

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Writing Program – Dissertations

College of Arts and Sciences

2013

"We're Still Here!": The Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School Association, 1963-1964

Rebecca Candace Epps-Robertson

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/wp_etd



Part of the [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Epps-Robertson, Rebecca Candace, "'We're Still Here!': The Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School Association, 1963-1964" (2013). *Writing Program – Dissertations*. 36.

https://surface.syr.edu/wp_etd/36

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Sciences at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Writing Program – Dissertations by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Abstract

“We’re Still Here!”: The Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School Association, 1963-1964, was directed by Lois Agnew. In 1954, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors voted to withhold funding to public schools in reaction to the *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling. Public schools remained closed for five years in this county. The White community created and sustained a private segregation academy. The Black community worked to provide a variety of programs to keep students engaged. In 1963, the Kennedy Administration took note of the Black community’s plight. Black community leaders and members of the Kennedy Administration worked to establish the Free School Association, a one-year temporary solution to the school closure crisis. The Free School made plain its intention to provide students with the skills they believed necessary for becoming active citizens despite the obstructions placed upon them by the White community.

Through archival research and interviews, this dissertation examines the Free School’s reading, writing, and speaking curriculum. I argue for an understanding of the curriculum as a blend of a traditional skills-based approach to writing coupled with a commitment to honor the communities of the students. The presentation of this history complicates our notions about rhetorical education, citizenship, and race.

We're Still Here!: The Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School
Association, 1963-1964

by

Rebecca Candace Epps-Robertson

B.A., Virginia Commonwealth University, 2000

M.A., Virginia Commonwealth University, 2003

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric in the Graduate School of
Syracuse University.

June 2013

Copyright 2013 Rebecca Candace Epps-Robertson

All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

For my grandmother, Kathryn Wright Anderson, your stories brought me here and will forever sustain me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A project this large and the endeavor of graduate school cannot be accomplished without support. I have been fortunate during this process to have the support of mentors, family, and friends.

I begin by thanking my director, Lois Agnew. Throughout my doctoral work, Lois has been most generous with her time, her thoughtful feedback on both my ideas and writing. This project was made richer because of her insight and ability to encourage me to explore emerging connections. Lois consistently provided me with careful reading and reflection. I am a better person because of her integrity. I am grateful to have worked with her on this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the other members of my committee. Gwendolyn Pough's scholarship and feedback provided enabled me to sharpen my analysis. Eileen Schell's close readings helped me to complicate my own perspective of the Free School's history. Eileen's ability to read and press for more helped this project to grow in ways I didn't think possible. Scott Strickland's historical knowledge of the time period provided additional historical perspectives. Jessica Enoch's suggestions and questions have demonstrated to me that this project will continue to shape my future work in meaningful ways. Finally, I must thank Marcelle Haddix for chairing my oral defense.

There are numerous faculty members (past and present) in The Writing Program whose presence has helped to shape both this project and me: Iswari Pandey, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Steve Parks, Krista Kennedy, and Collin Brooke. Portions of my dissertation research and writing were done from afar and I am grateful for the

administrative assistance of The Writing Program staff: Kristen Krause, Christine Palmer, and LouAnn Payne.

During my time in the program I was fortunate to form relationships across cohort lines. I am grateful for my extended Syracuse CCR family: Reva Sias, Brian Baille, T J Geiger, Denise Valdez, Derek Mueller, Tamika Carey, Laura Davies, Tricia Serviss, Laurie Griese, Zosha Stuckey, Tanya Rodrigue, Tim Dougherty, Rachel Shapiro, Kate Navickas, and Nicole Gonzales-Howell.

Friends and family in Prince Edward County provided me with a range of assistance during the completion of this project. My great-aunt, Mildred Reid, often allowed me to use her home as my base of operations during research trips and her cupcakes made the work that much easier. Armstead “Chuckie” Reid, my cousin, put me in touch with many who shared their stories with me. Mrs. Mickie Carrington helped to orchestrate many of my initial interviews. The Moton Museum staff and directors, Lacy Ward and Justin Reid, provided me with space to record interviews and were generous with their time and support.

My parents, La Rue Du Fay and Iris Epps, encouraged me to pursue all of my educational dreams. My mother, valedictorian of her class and the first in our family to attend college, set the bar high. My father taught me the importance of both style and substance. His rhetorical prowess demonstrated the importance of learning to listen actively and respond deftly. My brother, David, gave me ongoing encouragement, music trivia, and prayers that helped me to survive this process. The loving care he has shown my daughters while I needed time to write will be forever appreciated. My daughters, Phoenix and Artemis, both ground and challenge me. Their very being helps me to keep

my academic work in perspective and their questions and prescribed playground time give me the perfect rhythm.

My husband, Hunter, deserves to have his name here seven times seventy. During my time in the program (and well before) his patience and belief in me has been steadfast. Whether it was a midnight drive to Wegman's for snacks, countless hours on I-81 going back and forth between Richmond and Syracuse, or the hours he spent reading, responding, and talking through ideas, I am forever thankful for his sacrifices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
CHAPTER	
Prologue.....	1
1. Race, Place, and Education: Exploring the Roots of Resistance in Prince Edward County, Virginia	8
2. Pathways into the Archive: Situation the Prince Edward County Free Schools within Histories of Rhetorical Education.....	41
3. The Race to Erase Brown: Massive Resistance and the Preservation of Dixie...79	
4. Design within Constraint: Facilitating the Maximum Learning Experience for all Children.....	127
5. The Moton High School: Vicars of the Democratic Tradition.....	172
6. Ending with my Beginnings.....	223
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	250
Vita.....	260

Prologue

My earliest memories are of playing school at my grandma's house. This was long before I'd set foot in a *real* classroom. Even though she called it *playschool*, it was quite real. There was a school desk we'd move into the living room, a pale green lunch tray I used to go through the mock lunch line she set up in the kitchen and the backyard was complete with a swing and seesaw my grandpa built from leftover wood he'd haul. I had a chalkboard and loads of books, paper, and pens. My grandma always let me write in pen. The ink made me feel like my words mattered more because they couldn't be so easily erased. More than those things I remember the patience my grandma displayed when she taught. My grandmother, Kathryn Wright Anderson, gave me two of the most empowering gifts I've ever received. She taught me how to read and how to listen. I can't remember that first book now, but I remember her hand covering mine as she moved my finger across the page touching each letter as we read aloud together.

Storytelling was my grandma's art. She taught and I learned through stories and storytelling. She had a story for any occasion and that is what made her a great teacher. If you wanted to understand how the sun rose, what made rainbows, or why our family first moved to Richmond, there was a story to explain. The stories, though, were not just talk, they were what good stories are, connections, lessons, and histories. Her stories sought to make meaning out of life, remember the past, and make us push towards the future. My favorites were those about her childhood in Prince Edward County, Virginia. She was born there on December 20, 1928 and would stay until she was seventeen, deciding to move on because she could no longer take the stifling environment with such limited opportunities for Black women. Her stories of Prince Edward were filled with childhood

nostalgia coupled with a critical analysis and awareness that the situation most Blacks found themselves in was riddled with the oppression of Jim Crow and poverty.

Of the numerous stories she told, there are three that are very dear to me and these are the ones that I tell my daughters now. The first one is about her and her sister, Mildred, going down to the candy store on Main Street in downtown Farmville. It would have been sometime between 1933 and 1934. She would recount being very young, not quite in school yet. Of course she and her sister weren't allowed in the White-owned store, but they would stand at the window and look in at the rows of candy, peanuts, and popcorn, dreaming of delicious combinations. The only Blacks allowed in the store were young Black boys who on display in the storefront window with piles of peanuts. White passersby would point and laugh at whoever the young boy of the day was, peanuts and shells surrounding him. My grandma said that once she and her sister mentioned their desire to eat all the peanuts they wanted. They were promptly scolded by their mother and told to stop their window-shopping.

The second story is about my grandmother's first job. At nine she began to watch after a four year-old White girl. That girl lived just a few blocks away from my grandma's home. My grandmother's job was to go over after school to 'mind' after the child, take in laundry, and perform other household tasks. The child's mother would give them snacks and send them to play in the yard while she entertained. I was always baffled by the fact that at nine, my grandma worked longer hours than I did at eighteen. She would tell me that she honestly didn't mind the work; she really got paid to play. She only dreaded the occasions when she had to take the little girl outside the yard to run errands. If they took the bus there was the tedious job of getting on to pay, getting the

little girl settled in her seat up front and then getting off to go around back for her own seat. My grandmother kept this job until her high school years.

The third story depicts my grandma as an independent young woman. I have to admit that while I was in high school, this one was my favorite. My grandma attended Robert Russa Moton High School. During her senior year she had a strong aversion to her French class. She claimed the only thing she learned during her short time in the course was the French National Anthem. Quite early in my grandma's senior year she started skipping French. She would march through the halls of Moton singing the refrain of the French national anthem:

Aux armes, citoyens,
Formez vos bataillons,
Marchons, marchons!
Qu'un sang impur
Abreuve nos sillons!

