. White schools that enrolled black children were subjected to violent white mobs intent on preventing their education. In New Hampshire, Noyes Academy enrolled black students until a mob with “a hundred yoke of oxen” ran the teacher out of town and dragged the seminary into a swamp. In 1835, schools located in Washington, D.C. were attacked; at one of the school, a white teacher continued teaching until the Civil war began; her school was destroyed by fire. In Canterbury, Connecticut a female teacher named Prudence Crandell admitted to her school the daughter of a “respected black farmer.” The townspeople objected to the education of black females and passed a resolution prohibiting their education based on their belief that blacks were inferior to whites. Crandall insisted on keeping the child in school; as a result the “white residents refused to trade with Miss Crandall, threw filth into her well, hurled rocks and rotten eggs at her home, and set fire to her schoolhouse.” Miss Crandall reacted by enrolling even more black females into her school. The town then passed a

101 Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, 10-11.
102 Ibid., 10-11.
103 Irons, Jim Crow’s Children, 6.
104 Ibid., 5.
legislation prohibiting the teaching of white and black children together and eventually
Miss Crandall was jailed for her actions. When the Connecticut Supreme Court
overturned her indictment, she returned to teaching both black and white students.
However, in 1834 she closed her schoolhouse to protect the children after a mob attacked
the school again.\textsuperscript{105}

Eventually, the Northern states did provide for the education of blacks, but
challenges remained. Initially, the school systems that were established were segregated
in an attempt to attend to the perceived special needs of slaves and Freedmen.\textsuperscript{106} Black
abolitionists were instrumental in the fight against segregated public school systems. In
towns in Massachusetts and New York black abolitionist had blacks boycott the
segregationist schools; this was done with influential white support.\textsuperscript{107} Philanthropists
and ‘friends’ of black people who provided what they called “practical education” which
first attempts consisted of classical and vocational training. The abolitionists eventually
advocated for blacks to attend the state-supported public schools, for which blacks were
being taxed but not allowed to attend. Although New England was one of the first
colonies to support integrated education, segregated schools existed in the North long
after the Civil War.”\textsuperscript{108}

Lastly, there was one form of education that was used by officials of local or state
governments that was feared by free parents in both the North and the South. If officials
thought that a family was not able to or was unfit to care for their children, they were
removed from the home and placed in an apprenticeship. This apprenticeship service

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 5-6.
\textsuperscript{106} Carter G. Woodson, \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861}, 15-17 & 307-335.
\textsuperscript{107} Blight, \textit{Passages to Freedom} 84-85.
\textsuperscript{108} Woodson, \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861}, 16-17.
could last twenty years for black children. In Philadelphia, an apprenticeship for a black child could last up to twenty-eight years. Even with the long years of service in apprenticeships, black children did not receive the same quality of education as white children.\textsuperscript{109}

Education of Freedmen in the Northwest

Many Freedmen migrated to the North and Northwest in their quest for a better life and an education for their children.\textsuperscript{110} However, there are very few sources on what type of education, if any, was generally available in the American Northwest prior to the end of the Civil War. Although the Northwest, the Ordinance of 1787 had outlawed slavery in the Territory, blacks who had migrated from the south to the Northwest did not find what they had envisioned as a place free from bigotry and discrimination. In fact, the threat of competition for skilled jobs created a backlash against the influx of blacks by the white settlers.\textsuperscript{111} The Northwest Territories, like the colonies, also developed and enforced Codes that were restrictive. Blacks had to register for a “certificate of freedom” and pay a five hundred to a thousand dollar bond to ensure that they did not become a burden to the territory or cause a disturbance of the peace, and suffered the indignity of disenfranchisement.\textsuperscript{112} Whites in “Illinois, Indiana, and Oregon”\textsuperscript{113} sympathized with the South and denied blacks the rights to migrate into those territories; they also returned runaway slaves to their slave owners.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 275.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{113} Kelley and Lewis, \textit{To Make Our World Anew: Volume I}, 205.
\textsuperscript{114} Dodson and Dioue, \textit{In Motion}, 41.
Summary

Prior to the Civil War, the education of blacks – both slave and free – was fraught with conflict. To become literate or educated was equated with ‘privilege’ and that privilege was denied. Education during those times was equated with ‘power’; slaves, by virtue of their status, had no power over their lives.

Regardless of the educational aspirations of slaves, the reality was that their education was driven by political and economic forces that benefited the white economic power base. Slavery in the colonies and then the United States was contingent upon slaves’ ability to support and maintain the economic power of their masters. For slave holders, the education of slaves was not only viewed as unnecessary, but also viewed as a dangerous loss of power and control – and eventually the disruption of the status quo. To maintain the system of slavery, those who were enslaved were kept ignorant of any means that would enable them to effectively communicate amongst themselves or with others intent on destroying the institution of slavery.

With their economic dominance in mind, elite whites enacted Slave Code as a means of discouraging anyone, slave or free, from educating slaves. While the teaching of slaves could result in serious monetary repercussions for whites, for slaves the penalty for literacy could result in beatings, mutilations or death.

However, the desire for education as a strategy for freedom was so strong that the pursuit of literacy overshadowed the legally established punishments. Slaves used every clandestine measure to “steal” learning. Slaves sought the aid of others through the

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115 Williams, Self Taught, 4.
116 V.P. Franklin, Black Self-Determination), 7-8.
117 Irons, Jim Crow’s Children, 1-2.
118 Williams, Self Taught, 20
playing of games, bartering for learning, exchanging information and developing secret
schools. They also obtained lessons from sympathetic white masters, mistresses, and religious organizations. During the Civil War, slaves not only found sanctuary by fleeing to the Union Army for sanctuary, they were able to secure schooling through the aid of officers and black enlisted men. Blacks who were enlisted in the Union Army were not only instrumental in teaching each other, but they also built and financed schools for blacks within the communities where they were stationed.

In the North, slavery was also tied to the economy. In New England, where the growth of slavery was relatively slow, the importation of black slaves was critical for the financial viability of its economy. With the influx of runaway slaves and migrating Freedmen, the north began to control what they considered as a social and political threat by instituting their own set of Codes. White northerners also attacked black establishments, churches, homes and schools; and, enacted laws that forbade the opening of new schools, and restricted the teaching of blacks – enslaved or free. In time, some Northern states did establish segregated schools that provided blacks with a classical and vocational education.

Regardless of the Codes, violence, and obstacles prohibiting Free People of Color from getting an education, they pursued their dreams. The most educated blacks lived in the North and were taught in churches and elementary schools. 

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119 Ibid., 24-25.
120 Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, 2-3.
121 Williams, Self Taught, 24-25.
122 Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, 18-50.
123 Williams, Self Taught, 32-34.
125 Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, 10-11.
126 Ibid., 16-17.
127 Williams, Self Taught, 15.
colonies then states, free blacks sent their children to church schools or, if wealthy, to privately own black schools located within and outside of the South.\textsuperscript{128} It was the struggle and advocacy for education by the Freedmen that helped shape the concept of public education.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{128} Simpkins and Roland, \textit{A History of the South}, 1.
\textsuperscript{129} Williams, \textit{Self Taught}, 6.
CHAPTER IV
EDUCATION OF BLACKS AND FREEDMEN - POST CIVIL WAR

Even after the Civil War had ended, strong undercurrents of conflict persisted. At the root of this conflict, as with all conflicts, were power and the development of a new social order. The wealthy land-owning southerners were trying to heal from the ravages of war, rebuild their economy and re-establish their caste system. Poor white southerners were insecure as to their place in the new social order now that blacks were free to compete in the labor force. Wealthy northerners, who had benefitted economically from the victory over the south, were positioning themselves to maintain their powerful economic and political position, and push forward their industrialization agenda and industrial social order. At the foundation of this power pyramid were the Freedmen, who played a pivotal part in the success of the economy for southern landowners and northern industrialists. But the Freedmen also had a vision of how they wanted to obtain the power to control their own lives and improve their status in the emerging social order. Confusion, conflicts, concepts of power, and social and economic agendas heightened the tension in this post war era.

Education was an important factor in defining the social order and the newly ‘re-united’ country. Northern industrialist whites and philanthropists advocated and developed common school systems that provided a source of unskilled and semi-skilled literate laborers for their workforce. Their solution for the Freedmen consisted of educational facilities for industrial and manual training instruction. Freedmen also advocated for a common or public school system to provide education for all children. They felt that education would assist with individual development, racial uplift, and
provide them with the skills that would enable them to be informed citizens. For Freedmen the question was ‘what type of education would be best suited to meet their needs’ – W.E.B. DuBois’ ideology for a classical education or Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of industrial and manual training?

By contrast, white southerners objected to a common education. Wealthy southerners were threatened by the concept of a common education; they felt that the education of the masses would threaten the old southern caste system, deplete their supply of cheap and illiterate laborers, and destroy their economy. Poor whites, who depended on employment from wealthy whites, had no options but to support their employers.

Within all this conflict, the Freedmen were still determined to develop an educational system for their children. Freedmen had more access to schooling in the North and Northwest Territories than in the South. Through their own efforts as well as those provided by outside sources, a variety of schools became available in many different forms with different types of curriculum; and in almost all cases these schools were segregated by race. Freedmen also developed other educational support via newspapers and magazines to keep them abreast of the information and knowledge they needed to progress in their freedom and to elevate their caste status.

The Politics of Reconstruction

Although the Civil war began as a war intent on saving the union, blacks knew that they would be set free if the north won the war. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in 1863; yet in 1865 blacks still remained enslaved.¹ Those slaves who

¹ To Make Our World Anew: Volume I: A History of African Americans to 1880, ed. Robin D.G. Kelley and
were emancipated only briefly reaped the rewards of citizenship during the late 1860s and 1870s. During these two decades the Freedmen were navigating and adjusting to working for their wages in a capitalistic society and a government that was based on Republican leadership. By the end of the 1870s, whatever political gains Southern blacks thought they had established during the Reconstruction Period were quickly dissolved through the enactment of Jim Crow laws. These laws, while not legally stripping them of their status as citizens, retracted any rights associated with citizenship. Blacks were again trapped within a system that kept them politically disenfranchised and economically tied to the agricultural economy of the South.²

Following the conclusion of the Civil War there were two Reconstruction Periods – Congressional and Presidential. President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865 and died the next day; his Vice President, Andrew Johnson became president. Andrew Johnson’s vice presidency was the result of a compromise thanks to his southern roots and his ability to “appease” the non-rebellious slave holders in the south. Johnson had no interest in the ‘rights’ of the Freedmen and felt that they should be controlled by whites. His Presidential Reconstruction (1865 – 1867) included a proposal that the former Confederates take a loyalty oath to the Union, and that Southern state constitutions be rewritten to recognize the end of slavery. The requirements of the Presidential Reconstruction were far more palatable than those that followed in the Congressional version of Reconstruction Legislation. White legislators acquiesced to Johnson’s terms but also included legislation known as the Black Codes. These Black Codes denied the Freedman many of their Civil Rights. Johnson also vetoed the funding of the Bureau of

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Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (i.e., the “Freedmen’s Bureau”).

Congress opposed President Johnson’s stances relative to the rights of the new Freedmen, and overturned many his proposals. Under the Congressional Reconstruction (1867-1869), Congress enacted the 13th, 14th, and 14th Amendments. These Constitutional Amendments abolished slavery, and gave Freedmen the rights of Citizenship and the males the right to vote. However, the Southern whites were busily regaining their political power within their respective states and instituting the restrictive Black Codes. These codes included vagrancy laws, extensive and repressive labor contracts and child apprenticeship rules and voter disfranchisement. Blacks were also captives in the immoral schemes of powerful white landowners to re-establish the caste system of the ‘Old South’ – even if it meant manipulating the justice system to reinvent a new type of calculated slavery via contract prison labor.

The traditional protections of slavery were gone. In a perverse way, emancipation had made the black population more vulnerable than before. It now faced threats from two directions: white mobs and white courts. Like the Ku Klux Klan, the criminal justice system would become a dragnet for the Negro. The local jails and state prisons would grow darker by the year. And a new American gulag, known as convict leasing, would soon disgrace Mississippi, and the larger South, for decades to come.

Blacks could now be arrested and placed in a “state prison or county jail” for minor or imaginary offenses. Black prisoners were contracted out to do hard labor referred to as “nigger work.” Black convicts would work in cotton fields, build roads and levies, clear swampland, plow fields and to do any other types of labor intensive work. Their labor was not only necessary in the rebuilding of the “new south,” but it was a very profitable

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4 Ibid., 243-244.
5 Ibid., 240-247.
Throughout this era, blacks held firm to their beliefs that education was key to their survival as Freedmen and would help to guarantee that they retained the rights inherent in their role as citizens. Education was seen as a means of independence, awareness, and the ability to accomplish practical needs and tasks. More important than their own education was their desire for their children to become educated as a means of upward mobility. But the path to obtaining educational facilities, as before their emancipation, was not always smooth and sometimes their efforts were resisted or depended on the needs, desires and agendas of those in power.  

Reconstruction and Industrialization

While the South was trying to heal itself from the weight of the aftermath of the Civil War, the Northern industrialists took this opportunity to position themselves as the dominant economic and political power. Many Northern capitalists had become wealthy thanks to slavery; and with their victory over the South in the Civil War, they intended to increase that wealth. The Northern industrialists found their niche market in the expansion of the “oil, steel, textile, and railroad industries.” As the industrialists of the North became richer and more powerful, they knew they had to address the issue of what to do with the millions of Freedmen; their options consisted of “isolation, deportation, or integration.” They chose the act of Reconstruction as the method of retaining their dominance over the South while not upsetting the social structure. 

Northern industrialists turned their attention to providing mass education that

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7 Ibid., 36-37.
8 Ibid., 271-280.
would include blacks. Prior to Reconstruction, there were campaigns to develop some type of system of “mass education” for children between 1830 and 1860; and by the end of Reconstruction most states had a public education system for “free” children. This concept of mass education was not supported by many of the South’s elite white planters who felt that the state had no right to decide on children’s education and that universal education threatened the “social hierarchy,” economy, their rights as employers, and the authority of the church. However, for the Freedmen, education remained a priority and through their efforts, with the aid of the Republican Party, the foundation for universal education was laid. Freedmen used all means available to secure educational resources to benefit their community. Some of the resources came from government assistance, charitable and philanthropic organizations and social groups, as well as the economic support and ideology of the black community.

Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (more commonly referred to as the Freedmen’s Bureau) was responsible for establishing “hundreds of schools” in the South for the education of Freedmen. The focus of the Bureau was twofold – the development of local common schools for blacks and the development of institutions that would provide a higher education. In addition, the Freedmen’s Bureau, along with some of the Northern missionary societies sponsored some of the Sabbath Schools, and provided evening classes for Freedmen who could not attend classes during

11 Anderson, 1-5.
12 V.P Franklin, Black Self-Determination, 165.
13 Skeels, The Freedmen's Bureau: A Chapter in the History of Reconstruction, 84-86.
However, General Oliver O. Howard, commissioner of the Bureau, on investigating the educational situation of the Freedmen in the South reported that schools already existed within the some of the Freedmen communities. These schools were described as day schools for children, night schools for older children and adults, industrial schools, and Sunday Schools for basic education and religious enlightenment. Some of these schools were developed and sustained by blacks; most of the schools were the product of northern philanthropic organizations. General Howard’s report confirmed that the government did not directly fund these schools, but that the Freedmen’s Bureau appropriated proceeds derived from the rental of abandoned buildings to assist in educational endeavors, and permitted unused government military buildings to be used for schools. However, the Freedmen’s Bureau’s “most substantial and permanently beneficial service” to the education of the Freedmen was its work with philanthropists to establish institutions of higher education. According to General Howards report, the following normal schools had been established; and many of these colleges and universities are still

16 Ibid., 84-86.
Education of African Americans in South Jersey

in existence.17

…the National Theological Institute, Howard University, St. Marin’s School, and Miss M.R. Mann’s school in Washington; Richmond Normal and High School, and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia; St. Augustine’s Normal School and Biddle Memorial Institute, in North Carolina; South Carolina High and Normal Schools, in South Carolina; Atlanta University in Georgia; Alabama High and Normal Schools, in Alabama; Wesleyan College, Fiske University, Roberts College, and Maysville College, in Tennessee; Berea College, Kentucky; Wilberforce University, in Ohio; Quindaro High School, in Kansas; Storer College, in West Virginia; St. Bridget’s Parochial School, Lincoln University, Avery College, and the Institute for Colored Youth, in Pennsylvania.18

By 1869, its goal of having a normal school in each state was reported to have been achieved. The main purpose of these schools was to train and prepare teachers to work in the black schools.19

Philanthropic Efforts

Corporate philanthropy was instrumental in the development of the new order and education. The ideology of these philanthropic organizations was to insure that the Southern White elites kept their status and were supported in their efforts through “social engineering.”20 By the early 1880’s the Southern faction of the industrialist movement, unlike the traditional planters who were still opposed to the promotion of literacy, supported universal education for both blacks and whites. The Southern industrialists wanted to establish a skilled labor force that would promote a “socialization process.” This process would instill the values of the “southern racial hierarchy” in both black and white children. Thomas Muldrop Logan, a Southern industrialist who had been a general

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17 Ibid., 84-86.
18 Ibid., 78.
19 Ibid., 77-78.
in the Confederate Army, testified before one of the subcommittees of the United States Senate Committee on Education that education of blacks should train them “to perform, efficiently, their part in social economy, this caste allotment of social duties might prove advantageous to southern society, as a whole, on the principle of division of labor applied to races.”

In the 1880’s, “Race Philanthropy” was the answer to providing education for blacks. These philanthropic organizations financed the building schools and the training of teachers. The focus was to provide educational institutions that would provide an “accommodationism,” (more commonly referred to as “accommodationist”) ideology and curriculum that would make blacks more acquiescent to their prescribed station in life.

Two of the major proponents and architects in the establishment of the accommodationist system of education were Samuel Chapman and his student, Booker T. Washington. Armstrong founded the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1868 as a means of redirecting the educational design of the Freedmen to better suit the needs of the southern dominant-class whites through “social change without changing society.” Those who opposed the concept of an accommodationist education claimed that it continued the old regime of promoting a caste system for blacks that kept them “…socially isolated, provided limited occupational choice,” and “reinforced in their obedience to caste rules.” This educational focus shaped the social policy and curriculum for decades to

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22 Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 6-23
23 Ibid., 19
24 Ibid., 44-45.
Whether private, corporate, or social, the objective of these philanthropic foundations was to support the larger capitalist society and used education as their instrument. From 1921 to 1930, 43% of donated money was earmarked for education. Education continued to be seen as the vehicle to establish a “social ideology.” The philanthropists were intent on creating a society that was starkly divided by wealth. This included the political socialization of blacks, as well as developing a black middle class comprised of “entrepreneurs, clergy, clerks, and teachers” along with a lower class of laborers like sharecroppers. By the 1920’s, a coalition of white school reformers and philanthropic organizations aimed to created an industrial educational system that would “train black children as a docile, industrial cast of unskilled and semiskilled urban workers” to support this industrial vision.

From 1920 to 1930, the rural south was in the midst of an “economic depression.” Beginning in 1916 and continuing through the Great Depression in 1929, southern blacks were migrating from the rural to the urban areas of the south and to the north to escape the continuing “social and political oppression,” a failing southern economy, and the lack of schools for their children. The black flight from the southern rural areas resulted in a devastating decline in the agricultural labor force. As a result, the southern urban areas became overwhelmed by the numbers of black children entering the public schools system. Because of the economic depression, once these students completed grammar school they had could not be absorbed into the workforce and there were only a few secondary schools for them to attend. In 1915, there were only 21 public high schools for

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28 Ibid., 21-22.
blacks in the south; by 1925 that number had increased to 143. In 1925, the “General
Education Board, the Jeanes Fund, the Slater Fund and the Rosenwald Fund” met to
discuss the development of high schools for blacks. These Philanthropic organizations
participated in the design, funding, and building of black schools throughout the south. 30
The curriculum at these schools, and others throughout the south, stressed industrial
education in an effort to provide schooling that would train black children for
occupations deemed acceptable by the “repressive social order.” 31

Educational Efforts of Freedmen in the South.

Although the major motivation for black education began in the Freedmen’s
communities, the evolution of the educational systems were also influenced, as in the
slavery era, by the political, social, and economic agendas of people and institutions who
had their own vested interests. 32 While the education of slaves had always been tied to the
economic and social trends in the United States, there were a small percentage who were
literate; a task usually taken with great risks. After the Emancipation Proclamation,
Freedmen briefly took a dominant role in establishing educational systems that would
meet their perceived needs.

Regardless of the obstacles in their search for education, blacks were the first
Southerners to campaign for “universal, state-supported public education.” The desire for
education began during slavery and increased dramatically during the Post Civil War Era.
During slavery, slaves admired and held in high esteem those blacks who were literate,
and begrudged the fact that their learning to read and write had been denied. Once free, it

30 Ibid., 203-208.
31 Ibid., 228.
was imperative to them that they not only had access to schooling, but that they had the ability to financially support and control their own schools for their children. While they were willing to accept financial assistance from the Freedmen’s Bureau, missionaries and philanthropic organizations, they were not willing to relinquish control over their own children’s education. Their desire, campaign and struggle for education continued to challenge the southern whites in power’s reluctance to establish any type of public education for any of its citizens – white or black.

In 1866, John W. Alvord, the Freedmen’s Bureau’s national superintendent, reported that blacks had over 500 established schools and were engaged in the practice of “self-teaching” and the development of “native schools” which were common schools developed and maintained solely by blacks. Furthermore, most of the ‘teachers’ had just learned to read and write themselves and were sharing what they had learned with others. In Louisiana, existing black schools were taken over by the Freedmen’s Bureau, but when the funding was cut, impoverished Freemen offered to pay the Bureau themselves to keep the schools operational. When that effort failed, the Freedmen took over the schools and converted them into free locally-controlled schools. In 1864, Georgia black leaders met with Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War, and General William Sherman to discuss support for black schools. A year later these African American leaders had developed the Georgia Educational Association to oversee schools in all the districts in the state. By 1866, the Association owned 57 of the school buildings, fully or partially financed “96 of the 123 day and evening schools”, and sustained over two-thirds of black schools. Blacks were using any and all resources and creative skills to implement school
systems within their communities.\textsuperscript{33} 

Education for the Freedmen was perceived as the route to permanent freedom. Their “basic form, philosophy, and subject matter” was purposely chosen to insure that they had the necessary skills to be able to have some control over their lives and livelihood.\textsuperscript{34} Being able to read would give them the power to read contracts and election ballots and not depend on others interpretations or directions. In some areas they negotiated schooling into labor contracts with planters.\textsuperscript{35} 

During Reconstruction, black politicians continued to gain support by using their political prowess to initiate discussions and obtain legislation for universal public education. Their role in establishing universal public education as a “basic right” and getting legislation included in the Constitutions in the southern states. By 1870, five years from the Freedmen’s initial campaign for universal public education, a provision for state funded public schools was included in every southern state’s constitution.\textsuperscript{36} 

Nevertheless, white planters insured that the black public school system was developed in a manner that suited their political and economic needs – not the needs of black people. During the turn of the twentieth century, it was not a loss of interest by blacks in obtaining an education that prevented their children from attending school; rather it was a lack of educational facilities. This in turn, fulfilled the planters’ needs of keeping a continuous supply of cheap labor by preventing children from acquiring an education.\textsuperscript{37} The percentages of black children attending school at the turn of the twentieth century was relatively low; only 36% of black children attended school. In the

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 6-18. 
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 5. 
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 18 
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 18-19 
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 150-151.
age category of five to nine, 22% of black children compared to 37% of white children attended school; from ages ten to fourteen the numbers increased to 52% and 76% respectively. For those who attended schools, 86% attended less than six months per year.  

The migration of blacks from rural areas to cities between 1911 and 1914 was instrumental in the second crusade for universal education system for blacks. This migration reduced the number of children who were agricultural laborers from 50% in 1910 to 16.1% by 1930. In an effort to keep the blacks from migrating from the rural areas to Southern cities, as well as to the North, the southern white land owners “reconsidered” the need for black schools, and in 1917, the United States Department of Labor recommended that the educational system for blacks receive more support.  

However, blacks were not interested in establishing and maintaining an educational system supporting the existing caste system or an oppressed labor force. Their agenda included the view that the new Freedman had to play an active part in the developing any education that helped them to partake in their duties as full citizens. Freedmen and religious leaders who had any influence in the development of the common schools saw education as the vehicle that would allow blacks to understand what was required to participate and better their standing in the new social order. They did not feel that education would necessarily change the Southern stance on racial relations or equality, but if that were to happen, it would be through their own efforts to educate themselves on their responsibilities in this democracy.

To accomplish these educational objectives, blacks emphasized leadership
training. The coursework was patterned after the “New England classical liberal curriculum” and was taught throughout all levels – elementary and normal schools, and college.41

Students in elementary schools received instruction in reading, spelling, writing, grammar, diction, history, geography, arithmetic, and music. Normal school students took this standard English curriculum with additional courses in orthography, map drawing, physiology, algebra, and geometry, as well as the theory and practice of teaching. The college curriculum varied slightly among institutions, but the classical course leading to the B.A. usually required Latin, Greek, mathematics, science, philosophy, and in a few cases, one modern language.42

In 1911, the Atlanta University Conference on Negro Problems reported that blacks were “making heroic efforts” to repair a system of education that they thought was inadequate. The Conference concluded that regardless if the school was supported by private donations, self-supported or funded by philanthropic organizations, all levels of the education and training was “helpful but incomplete.” They also reported that while southern blacks were taxed to pay for white schools, they did not receive their fair share of money to establish schools for their own children.43 The Conference recommended that national funding was necessary for black schools in the South; with provisions that guaranteed that black children were treated fairly.44

Blacks were pursuing an educational system that consisted of several different philosophies of learning; two of which were Classical and Industrial. Schooling, when available, took on many formats that would allow learning, and included Sabbath Schools, public/common schools, industrial schools, and county schools. Booker T.

41 Ibid., 29.
42 Ibid., 29.
43 V.P Franklin, Black Self-Determination, 174-75.
44 Ibid., 174-75.
Washington was quoted as saying,

Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for education. It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn.  

Philosophical Educational Dilemma

Two influential and distinctly different schools of thought spearheaded the educational movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. While both had, as their primary interest, the survival of the Black race in the United States, their backgrounds and philosophy on how education might best support that goal were distinctly different.

Booker T. Washington, the son of a slave and an unknown white father, was born in Virginia in 1856. He entered Hampton Institute on October 5, 1872 and graduated on June 10, 1875. As a student, he was under the tutelage of its founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong an ex-union general and a former missionary. Washington, as the founder of Tuskegee Institute, modeled the curriculum that was offered at Hampton which was steeped in industrial education. The curriculum was based on the “Tuskegee Idea” which proposed that the involvement of blacks in “politics, protest, or higher learning” was not the route that would enable blacks to survive in the south. With four –fifths of the South’s black population living in rural areas, their livelihood depended on the economy of the white power structure. Therefore, in an effort to improve the lives of the most people, he

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46 Fairclough, 45-46.

offered a schooling that included skill development and manual labor. Washington felt that the training of industrial education teachers would provide the leadership necessary to provide the basic education needed for economic cooperation and stability, and race survival.\textsuperscript{48} Washington used industrial education to teach blacks how to be industrious. To reinforce this character-building mission, both Hampton and later Tuskegee Institute subjected students to strict rules and military-style discipline. Washington held the position of “the most powerful black leader in America” from 1895 until his death in 1915.\textsuperscript{49}

W.E.B. Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in a community where there were very few black families and he was the only black student in his public high school. He later attended Fisk University for his Bachelor’s degree, and received his Master’s and Doctorate degrees from Harvard University. As a child, Du Bois did not experience the typical lifestyle of most blacks and was not exposed to the extreme racism and discrimination of his brethren. Prior to enrolling in Fisk University, Du Bois was unaware of how blacks lived in the southern states.\textsuperscript{50} Du Bois believed that “culture and leadership were inseparable,” and that education was the key to the development of leaders. He developed the concept of the “Talented Tenth;” a society of the most learned black scholars. Du Bois believed that the classical style education, and especially higher education, was crucial in elevating the status of blacks. He felt that “No amount of material wealth could compensate for the loss of the vote, inferior education and the

\textsuperscript{48} Fairclough, 45-46.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 41-45.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 74.
‘emasculating effects of caste distinctions.’”51

Both Washington and Du Bois were leaders of their era; however because of their different backgrounds and experiences, they had extremely different ideologies on the type of education that would develop effective leaders who would improve the plight of African Americans. Theirs was a conflict of ‘top down vs. bottom up’ philosophies of leadership development and strategies for the economic, political, and social survival of the black race.52 The two ideologies, Classical and Industrial, continued to collide until both schools became more aligned with the “ideological mainstream of black education” in the 1920’s.53 The educational philosophies of these two prominent leaders were well-known throughout the black communities and their differences were still being immortalized in a popular poem written by Dudley Randall in 1969.

Categories of Southern Schools for Blacks

During the Post Civil War period, the newly freed slaves joined the Freedmen in their pursuit of providing educational opportunities for their children. One of their first priorities was to establish some type of schools within their communities. The available educational resources shaped the type, location, and curriculum of the school. Some schools were located in religious facilities with a curriculum that was limited to reading and writing, other schools were housed in educational facilities with a more expansive curriculum. Regardless of the type of school, education was viewed as the most important vehicle for securing their independence and providing for a better life. What follows is a sampling of the types of schools that emerged for the Southern Freedmen after the Civil

51 Ibid., 76.
52 Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 33.
53 Ibid., 33.
War.

Sabbath Schools

The main educational focus of Sabbath Schools was to teach the Freedmen the rudiments of literacy. Sabbath Schools were housed in churches, and held classes in the evenings and during the weekends. The curriculum focused on the use of a spelling book. Although some of these schools were supported and sponsored by white missionary societies, the majority were developed and controlled by blacks. In 1868, the African Methodist Episcopal church reported 40,000 students enrolled in these schools. In 1869, the Freedmen’s reported a “conservative” estimate of “1,512 Sabbath schools with 6,146 teachers and 107,109 pupils,” and by 1885 the numbers had increased to 200,000 students. Within 17 years the number of students increased five-fold. 54

Public/Common Schools

In the North, the crusade for universal public schooling occurred from 1830 to 1860, and although blacks began the crusade for universal education during the Reconstruction Period, the planters regained control of the south in 1876 and opposed common schools – especially those for black children. Although blacks paid school taxes, most of the money earmarked for black educational purposes was used to cover the expenses of the education of white children. Public elementary education for blacks in the south lagged far behind public education for whites. The construction and maintenance of the black school systems in the late 1870s was supported by contributions by Southern black citizens. Because blacks were located on the bottom of the economic ladder,

54 Ibid., 12-15.
providing funding to support a universal system was impossible; therefore they waged a “second crusade” for common schools for black children.55

High Schools

While high schools for children were being developed in the 1880s, the South did not keep up with the other states. Nationally, during the period between 1880 and 1930 high school was no longer only accessible to the “elite” who could afford to attend private schools but expanded to serve more classes of people as public institutions. In 1930, 47% of white children in the nation were enrolled in public high school, 38% of white children were enrolled in the South; in 1934 the south reported 7% less enrollment than the rest of the country. By the 1930s public secondary education was available to all classes of white children.56 However, blacks were “excluded” during the educational revolution for secondary education during the years 1880 to 1935. In fact, the exclusion and outright denial of black secondary education in the South helped to move the discussion from one of “class discrimination” to “racial oppression”57

There was also a shortage of high schools in most of the rural and over half of the urban southern communities in which large numbers of blacks had settled. The U.S. Commissioner of Education’s Annual Report for 1880-1881 estimated that out of the 804,522 black students aged 15-19, only 0.30% were enrolled in high school and of those 0.46% were enrolled in private secondary institutions. Of the 1,706,313 white children in the same age category, 4% were enrolled in high school, and 0.66% were enrolled in private schools. In 1910, the enrollment figures increased to 2.8% for blacks and 10.1%

55 Ibid., 148-149.
56 Ibid., 187.
57 Ibid., 186-187.
for whites.\textsuperscript{58}

The U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling on \textit{Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education, 175 U.S. 528 (1899)}\textsuperscript{59} shaped the direction of black education in the South for over 40 years. In 1890 Ware High School was established as a public high school for black children in Augusta, Georgia. The high school was just one of four such schools existing in the eleven Confederate states. \textsuperscript{60} In 1897 Ware High School was closed by the Board of Education thereby eliminating any access to public high school education for black children. Three taxpaying, landowning black citizens of the county, “Cumming, Harper, and Ladeveze, filed a complaint against the Board of Education claiming the Board had diverted the funds previously used for the black high school (Ware) to the white high school. They were requesting an injunction against the using of black tax dollars to support the white high school until a black high school had been re-established. The plaintiffs were not opposed to paying taxes for the black “primary, intermediate, and grammar schools.” However, their position was that it was illegal for the county to use any of their previous taxes that were earmarked for the school, or any future taxes to support a high school that “was for the benefit of the white population exclusively.” They further alleged that prior to the July 10, 1897 closing of Ware high school, the county had provided blacks the same educational advantages as whites; a right to which they were entitled. The use of any portion of their taxes for the exclusively white high school was “inequitable, illegal, and unconstitutional.” \textsuperscript{61}

The Board of Education responded by claiming that the Ware facility would be

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 187-191.
\textsuperscript{60} Anderson, \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South}, 188-192.
\textsuperscript{61} “Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education.
used as a grammar school to accommodate classroom space for an additional “four hundred or more of negro children.” They also stated that any legal obligation to provide educational facilities did not extend to “higher grades.” They pointed out that there were three high schools available for the sixty or so black students that were enrolled in high school at that time and in the future. These schools were the “Haines Industrial School, the Walker Baptist Institute and the Payne Institute—each of which were public to the colored people.” The plaintiffs declared that these schools were “pure private…and under sectarian control;” therefore not a public school connected to the city.

The Court rendered the decision that no funding would be used by the Board to support any white high schools until equal facilities were provided for black high school children. The Board appealed the Superior Court of Richmond County’s decision to the Supreme Court of Georgia and the previous decision was “suspended” pending the higher court’s decision. Judge Harlan of the Supreme Court ruled that the case be disposed and that the plaintiffs were in error. The judgment overturned the injunction for relief as follows.

The substantial relief asked is an injunction that would either impair the efficiency of the highschool provided for white children or compel the board to close it. But if that were done, the result would only be to take from white children educational privileges enjoyed by them without giving colored children additional opportunities…The colored school children of the county would not be advanced in the matter of their education by a decree compelling the defendant board to cease giving support to a highschool for white children.

The decision stated that Board did have the right to close the high school until funding was available to provide such education for black children. Also, all citizens are responsible for paying taxes and it was the respective states’ right to determine how funds

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
were spent.\textsuperscript{64} This decision not only left the plaintiff’s with no claim to the protections under the decision in \textit{Plessey v Ferguson} but denied them protection under the Fourteenth Amendment.\textsuperscript{65}

The Supreme Court’s \textit{Cumming} decision not only had implications for black education in Georgia, but curtailed the development of secondary education for blacks throughout the South. It took 46 years (1945) from the decision of the \textit{Cumming’s} case for Richmond County to re-establish another four year public high school for blacks. In 1915, twenty-three Southern cities with a population at least 20,000 had no public high school access for black students, even though they comprised 39\% of these cities’ eligible secondary school population.\textsuperscript{66}

The primary source of the education for blacks was provided by private institutions in the South. The total number of blacks enrolled in public and private secondary schools in 1916 was 20,872; approximately 53\% were enrolled in private schools, 25\% in public schools and 22\% in secondary education departments of the twenty-eight land-grant and state normal schools and colleges.\textsuperscript{67} There was no “significant” impact on black secondary education until after 1920 when there was an increase in black migration, industrialization and an increase in the number of black adolescents.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid
\textsuperscript{65} Anderson, \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South}, 188-192.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 192-193
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 197.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 187-191.
Industrial Education

*Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute*

Industrial Education for blacks was the product of the northerner, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, and Booker T. Washington, a former slave. Armstrong founded the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1868; his goal was to develop an educational system for the new Freedmen that would support the needs of the Southern planters. This new form of education would train blacks to enhance the southern economy by training for jobs that were socially prescribed for them and to maintain the social caste system.69

The main focus of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was to train teachers for the black common schools; it also offered trade classes. Admission to the Normal School for teaching certification required that a student have completed grammar school. Aspiring teachers were required to successfully complete a two-year teacher preparation program in which their participation in manual labor was included in all aspects of their training and activities. The goal of teacher preparation was to socialize them into a work ethic that would enable them to teach their future students the “dignity of labor”70

Armstrong’s vision for students enrolled in his industrial education program was not to prepare workers to successfully compete in the mainstream workforce, but to promulgate a “nonskilled or semiskilled” labor force necessary to maintain the economy of the South.71 Students were required to learn a skill and to also work while attending school. The money they earned was put towards their account at Hampton. For three

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69 Ibid., 33
70 Ibid., 34-35.
71 Ibid., 47.
years students were required to study and work sixteen hours a day; they then participated in a normal school curriculum for their last two years. The night school students attended classes and worked eleven hours each day, and they were required to study two hours each night. Unfortunately, with all the hard work committed during their enrollment, some students still did not gain an understanding of the basic concepts and skills necessary to compete in their field.72

By 1880, white southerners were concerned about the black educational movement towards universal education. They opposed universal education for blacks and felt that any education provided needed to meet the particular needs and interests of the South’s dominant-class whites. However, the white Southerners knew that changing the direction of the desired Classical style education would cause controversy and resistance by the Freedmen. With the support of northern whites, the new plan was to provide an education that would “redirect the social purpose” to one that supported their interests. This new educational philosophy was based on the industrial education model used at Hampton Normal and Agricultural and would “provide instruction suitable for adjusting blacks to a subordinate social role in the emergent New South.”73

*Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute*

Armstrong’s “prized pupil,” Booker T. Washington, established the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in 1881. Washington continued to develop the Hampton-Tuskegee Model as a means of redirecting the educational design of the Freedmen to

72 Ibid., 55.
73 Ibid., 33-36.
better suit the needs of the southern dominant-class whites.74 Yet, in a meeting of the “Presidents of Land Grant Colleges and other Schools” in 1904, anti-Booker T. Washington sentiments were expressed by the majority present. Of the attendees, only two were in favor of Washington’s industrial education concept. Other private and secular normal schools were being developed, but they were not based on the Hampton-Tuskegee models.75

The philanthropic northerners won an important battle in the development of the Tuskegee machine, but they lost the war as black leaders everywhere moved farther away from the Hampton-Tuskegee educational and political ideology.76 By the turn of the century, the Hampton-Tuskegee ideology was in decline.77

Blacks began questioning what their roles should be in society and how to obtain their aspirations through education. Black leaders and other professionals did not approve of Booker T. Washington’s “accommodationalist philosophy”.78 In 1895, Washington delivered a speech at the Cotton States and International Exposition to a predominately white audience. In this speech, known as the Atlanta Compromise Speech79, Washington assuaged whites’ fears that blacks aspired for equality. According to Washington, “The laws of changeless justice bind Oppressor with oppressed” and blacks were satisfied with positions of service and labor.80

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever

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74 Ibid., 33.
75 Ibid., 108-109.
76 Ibid., 109.
77 Ibid., 33.
80 Ibid.
other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man’s chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.\textsuperscript{81}

There were many black leaders and professionals who were opposed to Booker T. Washington and his philosophy requiring blacks to “Cast down your bucket where you are.” They felt that this philosophy relegated blacks to remain in the lower ‘caste’.

Among them was William Monroe Trotter, the Boston Globe Editor; John Hope, educator and later a college president; and W.E.B. Du Bois. Trotter referred to Washington as “the Benedict Arnold of the Negro Race”. John Hope felt that to deny that blacks were seeking equality was “cowardly and dishonest.” Du Bois severed his association with Washington in 1903.\textsuperscript{82}

Northern Educational Direction

In the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, the migration of African Americans from the fields of the South to the urban areas of the North bought new issues and new dilemmas. African Americans had hopes that they were leaving behind the violence, lynching, and disenfranchisement that were so prevalent in the South to a new life that would provide them with more humane and economically stable opportunities in the North. This trek

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid. Note: This speech is commonly known as Washington’s “cast down your bucket” speech.
was aided by the factory owners and agents who purposely went South to lure blacks to relocate to urban centers. In 1900, 27.7% of blacks were living in urban areas and there were over seventy-two cities that had at least five thousand African Americans. Of those, four of the six cities that had over fifty thousand African Americans were located in the North or bordering state – Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore and Washington. The other two states were New Orleans and Memphis. While educational opportunities improved, blacks were barred from becoming members of most trade unions; and housing discrimination resulted in forcing them to live in overcrowded segregated ghettos.\(^{83}\)

In the North, segregated school systems still prevailed. Even in the country’s capital city of Washington, D.C., schools were still separate for children, based solely upon race; 32% of the children attending school were black. In 1911 the Superintendent of Schools, Alexander Stuart, wrote in a report to the Board of Education that the maintenance of two separate school systems was costly and burdensome. In the report, he stated that there were “two deputy superintendents, two normal schools, (and) two expensive manual training schools.”\(^{84}\) In addition, in some areas there were two separate buildings serving the same grades in close proximity to each other. The costs of maintaining separate school systems and the “organizational inefficiencies” affected the “curriculum and instruction in both obvious and subtle ways.”\(^{85}\)

Larry Cuban studied the Washington, DC school district and stated that the black people in that city not only felt that they had the best schools in the country for their

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\(^{84}\) Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms 1880-1990*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Teachers College Press, 1993), 95. \\
\(^{85}\) Ibid., 95-96.
children, but that the education received was far better than those in the white schools in the district. For example, the first black high school in the nation, Dunbar High, was established in 1870 by blacks and the first classes were held in the basement of a church and had four students. Dunbar High and Central High—the white high school, both moved into new buildings in 1916. However, the classes were larger at Dunbar and the books, blackboards, and furniture were not in as good shape as those in Central High.