It would be some years later that I would look up the translation to the lyrics and think about the irony of her walking through the halls, calling citizens to arm:

To arms, citizens,
Form up your battalions,
Let us march, Let us march!
That their impure blood
Should water our fields. (trans. Halsall)

Six years after my grandma's hallway marches students at Moton would walkout in protest of the poor conditions in the Black schools. My grandmother ended her public

education shortly after her 17th birthday. She always told me that it was because she just “couldn’t get down” with that French class and while that very well might have been the case, I don’t think her full-time employment in the homes of White families helped either. She would leave those jobs and her family in Prince Edward to travel some two and a half hours to Newport News to live with her sister and work in a Chinese restaurant. Save for trips to visit her mother and other relatives, she’d never again spend longer than twenty-four hours in Prince Edward again.

Her stories taught me that while these were deplorable conditions, her spirit was resilient and steadfast. The stories I heard of her struggles and the undying hope of our community fueled both my sense of identity and history. What I had no way of knowing as a child and young adult was how these stories would so greatly influence my work as an academic. My grandma’s stories keep me connected to my home community, remind me of my commitments, and aid me in demonstrating to the field of composition and rhetoric that some of the most important lessons come not from the center, but from the margins.

My own history tells the story of a young girl who soared in “real” school. I studied, learned what was acceptable and sought after from my teachers, and gave them just that. Unfortunately, what I learned to do quite well was to separate my home self from the academic self I created. At some point I learned that the stories my grandmother told as a means of helping me understand and relate to the world, stories about how thunder worked, and how our people live survived despite oppressive conditions, did not have a place in real school. This isn’t to say I didn’t still value them or find the stories as useful guides for my life—but I knew they weren’t welcome in school. I know now,

especially from reading a variety of literacy narratives, that this is a quite normal, albeit sad occurrence for many students of color. In *Voices of the Self* Keith Gilyard tells the story of his struggle and the creation of his “new” self as a means of surviving school. Malea Powell speaks of her recognition that her *Indian-ness* wasn’t what her fellow classmates perceived in “Blood and Scholarship: One Mixed-Blood’s Story.” I recognized quite early on that there were no stories like those of my grandmother’s in any of the history books or language arts texts I read, and certainly science class seemed to explain away any of my grandmother’s notions of how the world came to be and why we are here. So, like others, I learned that to succeed in “real” school meant a need to distance myself from the epistemologies of home.

I continued this practice of separating the personal from the academic well into graduate school. There were wonderful models in the field of composition and rhetoric of those who made the personal become an integral component of their scholarship: Jacqueline Jones Royster, Amy Cobbs, Keith Gilyard, Malea Powell, Elaine Richardson, and Mike Rose, are just a few I admire because of their ability to make their home communities central to their scholarship. My resistance to the blurring of boundaries would yield to my own desire to find a space for my voice. As much as I tried to keep things compartmentalized, the personal began to bleed into my academic work. I know now that this was no accident. It came at a time I needed it the most. I was both homesick and at a point where I questioned my position in the field. Where did my experiences with language fit into the histories I read? How could I account for the brilliance of so many members of my family who’d never gone past the fifth grade? What could I do with all the stories about my community that still haunted me?

I arrived at this project through a seminar paper and a phone call home. I shared with my mother a project I was developing that looked at stories of integration as counter narratives. Together we reflected on my grandma's stories about Prince Edward County's closures of public schools in resistance to integration. We remembered the stories my grandma told of cousins who demonstrated, marched, and were forced out of public school for five years. I was immediately taken back to my grandma's kitchen, and the very first time my grandma spoke of Prince Edward's resistance. She was in the kitchen, standing over her stove, cigarette in her mouth, and one hand on her hip. She recounted her own shock at the county's ultimate act of resistance. "I remember," she said, "Chile, they put chains on the doors to the schools and said we don't want no niggers in here." Her words were biting and even as a kid, I could still recognize the pain in her voice.

My grandmother passed on in June of 2006 and with her passing so much changed for me. I became afraid that I wouldn't remember her voice or her stories. Once I began graduate school at Syracuse University, the following year, I seemed to remember her stories at a time when I needed them the most.

They came to me first as whispers and then louder as I struggled to weave together the voices of the very people who helped me get here. Many people complain that the higher the degrees they seek, the farther away from family, home, and friends they feel. I can see how that happens. The experience, thankfully, has been the reverse for me. I traveled over five hundred miles away from home and found that my grandmother and her stories were nearer to me than I'd ever imagined.

As I've grown older I've been able to see how important my grandma's stories were and still are. They are family stories as well as revisionist histories and critical

analyses of ideologies and power structures that shape our world. Those stories called me to look within my own community for ways to disrupt the troubling master narratives about race, rhetoric, and expressions of citizenship that dominate our society and perpetuate myths about both people of color and the construction of Whiteness. My interest in Prince Edward County's refusal to fund public schools in the wake of integration as an expression of White citizenship drove me to investigate how the Black community responded. Despite what history books told me, *I* knew those responses were there.

This project is a culmination of the intersections of both academic and personal experiences. It also marks the continuation of my putting into practice a commitment to honor within myself and those I encounter what I call the epistemologies of home. These epistemologies are constructions of knowledge based on lived experiences and are often born out of the necessity of surviving in the day-to-day. They differ across communities; but often share in their desire to explain and interrogate the world through stories. I present this project both as a scholar in the field of composition and rhetoric and a granddaughter sitting at the kitchen table.

Chapter One

Race, Place, and Education: Exploring the Roots of Resistance in Prince Edward County, Virginia

“Opposition to school desegregation has enabled Whites to preserve de facto advantages they held as a result of an earlier era’s overt de jure segregation.” George Lipstiz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*

“An examination of instructional practices at institutions outside the traditional circles of political and academic power not only expands our understanding of rhetorical traditions at these institutions but illuminates the development of rhetoric and writing instruction in America as a whole. Indeed, when it comes to rhetoric and composition studies, schools that have traditionally formed the basis for historical study may be among the least productive places to look.” David Gold, *Rhetoric at the Margins*

The American concept of public education espouses a mission to provide students with access to knowledge, freedom through literacy and training for life as an active citizen in our democracy. Despite these intentions, America’s history shows us that these ideals have not always been a reality for all. While education was originally a privilege relegated for the rich, during the nineteenth century, education reformers fought to disrupt this notion. Horace Mann from Massachusetts and Henry Bernard from Connecticut were early pioneers in these efforts. Both believed in universal education for the creation of a unified society. The efforts of Mann, Bernard, and others helped establish compulsory education up to elementary school by the end of the nineteenth century; however, the types of education students received would vary from state to state. William Reese’s *America’s Public Schools: From the Common School to “No Child Left Behind,”* describes Mann’s vision and mission for establishing mass education:

Social class divisions had widened in recent years. Riots and public disorder were especially common in the cities, reflecting social tensions between rich and poor, native born and immigrant. Mass education,

however, promised to restore social harmony to the land. Rising wealth among the few had been accompanied by rising rates of poverty among the many, but the schools could cement bonds in a world where community ties had dissolved. (11)

Mann saw mass education as a means to assist immigrants in becoming American and as a way to lessen the widening gap between the rich and the poor in the nineteenth century.

¹ Education reform during the nineteenth century, coupled with economic, political, and social upheavals brought on by the Civil War, saw the concept and practice of public education evolve. Two hotly debated questions arose during this time period and continue to be contested: How would public education provide training for citizenship, and who should have access?

With America's rapidly changing landscape, the common school became the primary source of instruction for patriotism and civic values. Change also created a struggle "for the power to decide what children in school should learn and how they should be taught" (Ravitch 15). This struggle has not been just over content but also the vision of schooling. Some reformers envisioned education as a mechanism of control to both "plan social progress and assign children to their future roles" (Ravitch 19). In part, assigning roles helped the creation of national identity. Noah Webster, an early textbook pioneer and educator, saw great possibility in being able to instill in students *a* common vision of country. Others, like Thomas Jefferson and John Dewey, saw education as a means of safeguarding against tyranny with an informed public. If Webster saw education as a means of creating a sole national identity in the populace, then Dewey and Jefferson described education for the preservation of a group of independent thinkers to

protect against manipulation of government. The competing imagined purposes for education reflected a variety of beliefs about the skills necessary for citizenship and the development of a (selective) productive populace.

In Mann's 1848 "Twelfth Annual Report on Education and National Welfare" he argued for the "ambition" of the State to ensure that "all are to have an equal chance for earning, and equal security in the enjoyment of what they earn." This meant education was an investment in human capital (Ravitch 17). In giving people opportunities for self-improvement through education, Mann believed that society would overall become better:

For the creation of wealth, then — for the existence of a wealth people and a wealth nation — intelligence is the grand condition. The number of improvers will increase as the intellectual constituency, if I may so call it, increases. In former times, and in most parts of the world even at the present day, not one man in a million has ever had such a development of mind as made it possible for him to become a contributor to art or science. Let this development proceed, and contributions...of inestimable value, will be sure to follow. (Mann)

It is undeniable that Mann's proclamation (and efforts as Massachusetts's Secretary of Education) did not include *all* people. His own anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic beliefs were testament to the selectivity of who his educational policy would serve.

Despite grand intentions, early efforts at public education often excluded women, the poor, immigrants, and people of color. Responses to these gaps sometimes came from government-mandated assistance such as the Freedman Bureau Schools for free Blacks

during Reconstruction. These institutions brought with them their own possibilities and dilemmas. At other times, groups sought to work from the grassroots level, like Stokely Carmichael's Black Panther Party Community schools. Schools created for these excluded groups adapted resources and curricula to meet the needs of their student populations. We know from historical research in composition and rhetoric that the history of adapting pedagogies to fit the needs of disenfranchised groups demonstrates a rich tapestry of curricula and pedagogies (Enoch, 2008; Gold, 2008; Kates, 2000; Logan, 2008). Creative forms of teaching speaking, reading, and writing often come from these spaces and, as the Gold epigraph suggests, these are the very places that warrant our focus because of the histories of rhetoric they provide. The unique positions of these schools and institutions present students, curricula, and pedagogies that further our understanding of rhetorical education and its place in American schools.

The idea that a society could create or cultivate citizens for a democracy through public education comes from a deep-rooted notion that an individual must be *trained* to play an active role in a democracy. This idea has certainly been made manifest in many ways based on the time and the group seeking empowerment. In the classical period rhetorical theorists and practitioners trained speakers to be effective communicators in public spaces. The Black community has experienced quite a different reality from that of the majority, especially with regard to citizenship and education. Beginning with the arrival of slaves in the Americas, ours has been a past that presents histories of the tumultuous relationship between access to literacy, language, and power.²

The complicated relationship between Blacks and the American public education system provides not only stories of struggle and oppression, but also an ongoing legacy

of Blacks (both adults and children) working, both alone and in concert with allies, to provide their communities with access to educational opportunities when all else seemed to fail. The Prince Edward County Free School Association (Free Schools) is one example of the Black community's commitment to establish educational opportunities when it was obvious that no one else would.³ White citizens in Prince Edward County saw it as their *civic duty* to uphold segregation and parents, teachers, administrators, and students of the Free School Association responded with the development and support of a rhetorical education that would prepare Black citizens to encounter a variety of discourses. The idea that it was the duty of the White community to *protect* both Blacks and Whites through segregation came from a long held belief that the unequal power structure was of "benefit" to both. As I will demonstrate throughout this project, the preservation of segregation has ties to the South's reliance on slavery and other forms of institutional racism. The connection between education as threat to the White establishment is best described in the introduction to Catherine Prendergast *Literacy and Racial Justice: The Politics of Learning after Brown v. Board of Education* when she writes: "The ideology of literacy has been sustained primarily as a response to perceived threats to White property interests, White privilege, the maintenance of "White" identity, or the conception of America as a White nation" (7). Literacy has been used as a vehicle for preserving social order.

This dissertation demonstrates how the reading, writing, and speaking curriculum created by the Prince Edward Free School Association was a rhetorical education that generated learning opportunities designed to prepare students to be active citizens in both their local and global communities. The rhetorical education provided to these students

reveals how competing notions of citizenship battled in this historical moment and exemplify the roles rhetoric and literacy played in this struggle.

On Terms

I have chosen the term rhetorical education to describe the reading, writing, and speaking curriculum of the Free School. My reasons for using the term rhetorical education over literacy education are informed by the distinctions and definitions provided by scholars in composition and rhetoric. Shirley Wilson Logan posits that while literacy “has been linked historically to writing” the terms literacy and rhetorical education are closely linked and often used synonymously (Logan 3). Logan proposes, “Literacy is the broader term, the ground upon which rhetorical education develops. Some manifestation of literacy, then, is implicated in one’s rhetorical abilities” (4). She defines “a site of rhetorical education as involving the act of communicating or receiving information through writing, speaking, reading, or listening” (4). Logan’s definition opens up the possibilities of rhetorical education happening across a variety of spaces. Similarly, Jessica Enoch’s definition of rhetorical education opens the possibilities for spaces where such instruction might take place. Enoch describes rhetorical education as “any educational program that develops in students a communal and civic identity and articulates for them the rhetorical strategies, language practices, and bodily and social behaviors that make possible their participation in communal and civil affairs” (7-8). In this project, I argue that students received a rhetorical education that included training in speaking, reading, and writing as preparation for a wide range of democratic participation.

Background

Prince Edward County sits sixty miles Southwest of Richmond, the capital of Virginia. “The Brief History of Prince Edward County,” compiled by William Fore in celebration of the county’s 250th anniversary in 2004, presents a history of an idyllic county, rich with natural and human resources. Two small towns, Farmville and Pamplin, reside within county limits. The area was originally settled in 1728 by non-slave owning families who owned small farms (Fore). As tobacco became a prominent cash crop in America, the demand for increased labor on these farms also grew, increasing the need for more labor, and resulting in the purchasing of slaves. The years directly before the Civil War saw growth in both the county’s population and income. As was true for most of the South, this prosperity dissipated at the end of the war and brought economic depression to the county. Arguably, the greatest change came after Emancipation when freed slaves began to farm alongside their “new” White neighbors. Some of Prince Edward’s public records suggest that there was early cooperation between the White and Black communities. For example, the Farmville Building and Loan Association had both Black and White stockholders (Fore). While Fore’s history presents a sanitized view of the relationship between the Black and White communities, other accounts suggest a more turbulent relationship.

A pamphlet created for use in the Free School by the Director of Elementary Education, Ms. Willie Mae Watson, “About Prince Edward” suggests the relationship between Blacks and Whites was one of tolerance at best. Watson describes the county’s history of discrimination, much like other county’s in the South, Blacks were second-class citizens at best. Prince Edward did not allow free property owning Blacks to vote. In the Black community it was not unheard of for Blacks to disappear, find themselves in

jail for speaking *too* directly to Whites, or for not stepping off the sidewalk for White passersby (Brown). The town of Farmville, located within Prince Edward's borders, was in many ways more racially divided than the areas in the country where neighbors often worked side by side out of necessity. Farmville was home to Black owned businesses such as grocery stores, barbershops, restaurants, silversmiths, shoemaking, and a brick-making company.

While rural Black and White neighbors may have at times worked alongside one another, segregation of course permitted children from attending school together. Separate schools meant inferior conditions for Black students. Prince Edward's Black community had a well-established record of working for equitable educational opportunities. Kara Miles Turner's "'Getting it Straight': Southern Black School Patrons and the Struggle for Equal Education in Pre- and Post Civil Rights Eras" traces the Black quest for education in Prince Edward to the post-Emancipation era. Turner offers a historical analysis of self-help initiatives created by Blacks to provide educational opportunities for their community. Early county records show that Blacks steadily petitioned the school board for better teachers and resources for their schools (Turner 219). In 1882, a county school board report included details about six Black citizens of the county requesting and petitioning the Farmville School Board for colored teachers who were as competent as Whites (Turner 219). The school board denied this request, and foreshadowing what was to come, the Black community would boycott the schools for the board's failure to supply competent teachers for the children. The school board closed the Black schools citing inclement weather as the reason; however, the fact that

White schools remained open suggests that the schools were closed because of the resistance displayed by parents (Turner 219).

Turner's work recounts the numerous instances where Black parents sought to seek "repairs and improvements in their schools' physical plants, longer school terms, higher grades, public transportation to and from school, and the allocation of more material resources for their schools" (220). Prior to the late 1930s, the county's policy was to operate Black schools for shorter periods than the White schools unless Black parents contributed to the salaries of teachers to be present longer (Turner 221). Black parents continued their efforts at securing funds and requesting the school board to match funds until the county standardized term lengths for both Blacks and Whites to 180 days. Not only did the parents contribute financially through their taxes paid to the county for schools, but they also contributed through out of pocket funds for the purchase of books, teacher salaries, and the upkeep of the physical structures of the school. The complaints, frustrations and lack of positive of the county action continued until the Black community reached its tipping point.

On April 11, 1951, Barbara Rose Johns, a sixteen-year-old high school student at Robert Russa Moton High School (Moton) rallied her classmates and led them in a walkout to protest the poor conditions of their school. Outraged by the overcrowded school, the "adequate solution" to build tarpaper shacks to provide more classroom space, and a continuous lack of resources, students marched out of the school and to the Farmville County Building, demanding to meet with school board officials. The 1951 Moton walkout, lead by youth, predates the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Woolworth's sit-ins (Turner 223). The students met with the superintendent of schools and county

school board to voice frustrations. Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson, lawyers from Richmond's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were sent to Farmville to investigate. As a result of the strike and subsequent investigation, the NAACP filed suit. *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* was the beginning of the Black community's legal battle for equitable education.

By the 1950s, the NAACP became convinced that the idea that separate but equal was not going to provide the Black community with the educational opportunities they sought. The NAACP saw the Prince Edward case as another opportunity to argue for school desegregation. *Davis v. Prince Edward County school board* would be combined with five cases total to make up *Brown vs. Board of Education: Briggs v. Elliott* (South Carolina), *Gebhart v. Belton* (Delaware), *Bolling v. Sharpe* (Washington DC), and *Brown v. Board of Education* (Kansas). The Prince Edward case was an affront to many local Whites because it began with children and started the protest that would legally end segregation, disrupting and challenging the White power structure.