Nonetheless, Dunbar not only had a “rigorous” curriculum, but also had the reputation for sending a high number of its students to college. 86

In Dunbar, it was the responsibility of the teachers to cultivate the most intellectually capable students. The teachers were intent on advancing the race by promoting the “black elite” who would “use their education to survive in a harsh, insensitive white world and ultimately help the race improve its standing.” To accomplish this task, the teacher’s goal was to prepare their best students to enter college. 87

Therefore, this segregated school system resulted in a double “caste system.” The first was the caste system created between the black elite and the rest of the race. 88 The other caste system imposed a code of discrimination that was based on the hue of complexion. Dunbar High School was known throughout the black population in Washington D.C. as a school that attracted students from the black “middle class or privileged” families, and students who were ‘light-skinned’ or could pass for being white. Rules and academic standards for enrollment were “bent” for the lighter students. Dark-skinned students were accepted to Dunbar but those students had to “compensate for their color with

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86 Ibid., 95-110
87 Ibid., 96
88 Ibid., 95-110
exceptional intelligence or wealth.”

Many of the teachers at Dunbar had advance degrees from universities in the North and East and had strong beliefs in the theory of the “Talented Tenth” – the development of potential leaders of the black race. Their mission was to provide an education to black students that would prove “equaling and even exceeding whites in knowledge, skills and gentility.” Some of the noteworthy graduates of Dunbar High were “the first black Cabinet member (Robert C. Weaver), the first black federal judge (William Hastie), the first black senator since Reconstruction (Edward W. Brooke) and the discoverer of blood plasma (Charles Drew)”.

During the 1800’s and 1900’s, the largest urban black population resided in the City of Brotherly Love – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Although Philadelphia was known for its “antislavery activities” the city was also a hotbed of tension and revolts. Historically, during the colonial period, Philadelphia did not have a large population of blacks, enslaved or free, and therefore did not feel it necessary to impose any codes or mandates prohibiting their education. However there was a concern regarding the provision for separate schools for blacks. The Quakers provided “schooling and manual training” for blacks, regardless of their status, as early as 1760.

However, this access to schooling was not associated with social equality. The anti-black sentiments were pervasive in the white communities and persisted through and after the Civil War. According to the 1850 census, although the majority of whites had

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been born in Philadelphia, there were a significant percentage of whites who had relocated from the South. Thus, Philadelphia’s racial attitudes, prejudices and violence were likened to those of the urban areas of the South. During the Civil War blacks who volunteered to serve had to do so in other Northern states; only being permitted to serve in Pennsylvania out of “grave” necessity. The City’s motto of “Brotherly Love” did not extend to blacks and this was not only reflected in its social treatments of blacks, but also to their access to quality education.

From 1920 to 1937, there were protests and court cases in efforts to reverse this practice. Nevertheless, by 1929 there were more segregated black schools in Philadelphia than in 1899 in response to the migration of Southern blacks into the city during World War I.

Although blacks in the North had more access to education, the Jim Crow standards of separate and not necessarily equal education still existed. In the two cities discussed in this study, Philadelphia and Washington, both experienced a separate system even though the education leaders saw that it was ineffective and costly. While the development of a public education for blacks in the North expanded to accommodate the challenges of the increase in migratory patterns to the urban areas, the public schools still maintained the strict caste system that catered to white superiority and a need for a laboring class. However, the dedication of the teachers and community efforts kept the Freedmen’s dream alive. Black teachers, who were only allowed to teach in black schools, were the vanguards of providing the best education possible.

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93 Ibid., 125-126 & 261.
94 Franklin, The Education of Black Philadelphia, 58-59
95 Cuban, How Teachers Taught, 95-110
96 Warner, The Private City, 29-34.
Educational Support Institutions

While it was a priority for blacks to provide schools for their children and campaign for universal public schools, they were also engaged in obtaining and providing information that would assist in the development of everyone within their communities. While most of these services were developed by and for themselves, there were many other supporters that assisted in formulating activities and methods of obtaining information.

Community and National Organizations

In building their new communities, blacks were also developing, building and supporting religious, civic, educational and fraternal organizations to support them in their goals of sharing information, and educational and cultural enlightenment. As early as 1790, the City of Philadelphia had organizations such as the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, the Committee to Visit Colored People, and the Free African Society; the most important social organizations/groups were “the Female Literary Society, the Library Company of Coloured Persons, and the Association for the Moral and Mental Improvement of People of Colour.” These groups provided information to the community through various types of activities but the thrust of information was on “black heritage,” “individual and community development,” and “education for black social and political advancement.”

The most important organizations to develop within the emerging black communities were “built on families and religion.” However, after emancipation, schools

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98 Ibid., 87-89.
were added to that list. In “towns and cities” these three oldest institutions within the communities, “joined with women’s clubs, fraternal organizations, businesses, and social service organizations to shape African-American community life and provide the basis for activism.”99 Churches were the oldest institution and largest within the black communities and were a central force in the lives of the community members. For example, the National Baptist Convention, the largest, had over 2.2 million members followed by the African Methodist Episcopal church which had approximately 500,000 members. Churches not only provided spiritual guidance and enlightenment, but also fulfilled many social, political, activist, and educational needs.100

While men were usually the leaders within the churches, it was the black women who raised funds to support activities and delivered services to those in need. Black women, desiring some degree of “independence” within the church, founded their own organizations. One such organization, the Women’s Convention of the National Baptist Convention, was founded in 1900. That one organization was the foundation for the growth of many organizations for black women. The National Association for Colored Women emerged from that organization and sponsored “kindergartens, day nurseries, training schools, orphanages, and clubs for mothers.” Black men were also developing “fraternal societies and mutual benefit associations.” These lodges, fraternal and benefit organizations were also active within their communities and offered services such as insurance and death benefits, leadership development and support for black businesses.101

99 Kelley and Lewis, To Make Our World Anew: Volume II, 89
100 Ibid., 89
101 Ibid., 90-92.
Political Influences

In 1881, President Garfield included in his Inaugural address, the plight of African Americans. In that address he expounded upon his feelings that there was a “direct connection between freedom and black social advancement.” He felt that the Freedmen were improving their lives and making strides in improving their financial status, educational foundation, and “blessings.” However, he noted that in some states blacks were still not allowed to vote in elections; and this was directly attributed to the fact that the majority of blacks still remained uneducated. Garfield reiterated that the government had decreed that blacks had the right to vote and therefore it was the government’s responsibility to provide assistance to the Southern states to establish schools for these “new citizens.” The remedy for this situation was the establishment of a universal education system. Unfortunately, President Garfield did not live to see his dream fulfilled. He was shot on July 2, 1881 by Charles Julius Guiteau and he died within two months. The impetus for universal education was taken up by Senator Henry Blair, a Republican from New Hampshire. Senator Blair introduced several bills to provide federal aid for public schooling in states that had the highest rates of illiteracy.

As one of the Republican advocates for black education, Blair blamed the lack of advancement by the Freedman on the lack of funding by state legislators. As a result of the efforts of Senator Blair, his Committee on Education and Labor in 1883, and his supporters, which included white capitalists, it was agreed that literacy and industrial training should be included in public schooling for both poor whites and blacks to support the South’s labor needs. Prior to the Civil War, manual and industrial training classes

103 Ibid., 151.
104 Ibid., 151.
were included in the curriculum of many schools from grammar through college. After the Civil War, the Southern states felt that manual training was as important as literacy training. The Committee decided that by 1883, all public schools would add industrial training courses to their curriculum. This would benefit those who were designated as lower class.

Senator Blair introduced bills for federal aid funding to Southern local school districts in 1881, 1884, and 1886; the bills passed in the Senate but was held up by the Speaker of the House of Representative, John G. Carlisle (Kentucky Democrat). In March 1890, Blair introduced the bill and it was defeated by the Senate’s “Conservative, agrarian Democrats and Republicans, North and South” claiming it would lead to a national educational system that would be controlled by the federal government.

African American Press

The Newspapers, magazines and community organizations upheld the responsibility of insuring that information that was deemed valuable was communicated throughout the black communities. Newspapers were instrumental in providing information in the early 1800’s; some of the publications were Freedom’s Journal, the North Star and the Anglo African. Black controlled newspapers emerged between 1880 and 1910. These newspapers were more than just a business venture; they were a very important vehicle for the passing of information and “important weapons in the ongoing 105 Ibid., 159. According to V.P. Franklin,"It was not enough merely to teach the Protestant work ethic through the grammars; spellers and readers used in public school classrooms around the country; the children should also receive instruction in mechanical arts, drawing, surveying, carpentry, agriculture and any number of other ‘practical subjects.’ Before 1860, various types of manual training programs existed, and many industrial training classes were included in the regular college, secondary, and elementary school curricula.”
106 Ibid., 159-61.
107 Ibid., 173.
struggle for knowledge and Afro-American self determination.”

_Freedom’s Journal_, a newspaper controlled by Freedmen, was established in 1827 and was one of the most influential newspapers in the African American community. The editors of the first issue, John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, promoted and expounded upon the virtues of education. Their mission was to publish articles and views that would enlighten readers on the value of “training their children, while young, to habits of industry, and thus forming them for becoming useful members of society.” They also pledged to provide information for children that would “stimulate them to higher attainments in science.”

The establishment of the African American press provided an avenue for continuing the struggle for protest. Newspapers replaced the pamphlets and petitions which had been instrumental in communicating within the free population in the northern colonies of Pennsylvania and New England. These newspapers allowed African Americans to voice their opinions in their own voice without depending on the interpretation, possible “misrepresentation”, and desires of others. Nineteenth century African American newspapers continued published articles on education, civil rights, self determination, and protest. According to Tara Hunter,

Newspapers also became advocates of using the movement as a tool of race advancement, highlighting the migration’s political significance as an expression of discontent. Southerners bought the newspapers in churches, grocery stores, and barbershops. They read articles aloud to one another until the newsprint was unreadable or worn to shreds.

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109 V.P Franklin, _Black Self-Determination_, 176-185.
110 Ibid., 177-8.
Newspapers were “preoccupied during this period, as they had earlier, with the problem of fighting for a larger place for Negroes in American Life.” There were magazines and papers that were religion-based, like the *Southern Workman* and the *A.M.E. Review*, which printed materials on “educational, literary and religious matters.” According to John P. Davis, in 1900, there were 150 weekly newspapers and three daily papers in, Kansas City, Norfolk and Washington.\(^{112}\) In the North, African American newspapers advertised available jobs and informed readers of the type of life lead by those already living in the North.\(^{113}\)

There was yet another type of publication that had an important impact on African Americans – the monthly periodicals or magazines. Between the years of 1900 and 1910, the monthly publications did not have education as their main emphasis but they did publish many articles that dealt with educational issues.\(^{114}\) The following is a description of the contents of four monthly periodicals.

*Colored American Magazine*- This periodical was founded by four migrants from Virginia in 1900. The emphasis was art, literature and the promotion of “brotherhood.” The periodical consisted of fiction, poetry and short stories. They also included articles and essays on the politics and social conditions, and featured articles on famous black citizens.\(^{115}\)

*Voice of the Negro*- Founded in January 1904 and ended in October of 1907. Its articles covered topics of economic, social and political interests. The format also included artwork, poetry and humor. The magazines publishers were white although its

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\(^{114}\) Nuefeldt and McGee, *Education of the African American Adult*, 77-78.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., 78-79.
editors were black. Unfortunately the editors were of two different camps and ideologies – DuBois and Washington. The magazine folded when one of its editors attempted to “repudiate anti-black explanations for the 1906 Atlanta riot.”¹¹⁶

*Alexander’s Magazine* - At the request of Booker T. Washington, Charles Anderson, a printing teacher at Wilberforce University, who was also a Tuskegee graduate, took over the weekly, which was formerly the failing, Tuskegee *Colored Citizen*. The issues were described as “nondescript general race periodicals, featuring articles on colleges and industrial schools, discussions of current issues, along with some poetry and book reviews.” It was very conservative.¹¹⁷

*Horizon: A Journal of the Color Line* - This journal was published by W.E.B. Du Bois in Washington D.C. from 1907-1910. This was Du Bois’ second attempt at establishing a publication between the years of 1900-1910; the previous publication, the *Moon Illustrated Weekly* in Memphis ended in 1906. The magazine did not have feature articles, but consisted of discussions on topics of interests. The three sections consisted of ‘The Over-Look,’ written by Du Bois, which touched on any topic the senior editor thought newsworthy; ‘The Out-Look’ by Hershaw, focused mostly on domestic concerns and the white press; and ‘The In-Look,’ by Murray, surveyed the black press.¹¹⁸

During the first decade of the 20th century, the press did not focus on education as the number one priority for the middle and professional class readership; the higher ranking priority was the building of “character.” Education was viewed as a link to the development of “ethical qualities” which would support the building of character. Thus educational articles were published on “the importance of proper family life, the

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 79-80.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., 80.
¹¹⁸ Ibid., 80-81.
necessity of home-getting, and other dictums that unified both middle-class norms and rural aspirations.”\textsuperscript{119} Between the years of 1900 and 1920, the black middle class used them as a vehicle for self-definition within the black community. Even then, newspapers and periodicals expounded on debates within the communities, i.e., what term the race would use to define itself\textsuperscript{120} - “Africans, Afro-Americans, Colored People, Negroes, or American Negroes?”\textsuperscript{121}

While education was not the first priority for the press it was viewed as important. According to Neufeldt and McGhee, “Education was undeniably essential, but the periodical literature of the decade, did not focus on this factor exclusively.” Simply put, education was always on the broad civil rights agenda, but it was seldom number one in the press – that top spot was reserved for justice.\textsuperscript{122}

Summary

For over 400 years, the decisions on the education of blacks were decided by the economic and political agendas of elite whites. During the colonial period, deterrents to education were used to insure that free black people were controlled and those who were slaves remained enslaved.\textsuperscript{123} After the Civil War, the Industrial Movement mandated the ideological direction of the education of Freedmen as an answer to labor needs in their new social order. Missionary societies were very active in the education of the Freedmen and developed programs that were vested in guiding the spiritual uplift of the race. Religious organizations were also interested in the development of their “civil and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 98-101.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 90-91.
  \item \textsuperscript{121} J.W.E. Bowen, “Who Are We?” \textit{Voice of the Negro} no. 3 (January 1906): 31-36.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Neufeldt and McGee, \textit{Education of the African American Adult}, 100-104.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Watkins, \textit{The White Architects of Black Education}, 1.
\end{itemize}
political rights,” which included how they would be included in the industrial movement. These educational ideologies were all well suited for the economic visions and ideologies of the North.¹²⁴

However, the philanthropists were not the only population that was interested in education as a means of creating a role for the Freedmen in the new ordering of society. Blacks developed and defined their own educational agenda. The Freedmen advocated for public/common schools, sued in court for their rights to have educational facilities, and determined what type of education – classical or industrial – would be more effective to uplift themselves individually and as a race.

In the South, the old guard still opposed the education of blacks, but these new Freedmen maintained their determination to become literate and developed native, Sabbath, common, and industrial school systems to meet their needs.¹²⁵ At the same time, some blacks migrated to the North with their own visions of participating in society as Freedmen. The promise of a better and more stable economic life was enticed by the industrialists’ propaganda.¹²⁶ Once settled in the North, blacks had better access to education, but it was often segregated and inferior to that offered to whites. But again, it was the effort of the black community, supplemented by organizations and the leaders of the black press that kept the desire for education alive.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 14-15.
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

To understand the significance and impact of education in South Jersey, it was important to examine educational access and attainment of the family unit. In this study, questions were asked about where the parents were born, their education and occupation, and their views relative to the importance of education for their children. The participants’ responses were looked at individually, and, when applicable as a family group, including the education of siblings.

As expected, all of the parents thought education was valuable and an asset needed to improve their children’s lives and insure a successful future. The amount of education depended on the economic circumstances of the family. All the participants graduated from segregated grammar schools and provided their memories of that experience. All but one of the participants who attended high schools, found themselves immersed in an ‘integrated’ environment where they were a small minority. They painted a picture of how it felt to find oneself in that type of situation, and the racial interactions and climate at that time. One participant attended Bordentown, which was an all black, live-in, manual training school that was referred to as the “Tuskegee of the North.” The description of that experience was enriched with memories of the students, faculty, curriculum and activities. Some of the participants and their siblings attended college. Since this research project was focused on public school attendance, college experiences were not included in this study.

The participants were lively, giving subjects and very engaged in the interview and the process. They were forthcoming with their memories and admitted when some things were not clearly recalled. However, it is important to note that findings are solely based upon ‘self– reported’ interview data that touched upon some very sensitive areas. In cases where the
participant did not answer a question, for whatever reason, the interviewer respected their privacy.

Family Background and Education

Obtaining information on the participant as well as family background is important to this type of study. To get a more accurate picture of the history of the impact of education on a family, it is necessary to understand a historical perspective on the families’ educational background including the types of educational institutions available and attended, and any opportunities inherent in the attainment of education. The questions asked in this study were an attempt to not only gather information on the participants, but to also gather educational information about their parents and siblings, and to try to understand the role of the community and available community educational resources in their lives.

Parents

Most of the questions asked about the parents of participants’ sought information on where they were born, literacy and educational accomplishments, views on the value of education, occupations and sources used for getting important information within and outside of their immediate communities. The questions and follow-up questions also tried to ascertain if there were any relationships between the educational levels and values of the parents and the impact on their children. Sometimes there were variations in the reported educational backgrounds of the participants’ parents. These variations are the results of the transference of that information to the participants as well as their actual memories. In cases such as these, it was advantageous to have more than one person from a sibling group participate to provide
Information on where parents were born was obtained from all the nine family units; only one participant was not able to provide birth location due to the early death of the parent and one participant provided the birth place of the grandmother who raised her. In this study, the term ‘parent’ referred to the person(s) who was responsible for raising the participant; the data included deceased parents who at one time lived in the household. Most of the parents were born in Southern New Jersey (7), the next highest place of birth was Southern New Jersey’s neighboring city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (3), followed by South Carolina (2). The remaining places each represented one birth each – Georgia; Florida; Maryland; Washington, and the West Indies. The grandmother formerly mentioned was born in Maryland. Only two sets of parents originated from the same location (Cape May, NJ and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), and one family in which both parents were born in two different cities in South Jersey (East Riverton and Atlantic City). Only one family reported that both parents had been born in the South (South Carolina and Florida). The rest of the families consisted of a combination of one parent being born in the South, and one case born in Washington and the West Indies. The following is the breakdown of birth place and sex of parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Jersey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Indies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While most of the participants stated that their parents could read and write, they reported that seven of the nine mothers and 5 of the eight the fathers were known to be literate. The literacy status of the remainder of the parents could not be established because of a lack of information on parents’ information. In such cases the participant’s 1) father died while the participant was a toddler, 2) grandparent raised them, and 3) observations and recollections could not confirm the literacy or educational accomplishments of a parent. The following chart provides a numerical and percentage breakdown of the reported literacy rates of the participants’ parents.

Table 4: Parents’ Literacy Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read &amp; Write</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once information relative to literacy had been established the interview questions tried to solicit information regarding the highest level of formal schooling received by the parents. Once again some participants did not have information on their parents’ education or the details were vague. Yet other participants could provide remarkably detailed information about their parents’ education. Examples the range of knowledge are best illustrated by the following quotes from some of the participants.

Oh Lord, I don’t know if I know about their education or not…Let’s see, I believe she was educated in Jersey. I am not sure if it was Cinnaminson; I’m not sure what they called that school when she was going to school. I think…I’m not sure. ¹

My mother was raised in Orangeburg, South Carolina. I don’t know what schools she went to. ²

(My mother went to school) In Miccosukee Florida. A little one school room, one room school. And by being smart when she came to Wildwood still a young kid and

¹ Bernice Hazell, Interview, November 10 2007.
² Louise Rozier, Interview, November 24, 2007
far as her schooling, she was promoted to the fourth grade… she was a very brilliant woman and my father I don’t remember him going to school any days….

He taught himself how to read but he could not write too well.3

My father went to high school and then from there he went to NY. He went to City College in New York and that’s where he got his training as an electrician. Then he went to Youngstown, Ohio for air conditioning. Of course, my mother, she went to Cape May High School… But she did go to Philadelphia and went to nursing school. She liked nursing. When she was in Philadelphia, she was working for a family in Philadelphia; she went to night school to learn nursing.4

Even with the variations in the amount of knowledge of parents’ information, from the nine family units, more information was known about the mothers’ education than that of the fathers. Three of the nine families claimed no knowledge of the mothers’ education compared to six of the fathers. Six of the mothers had some type of formal education, whereas only three of the fathers had attended school. Of those parents who had attended formal schools, nine had attended and five had graduated from grammar school, five had attended and three had graduated from high school, one attended college, and two had attended schools and/or workshops for formal job training. Mothers comprised six of the nine grammar school attendees and three of the high school attendees, and three of the five grammar school graduates and two of the three high school graduates. The two parents who attended high school, but did not graduate were from Riverton and Atlantic City. Of the three parents who graduated from high school, two were from West Cape May, NJ and one was from Atlantic City, NJ. The only parent to attend college was male. The three high school graduates consisted of a mother born in Orangeburg, South Carolina – although where she went to school was not known; and a mother and father, married, from West Cape May, NJ – the father also attended City College in New York.

3 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
Table 5: Formal School and Training of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Attended School</th>
<th>Grammar School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Parents' Occupation_

Most of the participants could recall the occupations of their parents. Those participants who were aware of the occupations of their parents were generally able to provide the name of the employer. Of the nine families, only two were unable to provide any information on parents occupation and one was only able to provide information on one parent. Understandably, some of the parents were employed in more than one occupation during their lifetime. Of the nine mothers, three were domestics/housekeepers for white families, one was a homemaker, one worked as a live-in on farming/contracting business, and two had their own businesses.

Table 6: Parents' Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chauffer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in Farming/contracting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longshoreman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not work. Kept own house</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Business</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comment/did not know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the two mothers who were entrepreneurs, one established an employment agency and the other an office cleaning company. According to Mildred Moultrie Sanders of Wildwood, New Jersey, her mother had established “The Seashore Employment Agency” which provided
workers for the shore tourism businesses in Wildwood and Cape May. Many of her mothers’
employees were students attending colleges in the South who would work to pay for their
education. Ms. Sanders reported that her mother’s employment agency was “the oldest
employment agency in the State of New Jersey.” According to Bernice Howard Gordon, the
women in Wildwood were strong businesswomen. While there are few historical records in
existence, the Mayflower Hotel was owned by Rachael Lockley and the “High Steppers Club”
was owned by her daughter, Louise Lockley. The Lockley women owned the whole corner of
Park Blvd and Lincoln Avenue and also owned rental property. According to the 1920 and
1930 Wildwood Census, most of the black women listed their occupation as homemaker,
laundress, or seamstress or “none”. However, in several of the residences where the women did
not specify an occupation, there were non-related “boarders” or “roomers” living in the home.
Louise Rozier’s mother had developed an office cleaning company in California prior to moving
to New Jersey. Some of her regular clientele included famous entertainers.

She (my mother) worked in, in … manufacturing I think. She was a factory worker. And
then she after she got older she started a-well, she used to clean state offices and then she
had the business of hiring out people to clean these big offices. By that time she was in
California. And she worked for the mafia out there. …She did. They had underground
vault. And she said, she used to fascinate me talking about the money that was just out-
what’s his name, Frank Sinatra and his crowd, Sammy Davis Jr. and all the rest…Yeah.
And she said, money would be all-she’d be getting nervous and she’d tell them, why

5 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
7 Laurice Blango Hearn-Miller, Telephone inquiry on October 4, 2010. Laurice’s father, Andrew Blango
and her mother, Dorothy Copeland Blango (stage name “Dot Jennings”), both worked in clubs in
Wildwood and Whitesboro. Her father was a cook and her mother was a singer. Louise was affectionately
called “the Mayor” because of her political connections. Her mother often worked in the summers at the
“High Steppers Club” and was friends with the owner. During their visits to Wildwood, the family stayed at
the Mayflower Hotel or rental houses.
8 “Fourteenth Census of the United States: Population (City of Wildwood, NJ),” Ancestry. Com,
2010).
9 “Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 (Wildwood City),” Ancestry.Com,
5, 2010).
don’t you put the money away until she finishes, you know the-they told her, “Nessie, we’re not worried about you. Just do what you can.”

The participants’ fathers had varied occupations; one father was employed as a live-in farmer, one as a longshoreman, one mechanic, one as a chauffeur for the Lippincott’s, and two had their own business. The two fathers who had their own business were from Cape May County – Wildwood and the West Cape May. Mr. Moultrie of Wildwood was a house painter; he was also an ordained minister. Mr. Howard of West Cape May was a licensed electrician who studied how to be an electrician at City College in New York and took the licensing requirements while working at the Coast Guard Station.

In Burlington County, many blacks worked for established Quaker families.

Well, my father, how do I put it, I don’t know how to put it, we lived, I don’t know how to put it, we worked for the people who we lived in their house and we worked for those people, they owned a farm and they owned a contracting business and they both [parents] worked for them.

My mother was a domestic. And my father was a chauffeur. I just like to add this in, my mother worked for, you know, like Bailey, Banks and Biddle…he was with the other rich family. The Lippincotts.

**Parents’ Attitudes About Educations**

Having their children get an education was very important to the parents. Every participant responded that their parents did not just encourage, but expected their children to get an education. The economic necessity of getting a job may have determined the level education

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11 The Lippincott family was the owners of the JB Lippincott Company which was a publishing company.
attained, but everyone at least completed high school (or do you mean primary school?). Parents generally believed that an education would help their children to have a better life and livelihood than they had.

No, just get your education was the main thing they told us. Get your education cause she didn’t want us to do what she had to do. You know, working in white folk’s kitchens and all that. Is that going to be on the tape? Oh well, working in the white folks kitchens... I’m sure they felt it was important after they make sure that we went and wouldn’t take no for an answer when it came to going to school.15

… my mother used to work for them. (the Biddles). Now the story I’m about to tell is because at the time, you know, I did have my driver’s license I was picking my mother up from work, you know, when she got off. And they were very fond of my mother. So, Mrs. Biddle knew all of us. And she said to my mother—my mother’s name was Melinda—and she said, “Melinda, I understand that Grace will be graduating in June.” And my mother didn’t talk much but when she did [laughs] you listened. And so, Mrs. Biddle said, “So, when she graduates Grace will be needing a job.” Well, you know what she’s getting at. And my mother said, “Mm-hmm, Grace will be needing a job. But there’s one thing I’m telling you right now, it will not be in your kitchen.” Now, even though my parents, you know, were not high school or college graduates, they were very much on pushing us as far as education, very much, to make sure that we did not end up having to work in the white (man’s) kitchen.16

The parents’ support of and expectation that their children receive an education was evidenced by the participants’ explanation of all the children’s educational attainments within their respective family groups. There were 48 children, including the participants. The participants reported a graduation rate of 92% from grammar school, 65% from high school and 19% from college (includes 2 and 4 year institutions). Those who continued their education post high school enrolled in Temple University, St. Joseph University, Glassboro Normal School (later known as Glassboro College and Rowan University), Lincoln University and Howard University. Lincoln and Howard Universities are historically black institutions of higher

education.

Table 7: Reported Educational Achievements of Siblings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th># of Children in Family</th>
<th>Graduation Rates</th>
<th>Attended College</th>
<th>Graduated 2 or 4 year College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanders Family</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 8 8 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Family</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 4 2 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Moody</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6 6 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Rozier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Hazell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 NI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hazell</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Ransom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 5 1 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy M. Watkins</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 NI-Siblings 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Sanders</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 5 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>44 31 10 9</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>92% 65% 21% 19%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some parents were born in New Jersey, some migrated to the state and one parent was an immigrant into the country and settled in South Jersey. The participants who were aware of the educational level of their parents reported that 71% could read and write, 52% attended school and 29% graduated from grammar school, 29% attended and 18% graduated from high school. There was no apparent relation between the parents’ place of birth and level of education. But all parents felt that their children needed to receive an education as a means to obtaining better jobs and financial security. This was evident in the educational achievements of their children.
Table 8: Comparison Graduation Rates of Parents and Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Rates</th>
<th>Attended</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Grammar School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants and their siblings had graduation rates from grammar school and high school that were three times those of their parents. As with the comparison of the parents’ educational attainment, again there was no apparent correlation between the educational attainment of the parents and those of their children.

Participants

Demographics

The researcher grew up in North Jersey and lives in Central Jersey. Not having any information on possible participants at the initiation of this project, participants were located by interacting with the people within their communities and referrals. The interviews took place between February 2005 and November 2007, and involved twelve participants. All participants gave permission to use their real names for the purposes of this dissertation study. All participants were enrolled in schools located in South Jersey between 1920 and 1945. The participants interviewed were African American and born between 1914 and approximately 1938; given ages, when interviewed, ranged from seventy-two to ninety-two; one participant only provided an approximate age. There were four individual interviews and four interviews that consisted of two or more participants. The following chart lists the participants, their dates of birth and ages, the date of the respective interviews and the type of interview.
Table 9: Participants' Ages and Interview Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Age at Interview</th>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Interview Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernice Sanders Hazell</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>November 10, 2007</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Lawrence Sanders</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>November 24, 2007</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sanders</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Moody</td>
<td>1935-38</td>
<td>Early 70’s</td>
<td>November 24, 2007</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Rozier</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Hazell</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>November 24, 2007</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hazell</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Sanders</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>February 15, 2005</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy M. Watkins</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>November 24, 2007</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Sanders</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>February 15, 2005</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age range of the participants represents approximately a twenty-eight year difference between 1914 and approximately 1942. The breadth of these dates is representative of at least one generation. Of the twelve participants, three participants (25%) were born between 1910 and 1920, four participants (33%) were born between 1921 and 1930, and five (42%) participants were born between 1931 and 1940. The actual numbers of participants in the age categories were less in the earlier years and increased during the latter years. There were challenges in identifying potential participants who 1) were born between 1910 and 1920, 2) fit the qualifications to participate in this project and were willing to participate, and 3) were able to recall sufficient information regarding their education and other relevant information.
All participants, except two, were born in South Jersey; the exceptions were born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which borders the City of Camden, NJ. However, all of the participants attended public school in Southern New Jersey, which includes the New Jersey Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth in Bordentown, more commonly referred to Bordentown Manual and Training School. Five New Jersey counties were represented in this study for attendance from kindergarten through twelfth grade – Burlington County, Cape May County, Camden County, Gloucester County, Mercer County and Monmouth County. In addition, training and higher education locations include Burlington County, Camden County, and the City of Philadelphia. The Howard Sisters, Bernice Howard Gordon and Jean Howard Boise, were interviewed in their childhood home in West Cape May, NJ. Ms Mildred Sanders was interviewed in her home in Wildwood, NJ. The Sanders and Hazell family, along with other friends and neighbors were interviewed in East Riverton, NJ. East Riverton, the original name of the town, was incorporated into the town of Cinnaminson. However, due to the time period of this study, the original town name of East Riverton was used.
Table 10: Participants' Geographical Information  
Birth through Twelfth Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th>Grew Up</th>
<th>School Location(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernice Hazell</td>
<td>East Riverton, NJ</td>
<td>East Riverton</td>
<td>East Riverton Palmyra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Moody</td>
<td>East Riverton, NJ</td>
<td>NY, Camden and</td>
<td>East Riverton Palmyra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Riverton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Hazell</td>
<td>Mt Holly, NJ</td>
<td>Mt Laurel and</td>
<td>Hattie Britt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Riverton</td>
<td>East Riverton Palmyra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hazell</td>
<td>Philadelphia, Pa.</td>
<td>East Riverton</td>
<td>East Riverton Palmyra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin L. Sanders</td>
<td>Mt. Holly, NJ</td>
<td>East Riverton</td>
<td>East Riverton Palmyra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sanders</td>
<td>Mt. Holly, NJ</td>
<td>East Riverton</td>
<td>East Riverton Palmyra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 or 4 years of age) then East Riverton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Rozier</td>
<td>Berlin, NJ</td>
<td>Camden, Pennsauken</td>
<td>Camden, Pennsauken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Camden County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernice Howard</td>
<td>West Cape May, NJ</td>
<td>West Cape May</td>
<td>West Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cape May County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Howard</td>
<td>Wildwood, NJ</td>
<td>West Cape May</td>
<td>West Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Sanders</td>
<td>Wildwood, NJ</td>
<td>Wildwood</td>
<td>Wildwood and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bordentown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burlington County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Ransom</td>
<td>Woodbury, NJ</td>
<td>Woodbury</td>
<td>Woodbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gloucester County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several of the participants were related by birth or marriage. The following charts and graphs attempt to clarify those relationships. It is important to note that although there were twelve participants in total, in actuality there are nine distinct family groups. One female participant was counted as a distinct family group because her relationship to another family was the result of marriage.

---

Table 11: Participant Family Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Family Groups</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard Family</td>
<td>Bernice Howard Gordon</td>
<td>Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jean Howard Bose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanders Family</td>
<td>B: Lawrence Sanders</td>
<td>Brothers and Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Sanders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bernice Sanders Hazell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazell Family</td>
<td>Henry Hazell</td>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearl Hazell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bernice Sanders Hazell</td>
<td>Sister-in-Law; married to Henry’s brother Dan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Hazell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Moody</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Rozier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Sanders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Ransom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy M Watkins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ Education

All of the participants were born in the Northeastern United States. Ten participants were born in Southern New Jersey and two in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. All of the participants lived in South Jersey during their formative years, and all but one participant still lives in South Jersey; the exception currently lives in Central Jersey. The participants attended both grammar and high school in South Jersey; only one participant attended a Junior High School. All of the twelve participants graduated from Grammar School, and ten participants reported graduating from High School; of the two remaining participants, one reported not graduating from high school because he had to go to work and one did not provide that information.
Table 12: Participants' Educational Accomplishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Grammar School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Training/College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard Family Bernice Howard Gordon</td>
<td>West Cape May Elementary Annex</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Cape May City High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Howard Boise</td>
<td>West Cape May Elementary Annex</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Cape May City High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanders Family BenjaminL. Sanders</td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sanders</td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernice Sanders Hazell</td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hazell</td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Hazell</td>
<td>Hattie Brick, Mt Laurel</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Moody</td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Rozier</td>
<td>Whittier Grammar School, Camden</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Mercerville HS, Pennsauken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Sanders</td>
<td>Wildwood School #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Bordentown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Ransom</td>
<td>Park Avenue School, Woodbury</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Woodbury High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy M Watkins</td>
<td>Cinnaminson #4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Palmyra High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Berean Manual Training and Industrial School18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N=12 | 100% | N=10 | 83% |

---


“The school is principally held at night, from 7-45 to 10 o’clock. The students come from all over the city and from out of the city as far as twenty-five miles. They come, for example, from Wilmington, Del., and from Chester, Ridley Park, Kennett Square, Bryn Mawr, Cynwyd, Wyncote, Frankford and Germantown Penna., and from Woodbury, Camden, Merchantville, Paulsborough and Riverton, N.J.”
Grammar School

All of the participants stated that the grammar schools in their towns were segregated. Being black, they attended the grammar school that was designated for black children. In many cases, the black grammar school was in close proximity to the white school, or they had to pass the white grammar school on their way to the black school. In Cinnaminson, the one participant recalled their sewing class being held at the white school with a white teacher because the black school did not have the equipment.

No, we went to school in Cinnaminson # 4 because there were whites and blacks and blacks and whites. Cinnaminson #2 was the white school and we went to Cinnaminson #4. That was the name of the school. Before they named the town the school was called Cinnaminson. So that’s where we went.19

When we were in Cinnaminson #4, Cinnaminson #2 which is the white school, we had to leave Cinnaminson #4 to take our home economics. That’s where we took our sewing at the white school and when we were finished we came back to ours.20

And we were, you know, of course we were all black. And we were at one end of the street and the white school was at the other end. That was, you know, up until kindergarten to eighth grade.21 (Cinnaminson # 4)

We played together, we walked to school together, we got up to the school we separated and went into our own school. We came home, we came home together.22

Why it’s called (West Cape May Annex) annex is because we were segregated.23

Given that all the participants were required to attend segregated grammar schools, none of the participants expressed any concerns regarding the separate systems or indicated any thoughts as to the reason for different schools. The facilities ranged from just a few rooms with

22 Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
23 Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
several grades in each to separate classrooms for each grade. There were no comments about any discrepancies between the facilities or equipment except for having to go to the white school for the sewing class in Cinnaminson. The two school systems were accepted as a way of life and the participants rated the education they received from ‘adequate’ to ‘exceptional.’ The Howard sisters of West Cape May thought that they received an excellent education at West Cape May Annex, and felt that being in that segregated school was beneficial to their academic achievement and character development.

There was always someone (from Cape May Annex) coming out in the upper ten percent of the [Cape May City High School] class. You talk about prepared, that man prepared us! And part our work ethics we got from him cause he did not like CP time.\(^\text{24}\)

So even though we went to a segregated school to us it was a blessing.\(^\text{25}\)

Participants were asked about the type of subjects that they took in their segregated grammar schools. Their responses indicated that the schools had a “New England Classical” educational philosophy. Children were taught subjects like reading, writing, social studies, music, art, civics, home economics and religion.

**Curriculum**

Yeah, I guess we took the basic subjects, the ones we had to take; English, Spelling, and Mathematics in elementary school…we may have had some form of Art, a little bit of Black History for at least one week out of the year.\(^\text{26}\)

Number four was fine. We had plays, we did little plays, and music and what ever. We even went to the school up in, I can't think of the name of that school unless I'm riding that way. We used to take class and go there and give a play for them and it was nice that was fun, a lot of fun.\(^\text{27}\)

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\(^\text{26}\) B: Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
\(^\text{27}\) Bernice Sanders Hazell, Interview, November 10, 2007.
And really Mr. Moore was building us. And prepared us. Any student that came out of West Cape May Annex he had already prepared for freshman year in high school. In other words it was a joke when we went over there. He used Sporndike, I’m sure you’re familiar with Sporndike, that’s what he taught us math out of. And when he thought he had the ability, he would keep us after school. And we knew algebra. He was an excellent teacher. And this was eight grades.

She taught drama, she played music, art and education; she taught you how to appreciate art. That lady taught you the finer things in life. You wouldn’t have…you had to be dressed, your appearance was important; your work had to be important. We had three excellent teachers. Another little lady, Miss Dalton she had kindergarten, first (grade). By the time we came out of her classes you knew your numbers, your letters, you were memorizing. You were set to go. They didn’t play us. They made sure that their children were the best.

_Civics_

You did a lot of memory work with her. We were learning the Declaration of Independence when we were in her room. (laughs) I done forgot it all by now, but we had to know it then.

You had to know the Preamble [to the US Constitution] … Mr. Moore, civics and math, that was his thing.

_Religion_

We started in the morning everybody had to go into one room and we had our little opening session with the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag, we had our prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, and then we had to read the scriptures. One of the Psalms we had to learn was the 91st Psalm, we had to learn that. They were good.
We had to learn scripture, we had had the Bible. We had to memorize the Bible scriptures in the morning. That was a part of our opening.34

Proverbs 16:16. ‘How much better it is to get wisdom than then gold, or to choose understanding rather than silver. The highway of the upright departs from evil; he that keepeth his way keepeth his soul.’ And we go on and on until the end.35

**Character**

They knew what we had to face and they prepared us for what we had to face.36

He [Mr. Moore] used to tell us you can’t be as good as; you have to be better than.37

**Teachers**

Much was expected of the teachers of black students. All of the participants recalled that their teachers were black. Interestingly, one participant brought up the question of their age, but as a child he could not tell what age they were. These teachers, more often than not, came from other areas and other states. Some moved into the community and others seemed to arrive by a special bus. In Cape May County, the teachers lived in the community or within close proximity—which may be the result of geography, but in the other counties it seemed that most of the teachers commuted from other places. Some participants mentioned that their teachers came from Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

They were old to me, but I don’ know if they were just a few years older than us or not. I don’t really know.38

… most of them came from East Riverton and Mount Laurel. I think they're also Mount Laurel because they moved to East Riverton39

36 Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
37 Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
38 Lawrence Sanders, Interview, November 24, 2007.
No, one of them lived in Riverton and the rest of them were from Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{40}

Mm-mm, I don’t know what they were, I think they lived in Philadelphia, I think. Camden or probably somewhere around, and there were a couple of them … No. They call came from Philadelphia. I don’t know why …\textsuperscript{41}

They were very fine teachers from Washington, DC as far as I know they were from out of town because we had no educated blacks at that time.\textsuperscript{42}

Teachers were respected members within the black communities regardless of their residential status. They were not only responsible for teaching the subject matter, but they also taught students proper behavior, ethics and enforced strict standards of discipline. The parents trusted the teachers’ judgments and were supportive of their decisions and actions.