Brown v. Board of Education: A Landmark Case with Landmark Reactions

Brown v. Board of Education was a watershed decision for the civil rights movement.⁴ While the ruling marked a substantial shift—the government would no longer sanction segregation—it did not provide a framework for how a formerly government sponsored charge would be unraveled and it certainly would take more than a court order to change societal attitudes and beliefs.

Prendergast writes, “the court thought on a grand scale that the rationale in *Brown* for ending legalized segregation rested on defining public education as the precursor to good citizenship” (17). The *Brown* rulings were as much about rethinking what it meant

to create opportunities for people to learn the necessary skills for becoming citizens as they were about providing the grounds for physical separation to cease. The very language of *Brown* draws upon an understanding of the importance of citizenship training to be gained through schooling:

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship.

(“*Brown v. Board I*”).

The connection between preparation for citizenship through literacy instruction and public education finds its origins in the beliefs that early proponents of public education professed: schools should be places to build productive members of society and allow for the transfer of knowledge. As I described, while early pioneers of public education (H. Mann, Catharine Beecher, John Dewey, and others) fought for public education grounded in a belief that this system would provide a means for citizens to be provided with the skills necessary for participation in a democracy, the template for public education was never constructed to mean *all* citizens. For this reason, *Brown* was also a challenge to both the idea of who had the right to be trained to be a citizen in America and how that education would take place. Blacks having access to equitable educational opportunities were a perceived threat to some Whites. Integrated schooling both threatened the White power structure, and meant a new physical proximity, that made many uncomfortable.

The epigraph from American studies scholar, George Lipstiz, aptly describes the power Whites gained through the practice of segregation.

Reaction to the Brown ruling often fell along racial lines. In historian Robert Pratt's *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-89*, the effect of integration on the South aptly described as follows: "As the bombing of Pearl Harbor was to the entire nation, so the Brown decision was to the White South—an assault to be recorded for posterity as yet another event that would live in infamy" (1). The Black community was, for the most part ecstatic. While this ruling was seen as the final legal ending to separate but equal, there was still a great deal of apprehension and perhaps anticipation about how this would be done. Thurgood Marshall, lawyer for the NAACP and at the forefront of arguing the segregation cases, was pleased but knew that there would still be defiance from the South. Reflecting on this he prophesized about White resistance: "If they try it in the morning, we'll have them in court the next morning—or possibly that same afternoon" (qtd. in Pratt 3). The mandate for integration seemed clear and straightforward; however, the interpretation and timing would be purposefully arduous. The Brown ruling generated a discourse of resistance and a continued investment in Whiteness attached to ideologies and power structures that supported segregation.⁵

Massive Resistance: Preserving Dixie

Following the ruling for *Brown v. Board*, many Southern states began to strategize "creative" ways to interpret how and when integration would take place, including solutions that meant total resistance. Virginia was no exception, and in many ways, came to set the precedent for the movement that would come to be known as

Massive Resistance. Then Governor Thomas Stanley's initial response to Brown described the necessary demeanor to respond to the ruling, "cool heads, calm, steady, and sound judgment" (Smith 84). Virginian Senator Harry Flood Byrd's prophecy was to declare that the court's decision would "bring implications and dangers of the greatest consequences" (Smith 85). Virginia's segregationist lawmakers and citizens worked diligently to maintain the status quo. Amidst pressures from other Southern governors and leaders of the fourth district (the area Prince Edward resides within) Governor Stanley changed his position and just five weeks later on June 25 announced, "I shall use every legal means at my command to continue segregated schools in Virginia" (Smith 85).

The fourth district of the state, known as the "black belt" because of the high population of Blacks in the community, was home to some of the strongest supporters of segregation. Lawmakers and community leaders from the Southside, the name given to the fourth district by locals, were in many ways the primary architects of Virginia's plan and subsequently, the South's plan to resist. Senator Byrd, from the fourth district, used his pro-states' rights rhetoric and fear mongering, as I will show in chapter three, to garner and maintain support. While lawmakers worked to maintain segregation through legislation, efforts at the grassroots level began.

Some White citizens of the fourth district began to meet formally to discuss their displeasure with the thought of integration. One of the biggest platforms for these conversations was the local paper, *The Farmville Herald (Herald)*. In chapter three, I discuss how the *Herald*, the fourth district's primary newspaper, was regarded as *the* messenger of resistance. The *Herald's* editor, J. Barrye Wall, dominated arguments about

maintaining Virginia's traditions through segregation. The newspaper expressed the growing arguments that were being made in local group meetings. These early meetings and manifestoes culminated in the formation of a citizens group, the "Defenders, of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties" (Defenders) whose mission was to uphold states' rights and segregation. Between citizen organizations, Byrd's political machine, and the Governor's new vocal opposition, the climate was ripe for what Byrd would come to call Massive Resistance at both state and local levels.

The Defenders developed a "Plan for Virginia" that would establish the withdrawal of state funds for any school system forced to integrate. Amy E. Murrell's "The 'Impossible' Prince Edward Case: The Endurance of Resistance in a Southside County, 1959-1964," outlines the sentiments of those who pressed for resistance. Through Murrell's description we see how efforts by the Defenders and others in the community made Prince Edward the model for resistive action to Brown. Having one of the five cases of Brown originate from Prince Edward meant additional levels of interest and scrutiny in Prince Edward's affairs by local Whites.

The White community had to come to terms with the fact that the threat of integration was not going to go away quietly. On June 7, 1955 fifteen hundred people, all of whom were from Prince Edward's White community, packed every seat as well as the hallway of Jarman Hall at Longwood College (in Farmville) to discuss the issue of integration (Murrell 140). Wall, editor of *The Herald*, presented the Defenders' plan of closing public schools should the courts order them to integrate. Other White community leaders such as Louis Dahl, owner of a sporting goods store and member of the chamber of commerce and Robert Crawford, owner of a dry cleaners and former chairman for the

school board, worked alongside Wall to establish and convince others of the plan. These men became the primary leaders and public faces for the movement in Prince Edward (Murrell 138-139). If there were any in the White community who may have been uneasy about the prospect of closing schools to resist integration the unified front presented by the Defenders and those who spoke with them seemed to obliterate any confusion or dissent. Dissenters had no room to make public their perspective simply because of the domination and power held by the Defenders at local events, in the news, and other media platforms.

Some Whites in the community did attempt to speak out in protest. A few dissenting voices came from professors at Longwood College; however, these voices were few and far between.⁶ The rhetoric of the segregationists rang clear throughout the county as they advanced the argument that they were doing their best to perform their civic duty and protect *all* citizens. The Defenders and their supporters, as will be discussed in chapter three, were careful to connect their arguments to states' rights rhetoric, advocating that integration should be left up to the states to decide how children are educated. This new discourse of resistance came into being because Brown threatened to disrupt their way of life that was maintained through an investment in segregation. While the terms of the argument were new, the ultimate aims of the rhetorical strategy were the same as the arguments made to maintain slavery and Jim Crow: The dominant culture had to be protected.

While Prince Edward formulated its plan for resistance, the state government was equally hard at work. In November of 1954 Governor Stanley created The Gray Commission to investigate possibilities for proceeding with integration. This group

would fail to reach any solid conclusions and “The Gray Plan” submitted to Stanley in November of 1955 advanced no real guidelines: “The plan neither enforced segregation nor enforced integration” (Gates 63). The “Gray Plan” would suggest transmitting the power of determining where students were placed to local school boards, based on their assessment of the needs of both schools and children. Tuition grants, provided by the state, were also recommended to allow parents the option of not sending their child to integrated schools. While the Gray position was pleasing to some, it seemed too tame for others, specifically for Byrd and his compatriots (Pratt 5). A stronger response was still to be cultivated.

James Jackson Kilpatrick, described as “one of the South’s most articulate segregation spokesmen” and editor of Richmond’s newspaper, *The News Leader*, began to publish editorials on the theory of interposition (Pratt 5). Interposition held that a state could assert itself and claim a Supreme Court decision null and void. There was fear in Virginia that some counties and areas in the state, primarily those close to Washington, D.C, would decide to integrate and for this reason the idea of interposition gained quite a following in Virginia. There was so much support for the position that the Virginia General Assembly passed its Resolution on Interposition on February 1, 1956 with an overwhelming majority vote, clearly marking its defiance of the Supreme Court. The wave of resistance would continue at the legislative level. By March of the same year, the Southern Manifesto was introduced to the United States Congress by Senator Byrd. The manifesto was described as being part of the effort towards massive resistance to the Supreme Court’s integration decree and was signed by eighty-two representatives and nineteen senators. In no uncertain terms, this document declared the South’s resistance

and coined a phrase that was synonymous with the group's efforts to thwart integration: Massive Resistance. With the Gray Plan effectively replaced by strong Massive Resistance policies, Kilpatrick and Byrd made certain that Virginia would be at the forefront of the movement to resist integration.

Virginia continued to lead the way in modeling resistance to integration when Governor Stanley called a special session of the General Assembly in August of 1956 to pass a Massive Resistance policy package. These laws included a Student Pupil Placement Board that would take the power *away* from localities to assign students to schools and give it to the state. The Governor was given the power to take over any school ordered to desegregate, close it and reopen it segregated. A tuition grant program was established to ensure that students could go to a segregated school, as well as laws directed towards making it difficult for the NAACP to file cases against the measures being taken. All of these efforts were couched under language that promised to uphold and protect the rights of citizens. As will be further presented in chapter three, the political discourse of proponents for Massive Resistance promised to maintain the rights necessary for both Blacks and Whites to exist comfortably. In practice, however, this was done at the expense of the Black community.

Virginia's state-level full force approach to Massive Resistance was finally halted with the election of a new Governor and interference from rulings in Federal courts. Governor James Lindsey Almond, elected in 1957, initially pledged his support to the state's resistance package and his initial efforts demonstrated his commitment. In September of 1958 Almond, acting under Massive Resistance laws, closed schools and locked out some 13,000 students in Charlottesville, Norfolk, and Front Royal County

because of plans to integrate. These larger districts found it impossible to create alternative school options for White students because of the sheer number of students and lack of resources. The tables were turned when White parents in these communities found their children without schooling. Virginia's Supreme Court ruled the closures unconstitutional and schools opened four months later. Surprisingly, instead of more defiance, Almond called a special assembly of the General Assembly to repeal the Massive Resistance laws.⁷ While Massive Resistance (as a set of legislative policies) was officially over in most of Virginia, Prince Edward County had only begun its display of allegiance to the ways of the old South.

The Resistance of Prince Edward

Prince Edward's White community continued its display of resentment and disdain towards Blacks: "White civic and business leaders took offense at the national recognition that Prince Edward received as a litigant" (Murrell136). *The Herald* carried the following explanation of its displeasure to its readers: "Until this incident, the leaders of the races of Prince Edward County have worked together for the benefit of each. Local problems have been discussed and resolved by co-operation and understanding" (qtd. in Murrell 137). While editorials in *The Herald* continued to maintain that any real problems could be solved locally, these claims demonstrated White disapproval at the Black community's refusal to back down as they carried forth the case through the courts. *The Herald* became *the* platform for pro-segregationist rhetoric. As mentioned earlier in this chapter and as will be shown in chapter three's analysis of articles and editorials: "*The Herald* often chastised those who did not dedicate themselves to the betterment of the county and once declared civic spirit is needed to make a community develop and

make progress” (Murrell 137). The editorials became a space for White civic leaders to create a picture of Prince Edward as “a county steeped in a tradition of civic dedication, where both races worked together and succeeded in making it a better place” (Murrell 137). Community leaders who were vocal against Brown were deeply ingrained in the fiber of the community: “they were members of the board of supervisors, the school board, and an array of civic organizations, the leaders to whom other White citizens had turned for guidance and help for decades” (Murrell 138). Civic dedication in the White community was code for preserving White supremacy. The Black community felt differently and experienced this brand of civic dedication as part of a continued tradition of deprivation and denial of their basic human rights.

Given this context and history it is not difficult to see how Prince Edward County would become the site of one of the most volatile reactions against Brown. In its final opposition to integrated schools, Prince Edward’s school board refused to pass funding, thus closing all public schools in June 1959. The White community in Prince Edward had prepared for an event such as this since the initial Brown decision. Beginning in 1955, after Brown II, the county’s board voted to not appropriate any money for desegregated schools and the White community began to raise money to hire White teachers for their children, should the need to create and finance their own private school organization arise. Public schools received a monthly allocation of funds for their operating budget. This system would make it easy to halt funding should the need arise. The Defenders group assisted with the efforts of the White community to organize its own segregated school system as the threat of integration became real.

For quite some time it seemed that Prince Edward would be able to evade integration under protection from the courts. Judge Sterling Hutcheson, from the Fourth District Court, made his first decision in 1957 declaring that Prince Edward could have an indefinite period to implement desegregation. Hutcheson argued that knowing what he did of the attitudes in the area it would be wise to “act in concert with local officials” (Murrell 143). When a court of appeals reversed his opinion in 1958, Hutcheson ruled that Prince Edward could have until 1965 to integrate (Murrell 143). The second decision was reversed and immediate desegregation ordered in 1959 by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, triggering the implementation of Prince Edward’s brand of resistance. In reaction to the desegregation order, the board of supervisors refused to allocate funds and the schools were closed (Brookover 150). On June 2, 1959, Prince Edward County’s school board voted to close all public schools. In an announcement made in *The Herald*, they reasoned that:

The action taken today has been determined upon only after the most careful and deliberate study over the long period of years since the schools in this county were first brought under the force of federal court decree. It is with the most profound regret that we have been compelled to take this action. It is the fervent hope of this board that we may in due time be able to resume the operation of public schools in this county upon a basis acceptable to all the people of the county. (Smith 151)

Each of the cases, appeals, and pleas to defer or deter integration was couched in language that sought to uphold traditions of the South and thwart the ongoing effort of

the federal government's interference. Public Schools in Prince Edward would close and remain closed until September 1964.

The Prince Edward Foundation, the White community's contingency plan for schooling, opened and enrolled most of the White children of the County in September of 1959. Those whose parents were unable to afford it often found help through tuition assistance. This private segregation academy, known to locals as The Foundation, was established with a mix of private funds and tuition grants from the state government.

In response to the dilemma created by the closures, the Black community galvanized support, infrastructure, and plans to assist its children. Primarily under the leadership of the Reverend L. Francis Griffin, noted civil rights leader and well respected minister of the First Baptist Church in Farmville, the Black community pulled together to provide hope and what they wished would be temporary plans for schooling. The Prince Edward County Christian Association (PECCA) comprised of local Black churches established locations in church basements, Mason Halls and any free space that was available to serve as "training centers."⁸ These programs were to provide temporary tutorial services to the students in math and reading. They would also children an opportunity to socialize with others their age. PECCA made clear that they did not want these sites to become schools because they feared others (namely the White community) would feel they were settling for segregated schools.

Reverend Griffin also worked alongside other church leaders to network with Christian churches and organizations that would place students who were seniors in the upcoming school year in high schools so that they might still be able to graduate on time with high school diplomas. Working with the American Friends Service Committee

(AFSC), some children were sponsored by host families in the north. The American Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) of Prince Edward County worked in conjunction with Kitterell College, in Henderson, North Carolina, to offer both high school and college courses.

Parents who were able home schooled their children to keep reading and math fresh. Amy Tillerson-Brown's "Grassroots Schools and Training Centers in the Prospect District of Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1959-1964" describes the network of Black women who worked independently of PECCA and the AFSC to facilitate educational opportunities for students. The primary difference was that, unlike the PECCA training centers, these grassroots groups did choose to identify as schools. Tillerson-Brown describes how these schools continued to provide an education for children long after the AFSC and PECCA were unable to sustain programs (1). The women who ran these schools were most often natives of Prince Edward who made public their desire to provide academic opportunities for the children in their communities (Tillerson-Brown 2). Some families who were able moved out of the county altogether, and still others would wake in the early predawn hours to sneak their children across the county lines to counties where schools remained opened. Amidst continuous stalling and statements from judges and court orders, these grassroots efforts at providing Black students with an education continued until 1963.⁹

Having inherited the Prince Edward crisis in 1961, President John F. Kennedy ascertained that something needed to be done. Watching the events unfold, Kennedy encouraged some of his closest assistants to investigate the options available to them. Brian Lee's "We Will Move: The Kennedy Administration and Restoring Public

Education to Prince Edward County, Virginia” describes Kennedy’s plight and action. Fearing that Prince Edward’s method of resistance would spread through the South, Kennedy knew that immediate action was needed. Kennedy was faced with numerous other counties and cities in the South who resisted in similar ways: “The administration identified New Orleans and Atlanta as the two key school districts that faced the choice between compliance and resistance. In the previous fall, New Orleans decided to resist integration and remained a crisis center. Atlanta was under federal court orders to desegregate by September 1961” (Lee 19). While Prince Edward wasn’t alone in its defiance, it still appeared to be a leader in its resolute refusal to integrate. Roy R. Pearson, administrator of The Foundation, accepted speaking engagements around the South to share his method of creating privately owned and operated school systems, unnerved Kennedy and his administration.

The possible exportation of Prince Edward County School Board’s philosophy threatened the future of all public schools in the South (Lee 19). Unlike his predecessor, President Dwight Eisenhower, Kennedy was public about his support for the Brown decision. Initially, Kennedy and his administration were unable to do anything *directly* about Prince Edward because of the law. A conservative coalition of both Republicans and Southern Democrats prevented the passing of Title III, which would have given the Attorney General clear authority to initiate school desegregation suits (Lee 20). There was no way for the Attorney General to intervene without a federal judge *inviting* him to do so and “without legislation or an intervention from the court, the implementation of the Brown decision depended on Blacks’ ability to file suits school district-by-school district” (Lee 20).