He’d stand at that door. He’d come to that door and by the time he blew that whistle, you’d better be going up those steps walking past him! And when he walked in the door, the door was closed. Oh yeah, he had that whistle and when he blew he’d let you know. And if you were half way down you started running because you wanted to be in that door before it closed.\textsuperscript{43}

That man would snatch a boy up in a minute. And he would walk a boy up that long hallway and they came over - they was big boys too. Honey, they would have Mr. Moore under the jail today when you talk about this business of children’s rights (laughs). Oooh, there were no children’s rights!\textsuperscript{44}

And the thing is, even our parent. The way the system is today… well all you had to say was Jean so and so and so. They didn’t ask “did I” or “could I” or “would I” or “did you”? NO, there was no point in saying nothing cause you didn’t explain anything.\textsuperscript{45}

If you misbehave in school? Oh yeah, they take you in the coatroom…And spank your bottom… Ms Flounoy would stand in the door with the door kind of ajar. And when you go in her class before class started you have to sit there like little mummies …And one day I asked somebody for a pencil because I forgot mine. And she said-she never turned around. She looked straight ahead and said,

\textsuperscript{40} Lawrence Sanders, Interview, November 24, 2007.
\textsuperscript{41} Mary Ellen Ransom, Interview November 24, 2007.
\textsuperscript{42} Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2007.
\textsuperscript{43} Bernice Howard Gordon, Interview, January 16, 2006.
\textsuperscript{44} Bernice Howard Gordon, Interview, January 16, 2006.
\textsuperscript{45} Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
“Louise, I’ll get you a pencil when I get in there.”

The participants all attended segregated black grammar schools within their respective towns. They all provided insights that supported that the schools’ curricula was modeled after the New England Classical style and included civics and religion. Most of the students thought that the grammar schools education they received was “okay” although a few, upon reflection, thought that their education was “excellent” and superior to that which was taught in white grammar schools. Those who remembered their teachers had high regard for them and thought that they also taught them character and discipline. As a whole, no one expressed any discomfort in the fact that they played with white children in the area, but attended segregated schools.

**High School**

Attending and graduating from high school, was not always expected. The participants all reported that they had graduated from grammar school and attended high school. Of the 12 participants, 10 confirmed that they had graduated from high school. Most of the participants, when asked, indicated that not many from their grammar school class attended high school. That said, there were participants who said that most of the black students in their town went to high school.

No, everybody didn’t go. They didn't have to go. When they left the Cinnaminson number four, there were about three or four kids that didn't go with us. They just chose not to go further you know because at that time you didn't have to go to high school like now.

I went through the four years of the high school… we didn't have that big of a class, but I think most of everybody went except maybe about four or five. I'm

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just guessing.\textsuperscript{48}

It was only two or three of us there, see. [laughs]\textsuperscript{49}

Most of them went to high school. When we came along…well, during my mother and father’s time, they went to work.\textsuperscript{50}

Most of them, but not too many. Some stayed here but we never had too large of population of Negroes here.\textsuperscript{51}

All of the participants provided information on their high school attendance including the racial make-up of the school, their teachers and their classes, and how they felt about their high school experience. Every participant, except one, attended an integrated high school with integrated classes. One student attended The Manual Training and Industrial Schools for Colored Youth in Bordentown, New Jersey and another graduated from a public high school and then attended the Berean Manual Training and Industrial School in Philadelphia. The teachers in the integrated high schools were all white. The teachers in Bordentown were reported to be black. In Riverton/Cinnaminson, the Quakers had a separate school for their children.

\textit{Integrated High Schools}

All but one of the participants who were enrolled in high school said that the high schools and classes were integrated. The exception was the participant who was enrolled at ‘Bordentown’ which will be discussed later in the chapter. Attending integrated high schools after segregated grammar schools had varying affects on the participants. All of the participants indicated that going to an integrated high school had little negative effect on them. They knew that the high school was predominately white but they did not express any overt feelings as to

\textsuperscript{48} Bernice Sanders Hazell, Interview, November 10, 2007.
\textsuperscript{49} Louise Rozier, Interview, February 15, 2005.
\textsuperscript{50} Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
\textsuperscript{51} Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
any impact on them. It was expected and they did what they were supposed to do by attending. However, reading between the lines of what was said, and especially what was not said, is a wealth of information regarding their understanding of race relations during that era.

I don’t know. I had no feelings. I don’t have an answer. I was just going to school.52

We understood, but we just accepted it. It was something that was; it didn’t make us feel ‘less’ of a being.53

It was different. You know, you felt like you didn't have to take no stuff that's for sure. But we got along, I make friends quick anyhow, so it didn't matter to me…. (later in the interview) Well you know what the kids in high school, they would like, especially the white kids, look at us like we were nothing but you have to show them that you were something. And right now I'm getting these letters from this boy who went to high school with me, he's writing and saying nice things now. And high school he didn't seem that nice, he wasn't that bad but now he's saying, yeah he's why, I write any write back and I let him know that things weren't the same when we went to school. I got class reunion and stuff, they were very different, very nice. But in high school you can see some of them going down the hall pass you and not say a word to you.54

Later on in life they would always app-you know when I put in an application for a job when I tell them I graduated from Mercerville High School they thought that was very impressive. Because they had mostly all white.55

Oh, we excelled. We were always better than them.56

When asked about how they were treated by the white teachers, the participants painted a very complex picture. They generally stated that the teachers treated them the same as other students, however, more often than not, the participant would weave threads of race and race relations into their answers. Although none of the participants said anything negative about their teachers’ treatments or actions towards them, they did reveal survival techniques and coping strategies...

53 Jean Howard Bose, Interview, January 16, 2006.
54 Bernice Sanders Hazell, Interview, November 10, 2007.
mechanisms like prior preparations by grammar school teachers, keeping feelings masked and trying to blend in.

Well my teachers were Mrs. Holloway, white. We didn’t have any black teachers in high school. No, no, all white teachers in high school. One thing I did appreciate, my teachers, they respected us; those of us who acted like we had some sense and knew what we were doing. And that’s where we had “heads up” being out of West Cape May Elementary Annex. Mr. Moore had prepared us for that. That was another thing, you did not, I did not have the feeling that I was different from the white kids. We were just people in the school together. It was never, even though we had just come from a segregated school system, we were never made to feel like, we did not-now there was always somebody who was, you know folks who wanted to (trails off). But we never, with all of it, I was never made to feel that I was different. And yet, we saw segregation, we saw people be treated differently because.57

Or nervous. And the teachers did not treat us that way. I didn’t have any teachers that treated us that way. As a matter of fact, I think we were better off because there were fewer of us; we just melted into the woodwork. (Next sentence unclear) And because we were prepared to go into this atmosphere, we didn’t make an issue- we were just part of the group. What made it good was that we stood out- we were smart. We weren’t ‘show off-ish); we didn’t go down there acting like we….no, we were people. We were there, we were going to school and we had been taught already to respect your elders, respect your teachers and respect yourself. So when you went to school; and you know everybody tried, everybody’s parents tried to keep us looking good. Oh yeah, we weren’t going to go down there with those white kids looking tacky- oh no! Not a one! Even the poorest one went down there trying to look…58

Comme ci, comme ca.- some was good, some wasn’t. I can look back now and there was some racism but it wasn’t as prevalent as it is now. It was there, you could feel it, you could tell it, you could see it, but of course, those days you didn’t talk about it, you didn’t say anything, you accepted it. You were scared to say anything. Who could you talk to? There was no one we could talk to but it was there, but, we learned to cope with all of that and learned and got out of that school. That’s what we did…To stay focused, get what you came for and to leave…But you could feel it, you know that was there. There were the good times, there were some teachers who were nice and kind to you.59

Public schools were not the only educational institutions available to black children in the state. Many parents chose to send their children to Manual Training and Industrial Schools. One such school was the Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth at Bordentown in New Jersey. The school had a black administrative and teaching staff and taught both academic and manual training to black youth from grades 6 through 12. There was only one participant who attended Bordentown; however another family reported that their two brothers attended the school. The parents selected Bordentown because of their desire to have their children learn a trade(s) that would make them self-sufficient and also for the care their children would receive.

…and you could feel your children were in a safe place. A lot of parents had to work and they knew their children would be under good care at this institution as well as educated. It was a very beautiful thing.60

The students at Bordentown were encouraged to take more than one trade to ensure that they were diversified. Even students in the academic track had to learn at least one trade while in attendance. The participant who attended the school reported that she initially enrolled when she was around 17 years old and went “back and forth for four or five years.”61 During her tenure there, she lived on the campus and took three different trades – catering, cosmetology and to be a personal maid.

I took up catering it was a good business. Then the Depression came and persons weren’t hardly eating or entertaining. And one of the teachers said to me, it’s a good thing your trade and a side, like I had two choices - a beautician cause folks like to get their hair done and go out eating. so therefore I took up cosmetology and even had to make hair pomades and all that stuff like that. You see, it was fine training and learning, we made our own pomades and lotions- it was well

60 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
61 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
rounded. And therefore, I could have a business for myself….if one of them didn't work the other would work-so of course I took, on the side, a course to be a personal maid to take care of rich people and take care of everything for her...  

Teachers

The participant had vivid and fond memories of her time spent at Bordentown. She shared her memories of the teachers, curriculum and the activities that were available to her at the school. She was very fond of the teachers and held them in high esteem. She felt that they were “refined and cultured…and well educated.”63 In describing them she was very attentive to their physical characteristics. When asked if her teachers were black or white, she responded as follows.

No, they were very fair. The darkest one would be about my color…The rest were very fair. And the principal of the school and his wife were fair. They were black, mulatto. Their names were Mr. & Mrs. Valentine….Now we had one teacher name Miss Butcher who came from a family of fifteen children, now she was dark. There was another teacher name Professor Ray, he was dark. They were the two darkest teachers on campus. Everyone else was fair…Miss Butcher was a gym teacher, phys ed., and Mr. Ray was a science teacher. 64

Even though Bordentown was a public school during the participant’s enrollment, she remembers that there were some students that could not afford to attend the school without working to help pay their way. These students were assigned a variety jobs and responsibilities, i.e. “waiters, working around the lawn, yard keepers, cooks assistance, etc. so they earned their way and they had to work year round.”65

63 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
64 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
65 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview February 15, 2005.
The curriculum at Bordentown was rigorous and students were kept busy from sun-up until sundown. The participant reported that they had just a little time before “lights out” as a recreation period. They were also expected to attend chapel which could also include a lecturer or guest speaker.

Well, I will tell you they had a trade; they went to school a half-day then went to your trade the other half of the day and they offered any type of trade that would make a person a good citizen, self-employed such as mechanics, hairdressers, dressmakers, and cooks, domestic science just anything that it would take to make a living without going to college… (Later in the interview) Yes. Anything with agriculture, poultry, farming, dairy. They had a lot of training. Very unusual.66

The curriculum also included daily lectures and chapel which were additional vehicles that were used to impart knowledge to the students. According to the participant, sometimes the Chapel program would include a lecture or presentation by a notable member of the black community. Lecturers that she remembered were given by Mary McLeod Bethune and George Washington Carver.

Although the academic and trades programs were at the forefront of the institution, the school also provided the students with lessons and experiences that would foster “good citizenship” and proper etiquette. These lessons were interwoven into the curriculum and were part of the students’ learning experience. The participant offered the following example of this type of training.

In the dining hall at each table they had a host and hostess. They trained girls how to entertain. The fellows were military trained… and they boys would sit at one end of the table and be host and the girls at the other end and be the hostess. And they taught the kids how to eat and what silver to use and make them know how to entertain. They did a wonderful job. You became a well-rounded person.67

66 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
67 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview February 15, 2005.
Activities

Activities were also an important part of the school experience. They were not only taught to the students for their physical and cultural development, but were an important public relations tool to attract prospective students and philanthropic contributions. The participant spoke about two activities in particular—football and the glee club. In the interview she stated that the Bordentown football team also played Cheyney Training School for Teachers (now Cheyney University) and Lincoln University Schools, both located in Pennsylvania.

Some of them boys was bigger than those college boys. They were from farms and never went to school until they came to Bordentown. And the people from Bordentown always did that under the table stuff. So they can build the football team. So they could get their team on the map.68

Oh yes. They had the glee club singing and they traveled all around and they had a special school bus and you could see them going all around the country to sing.69

Those students who attended an integrated high school had different experiences than those exposed to in grammar school. After graduating from a segregated grammar school they were placed in an integrated high school where they were a minority. In addition to being in a totally different school and atmosphere, all of their grammar school classmates did not attend high school and or graduate from high school. The classes were integrated, but the teachers were white. Not one of the students attending the integrated high school recalled having any black teachers. Most of the participants did not overtly talk about how the racial composition of the high school affected them, but their discussions implied that there was not a feeling of ‘inclusiveness,’ belonging and comraderie with their fellow students. Interestingly, unlike their

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68 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
69 Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
discussions of grammar school, they did not acknowledge any racial interaction with their white high school peers after school.

The experience of the participant that attended Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth at Bordentown had a completely different experience than those who attended the integrated public high schools. Bordentwon had an academic track, but was mostly known as a manual training institute. Parents made a conscious choice in sending their children to this all black residential school. Mildred Moultrie Sanders’ parents sent her to the school to learn skills that would enable her to have a profession. She attended the school as a high school student and enrolled in the Manual Training Track. The participant recalled that all of the teachers at that institution were black and “well educated.” The teachers also taught the students discipline and provided experiences that developed social skills and taught etiquette; but also scheduled educational, social and recreational activities that intended to produce “well rounded” students.

Summary

An important feature in the findings was the parents’, teachers’ and students’/participants’ understanding of the value of education and their role in the educational process. Some of the parents (29%) only had a grammar school education; what educational facilities and access were available to them is unknown. These parents valued what they perceived as the benefits of providing their children with the best education within their means. That meant sending their children to segregated grammar schools within their district; and choosing which type of high school fulfilled their vision of the purpose of education. Their choices were a classical public school education or a manual training institute.

In the findings, the participants’ memories of their teachers,, names and the subjects taught in grammar school were more vivid than in high school. The names of the integrated high
school teachers and course content were rarely touched upon; except to reiterate that the high
school was integrated and all the teachers there were white. The student that attended an all black
manual training school was the only student that actually described the curriculum and the
teachers, and indicated that they felt the teachers were student centered.

The participants, as students, were the primary focus of this project and all information
provided was through their lenses. The participants understood that their parents ‘expected’ them
to go to school and to get an education. The participants felt that that their parents wanted them
to get an education as a way of getting better jobs and improving their lives. For the most part,
they were able to provide insight into the goals of the segregated black educational institutions –
providing education and training, and the promotion of the ideals of civic responsibility,
religious and moral development, and discipline. For most, the information provided on their
high school experiences was either vague or non-existent.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to ascertain what types of educational opportunities were available to African Americans in South Jersey, how they educated themselves and the purpose of their education from 1920 to 1945. The focus of this study was to discover what individuals, institutions and organizations helped shaped the goals of education for black children. This study is based on information obtained from the interviews of individuals who were students in the Southern New Jersey public school system during that period.

This is a study of black education in South Jersey during an historical period that included the migration of blacks to the north in an attempt to escape Jim Crow, who lived in ostensibly integrated school districts. This study purposely does not address schools located in historically black towns in South Jersey. These were people who were attempting to provide a better life for themselves, and have better access to education for their children. Added to the challenges of fleeing to the north was the onset of two World Wars and the Great Depression, and segregation. All these affected where they lived, how they lived, available services, and how they were educated.

From the onset, it is important to understand that this study does not include participants who attended school systems in towns that were formed during New Jersey’s Black Town Settlement Movement: i.e. Lawnside, Gouldtown, and Whitesboro. Their unique development and characteristics should be studied separately.

Furthermore, this project was not a comparison study. No value was placed on which of the school systems provided the best education. The purpose of this study was to define the types

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of education that were available and the purpose of that education. Like the study conducted by Vanessa Siddle-Walker on the Caswell County Training School in rural North Carolina, this dissertation project provides an “emic perspective.” The data analysis in this study is based on black education in South Jersey from the lenses of the participants and their recollections of forces that helped shape the type of education available. This is also not a comparison of black education based on any comparisons of education available to other ethnic or racial groups. Too often when comparisons are made there is the assumption that one of the variables must ‘be better’ or more preferable. That was not the intent or focus of this study.

The ‘given’ in this analysis is that all of the parents and guardians of the participants wanted their children to be educated. Notably, the “children” understood why their parents thought education was important and how they felt it would benefit their lives. The parents’ view of the purpose of education, their knowledge of what educational options were available, their occupation and the economic conditions all influenced the level of educational attainment and type of educational institutions their children attended.

It is also a ‘given’ that all of the participants in this study, regardless of the county, attended segregated grammar schools within their respective towns. All but one of the participants attended their local ‘integrated’ high schools. There were two participants who attended all-black manual training schools; one attended to obtain her high school diploma and the other attended for additional training after graduating from an integrated high school. That said, memories and discussions were significantly less detailed when referencing their high school experiences. And a portrait of race relations in high school was painted not only by what was said, but also by what was left unsaid.

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3 Ibid., 11.
This study is based on self-reported data from adult participants recalling memories of childhood through the eyes of children. Their stories were enriched through the sharing of what they saw, heard, learned, and felt. Children are ‘children’ and do what they are told, but have big ears and a natural curiosity and synthesize both – this is their story.

This chapter discusses how economic status, occupational opportunities, and access to cultural capital guided the decisions on 1) what types of education were available, 2) the purpose of that education, 3) the effects of external and internal influences and most importantly 4) how did the participants perceive their educational experiences. Interviews with the participants allowed them to tell their story from their lenses. The sharing of their educational development are richly interwoven with colorful recollections of their families, communities and the racial attitudes of their times.

New Jersey’s Southern Cultural Roots

Some researchers have claimed that South Jersey’s racial attitudes were more closely aligned with those of the south and were greatly influenced by their southern bordering neighbors of Delaware and Maryland. Others have argued that South Jersey also modeled some of their racial attitudes after those of Philadelphia. The information obtained from these interviews supports both of these claims.

Like the U.S. south and the bordering states and locales, including Philadelphia, schools were segregated. In the southern states grammar schools, where available, were segregated. In some areas there was no access to secondary education for black children. In Augusta, Georgia, the high schools were segregated. Ware High School, the black high school, was established in

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5 Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 14-16.
1890 and was closed by the school board in 1897 to redirect the school’s budget to the black elementary school. Ware High School did not reopen until 1945. In 1915, there were no public high schools for black children in 23 major southern cities with significant black populations.6

Like the south, the number of segregated grammar schools for black children continued to increase in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. While schools in North Jersey began the process of integrating their facilities, South Jersey’s number of black schools continued to increase. The counties of “Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem” ranked highest in the state for the number of black schools. Burlington County increased its number of black schools from 1913 from 5 black schools to 11 schools in 1930.7

Like Philadelphia, New Jersey introduced laws abolishing the separation of schools for black and white children in 1881.8 However, like Philadelphia, this was merely symbolic politics; in reality, segregated school systems continued to exist. Blacks were protesting school segregation until 19379; in South Jersey, schools remained segregated for decades.10 The defendant’s attorneys in the Brown v Board of Education surveyed “education officials” in many states. The data from the surveys revealed the following.

New Jersey falsely reported that “[a]t no time has segregation by race been established by law in the public schools of New Jersey,” ignoring state legislation in 1844 and 1850 that expressly granted local communities the right to establish segregated schools, a right that many local communities exercised and would continue to exercise until the early 1950s in violation of an 1881 statute that forbade such segregation.11

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7 Devore, “The Education of Blacks in New Jersey 1900-1930”, 247
8 Marion M. Thompson Wright, The Education of Negroes In New Jersey, 4-5.
11 Ibid., 3-4.
Type and Availability of Education for Black Children

Grammar School

Photograph 1: West Cape May Annex-Class of 1914

According to the interviews with the participants, public schools were available to them in each of their respective communities. However, for the grammar school grades, the schools were segregated and black students were required to attend the all-black schools. Sometimes the participants had to pass by the white schools before they arrived at their designated school. Other times the white and black schools were next door to each other. The black grammar schools had different names or were referred to as the ‘annex’ to designate it as the school to be used for black children, and were commonly referred to as the ‘colored school.’ All of the teachers were black in their grammar schools.

Post *Plessey v Ferguson*, the grammar school facilities in New Jersey were ‘separate,’ but ‘not equal’ to white schools. In most cases, when the students described their schools they noted that their school buildings were different than the white schools. Those students recalled that

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their school was smaller and had fewer classrooms. It was common for these students to experience having multiple grades sharing the same space, and/or different grade levels being taught simultaneously by the same teacher. In East Riverton, the black school did not have the same resources and equipment within their building for home economic classes; therefore their teacher would take them to the white school to teach those classes.

Photograph 2: West Cape May Elementary School 13

![Photograph 2: West Cape May Elementary School](image)

Photograph 3: West Cape May Annex 14

![Photograph 3: West Cape May Annex](image)


Black teachers were important in the schools, as well as in the communities where they taught. Teachers were regarded as ‘professionals’ and leaders within the communities. They were not only responsible for teaching the basic established New Jersey curricula, but black parents expected the teachers to prepare their children for success, endurance, and to teach their children how carve out a better life for themselves. Included in the teachers’ broad sweep of responsibilities was the expectation that they lay foundations for the students’ behavioral, moral, and cultural development. In some districts the teachers lived in the communities, in others, the teachers commuted in, as a group, by bus from Philadelphia. This was mentioned several times by students who lived in Burlington County.

The participants had vivid recollections of the curriculum, the activities and the expectations of their grammar school teachers. When they spoke of their grammar school experiences, they demonstrated through their words and expressions an understanding of why they were in school and the respect they had for the teachers. They all spoke about how the teachers expected the students to learn and demonstrate ‘discipline,’ and how strict the teachers were with ‘on the spot corrections and chastisement of undisciplined behaviors. However, they all understood, as children, as well as in hindsight, that the teachers strictness was imparting a very important lesson that they would need for the rest of their lives. At no time did they express dislike for any of their teachers or express that they felt that any teacher disliked or disrespected any of the children. Their descriptions of how they felt about their grammar school experience were very positive.

Nope, cause in them days people didn’t lie on you. As far as the parents were concerned they would acknowledge Miss. so and so, she was the teacher; she’s not going to tell something that wasn’t true. And today you can’t even tell a kid to
keep quiet.¹⁵

I remember a teacher, Mrs. Young. She was a younger teacher that’s what I remember. She was a stern teacher. She was tough but she was good. She was good for us. That’s what we need today, some more teachers like that. She was very stern and she made you learn. Miss Terry was good too.¹⁶

High School

According to the participants, not all of their elementary schoolmates continued on to high school, and of those who did attend high school, many did not graduate. The economic upheaval caused by the Great Depression meant some students had to find employment to help with family expenses and survival. One participant stated that there were very few black males in high school during World War II due to enlistments in the armed service.

There were two types of public high schools available in New Jersey for the participants during that period – the integrated public high school within their district and The Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth at Bordentown. The school at Bordentown was designed after Tuskegee Institute, and as such, offered on-campus housing and had black teachers, principals and staff. The integrated public high schools had predominately white students, and in contrast to Bordentown, did not hire blacks in any positions of authority. These schools provided two totally different emphases on purpose, curriculum and atmosphere for their students.

Unlike their enthusiastic and freely given description of their experiences and coursework in grammar school, the participants who attended the integrated high schools had very little to say about their high school. Most information was obtained through the process of asking multiple probing questions. They glossed over their high school lives. However, not only was the

information they divulged important, but some of the most valuable analysis was based on what was omitted from their discourse. What they did not talk about were their feelings about attending the school, how they were treated and how it affected them.

A few students provided a little insight into what the racial climate was like in the integrated school. Bernice Sanders Hazell, who attended Palmyra High School in Burlington County mentioned that she knew that she did not have to “take no stuff” from the white students. Later in her interview, she talked a little about how the white students would come in contact with her in the hallway and not speak or acknowledge her presence. Louise Rozier, who attended Mercerville High School in Pennsauken in Camden County, participated in several extra-curricular activities, but she stated that when they went on school trips or excursions, the black students had separate hotel rooms. The Howard sisters, attended Cape May High School and repeatedly talked about how their grammar school prepared them on what to expect in high school and that they were taught by their parents and grammar school teachers to be ‘better than’ the white students. But with all of them, there were no direct statements regarding how they felt when they were ignored, had to be ‘better than’ or when they were not assigned to share hotel rooms with their white peers or team mates. And yet, there were no in-depth conversations on how they were treated and how it affected them. There was also almost no mention of how it felt to be placed in such a totally different atmosphere than their grammar schools, how the teachers reacted towards them or if they developed any interracial friendships.

The participants’ lack of direct and free flowing information regarding their experiences in high school suggests that there may have been some level of discomfort in the way they were perceived and/or treated. Why they were reluctant to express their feelings about their experiences signals a cause to be concerned. It is this researcher’s opinion that this ‘orchestrated
dance’ around the subject of race and discrimination may be the rehearsed responses taught to them as children. In the age of Jim Crow, and the discrimination and segregationist attitudes in South Jersey, their parents’ lives and livelihoods were dependent on the perceived acceptance of their lower caste status by whites in power. For purposes of survival it would be imperative that parents teach their children the expected acceptable behaviors and speech. I strongly suspect that those children were taught not to express, in actions or speech, any feeling regarding the discrimination and/or mistreatment by whites. And as adults, these children of that time period still prefer to “mouth with myriad subtleties.” However, these structured silences and subtleties are definite areas for future research.

Mildred Moultrie Sanders attended the Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth at Bordentown and unlike the other participants, spent most of her interview sharing information on the school and her experiences there. In contrast to the participants who attended integrated public high schools, Ms. Sanders provided in-depth descriptions of the curriculum and the teachers, the school schedule and activities, the social life, and a rare glimpse of the perceptions of ‘color’ within the black community. And unlike other participants, she was able to articulate the school’s purpose, its value to the black community and how the school benefited the future endeavors of the students. Ms. Sanders described the teachers as being very knowledgeable, refined and professional. She felt that these teachers recognized that many of their students were not exposed to the ‘basics’ skills and behaviors needed to interface with the white culture, i.e. using proper eating utensils, how to properly serve food, etc. Bordentown “socialized” their students to be successful students and members of society.18

In the dining hall at each table they had a host and hostess. They trained girls how

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18 A Place in Time: The Bordentown School, Davidson, Dave (Producer), Hudson West Production, 2009.
to entertain. The fellows were military trained… and they boys would sit at one end of the table and be host and the girls at the other end and be the hostess. And they taught the kids how to eat and what silver to use and make them know how to entertain. They did a wonderful job. You became a well-rounded person.¹⁹

Photograph 4: The Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth at Bordentown²⁰

The great ‘secret’ to most people, even those who had heard about Bordentown, was that it was not only a manual training school. In 1927 the Principal William A. Valentine who was a former Tuskegee teacher, incorporated a College Prep track to assist with the development of W.E.B. DuBois’ concept of the “Talented Tenth.” However, those students, in addition to their classical education, were also required to learn a manual or industrial skill.²¹

Ms. Sanders, like the Alumni in the Bordentown documentary film, and other Bordentown Alumni who I have met, all had enormous respect and utmost reverence for the purpose(s) of the school and dedication of the principal and teachers. According to Clement Price, Bordentown was “more than a school, it was a symbol” for the black community.²² The school hosted conferences and tournaments during the school year and also in the summer. These events were open to the community. Bordentown was not only referred to as the “Tuskegee of

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¹⁹ Mildred Moultrie Sanders, Interview, February 15, 2005.
²⁰ Picture from the NJ State Archives.
²¹ A Place in Time: The Bordentown School, Davidson, Dave (Producer), Hudson West Production, 2009.
²² A Place in Time: The Bordentown School, Davidson, Dave (Producer), Hudson West Production, 2009.
the North” but also as the “Black Forest Hills” which was a wealthy white community in Newark.

The students’ views of their segregated grammar schools and high school were very different than those of the integrated high schools. The references to race and discussions on the relevance of race during their school days were pretty much limited to their segregated school experiences, including the fact that many of them played with white children. However, once they reached the integrated high schools, they did not say much. Ms. Sanders was the only participant who talked more about her high school experiences than those of her grammar school. At this point in the study, it cannot be fully determined on what factors this positive reflection on their segregated school experiences is based. Perhaps having teachers of the same race made the students more comfortable, offered a positive image of a role model, and/or the teachers provided encouragement and promoted their sense of self esteem. Other possibilities could include the feelings that the teachers cared about them, even to the point of disciplining them ‘for their own good’ with the sanctioning and respect of their parents. However, the participants observed and discussed all of the preceding as qualities in their segregated school experiences.

Educational Influences

Popular Educational Philosophy

Although not mentioned by the participants, there were two prominent African American educational philosophers during that time period. These philosophers had two very distinct visions for the directions of education for black children. Booker T. Washington was a firm believer in the philosophy of industrial education as the means for
black survival. The Manual Training and Industrial School at Bordentown was modeled after Washington’s Tuskegee Institute. Whereas E. B. DuBois promoted a more classical style academic curriculum which included college attendance as a means of developing the leaders for the race called the “Talented Tenth.” who would provide leadership for the race. Both were well known within black communities.

This study could not conclude to what extent the educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington’s and/or W.E.B. DuBois’ were known by the parents of the participants or directly influenced their decisions. However, at least two families living in Cape May County chose to send some of their children to Bordentown and others to college; in these families totaling nine children, three went to Bordentown, five went to college, and one concluded their education after graduating from local high school.

Educational Configurations

While most people view education as a process that can only be accomplished in a school setting, education takes place in a variety of places and has different configurations.” These “configurations of education” can be “political, pedagogical, or personal” and can be delivered by different “educational agencies,” i.e. individuals, educational institutions, communities, organizations, etc. In the case of some of the participants, these different agencies had a profound effect on defining and facilitating the type of schools they attended.23

Individual life histories must be taken into consideration when examining the choices and outcomes of a person’s education. From the perspective of the learner, the

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educational path usually begins with the influence of ‘individuals’ that have a close connection with the student, such as parents, teachers, and religious and community leaders. The participant’s parents who were able to create relationships with other educational agencies chose to send their children to Bordentown or to college.\textsuperscript{24}

The Effects of Capital on Education

The participants’ descriptions of the type of education they received in public school were very similar, except for the student who attended a manual training school. However, the interviews also told the story of the differences in the educational systems and the extent of their education. Some of these differences can be attributed to the types of industry and job availability in the area. However, in some instances the parents played a major role in determining the types of schools that were available within their communities, the purpose of those schools, and the decisions on what type of education they selected for their children. These parents had the power of ‘capital’ to invest in their children’s’ educational future. Capital could be possessed by individuals or a community in various forms, but regardless of the type, it provided knowledge and power to determine how education would mold the future of their children.

The highest levels of educational attainment were observed in the children raised in Cape May County. Eight of the nine children in the participants’ families in that county graduated from a school that taught them a profession. These parents chose to send their children to a manual training school to learn a trade or to college to obtain a degree. Although the highest percentage was in Cape May County, this was in no way unique, there were others. But in each of these cases the family had one thing in common; that commonality was access to capital.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 38.
Economic Opportunity

Historically, one purpose of education has been to prepare students to be productive citizens. To do so, public school systems need to understand the types of industry in their area and then design their curriculum to also produce graduates that will be able to successfully fill those jobs and thus maintain that economy. In just looking at two of three counties represented by the participants – Burlington and Cape May – the industries are vastly different. Burlington County depended on its labor intensive agricultural economy. By 1943, the county’s farming products were valued in excess of $11,000,000, and agricultural land and property was estimated to be worth almost $21,000,000. The Burlington County public schools included agriculture classes into the curriculum in areas where farming was the main economy. In contrast, the participants from Cape May County lived in Wildwood and West Cape May. Those cities main source of income was from the resort and tourism industry. Their school systems developed employees that would be able to fulfill the primarily service oriented roles that would maintain a tourism economy. According to Ms. Mildred Moultrie Sanders, a resident of Wildwood, there was even a distinction between the type of service employees required between Wildwood and Cape May. She stated that most students who wanted to work as butlers in Cape May wanted to go to school in Cape May or Bordentown. Those were the two places where they would teach you to be “refined;” only those students who were taught those characteristics would be “hired by refined families.”

The businesses of the County sent powerful messages to the School Boards on what additional curriculum would help them in maintaining the economy. In Burlington County,
districts whose economy was based on agriculture, public schools included classes in agriculture and homemaking.28 In Cape May’s resort and tourism industry it was a matter of insuring that there were enough service employees to support that economy. In areas with different types of industries, i.e. forestry, agriculture, seafood, etc, the curriculum was adjusted accordingly.

**Calculation of Parental Capital**

According to the participants, all of their parents/guardians felt that a formal education was important regardless of their own educational background. However, the type of institution their children attended and their level of educational attainment were influenced by their parents’ amount of, and/or access to, economic, cultural and social capital.29

Economic capital, otherwise known as socio-economic status, is a measure of one’s wealth or possessions that can be easily converted to wealth, i.e. occupation and property. Economic capital allows the holder to have the time to develop cultural and social capital. Cultural capital exists in three states – embodied (individual’s “assimilation” into a culture and adoption of its characteristics), objectified (material possessions, i.e., books, art, and instruments), or institutionalized (i.e., educational degrees or certifications). Social capital denotes one’s access to a form of collective capital that is gained by membership in an organization or family unit. Most of these different types of capital can be converted into one of the other forms, or inherited – unless the capital no longer exists after the demise of its holder. These forms of capital are maximized when inherited by the children.30

30 Ibid., 241-258.
Parents in possessing economic, cultural or social capital, whether actual or symbolic, had been exposed to the tools they needed to influence their children’s educational and employment futures. This capital allowed them to prepare a plan of action that would help their children to secure their parents’ accumulation of capital and to amass even more of their own.\footnote{Ibid., 241-258.}

\textit{Economic Status}

Economic status appeared to be one of the parents’ most powerful tools in the planning and guidance of their children’s educational development. However, generally their status and their occupation were intertwined. The two families who fit into this category were the Howard and the Moultrie family. The Howard sisters’, Bernice Howard Gordon and Jean Howard Bose, father was a licensed plumber who worked for the Coast Guard and had his own business. Mildred Moultrie Sanders’ parents were both self-employed. Her father was a house painter and her mother had her own employment agency, a bed and breakfast, and other income producing properties. Mrs. Moultrie (the participant’s mother) “ran the west side of Wildwood”.\footnote{Bob Bright, Manager/Historian of the Wildwood Historical Museum, August, 2010.} These parents carefully planned their children’s education. In these two families, five of the nine children attended college. But more significant is that they made a conscious decision to pay for three of their children, who were not academically inclined to attend college, to enroll in Bordentown. Only one child did not attend college or Bordentown because she wanted to work within her mother’s employment agency business.

For the parents in these families economic capital came in the form of their wealth derived from their occupation, certifications, and property ownership. Their economic status allowed them the time to collect the other forms of capital-cultural and social- and spend the time necessary to develop their children’s educational success.
Cultural Capital

Some of the parents had occupations that may have placed them in a higher socio-economic status; other parents had employment that did not offer them monetary wealth. However, sometimes the type of employment placed one in the position of interfacing with people who have cultural capital. Parents with this access had occupations which consisted of 1) having their own business which allowed them to be self-employed, and 2) were employed in personal service occupations with wealthy families whose businesses were nationally known. The children of parents in these two distinct occupations received an education that provided them with the knowledge to obtain professional occupations or the skills to be self-employed.

Although this research project’s focus was on public school education, this section will include the participants, and siblings’ college attendance information. The Moultrie and Howard families had a combined total of nine children. Of this total, four of the nine children graduated from four-year colleges, one graduated from a two year-college, and three attended the Manual and Industrial Training School for Colored Youth at Bordentown. The remaining child remained at home to work in her mother’s business. It was important to these parents that their children become self-sufficient. In the Howard family, who had 4 children, the parents sent the two girls to college and the two boys to Bordentown.

Another example of the educational benefits derived from having access to cultural capital through service employment was demonstrated by the Moody Family. Both parents worked for two distinguished wealthy families. The father was the chauffer for one of the owners of the Lippincott Publishing Company and the mother was a housekeeper for a family member of the Bailey, Banks and Biddle Jewelers. Their employment with these families provided them with the knowledge of educational options for their six children, two of whom graduated from a
four-year college, and one (the participant) graduated from a two-year secretarial college.

Another case that supports this theory of the effects of being exposed to ‘cultural capital’ on education involves Martin Luther King, Mr.’s lawyer and speechwriter, Clarence Jones. Mr. Jones’ parents also worked for the Lippincott family in Riverton, N.J. Neither of his parents had graduated from high school and his father was employed as a “chauffeur and gardener” and his mother as a “maid and cook.” They both were “live-in” employees which forced them to place their son in a foster home at birth and when he was 6 years old his parents enrolled him in the Sisters of Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People, which was a Catholic Boarding School.\(^{33}\)

If I had been in a public school in New Jersey at that time, it would have been segregated. This was different. The nuns grounded me in Latin and English grammar. I can still remember going to the chalkboard in the front of the classroom and diagramming a sentence.\(^{34}\)

He returned to Riverton to live with his parents, in their own home, when he was 15 years old and he attended Palmyra High School. There, he was the President of the Honor Society, a graduation class speaker, and also “voted as the ‘Person Most Likely to Succeed’ and the ‘Most Outstanding Student.’” Mr. Jones later received a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Columbia University and a law degree from Boston University.\(^{35}\)

Parents who had occupations that provided them with the ability to interface and/or interact with people who were in a higher economic bracket and social class, and had cultural capital are exposed to lifestyles and ideals that are deposited in their ‘bank of knowledge.’ As these ‘savings’ multiply, they are invested in the aspirations that they have for their children’s futures – and they have a more expansive understanding of the potential value of education.


\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
Social Capital

National and local organizations provided social interaction, social services, and educational activities and scholarships. Membership and involvement in these organizations provided the community with information that was relevant and important to members of the black community. The information provided in their educational programs covered a wide range of topics that were intended to improve the lives of those in attendance. They also provided valuable networking opportunities. Unlike occupational and cultural capitals which are often obtained through the observations and interactions with those in a different class or culture; social capital, obtained through organizational involvement, is tailored to meet the needs of the members – a homogeneous group with shared aspirations and concerns.

The participants mentioned several national fraternal orders and political organizations that were available in their communities. Some of the participants remembered that their parents were members of these organizations, some just attended programs and others did not have any perceived direct exposure. National Fraternal organizations mentioned were the Elks, Masons, Knights of Pythias, Shriners and the Daughters of the Eastern Star. Two other organizations that were not mentioned by the participants were Queen Esther and the Household of Ruth. Mrs. Bernice Howard Gordon is buried in an African American cemetery in Whitesboro that was named after these two organizations. The historically black town of Whitesboro also had a Longfellow’s Lodge. These organizations provided valuable information and services to the communities. Mrs. Bernice Howard Gordon, of West Cape May, explained the role of the Fraternal Organizations in her town.

Well they were the social service people of that day because that was part of their commitment; to help families. They were also a social outlet for our people; everybody did not want to go to a bar and such. So you had a lot of night clubs around- plenty of them. But then there was always that group of people that wanted to be special and
different and their aspirations were higher. So they had the Eastern Stars, the Masons, the Elks, and the Shriners. My pops, my grandfather, belonged to the Knights of Pythias. You never heard of them? That was an old group.\textsuperscript{36}

According to Dorothy Watkins, of East Riverton,

\ldots we had the Elks at that time just like we have now, the Elks and Masonic and we stayed around those places a lot and from them we got a chance to learn things and they would tell you about what their organization was all about and what they stood for.\textsuperscript{37}

An unexpected finding was the amount of political involvement within the black communities, The NAACP was mentioned in Mary Ellen Ransom’s interview. In Cape May County, Mrs. Bernice Howard Gordon enlightened me on the political prowess of the women that lived in neighboring Wildwood.

\ldots when it came to black families in Wildwood was strong. The black economy in Wildwood was built on the backs of black women...They were the ones controlling issues over there in Wildwood. For one thing, they got into politics…Yes, that’s why they were so strong. Oh yeah, in Wildwood, it was the black women who were in politics. They flourished, they moved! You see, in Cape May the black men were very independent and they had their own businesses; and they did. Wildwood was a different story, those black women got into politics and it was the Italian people in Wildwood pushed them black women. They opened the ways for them. The black men were doing their little thing, they had their little trades some of them. They were not business. It seemed like the mentality of the women in Wildwood was ‘business.’ Naked business.\textsuperscript{38}

Mrs. Mildred Moultrie Sanders also explained that her father was a lecturer and was involved in speaking in Trenton for the Republican candidate William Taft Harding’s presidential campaign.

Local community organizations also played an important role in the communities. Local organizations included Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), church activities and literary organizations. Mary Ellen Ransom, who went to school in Woodbury, explained that the PTAs

\textsuperscript{36} Bernice Howard Gordon, Interview, January 16, 2006.
\textsuperscript{37} Dorothy Watkins, Interview, November 24, 2007.
\textsuperscript{38} Bernice Howard Gordon, Interview, January 16, 2006.
for the grammar schools were, of course, segregated. Black parents were not included in the white PTA. In Cape May, the Howard sisters’ mother was the leader of a 4-H club which taught women how to sew. There was also a women’s club called the Social Service Workers who had fundraising events to assist families who were in need of financial assistance, food and clothing. Bernice Howard Gordon stated that “we were doing things like the Federal Government Today.”