Kennedy was politely reminded of the need for action when a petition signed by 650 Black parents from Prince Edward County reached his desk in the fall of 1962. The petition, circulated by Reverend Griffin, “called on Kennedy to sponsor a survey to measure the size of the educational problem in the county and to back a program designed to help the children prepare for the reopening of the schools” (Smith 237). Motivated to respond by a fear that Prince Edward’s method of resistance would spread through the South, but bound by the lack of federal precedent, Kennedy carefully began crafting a strategy for intervention (Lee 20).

Deciding to use Louisiana as a litmus test, Kennedy and his administration waited to see what would happen. In a move that resembled Prince Edward’s actions, the governor of Louisiana blocked all federal court orders and passed two bills to prevent integration. In the first bill, the Louisiana House of Representatives approved a bill to give local school boards the power to decide whether to desegregate or close through the power of holding referenda (Lee 20). The second bill empowered the governor to place four segregationists on the East Baton Rouge school board to impede court orders (Lee 20). In this moment, Louisiana would be the turning point. To halt Louisiana’s actions, the Department of Justice expanded its role to allow the Attorney General the opportunity to intervene rather than wait for an invitation based on court intervention.

Using Louisiana as a precedent for entering the Prince Edward case, Attorney General Robert Kennedy prepared to make the case for intervention. Burke Marshall, Assistant Attorney General, argued for the federal government to enter the Prince Edward case based on the intervention in Louisiana. Virginia’s Attorney General, Albertis Harrison, Jr. denied the need for any federal intervention. On April 26, 1961, Attorney

General Kennedy filed a motion in Federal District Court to intervene as a plaintiff with those who were being affected by the school closures. This argument was based on the principle that because the “obstruction and circumvention of school desegregation decrees violates the interests of the United States in the due administration of justice as well as the interest of the original plaintiffs in the desegregation suit” (qtd. in Lee 21). Trying to work with the NAACP and broaden the court charges already made against Prince Edward, the Department of Justice tried to expand the NAACP’s complaint against the school closures (Lee 21). To do so, the Attorney General attempted to name the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Comptroller of Virginia, and the Prince Edward School Foundation as defendants.

Attorney General Kennedy had few fans in Virginia. He argued that the county’s refusal to provide public schools was quite simply circumventing court orders. With a final bold move, Kennedy asked the court to see the school closures as a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment which would result in asking “the federal court to order the State of Virginia to withhold state money from all public schools until Prince Edward County’s public schools re-opened” (Lee 22). Virginia’s leadership capitalized on his last motion and blamed Kennedy for being the tyrant who wanted to close all public schools. Senator Byrd remarked that he was “amazed” at Kennedy’s attempt to “punish an entire State because [of] the action of one county” (qtd. in Lee 22). Federal Judge Oren Lewis denied Attorney General Kennedy’s plea for intervention, citing that “federal intervention in this case without clear legislation was ‘contrary to the intent of Congress’” (qtd. in Lee 23). Between the stalemates and

oscillating court decisions, the process to reopen Prince Edward's public schools without further delays seemed improbable, if not impossible.

Kennedy's administration continued to investigate alternative methods outside the judicial realm that might be of assistance in supplying education to those in Prince Edward. Marshall explored the possibility of federal schooling but could not find any precedent (Lee 24). An answer seemed to be on its way when on July 27, 1962, Judge Lewis determined that Prince Edward did violate the fourteenth amendment and had to reopen regardless of race. While his judgment seemed positive, Lewis decided to withhold his decision until the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reviewed his decision. Having had enough, the President requested Burke Marshall to investigate all manners in which the federal government might be able to intervene and create a temporary school. Marshall worked in coordination with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to fund a research team from Michigan State University to first assess the damage done to the children of Prince Edward. In addition to the Michigan State testing, Attorney General Kennedy asked William J. vanden Heuvel, President of the International Rescue Committee, to travel to Prince Edward and provide his perspective on what might be done.

From this collaboration the seeds of a solution for Prince Edward's "impossible" predicament were planted. Marshall, vanden Heuvel, and leaders from Prince Edward's Black community worked together vested in a common mission—to provide the children of Prince Edward with an opportunity for education. From vanden Heuvel and Marshall's observations, along with the results from the Michigan State University study, it was recommended that "the administration assist in the development of a free private school

system, available to all wishing to attend—both black and White—for the 1963-1964 school year” (Lee 25). This school would need to meet the needs of a most special population of students. While Attorney General Kennedy was taken by the idea, the President expressed some reservations but still authorized vanden Heuvel to proceed (Lee 25). The team made several concrete suggestions for what they felt would make for the best type of school model to follow given Prince Edward’s situation. The proposal included: an integrated faculty, small classroom units, un-graded instruction, emphasis on special education and pupil services, and periodic testing (Lee 25). The system would become known as the Prince Edward County Free School Association. This school would not only be a necessary, albeit temporary solution, to the school closures; but, it would provide counter arguments to the rhetoric that permeated Prince Edward (and much of the nation) about the Black community and education.

“Teaching will be our demonstration!”: The Prince Edward County Free School Association

The establishment of the Free School would be no easy task. To provide an effective school system the community would need to accept the plan, and not feel that the school was being imposed upon them. Months of negotiation and work between the Kennedy administration and Virginia leaders finally led to support for the endeavor. As will be further developed in this project, key leaders such as Governor Harrison and Reverend Griffin supported the plan after much negotiation. Governor Harrison announced the creation of the Free School Association on August 14, 1963. He described it as “a nonprofit association incorporated under the laws of Virginia, whose purpose it will be to establish, maintain and operate a system of schools for the children of Prince

Edward County, Virginia, without regard to race, creed, or color” (qtd. in Lee 26). While Kennedy and his administration wanted to turn the school and its work over to the community it would serve; the need for federal resources and influences to open the doors was still there (Lee 26). The Office of Education and vanden Heuvel received aid from the National Education Association and Peace Corps to assist with initial staffing. Vanden Heuvel worked to garner initial financial contributions and donations for the effort.

With the general concept for the Free School set in place, work to secure school buildings, supplies, and most important, an administration and faculty began. One of the first steps in the transfer of power was to secure a board of trustees for the school. The board of trustees was comprised of former Virginia Governor Colgate W. Darden, Dr. Fred B. Cole, President of Washington and Lee University, Dr. Robert P. Daniel, President of Virginia State University, Dr. Earl McClenny, President of St. Paul’s College, Dr. Thomas Henderson, President of Virginia Union University, and Dr. F. D. G. Ribble former Dean of the University of Virginia’s Law School. The board was integrated (Drs. McClenny, Daniel and Henderson were Black) with a two-fold hope: to demonstrate the importance of integration and for a balance of perspectives in this endeavor. Kennedy’s advisors offered several names to the board for the position of superintendent. Neil Sullivan from the Union Free School on Long Island, known for his progressive hiring and pedagogical practices, was hired. Sullivan, friend to the Kennedy family and supporter of civil rights, hired Black teachers for his all White student body in Long Island and used team teaching and non-graded classes as a means of facilitating learning in Union’s classrooms. These practices were seen as quite progressive for his

time. Sullivan's hiring was not without debate. Initially, the board hoped to put a Virginian in this position. There would also be criticism from teachers who felt that at times during his tenure, Sullivan exaggerated stories about his experiences in Prince Edward, especially about some of the children. This claim will be further explored in chapter six.

As to be expected, there were tensions, dilemmas, and concerns in the process of creating the Free School. These tensions resulted in numerous discussions about curriculum, pedagogy, and language ideologies. As I will recount, there was immediate concern over how teachers and administrators from outside of the area should have power to design a curriculum for students they did not know. Deciding the school's mission and philosophy was not difficult. Teachers and administrators agreed that the work of the school would be more than the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic; the work of the Free School would be to "develop and expand desirable character traits acceptable to a democratic people" (Sullivan, "Philosophy" 3). If part of the purpose of public education in America has long been to foster citizenship for a responsible democracy, the Free School had a most unusual set of circumstances to do this within.

This school would be a counter response to the discourse of resistance on multiple levels. The belief that these students needed an opportunity to become critical thinkers, writers, and speakers arose in an environment where they were surrounded by discourse that told them they were not worthy to participate. How, then, would a temporary school counter discourse and sentiments that were so strong? As I will show, what made the Free School a successful and rich model were its mission, pedagogical practices and multi-tiered approach to engaging the rhetoric of resistance. The Free School responded on

multiple levels to the discourse that permeated the region. First, the creation of a school system and the pronouncement of its identity refuted racist politics and thought. Second, the use of Black and White team teaching defied stereotypes about collaboration. Third, the call for teachers to regularly reflect on their own practices in the classroom encouraged constant consideration and revision of the pedagogical and curricula practices utilized for student success. Finally, a sense of accountability to a larger community and not solely to a school board demonstrated the school's recognition of the importance it held for many on both local and global fronts. The connection to civic training was a necessity for the survival of its students. The rhetorical education comprised of training in reading, writing, and speaking was designed with a conscious effort to prepare students to engage in the discourses that encircled them. Arguments for racial inferiority were countered not through demonstrations in the streets, but as Sullivan declared at the faculty convocation, through teaching, the work of the students, and the support of the Black community. The Free School would open its doors on September 16, 1963, four years after public education ceased for Prince Edward and one day after the murder of four little girls in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing by the Ku Klux Klan in Birmingham, Alabama. In the midst of tragedy and despair the opening day would bring some fifteen thousand hopeful students, along with anxious parents, back into the halls of Prince Edward school buildings.

Throughout this dissertation I include reflections from former students through archival research and interviews. While there are no student papers in the archive, I work to capture the voices of the students as they were presented through the description of responses given in teacher reflections on the classroom. My interviews with former Free

School students are woven into conversation with archival artifacts in the hope of complicating, reflecting, and enlightening its history of rhetoric, race, and citizenship.

Overview of the Dissertation

In chapter two I contextualize my work within the field of composition and rhetoric to show the connection to scholarship that examines revisionist histories, rhetorical education, and citizenship. This chapter also includes a description of my primary methods: archival research, historiography, rhetorical analysis, and interviews. Finally, I continue to explore and reflect upon my relationship with the Prince Edward community as described in the preface. I address the importance of self-reflexivity with regard to being a researcher with strong ties to this community.

In chapter three, I present a more detailed description of the rhetorical situation the Free Schools existed within through an examination of the central arguments made against integration and counterarguments launched by the Black community. I identify the primary voices in the segregation movement (Senator Byrd, The Defenders, and voices from the White public sphere) and their rhetorical tactics. Next, I present the Black community's response through the use of newspaper editorials, radio archives, and interviews. I argue that the establishment of the Free School was a counter rhetorical tactic made most effective through the school's curriculum, teaching, and presence in the community. Just as important as what the students did inside the school, their extracurricular activities, like voter registration drives, demonstrated the desire of students to be counted as full citizens in the community.

Chapter four examines the rhetorical education of the lower school through engaging the following questions: How was a school with close ties to the federal

government able to maintain a balance between government direction and interaction and the needs of this particular community? How were teachers instructed to enact this mission through professional development? What obstacles did teachers face, not just externally from the public, but also from within? How did the environment complicate the work they intended to do? How did the students feel about the curriculum? I provide a thorough description of the lower school's organization and development of a curriculum that gave prominence to instruction in reading, writing, and speaking. Teachers were provided with detailed curriculum guides and memos with methods to improve student writing, speaking, and explanation on how to make purposeful connections to the real concerns of their students while teaching. Descriptions of written language activities and assessment present a curriculum that valued students' knowledge from home, provided a variety of writing assignments (summaries, reports, biographies,) and instructed teachers to not place undue emphasis on form because it "crushes the imaginative and stills originality" (Sullivan, "Bulletin #2," 6). Planning notes, teacher reflections, evaluations, curriculum guides, and minutes from curriculum meetings are used to reconstruct the language arts program.

Following the structure of chapter four, chapter five begins with a description of the organization of the upper school and its curriculum. The upper school was unique because many of the students were young adults, over eighteen, and teachers needed to build upon their real life experiences. Many of these students were working full time before the Free School opened. Upper school students also benefited from a curriculum that placed emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking. Like teachers of the lower unit, instructors were encouraged to select texts that would incite discussion amongst students.

Teachers were advised to make the conversations of their students a focal point of class work. This chapter closely examines the faculty handbook, state accreditation materials, and textbooks for the upper school to recapture the rhetorical education provided for older students. The upper school students left behind both a student newspaper and yearbook. These artifacts are also examined for what they can reveal about student experiences at the Free School. In both chapters four and five I argue for an understanding of the curriculum as being a blend of a traditional skills-based approach to writing coupled with a commitment to honor the communities of the students.

Finally, in chapter six, I explore the legacy of the school closures and Free School for the contemporary Prince Edward communities. Further, I present the contributions this dissertation makes to the field of composition and rhetoric through an examination of one rhetorical education designed for a unique student population's need to arm themselves with the very language used to oppress them.

Chapter Two

Pathways into the Archive: Situating the Prince Edward County Free School within Histories of Rhetorical Education

“I kept everything so that no one could say it didn’t happen.” Luscious Edwards, Head Archivist Virginia State University

“All histories are partial accounts, are both biased and incomplete. The good historians admit this and then tell their stories.” James Berlin, “The Octalog I”

“In other words, as participant/observers within the community, African American women intellectuals are accountable to those with whom and about whom we speak.” Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women*

Histories of composition and rhetoric serve our field both as a means by which to recognize our past and set trajectories for the future. In our early disciplinary history, we often found our existence to be a fraught and complicated endeavor. Traditional histories in our field focused on developments that occurred solely within the academy. Our historical narratives have been dominated by Harvard’s first writing classes, rhetoric’s relegation to communication departments, its subsequent revival in English and writing departments, and descriptions of writing instruction for those who occupied dominant spaces. While these histories serve a purpose, their limited scope does little to help us understand the ways in which traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups have experienced rhetorical education. This is the space where revisionist histories have entered into our field’s literature. My own project situates itself as a response to efforts aimed at expanding our understanding of sites where writing and speaking instruction has taken place. Broadening our historical gaze is an imperative step in the process of gaining a full perspective on language and literacy practices experiences by marginalized groups.

I begin this chapter with a review of literature pertinent to this project's engagement with conversations about rhetorical education and historiography. First, I begin with scholarship on the Prince Edward closures to demonstrate where the focus has been in this area. In the section that follows, I first work to broadly trace rhetoric's connections to preparation for citizenship, giving attention to the ways in which rhetorical education has often provided limited access to citizenship. Next, I identify the ways in which scholars have worked to broaden our understandings of marginalized groups' experiences with rhetorical education. This type of recovery work has made ongoing conversations about historiography necessary. As such, the final section of this literature review examines the challenges involved in acknowledging multiple histories, rethinking evidence and methods in research, and the importance of standpoint theory. In the final pages of this chapter I move from the conversations our field has had about practices in historiography to a description of the research methods I employed for this project.

Histories of Exilic Existence

An edited collection by Terence Hicks and Abul Pitre, *The Educational Lockout of African Americans in Prince Edward County, Virginia (1959-1964): Personal Accounts and Reflections* (2010) and J. Samuel Williams Jr.'s 2011 *Exilic Existence: Contributions of Black Churches in Prince Edward County, Virginia During the Modern Civil Rights Movement* are the only two published books about the school closures by local Prince Edwardians. Both of these texts offer the unique perspective of the authors as members of the community—a position that affords them a different perspective than that of authors from the outside. In Williams's work he weaves reflection, theology, and

history to tell the story of the numerous Black churches in Prince Edward that worked to provide support for the civil rights movement. A part of what makes Williams' text so powerful is that he provides his perspective as both pastor and native. His work and knowledge base comes both from personal experience and scholarship. His primary focus is to trace the history of how local churches organized both during and before the civil rights movement to provide support for Blacks in the county and outside of the county as well.

The edited collection by Hicks and Pitre offers a selection of articles about the closure period, several of which I use in this project. Hicks, a native of Prince Edward, wanted to provide an opportunity to give room for both scholarship and direct reflection to be showcased. The first section of the book draws upon scholarship that addresses the 1959-1964 period. These articles examine the grassroots efforts of the community to provide educational opportunities, Kennedy's intervention, the demonstrations in the summer of 1963, and White resistance. In the second half of the book, the editors offer opportunities for those who were affected by the closures, either as directly having been locked out or as the children of those who were locked out, to tell their stories and to reflect on their experiences in Prince Edward.

The stories told in the second half of the collections are quite poignant. Four university professors whose parents were affected by the closures reflect on how their parents experiences contributed to their own pursuit of education. The reflections were made during a lecture at the Moton museum on May 17, 2009 entitled, "A Lecture from the Children of the 'Lost-Generation' of Students from Prince Edward County, Virginia." Perhaps one of the most powerful rhetorical moments in this reflection comes from the

work of *redefining* terms that are often associated with the Black community in Prince Edward, or at least those who were affected by the school closures, “the lost generation” or “the crippled generation.” It appears that journalists used the term to describe those affected by the 1959-64 closures. Dr. Amy Tillerson-Brown’s reflection seeks to set the record straight on the fact that those who were locked out were not *lost*. She analyzes how this term has been used and challenges us to think this group in a way that more accurately reflects the plight of people like her mother:

It gives me great pleasure to stand before you today, the daughter, niece, cousin of members of the “lost generation.” While I understand the reasoning for this description of students locked out of school during Virginia’s Massive Resistance, I also recognize the power of a name. My mother and many members of her generation are by no means lost. They know exactly where they are and in many cases are doing well, considering the circumstances. (72)

Her story speaks to a testimony that can only be best demonstrated by someone who has deep connections with the space. Her choice to provide a different, more accurate descriptor demonstrates the rhetorical power present in naming and defining. Hicks and Pitre’s collection offers a blend of first-hand experience and scholarly research on the Prince Edward story.