The women in the churches in the Cape May area hosted “literary teas” where you paid ten cents for a cup of tea and listened to lectures or recitations that were educational. The Howard sisters’ mother was very involved in one of these groups and as children would accompany their mother to the meetings. Bernice Howard Gordon, her daughter, described the “literary teas” as:

…they were really into poetry, that’s what I am trying to think of. They had Langston Hughes, aha; we had women who were very much into remembering (and) reciting poetry… And that’s where they would come together and they would talk. Yeah. Dunbar; they would quote the black writers. Negro history were a big thing, but the women in their ‘C’ circles, they would keep that up all year round. They just didn’t wait til February to talk about the black folks. Okay… that’s the one thing the women in the churches did do. They did have that kind of activity. Yeah. That was a big thing to have their get-togethers and have their little sandwiches and their teas and whatever. ..They were elocutionists and they just loved to do this; and it was exciting just sitting there listening to them. And then we had a woman, Thea Allison, a relative of ours, beautiful pianist, and see they had to have that music. See, this was very important to have somebody that could sing, and they would have people that could play and this made up their program. This was our culture. Sunday afternoon.39

People who were members of these organizations learned how to provide for their communities. Many of these organizations were the social fabric and social organizations for their communities. They were also a means of sharing information and providing educational activities and resources to members and attendees.

Having economic, cultural and social capital were the keys in the determination of the types of education that were available to children by their parents and the community. Parents who possessed or had access to these types of capital had the financial knowledge and social means to select the best educational opportunities to secure a better future for their children. Children of parents who lacked cultural capital did not have the means nor influence to aid their community’s public schools. Furthermore, they did not have enough information or finances to provide their children with alternate educational resources. The children of parents without capital were devoid of the “economic and cultural means for prolonging their children’s education beyond the minimum necessary for the reproduction of the labor power least valorized at a given moment”.  

Summary

This dissertation was an attempt to discover information on the availability of education for African Americans in South Jersey between 1920 and 1945. Particular interests were placed on the discovery of the types and purposes of their schools, and which individuals, institutions and/or organizations shaped the goals of the schools black children attended. This was an oral history in which the participants were recorded by digital camera in their own homes or homes of friends and family members.

The location of the interviews was not only done for the convenience of the participants, but also in an effort to host the interview in a place that was natural for them. Some participants chose to be interviewed in the same session with other family members or with their friends. This comfort level allowed the participants to freely discuss their educational experiences, and it also allowed them to expound on other important aspects of their lives during that period. Most

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40 Bordieu, P. "The Forms of Capital", 241-258.
of the information received was so rich in descriptions that no other method would have been as effective.

The results indicated that all of the participants had parents who wanted them to ‘get an education’ so that they could improve their lives. Their parents felt that education would provide their children with broader occupational options than those of themselves. Education was viewed as an important form of ‘capital.’

All of the participants attended and graduated from black grammar schools in an era when public schools in South Jersey were segregated on the elementary level. Their teachers in these segregated schools were also black. Black teachers were not permitted to teach in white schools. Even though several of the New Jersey statutes made segregation illegal, segregated schools existed in South Jersey past the Supreme Courts findings in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. It is important to note here that in two of the towns represented in this study – Camden, Cinnaminson (East Riverton) – partitioned the State to allow their schools to remain segregated following the 1881 legislation prohibiting such acts. These parents did not want to subject their children to the risk of being mistreated by whites in integrated schools.\(^{41}\)

Photograph 5: West Cape May Grammar Schools Graduation Class

1939 Graduating Class from the two West Cape May Grammar Schools
This class picture was taken by the garden fishpond at the home of Ottier Howard.
(Photo courtesy of the Williams J. Moore Family)\(^{42}\)

Photograph 6: Ottier Howard\(^{43}\)

All of the participants were able to talk about their experiences in grammar school. They spoke about the teachers, the curriculum and smiled and laughed about the discipline they received if they did not behave. Some participants went so far as to talk about the purpose of their education and how the teachers were not only imparting knowledge, but they were building self esteem. Their stories reflected that they were comfortable in their surroundings and had a sense of

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\(^{42}\) “School History,” West Cape May School District, [http://westcape.nj.schoolwebpages.com/education/school/schoolhistory.php?sectionid=16&linkid=nav-menu-container-4-69](http://westcape.nj.schoolwebpages.com/education/school/schoolhistory.php?sectionid=16&linkid=nav-menu-container-4-69). (accessed August 23, 2010). Note: Ottier Howard was the grandfather of Bernice Howard Gordon and Jean Howard Bose who were participants in this project.

\(^{43}\) Picture of Ottier Howard from the Physick Estate, Cape May, N.J.
purpose and belonging. But all of that changed when they attended integrated high schools.

The participants who attended their local public high school were subjected to a totally different atmosphere and had to interact with white teachers and school mates. They were now forced to interact with whites at a different level. The responses to questions regarding their experiences in high school were very short and direct. The enthusiasm and exuberance they displayed when talking about their grammar school experience did not transition into their discussions about high school. The tone and content of their discussion was relatively flat for most of the participants, except for the participant who attended Bordentown, an all black school.

The Manual Training and Industrial Institute at Bordentown for Colored Youth offered its students the opportunity to learn a skill or trade that would insure their employment. The school was modeled after Tuskegee Institute and offered a manual training and an academic track. Students enrolled in the academic track also had to learn a trade before graduating. Parents sent their children to this school because of its purpose and it offered the students a safe and secure residential campus environment. The participant who attended Bordentown was proud of its heritage and spent a good part of her interview reminiscing about the schools purpose, her courses, the curriculum, the principal and teachers. All of the teachers and the principal were black, and she described what each one of her teachers taught and painted a verbal picture of how they looked. There was an excitement and sense of belonging in her experience that was unlike those of the other participants who attended integrated public schools.

Throughout the interviews, participants not only talked about their parents aspirations for their children’s education, but discussed what their parents did and sacrificed to fulfill their dreams for their children’s futures. Clearly, some parents played an important and pivotal role in orchestrating the type and purpose of education their children received. These parents had the
resources, connections and knowledge to either shape the public school system that their children attended and/or select a school that would better meet their goals. These parents had 1) occupations that allowed them to interact or interface with a broad range people including those of a different class and culture, 2) had a higher than average economic status, and/or 3) were active or participated in organizations that shared information. In other words, these parents had access to a form of economic, cultural and social capital that allowed them to make informed decisions on the types of education that would best benefit their children. The children of these parents were fortunate enough to attend black grammar schools that prepared them to excel in high school, or to attend a school that would train them in a trade. The children of these parents either attended college or attended Bordentown and were ready to work or own their own business upon graduation. These parents had the cultural capital to insure that their children would succeed in an era that segregated and discriminated against blacks.

The results obtained in this study provided valuable historical information on the education of blacks in South Jersey between 1920 and 1945. However, as with all studies, there were areas that presented particular obstacles in the gathering of supportive information. Some of the problems were the results of the researcher and others were more systemic. Some of the problems were resolvable and others had no resolution. The following are a few of the problems encountered while collecting data.

Interacting with Community- I selected a topic in a geographical area where I was an outsider and did not know people within the communities. I learned very early in the project that as an outsider it was imperative that I was ‘formally introduced’ to community members or the research project would fail. I had to retreat and find people within the community that were respected and trusted, and were willing to assist me through formal introductions and referrals.
Finding Participants- The age of the participants was a critical factor in this study. It was difficult finding participants who were enrolled in school in the early years of the study, who remembered details of their education, and were willing to talk about their experiences.

Locating records and supporting documentation- Once the participants had been interviewed, finding supportive documentation was the greatest obstacle. Some of the records from schools no longer existed or were difficult to find. Records and documents that did exist were archived in so many different places, that it made it difficult and sometimes impossible to find their location. There was no centralized area within the state or county that had a copy of all the records or an up to date and accurate database on where they could be located. Understandably, each local historical association, museum, or library wanted possession of original historical documents but there needs to be a centralized data base of where these documents are housed. Other pitfalls included associations that would not allow researchers to view their documents, and in one case, a board of education had given old files away to an individual on the premise that this person was writing a book. These public, and possibly some private, information was therefore no longer available to other researchers.

While this research project uncovered a wealth of information about the education of black students during a specific period in South Jersey’s history, it also unearthed as many mysteries. There were topics that kept surfacing in which there were no available answers or were not directly related to this research question. This information would add depth and color to the portrait of the black community and its resources.

Education in New Jersey’s Historical Black Towns- this project purposely did not delve into what types of education was available within these communities. Were the purposes of education decided by internal or external forces?
*Perspectives on Black Teachers*- How did they see their purpose and what were their challenges? It also would be interesting to know where the black teachers originated from, how they were selected and by whom, where they went to school and what were their credentials. Some of the participants mentioned that their teachers commuted daily via bus from Philadelphia; it would be interesting to document the Philadelphia connection to black education in New Jersey.

*The Affects of Integration in Education on Black Students*- The participants who attended integrated high schools did not talk about how this transition from a segregated grammar school affected them. Also valuable would be a study about the affects of integrating grammar schools on children that were in attendance during this transition period.

*Strategic Silences* - Today it is permitted to talk about race relations and its affects – or is it? The participants did not discuss in any depth race relations that may have had a negative effect on them. This occurred too often to be incidental. Is this something that they were taught as children for the sake of survival?

*The History of Black Organizations in Black Communities in New Jersey* - Black organizations were important vehicles for social interaction, networking and information sharing. Which organizations were available in New Jersey, what was their mission and purpose, and how they were valued within the communities?

The African American Women of Wildwood - The participants in West Cape May admired the political connections and power, and the business acumen of the women living in Wildwood. There is very little to document their activities, but is a subject worth future research.
This study, in its entirety, provided insight on the types of education available to black children during that era in South Jersey. The participants, who were children at that time, allowed us to hear through video and transcripts and to understand how they were educated, what they learned and, in some cases, how they felt. It also provided insights into their parents’ lives and views on education; a glimpse of the lives of a generation that has long passed; members the first generations born after the Emancipation Proclamation. These parents had the spirit and tenacity to ensure that their children obtained something to which many of them had been denied – an education.
REFERENCES

Books


Douglass, Margaret. *Educational Laws of Virginia: The Personal Narrative of Mrs. Margaret Douglass, a Southern Woman, Who Was Imprisoned for One Month in the Common Jail*


Education of African Americans in South Jersey


Encyclopedias


Journals


Magazines


Newspapers

Bowen, J.W.E. “Who Are We?” *Voice of the Negro* no. 3 (January 1906).

Government Documents

*Abstract of the 14th Census of the US, Population*, 1)“School Attendance of Population 13-20 Years of Age for Principal Population Classes by Divisions and States, 1920 &1910” and 2) “School Attendance of Population 7-13 Years of Age for Principal Population Classes by Divisions and States, 1920 &1910”

Education of African Americans in South Jersey

*New Jersey School Laws.* Trenton, New Jersey: MacCrellish and Squigley, 1911.

**Dissertations and Theses**


**Unpublished Documents**


**Films**


**Internet Documents**


APPENDICIES
APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

_The following are examples of the types of questions that will be asked during the interview sessions in an effort to ascertain educational information._

**Personal Information**
- Name
- Age and Birth date
- Where you were born
- Where you grew up
- Place (state and town) where you went to school
- Occupation

**Family Information**
- Place were parents born?
- Education of parents –
  1. Could they read and write?
  2. What was the highest level attained?
  3. Where were they educated, what type of school-race?
- Do you remember anything your parents might have said about how they felt about education?
- Did they think it was important? If so, why?
- What was occupation of parents?
- What were their aspirations for their children?
- Number of siblings
- Age of siblings
- Birth dates of children of participant
- Occupations

**Educational Information**
- Education of participant, spouse(s), children, and siblings.
  1. Where attended school?
  2. How old were you when you attended?
  3. How long was a school year?
  4. What was the highest level of education attained by each?
  5. What type of school did they attend (public, private, integrated, etc.)?
  6. What did they learn; what type of classes, what types of activities were available?
  7. Who attended- (race, class, economics, etc.)?
  8. Who were the teachers- how many, race, class, color, how were they paid, where did they live)?
  9. Who were the leaders? Who funded the school?
10. Why did you attend that particular school? What was the purpose of the education?
11. Did you attend college, where did you go, what did you study, and why?
12. Did you go to school or training courses as adults?
13. What were your feelings about school?
14. How did schooling help?

**Community Education & Information**
1. What were the demographics of the community?
2. What types of jobs were available?
3. How did people learn how to do a job?
4. How did adults learn new things or things that were of interest to them?
5. How did adults get important information?
6. How did people ‘earn a living’? Where did the people in your community attend school?
7. What types of schools were available?
   a. Level
   b. Demographics
   c. Purpose
   d. Public or Private
   e. Teachers and administration
8. If you could do it all over again, what type of school would you attend what would you study and why?

**Religious, Social, Educational or Occupational Organizations**
1. What type of clubs and organizations existed?
2. Did they provide any training? If so, what type?
3. How were people selected?

**Media**
1. What newspapers and magazines were read?
2. What was your favorite radio program?
3. What were your opinions of these media forms?

**Miscellaneous**
1. Who was the greatest influence on your life?
2. What famous person did you admire?
3. Did you attend any speeches? Who, what, when, where, and why? What did you think?
APPENDIX B

Participant Permission Form

ACCUMULATION OF KNOWLEDGE: THE EDUCATION OF ADULT AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY FROM 1920-1945

You are invited to participate in an oral history research project that is being conducted by Janet E. Allen, a doctoral student at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. This is a dissertation research project that is designed to collect and analyze information and data on the actual educational resources provided to, and by, African American students and adults in South Jersey from 1920 to 1945.

Approximately 10-15 subjects will be interviewed who were residents of South Jersey and were enrolled in a school or training program during that period. Questions will relate to your education, the education of your family and educational opportunities for the members of your community. I will also be interviewing people who held educational or other types of leadership positions in South Jersey during that time. In this study each person will be interviewed for approximately one hour.

As a participant in this research project, the method of preference is to video tape the interview. By doing so, it will provide a more accurate record of the questions and answers. However, other methods are available if you prefer. Please initial your consent to the method(s) which you feel comfortable for me to use during your interview.

_________ Video Taping    _______ Audio Taping    _______ Notes
(Tape Recording)

There are no foreseeable risks to you if you participate in this study. The results of this study will be used for educational purposes. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the study procedures without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

In an effort to preserve your rights to privacy, the information in this project is classified as confidential and will only be used for educational purposes. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you, such as your name, date of birth, history and educational information. I will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated, unless you have agreed otherwise.
Please circle one of the following and initial:

The researcher may / may not used to personal and confidential information in publications, and for educational purposes and presentations. Initials ______

After the completion of the project, permission is granted to donate the interview information to

_______ The Rutgers University Library Special Collections Department
_______ A New Jersey County or State Historical Association (circle one)
_______ The researcher

_______ The information is to be destroyed.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Janet E. Allen at (732) 259-6500. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject ________________________________ Date ______________

Print Name ____________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________

Phone ________________________________

Authorized Signatory (if necessary) ______________ Date ______________

Print Name ____________________________________________
Education of African Americans in South Jersey

Address ________________________________

Phone _________________________________

Principal Investigator ___________________________ Date ______________
## APPENDIX C

### U.S. Census Data for 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Free Males</th>
<th>Free Females</th>
<th>Aggr Males</th>
<th>Aggr Females</th>
<th>Population minus Slaves &amp; Freedmen</th>
<th>Percentage Slaves</th>
<th>Percentage Freedmen</th>
<th>Percentage Slaves &amp; Freedmen</th>
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<td>Alabama</td>
<td>964,201</td>
<td>1,254</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>144</td>
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<td>111,115</td>
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<td>375,908</td>
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<td>9,940</td>
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<td>566</td>
<td>503</td>
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<td>10,684</td>
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<td>Maine</td>
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<td>659</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>1,327</td>
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<td>626,952</td>
<td>0.211%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>687,049</td>
<td>39,746</td>
<td>44,196</td>
<td>83,942</td>
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<td>87,189</td>
<td>12.218%</td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1,231,066</td>
<td>4,469</td>
<td>5,133</td>
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<td>1,221,464</td>
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<td>Nebraska (territory)</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Total %</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>494</td>
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<td>93.802%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>76</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>52,337</td>
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<td>98.040%</td>
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<td>170,668</td>
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<td>97.737%</td>
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<td>402,406</td>
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<td>24.844%</td>
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<td>181</td>
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<td>69.726%</td>
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<td>371</td>
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<td>653</td>
<td>518</td>
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<td>774,710</td>
<td>0.151%</td>
<td>99.849%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>31,183,744</td>
<td>229,296</td>
<td>247,452</td>
<td>476,748</td>
<td>3,650,546</td>
<td>1.529%</td>
<td>11.707%</td>
<td>86.765%</td>
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STATISTICS OF THE FREE COLORED POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Attending School</th>
<th>Adults Unable to Read</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>2,265</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>California</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>7,693</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>575</td>
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<td>Delaware</td>
<td>18,073</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>932</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2,031</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>11,262</td>
<td>484</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>10,011</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>49,069</td>
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<td>2,607</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>104</td>
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1 Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 237.
## STATISTICS OF THE FREE COLORED POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1860

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APPENDIX D

Verbatim Transcripts
Janet Allen: Miss Honey I want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

Mildred Moultrie Sanders: Well, you see, I have nothing else to do on the weekends you know, Saturdays.

J: I appreciate you helping me with my research project on the education of African Americans in Cape May County. I am looking at the years 1920 to around 1954. And, before I start this, I’m going to ask you some questions about your education. I would like to ask you a little bit about your history and your family’s history. And so could you please tell me your name and where you were born?

M: I was born in Wildwood.

J: You were born in Wildwood?

M: Yes.

J: Okay. And your full name is?

M: Mildred Powell Moultrie Sanders

J: And we call you Miss Honey?

M: In the church they call me Sister Honey.

J: Okay. (laughter) I want to start with your parents. Were your parents both born in Wildwood?

M: No, my father was born in South Carolina and my mother was born in Miccosukee, Florida.

J: Did they meet in Wildwood?

M: Yes.

J: What did your parents do? I understand that your mother ran her own business

M: Yes. It was at 19 _____ (unintelligible) And my father was a house painter.

J: What was the business that your mother ran?
M: Seashore Employment Agency. It was the oldest one in New Jersey. She was 19 years old and applied for a license.

J: And that was located in Wildwood?


J: Do you know what year your parents came to New Jersey?

M: No. I don’t exactly but I imagine my father was here first around 1904, I would say. In that vicinity.

J: Around 1904?

M: Yeah.

J: One of the things and one of the reasons I wanted to interview you is we had a conversation before and we were just talking about education in general and in fact we were talking about one of the other families the Poindexter family that was in Wildwood and you were talking about people’s educational levels at that point and what they could and could not do. You had mentioned to me that your mother ran a business and could read and write. Do you know where your mother went to school or how she learned?

M: In Miccosukee, Florida. A little one school room, one room school. And by being smart when she came to Wildwood, still a young kid and far as her schooling she was promoted to the fourth grade (unintelligible) she was a very brilliant woman and my father I don’t remember him going to school any amount of school days but he taught himself and his vocabulary was extensive and instead of us looking up in the dictionary, a word we came across, we would ask him because if he were reading and came across a word he did not know he would have his dictionary by his newspaper and look it up and he was a lecturer, and he was noted for his lecturing. He had a lovely voice, a baritone voice. He taught himself how to read but he could not write too well. And even when they had any kind of affair he would be the guest speaker and even when they had the campaign for president-elect was Wilson and they came to house right here on Garfield Avenue and sent an auto there to carry him to Trenton to make a speech that’s how well he was known for his speeches. (unintelligible) Blacks back there were very ambitious people and they wanted to learn and they were active just a different type of people then they are now. They educated their own selves and so they became business people- taxi cab drivers, shoemakers, little stores (unintelligible) and what have you- they were very ambitious people

J: And education was really important?

M: Yes, the most important thing. And children would come from the south in the summertime to Wildwood to work from the large families. And they worked in the summer to go to college down south and what have you, and my mother helped them by giving them employment. So it’s a long story. And that is why I was writing that book that book I’ve been writing. So anyhow,
they were ambitious people, young and old. But not too much was handed out to them. They had to make it own their own. And the older ones were getting educated first and then helped their younger brothers and sisters. And sometimes kids had 8 children in their family or more and all of them would become educated by this rotating. They were just ambitious people.

J: And in your family there were 8?

M: No, no. Five.

J: But in some families…

M: The kids that came to work from the south but not [trails off] from 8 to 10 children and dirt farmers, very poor. And they would come to Wildwood to work in the summer and Cape May and around the vicinity trying to get employment My voice is not as good as it use to be because I had (didn't finish sentence).They had a long story but beautiful background. And most of them now have, naturally deceased.

J: And if you need a break for your voice just let me know. I’ll turn it off. Or if you need water or anything.

M: No. Anytime.

J: When you were growing up did your mother or father say anything to you and your siblings about education? Did she encourage you to go to school or any type (trails off)

M: That was a must. That was a must. Education was. We understood. Because everybody at that time was education conscious. And by the students coming up and what not from the south and becoming you know very good citizens at home and what not so we were encouraged by our surroundings because education was the main thing at that time. Around I would say around the 1950s or what have you.

J: Now I never asked you if you have any sisters or brothers.

M: Yes I had three sisters and one brother.

J: And did all of you go to school in Wildwood?

M: No. To start we went to school in Wildwood naturally

J: Who went?

M: We all did started school in Wildwood. One school number 4 and that was a black school and then we went there to the white school and then to college and trade school or what have you. We all started in Wildwood here.

J: The first school was a black school? What grade did it go up to?
M: Went to the fifth or sixth grade

J: Then you went to the integrated school?

M: Yes. That went to the seventh grade.

J: In the black school or the grammar school, who were the teachers, what color were the teachers?

M: They were very fine teachers from Washington DC as far as I know they were from out of town because we had no educated blacks at that time.

J: So the teachers in the school were black?

M: Yes there were 4 of them there were 4 classrooms.

J: And they went up to the sixth grade?

M: I think it went as far as the sixth or seventh grade and then they went from the black to the white school to further their education.

J: What was the name of the white school again or was there only one?

M: There was only one-Roberts High School, there was only one the grammar school, the department was there also, and that was the only one I think from the sixth grade to the high school.

J: And they took all the students from your school there?

M: The blacks had to go to school up there too (Robert High School) because there was no other school. There was a complete building for the blacks (grammar school) they were called Negroes then. And it was a four room school room then and then they went to Wildwood High School and that’s still there.

J: At Wildwood High School what were the classes like. Were you in class with everybody?

M: Yes they were mixed. That’s right.

J: The reason why I am asking you is sometimes they are not.

J: Do you remember some of the classes you took?

M: No. I didn’t go to school there. My older brothers and sisters did. I think my oldest sister was one of the first to graduate from Wildwood High.

J: And what were your sister and brothers name?
M: My sister’s name was Geneva and my brother’s name was Richard.

J: And he was one of the first in the family to graduate from there or one of the first colored children.

M: He was one of the first colored, they were called Negroes then. He was one of the first, and then he went to Lincoln University and Geneva went to Howard University in Washington.

J: How much older than you were your sisters and brothers?

M: Seven years apart something like that.

J: Were you the baby?

M: No next to the baby my younger sister was born in 1914.

J: And you were born in 19...?

M: 1913(I think she meant 1915) and my younger one was born in 1914

J: Then you said you did not go to Wildwood High School?

M: No.

J: Where did you go?

M: I went to school for manual training school because I wanted to be in business…

J: Was that in ….?

M: New Jersey, Bordentown, NJ.

J: That’s quite a distance, did you live there?

M: No you had to be a resident from New Jersey.

J: But did you live on campus there?

M: Yes. It was a Jersey school for Jersey students.

J: If I recall correctly, and tell me if I’m wrong, Bordentown was an all colored school?

M: Yes it was; it was sponsored by the state. It was a very fine school. It’s too bad they don’t have too many of them now to use your hands as well as your head you know.

J: And there has not been too much written about Bordentown. I’ve heard about it but people
haven’t written much so we don’t know what majors they had what people learned there or what their day was like.

M: Well I will tell you they had a trade they went to school a half-day then went to your trade the other half of the day and they offered any type of trade that would make a person a good citizen, self-employed such as mechanics, hairdressers, dressmakers, and cooks, domestic science just anything that would take to make a living without going to college.

That’s right without going to college.

J: And you said you worked a half day and went to school a half day?

M: Yes and went to school the other half from 7 in the morning you were up then go to school at 9 until 1 then to chapel then after that your classes were either morning or trade or academics. It was a wonderful place. It eventually turned to white.

J: I didn’t know that.

M: It certainly did. It is a beautiful campus and everything so now, yep, they took it over.

J: What did you all do in the evenings there, I’m just curious?

M: Just studied your lessons, just studied and half hour for recreation to play your piano or what have you and lights out at certain time, whatever time that was, and you could feel your children were in a safe place. A lot of parents had to work and they knew their children would be under good care at this institution as well as educated. It was a very beautiful thing.

J: How old were you when you went there?

M:I don’t remember it was so long cause you stayed as long as you could, I had to be around 17.

J: Around 17? How long did you stay?

M: Oh I went back and forth for four or five years. About four years.

I took up catering it was a good business. Then the Depression came and persons weren’t hardly eating or entertaining. And one of the teachers said to me, it’s a good thing your trade and a side like I had two choices - a beautician cause folks like to get their hair done and go out eating. So therefore I took up cosmetology and even had to make hair pomades and all that stuff like that. You see, it was fine training and learning, we made our own pomades and lotions- it was well rounded. And therefore, I could have a business for myself.

J: Sounds like they had a plan going because you could take one or two things…you could take two different things.

M: You could take two different things-if one of them didn't work the other would work-so of
course I took, on the side, a course to be a personal maid to take care of rich people and take care of everything for her - making appointments for her beautician, etc. so anyway, the girls to always try to get somebody around your size. You could travel a lot cause they couldn’t do nothing for themselves some of couldn’t even put on their cloths or comb their own hair – you had to do everything for them - it was a very good job. And you always try to get someone around your size for cast-offs so you can save your money. For maids, they might use two dabs of cold cream and throw the rest anyway,

You know what happened? We could not go cause they wouldn't let the black as they're maids on a cruise ships. `They didn’t allow blacks. That didn't go over too well.

J: So you could study to be a personal maid…

M: For those that went abroad, cause they didn’t allow black people on cruises, and I want to put in my book about the... on the Titanic. Because you know why? They wouldn't allow anyone (Black) on the ship with the madams. Some madams wouldn't go without their personal maid there wasn't nothing black on the Titanic, not even black rats. Nothing black. On the Titanic, not even black rats. That saved a lot of white people by not wanting to go because they couldn't take their maids. I wanted to travel, to be all glamorous, and whatnot. ¹

J: That would've been a perfect opportunity...

M: It would have been. I primarily stayed in the states, I didn't go abroad.

J: You actually took that as a study?

M: Yes. How to give a bath and massage. We were called private maids; a lot of those they married their husband, or the son, those personal maid. Cause you had to be refined.

Another voice: I’m confused. You are saying that the black maids married some of the husbands?

M: Yes, and the sons!

J: They weren’t black maids?

¹ The Titanic sank in 1912, three years prior to Ms. Sanders birth. However, there were no African Americans allowed on the Titanic. The only Black people on the ship were a family heading to Haiti from France. The husband, Joseph Phillipppe Lemercier Laroche, was born in 1889 in Cap Haiten, Haiti. He was the nephew of Dessalines M. Cincinnatus Leconte, president of Haiti. Laroaces family was rich and “powerful”. He studied to be an engineer in France and while there married a French woman and had two little girls. His race precluded him from getting employment, so he decided to return with his family to Haiti. He was able to put his pregnant wife and two children in a life boat and they survived. Laroche did not survive the disaster.

M: What are you talking about! They certainly were. Up in New York City and whatnot, oh yes indeed.

J: Ooh, you are telling us something, I’m being educated.

M: This one white woman told the black girl that one day she wouldn't have any job and then she would suffer. You know what she told her?... not as long as you white women had husbands and sons. No we won’t starve. A lot of black girls up in Harlem had white male friends.

They took a lot of beatings, the black maids did. We had a personal friend of ours... the men they like to show off, you know. This white man had this cute little black girl, she wasn't beautiful but she was neat. So he says to her "I wonder what have you would look in bed with white sheets around you". So she said, “I didn't say anything to him but I was so mad I wanted to throw food in his face, but I didn't.” The next night, she said, she dressed all in white. She even had a white hat on and she stood there... after they finished eating she said, "Mr. so and so, last night you said you would like to know what a white girl would look like wrapped in white sheets in the bed. So look at me now and imagine me in white sheets. Let me tell you something. The black girls have white sheets and the white mens buy them for them and get in bed with them.” They stopped being personal maids because it became too personal. And the whites stop hiring because there was a lot of personal contact; because the mothers were never home. The babies were in their teens and whatnot. A lot of black folks up from the south and they could not meet the (unintelligible), they stay because it would. Until then -- you know and they took care of the white people and vice versa...

This morning I was laying in bed and I said I really should finish my book and I don’t feel like writing, I just can’t write anymore. But you’ve asked me about a lot of things that I have never thought about before that would never go down in the books they would never know it…(unintelligible)

J: So you took personal maid, beautician and catering? Did any of your other friends from Wildwood go up there?

M: Yes, they went into business and whatnot. They had steady jobs because they knew what they were ambitious and knew what they were doing and weren’t lazy and laying around. If they weren’t a good student they wouldn’t keep them.

In the dining hall at each table they had a host and hostess. They trained girls how to entertain. The fellows were military trained… and they boys would sit at one end of the table and be host and the girls at the other end and be the hostess. And they taught the kids how to eat and what silver to use and make them know how to entertain. They did a wonderful job. You became a well-rounded person.

J: The food and all was it cooked by the students?

M: No, they had a chef but we did learn how to cook but the food we ate were cooked by professional chefs. The ones that worked in Wildwood and had jobs from my mother’s
employment office. The boys that worked their way through school and didn’t have any money they were the waiters.

J: And that was the summer in Wildwood, but up in Bordentown or did I get it confused?

M: No, I’m talking about the students that wanted to go to Bordentown that didn’t have the money and their parents were in Jersey and they would work their way through school by going to Bordentown and get a job and work their way through as a student getting a job as waiters, working around the lawn, yard keepers, cooks assistance, etc., so they earned their way and they had to work year round. Very fine kids came from Bordentown and could find employment because they were well-qualified and able.

J: How about the teachers?

M: They were very refined and cultured. And I must say they were very, very, refined. And well educated.

J: Were they black, white?

M: No, they were very fair. The darkest one would be about my color…The rest were very fair. And the principal of the school and his wife were fair. They were black, mulatto. Their names were Mr. & Mrs. Valentine.

J: What an interesting name. The principal, his wife, his children and the teachers were all fair, what about most of the students?

M: There were all kinds mixed in there. Now we had one teacher name Miss Butcher who came from a family of 15 children, now she was dark. There was another teacher name Professor. Ray, he was dark. They were the two darkest teachers on campus. Everyone else was fair.

J: What did they teach?

M: Miss Butcher was a gym teacher, phys ed., and Mr. Ray was a science teacher.

J: So not only did they teach…

M: That’s all they did. They also chaperoned different affairs.

J: But you also had science, gym.? What other courses did they teach?

M: You could have had band and it was a good training school for anyone who wanted a trade or go to college. And it only cost $15 a month for boys and $14 for girls. That’s all it cost. But then some couldn’t get that $14 and $15 together, you know.

J: How much was a loaf of bread?
M: Three cents and day-old bread was 2 cents and you got a dozen eggs for 10 cents.

J: What were people making per week salary?

M: I don’t know. What’s that? (a strange sound in the house)

J: That might have been quite a bit of money then.

M: Yeah $14 was a lot of money and you were running around trying to find that extra credit for a 3 cent stamp to write to your parents and shoes were a dollar and something and a blouse was 75 cents. It was cheap but $14 was a lot to get a hold of but it was a very fine institution.

J: So you had one sibling that went to Lincoln and one that went to Howard and you went to Bordentown?

M: Yes, and my younger sister went to Teacher’s College here in New Jersey, state college.

J: Was it near Wildwood or North Jersey?

M: No it was near Glassboro.

J: Glassboro State?

M: They changed it to Glassboro State it used to be Normal School. Then they took it over, the campus for some white institution (referring to Bordentown).

J: Now those people who didn’t go to college, did most of the colored children in Wildwood go to high school or industrial school?

M: Most of them, but not too many. Some stayed here but we never had too large of population of Negroes here.

But those that were white went away to college. The boys went to Lincoln and the girls also and those that wanted to be educated were. Most of them wanted to be educated in Cape May. Now as I told you before Cape May has the most refined people. They were all very cultured. The Wildwood people were a little bit rougher because they had excursion people coming by the day… The refined people were trained at Bordentown to become butlers. They were hired by refined families. You couldn’t be all loud and rude and keep those jobs they wouldn't have you. And the butlers in Cape May were more refined and when they retired they came to Cape May so therefore brought that culture with them. They didn’t bother with them other kind of people and I don’t blame them. It was a wonderful training. Those that wanted to be trained could be.

J: Sounds like you had really good memories of that place.

M: Well I do. We had fun. If you couldn’t go home you stayed on campus. We had a good football team. From Cheney. You heard of Cheney?
J: Yes.

M: And from Lincoln. They had a lot of rough boys from Bordentown. Strong boys at Bordentown. We had good football games at Thanksgiving. And we were allowed to go home at Christmas. We stayed for 10 days or so… I can't remember. You didn’t have too many vacations because we had a routine.

What was interesting was the domestic department for the girl cooks and waitresses. They had a teachers dining hall in another little building. We, the caterers, we had jobs (everyone had duties) for a whole month waiting on the teachers. Every one had duty to do. I became a waitress and waited on the teachers. They were very refined and dignified. And they taught you how to wait tables and what have you...And when you leave there, the boys and girls that lived there became very good waiters and butlers. And they had those jobs for years and years. Some of the blacks became so cultured that they became over cultured. They had to be refined in order to stay in those people household and some slept in and had money and would not spend one cent and had a salary also. Very well trained and expected to work for what you got and still enjoyed it.

J: Now the football team played Lincoln and Cheney?

M: Yep, from Bordentown.

J: I only know them as a college; did they start out as an industrial school?

M: No. Cheney and Lincoln.

J: So your team was really good to play college teams.

M: Some of them boys was bigger than those college boys. They were from farms and never went to school until they came to Bordentown. And the people from Bordentown always did that under the table stuff. So they could build the football team. So they could get their team on the map. They were big strong strapping boys, they were actually giants. One boy was so tall that he was dancing with a girl and she felt water dripping on her head and it was the boy sweating. She said “oh Honey he was so tall he was dripping water on my head from sweat”; he was just that's tall .Name was Gibson, he was a nice boy; he was a giant. They had dining hall for the football team. And we fed them very heavy. It just was a nice training you know. Right now we're trying to get together those who were surviving; teachers ‘in all.

J: Did they teach agriculture?

M: Yes. Anything with agriculture, poultry, farming, dairy. They had a lot of training. Very unusual.

J: Did you have any special guest that came up?

2 Definition- “sub-rosa: designed and carried out secretly or confidentially”. wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn, October 22, 2009.
M: Oh yes. They had the glee club singing and they traveled all around and they had a special school bus and you could see them going all around the country to sing. And they could sing, harmonizing. Anything you wanted. It was a well trained school.

J: So you could actually leave there and pretty much be assured that you will get a job?

M: That’s right. And you didn’t have no trouble getting a job.

J: Did they recommend you or try to help find jobs?

M: I don’t know but I do know that if anyone said they came from Bordentown they could verify it. Like the Theresa (Hotel) in New York, our dining room maitre’d, which we called hostess …, My husband and I spent our honeymoon at the Hotel Theresa in New York, I forgot the name, and who was coming down the steps but one of the waitresses from Bordentown was coming down the stairs and she was so glad to see us. And she was refined.

J: So there was a lot of pride when you graduated from Bordentown?

M: Yes. And we still have it but it is not just the same

J: Now Wildwood. I’m going to change just for a little bit. Now we talked about Wildwood and the people coming in for the summer and working then leaving. What did the people that live here all year round do?

M: There was such a few of them and they were older. But as Wildwood grew larger and larger and they didn't have enough in Wildwood to supply them. However, some of the black waitresses went around cleaning the community houses which are now known as bed and breakfasts. That is something they don't have anymore. A community house; it's like a bed and breakfasts, you had the privilege to use the community kitchen. There are too many restaurants most of them were Jewish houses. And they have a room with the kitchen use. And the maids did not clean up after themselves they would just cook but they didn't wash dishes. That was a job for the black girls to clean everybody's dishes but they kept the place clean they would clean up the whole kitchen and wash everybody's dishes. And what food not thrown away the girls could bring home.

So, therefore they still needed more help. So my mother got together with myself and thinking, she was just 19 years old then, how she can help. There were so many that wanted to go to college. My mother wanted to go to college. But she always wanted a college education. She was very brilliant. My father was older than my mother (when they got married). He was 27 and she was 15. Therefore she didn't have any money of a row. So when you have to borrow two dollars from my father to pay for a license to be an agent: four and unemployment office. She did have two dollars. He loaned her the two dollars. So anyway she got the license. So arsonist came to her house because they (whites) burned it down. She had the oldest employment agency in the state of New Jersey.

J: Did she have to do any kind of training?
M: No not at that time. But in later years you did. My sister Myrtle went into business with her.

J: You said your father did some lecturing. What did he lecture on?

M: Anything. He lectured for President Harding. He won anyhow. He became president of the United States. 3

J: Your father was an ordained minister?

M: Yes. Ordained minister. …He was a campaigner and speaker for Harding with no education. I don’t know any school he went to or nothing.

J: And he went all the way up to Trenton, wow.

M: Yes, they came and got him with a car and brought him back to Garfield Avenue.

J: This house here?

M: No. The one that burned down. The one in the picture. This was rebuilt. The one in the picture they burnt up.

J: They who?

M: That house (#136) was built in 1904.

Another voice: It was burnt down in the ‘90s. It was arson.

M: The employment agency the employment agency was in that house. You see that house is one of the oldest on the island and they didn’t want to put it in the Wildwood Historical Society so they burnt up all four parts. No house burns all around.

J: With your father being a minister and knowing other ministers in the area, were there any religious schools or did people go to churches to learn different things? In other words, were the churches helping to educate people or give them information?

M: Yes, Marion Anderson came to Wildwood. (She was)A little girl in a gingham dress .

J: Marion Anderson?

M: Yes. And she came to Asbury. And the Negroes, which is what they were called then, sponsored it and we had quite a few celebrities that came to Wildwood. Paul Robeson came down to Cape May. I still say that the Black people were more education conscious- they were looking for culture and they always got that….

3 “… NJ tipped that close election to Harding--the black vote in South NJ was key.”
Catherine Lugg, Professor, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
J: If you were an adult around 20 years old, how did you learn anything?

M: They way you are talking to me know and going on a job with you.

J: Like word of mouth?

M: (Through word of mouth) and observation. Like a lot the kids at the end of the school term, I’m not taking about those kids that were not coming back anymore- they were just running their mouths off, would say they weren’t coming back to this school and they would be the first one you would see back on campus in September. Because they find out it so different, you know, when they get back to the cities. One boy told his dad that he wasn’t going back to that old school no more and he said, “I ‘m not going back this term.” So his father said, “well listen, prepare to come down in the morning to go on the job with me.” So he said “so here I am at the school.”

J: Your mother, at the employment agency, how did she or did she train the people (to do their jobs)?

M: No, well she did and she didn’t. Because those kids didn’t know how to work. But she loved having them work around the house with my sisters and all. She watched them. Some were sent home, they came back crying because they didn’t know how to work and they didn’t want to go back home. And they wanted to learn...if you want to learn you can. But they learn how to work, and they worked there for years, while they were at school. Some come back now looking for the same.

And the mayor of Tuskegee, stayed at my mother’s house and worked down at one of the white folk’s house. He became the mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama. So Wildwood has quite a bit of history.

J: I always knew they had quite a bit history

M: During the Depression my mother said she would sit in the office and prayed "Oh God, just send me some jobs for these people." Even people who had hotels, they were hiring their own culture they would pay their nephews and nieces to help them go to school. Why would they pay you when Dan nieces had to have a job? The day will come, that's why black people lost their jobs as bellhops and waiters and servants because the whites took it over.

They had to. Why would I send you to school when I got kids that have to go to school. So they found out it was a lot of money in it. The proprietors (white people) thought that there was nothing to it, nickels and dimes, but those nickels and dimes counted up. So the help and that's when he got out about how much money they made. They were making two and three hundred dollars in tips money. So they said, “why would I pay this when my nieces and nephews all have to go to school.” So the tip money, they asked their boss to keep their money for them the jobs. The boys were bellhops and what have you, and the girls were clerks. And the waitress were their daughters and nieces and so on, and cousins. And the black man scooted out. It was very historical and will never be the same. Not in our time that was my time.
J: When I read some things in different areas they talk about organizations coming into the area to provide training like the NAACP, the Freedmen’s Bureau and Masons. Did any organizations come in and do any training for the people?

M: No not that I know of.

J: So either you did it on your own, learned something in High School, or went away?

M: Even the trade schools and the high schools some of the teachers tell me that they don’t have this and they don't have that... different classes anymore. Like my nephew was saying to me they have equipments and whatnot that kids don't even sign up for.

J: Like shop and different things?

Another voice: remember you used to just go to a job and which train you how to do on that job? They don't do that anymore.

M: Not really, and it's not fair. And they can't hold a job either. They're not trained. You got to be prepped for the job. No that's a thing of the past, and that's why service is so poor. They don't have time, people used to come for training, like my mama would have this girl to come them work or help us work. I was lazy and I didn't like housework: you know I despise it to this day. I'd rather work out in the field. But in now we have trained a lot of girls and a lot of them become very thankful. And their parents will take their money and sacrifice and then they got up the road a little bit and became careless with their children they give the kids too much you know. They stopped coming to work; they didn't have to work anymore. (could not understand the next sentence)

J: What were the most popular newspapers and magazines?

M: Oh my word! The most popular both in name and that I want to say is. That's right Ebony and Jet. I was an agent for them when they first started right down the street here.

J: What newspapers did you read when you were young?


J: Were there any black newspapers in the area?


J: The Tribune? I didn't know that was a white paper. Was that white or was it black?

M: No, it (the Philadelphia Tribune) was black and the white paper was the Evening Bulletin. The whites had their daily paper. And the Chicago Defender. It was red and black print. There were a lot of nice black magazines. Like Maxine's (Maxine is the other voice indicated on this transcript) friend she was a beautiful woman, a beautiful woman. She so pretty. That was a new
day; those who want to be something could be something. It may not be a millionaire but you
can be what you are. This white boy... there was a maid with a wealthy family and his son was a
Playboy...a white son now... and she heard the mother and father talking... they were down in
the country... about him not studying that he should. And be up in his grades. They were down in
the kitchen, and a white mother was fond of the black maid, you know that. So anyhow she (the
black maid) said “let me tell you something son, said let me tell you this, don't be what you isn't
just be what you is. Cause you isn't what you is and you isn't what you ain't and you ain't what
you is.” He said he never forgot it with all those “is-es”. But he said he was lucky now, but she
knew what she was talking about she said "don't be what you isn't just be what you is, for it isn't
what you is but you ain't what you is ”… that's what I mean is that you are. He said I ain't never
those words. And he said I straightened up and flew right because she was telling the truth. Don't
be what you isn't just be what you is because "is" meant everything and that he wanted to use and
she was telling the truth. (Cant understand the next sentence… something about black people
wouldn’t be what they are). They have stolen all the trades and interventions like the stoplights
in certain cases that people wouldn't be thinking about. Like stop lights and other things like B:...
B: Banneker's striking clock and so many things, that what's his name -- that peanut man, oh yes,
Carter.

J: Where did you learn all this?

M: By getting around and listening. And listen. Listening to people talk instead of doing all the
talking. You learn something. And you observe. Listen is better than a mouthful of time. That’s
why I am in this chair now all banged up. Driving and running my mouth and all; this car ran
into me. That's why.

J: Even some of the young people today don’t know this information and that’s why I was
wondering how you know.

M: And they never will. They don’t read. It’s sad. Yet they know everything. They know
everything! A lot of times my nephew and nieces tell me, you know why "My son said that a
question came up in college that nobody knew the answer but it just so happen that the night
before they had discussed this subject at the dining room table, and Randy, his mother and father
and Fuzzy, they called him Fuzzy, and that’s why he knew the answer to it. By listening to it the
by listening and listening right.

And one teacher Bordentown would lecture to us. We had a lecture every day at Bordentown.
We had chapel at Bordentown every day for 15 minutes and on Friday we would have guest
speakers like Mary Bethune, the best in the country they would bring to us in Bordentown. And
one of the teachers, said now listen this may be boring to you but listen to them because nobody
is going to talk two hours without something that is worthwhile. And I do remember that. You
listen and you will find something in it.

So therefore, I'll knock off now and enjoy the sun.

J: Let me just ask one more question. Did Booker T. Washington ever come?
M: No. Not that I remember. Mary Bethune, Carter and some I forget now. But every time they come through this way going to New York or someplace big they would manage a way to stop by campus. Professor Valentine was wonderful he would find a way for them to come by the campus.

J: He cared a lot about you all.

M: Yes he did. He really did. He was ‘nutty as a fruit cake’ but anyhow he very was good. Very good He fought for that school. They wanted to get rid of him but it was a long time before they did. They wanted it for the white campus because it was so perfect directly off the highway, the gate on a hill, just beautiful. They eventually got it too.

J: From Brown vs…

M: Yes.

J: Did that change anything along with Brown vs. The Board of Education?

M: Didn’t change nothing but changed everything. Wildwood and South Jersey was very prejudiced and still is. Very prejudiced.

Thank God the sun is out.

J: Were there any other laws that did anything for education?

M: no, not that I know of.

J: But Brown helped?

M: I just dropped everything after Brown.

J: Are you tired of this interview?

M: No , the questions don’t bother me. It’s not hurting because me. Somebody needs to know something but I don’t know what good it’s going to do, because Wildwood needs to come to a drastic change right now. South Jersey not just Wildwood. Like Whitesboro, they are building out there. That was started by a black man. You’ve heard of Whitesboro, New Jersey? That was started by Mr. White.

J: Yes and I have been there.

M: They had a big hotel in Whitesboro before you even thought about being born. They had a big Negro hotel for years right on the highway. At that time it was horse and buggies. That's a Whitesboro had a big hotel; I think it burnt down or something. Was nothing but farmers over there; it was nothing but farmers from down South Carolina and for the and down there. It was nothing but farmers and planters but anyhow they educated all their children. And all of them
have six children a more in their families, and they sent them all to college one was a mayor, lawyer, in Philadelphia.

J: Yes, that name is very prominent. I am going to try to interview someone from up in Whitesboro. They have a lot of history.

M: You better hurry up. Like Barry, one of the friends who come to see Randy (her nephew) is a true Spalding. They were very ambitious people. Just as ‘country’ but they were real good people. They were smart.

J: I thank you Miss Honey. Is there anything else you would like to say about your education when you were younger or your children’s education or anything else you would like to add that I might not have asked?

M: No. I think we covered everything that was worthwhile. Everything which is, is.

J: Thank you.
Janet Allen: This is an interview of the Howard Sisters for the dissertation of Adult African Americans of Cape May County 1920-1945. The interview is with Mrs. Bernice Howard Gordon and Mrs. Jean Howard Boise of West Cape May. My interviewing is by video tape Ms Bernice Howard Gordon, and by voice on the side, Ms Jean Howard Boise. Okay, I’ve got that straight. I am going to start with Bernice. I am going to ask you some personal information and some family History which both of you will answer. I am going to start out with the personal information. Please state your names.

Mrs. Gordon: Bernice Howard Gordon

Janet: And if you don’t mind, can I have your age?

BG: 78

J: Where were you born?

BG: West Cape May NJ

J: And you grew up in…?

BG: West Cape May NJ.

J: Where did you go to school?

BG: I went to West Cape May Elementary, Cape May High, and Temple University in Philadelphia

J: Jean, please state your name

Jean Boise: Mrs. Boise, Jean Howard Boise

J: Your age, if you don’t mind?

JB: 76

J: You were born in…

JB: Wildwood, NJ. I was born in Macy’s hospital. Grew up in Cape May County.
And you grew up in…?

JB: West Cape May County. I was the only one born in a Hospital.

J: And you went to school at…?


J: Is there a difference between West Cape May Elementary and the Annex?

JB: No, it’s the same there is no difference they are the same.

JB: Why it’s called annex is because we were segregated.

JB: that’s why we were called annex. We were at the same site, but the white school sat right at the end of 5th Avenue and we were over on the corner. There were three classrooms.

J: So they were segregated. I am going to ask you, if you don’t mind, what field or occupation you went into as adults?

BG: Business administration.

JB: Electronics.

J: For this project, one of the things I am also looking at is some family information. Where parents came from, what educational level, and what parents thought about education. So, where were your parents born? Where were they born?

BG: They were from Cape May. Both of them were born in Cape May City and my grandparents, my grandfather bought property at tax sales and bought a home and built here back in 1903 or 1902 and moved his family here. My father was born in 1903. And that’s his house there on the corner. On Fifth Avenue, right there; that was his property. He built that and all this land you see here, all the way to the church that is land that he purchased from tax sales. So my father was born here in Cape May City. They moved here when he was a year old. And my mother, she was born here in Cape May City... She was a Major; her maiden name was Major. Her mother and father were Theodore Major and Bernice Major. Bernice Edmunds Major her mother’s name. She was educated…

JB: Didn’t you want to know their background?

BG: Grandmother Major, my mother’s mother was from Virginia. Her father was a native Indian from here in N.J.; Theodore Major, the Majors were native Indians. My father’s people…my grandfather on my father’s side was from Baltimore, Maryland and his name came from the Howard’s of England. My grandfather was a house boy, a very delicate man and he was one of the house slaves. He learned a lot about taking care of flowers and how to take care of the inside of a home. When he came here he was a young boy, his father moved him here; his mother died.
and his father got married again. He moved him here to West Cape May and his mother (grandmother?) was a woman named Virginia and she was also from Baltimore.

Now, we are a part of four families in Cape May that made up the Negroes, the black population back in the early teens, the late teens. The Edmunds, the Turners, the Howards, and the Majors. We have a family reunion and we call ourselves “them” T H E M. “T” for Turner, “H” for Howard, “E” for Edwards and “M” for Major.

My mother and father, they were even on the same family line. My mother’s father was a Major; he married…wait, let me get that straight, my mother’s father who was a major, he married Edmunds- he married Bernice Edmunds; and my father’s mother who was a Turner, and her father and my grandfather, who was a Major were sisters and brothers. His mother and my grandmother’s father were sister and brother. So that’s how those two families are together. The Howards, my grandfather, was the hand of course he married the turner so that’s how the four families came together. I hope that I’m not making this too jumbled up.

J: No, I am following you. Now, your mother and father, did they go to school in Cape May?

BG: Yes, my father went to West Cape May Elementary School, and the same man that taught him, who was the Principal, William J. Moore, he also taught us. He was one of the first Black tennis player, professor, here in West Cape May. He taught Arthur Ashe.

J: He taught Arthur Ashe?

BG: Yes he did. When he would come to Cape May for the summer. One thing about Cape May, it was a very affluent sea shore. Wealthy people came here. Very wealthy people.

And of course, most of the blacks were servants.

And when my grandfather got old enough he became one of the house servants for the Physick’s (Estate) where you are going this afternoon. If you go in the main house, they have this picture there. Because when Dr. Physick who had the property built, my grandfather was one of his first gardeners and house men. So they have, they asked the family for a portrait of him for the Bicentennial celebration so they could have that picture to show that he was one of the original.

J: I am going to look for him.

BG: You look for him. As a matter of fact, the picture that we took his picture from is right here. I will show it to you. His wife was a maid in the house, that’s how he met her and they got married. My grandmother she was from Philadelphia, he was from Baltimore. So she was working as a maid in the Physick Estate and they met and that’s how they got together.

J: So your father was from West Cape May Annex….

BG: And my mother went to Cape May Elementary. (Shows a picture of her father) That’s the man and that’s my grandmother.
J: Now, Cape May Elementary…?

BG: That’s the Franklin Street School. In Cape May, and you’re probably going to see that today.

J: I’ve been there, I’m glad you clarified that. When you were saying the Cape May Annex, in my mind I was thinking…

BG: You were thinking about Cape May City.

J: I was thinking about the Franklin Street School.

BG: The Franklin Street School came after the Annex. They are working on the preservation of that now.

J: The West Cape May School was an integrated school, but segregated…?

JB: No, It wasn’t integrated.

BG: No. It was two separate building. It was segregated; we had two buildings. We walked up the road together and at the top of the road we had to separate. The black children here and the white children went there.

J: So, that’s why ours is called the Annex. So it was not in the same building?

BG: No it was two separate buildings. It was the West Cape May Annex because the West Cape May Elementary was (can’t make out words)

J: And then the Franklin Street School…?

JB & BG: That was all black.

BG: They built that for black children

J: And that was after…?

BG: The West Cape May Elementary

J: So when the Franklin Street School opened, there was no need for the Annex?

BG & JB: Yes you did.

JB: See, they are two different towns. West Cape May is a borough and it is separate from Cape May City. So when we talk about West Cape May, this area you are in now is the Borough of West Cape May. They had their own school system, they had their own mayor, they had their own everything and it is still that way. Cape May City is over on the other side of town.
J: You know, I never realized that.

BG: You feel because you say you’re in West Cape May, you are on the west side of Cape May City, but you’re not. Cape May City is a separate municipality. It’s got its own government. There was a time, when we had a borough of South Cape May which was right off of here and that washed into the ocean. When we were kids growing up, we watched that part of town wash away. And we had Cape May Point, which is still all the way out at the end of the Blvd. And West Cape May kind of sandwiched in between, and Cape May City. Now Cape May City is divided, they do have the east side and the center of town, and they have the southern part but it’s all a part of Cape May Municipality. It’s just that they call it East Cape May. When you talk about East Cape May, at one time when we were children, it was like marsh land, it was swamps out there. And the Coast Guard Base was in East Cape May. The Coast Guard Base was like the end of the beach and they had a trolley that used to run along from Cape May Point along the beach to Sulles Point, it was like a big amusement area. It was what is now called East Cape May. You go down there now and you see the Admiral Hotel and of course that was built there during the First World War. There used to be a hospital and in the latter years, in the last 10 years, they destroyed it and they tore it down and now you see all those fabulous home built out there, but that was East Cape May. And that’s history.

J: So now I am understanding why I was getting confused. So both your mother and father went to the elementary school…? Different schools?

BG: My father went to West Cape May Elementary; it was a three classroom school just like ours and three teachers. And my mother went to the Cape May Elementary School.

J: And that was also segregated?

JB: And that was segregated.

BG: See that was Franklin Street, we called it Cape May Elementary, but it was actually Franklin Street School.

J: So now I am going to go back just to clarify for me…you went to West Cape May Annex…

BG: Jean went to West Cape May Annex. All of us here in West Cape May went to West Cape May Annex. They didn’t become…they didn’t consolidate the schools until they said no more segregated school systems and they brought all the school systems together when that happened but ah…

J: Was that in the 50’s?

BG: That was the 50’s…early part of 60’s.

JB: I had left there by then

BG: I had too I went to Temple in the 40’s. Jean went to Glassboro and she got married but we
had both gone away to school.

J: And when that happened you went to Temple and you went to Glassboro. What about your high school?

BG: We had the West Cape May Annex and that was the elementary school.

JB: That’s where we came together in the high school. They had one high school. That was very interesting. They had the segregated elementary school, and then we went together in the high school.

J: And that was the West Cape May Annex?

BG: No, that was the Cape May City High School.

J: Did you sit in the same classes?

BG: No, we went to school…

J: Are you talking about high school?

JB: We sat in class together…

BG: We weren’t separated in the classes.

JB: You know it was an interesting situation.

BG: It was an interesting situation.

JB: We played together, we walked to school together, we got up to the school we separated and went into our own school. We came home, we came home together. We still played in the community together and the only time we were …and at that time the movies were even segregated, we could not go to the movies together. The same people who owned the movies here in Cape May own the one in Wildwood. If you were black you went to Wildwood to the movies but you sat in the balcony.

BG: Here you could not even go into the movies.

JB: The only time we went, they were very gracious, was at Christmas time.

BG: (laughs)

JB: And when you went down and got your box of candy, your apple, your orange and you walked down and saw a movie.

BG: They let you see a movie
J: Now what year was that?

BG: But wait a minute now, you have got to remember we didn’t go to liberty, we went to called the Palace on the corner on the end of Washington Street. Remember that… The Palace Bow (?)…?

JB: at one time we went to Liberty. Now I remember going to Liberty on the corner of Washington Street.

BG: Now do you remember Perry Street”

JB: I remember Perry Street.

BG: Remember we had to go there…

JB: That’s why we always used to say we just might as well have grown up in the south. It wasn’t until the Second World War…

BG: In the 40’s…

JB: That we were able to go into the movies here in Cape May.

BG: That was because of the service men.

JB: That was because of the servicemen; the base, the Coast Guard base. That was because you had blacks in the coast guard. At that time they were opening up, you know, because of the service men. Now my father was a licensed electrician. I imagine he got his license back around in the thirties….because I was up here in elementary…

BG: Because a friend of his, a white man who was an electrician. Dad used with work him. He was the only one who would stand for him to get his license in the State of New Jersey. My father was the first black electrician.

J: In New Jersey?

JB: Yes, in New Jersey. But the man that licensed Mr. White would not license him. He got his license because of the Coast Guard Base. When they opened up they needed an electrician. He went and he applied and it was through them that he got his license.

BG: And there was a white man, who was his friend, who stood for him. But now the white man from… he wouldn’t do it. My father grew up with a man named Morton and he was an electrician so he knew what my father could do, so he stood for him as an apprentice. That’s how prejudice it was down here.

J: Did your parents go to high school?
BG: My father went to high school and then from there he went to NY. He went to City College in New York and that’s where he got his training as an electrician. Then he went out to Youngstown, Ohio for air conditioning. Of course, my mother, she went to Cape May High School; she was a housekeeper. But she did go to Philadelphia and went to nursing school. She liked nursing. When she was in Philadelphia, she was working for a family in Philadelphia; she went to night school to learn nursing.

J: In Youngstown, Ohio, was that an air conditioning school?

BG: Yes that was an air conditioning school. And he went there as a result too of being at the base. He had to have air conditioning capabilities, so he had to go out there.

J: That was going to be my next question…how did he find Youngstown Ohio? But now I see.

BG: He went out there in order to get trained as an electrician, I mean as an air conditioning person.

J: Now what did your parents say to you about your education? Did they have they have any feelings?

BG: Oh yeah, my dad, he was a mathematician. He was a stickler for math and learned in how to do figures. My mother, she was a perfectionist when it came to English, reading, writing. She was quite a woman.

JB: You could not be lazy.

BG: No you could not.

JB: You had to think it through they didn’t do it for you.

BG: You did it for yourself.

JB: And they pushed us.

BG: And you used to have to sit around the table and attend to our homework. My father, he would check that math, anything to do with mathematics, I don’t care what it was. My mother, she would check our English. We had to read for our mother, she made us read.

JB: In fact that was all….for Christmas, half it was books…that all we got was books.

BG: Yeah, a lot of books.

JB: And really Mr. Moore was building us. And prepared us. Any student that came out of West Cape May Annex he had already prepared for freshman year in high school. In other words it was a joke when we went over there. He used Sporndike, I’m sure you’re familiar with Sporndike, that’s what he taught us math out of. And when he thought he had the ability, he
would keep us after school. And we knew algebra. He was an excellent teacher. And this was eight grades. He used to tell us you can’t be as good as; you have to be better than.

BG: That was his motto with us.

J: So when you got to high school, and sat in that integrated class in high school…

BG: Oh, we excelled. We were always better than them.

(They both laugh heartily)

JB: There was always someone coming out in the upper ten percent of the class. You talk about prepared, that man prepared us! And part our work ethics we got from him cause he did not like CP (Colored People) time.

BG: You had to be on time with him

JB: You had to be on time

BG: He’d stand at that door. He’d come to that door and by the time he blew that whistle, you’d better be going up those steps walking past him! And when he walked in the door, the door was closed. Oh yeah, he had that whistle and when he blew he’d let you know. And if you were half way down you started running because you wanted to be in that door before it closed.

J: So there was no “I can’t”?

BG: Oh no. There was no such thing as can’t; you could not use that word.

JB: My thing was even if you can’t do what someone else can do…

BG: …you can do something.

JB: to the best of your ability.

BG: That’s what he taught us.

JB: You always go for the utmost.

BG: The utmost!

JB: No in between.

BG: So even though we went to a segregated school to us it was a blessing. We had a teacher, Mrs. Booker, from Philadelphia, I mean New York, that lady, you talk about teaching children…

J: What did she teach?
BG: She taught drama, she played music, art and education; she taught you how to appreciate art. That lady taught you the finer things in life. You wouldn’t have…you had to be dressed, your appearance was important; your work had to be important. We had three excellent teachers. Another little lady, Miss Dalton she had kindergarten, first (grade). By the time we came out of her classes you knew your numbers, your letters, you were memorizing. You were set to go. They didn’t play us. They made sure that their children were the best.

J: And then the next teacher, you had three teachers…did what.

JB: Miss Hooker…

BG: was a very good person when it came to …

JB: Third, forth, and fifth.

BG: You did a lot of memory work with her. We were learning the Declaration of Independence when we were in her room. (laughs) I done forgot it all by now, but we had to know it then.

JB: You had to know the Preamble [to the US Constitution] … Mr. Moore, civics and math, that was his thing.

BG: We had to learn Scripture, we had had the Bible. We had to memorize the Bible scriptures in the morning. That was a part of our opening.

JB: And you took pride …. 

BG: You had your morning session.

JB: And the little ones, we used to go into Miss Bookers room with our chairs. Everybody would go into one room for the opening.

BG: …Then we would separate and go into our classes, but that’s where we started. We started in the morning everybody had to go into one room and we had our little opening session with the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag, we had our prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, and then we had to read the scriptures. One of the Psalms we had to learn was the 91st Psalm, we had to learn that. They were good. [all of this was required under state law]

J: It was a good foundation?

BG: We played music.

JB: If you wanted to succeed it was your choice.

BG: Writing.

JB: The basics were there.
BG: One of the things I wanted to say was, Miss Daugton, 2nd and 3rd by the time we left her room we knew how to write, Spenserian, not print. You learned how to do the up and down stroke, the circle. Every morning we had a drill. We had to make strokes up and down, up and down, up and down. And then you had to do the circles and when you left there you could write Spenserian. You could make you’re A’s, your B’s; a lot of adults could not write as well as we did. We learned how to write by the time we were in the third grade.

J: When you went to high school, what type of courses did you take in high school?

BG: College Prep. There were only three courses, now you have all these whatever. You had College Prep; you had Business and straight-General. The three courses that was open to you and you had to take what they mandated; you could not pick what you wanted. You had an English, you had a science, you had a math

JB: You had social studies.

BG: You had two electives besides gym. You could take art, cooking, sewing, mechanical drawing and shop. And you had to take one of those; those were your electives. You had to take two electives and all the rest. I took art and sewing.

JB: I took mechanical drawing.

J: Did the school put you into college prep or did your parents decide. How was that decided?

JB: It was unspoken.

BG: You didn’t even think about it. You (the interviewer) asked the question but you (we) didn’t even think about it. First of all, when you came out of school, this Mr. Moore, he had made you ready to go to higher level and your parents’ expected you to go to a higher level. Our parents did. My aunt was a teacher, Miss Howard, she was the youngest student to graduate from high school; she was 14 when she graduated from there and my aunt went to college. When she graduated from there (college) she was so young they wouldn’t give her a teacher’s license. She had to go down to North Carolina and get it. My uncle was a doctor. My father was an electrician. They were professional…

JB: You see, their mother, Deal, very little education, but that was what she wanted for her children. Every last one of them played a musical instrument. My father played piano, my aunt played violin; and pop used to sit every afternoon and listen to opera. He would be washing down his plants from the side porch. For as far as you could see that he had nothing but plants; we had French windows on the far side of the house; and he would be washing his plants, cause he didn’t clean the house, and the music would be playing. And my sister and I would be over at grandma’s house and we would end up listening to the opera.

JB: We were privileged in a way. We had the best of both worlds. We weren’t rich…

BG: No, no. we came from working people. But we came from working people that wanted
something.

JB: And we were somebody. And so we were introduced because our aunt and uncle were like family.

BG: Our older sister and brother because we were over there as much as we were here because when we came home from school we went to our grandmothers. Mom was working, dad was working; we had to go over there until they came home.

JB: We were introduced to the finer things. You know, and mom wanted nothing but the best; whatever she could afford.

BG: Like grandfather, this yard was, it really...people used to come through here and see this yard and ask my grandmother if they could speak to the madam. And she would tell them, “I’m the madam.” (laughs) This yard, talk about a picture, it had a hedge all the way around it and flowers, a big fish pond. My grandfather had all the things that he liked, he had in this yard. It was beautiful. He was working in the yard. Besides being the person who maintained the house for the Physick Estate, he was a Presbyterian sexton; he would ride down on his bike every morning to do what he had to do, because in those days you didn’t have automatic furnaces. You had to have a furnace person. He would ride down and take care of the furnace and go to his work. And when he came home, he and my father would work in this yard.

J: Were you two the only children.

BG: No, no. we had two brothers. My oldest brother is right there with his wife and his son; and my youngest brother is right there. (Pointing to pictures on the wall)

J: And they went to college also?

BG: No, both of them went to Bordentown, and then they both went into the service because academically my mother wanted them to go there. She felt that they weren’t…

JB: You know how boys were.

BG: They were not interested in books and academics.

J: At Bordentown, what did they study?

BG: Well Bordentown was a manual training school.

JB: Well more or less they trained you...like an academy.

BG: Well that brother, he was in the choir because he liked to sing. That’s the older one, he liked to sing; he has a nice voice and he sings. He’s the older one. That’s his wife and his son. And my

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4 The Physick Estate was built around 1880 and was the home of Emlen Pysick, a member of a family of prominent Philadelphia medical doctors.
youngest brother, he went to Bordentown too. My older brother ended up going to the Navy; that was during the Second World War. And when my youngest brother went it was during the Korean War.

J: So they both went.

BG: They went from Bordentown into the service. And of course, my younger (?) brother ended up being a paratrooper and going to every part of the world. He is in Africa right now with his wife.

J: He settled there?

JB: Yeah, his wife, she is an African woman.

BG: From Liberia, you know the history of Liberia. Her father was one of the, what do you called them, she came from a religious family and he was one of the missionaries, or whatever.

JB: Wasn’t he in government?

BG: Yeah, he was definitely in the government where they had the coup. They had quite a bit of land over there when that coup took place. They had had to get out of that. Her mom used to raise the rubber plants in … and when the coup took over they had to get out. They are in Ghana.

J: Seems like your family, after eight grade, went to different institutions….did most of the African Americans in this area continue after grammar school?

JB: Most of them went to high school. When we came along…well, during my mother and father’s time, they went to work. They had to go to work; very few of them even left the area because back then Cape May was a booming area. There were jobs for people. We had the coal company, the electric company, the phone company…we had the railroad station. We had a train station here that was fabulous. And most of the black people either worked for the coal company, the ice company, they worked for the railroad and down at the fish dock. And we had a lot of farm lands. And my mother did a paper on the black business in Cape May from 1920. I will share that with you; I have to dig it out. That will give you…We had churches, we had three very strong churches. And we had businesses; we had blacksmiths, we had barbers, we had tailors; shoe cobblers and these people owned property. Did you know that West Cape May was mostly black people? And they all just about had their own businesses. They had to do it because they still had to be self- sufficient. They helped build Cape May. They helped build the beaches, they helped build the hotels. Some of our people, the Edmund sons, I understand they were some of the strongest men that help to drive the palings down to build those piers and things down at the beachfront. And these were my grandmother’s people, the Edmunds family. Cape May has beautiful history and a very full black history. It really makes you proud when you hear it. What you see now is nothing.

JB: You were asking if …
J: Did they (young people) go away?

JB: The majority of them...some did, and those that didn’t went away and found jobs to advance themselves.

BG: They relocated. I don’t know of one; I’m sure some but the majority the young people, like in our group didn’t go away and learn. They learned, if not from school, from jobs.

JB: They got jobs where they could learn and advance. We came out of an era when things were beginning to opening up.

BG: See, cause when we went away… (Unclear)

JB: When we had to prove ourselves. We weren’t looking for someone to give us something that we hadn’t earned and were entitled to.

J: And you say you left in the 40’s?

BG: Yes, cause we...I graduated. We just celebrated our sixtieth anniversary from high school. 1945 was when I went to Philadelphia and she (Jean) came out in ’47. And the thing about it is even when I went to the city, like when I went to Philly, things were beginning to open up. Things were beginning to open up. The young people were beginning to get an opportunity because this was following the war, when things were beginning to open up. The segregation line was beginning to break down. And people were beginning to….when I was going to Temple they almost still had like a class system.

JB: They did, cause she went to Temple to be a medical technician, and they told her- and I sat right there and listened to them- they told her that they would advise her to go into another field because at that time they were not allowing blacks to work with the patients. In order to be a technician, you had to work with the patients. That’s what they told her; and that’s why she went into business administration.

(Bernice giggles)

J: I am just going to shake my head.

BG: I’m telling you! And even at Temple, they kept us on a curve- you’re familiar with a “curve”- per marking. And they made sure-and the black kids were pretty smart; they weren’t stupid - but they made sure that they put that percentage so that that curve kept us, you know, like out of the ‘upper group’. That curve- I was glad when they got away from that because that really wasn’t fair.

JB: That’s why can appreciate the teachers that we had although we were segregated.

BG: But the teachers- we were taught! They knew.
JB: They knew what we had to face and they prepared us for what we had to face.

BG: He used to tell us all the time- cause he came out of Washington and he knew what it was like being segregated and what the blacks were going through in the south. And he made sure- that was one thing, that his students- you know he even made us learn how to take care of a check book!

JB: Can you believe it? How many people thought about it then?

J: How many people had a checkbook then?

BG: That’s right. How many was there that would go to the bank and we used to even up there. They started us out at the bank with the little nickel and dime savings accounts.

JB: The one good thing about then was that the parents supported the teachers.

BG: Oh…you asked the question “did you have a disciplinary problem?” Well I’ll tell you, Mr. Moore was an ace disciplinarian. You didn’t have no problem with Mr. Moore.

JB: And Miss Daughtery too.

BG: That man would snatch a boy up in a minute. And he would walk up to a boy up that long hallway and they came over- they was big boys too. Honey, they would have Mr. Moore under the jail today when you talk about this business of children’s rights (laughs). Oooh, there were no children’s rights!

JB: Under the jail!

BG: Mr. Moore- That man!

JB: And the thing is, even our parent. The way the system is today… well all you had to say was Jean so and so and so. They didn’t ask “did I” or “could I” or “would I” or “did you”? NO, there was no point in saying nothing cause you didn’t explain anything.

BG: Nope, cause in them days people didn’t lie on you. As far as the parents were concerned they would acknowledge Miss. so and so, she was the teacher; she’s not going to tell something that wasn’t true. And today you can’t even tell a kid to keep quiet.

J: You said that there were three churches, influential churches, in town. What were their names? BG: Macedonia Baptist Church, Franklin Street Methodist and Allen A.M And the sad thing about it is, do you see what they are doing to the Franklin Street Methodist Church? Wait until you ride down there. The sold it and they are turning it into a condo! You just wait until you see it- it’s a disgrace!

J: I didn’t know that they were turning it into a condo. The Historical Society was storing some things there and I just happened to walk in and ask if I could see the inside of the church and
they had said that it had been sold.

BG: Yes, they did. They sold it and the owners are turning it into a condo.

J: Which means they are probably going to do a lot to the inside.

BG: They already did. They have taken the stained glass windows out. It breaks your heart to see what they have done to that church. We were raised between Allen and Macedonia. My mom was Baptist and my dad was Methodist, African Methodist.

J: We know that churches have Sunday School and other kinds of classes on Scriptures and religion and how to live within them. Did churches in this area have other types of meetings, community meetings, or educational classes?

JB: No, not really. Because you had all these other… my mother used to belong to, what was that women’s group she belonged to?

BG: They had clubs. And first of all the schools were different, the schools had a lot of community programs.

JB: Mom used to do 4-H with the girls, the women. And the women, they used to come here to sew, to learn to sew and all. I was in a lower grade, Miss. Dockerty’s (Daugherty's) class, but I remember them coming. They would come and sit at the table and she instructed them. She was 4-H and more or less deportment of dress and all like that. She, she was into that type of thing.

BG: She had a group of women and called the Social Service Workers. They were social service workers and they helped take care of people who, black families that were not doing too well and need some help. And they used to have affairs, socials and things, so that they could take the money and help. They needed school clothes or they needed shoes. I came across, not too long ago, my mother’s notes on Social Service and when they had their little collections and do for the people. Like what we are doing with the Federal Government today. People did that on their own and the little groups were very active. The Elks were very active and the Eastern Stars…

J; I always hear about the Elks and the Masons and the Eastern Stars, but I’m really not familiar with them,

BG; Well they were the social service people of that day because that was part of their commitment; to help families. They were also a social outlet for our people; everybody did not want to go to a bar and such. So you had a lot of night clubs around- plenty of them. But then there was always that group of people that wanted to be special and different and their aspirations were higher. So they had the Eastern Stars, the Masons, the Elks, and the Shriners. My pops, my grandfather, belonged to the Knights of Pythias. You never heard of them? That was an old group.

JB: I think they took off from the Knights of Columbus.

BG: Who were white. The white clubs always had there’s and then we came and we would have
our clubs.

J: Were there any reading circles and reading groups

JB: not that I know of; not that I am aware.

BG: Only in the recent years that came about. I didn’t hear about reading groups here until I came back from Philadelphia about the 60’s- that came about later, but back then. Now they didn’t have reading groups, but the churches did have people in…they used to have a lot of teas and things where…they were really into poetry, that’s what I am trying to think of. They had Langston Hughes, aha; we had women who were very much into remembering (and) reciting poetry. They loved that and we used to have Sunday afternoons they would have what they called ‘literary teas’. And that’s where they would come together and they would talk. Yeah. Dunbar; they would quote the black writers. Negro history were a big thing, but the women in their ‘C’ circles, they would keep that up all year round. They just didn’t wait til February to talk about the black folks. Okay. They were always in their churches now …that’s the one thing the women in the churches did do. They did have that kind of activity. Yeah. That was a big thing to have their get togethers and have their little sandwiches and their tea and whatever. There was usually a program where the groups would go through this, what do you call it, there was a name for that- where people would expound on the racial….

JB: “Elocution”

BG: “Elocutionist,” yeah that’s it. I knew there was a right word for it. They were elocutionist and they just loved to do this; and it was exciting just sitting there listening to them. And then we had a woman, Thea Allison, a relative of ours, beautiful pianist, and see they had to have that music. See, this was very important to have somebody that could sing, and they would have people that could play and this made up their program. This was our culture. Sunday afternoon.

J: That couldn’t be every Sunday?

BG: Oh no, but we did it enough.

JB: We did it about once a month.

J: That sounds like a lot of planning…

BG: Here it was one thing of value. It was nice because had different groups doing it, it wasn’t just one group working on it have something.

JB: You paid ten cents for the cup of tea, and you were with family and you had a couple of hours. My mother was one that wherever she went, we had to be.

They laugh

BG: We had to go along with her.
JB: But that was good. We had good exposure.

J: What newspapers did you read?

BG: *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Star Ways*, and every now in then we would get a hold of the black newspaper from Philadelphia.

JB: *The Afro*.

BG: And there was the *Philadelphia Afro American* something.

JB: I used to just call it the *Afro*.

J: Now the other two papers …

BG: *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Cape May Star and Way*-that was the local paper…

J: They were white?

BG: Yes,

JB: Those were an everybody paper.

BG: And *The Bulletin*.

JB: But the black paper was called “*The Afro*” and it came out on Saturday.

BG: They had it in Philadelphia; I think they still have it. And I worked with the man who was editor of that. His name was Hustus Gay, West Indian. When I first went to Philadelphia, in 1945. We went to the same church, Zion Baptist Church, and he was a deacon there. He was a very fine person.

JB: And then he worked at the bank too, didn’t he?

BG: No I worked at the bank. Mr. Ely worked at the bank and the Wrights.

JB: Yeah she worked at…

BG: Citizens Southern Bank, when I came out of Temple.

J: Were there any other schools available for blacks in this area?

BG: No.

J: Who is the greatest influence in your life?

BG: Who is the greatest or who was? I think my parents were the greatest influence. I will tell
you why. They were so strict. Just to give you an example. My dad was so strict, he was the kind of man who would come into here on a Saturday when we were supposed to be doing our work and he would give us the white glove treatment. Now you know there aren’t many fathers who would do that. That man made sure that we had to keep house. She (Jean) was the upstairs maid and I was the downstairs maid. (They laugh) You see, when we grew up, we had to clean. We had to wash, we had to do all the things in the house because my mom was working, my dad was working and we were all close together. My brother was older, a brother was younger and we had to do all the things my mother made us do and learn how to do. And my dad, he was a very neat man.

JB: That was an interesting question for me because I never really thought about it. I was influenced really just by my life and the people I was around and that’s my family. I was influenced by my grandparents, my aunt my uncle and my parents. And Mr. Moore was quite an influence in my life.

J: Yeah, you both talked quite a lot about Mr. Moore.

JB: Mr. Moore gave me something that kept me going in spite of …and I really didn’t really realize that and appreciate it to the extent that I do, his influence in my life, until after I grew up. And in my schooling, because I was the only black girl in my class in high school. And I went away to school. And when I went into industry, what he taught me served me well. It was the basis of my excelling at what I did and the fact that I wanted to make my parents and my family proud of me. So really, my parents were the greatest influence on me. I realized how they were. There was really nobody like them. They respected you and they respected themselves and they accepted you. It was ‘love’ really, in action, this family we grew up in. I am not saying they were perfect, that is not what I am saying. But you felt, you know, it was something you felt- you weren’t taught- it was just the way you were received and treated. That is the only way I know how to explain that. So that is what influenced me.

J: I have something else also. You said that you were the only black girl in your high school class…

JB: Yes, in my class

BG: Yes, she was.

J: And you too?

BG: No there was …

JB: There were four.

BG: I know I was the only one who graduated from West Cape May who went to high school and there were about three. There was one girl, my cousin from the country, Ethel Purnell; up from Cold Springs. She was in my high school class.

JB: She was.
BG: Yes, we were in high school together. Betsy and Florence, May and the Byrd (Bird) girl... you’re right (taking to Jean), Ethel was a year ahead of me but we were very close. She was the only black girl in her class.

J: How many people were in a class?

BG: In my class there were only 40- we had a very small class. Did we have 40?

JB: I thought your class was bigger than that.

BG: We didn’t have 80. I should know because we just had our 60th and we didn’t have 20 something at that. Our 60th class reunion, we had it in September.

JB: I thought you had 100.

BG: No, because we had 20 something people at our reunion and their mates. I think my class had 40 something students in my class. We had a small one (class). Yours was about 200.

JB: Let’s say between 100 and 160.

BG: See, one of our problems with my class was that it was in the middle of the Second World War and all the fellows were in the service. We would have had about 60 students, but we didn’t cause too many of the boys were in the service. See I was in high school between ’41 and ’45. See I went in ’41 and graduated in ’45. But she (Jean) was the only black. In fact, she only had what 4 black students in your class?

JB: There was 5 of us.

BG: Yeah, 4 fellows and one girl.

J: How did the teachers treat you in the high schools? Who were the teachers?

BG: Well my teachers were Mrs. Holloway, white. Well didn’t have any black teachers in high school. No, no, all white teachers in high school. One thing I did appreciate, my teachers, they respected us; those of us who acted like we had some sense and knew what we were doing. And that’s where we had “heads up” being out of West Cape May Elementary Annex. Mr. Moore had prepared us for that. That was another thing, you did not, I did not have the feeling that I was different from the white kids. We were just people in the school together. It was never, even though we had just come from a segregated school system, we were never made to feel like, we did not-now there was always somebody who was, you know folks who wanted to (trails off). But we never, with all of it, I was never made to feel that I was different. And I guess if I had not been raised the way I was I may have felt different. But I was never allowed to feel different, even at home with my family. We did not come from a family. You were not treated-we did not even think about color. We were people and we were raised and we were treated and we came from a family that it didn’t matter if you were black or white; you were just another person. And yet, we saw segregation, we saw people be treated differently because.
JB: We understood, but we just accepted it. It was something that was; it didn’t make us feel ‘less’ of a being.

BG: Or nervous. And the teachers did not treat us that way. I didn’t have any teachers that treated us that way. As a matter of fact, I think we were better off because there were fewer of us; we just melted into the woodwork. (Next sentence unclear) And because we were prepared to go into this atmosphere, we didn’t make an issue- we were just part of the group. What made it good was that we stood out- we were smart. We weren’t ‘show off-ish’; we didn’t go down there acting like we….no, we were people. We were there, we were going to school and we had been taught already to respect your elders, respect your teachers and respect yourself. So when you went to school; and you know everybody tried, everybody’s parents tried to keep us looking good. Oh yeah, we weren’t going to go down there with those white kids looking tacky- oh no! Not a one! Even the poorest one went down there trying to look…

BG: See, there wasn’t any of that- and we were poor!

JB: Economically wise, we were all on the same level.

BG: We went to school with the kids whose parents- most of the Jewish children- there parents owned the automobile stores, they owned the clothing stores, and our (black) parents worked for them. We were like family. It was a community. You didn’t have a lot of snobs in town. Everybody was on a first name level.

JB: This is what I have always maintained- you can’t pass the laws to make people accept - it’s up to the individual. It’s a one on one thing. It’s how you carry yourself. And of course, they have an image; and if there honest, they have an image of us, but it is up to us not to take that image. And that’s why I get annoyed with the young people today. They want to fall into that, when somebody has…yes, black is beautiful but black doesn’t say you can do whatever you want to do and folks accept it.

J: Is there anything that I haven’t asked, or you have not had the opportunity to tell me about education or life in Cape May that you think I should know?

BG: We’ve covered church, we covered businesses, attitudes. Like I say, people were on a first name basis, black families worked for the white families that had money. That was so everywhere, but you didn’t…what was interesting was that they didn’t treat our parents like they were servants. They knew, just by knowing families. What were interesting about Cape May was even the people who had money and were able to be in business, their fore parents came along with our fore parents and they were all on the same level. Because most of the people and set up here were poor farmers they were either Irish, they were Italian, Jewish, they were immigrants and they found a spot where they could do and had brought from the old country. Most of our people who had businesses and were white, they were not “native” (born) Americans. Most of them came here on the boat and they had trades- they knew how to do things or their parents knew how to do things. And they came, they were all poor together. The reasons why they got along so well is because like grandmother…let me give you an example, my mother’s mother lived on one end of Broad Street and somebody else's mother lived on the other end of Broad
Street who was maybe a poor Irishman. Most of them came in and they were on the docks. There were men that came; they were hucksters, people who started from the farm and brought things down and would sell on the streets. We were all poor together, until, because they were white during a time when whites could move up. They got a little money and were able to buy a house and sell a house or would rent to black folks. And they’d get their little bit of money together and move on out and set up a store. But they started from the same pot. They didn’t come over with no ‘big I’ and ‘little you’. When my mother and them came along, they knew each other; they were neighbors. They probable met each other in their back yards. It was Octavene and Al Luce and them. Remember grandma in them days. The people down at the other end of Lafayette Street had farms and mom and them would walk the fences and get eggs and all that kind of stuff. You know, that kind of life. They did not come…it wasn’t like “oh, you’re black; I can’t have you…”- no. They were all poor together. And if any of you talk to any of them older white people that came out of Cape May, and they know those old black families, they will tell you.

JB: You know the biggest problem that you had when you were dealing with the whites here were really from your farmers and lower class.

JB: Now they were bigots. They were like rednecks. The farmers up in the country, they were like rednecks. But downtown and in the City- no. I’ve met people that, since I’ve been back here working in Social Service work that we have found out that…did you know the Majors, did you know the Haggertys, did you know, did you know…Yeah. Their grandparents, their mother and father were raised next door. Yeah, because before blacks got into certain areas, the white people had come and settled. And then come the foreign families and they needed a place to stay. And the white folks get ready to move someplace else and we come and move into their property. And it was that kind…like a stepping stone thing.

J: How about the trades people? Let’s go back to that because you said that your father, he was an electrician and he was an apprentice and wasn’t able to get a license under the man. Were the trades people kind of “stand-offish”? 

BG: It wasn’t that the trades’ people were kind of stand-offish but it was sign of the times. It wasn’t time for black people to move into so therefore they had to stay on the outside and do their own business.

JB: It’s just like there are some groups even now that black men cannot get into and you had a lot of that cement, like I the building trades, those trades there you were sort of locked out.

BG: And most of it was because of the licensing. You see you got to stop and think, that was another way of keeping the black man down. Because what did the law say all of a sudden, the state law says you got to have a license. But some of the black tradesmen knew more about the trade than a lot of the white men did. A lot of the white men were making it off of the backs of the black men and (who) knew what to do and hadn’t even been to school. Because God gave them that ability to be technicians. Half these people didn’t have to go to school. The black men didn’t have to go to school to learn what they learned- it was an innate ability. And like the white folks did, they took a change. They built their whole economy off of the backs of black people. I mean it is a vicious cycle. And your government helps to do it because they still comes from a
time when we ain't supposed to have but so much.

JB: It was the mindset, not the time. The mindset— that's always going to be there.

BG: It's always going to be there. But I'm just so happy that I saw a period of time when our people 'did it'...they really did. And I'm going to find that paper! And you know the sad thing about it. The young black people in Cape May have left. They left their heritage.

JB: Well it started, when you asked about them going away to school, they went to school and never came back. So there were a lot of properties that were lost here because...

BG: The families didn't come back to take them or keep them up. And know you're getting a similar thing happen (when) you go to Wildwood. Wildwood, when it came to black families in Wildwood was strong. The black economy in Wildwood was built on the backs of black women. Know that was a little different over there. They were the ones controlling issues over there in Wildwood. For one thing, they got into politics.

J: Black women got into politics?

BG: In Wildwood? Yes, that why they were so strong. Oh yeah, in Wildwood, it was the black women who were in politics. They flourished, they moved! You see, in Cape May the black men were very independent and they had their own businesses; and they did. Wildwood was a different story, those black women got into politics and it was the Italian people in Wildwood pushed them black women. They opened the ways for them. The black men were doing their little thing, they had their little trades some of them. They were not business. It seemed like the mentality of the women in Wildwood was 'business'. Naked business. The men, you know, they were kind of different. Their idea of business wasn’t the same as the people in Cape May. You take Middle Township, Middle Township was very interesting. It was a mixture; those people came straight from the south. But they were willing to live with nothing. When I came back here in 1968 and started working for the County Clerk, Cape May Human Resources, in Middle Township there wasn’t a street light- I mean in Whitesboro, not Middle Township. In Whitesboro there wasn’t a street light; there wasn’t a paved street. In 1968, I am telling you, I came back here and went to work for Cape Human Resources in the 70’s. And they didn’t have no street lights, they didn’t have no paved streets….

JB: They just got water in there.

BG: Of course, water just came through. They did not have. And you know, those people were living in houses with dirt floors. We were going around getting the children and that’s why we were so successful with an antipoverty program in Whitesboro because those people were living just like they did when they came up here from the south! They had children living all in one room; they had cardboard on the walls for protection...

J: Why? Jobs?

JB: Laurel, Laurel, what was that? Mount Laurel! You read the book, The Scandal of Mount
Laurel?

J: No I didn’t

JB: Oh you haven’t!

J: I will be.

BG: Yes please!

JB: What she is talking about is similar to *The Scandal of Mount Laurel*.

BG: I’m a tell you, when I came back I went to work and that was in the 70’s and that was not 100 years ago. Those people were sweeping dirt floors. They had those floors so hard, it was like rock and that’s the way they were living in those houses in Whitesboro. Reverend Gilmore, when they came through in the 70’s and the 80’s that they were going to tear down all them, he was one of the forerunners to make them tear those shacks down and get those people into some decent houses. You’d be surprised at the way people were still living. When I came back here, and I went away in ’45, when I came back here in ’68 it was terrible. You would not believe it. I said “I don’t believe it.” And Woodbine wasn’t much better. And this was Cape May County.

JB: And the same conditions existed in Mount Laurel and it was after the Second World War. And then the town, as a result of that situation in Mount Laurel,…it was interesting.

BG: And as a result of that, you cannot build a housing development without having low cost housing involved in it; that has got to be a part of your proposal.

J: I have heard about that.

BG: Hey, there is some interesting history around here.

J: Well, I thank you because I have learned a lot. Not only have I learned a lot in this interview, I learned what I don’t know and need to know and need to research some more. You have been very helpful.

BG: Well, I am going to find that paper that my mother did about the businesses, the black history.

J: Thank you.

BG: I enjoy talking about Cape May. I like Cape May’s history. I just always think about it. She (JB) is a better speaker than me.

J: Oh no, you both were wonderful.
Mrs. Bernice Howard Gordon, known as “Mother Gordon,” was born on August 1, 1927 and passed away on December 12, 2007.
Janet Allen: Thank you very much Ms. Hazell for agreeing to do an interview for my dissertation on the education of African Americans in NJ. I am going to ask you some personal information first.

Bernice Hazell: If I have the answer, I’ll give it to you.

J: Your full name is…

B: Bernice R. Hazell. Rose. I’m a rose, I may not smell like a rose, but I’m a rose.

J: If you don’t mind me asking, would you please tell me your age and birth date.

B: My birth date is 3-18-30. I will be 78 in March. I’m 77.

J: And where were you born?

B: Right here in NJ on Union Landing Road.

J: And you grew up there?

B: Right. I was born there; I didn’t grow up on that street. We moved out on the farm when we were smaller. I don’t even remember how old I was when we went out there.

J: But it was in NJ?

B: Oh yeah, definitely.

J: And the town was Riverton?

B: Well, it was East Riverton. East Riverton and they changed it to Cinnaminson.

J: I didn’t know that Cinnaminson was East Riverton. And you went to school in East Riverton?

B: No, We went to school in Cinnaminson # 4 because there were whites and blacks and blacks and whites. Cinnaminson #2 was the white school and we went to Cinnaminson#4. That was the name of the school. Before they named the town the school was called Cinnaminson. So that’s where we went. And we went from there to Palmyra High.

J: And you said you are retiring right?
B: In December, Hallelujah!

J: What is your occupation?

B: I was a bus driver. For 43 years I was a bus driver.

J: The students are going to miss you.

B: It was little kids, children you know.

J: Now I am going to ask for information about your family and your family’s education.

B: Oh Lord, I don’t know if I know about their education or not.

J: Where were your parents born? In NJ?

B: I think Mt. Holly. I’m not sure. I’m not really sure. My dad was from Georgia, I do know that. I’m not sure about mother; I think she was born right here in Jersey though; I’m not sure about that.

J: And do you know about the education of your parents; what grade they went to or if they went to school at all?

B: Daddy, no I don’t. Mother, she didn’t finish high school; I think. She’s past and gone now so if something pinches me, I know I’m doing something wrong.

J: As far as you can remember, could your parents read and write?

B: Oh yeah, we knew how to read and write and arithmetic.

J: So your parents knew all of that?

Shakes her head in affirmation.

J: You are not sure if your mother was from NJ. Do you know where they were educated? That is what I am trying to get at.

B: Let’s see, I believe she was educated in Jersey. I am not sure if it was Cinnaminson; I’m not sure what they called that school when she was going to school. I think…I’m not sure.

J: Was it in this area?

B: Cinnaminson school is not right here in this area, it’s across the highway.

J: So your mother might have gone to c school-maybe?
B: Yeah

J: So you remember anything your parents might have told you about how they felt about
education?

B: No, just get your education was the main thing they told us. Get your education cause she
didn’t want us to do what she had to do. You know, working in white folks’ kitchens and all that.
Is that going to be on the tape? Oh well, working in the white folks’ kitchens….

J: And your father, what did he do?

B: Daddy worked on the farm.

J: And you said that they told you all to go get your education. Did you have sisters and
brothers?

B: Oh yea, there was eight of us.

J: Were you the oldest child, the youngest child or…

B: I was the fourth

J: Which school did you go to and what schools did your brothers and sisters go to?

B: We all went to c school #4 and from there to Palmyra High School.

B: And my kids went to C #...you see, after I got married and had children they built a high
school down that way. And that’s where my kids went; Cinnaminson.

J: When you went to school how old were you? Like when you went to # 4?

B: I went to kindergarten; kindergarten children start at 5 years old. And we had to walk to
Palmyra High School when we got older. When we graduated from 8th grade we didn’t have a
bus to take us to Palmyra, we had to walk to Palmyra High. Rain, snow, sleet, whatever- we had
to go.

J: Palmyra High School, that was the high school…let start with grammar school. At #4, was that
school all black?

B: Yeah, definitely all black

J: Was it designed to be all black?

B: Everything in New Jersey was designed to be black until they started making rules.

J: In the high school was that a mixed high school?
B: Oh yeah. They warned us when we went to high school things were going to be different and it was….white folks and all of us together.

J: Was the high school integrated or segregated space totally. Were you in separate classrooms or together?

B: Oh no we were altogether, once we got to high school.

J: How did you feel about going from number four to the high school where everybody was in the same class?

B: It was different. You know, you felt like you didn't have to take no stuff, that's for sure. But we got along. I make friends quick anyhow, so it didn't matter to me. We made out alright.

J: Which classes did you take?

B: I can't remember. I took one that was… I can't remember the name.

J: Did they have afterschool activities available for you?

B: They had baseball, football, bands in the high school. Whatever you wanted to get into.

J: And where black students allowed to participate in these activities?

B: Yeah, and cheerleading stuff like that yeah. They made sure that my too many of us on one thing that there was some in there.

J: Now that's interesting. The teachers from school number four were they mixed

B: No, they were black.

J: How about at the high school?

B: No, you know what, since you mention it I don't remember seeing a black teacher down there, tell you the truth.

J: Now did you attend college?

B: No, wasn't able to.

J: Did you go to school or take any training courses after you finished?

B: No

J: What were your feelings about school when you went? Both schools. School number #4?

B: #4 was fine. We had plays, we did little plays, and music and whatever. We even went to the
school up in...I can't think of the name of that school unless I'm riding that way. We used to take class and go there and give a play for them and it was nice that was fun, a lot of fun.

J: The school that you went to give plays, do you know whether people lived at that school?

B: No, no it was a school just like ours. I can't think of the name of it for nothing. We used to go up there and give plays to them; I don't remember them ever coming to our school but I remember us going there.

J: Were students about the same age?

B: Yeah

J: Did you have any feelings about going to Palmyra High?

B: Nope, it was just the fact that you're finally leaving Cinnaminson and going to Palmyra High. It was something different. But we got along. We got lost finding our classes. It was a regular school I guess.

J: Now, I don't know a lot about Cinnaminson, was that a mixed community?

B: I'll tell you what; in this area around here it was all black. And white folks just started moving in to here. Over in this area it was just black and down the other end was the section that was all black. But now you can't say that because they are just mixing in. White folks are moving in. Every time a black person moves out, there in. I don't know how they find out that the house is empty but they get in it.

J: So Cinnaminson was a historically black town?

B: No, East Riverton, not Cinnaminson, East Riverton! And when, after the white folks started weaving in and out, they changed the name. They changed the name to Cinnaminson. Maybe they have another reason why they changed it but that's why we think they changed it.

J: What types of jobs were available in East Riverton?

B: The ice plant used to be there. But I guess the rest of the jobs were out of the town; like Burlington and Camden or someplace. I don't know where people worked to tell you the truth. RCA was in Camden but then they moved to Morristown.

Roxy James: East Riverton was their residence but they had to go out of town to work. A lot of people went to Philadelphia to work. The reason I asked was because she said her father worked on a farm.

B: Well yeah, but I don't think all these folks did farm work because farm work was like going out. Like this farm up here, most of the folks went out to Hunter’s farm. Yeah that's still there. But now, yeah (yes) they have all of these Puerto Ricans, Jamaicans or Mexicans, so yeah.
J: How did people learn things that were new, like when there were new jobs opening, or how to train for a new job?

B: I guess somewhat mouth-to-mouth. I never saw any being advertised on television or in the newspaper. Like I know you and I tell you, and you tell somebody else. Mouth-to-mouth.

J: Were there any churches in town? Were the churches integrated?

B: No the churches were not integrated. St. Paul's Baptist Church and it was a church in Riverton and there's a church in Wrightsville, now it's called Cinnaminson. I'm just telling you the new name because there was Wrightsville, St. Paul and Mount Zion in Riverton; those of the three churches I knew about when I was growing up. The other churches with out-of-town; Burlington and Camden.

J: Were there meetings at the church that may not have been just the service? Other meetings like visitors and talks?

B: No, I don't remember. Because when we were growing up we just went to prayer service, choir, BTU and stuff like that unless we elected a new minister or something.

J: When you think back, the students that went to #4 with you, did everybody go onto high school?

B: No, everybody did not go. They didn't have to go when they left the Cinnaminson #4. There were about three of four kids that didn't go with us. They just chose not to go further you know because at that time you didn't have to go to high school like now.

J: How many people that went to the high school graduated? Like when you went did you go to all four years?

B: I went through the four years of the high school. My sister, Daniel Sr, and it must've been in our class we had… we didn't have that big of a class, but I think most of everybody went except maybe about four or five. I'm just guessing.

J: So how big was your class at #4?

B: That's some time to tell you. I can see them… Michael, Laverne, and Robert. We had to do that, everybody together. In our class we had to learn Proverbs 16:16. The figure was 1,2,3,4,5,6, 10 or 12 in our graduating class at my school. Our graduating class at high school, of course, was much bigger.

J: You said that you had to learn the Proverbs…

B: Proverbs 16:16. How much better it is to get wisdom than gold, or to choose understanding rather than silver. The highway of the upright departs from evil; he that keepeth his way keepeth his soul. And we goes on and on until the end.
J: What are some of the other things that you learned at #4?

B: We sang, we did music; we did a lot of singing.

J: Do you remember whether any clubs or sports or social organizations that were around there when you were young lady that you or your parents participated in?

B: When we were in Cinnaminson #4, Cinnaminson #2 which is the white school, we had to leave Cinnaminson #4 to take our home economics. That's where we took our and our sewing at the white school and when we were finished we came back to ours.

J: Was that because they had the equipment?

B: Yeah, because we didn't have it at ours. So we all go up to their school. That's where we would get our home economics and our sewing on whatever day we had to have it. They had a white teacher down there that was teaching us. So when we got out of there to come back to our school we got chased by them. We had to find our way back to our school. But we still went. Cinnaminson was a prejudice place that's all there is to it, and I think right now they are still places here that are a mess if if you don't stand your own ground.

J: Did you use the same books at #2 in #4?

B: I don't know what they used at #2. And before we had our own books.

J: Where the other religious or organization that people in town, African-American, would go to for club meetings or… you mentioned BTU.

B: Not that we know of. It might've been but none that I know of. See, when I graduated from Cinnaminson #4… when I left Cinnaminson #4 I was 13 and of course when I left there and got to the church and I joined the choir. I joined the choir when I was 13 year old.

Did your parents go to any club meetings?

B: No, daddy didn't go anyplace.

J: What was the favorite newspaper in your community?

B: Who said there was a favorite? I don't know because I didn't read a newspaper back then. Whatever mother daddy read, that was it.

J: Radio program?

B: Daddy was into country music a lot. Grand Old Opry. He turned the new radio set and listed to it because we didn't have television that time- we had radio. Grand Old Opry. And of course on Sundays we had the regular old Sunday service, whenever that came on.
J: When you went to school #4? Do you feel…looking back on it now, that the school had a particular purpose for your education? Were they into training people because you said some people didn't continue and didn't need to go to high school? Did they train people for particular jobs?

B: Not that I know of, no, not that I can remember.

J: These are my last questions for you. Who were the greatest influences on your life?

B: Of course my mother, of course, because she was just close to us. She did all the talking and…

J: Was there a famous person that you admired back then or now?

B: Not now. Who I admire today of course are my kids, of course. I try to follow them whatever they are doing here, but back there, no, there wasn't anybody famous I don't think.

J: And my last question did you attend any speeches by anyone or by anyone famous, or an entertainer who might've come to town? Or that you saw when you were young?

B: I don't remember them, no.

(needed to change the DVD and for some reason when I started the new DVD it did not get the first part of the question. Therefore I am not sure of the question but I suspect it was about her mother and her grandmother's sewing training.)

B: Overcoats and makeup, gloves that yeah my mother. We didn't know how important it was then, I do now.

J: How did your mother learned to sew, from her mother? Or did she go to school?

B: You know what; she didn't go to no sewing school. Old folks back then didn't have too. They had the knowledge and you didn't have to get it out of book. You didn't have to go to no class to get it. Grandma Marks, I don't remember her too much but she'd come around and visit us. But we were little when she passed.

J: Is there anything you think would be important for me trying to do a study on African-American education? A question that I didn't ask you that you think would be important for me to know?

B: No not really, I don't think so. Can you think of anything? (Talking to Dr. Roxie James)

Dr. Roxie James: or maybe something that they don't do today that they should do? Sometimes the old ways are the good ways, the best ways. Is there one thing that you can think of, if we could go back, that they should keep today that can improve children's lives?
B: What they could go back, they need to go back to the Bible. They need more Bible. That's what they need. Because now, getting to head start, were I'm working now, they say that you can’t raise your voice at the kids. In the Bible it tells you that to spare the rod will spoil the child. I think they need to go back to the Bibles; they are not close enough to God. That’s what I'm saying. And especially the black folk that was raised almost only on God's word and now are drifting out and away with whatever they are thinking. They need to go back. All the way back.

Dr. Roxie James: In my opinion its “respect,” to focus on respect because kids today don't respect their parents and the parents are afraid of the children. There needs to be some kind away that the parents could have more authority and they can turn these kids around so that the kids know that they don't rule the roost.

B: We had these little kids this time kicking their parents coming into school because they don't want to go. They try to put one on my bus that was kicking and carrying on and I said “I kickback so you'd better take her off my bus.” Take her off until she learns how to add. I said because I can't have anybody getting on my buss kicking and screaming. I have to pick up one at put them in the seat and get her to back in her seat, but if her mother put them in their seat they would be running up and down the bus line. Oh no! They need to go back.

Dr. Roxie James: How long did it take you to walk to school?

B: We had to be at the school about 7:15. I can't remember the hours but it took us a while; it took at least an hour. And at that time I was moving fast. And when I was 17. I had just come out of, let's see, I was 17 and I had a thyroid operation and I spent the whole summer in the hospital and when I came out, I got excused from school and didn’t have to hurry. If I was late they didn’t mark me down because I could not run or anything; I was still open.

Dr. Roxie James: another question I wanted to ask was more about feelings because I grew up in the South on the other side of the tracks and seemed like white folks always had more and I think I had this feeling of being inferior because we had to go to back doors and do their laundry and ironing. And that kind of feeling grows up inside of you and becomes a part of you. Do you have any feelings like that?

B: Well you know what- the kids in high school, they would like- especially the white kids- look at us like we were nothing, but you have to show them that you were something. And right now I'm getting these letters from this boy that went to high school with me, he's writing and saying nice things now. In high school he didn't seem that nice, he wasn't that bad but now he's saying, yeah , he was white, I write any write back and I let him know that things weren't the same when we went to school. I got class reunion and stuff; they were very different, very nice. But in high school you can see some of them going down the hall; pass you and not say a word to you.

J: When you were in the classroom, and you said white and blacks were in the same class, what was the seating arrangement like then?

B: We didn't have any special seating or anything once you got into high school… (phone rings and she answered it).
J: Well I think we've just about covered everything. You gave me a lot of information in one of things that you pointed out to me along with education. As I have been doing a lot of research about the African-American towns and I didn’t know about this one, and they finding more and more as I talk to people. That is important. I want to thank you.

B: And even when we went to Cinnaminson there were two school buses; one for whites and one for blacks. There was Mr. Dingy and Mr. Shea, they were both white. We were on Mr. Shea’s bus. Mr. Dingy had the white area down the other side.

J: So you took to a bus to grammar school but to walk the high school.

B: Oh yes, we walked to our high school and then there was night school, I don’t know what they call it now, and now they call it something different but it was all night school. But daddy Mama got dressed and ready and we walked across route 35. It was only two landings. But we walked to grammar school. They had a night program for the parents that was at our school #4 and the white student had their own program at the white school. We had to walk past the white school to get to the black school. Our school is still standing; I pass it when I'm driving a school bus. It's a little different now.

J: This night school was the PTA or was it where you parents came to learn?

B: We had to go to our class that we were in the daytime and the parents were there to talk to the teachers.

J: Well thank you again for the interview.
Janet Allen: Thank you for participating in my dissertation study. And for the record I'm been asked to name

Pearl Hazell: Pearl Hazell

Henry Hazell: Henry Hazell

Bernice Sanders Hazell: And I have to tell my name? Bernice Hazell.

J: Well you might as well put your name on it because I had you on another day. Okay, now I have your information (referring to Bernice) but if I say Mrs. Hazell, two people are going to answer.

B.: Oh no, I'm not saying anything for the rest of the tape.

Do you mind if I ask you your age and birth?

P.: Yeah, I'm 72. I was born September 20

J: And Mr. Hazell?

H.: 75

J: Where were you born?

P.: Mount Holly, New Jersey

H.: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

J: And you grow up and in Mount Holly

P.: No, I grew up in Mount Laurel

J: And Pennsylvania? (Referring to Henry)

H.: No Cinnaminson.

J: And what age did you come to Cinnaminson?

H: When I was little teeny thing I guess.
J: Was it before you went to school?

H.: Oh yeah.

J: And did you go to school in Mount Holly

P: No, I went to school and Cinnaminson. I was raised in Mount Laurel but then I moved to Cinnaminson

J: At what age did you move to Cinnaminson?

P.: Oh that's right, I didn't go to Mount Laurel school I went to Cinnaminson after that

J: At what age did you come to Cinnaminson about?

P.: I think I was around 10.

J: So you where old enough to be going to school. Now I’m going to ask you all some family history. Where were your parents born?

P: My parents will born in Maryland, my mother was born in Maryland, and my father was born in what's called Wrightsville.

J: Was that in New Jersey?

P: Yes

J: And the education of your parents, did you parents go to school?

P: Yes my mother was in a Mount Laurel and my dad was in I think it was Riverton. He was around here all his life. But I'm not sure about that.

J: About your parents, could they read and write?

Both: Yes

J: Where were your parents born?

H: Mom was born in Washington and dad was born in the West Indies. St. Vincent.

J: What was the highest grade level your parents achieved? If you know this information, you may not.

P: I know my mother graduated from high school I'm not sure if my dad did. I know he graduated from grammar school.
H: I don't know.

J: Did somebody say St. Vincent?

H: Yes.

J: Did either of your parents ever say anything to you when you were young about education?

P: Yes my dad always said “go to school and get your education.”

J: Why did he think it was important?

P: Because you can get a decent job.

J: What were the occupations of your parents?

P: My dad worked at Fortics - as a mechanic, and my mother was a housekeeper.

H. He worked in a warehouse, he was a longshoreman.

J: That was and still is a good job. How many children in your family?

H: There were 13 of us.

J: And do you remember… I'm supposed to ask you the age of his siblings but where you where in this set of 13?

H: I'm the third from the oldest.

J: And the youngest was born when?

H.: I'm not sure she’s a half-sister.

J: Out of your siblings, did everybody graduate from high school?

H: No, nobody graduated from high school.

J: Why not, I'm just asking?

H: Daddy wanted us home.

J: Did you find that the majority of people did not go to high school or did not graduate?

H.: I don't know how. I just think they were interested in going to school. They graduated from grammar school but not from high school.
J: After they graduated from grammar school what did they do?

H: They went out and got jobs.

J: And how about you how many children were in your family? Two?

P: Yeah.

J: And what was the highest level schooling for children in your family?

H: Dan graduated from high school, I graduated from grammar school, that was it.

J: You didn't go to the high school?

H: No I had to work.

J: After you graduated from grammar school, what job did you do? You were 12 or 13?

H: After that I don't know. I did something.

J: Well, if it comes back to let me know.

H: I picked apples. I worked on a farm.

J: Now when asked about grammar school, you attended school in Mount Laurel. Do you remember the name of the school?

P: Yes, Hattie Brick.

J: Was it integrated, segregated?

P: It was segregated -- all black.

J: And the teachers?

P: They was all black.

J: Did you know where they came from, if they live in town?

P: Most of them came from East Riverton and Mount Laurel. I think they're also Mount Laurel because they moved to East Riverton.

J: Was the school year from September to June?

P: Yeah.
J: What subjects did you learn in that school? You went when you about 10.

P: English, music really music.

J: Did you get a lot of music? Why was music so important?

P: I don't know why they always had us do. I don't know why it was important, it's just something they always had for the kids.

J: And then you went to high school? No way to transfer?

P: I transferred to Cinnaminson to grammar school? The same type of situation? Did …

J: You transfer to Cinnaminson?

P: Yes, the same type as they always do.

J: And then you went to high school in Cinnaminson?

P: What was it called?

B: Cinnaminson number #4.

P: Was it #4 or was it Phillips school?

B: No Cinnaminson #4.

J: Was it in Cinnaminson?

P: Palmyra.

B: Palmyra High. Whether called Palmyra High? I didn't know, I always thought the high school was in this town.

J: How did you like Palmyra High?

P: Okay, it was nice.

J: Where the teachers all white?

P: Yes, they will all white.

J: Let me go back, once before when I interviewed Ms. Hazel (Bernice) you say in the grammar school you took music and with this music you went to other schools doing plays?

B: Yes it was musicals and we were doing plays.
J: Was it for glee club?

B: No, it was to do plays. I don't remember the names of the plays now.

J: You said you had a glee club?

B: No, it was in grammar school that we had the glee club.

J: Remember where you did the plays?

B: No it was up in Jersey someplace, I can't think of it. We just visited different schools and gave our little program.

J: You said you can't remember the names of the plays?

B: No I don't remember the plays and stuff. But we had to have costumes. Mother made most of our costumes. I remember that much. I remember this big skirt I had on. I don't remember what I was supposed to be but I remember that skirt.

J: You must've liked that skirt.

B: Yes. I like the acting.

J: What grammar school did you go to?

P: Cinnaminson #4

B: Cinnaminson #4, we all did.

J: Now what was it like being a little boy instead of a little girl?

B: He got beat up all the time by the little girls.

P: He did?

H.: What do you mean?

J: So far I have what the women did like - the glee club, the big skirts. What did the fellows do?

H: I did a little singing in the glee club.

J: Oh you were in the glee club. Is that how you met your wife?

P: We met out here in Cinnaminson.

H: I married when she was working.
B: And she's still working.

H: She was working when she was 12.

P: Yeah, I was working on a farm. Always work after school.

J: So you're both working at the farm?

P: He wasn't working nowhere then.

H: I wasn't doing anything then.

J: Now you said you would've the eighth grade and then you left. But Danny graduated from high school. At the Dan graduated from high school what he do?

B: He went to the service.

J: Do you know what year Dan graduated from high school?

B: The same year I dated 1949.

J: And how long did he stay in the service

B: Four years

J: And then what did he do?

B: He got out, got married. He got a job first. Last

H: He had a job when he got married. He had 19 kids didn't he?

J: He had 19 kids?

B: No, we had eight.

H: He worked at H. K. Porters, didn't he?

B. But he didn't get that job right away.

J: You were married to Dan?

B: Oh yeah, didn't you know that? There he is right up there. (Points to a portrait on the wall) that's me and him. That's Dan.

J: I didn't know that.
B: You didn't ask.

J: I was wondering why you knew a lot about him -- Dan

B: That makes him my brother-in-law and that makes her my sister-in-law. And that makes me want to get out of here.

J: You all get along very well. I'm skipping some of the questions. One of things I didn't ask anybody when it came to the community, what type of jobs were available in this community that you will settle them for African-Americans

All: Farming that's all that was, farming. Farming, farming and housekeeping that's all there was. That's all it was farming and housekeeping.

J: And was there any other kind of education? Would you want to high school or didn't go to high school, how did the adult people learn things or learn new things or got information on what was going on in the community. How did they get back new information?

B: By word-of-mouth. Somebody would tell somebody. They would know what was going on and they would tell someone else. And just spread it like that.

J: Were there any organizations with your church or order missionary Society? People coming to speak at church?

P: Yes, we did have back choirs in different churches.

B: I was singing in the choir at 13. So they may be seeing different churches and you learn different things

J: How about organizations that how my aunt of the people and they said that there was a PTA and there was a… whether any other associations with their clubs, Mason?

P: The civic club.

B: if anybody wanted to join.

J: Do you know what they did?

Pearl: Civic activities.

Bernice: I don't know what they did, whatever they did this still doing it.

R Hazell: where there any Masons in your family?

B: Grandpa was a Mason. Grandpa Wade, mother’s daddy
J: So there were Masons?

P: The Masonic Lodge was big in this area

J: What kind newspapers with it to read?

P: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

B: It was the only newspaper for while.

Dr. Rhonda Hazell: It was the *Bulletin* before the *Inquirer*.

B: Yeah, that's right.

R: Was there another paper besides the *Bulletin*?

H: *The Philadelphia Tribune*.

R: That was a black paper. It was the only black paper we had. It was strictly a black newspaper.

J: And it was out of Philly?

R: Yes

J: If you had to do it over again and you were going to grammar school or high school what type of school would to go to and why? Would you do it the same way which go to a different type of school for grammar school and high school?

B: If you have the same parent to do it the same way. When they say do it you did it.

P: I do it the same way.

J: In your church whether any training programs? Did they have BTU (Baptist Training Union)?

B: Yeah, in the afternoon it was BTU.

J: Were there magazines like *Ebony* or *Jet*?

B: *Ebony's* been out a long time but we didn't have any money to buy *Ebony* magazine.

J: I'm almost finished which should make you very happy.

B: Praise the Lord.

J: Who was the greatest influence in your life?
P: Outside of my mom and dad, Martin Luther King.

B: Outside of my mother and dad, Jesus Christ.

H: And Pearl (taps her on the thigh). She was my greatest influence.


R: Uncle Henry who do you admire besides me?

H: Just Pearl.

J: Is there anything I should ask you that I didn't?

B: You didn’t say nothing about food. Don't you want to know about food?

R: Did you come home from school lunch and did you eat lunch at school?

P: We packed our lunches. We had to walk 90 miles to school with snow up to our knees (I laugh).

B: We did have to walk to school.

P: We had to walk an hour and a half.

B: We took the bus to school and you walked home (laughs).

J: The farm you work at; who owned the farm?

H: The Rottenbacher and the Schaeffer's

R: The Schaeffer's were in it too? That Apple Orchard?

R: They had apples and tomatoes.

H: Oh yeah ,I picked a many tomato out of that place. And drove many a mule.

B: That's all we can find them now, you drove them a right on out of here.

J: Were the Rottenbaker’s or Schaeffer’s, either of them Quaker's?

R: Yes both of them were Quakers.

B: All of them were Quakers around here.

R: The Quakers employed the black folks in your neighborhood.
J: With anybody else in point but people besides Quakers or was it generally known to try to get a job with them?

H: That’s all it was down there.

B: Besides Ritchie. Ritchie, was he German?

P: No they were Quakers

R: They were Quakers too? What kind of company that day own?

P: They owned the farm. They owned chickens, Peaches, apples, cherries, and sold eggs.

R: You worked on a farm?

P: Yet worked for him. I sold eggs.

H: In the first person in Cinnaminson with an airplane. He would land it on his property.

R: Is that where the nursery is now?

P: That's all those houses are built up.

B: Right across from uncle… (couldn't understand)

P: No that was one of Rottenbacher. Ritchie is on the other side of branch Pike

H: At age 14, Pearl carried his kids to the Quaker school in Morristown (?) and the buggy. She drove.

P: No license!

R: At 14 years of age, girl you would bad!

J: And then got in time for you to go to school?

P: That was after I got out of school and I went to the Quaker school to pick them up after school.

R: Did they pay you any money?

P: Yeah.

B: Not much.

P: But I was getting pay.
H: That’s why I stuck with her, she was making big bucks (laughs).

R: So she can spend some money on you? (Everybody laughs)
Janet Allen: Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study that I am doing on African American Education in New Jersey. Can you please let the tape know what your name is?

B: Sanders: B: Lawrence Sanders, Sr.

J: And what town do you live in?

B: Pennsauken.

J: Okay. I am going ask you a little bit of personal information to start out, what is your age and date of birth, if you don’t mind me asking

B: Date of birth is 11/17/34 -that’s November 17, 1934… that makes me 73.

J: You were born in?

B: Mount Holly, I think.

J: You were born in South Jersey?

B: I was born in South Jersey, yes

J: And did you grow up in Mount Holly?

B: No, I grew up in Cinnaminson.

J: And you went to school in Cinnaminson?

B: Cinnaminson and Palmyra.

J: And do you mind me asking you what your occupation is?

B: Retired for the last 12 years.

J: Okay. Before your retired, what type of occupation were you in?

B: In industry, where we made glue.

J: Okay. And that was in South Jersey?

B: Yes. That was in Riverton, South Jersey.
J: Where were your parents born?

B: You got me there. I think my father was born in Georgia and my mother was born around here, I guess she was born in South Jersey.

J: Okay. Do you know anything about your parents’ education?

B: No, not really.

J: Okay. And I’m going to ask you, did your parents read and write?

B: Yes

J: Both of them?

B: Yeah

J: Okay, and you are not quite sure where they went to school and what grade?

B: My mother went to school in Cinnaminson. My father, I don’t know.

J: Do you know what grade she went up to?

B: I’m not sure. I believe it was 6th or 7th.

J: Do you remember anything your parents might have told you, how they felt about school? Or about how they felt about education in general

B: I’m sure they felt it was important after they make sure that we went and wouldn’t take no for an answer when it came to going to school.

J: Did they tell you why they felt that way?

B: No, they didn’t explain why, I guess the obvious reason that you need to be in school, you need to learn.

J: And what was your parents’ occupation?

B: Well, my father, how do I put it, I don’t know how to put it, we lived, I don’t know how to put it, we worked for the people who we lived in their house and we worked for those people, they owned a farm and they owned a contracting business and they both worked for them.

J: Okay. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

B: How many do I have now or growing up?
J: Growing up

BS: There were eight of us…there were nine of us, there was 9 of us.

J: And do you remember who was the oldest and where you are?

B: The oldest one is deceased. What do you want to know other than that?

J: Where were you in the line of children?

BS: Next to the last.

J: And the oldest one was how much older that you?

B: He was born in ’26 and I was born in ’34. That made him eight years.

J: Do you remember any of their occupations, like the oldest one?

B: He worked for a company for about 30 years in Philadelphia and he was in the army for 2/12 – 3 years. Other than that, I don’t know. I think once he put his roots down, he worked for, I forget the name of the place that delivers money for the banks and what not…..Wells Fargo, or somebody like that.

J: Now did all your brothers and sisters go to school?

B: Yeah

J: And what grade did they go up to?

B: 12th

J: Everybody went to 12th and they all graduated?

B: Yeah, I believe, I would say yeah

J: Okay, now you said that you attended school in Cinnaminson?

B: Yeah

J: At what age did you start?

B: I would imagine five, let’s see, I would imagine if I didn’t start at five, I was five within the next couple months because school started in September and my birthday was November – so it may have been, I may have started at four.

J: How long was your school year?
B: How long was my school year?

J: I mean did it start in September and end in June, like it does now?

B: Right

J: And which school did you go to?

B: Cinnaminson Elementary School in Cinnaminson

J: Was that Number 4?

B: Number 4

J: And you graduated from Cinnaminson?

B: Yeah, 1948

J: Did you attend any other schools except that one?

B: High School in Palmyra

J: When, let’s start with Cinnaminson, was that a public school?

B: Sure

J: Was it an integrated school?

B: No, segregated school when we went there.

J: What subjects did you take?

B: What subjects did I take?

J: Yeah – what was school like? What do you remember about it?

B: What do I remember about school?

J: Did you like it, like school?

B: Yeah, I guess we did like it when it started and liked it when it ended.

J: So you liked it twice.

B: Yeah, I guess we took the basic subjects, the ones we had to take; English, Spelling, Mathematics in elementary school.
J: Art?

B: We may have, I don’t remember that……..we may have some form of Art, a little bit of Black History for at least one week out of the year.

J: What were your teachers like?

B: What were they like?

J: Young, old………

B: They were old to me, but I don’ know if they were just a few years older than us or not. I don’t really know.

J: White? Black?

B: No, Black

J: And where did your teachers……..did your teachers live in Cinnaminson?

B: No, one of them lived in Riverton and the rest of them were from Philadelphia.

J: Why Philadelphia – do you know?

B: No, I don’t know why.

J: Where did the white students go to school?

B: Down the street called Cinnaminson #2, right down the street

J: Okay, the neighborhood that you lived in, was it integrated?

B: Where we lived, we lived on a farm and that was, we were the only blacks around in that particular area

J: So, it was like the school system was definitely segregated and it wasn’t like you were closer to the other school you could go to that school?

B: No, it was definitely segregated, it was right down the street from one another; you had to pass the other school to get to [ours?]

J: When you went to high school, what was that like? What was the high school like?

B: What was it like?

J: Um hum, was it integrated?
B: Oh yea, it was integrated.

J: How about your teachers

B: They were all white.

J: I’m going to ask you this question, because some people that I have interviewed said that when they went to high school, the classes, the school was integrated, but the classes were not.

B: No, everything was integrated. Completely integrated.

J: How did you feel when you went to high school?

B: How did I feel?

J: About, you know, being in a different type of school, an integrated school

B: I don’t know. I had no feelings. I don’t have an answer. I was just going to school.

J: And that was the only school, high school around?

B: When we were in school and where they were integrated, we intermingled with sports and different things once in a while. No, I had no different feelings.

J: Okay, do you think that the white students in school felt one way or the other?

B: No, it didn’t appear that way.

J: When you went to grammar school

B: Who?

J: When you went to grammar school, do you think that the education that you got there prepared you for high school?

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah sure.

J: Do you think that the teachers did anything special for you when you were in grammar school, any special attention or anything that you didn’t get quite in high school?

B: No, I don’t think so.

J: I’m gonna change it a little bit and ask about the township.

B: Okay
J: When you were in school, do you remember any special people that might have come to town or at church that really impressed you? A speaker or any leaders?

B: I can’t remember. No, I can’t remember that, no, I did not have that experience.

J: Did you go to church when you were young?

B: Pardon me?

J: You went to church when you were young?

B: Yeah, oh yeah

J: What church did you go to?

B: St. Paul Baptist Church in Cinnaminson

J: Who was the minister, do you remember?

B: When I went?

J: Yes

B: Well they had several.....Rev. Aiken, Rev. Waller, Rev. Clark

William Sanders: Yeah, Rev. Clark, that’s who I was trying to remember

B: Rev. Aiken was the one that baptized us.

W: Rev. Aiken did not baptize me; I was baptized before Rev. Aiken. You were…

B: Yeah…No, I was baptized by Rev. Aiken and you were baptized long before Rev. Aiken.

J: And you know what? Since I’m going to have your voice on it, you have to give me your name for the tape.

W: You want my name now?

J: Yes

W: My name is William Sanders.

J: Okay, thank you and you are Lawrence Sanders’ older brother?

W: Right
J: Okay, just because when I type it up, I’ll have this voice so I have to put your name to it.

B: What made you call me Lawrence?

J: Your name isn’t Lawrence?

B: Yeah, but what made you call me Lawrence?

J: Because that’s what it says here.

B: But, my first name is B:, but Lawrence is right.

J: You were introduced to me as Lawrence.

W: The family all calls him Lawrence from day one.

B: That’s my middle name. That’s why I was wondering, somebody must have told you because other than that, if you had read from the paper, you would have said B:.

J: That’s right. Rhonda said “Uncle Lawrence.”

B: Yeah, that’s right, that’s what I go by.

J: Oh, you got me nervous there for a while. I thought I had called you by a wrong name.

B: Yeah

Once you got pass high school, were there any types of training things you went to? Did your church offer you any training or a “Y” or any clubs or organizations?

B: Training, what do you mean? Like jobs and stuff like that?

J: Yeah, job training.

W: I didn’t have any on most of the jobs. Immediately after school, you mean, or?

J: Through life

W: Okay, well in 1969 or something like that, I did three years of night school at Temple University

J: And what were you studying?

W: Metallurgy

J: Now you have to tell me what metallurgy is.
Education of African Americans in South Jersey

W: A study of metals and how they react to heat and cold and strength and stuff like that.

J: And why did you decide to take that up?

W: I was working in that field already and was to enhance whatever I was doing on my job.

J: Did you take any other things

W: Well, when I went to another establishment, the Navy, I took six months course or maybe less than that in computers

J: And what year did you start in the Navy

W: What year did I start in the Navy? ’77 I believe it was 1977.

B: You worked for the Navy Yard.

W: Yeah, I wasn’t in the Navy, I worked for the Navy. I was never in any military establishment

J: Now, when you were young, in school, what types of newspaper were out?


J: The Enquirer?

B: When you say young, what do you mean?

J: What age?

B: Oh, I don’t....

J: While you were in school? Now The Bulletin, is that a local paper?

W: No, it was a paper out of Philadelphia, but it was an evening paper.

J: Okay and The Enquirer?

W: That was out of Philadelphia but it was a morning paper.

J: You’re bringing back memories for me. When I used to, when I grew up, there was the Star Ledger and the Newark Evening News. Now there is only one paper

B: You’re from Newark?

J: Um hum. Do you remember reading any magazines, when you were young?
B: I read some, I don’t know what they were.

W: Yeah, when I was a teenager or just before pre-teen or something like that, I used to read things like “Field and Streams” stuff like that and I also used to read books published by the music industry, like “Down Beat” and stuff like that.

J: After you graduated from high school, and my guess up until now, which types of jobs were available for people, for African Americans?

B: When I graduated, I guess in industry, I guess.

J: Most of them were industry?

B: I guess there were others.

W: Sure, there were all types of jobs out there, just what you qualified for, which way it would come in contact with, you know, and stuff like that.

J: Okay, so there was no discrimination about jobs?

W: Not on the jobs that I was ever on. I never really experienced any discrimination to a degree.

J: Do you remember if there was any kind of clubs or organizations in Cinnaminson that you belonged to?

W: No, I didn’t belong to any and not even sure if there was anything around at that age.

J: What was your favorite radio program, when you were young?

W: Tom Knicks.

J: What was that?

B: Cowboy stories on the radio

W: Yeah, cowboys and things like Tom Knicks and then there was The Shadow.

J: And it was called Tom Knicks?

B: Tom Knicks – he was a cowboy.

W: Western story and mystery.

J: Now, I’m getting to the end. Who was the greatest influence in your life?

B: I don’t know if I really had any great influence.
W: I’m pretty sure I didn’t, no.

J: And was there any famous person that you admired?

W: The only thing I can think of along that was Joe Louis when he was boxing and stuff like that and aside from that, I would say no.

J: And did you attend any speeches of any famous people or important people or anybody that impressed you?

W: No.

J: No? Is there anything I should have asked you that I didn’t about education in Cinnaminson?

B: You were just concerned with the earlier part of our lives and not now, right?

J: My study is really between 1924 and 1950 but sometimes things that people are doing now, you know, may have been something that they may have been thinking back then.

B: No, you asked the right questions.

W: No, I can’t think of anything you have missed.

J: Well, I appreciate it, I really do.

B: I hope you got something from it.
Dr. Rhonda Hazell: Are you serious?

B: Lawrence Sanders: Yes

William Sanders: Yeah.

R: Fighting over chicken feet?

W: Chicken.

B: Yes, sir, whose turn to get the chicken feet.

R: Oh man.

W: They sell chicken feet in the stores now.

B: Yes they do

R: I know they sell that stuff

B:…. delicious.

R: What?

B: Once you pull that husk off from everything and boy…

R: And you’re sucking on them toes

B: You don’t suck on the toe, you cut the toe off

R: So you cut the toes off?

W: Eat the meat.

B: Oh yeah, you cut the toe nails off.

W: (eat what little bit) of meat there is yeah.

R: Is there meat on the feet?

B: There’s meat on it. We said we ate it, there’s gotta be meat...
R: I never even noticed, to me it’s just a little web.

W: [laughs]

B: No, not a web, it’s not a web at all.

W: Do you eat chicken feet?

R: Janet? You eat chicken feet?

J: No, I never had any because it looked like it was too much trouble.

B: They are expensive, now …

R: Were they?

B: Oh yes, yes.

R: It’s a delicacy.

B: Huh?

W: It’s a delicacy.

B: Oh what do they call them, chicken fingers or something they call them?

W: Chicken fingers is something different. Chicken fingers is it’s more like bread or cake…or something

B: Oh is it? I don’t know. I haven’t bought it, I never …

R: Now, let me ask you something, did you eat, eat the pig tail?

W: I did.

B: I have ate the pig tail a couple times but it’s too fatty.

R: Too fatty.

W: The ears, I didn’t like the tail, I didn’t like the ears. I like the chitlins of course.

B: Ears was too much, ears was too much gristle and the tail was too fatty but everything else …

W: I like the sausage, and you got the bacon, you know what I’m saying.
R: Uh, uh, uh. I just …

J: How about the brain?

W: I never ate the brain.

B: No, I’ve never eaten the brain, no …

R: (What did y’all) do with the brain when you took the brain out of the pig?

W: I don’t know, I don’t remember taking it out. I didn’t—I wasn’t part of that.

R: You weren’t a part of that.

W: I didn’t—I wasn’t part …

R: Uncle William, did you ever shoot the pig?

B: Ever shoot—no, no, no, no, no. The pigs were not our pigs.

W: (unintelligible)

B: They were the—they belonged to the guy whose farm …

R: The McBaughss …

W: yeah, yeah

R: I know you always …

B: They’d get out and we’d have to chase them, put them back in the pen and all of that …

W: Yeah, yeah, we took care of them—I imagine they shoot them in the head with a rifle and then jump in and cut their throats …

B: Yeah, used to hit them in the head with a rifle and they used to sit on the bike and hit them with the back of the hatchet

[laughter]

B: They didn’t know how to kill them …

R: That was crazy.

B: They didn’t know how to kill them, they did not know how to kill them …
R: The white people.

B: Yeah, yeah.

R: [laughs]

W: They had, they had quicksand down there too, I remember they ...

R: Quicksand?

B: Down back in ...

W: Or sinking mud.

R: What?

W: I remember a horse going down there, they had to, they had there daddy shoot it in the head and kill, kill them before it ...

R: ...‘cause you couldn’t get the horse out, they was stuck ...

W: ...stuck, but they were going out in the quicksand ...

B: That was Luther, wasn’t it, easnt it?

W: I don’t know which one it was, yeah. I remember one of them was sick, they hit it in the head ...

R: Did they have horses over there, the McBaughs?

B: We had horses.

W: Yeah, had horses

R: You had horses.

B: Well they want—we did, no at the farm ...

W: At the farm across, they were all ...

R: Were you allowed to ride the horse?

W: They were working horses ...

B: Uh, well I guess we never even ...
W: I rode them but they were ...

R: work them, working in the fields?

B: Oh we used to work with them, yeah, sure.

R: Wow. I never remember no horses. I remember the stall, there was a stall back over there.

B: There’s a barn back over here ...

R: Yeah, there’s a barn back over there. I do remember that.

B: Cows, and we used to get cow meat too ...

W: Yeah, used to have the cows.

R: Who was milking the cows?

W: Listen, I milked the cows many a time.

R: You’d get up in the morning and milk the cows?

W: Well, we did it.

R: Did you have—and you drank the milk from the cows?

W: I don’t drink milk at all, I never have ...

R: See.

B: Yeah, we did then.

W: I never, ever drank milk.

R: Nope, none of us drink milk.

B: We did then, we did then.

R: Back in the day you had no choice.

R: It was milk or water, [laughs] milk or water.

B: Except for holidays, and then you might get a soda or something then.

R: Yeah, really. [laughs] Something special.
B: Yeah.

R: Something special. But yeah, I mean, to me living on the farm was just a lot of fun because ...

B: It was.

W: Yes, yes.

R: ... you had all those animals and you got to hang out.

B: And, and it was just us. We ...

R: I know.

B: ... (as mostly playing) mostly playing with each other

R: Right, eight brothers and sisters.

B: The dogs and stuff like that.

R: Yeah. And there was no other black peoples for you to play with.

W: Back then...

B: Nope, nope.

W: We used to play with them, we used to play with a couple white people there, we used to play with them all the time.

R: Their kids would come out and play?

B: We used to play with them too.

W: All the time.

R: Uh-huh, yeah, that’s amazing, that’s amazing.

J: But yet when you went to school you all went to different schools.

B: Yeah, well matter of fact the school we went to was black, white folks didn’t go there. There was another school for white folks to go to ...

W: No, the black schools, they were separate.

B: There was a black school and a white school.
W: And, and the white people that lived on the farm, they were Quakers. So they had their own little thing ...

R: See, he didn’t tell you that, did he?

J: Mm-mm.

W: They had their—they were Quakers.

R: See, (now getting) the real story.

J: Now, and you know what, I was taping this for you.

R: Oh. Good.

J: But I’m going to have to keep that little piece.

R: No, that’s a good place ...

J: They were Quakers?

R: Wait a minute, I didn’t know the McBaughs were Quakers?

W: They were Quakers, yeah.

R: Quakers love everybody, black people, white people, they love everybody ...

B: Well, these were different Quakers. [laughs]

R: They were hard Quakers.

W: Then they had their little Quaker school, too, you know ...

R: Did they have a Quaker school?

W: Oh yeah, right off of 130.

B: Friends School, right under ...

R: Oh, Westfield Friends.

W: Westfield Friends, that was Quakers.

B: Friends, Westfield Friends, yes.

R: Oh, that’s where they sent their kids?
W: Yeah.
B: Yeah.
W: Yeah.
R: Ahhh.
B: All the Quakers in the area went there ...
W: Yeah, went there.
J: Now there were a lot of Quakers?
R: Yeah, there’s a lot of Quakers around here, in this Jersey, South Jersey. Did they ever let you guys ever have like a little sleepover?
W: What, the white folks?
B: Sleepover?
W: Sleepover?
R: I’m just wondering, did y’all ever have a pajama party ...
W: Nah.
B: No, we never had ...
B: That stuff came in modern (year) or something like that, we ...
W: Later, later.
R: So you couldn’t have a best friend come over for dinner?
B: No, we didn’t do like they ...
R: Did they ever come over for dinner?
W: No, we didn’t have anything to do—never came—we were friends ...
R: (unintelligible)
W: ... and we played together all the time. But we never you know went in their house ...
R: But didn’t Grandma cook for them?
At their house, maybe.

Yeah, she cooked food for them, but that’s how they got ...

She cooked and cleaned for ...

Yeah, I know she cleaned for them.

Yeah, yeah.

Mm-hmm.

But I thought she also used to make pies for them, because her pies were so good.

I don’t remember if she did or didn’t.

I don’t remember making no pies for them.

She probably just ...

She made her pies, didn’t get down there ...

[laughter]

That’s for sure.

Oh man, that’s funny.

And what was the name of the family again? The Mc ...

McBaugh.

McBaugh, M-C-B-A-U-G-H ...

B-A-U-G-H.

Oh yeah, McBaugh, B-A-U-G-H. Because I remember those trucks, they were the concrete ...

And what was the name of the family again? The Mc ...

McBaugh.

McBaugh, M-C-B-O ...

B-A-U-G-H.
R: Oh yeah, McBaugh, B-A-U-G-H. Because I remember those trucks, they were the concrete ...

B: Yep.

W: Yep.

R: … trucks or something they had.

W: They contracted, they were contractors.

R: Yeah, contractors, right, right.

W: They built down there … they built those buildings, some of those buildings.

R: They built those buildings. They, they, they were really the only contractors in the area, right, at the time?

W: Oh there was another one ...

B: The only ones that I knew of …

R: Right, they made a lot of money, the McBaughs.

W: They ended up with having money.

R: Didn’t they have a swimming pool over there?

W: Yes, they had ...

B: had a pool.

R: Did y’all—were y’all allowed to get in the pool?

B: No.

W: Yeah, well we cleaned it.

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

R: You cleaned it.

[laughter]

J: How old were you then?
W: They had a lot of people come down there and go swimming too, a lot of people ...

J: How old were you? About?

B: How old was we—oh we was—preteens anyway.

R: Like 12, 13?

B: Well, yeah we did a lot of work for them when were ...

R: You were earning—were you—you get paid?

B: Well it was long before we were 12. Wasn’t it ten, ten.

W: Yeah.

R: Did you make money?

B: Yeah, well, we made money. We couldn’t keep it, give it to daddy.

R: You gave it up.

W: I, I remember ...

R: You came home and gave it up.

B: We used to ...

W: …pull nails, I remember we used to pull nails out of the boards so he could use them over again.

R: Did you?

W: We’d pull all the nails out of the boards so they could use them up because they doing homes and stuff like that ...

R: Yeah,. Yeah, yeah ...

R: … so they were bringing boards home.

W: Fifty cents for four hours.

B: Lawrence and them had it on the easier ...

R: Fifty cents? Four hours of pulling nails? Oh, Lord have mercy.
[laughter]

B: I don’t think that you ever had to—I don’t think you ever had to weed gardens and stuff, clean the pools, did you have to do that?

W: Yeah, yeah, I weeded the garden ...

B: Did they have frogs, you used to eat frogs legs.

W: Frog legs, exactly ...

R: Big frogs, y’all had the big bullfrogs back in those days.

W: Yeah, yeah.

B: I remember those bullfrogs ...

W: I never, I never cleaned the pool.

R: You never cleaned—did you get in the water?

W: No. No.

R: See, you know, what’s interesting because ...

W: Because first of all you didn’t swim.

R: ... can any of y’all swim?

B: No.

W: No, not ...

B: It was—there’s no water in there, if it was it was real low ...

W: When you clean it. But they have a regular pool ...

R: Right, you clean it out so they can get in it.

W: Yeah and they, every day in the summer time all those people from right out in the area and other people they knew came and got in the pool.

R: All their friends?

W: Yes.
R: Ah.
W: But we could never swim.
R: So what were y’all doing to cool off in the summertime? With a hose?
W: …outside for a big tree
B: We would get that too, you know ...
W: Sit under a big tree
R: Get one of them sprinklers?
W: Yeah.
R: See, that’s the good old fashioned fun where you put the sprinkler on, just run around in it.
W: Yeah, yeah.
J: Sit under it.
W: All, all the time, all the time. Go get wet, that was the main thing, just go get wet ...
R: Get wet.
Mm.
R: See Mom used to say if you sit down, keep still, you won’t be so hot. [laughs] Because we used to be hot.
W: We used to be, we used to be underneath a tree ...
R: Y’all have all those trees over there.
W: Yeah.
R: You had nice shade trees. Get a nice breeze coming through them woods.
B: Yeah we had, we had an apple tree, we had a peach tree, we had a walnut tree.
R: You had a walnut tree?
B: Yes.
W: Yeah, yeah, pear tree ...
B: Walnut tree was up on ...
W: Blackberries.
B: Oh, blackberries galore, all ...
R: Everybody loves blackberries.
B: Delicious blackberries. (Big, big blackberries) ...
W: Blackberry cobbler.
R: Uncle, you know, Uncle Benjamin said y’all used to go over on their side of the fence.
B: Yes.
W: Get them blackberries.
R: Take their blackberries. [laughs]
W: Their blackberries were bigger. Their blackberries were bigger, twice the size of ours.
R: They were bigger because it was on the white people’s side. [laughs]
W: [laughs] It was only about as far as from here the room across the little pathway ...
R: And nobody ever bothered you.
W: Well, they didn’t see us. We didn’t do it where anybody could see us.
R: Ah, you’re sneaking around, sneaking around. Nothing like some good blackberry pie. Oh, mmm.
W: Yeah, blackberry dumplings (they called it) ...
B: That stuff too.
R: Grandma could hook up5 a dumpling.
B: I’m telling you…
J: That’s why it never got across the street.

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5 Slang for ‘make something very well.’
R: Uh-huh, mm-hmm.

B: Yes, sir.

R: Well, I don’t want to delay you—you’re ready for my next neighbor?

J: I’m ready for the next neighbor.

R: Okay.

B: Okay ...

R: Thank you very much, you were awesome of course, you know.

J: Yes, thank you very much.
Jane Allen: Thank you for participating in my dissertation research project on the Education of African-Americans in South Jersey in nine—between 1920 and 1945. And I want to just start off by again saying thank you and asking you to state your name for the record. Either one.

Grace Moody: Oh, my name is Grace Moody.

Louise Rozier: And my name is Louise Rozier.

J: Now, how did you meet each other?

G: Louise and I?

J: Uh-huh.

G: I had lived here for quite a few years. And then I think it was one lucky July, was it July?

L: July, yes.

G: Louise and Ted built their home there. And I felt that we kind of instantly became neighbors and friends, good friends. Yeah, I think when she moved in here I think we were having a Fourth of July barbecue or cookout.

L: Yep.

G: And I went over, you know, to extend then into the neighborhood and invited them over. You know, of course, you know, they were busy, you know, unpacking. And we've been friends since.

J: And you don't always get that with the neighbors.

L: You sure don't.

J: Thank goodness. Now how many years you been, you been friends about?

G: You've been here what?

L: Since 1976.

J: Okay.
G: Doesn't seem that long.
L: No, it doesn't.
G: It really doesn't.
J: That's because you're having fun.
[laughter]
G: Of course in the wintertime, you know, when it snows, we may not see each other until spring, but …
[laughter]
G: But we, but we know we're still there.
J: But you can wave.
G: Exactly.
L: Mm-hmm.
J: Now, I'm going to ask each of you for your age and what year you were born.
G: Do you really have to?
J: No, you don't have to answer.
[laughter]
J: You could just say [laughs]…
G: I'm early 70 ish.
J: Okay.
G: Is that good?
J: That's good.
L: And I’m 72. [laughs]
G: That's what I was going to say
[laughter]
J: Okay. And I'm going to ask, I'm going to go in order because it's how it seems to be. Where were you born?

G: Where?

J: Yes.

G: Here in Riverton. Well, it wasn't called that when I was born, it was called East Riverton.

J: Okay. And you?

L: I was born in Berlin.

J: Hmm.

L: I sometimes say Berlin, Germany, but it was Berlin, New Jersey.

[laughter]

J: Okay. And you grew up in Berlin?

L: No, I grew up in Camden and at an early age. And I think I started school—well, I started in New York, but I came to Camden and went to Whittier.

J: Could you spell it for me?


J: Mm-hmm.

L: That was grade school. And we left Camden and came to Pennsauken. And I went (say) Pennsauken and went to Pennsauken High School and then—no, actually there was Mercerville those days. They didn't have a Pennsauken High school. I graduated from Mercerville. And then after that they had—they built Pennsauken. I think it was the very next year they made a high school in Pennsauken

J: So you finished grammar school at Whittier.

L: Mm-hmm.

J: And then went to high school in Pennsauken.

L: Right. Junior high first and then ...

G: [laughs] I went to—talking about schools now?

J: Mm-hmm.

G: Okay, I went to Cinnaminson school, elementary. And at the time it was all black.

L: What was the name of the school?

G: I think it was just called Cinnaminson. I'm not, I'm not too sure.

L: Number four.

R2: Was it number four?

G: Wait a minute. No, I think it was number two.

R2: Number two.

G: I think, yeah.

J: Okay, I've got two twos and two fours.

G: And we were, you know, of course we were all black. And we were at one end of the street and the white school was at the other end. That was, you know, up until kindergarten to eighth grade. And then from there I went to Palmyra high school, which as you know, you know, was mixed.

J: And was that mixed in the classrooms?

G: I'm sorry?

J: Were the classrooms also mixed?

G: Yeah, yeah.

J: And the reason it sounds like a simple question but in some schools…

G: It isn't. [laughs]

J: The school says it's integrated but the classes are segregated?

G: Exactly, exactly.

J: So, that's why I was asking that question.

G. And then after graduation from Palmyra high school I did two years at Pierce Business
School.

J: P-I-E-R-S

G: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Rhonda Hazell: P-I-E-R-C-E isn't it?

G: Yeah, P-R …

J: Oh, Pierce.

R: Pierce.

G: Yeah, Pierce.

J: Okay. And where is that located—where was it located =

G: In Philadelphia.

R: Philadelphia.

G: Mm-hmm.

J: Now I'm gonna—I'm be jumping—I'm going to jump back and forth. When you went to Whittier school in Camden, was that integrated or segregated?

L: I don't think that—I don't, I don't remember any white kids. [laughs]

[laughter]

L: I really don't.

R: There must not have been any.

L: No, there must not have been.

J: You don't remember anymore?

L: The ones that I knew that went there, well most of them are gone now, but I just remember the black children. I don't remember—it might have been some white, I don't remember.

R2: Prob, probably very few =

L: Very few if there was.
J: I could—I might be able to find out.

L: Yeah. But the junior high and Mercerville high had white children.

J: Okay, now and you said junior high.

L: Well, it was Like the middle school?

L: Yeah.

J: And that was in Pennsauken

L: Yes.

J: And were they integrated by classroom?

L: Yes, we had

G: The lemon water please.

L: Yeah, it was mixed, it was mixed.

J: Okay. And I know it sounds like such a little thing to ask but it's important, so I can, you know, see which schools did what. Because sometimes I have a tendency to ask questions and when you give an answer in my mind I'll think I'll know what you said because my—I'm thinking something else

L: Later on in life they would always app—you know when I put in an application for a job when I tell them I graduated from Mercerville High School they thought that was very impressive. Because they had mostly all white. It was only two or three of us there, see. [laughs]

R: Really?

L: Yeah. It was ..

G: Mm-hmm.

L: Even when we were on our class trip down to Asbury, we had rooms to ourselves. There wasn't but like four or five of us the whole class trip .

J: Do you, do you think it's—and you graduated from there.

L: Mm-hmm.

J: Okay. Why do you think there was so few?
L: I don't think there was that many in the neighborhood. I don't know why. I really—you know they—we had a school bus that come to Pennsauken pick us up at (Glavin) Avenue, and everybody that was in that grade or going to that school period would get the school bus and go into Mercerville.

J: And you know I'm sorry I didn't ask other people and I'm going to ask you both, how many people were in your graduating class from grade school?

L: From grade school?

J: Mm-hmm.

L: I don't remember that.

G: I was—I'm going to say about—oh I know there were at least—I'm going to say somewhere between I'd say 25, not, not a huge amount.

J: That's a good amount.

G: I'm going to say about 25.

J: How many were there when you went to high school?

G: Oh well …

J: I know this is a guess.

G: In high school it had to be I'd say over 100 when I came out of high school.

J: A hundred African-Americans?

G: Oh, oh, oh, oh. You don't mean …

R: Black people!

[laughter]

J: That's better than now.

R: I only had 16, where the heck did you go?

G: I thought you meant the whole class.

J: I, I wasn’t clear, I wasn't clear.

L: I thought you meant the whole class too, I'm trying to think …
G: Okay, I would say, I would say at least, at least 20. At least.

R: That was good.

G: Mm-hmm.

J: But not 20 necessarily from your class. Twenty in the whole school?

G: No, no, no.

R: No, in her class.

G: Twenty in the, in the graduation class.

J: Okay.

G: And when, and when I graduated the valedictorian was a black student =

R: Really?

G: …Clarence Jones⁶

R: What?

G: The gentleman that I went to he prom with who was in Vanity Fair not too long ago.

R: Excuse me.

L: Go ahead girl.

R: Excuse me.

[laughter]

L: I was wondering how you were going to work that into the conversation.

[laughter]

J: I'm sitting here still trying to do valedictorian. Valedictorian was black …

R: (sure) Did you know they had black valedictorian? Oh that's decent.

J: From Palmyra High school?

G: Mm-hmm.

⁶ Clarence Jones was the speech writer and Lawyer for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
J: What year was that?

G: In 1949.

R: Mm, mm, mm.

J: I’m going to have to look up *Vanity Fair*. I’m not trying to get into your business, but what was his name again?

L: No, actually she has it

G: Clarence B: Jones!

[laughs and cross-talk]

G: Yes, I do.

J: Oh my goodness.

G: He was Martin Luther King’s lawyer, if you were wondering who he was …

J: That is, that’s, you know, that’s a fabulous piece of history.

R: Oh yes it is.

L: Wow …

R: And you went to prom with him?

L: Excuse me!

G: I am never going to throw that book away

L: I guess not.

J: Oh no, bronze it …

L: Mm-hmm.

J: Now is there anything that you want to add to this? [laughs] From Pennsauken, I mean you never know.

G: Now it’s L’s turn.

J: Because you’re the first person that even ever mentioned you know, that there was a lack valedictorian, you know
G: Mm-hmm.

L: We didn’t have a val—a black anything. [laughs] That’s [11:12] It was only about I ould say maybe ten blacks that graduated with me, and that’s stretching it.

G: Mmm.

L: Yeah, there wasn’t that many blacks in Pennsauken.

J: Do you think most of the people from your grade school went to high school?

L: You talking about the black people? Yeah, yeah.

J: Most of them did? Did most of them graduate? Did they stay in it?

L: Yes.

J: Okay. And for you too?

G: Mm-hmm.

R: What year did you graduate, L?

L: ’53. We had our fiftieth anniversary down in Sea Isle or someplace and they was still prejudiced down there. You had to..

J: Yes, they are.

L: go across the bridge and …

R: Really?

L: They looked at you like, “Why are you coming down here? What you want down here?” [laughs]

G: Mm-mm, (and no shirt).

[laughter]

J: Okay now I’m going to ask you, and I don’t know if I asked you this before, where are your parents born?

G: Want me to go first?

J: Okay.
G: Okay, my mother was born right herein Riverton. And my father was born in Atlantic City.

J: Hmm. Did—do you know what schools they attended, if they attended.

G: Uh, my mother went to school here in the—well, the Cinnaminson area.

J: Mm-hmm.

G: And my father went to school in the Atlantic City area.

J: Do you know what their highest level?

G: I, I don’t think, I don’t think, I don’t think either one of them ever completed high school.

J: Okay. But that was a different generation.

G: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

J: But they both, you think, might have completed grammar school.

G: Yes.

J: Okay. How about you?

L: My mother was raised and born in Orangeburg, South Carolina. And I don’t know what schools she went to.

J: Okay.

L: And my father was deceased about 70 years ago, I don’t know where he was born.

J: Okay.

L: I know she did—I’m pretty sure she graduated from school but I don’t even know where.

J: Now how did she get up here?

L: She came up, I guess she came up on her own because I know she lived in Philadelphia for a while, I remember that.

J: Do you know what year she came up?

L: No. Mm-mm.
J: Okay. Brothers and sisters. Well, before I go there, with your parents, what were your parents’, parents’ occupations?

G: My mother was domestic. And my father was a chauffeur. I just like to add this in, my mother worked for, you know, like Billy Banks and Biddle.

R: Ah.

G: And the Bittles used to live right down here on Riverton, it’s one of those big houses on …

R: On the riverbank?

G: No, on Riverton Road. And it’s a big house. And my mother used to work for them. Now the story I’m about to tell is because at the time, you know, I did have my driver’s license I was picking my mother up from work, you know, when she got off. And they were very fond of my mother. So, Mrs. Biddle knew all of us. And she said to my mother—my mother’s name was Melinda—and she said, “Melinda, I understand that Grace will be graduating in June.” And my mother didn’t talk much but when she did [laughs] you listened. And so, Mrs. Biddle said, “So, when she graduates Grace will be needing a job.” Well, you know what she’s getting at. And my mother said, “Mm-hmm, Grace will be needing a job. But there’s one thing I’m telling you right now, it will not be in your kitchen.” Now, even though my parents, you know, were not high school or college graduates, they were very much on pushing us as far as education, very much, to make sure that we did not end up having to work in the white (man’s) kitchen.

J: Mrs. Biddles’ kitchen.

G: Exactly.

G: You know, because I know what they went through to make it better for me.

J: Yes.

G: And when I had kids, this is what I tried to do for my own.

J: Mm-hmm. Wow. And your father was a, chauffeur for the same family.

G: No, he, he was with the other rich family. The Lippincotts.

R: Oh, excuse me. [laughs]

L: At least …

J: Now, what did the Lippincoctts do or manufacture?
G: Oh I’m just—you know, I’m trying to think …

J: Because I don’t know the …

L: The Lippincocks owned the Lippincocks Publishing Company.

G: Yeah they, they—and their house is in Riverton—right here on Riverton Road.

L: Very famous.

R: Isn’t there a Lippincott oil people too?

L: They owned everything.

G: Yeah, they, they owned …

J: Anything with Lippincotts belonged to them.

G: (they belonged) in that family, yes.

J: Okay. Not too many Lippincotts around.

G: [laughs] That house is still there.

J: Hmm.

R: Wow.

J: How about you, Louise?

L: What was the original question? [laughs]

J: Oh, what did your mother do? Because you said your father died when you were very young.

L: She worked in, in … manufacturing I think. She was a factory worker. And then she after she got older she started a—well, she used to clean state offices and then she had the business of hiring out people to clean these big offices. By that time she was in California. And she worked for the mafia out there.

G: [laughs]

L: She did. They had underground vault. And she said, she used to fascinate me talking about the money that was just out- what’s his name, Frank Sinatra and his crowd, Sammy Davis Jr. and all the rest.
L: Yeah. And she said, money would be all—she’d be getting nervous and she’d tell them, why don’t you put the money away until she finishes, you know the—they told her, “Nessie, we’re not worried about you. Just do what you can.”

J: Until she finishes the what?

L: Cleaning.

R: She cleaned around the money?

L: Yeah.

J: Feather duster?

L: Her employees didn’t go there. Her employees went to different offices. She was and her husband at that time was the only one allowed to go down.

J: Into the vault.

L: Into the vault and clean that …

R: That’s interesting.

J: Mm,mm.

L: So she said she was a little nervous.

G: I, I can imagine.

R: Did they give her a big tip for being so nice to them?

L: Well, they would just pay her royally anyway, so ..

R2: Oh good.

L: Oh yeah.

J: Oh.

G: So it was worth, it was worth her confidentiality.

R: Mm-hmm.

J: Ooh. Okay, how many brothers and sisters do you have Louise?
L: I don’t have any.

R: You’re an only child?

L: Yeah. She says to me, “Did you want a baby brother or sister?” And I told her, “No, I want an older brother.”

[laughter]

L: And she said, “You can’t—I can’t get you an older brother” …

J: Well, then that’s all you want.

L: So I said “there wasn’t any” so I didn’t get any.

J: Oh, she was being difficult wasn’t she.

[laughter]

G: Well I, I’m the youngest of six. No, five, five, but there were six of us.

L: So you’re the youngest of six.

G: Yes.

L: Six total children.

G: Three girls and three boys.

R: Wow.

J: And they, did they all go to high school?

G: Yes, mm-hmm.

J: Did any go any further?

G: Yes, my two brothers.

J: And they went?

G: What school? My oldest brother went to Temple. And my other brother went to St. Joe’s.

J: Oh.
R: They both graduated?
G: Mm-hmm.
R: Wow.

J: And do you know what their majors were?
G: My oldest brother, he went—he was like in carpentry, that kind of—I don’t know what you’d call it. And then my other brother was like in the math field.

J: And then that’s two brothers.

R: Well, wait a minute, yeah, who went to Temple, who went to St. Joe’s, I mean …
G: Richard.
R: Richard went to Temple?
G: Mm-hmm.
R2: And …
G: Jimmy.
R: And Jimmy went to St. Joe’s (St. Joseph’s University).
J: And you have one other brother.
G: Yeah.
R: Mm-hmm.
G: He went right in the service.
J: Okay. And how about the women?
G: My one sister, she was working for the government. She didn’t, she didn’t go to college. She was working for the government. And she died rather young.

J: Okay and there were three girls and three boys …

G: And then I have another sister that, you know, that’s still living. She didn’t go to college but she completed high school.
J: Now I’m going to ask a question just because I’m, I’m wondering here. You had two
brothers who went to college, one brother that went to the service. You went to two years…

R: Junior college.

J: Yeah, junior college, secretarial school. And your other two sisters didn’t.

G: Mm-hmm.

J: Was there any during that time period any belief that men got more education than women or it just that’s just the way ..

G: I kind ..

J: …it just happened?

G: I, I kind of think so.

J: Yeah, I’m just, you know

G: Yeah, I do. I think sometimes that it was a feeling that, you know, the men were the ones to me who were supposed to go to college [laughs] and women I guess were not, you know.

J: No, and I don’t know, so ..

G: Yeah, that, that’s the feeling that I had. But with me I wasn’t the type of person, you know, you know like some men want their women to stay home and just have children. But that wasn’t, that definitely not me.

L: [laughs]

J: No.

G: No.

J: Mm-mm. And how many children did you have, again?

G: Me?

J: Uh-huh.

G: I have three.

J: Okay. And what is the education background for your children, the highest =
G: They …

J: (attainable).

G: They all, they all went to college. And my youngest daughter, she went two years of college. My son graduated from Pace University and got his Master’s at Columbia and then Sherry, who was here, graduated from Georgian Court College. She majored in anthropology. My son majored in teaching—no.

L: I think it was more English …

R: English.

G: English, yeah, he was an English major

G: And Alison was more on the clerical side

L: Party circuit.

G: The what?

R: The party circuit.

[laughter]

J: Now this is going to be on tape. [laughs]

L: Oh sorry.

J: Okay.

R: Louise

J: I know, I’m just trying to think the way I left off with you in my notes.

[laughter]

R: We didn’t ask Louise if she had any children.

J: I—okay. Louise do you have any children?

L: I have one.

J: Okay.

L: A daughter. One grand, one granddaughter and one great-granddaughter.
J: Wow.

R: Oh I didn’t know your Nicole had a daughter.

J: That’s cool.

L: Mm-hmm.

R: Oh.

L: That little girl you see around here.  
[laughter]

R: Oh, oh she is cute.

J: And what is the highest degree …

L: My daughter graduated from high school.

J: Okay.

L: And my granddaughter, I think she’s graduated from high school too. They didn’t get—no one went to college.

J: And what do they do?

L: Right now I don’t know hwat my daughter does. She’s out in California someplace.

J: California seems to be the ticket.

[laughter]

G: Really?

J: I don’t know.

G: When you want to get away.

J: I haven’t been there, but

G: It’s a nice place to hang out

J: …you’re the second person today talked about this California thing. Okay.

L: And my great granddaughter is, she goes from one job to another. So she’s
J: Okay. She’s young, she hasn’t figured it out yet.

G: She got time. She’ll settle down.

J: Okay.

L: I should have said my granddaughter, because the great’s still in school.

[laughter]

J: When you went to high school—nah, when you went to grammar school what color were your teachers?


R: Grace?

G: What color were my teachers?

J: At Whittier.

G: At Whittier—yeah. Let me see. Mrs. Flounoy No, she was black. Mrs… and Mrs. …

J: I mean they could have been.

G: I know that one teacher was black because she was—in those days, you know, they would beat you up. So, and she was tough.

R: Who, the teacher would beat you up?

G: If you misbheave in school? Oh yeah, they take you in the coatroom.

J: Mmm.

G: And spank your bottom.

J: Oh, I think I had her.

[laughter]

R: Mm, mm, mm.

G: Yes, but I yeah I think they were black, come to think of it, because Ms Flounoy would stand in the door with the door kind of ajar. And when you go in her class before class started you have to sit there like little mummies for ..
[laughter]

G: And one day I asked somebody for a pencil because I forgot mine. And she said—she never turned around. She looked straight ahead and said, “Grace,, I’ll get you a pencil when I get in there.”

R: Ohhh.

G: I was scared to death.

R: Mm, mm, mm.

G: How did she know I was looking …

R: She had eyes in the back of her head.

G: She had that door ajar so she could see in the back of her. And everybody was afraid of her because she was …

R: Where was DYFS\(^7\) when you guys were young?

[laughter]

G: Oh yes, she would …

L: Child abuse, child.

G: And I was never one,. You tell me what to do, I’ll do it. Don’t touch—don’t hit me, you know. I’m not (aim to be) hit, you know. Even at home.

R: Right.

G: Say do something, okay, don’t hit me.

J: So you, so you didn’t have to go to the coat room.

G: No, no, no …

R: But you probably saw some of your friends go there.

G: Oh yeah the boys.

R: The boys?

G: She’d tear their little—take the panties—their …

\(^7\) Division of Youth and Family Services.
R: Did she?

G: Their pants, oh yeah.

R: She pulled them down?

G: Take across her knee.

R: Mm-hmm.

[laughter]

L: She was …

G: And the guys knew it, I men everybody knew it, so you had to behave in her class.

R: Please!

G: And then the two teachers, one of them, they had Ms Flounoy had it with another teacher, so they were tough back in those days. [laughs]

J: I’m going to stop this, just for just a minute.

L: Was it working?

J: Yeah.

R: She’s just changing tapes.

[recording pauses]

J: I’m going to ask this question, just because I’m curious about it, when you went to high school, either one of you, was there different say tracks? Like right now you could do the business track, you could do a college prep. Were there different tracks for you in school?

G: Yes.

L: Yes.

J: What were they? Were they the same ones?

G: Academic, commercial and general

L: General.
G: And we, and we did have, we did have college prep.

J: And what was, what was the academic track? I’m not familiar with that one. Was that like the college prep or …

G: Mm-hmm.

L: Mm-hmm.

J: Were there many African-Americans in that track?

G: Um =

J: ‘cause you know considering proportionally.

G: There, there—there were a few, mm-hmm.

L: Yeah, just a few.

J: What extracurricular activities did you belong to, if any?

G: Uh


J: And that was in high school or grammar school?


G: I played soccer.

J: Mmm.

G: I was pretty good too. [laughs]

R: Excuse me.

G: And I was in the choir …

R2: In the choir?

G: Mm-hmm.

L: Yeah. I was in the choir too …

R: High school choir?
G: Mm-hmm. There was, there was something else, but I can’t think of what it was.

J: What I’ve heard about Cinnaminson school—and I don’t—I haven’t heard anything about yours, your school’s a new one for me.

L: Okay.

J: So I’ll be interested in hearing this is that there was—that learning to sing and choirs and chorals all were very important because you went to other schools and did plays and other performances.

R: Performances?

J: And performances. Do you remember any of that or any of the performances? Where you went, who you …

G: When I was in—talking about high school here?

R: Mm-hmm.

J: No, no.

R: Grammar school.

J: You went to Cinnaminson or Riverton two or four?

G: Number two.

J: No?

G: I, I don’t remember that. We may have though I don’t remember.

J: Okay.

G: Doesn’t strike me.

L: We didn’t too much in grammar—in junior high. We did a lot in high school.

G: High school.

J: Mm, okay.

L: Was when we…

J: A lot of singing and then?
L: Yeah.

J: Traveling?

L: They would have variety shows three nights a week.

L: Mm-hmm.

L: And I was glad because I was always out, I could get out the house …

R: Three nights a week?

L: Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night.

J: Three nights a week?

L: Three nights we have variety show. And if you were in the show then you would have your …

J: These are students performing? I’m sorry, I was—I stifled you.

[laughter]

R2: What was the variety show? What were you doing?

L: Well, one year I danced in a chorus line.

R: Excuse me. [laughs]

L: But the chorus line had—we danced to The Sunny Side of the Street, we tapped. And with our little chairs. And the teacher, the white teacher, now I can’t think of her name but she had a round face and she was (standing). She would say, smile, smile, and make us smile.

[laughter]

J: Now, were the students all black students or mixed …

L: Oh, all black? No, we didn’t have any black kids in there. I think I might have been the only black in that chorus line.

J: Oh that—okay.

L: And we’d get out there and do our little routine and smile and just dance back off the stage, get our little chairs besides us, and we’d do that for three days. And that was great [
[laughter]
R: Mm, mm, mm.
J: You a star.
J: And could come out.
R: Mm-mm.
L: And we’d sometimes we’d have chorus, people, you know, sing. They would try to get me to sing by myself but I was always shy. I was never—I don’t do anything by myself. So rather sing in chorus. But even when I was, you know, even younger than that my mother wanted me to tap. Took me to tap dancing school in New York. And I was all for it because the whole family tapped.
J: In New York?
L: Yeah, well she lived in New York at that time.
J: Okay.
L: And I got right to the door and I just—she says, “Come on,. You have to go in.” I said, “Is anybody else(in here.” [laughs] And she said, “Yeah, the man is going to watch you tap.” I said, “By myself?”
R: Mm, mm, mm.
L: Chickened out, had to go home.
J: And then you said your whole family tapped.
L: My mother, my aunt, and my uncle.
J: Did they perform?
L: Just in the house
J: Okay, but they knew how—they took lessons, they knew how to tap dance.
L: They know how to tap and they taught me how to tap. But I wouldn’t do it by myself.
R: That was good.
L: Nothing by myself.
J: Wow.

L: I was always bashful.

R: Introverted.

L: Yeah.

R: That’s okay. It’s a good thing.

J: But when you think about that, everybody’s tapping, it’s something that the whole family …

R: They get together

J: …could do together.

R2: For family gatherings.

[laughter]

L: Say what? What did you say =

G: Could have been

L: Oh God. There wasn’t that many of us, it was only four. [laughs]

R: Mm, mm, mm.

[laughter]

J: Hoo, okay.

L: We did that in school, and I was (played). And then one year I was in a trampoline act.

R: What? Excuse me?

L: Well, because I was tall and skinny. And we had, you know, the Branches from Mercerville. Jimmy (Branch) was always small. And (was a lot of Branches) from Mercerville. And Jimmy and I would do a trampoline act together. Because he was short and I was tall.

G: Oh that must have been cute.

R: Mm.
J: Ah.

L: Yeah, we were [34:09] Go ahead, L.

G: Do the snap?

R: (through the air)?

L: Just trampoline, bounce.

G: No just jump around, jumping on and bounce.

R2: Oh trapeze? I was thinking trapeze.

L: Trampoline.

[laughter]

G: Bouncing up and down. He’d go up and I’d go down, vice versa.

J: Now we’ve gotten through grammar school with the trampoline.

[laughter]

R: Chorus line.

J: [laughs] the chorus line. And the choir and the soccer. Once you graduated from there, and I know you went on to secretarial school. But were there any other training schools or—that you all—either of you attended? And I’m going to say you were adults by that age even though we know 18 does not always make you an adult. But were there any other types of training courses that you went to?

G: I went to [35:10] (key punching) school. I don’t know if it was Pierce or where. It was in—I knew it was in Philadelphia.

L: No I …

R: After high school?

G: Uh-huh.

R: Key punching school. How long was that?

L: I didn’t.

G: It wasn’t too long. Don’t know how long,. But it wasn’t that long.
R: A year?

G: Just, yeah, just teaching how to …

J: Do you remember what year-ish? ’75, ’73?

G: (it wasn’t that long). Just got out of high school, got out in ’53. I would say about in the ’60s.

J: Hmm.

G: Because it was at night, I remember that, I’d go there after work at night, learn how to key punch.

J: I’m going to ask you a little bit about your community and what type of resources were in the community. We all know that sometimes they—people in a community need information or need extra skills or whatever. Were there any—was there anything in the community that might be used to educate or inform people of things that were happening or new skills?

G: Back then?

J: Mm-hmm.

L: Wasn’t anything.

G: I, I, I don’t remember any.

L: Yeah, me neither.

R: Didn’t you guys have like Daughters of the Eastern Star that were mentoring you?

G: Back then?

R: Mm-hmm.

G: No. I knew people that were in Eastern Star, matter of fact I wanted to be one of the Eastern stars. But I didn’t know them by name or you know.

R: Close contact.

G: …wasn’t that close with them. I could never be eastern star because I didn’t have a father and I don’t have any brothers.

R: Right you have to be, you have to …
J: You have to have had...
R: Have a man?
G: Mm-hmm.
R: I never knew that.
G: Isn’t that funny? I always wanted to be one too.
J: I never knew that.
R: Are you serious?
G: I remember my boyfriend John, when he …
R: Did you know that?
J: No, I didn’t.
G: When he was in the Masons …
R: You had to have somebody that was in the Masons to be an Eastern Star?
G: Yeas, a brother or a father.
R: You were only adopted through a male?
G: Right.
R: Yes.
G: And I told John I want to be an Eastern Star, and he said …
R: That’s kind of sexist!
G: …you’ll never make it. Because I’m, I, I don’t think I could have …
J: I didn’t know that. I thought that you could walk up and join.
R: Me too.
G: It has to be your brother, father, husband. You can’t just say I want to be an Eastern star.
R: Oh excuse me.
G: Like you going to a sorority and …

R: Yeah.

G: No.

J: Somebody with a tie.

G: Yes. Yes.

L: Because I would have uncles that was in Eastern Stars but they couldn’t get me in. I mean Masons.

R: Really?

J: No?

G: No, it's gotta be your father or your brother.

R: Suppose you don’t have any brothers.

G: I didn’t. That’s why I wasn’t one. [laughs]

R: Grace, when did the Ebonettes come about. Do you know? We, Virginia was trying to figure that out. When did the Ebonettes start? Was it in the ‘60s, or before that?

G: I, I don’t think it started before the—I don’t think it was before the ‘60s.

R: Okay, so it was in the ‘60s.

G: But it was in the ‘60s, yeah.

R: Because she said she was a charter member.

G: She was.

R: Well when did you come into this …

G: I was never, no, I was never in that.

R: You were never an Ebonnette?

G: No. Mm-mm. Virginia, (Gwen), my sister (Gwen), Doris Johnson. I think Phyllis.

R: Phyllis Reed?
G: Yeah, yeah, and Sandra.

L: What about [Doris Butler]

G: Well, no, she …

R: She wasn’t even around, was she?

G: She is one now, but we’re talking about the ones …
R: That founded the group.

G: Yeah.

L: Oh, okay.

G: And it was another one.

R: Lynette?

L: Lynette.

G: No. Mm-mm, they’re not, they’re not the charter members. It was only five of them.

R: I think Elizabeth Valentine was a charter member.

J: And what did they do?

G: No, no, no, she, she was, she was in the Triboro Women’s Improvement …

R: Oh (Triboro women’s club).

G: A spin-off of the Ebonnettes

R: Oh, oh okay.

G: Yeah.

J: You went to school—I’m—‘cause I’m taking notes. Was it bur—you were born in Berlin but you went to school in Camden.

L: Mm-hmm.

J: Okay.

L: I didn’t stay in Berlin long, I was just born there and they …
G: They shipped you back.

[laughter]

G: Got you out [laughs] out of there.

J: Okay. And I’m assuming that Camden was an integrated town.

L: Yes. The town was integrated.

J: How about where you live in Camden. Do you remember?

L: 719 South 8th Street.

J: No, but I meant was that an integrated neighborhood?

L: Yes.

J: Was it a segregated neighborhood?

L: No, it was—I had white neighbors.

R: Did you?

L: Mm-hmm. It was the first time I ever seen a dead person was a white man, my next door neighbor

[laughter]

L: Scared to death.

L: You know what I’m saying?

J: Yeah.

L: Because I was a little kid. I never seen anybody dead before. And they had—they lived—I mean they were in the houses in those days, you didn’t go to a funeral home.

R: Right, right.

J: Yes, yes.

L: Had to go next door and he was laying up there little …

J: In the living room.
L: Stiff, whew! And all white and everything. Oh my God, just scared me to death.

R: Mm-hmm.

J: But yet it was integrated but so it was an integrated neighborhood but you had to go to segregated schools.

L: I think Whittier was the—I don’t remember any white kids going to Whittier, I really don’t.

J: Hmm. Okay.

L: Could have been, but I don’t remember any.

J: Now, did I ask you two what your occupations were?

G: Um, when I start out working with the government I was a typist.

J: Mm-hmm.

G: And then it graduated, you know, you get out of typing; you go into more of a different feel. And when I finally retired I was like an assistant to guys who were engineers who were doing some stuff over—and then they were still doing stuff in Iraq at that time. This was many years ago. And that kind of, you know, thing. It was always something to do with clerical field.

L: Well, I got out of high school; my first job was at the Bell Telephone Company.

R: Hmm.

L: I was a receptionist at that time. And then I started working in Philadelphia. Can’t think of the name of the company. But I wound up working for the railroad for like 27 years, and that’s where I retired. Started in the …

J: What did you do with the railroad? I’m curious.

L: Ah …

J: I always think of it as such a manly job, you know.

L: Well that was if you were on the tracks. I was always in the office.

J: I never thought about it really …

L: Oh yeah. [laughs] I worked there for =
R: What was the name of the railroad company?

L: Uh, it was Conrail when I left…

R: Conrail, okay.

L: …it started with the …

J: Penn something.

L: It was the Pennsylvania Railroad, and then it changed to some other kind of road. And it stopped at Conrail. That’s when they like broke up …

[coughing]

L: At that time I was a supervisor in the payroll department. And then …

J: How did you learn that?

L: How did I get that job?

J: Mm-hmm, how’d you learn it?

L: I was in the department for a while. And then you get bumped out of there because that’s one of the main departments that everybody wants to get in.

J: Yes.

L: And the more seniority you have that’s where you stayed. And you have to have a lot of seniority to get in there. So, I got in when somebody retired, and I got in for a couple (of weeks) and then I got bumped out. So, when the supervisor was going to retire the boss asked one of his secretaries to find out where—what department I was in and for me to put in for the job. So, she said, “Did you put in for it?” I said, “Are you kidding me? I know I’m not going to get the job.” She says, “Put in.”

R: And you were in.

L: Because he wanted you to put in.

R: That’s right, when somebody wants you.

L: Yeah, so that’s how I got it.

J: Okay.

G: You know what, here’s something that I think is interesting. When I retired from the
government with my 33 years and I stayed home for a while and then I wanted to, you
know, get another job. And there was something, I don’t know if you’ve heard of, it’s
called green thumb, you probably heard of it. And it’s for senior citizens who want to
work and you know to make extra money. And I got involved in that with somebody, you
know, from our church. Dolly Nichols was involved in that then. And you know, then
they would place you, you know, somewhere near your house.

J: Mm-hmm.

G: And they—you could get some training from that if you, you know, if somebody did
not know how to type, they would send you where you could learn how to type. So…

J: And this is something that exists now.

G: I, no, I …

R: I don’t think it’s in existence anymore.

G: I’m not sure that it still exists now. I’m not sure, it could.

J: Hmm.

G: Because I was placed down to Palmyra High School. They had something that was
called Palmyra High school Adult Education. And I was the secretary, you know, to the
principal. And it was—I, I really liked it. I really did. And then of course, you know, after
I’d been there a couple years, you know, they were cutting down so they kind of, you
know, had to, you know, let me go.

J: you remember what years that was?

G: Uh…

J: The adult education program.

G: Let’s see. That’s been about 15, it’s been about 15 years ago, so…

R: Is that 1990?

G: Yeah, yeah, um, yeah.

J: Okay.

G: Mm-hmm.

R: I remember you in that program because I was in school.
G: Hmm?

R: I remember you in that program because I was in school somewhere.

G: Yeah in—it, it was very interesting. I think Maura Scales was in it because she worked at one of the other schools in Palmyra Virginia you—Virginia was in it. And it was, it was good.

J: What were your favorite magazines and newspapers?

G: Um, right now my favorite magazine of course is the *O Magazine*.

[laughter]

R: She’s talking about back then in the day.

G: Oh back then? [laughs] I’m sorry.

J: That’s all right, I’m writing down O.

[laughter]

J: Because I may need to read that. No, I, I’ve read a couple of them.

G: Oh jeez. Back then.

J: Remember I’m still trying to figure out how people got information.

G: Oh, you know, back then I would say the *Ebony*.

G: And the *Jet*.

L: Jet, yeah.

R: Same?

L: Ebony and the Jet. I, I didn’t, you know …

J: Was there any black newspapers around?

L: *The Tribune*.

G: *The Tribune*. The Tribune is about the only black newspaper that I know.

R: It’s the only one.
L: Yeah.

2: And that was from New York?

L: Philadelphia.

G: Philadelphia.

[laughter]

J: I have the nerve to answer and I just found out today. [laughter]

G: That’s Philadelphia.

J: What was your favorite TV or radio program?

L: When, back…

J: Mm-hmm. Growing up and into young adulthood.

G: Uh.

L: I don’t have any favorites.

G: My favorite [laughs] TV program, I don’t know how far this—no, this is not far enough. [laughs]

J: Radio?

G: I wasn’t too much on—well, once we had TV I wasn’t too much on radio. But I was trying to think.

L: My—when I was very, very young I used to—the radio, before television came out, my grandfather would listen to The Green Hornet all the time…

L: = so I would listen to that. He loved The Green Hornet.

G: I don’t think I really had anything that was really a favorite, favorite.

L: I don’t know which one was Lamont Cranston and—I don’t know if that was Green Hornet or not, Lamont Cranston, Margo Lang. But one of them…

R: When did the Honeymooners come out?

L: Later. Yeah, ‘cause they were on TV.
J: Baseball. Okay. I’m down to the last couple of questions. Who was the greatest influence on your life?

L: My aunt.

J: And why? Aunt who?

L: Aunt Rose.

R: Was she…

J: Where did she live?

L: She, well she lived in Pennsauken but she was just like, I don’t know, she was like my mother really. She was like a mother to me. I was closer to her than I was to my mother. And we would sit and talk and she was just, she was just like a sweet, sweet person. And you know I would just adored everything she said and did.

J: Now was this your mother’s sister?

L: Mm-hmm. She got (unintelligible) when she was very sick and she was pale. I mean, she told me where she hid this, and look in this drawer for this. I didn’t want to pay any attention to that, no, I don’t want to hear that. Anyway, she did pass, it took me the longest time to figure out what did she say, because I didn’t want to hear it…

J: Mm-hmm.

G: I think my greatest influence were really my parents. And even though my parents, especially my father, he was a man that did not talk very much.

J: Mm-hmm.

G: But you could sense—he didn’t have to say anything. For instance when, when I was young and dating and you know you’d be sitting downstairs with your boyfriend, so you thought, and my, when my father decided it was time for this person to go home he wouldn’t say a word. He would just come downstairs, stand on the steps and go [clears throat]. That was all he would have to say.

J: [laughs]

G: …and hat and coat, bye.

[laughter]

G: To be doing to get an education, to do better and to, you know, make sure that you were progressing out in the world.
L: Speaking of fathers, my grandfather was somewhat like that. He was a quiet, quiet person…

G: My father…

L: He’d sit there…

G: …did not talk.

L: …week after week watch—listen to the stories and I’d fall asleep and my grandfather would tell me to get up and go upstairs to bed. And I’d act like I was still asleep so he would pick me up and carry me upstairs to bed.

R: Mm, mm.

L: [laughs] So one time I looked up at him…

L: And he was looking right at me. And he winked his eye and kept going. [laughs] He knew I wasn’t asleep.

R: Yeah.

[laughter]

J: You just wanted a little care and little love.

G: That’s cute.

J: What famous person did you admire the most?

G: Martin Luther King was my favorite one.

[laughter]

R: What?

G: Stay out of it.

L: [laughs] I’m trying to think, the famous person I admire the most.

J: And some people don’t, you know, have one, you know.

G: Mm-hmm.

L: Martin Luther King, yeah, he was good too, but I—he didn’t come to mind first.
R: What about Marian Anderson?

J: Um, is there anything about your school days or any training programs or anything I might have forgot to ask you that you think might fit in this whole element of how people got information?

G: I, I think people got—well then I think people received a lot of information, I think, by word of mouth. Like networking, talking to people.

L: Mm-hmm.

G: And also, you know, going to church I think you got a lot of information, you know, going to church.

J: And who did you get it from in church?

G: Um, mostly I would say my minister was very informative, he would give out a lot of information.

L: The Reverend Jackson.

G: Mm-hmm.

J: Which church was that?

G: St. Paul Baptist.

J: [coughing] And Reverend Jackson.

G: Mm-hmm.

R: Alvin A.

G: Alvin A.

[laughter]

J: This is another one? [laughs]

G: Dr. Alvin A. Jackson.

J: Doctor?

G: Yes.

J: And what year was that?
R: He’s still there.

G: He’s still there.

J: When did he begin, Dr. Alvin A.?

G: Okay.

J: Jackson.

G: He came around 1950.

J: Okay. So he’s well liked. Well, you know…

G: Uh-huh. [laughs]

J: Okay, never mind. I mean in terms of being…

G: Yes.

J: …in a facility for such a long time…

G: Yeah.

J: Okay. Anything else I might have missed?

G: I was trying to think.

L: Can’t think of anything.

J: I thank you.

G: I can’t think of anything right now.

J: Well, we can let it roll for four more minutes—no. [laughs] It’s got three more minutes. No. I appreciate it. And I can give you—oops, my…

R: Your business card?

J: Yeah, I left them at your house.

R: I’ll give, I’ll drop off a card to…

G: Okay.

J: In case you can think of anything and…
G: Oh, all right.

[end of DVD]
Janet Allen: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my dissertation project on the Education of African Americans from 1920 to 1945. I am going to ask you to state your name just so I have it on the videotape.

Dorothy M. Watkins: My name is Dorothy M. Watkins.

J: And, if you don’t mind, and if you don’t want to answer this question it’s fine, your age and birthday.

D: Birthday is June 10, 1920 and I am 87 years old.

J: Thank you and where were you born?

D: Philadelphia.

J: And you grew up in Philadelphia.

D: Until I was three or four and we moved out here.

J: To Cinnaminson?

D: Yeah.

J: And you went to Cinnaminson School #4?

D: Yes, I did.

J: All right – do you have any memories of that school – what it was like?

D: Not really.

J: Did you like it?

D: Yeah, it was all right.

J: It was school.

D: It was school.

J: Where were your parents born?
D: As far as I know, Philadelphia.

J: And your parents – do you know what schools they went to?

D: No, I can’t tell you that, you see, my grandmother raised me. My mother didn’t raise me.

J: Did your grandmother ever go to school – did she talk to you about that?

D: No.

J: No – could your grandmother read and write?

D: Um huh.

J: You went to ….did your grandmother ever say anything to you about education or how she felt about it?

D: She always told me that she wanted me to go to school, go to college, get educated and do the best I could do and make sure I go to school. It was very important to her.

J: Did she tell you why she didn’t go to school?

D: No, she didn’t. They were sort of poor, I think, and she grew up on a farm if I remember correctly. It was in Maryland, I’m not sure.

J: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

D: I have, I had one brother, had two sisters. I have one sister…..my brother and my sister died and I have another sister in Philadelphia.

D: Yes, that’s the one that’s dead. : (Rose-her Sister in California)

J: Out of all of your brothers and sisters, there were four of you, were you the oldest ….. next in line……

D: Yes, far as I know (So there might be more siblings?)

J: What were the occupations of your siblings and you?

D: I’ve done a little bit of everything….where should I start? I’ve done housework, I’ve worked in a store, I’ve been out there in the fields picking,

J: Was that first, second or this, what was your first job?

D: It is hard to remember. I’m trying to think now when I came out of school, what did I
do? I was 18 and I graduated from Palmyra High School and I went back to Philadelphia. If I can remember correctly, I think I worked in one of those hamburger places…fast food restaurant for a while. Then I remember having a, now they call it babysitting, but it was nothing but housework for Jewish people. I took care of two little children. I remember that

J: And then a store…. so when did you work in the fields?

D: Oh, out here.

J: Was that when you were in high school?

D: Before I left……summer time.

J: You went to Cinnaminson – do you remember anything – I’m not going to ask you the regular questions because I’ve gotten the answers for almost everything, was there anything special about the school that you can remember that you liked or disliked?

D: I remember a teacher, Mrs. Young. she was a younger teacher that’s what I remember. She was a stern teacher. She was tough but she was good. She was good for us that’s what we need today, some more teachers like that. She was very stern and she made you learn. Miss Terry was good too..

J: What did Miss Young teach?

D: Everything – grammar school.

J: Who was the principal?

D: I don’t know. I don’t remember my principal either. Miss Young was over everything – she was like the principal – she was top dog. But she was stern. She was very stern, but she was good. She wasn’t mean she wasn’t nasty but she was just stern. She made you learn. She was good for us.

J: What do you remember about high school?

D: High school? White people.

J: You are saying that and you are looking down, was it…were they good years?

D: Comme ci, comme ca.— some was good, some wasn’t. I can look back now and there was some racism but it wasn’t as prevalent as it is now. It was there, you could feel it, you could tell it, you could see it, but of course, those days you didn’t talk about it, you didn’t say anything, you accepted it. You were scared to say anything. Who could you talk to? There was no one we could talk to but it was there, but, we learned to cope with all of that and learned and got out of that school. That’s what we did.
To stay focused, get what you came for and to leave.

But you could feel it, you know that was there. There were the good times; there were some teachers who were nice and kind to you.

J: When you say you could feel it, it wasn’t just the other students, it was the teachers also?

D: Also, sure

J: After you graduated from high school, you went back to Philadelphia and you said that you went to music school?

D: Yeah, I went to Berean. I did tell you but I can’t call it now

J: While you are thinking about that, what made you decide on music?

D: Because my grandmother gave me music lessons at home. I had a teacher come to the house every week and I learned. That’s how I learned to play.

J: Piano?

D: Okay and I liked it and there wasn’t so much jazz, rock and roll, I decided I wanted to learn to play this stuff.

D: Berean School of Music, that’s what it was

When you were young, what was your favorite musician or your favorite singer or………

D: Cab Calloway was one. I’m thinking of the one who played the blues on the organ…Grove Holmes. Duke Ellington played sophisticated. I liked everything. I liked the sophisticated, I liked the rowdy, I liked whatever it was as long as it was music, I liked it. I tried to learn everything, but I couldn’t. I never did. I messed around with it, but I didn’t learn the way I wanted to.

Dr. Rhonda Hazelle; Did you ever get to play with famous people?

D: A couple times I did. When I lived in Atlantic City, I told the guy to get up and let the (unintelligible) sit down to play.

J: Now, when you went to your music school, was it a black, white?

D: Now, you know you got me. I think it was a mixture. If I can remember correctly, I think it was white and black. If I am remembering correctly, it’s been so long.

And was it like a music conservatory or was it a music college.
D: I would say it was a college because you learned other things too besides just the music.

J: Did you graduate from there?

D: No.

J: Were the teachers white, black, mixed?

D: I think white. They weren’t too bad though.

J: How many of you were there about...black students?

D: I can’t tell you.

J: But there were some?

D: Yes.

J: Okay, you moved back over there so I started to ask you did you come back here at any time, but you moved back over there? This is hard – after you graduated from there, did you take any more music lessons?

D: No, what I did, I went around – I lived in North Philly right near Bridge Avenue where all the bars were and I got to know all the guys who played and what I used to do every night, I would go to the bars and I would sit in with the piano player and I would learn something from him and I would go home and practice.

J: But you didn’t get paid?

D: Oh no, I was learning then.

J: Oh, you were getting your skills together?

D: I would go all the way down Bridge Avenue all the way down in Colombia – there was a bar on Colombia and I would pester the guys to death and they would see me coming, but they would help me. Everybody helped me, that’s how I got mine. I couldn’t go to school the way I wanted to go.

J: One of the things I’m really interested in is, I’m interested in how young people got their education but also how adults learned new things and you know right now we think of adults as someone over 21, but that isn’t always necessarily the case, especially when you have adult responsibilities. So, those people who didn’t go to school, how did they get information that they needed?

D: By asking others, inquiring.
J: Were there any clubs or organizations that would give out information?

D: Nobody, but we had the Elks at that time just like we have now, the Elks and Masonic and we stayed around those places a lot and from them we got a chance to learn things and they would tell you about what their organization was all about and what they stood for.

J: Did they do things for the community?

D: Um hum.

J: Like what?

D: They did it if you needed something and it was really necessary, they would help you. I was married to an Elk. My husband was an Elk.

J: What about women?

D: They called the women Daughters of the Eastern Star?

J: Are they still in existence?

D: They are still around – you don’t hear as much about them now as you used to.

J: But, I meant, they were in existence then too – cause most of the time when I was asking I heard about the men, the Elks. What about church – did you attend church?

D: While I was out here, I did – I didn’t attend when I was in Philadelphia, but I went to church out here every Sunday – after I got out on my own, no, I didn’t go.

J: Did you remember any type of programs or training that the church provided?

D: No.

J: When you were in Philadelphia, what newspaper or what magazine did you read, if any?

D: *Evening Post.*

J: Was that a black newspaper?

D: No, *The Tribune* used to be the black newspaper.

J: Did you read *TheTribune*?

D: Yes.
J: What was your favorite radio program?

D: Favorite radio program at that time? I didn’t listen to radio that much. I was too busy out there trying to learn that music. I was busy out there bugging those guys about how to play those tunes.

J: Who was the greatest influence in your life?

D: Greatest influence in my life was my grandmother and mom. And mom… mom Elnora was her name. My grandmother put some great stuff in my head.

J: And what famous person did you admire?


J: Is there anything about your education or anything that happened between 1920 and 1945 that you think is important for me to know but… how did the war effect…

D: No effect on the war.

J: My main thing was the music. It didn’t bother me. Taking care of kids since God know when, I’ve been a foster parent for years and still am right now. I work for the State of New Jersey. I have one lady I’ve been taking care of for 37 years.

I raised eight boys in New York. I got married and we went to New York to live.

J: And that when you started raising kids?

D: And that’s when I started with the care of up there, taking care of grown kids, I call them, they were teenagers. I took care of eight.

J: Now, you said you raised these eight children – how did you get these eight children.

D: Well, we moved to New York and I was looking for a job and I said I wanted to take care of children. I looked into the newspaper and I saw an ad that said “Wanted, someone to take care of young boys, teenage boys” so I showed it to my husband and he said well, if you want to see about it, go ahead. So I decided to go and I went and talked to the man, Mr. Hodgie, and we talked about an hour and the next thing I knew I had the job. He said that the reason he gave me the job was because when he told me about the boys and how they were and how many there were, he said that my eyes, I never knew my eyes showed anything, but he said my eyes looked like a Christmas tree and he said that’s why he hired me.

And where did these boys live – with him.
D: In New York. No, they were in a home in New York.

R: A boys’ home, an orphanage type?

D: Fifty years all together, I have been doing this work.

J: That is fantastic, it really is…Did your “little” boys go to school.

D: Yes, they went to school. They did everything a normal kid would do and that’s why I’m always fighting with the people I work here with in New Jersey. I’m always fighting with them. They make me sick because of their rules and regulations and I hate it when somebody dictates to me telling me what I have to do and you’ve got to do this. I’m grown and I think I have lived long enough now to be able to decide something for myself and if I have been doing it this long, I have got to know more about it than you do. I have to, there is no way you can know about it because you haven’t been in it as long as I have.

J: And you still have foster children?

D: Yes, I have got the girl now. I’ve got one woman, like I told my case worker, I said there is no way you can know what to do with this girl if I were to give her to you right now and say take care of her, you wouldn’t know where to begin.

J: How old is she?

D: Sharon is 52. I worked in a place called Johnston up here in Bordentown and she was there and the boss that I worked for asked me if I would take her for two weeks and I told him no, cause I was busy playing music and I didn’t want to be bothered and he came to me again and asked me and I said no, I will not take her cause I didn’t have the time. I was doing something another day and the following week, he came to me and said Dot would you please take her just take her for a trial and I remember yelling and saying all right dammit, I’ll take her.

J: And she was in a home?

D: Yeah, it was a home for girls. They had all kinds of retarded people, people with bi-polar, mental disabilities…And he just wanted to get her out. He wanted me to…….he thought that…first of all, no, she wasn’t that bad off, she wasn’t that retarded. She’s high functioning, she’s her own guardian and he thought she had a chance if somebody would take her and he thought that I could do it. So I did and I’ve had her ever since. This is my 37th year with her. That was her blessing – and could have been yours too cause who knows what each other learns from…

J: Well, I have asked you all the questions unless there is something else you want to add to this.
Janet Allen: Okay, thank you for participating in my dissertation study. And for the record I’m going to ask you what your name is.

Mary Ellen: My name is Mary Ellen Ransom.

J: And what town do you live in?

M: Cinnaminson, New Jersey.

J: And I’m going to ask, if you don’t mind, what year, what month and year you were born and what your age is.

M: Yeah, I was born in … April, April the 15th, 1919. I had to think myself.

J: 1919.

M: Yes.

J: Okay.

M: Born in 1919.

J: And where were you born?

M: Woodbury, New Jersey.

J: And is that where you grew up?

M: Uh, until graduating from high school. Then I moved up here in Cinnalminson.

J: And where is Woodbury near? That in South Jersey?

M: Yes, just below Camden I would say the biggest town would be.

J: Okay.

Henry Hazell: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

J: Okay.
M: Yeah, would be Camden, New Jersey.

J: See, I’m from North Jersey and I don’t know too much about =

M: Yeah, yeah

J: …the town.

M: Yeah, Camden that would be the closest to Woodbury, a big town.

H: Yeah.

J: All right, and you went to school. And what is your occupation?

M: Mine now?

J: Mm-hmm.

M: Enjoying life. Living at home.

J: Okay.

M: [laughs] Doing everything I can do.

J: [laughs] And before that.

M: Oh, well I lived in California for 24 years.

J: Ummm.

M: And what did I do? I had a job. I was—well I don’t know what I’d call it. I worked in the supermarket. I was a food demonstrator.

J: Okay.

M: In California.

J: And so like you would have different products and you’d show people what you’re…

M: Yeah. And I did that in California.

J: Okay.

M: Because I came home four months out of every year.

J: Home meaning…
M: Here.

J: Here.

M: I came back to Cinnaminson four, four months out of the year…

J: Four months out of the year.

M: Four months out of the year my husband and I came back, drove home.

J: Oh, that’s not bad.

M: Mm-hmm.

J: So you really considered this your home, not California…

M: Yes—well, I had two homes. [laughs] I mean I considered that my home and here my home too. Because see I stayed there and here four months and eight months of the year we were living in California, because I had my own place in California.

J: Okay, you had the good life, both places.

M: Yeah, I enjoyed life. I lost my husband, what, seven years ago. So, then that’s when I, I moved back home. Because I left my home here when we went to California. And I left it all furnished and everything. So, when my husband had passed all I did was they just loaded me up—actually my daughter loaded me up and brought me home. [laughs] And, and she—and life. I’m glad I didn’t sell my home here now.

H: Yeah.

M: I left it all furnished just like I’m living there now. Okay.

J: Now, your parents, where were your parents born?

M: I think … I think my mother was born in Philadelphia. But my father, he was born, he was born in Woodbury, New Jersey.

J: And do you know about the education of your parents, did they go to school?

M: Not really. I couldn’t tell you anything about their education, honestly.

J: Could they, could they … could the parents read and write?

M: Oh yes.

J: Your mother and your father?
M: Oh yes.

J: Okay. Did your parents ever say anything to you about what they thought about education?

M: Not that I can remember, you know.

J: Okay.

M: Because then, you know, education was different then.

J: Mm-hmm.

M: You know we just went to school and went to school ‘cause we knew we had to go to school and finish our education. You know. And, and at those days our parents didn't have money to send us to college or nothing, see. We, we finished high school and that was it. But that’s when I moved up here.

J: Did they feel that that was important for you to go to high school?

M: Oh, oh yeah, oh yeah, yeah.

J: That’s what I meant, you know…

M: Yeah, oh yeah. You had to get out there and go to school.

J: All right. What was your parents’ occupation, what did they do?

M: Oh, my mother—my mother didn’t work. She was a housekeeper.

J: Okay.

M: And well, my dad I guess you would just say a laborer. I mean because he worked for … transportation company, public service, you know, on like on the bus system, transportation. Those days were different when our parents came up.

J: Now did you have brothers and sisters?

M: Yes. Um, trying to think. Um, let’s see, I had one brother.

J: Mm-hmm.

M: And three sisters. And three sisters.

J: Okay, so there were five of you.
M: Yeah, it was five of us.

J: And do you remember if each of them went to—what grade did each of them graduate from?

M: High school.

J: All of them went to high school and graduated.

M: Yeah, my oldest sister was a teacher, schoolteacher. My next sister was a beautician.

J: And the next was a beautician?

M: The two that I remember, you know, just exactly what. My brother, he was a roamer. He loved to go from—I never knew where he was. [laughs] I never knew where he was in fact, in fact I know, I know he can’t be living now. But we never knew where he was one of those kind that my mom never knew where he was. Hmm. Last time I heard him been many, many years ago.

J: So your oldest sister was a beautician. No…

M: No, she was a teacher, a teacher.

J: …oldest teacher was a schoolteacher.

M: Schoolteacher.

J: The next one was a beautician.

M: Uh-huh.

J: Now I’m missing one more schoolteacher—I mean one more sister.

M: I don’t know what she did, really.

J: Okay.

M: Um … she was younger than me. I don’t really don’t remember what she did.

J: Okay. Where did your … where did your older sister go to school?

M: Glassboro Normal college in Glassboro, New Jersey.

J: And your sister was a beautician?
M: Mm-hmm.

J: Where did she go?

M: Philadelphia.

J: She went to grammar school in Philadelphia or…

M: No.

J: …this is beautician’s, beauty school?

M: Yeah.

J: Okay. Now I’m going to ask you about going to grammar school.

M: Who?

J: You.

M: Where did I go?

J: Yeah.

M: Oh.

J: Where did you all go to grammar school.

M: One … Park Avenue School.

J: And where was this?

M: That was segregated then in them days.

J: Where is Park Avenue School?


J: And you said it was segregated?

M: Oh sure.

J: Well where did the other—where did the white…

M: Hmm?
J: Where did the white students go to school? The white students?

M: They had their own schools. They had their own school, no we never went to no, no integrated schools. No, not those days. Huh. Didn’t even want you even, even come in the door. The light… we had—these kids don’t know what they’re going through.

J: Mm-mm.

M: Uh-uh. But what we went through.

J: Yeah, what was school like?

M: Hmm?

J: Back when you went to grammar school what was it like? What did you study?

M: It regular…

J: What were your courses?

M: No just regular…

J: Who were your teachers?

H: Regular elementary school teachers.

M: Hmm?

J: Who were your teachers?

M: Oh I…

J: Black, white?

M: Black.

J: Okay, did they live in Woodbury, the teachers? You know like sometimes teachers are Local…

M: Yeah.

J: But when I went to school your teachers lived in the town.

M: Right, no.

H: Not when I went to school.
M: Mm-mm, I don’t know what they were, I think they lived in Philadelphia, I think. Camden or probably somewhere around, and there were a couple of them. First you had first through eighth grade and…

H: Mm-hmm. All of them, all of them was from Philadelphia except one.

M: Yeah, I was going to say, most of them came…

H: All of them, all of them from…

M: From Philadelphia.

H: Yes.

J: Do you know why they came all the way from Philadelphia?

M: Hmm?

J: I’m trying to figure out what was the Philadelphia connection? Because…

H: Well probably…

J: …you’re the third person that talked about Philadelphia, the teachers coming all the way—that’s a ride.

M: Yeah but…

H: There was probably none around here.

M: Wasn’t none in Jersey.

H: No, right, not around here, not around here.

M: No. They call came from Philadelphia. I don’t know why, but…

J: I was just wondering because, you know…

M: Yeah. Well you know where Philadelphia is.

J: Yeah.

M: From, from say from Woodbury and …

J: But with the roads and everything I just said wow, that’s…

M: Oh, wasn’t, wasn’t that many cars.
J: That’s a travel.

M: No, no. You’d be lucky you’d never have another car on the road coming from Philadelphia.

J: [laughs]

M: Yeah.

J: So, your grammar school in Woodbury was segregated.

M: Oh sure.

J: How about the high school?

M: Segregated.

J: Do you remember the name of it?

M: Hmm?

J: Remember the name of the high school?

M: Yeah, Woodbury High.

J: Okay.

M: Yeah, Woodbury High School…going over there at Woodbury High School?

M: Yeah, where you from?

[cross-talk]

H: From Wrightsville, right here in Wrightsville.

J: I know your face but I don’t know your name.

M: He’s (unintelligible) Bernice’s brother.

J: Whose?

M: Dan. (wrong name) Bernice’s.

H(?): I’m (unintelligible-too much noise in the room) Bernice’s Brother in law.

M: Oh yeah.
H: Yeah.

M: No, but see I—when have I seen you, 24 years ago?

H: Fifteen.

M: Yeah, ‘cause… see I lived in California 24.

H: Yeah.

M: And this I didn’t see these people.

R: It’s been a while.

M: Yeah. I hate to ask somebody who they are and I keep looking at them trying to… I know that…

R: I have to ask because then you do forget.

J: I’m going to have to ask you this.

M Yeah.

J: Woodbury High School was segregated.

M: Yeah.

J: And so there was a white high school and a black high school…

M: No, no, just one high school. But we all went in there, then they had [laughs]

J: Okay, was Woodbury a historically black town?

M: Woodbury? No, mixed

J: Then where did the white students go to school?

M: Same place, but we, you know, just like black people live here in Cinnaminson, they lived in Palmyra but now they’re living here with us.

J: Right so it had…

M: Yeah.

J: You said Woodbury High School was…
M: Yeah, was in the white town.

J: …segregated.

M: Oh yeah. White—it was in the center of the city of Woodbury. So therefore we had to walk a mile and a half to go to high school.

H: Yeah, but did you go to the same high school that the white people went to?

M: Yeah.

J: Oh, okay.

M: Yeah, we went to the same high school…

J: That’s where I got mixed up.

M: Oh, yeah, we were in the same high school.

J: That’s where I got mixed up.

M: Yeah, yes, we—but you know, we lived in a little (two) town, you know, segregated, we segregated. White people live here and black people live there.

J: Mm-hmm.

M: Yeah, but we’re still in Woodbury.

J: And you walked a mile and a half.

M: Oh yeah.

J: To get to high school.

M: To high school.

J: You got …

M: Anywhere you wanted to go you walked in those days.

J: …good strong legs.

M: Yeah, anywhere you wanted to go you walked. [laughs]

J: I’m going to change this.
M: You didn’t have money like that to go riding every time…

[recording pauses]

J: I’m going to have to go back and ask you about…

[laughter]

J: But at least—(we talked) at the beginning of the disc…

M: Right.

J: …about you said that the school was—the high school was integrated.

M: Oh yes.

J: And that all the classes were integrated.

M: Yes.

J: About how many African-Americans were in high school?

M: Oh, I don’t know…

J: I mean one a class, two in each class?

M: Oh yeah, something like that. Yeah, wasn’t many.

J: Wasn’t many.

M: No.

J: Okay, and you said that the after school activities you. You all didn’t participate. Well, you didn’t participate because you had to go home.

M: Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah but we went on—we had to get home because we were, years later, we was on the school bus and then we had to go after they eventually gave us a school bus. But no, no you, you didn’t really go into sports like, like today. Today in schools you’re able to get into everything. You know. If your school’s—but when we came up, you know, they wouldn’t want—they didn’t want any black in anything, so.

J: How did you feel about going to that high school?

M: Wasn’t no other high school to go to. [laughs] Wasn’t no other high school to go to. You had, we had to go to Woodbury High.
J: So there was no other choice.

M: Yeah.

J: So we just did what you had to do.

M: We—yeah, well there wasn’t a school to go to. Which that still—that school’s still in existence.

J: The Woodbury High School?

M: Oh yeah, mm-hmm.

J: How about your grammar school, is it still in existence?

M: Oh no, they tore that school down long time when they start mixing the schools.

J: How many classes were in your grammar school?

M: Eight.

J: You mean there was eight grades.

M: Yeah, eight grades.

J: But they had eight different classrooms?

M: Yeah, eight, you know. Eight different … rooms.

J: Do you think that the teachers in your grammar school did anything special?

M: Nope.

J: For the students that you might not have gotten in other schools?

M: Oh no they just I mean just ordinary education, what you would get from grammar school to eighth grade, what they’re taught to teach the children. Had no, no different things like extra stuff like they have today.

J: Do you remember like any people coming to town to make speeches or you know this is outside of school in the community? Were there any places where adults could learn things?

M: Uh-uh. We didn’t have time. [laughs]

J: How about church?
M: Oh in church, oh yeah, with church.

J: Okay, any special speakers at church or…

M: No, your regular minister.

J: Okay.

M: Now this—a long time, this is been back years ago. You know?

J: Mm-hmm. Were there any clubs or organizations like NAACP in town…

M: Yeah, they had, but I didn’t, I didn’t join, I didn’t belong to anything like that. I guess I wasn’t at the age when they had all that then.

J: But do you, do you remember some of them?

M: Yeah, NAACP and the Parent Teachers Association in your grammar school, had all that. But you had—they had it separately, you know segregated.

J: Mm-hmm.

M: Well, everything they did in those days was segregation, that’s all I can say, was segregated.

J: What newspapers were in town during that time?

M: Hmm?

J: What newspapers did people read in town?

M: Uh, your daily times…

J: In the black community.

M: Daily Times.

J: Is it out of Philadelphia? Or was it—see I don’t know where the Daily Times was. It was local?

M: Woodbury, yeah, it was local.

J: Okay.

M: That was local.
J: Were there any black African-American magazines or newspapers?

M: Not, not really, not really. I mean not, not … no, we didn’t have no nothing like that. Mm-mm.

J: Okay. Who’s the greatest influence on your life?

M: Hmm?

J: I’m getting to the end. Who was the greatest influence in your life?

M: Like what?

J: Who did you admire the most?

M: What, in, in grammar school?

J: No, just in life.

M: What you mean you get married?

J: No, who did you admire the most? Like some people—like you had a sports person.

H: Who was your idol?

M: I didn’t have none. [laughs]

H(?): You answered the questions.

M: I didn’t have any idol, I just was…

J: Any famous people that you admire?

M: No.

J: Okay.

M: Not really. I don’t know nobody I, I admire or nothing. Mm-mm.

J: Is there anything I didn’t ask you about education or people in your town during that time that I missed?

M: Mm-mm.

J: Okay.
M: I done gave you my life history.

J: You certainly did, and I appreciate it.

M: [laughs]

J: And that’s the end.

[laughter]

J: Thank you.

M: And that’s all I gotta do is just live it and enjoy the rest of my day, that’s all I say.

[End of audio]