Jill Titus’s *Brown’s Battleground: Students, Segregationists, and the Struggle for Justice in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (2011) provides a historical account of the county’s decision to resist integration within the larger history of Brown’s implications for the South. Titus’s book focuses on the work of the Black community (and their allies)

in resisting the efforts made by Whites to maintain segregation. She presents archival research and interviews to recount the five-year closure period as well as the continued efforts of some to fight for better public education. Her careful attention to the “depth of Black commitment to desegregated education and the intensity of Southern White resistance to Brown” reveals how actions unfolded in the community (Titus 10). Titus aptly notes that “...the struggle to reopen the Prince Edward public schools played out, for the most part, in shadows of other stories” (10).

Similarly, Christopher Bonastia’s *Southern Stalemate: Five Years without Public Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (2012) carefully recounts local, state, and federal confrontation in Prince Edward. Like Titus, Bonastia’s work also relies on archival research and interviews to describe the forces at work during the five-year closure. Bonastia’s work examines the closures on multiple levels: state and local government, the Black and White communities, and federal intervention. He acknowledges that silence is his very reason for writing the book:

Journalist and scholars have accorded inadequate attention to the Prince Edward case, which lacked the essential ingredients of a standard civil rights period. Face-to-face confrontation in the streets, sometimes fights with gruesome violence, lured pens and cameras to the Deep South. Rhetorical clashes in courtrooms, and the quiet suffering of locked-out children in the Upper South, provided little competition. (15)

While both Bonastia and Titus offer excellent (and needed) histories of the five-year period, neither provides extensive research of the Free School year, a void my project hopes to fill.

‘Whom Do We Serve?’ Equitable Educations and Radical Opportunities through Rhetorical Educations

The classroom has been one of the most contested spaces where race, rhetoric, and citizenship converge. The field of composition and rhetoric has become increasingly aware of the importance of scholarship that investigates these connections (see K. Gilyard; C. Prendergast; M. Powell; R. Marback; and others). Many of our pedagogical recoveries have focused on the ways in which the writing classroom has functioned as a space for civic preparation for groups who were left out of mainstream educational efforts. Scholars engaged in the work of understanding connections between race and literacy have called us to look upon classrooms that existed outside of the traditional. These sites display instructors adapting rhetorical educations to meet the unique needs of marginalized students.

While each of the particular histories of rhetorical education differ because of their institutions, curricula, instructors, pedagogies, and students, they each work at some level to help write, or rather revise, histories of rhetoric. These histories challenge dominant narratives about how language has been used in the face of oppression. A common thread found throughout many of these classrooms is the use of rhetorical education as a means to challenge dominant discourses that prevented full citizenship for some. The connection between rhetoric and preparation for citizenship is, of course, not new and has roots that originate in the classical period; however, the manifestation of

various theories and pedagogies to support this mission have continued to develop and evolve as various populations employ rhetorical educations to meet their diverse needs.

Classical rhetoricians imagined a variety of curricula and pedagogical practices that would prepare students to lead active, vocal lives in society. The specific curricula theorized and practiced depended greatly on the rhetorician and *his* perspective of what was most important to foreground. Generally, most during the classical period agreed that students needed an education to cultivate virtue within, allow them for the analysis of discourse for effective participation, and education in a variety of subjects. While the training and philosophical grounding for preparation of an orator differed amongst classical theorists, *who* had access to this education did not differ and was consistently limited. Both Greek and Roman theorists imagined rhetoric would provide greater access to citizenship; however, women, slaves, and men who lacked credentials necessary for citizenship were traditionally excluded from public discourse.

For Aristotle, one of the primary goals of instruction in rhetoric was to produce a controlled and disciplined orator who could appeal to others through reason and logic. He believed the state had an obligation to provide this type of education. In “Politics” Aristotle describes the importance of education for society, particularly with regard to youth:

No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth; for the neglect of education does harm to the constitution. The citizen should be molded to suit the form of government under which he lives. For each government has a peculiar character which originally formed and which continues to preserve it.

The character of democracy creates democracy, and the character of oligarchy creates oligarchy; and always the better the character, the better the government. (1337a, 452)

Despite his belief that the government should provide an education for youth as preparation for citizenship, we know the receivers of such an education were a select group. In Book Three of *Politics* he defines who the citizen is:

But the citizen whom we are seeking to define is a citizen in the strictest sense, against whom no exception can be taken, and his special characteristic is that he shares in the administration of justice, and in offices. (1257b 18-21)

For Aristotle, a citizen was one who had a right to participate in deliberative or judicial office, a role that excluded women, slaves, and foreigners. Thomas Davidson notes in *Aristotle and Ancient Educational Ideals* that for those who were not considered citizens of the state, Aristotle advocated *no* provision for state sponsored education (179). Those who occupied non-citizen status, such as slaves and laborers, would have received training most appropriate for their job and position. The purpose of education for Aristotle was to strictly prepare men eligible for citizenship in public.

Many of these assumptions about citizenship and rhetoric's promises for education are carried forward in Roman rhetoric by Cicero who believed strongly in the connection between rhetoric and the cultivation of virtue. Through a dialogue between Crassus and Antonious in Book One of *De Oratore*, he establishes the orator's duty to himself and his community:

...For I consider, that by the judgment and wisdom of the perfect orator, not only his own honor, but that of many other individuals, and the welfare of the whole state, are principally upheld. Go on, therefore as you are doing, young men, and apply earnestly to the study in which you are engaged, that you may be an honor to yourselves, and advantage to your friends, and a benefit to the republic. (Watson 14)

Virtue was critical for Cicero because if an orator had the power to persuade or manipulate he could influence the direction of the state. As such, rhetorical education would provide both training in moral philosophy as well as practices of oratory. This type of education however was still provided with limited access, as Cicero believed that states were to be established and maintained by *good* men (Watson 14).

Building upon the theoretical groundwork provided by Cicero, Quintilian outlined a type of instruction that combined rhetoric and moral philosophy in *De Institutione Oratoria*, a text that outlined Roman oratorical education from birth through adulthood. In his system, only male children were trained through exercises that increased in difficulty with the ultimate goal of producing articulate and active citizens. He specifies that his aim “is the education of the perfect orator. The first essential requirement is that he should be a good man, and consequently we demand of him not merely the possession of exceptional gifts of speech, but of all the excellence of character as well” (Loeb 11). As such, Quintilian’s comprehensive prescriptive curriculum included lessons learned beginning in infancy and included input from both the child’s nurse and parents (Loeb 23). Both his proclamation to fathers and knowledge of Roman culture show who this education was intended for: “I would, therefore, have a father, conceive of the highest

hopes of his son from the moment of his birth” (Loeb 21). Further, his focus on the importance of “natural gifts” predetermined who was eligible or worthy of such training.

The classical period saw foundational theories of rhetoric develop along with arguments about its importance, connection to preparation for civic participation, and the government’s role in providing such an education. Classical theorists developed ideas about who was meant to take the role of a good speaker and what kind of training he should receive based upon societal standards. My list here is certainly not exhaustive, but meant to show in broad strokes how conversations about rhetorical education and the cultivation of specific *types* of citizens originated over 2000 years ago. These ideas and conversations about rhetoric, virtue, the power or responsibility of orators to their community, and the government’s role in providing such training continue to be of importance.

We know the practice of offering rhetorical education to a select few continued well past the classical era. Classical assumptions about training in speaking and writing have also played a part in our field’s early conceptions about what counts in rhetorical history. As such, our early histories focused on rhetorical education for the elite in mainstream institutions: James Berlin’s *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*, *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*, the edited collection, *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875-1925* by John Brereton, and Robert Connors’s *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*, are such examples. These histories cover a range of institutions and practices, but speak primarily of educations received by wealthy White male students. Recovery efforts aimed at histories that acknowledge the implications of

gender, race, and class on rhetorical education demonstrate for us a rhetorical education can serve diverse populations and expand our notion about who is eligible to receive training as preparation for citizenship.

Susan Kates's *Activist Rhetorics and American Higher Education: 1885-1937* (2001) examines three marginalized groups (Blacks, middle-class White women, and workers) to understand how they were served by rhetorical educations, which sought to prepare them for citizenship. In particular, she exemplifies how the teachers created curricula that would prepare them to "confront the sexism, racism, and classicism, in the larger culture through a curriculum defined by its politics of difference" (xi). Kates demonstrates how some teachers, in serving groups excluded from traditional means of education, have often turned to rhetoric as a means of providing theoretical and pedagogical practices for connecting literacy to social justice and preparation for participation in society.

Jessica Enoch's 2008 *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911* examines the way in which rhetorical educations were employed by women teachers for three groups of marginalized students through an examination of how the curricula presented to students aided them in participating not only in the public sphere, but within their communities as well. Like Kates, Enoch demonstrates how these teachers responded to the particular civic needs of Black, Native American, and Chicano/a students. The histories presented show that "through their educational challenges, these teachers composed alternative forms of rhetorical education—forms that were steeped in their students' languages, cultural practices, and histories..." (8). Enoch's work brings to light the ways in which

teachers challenged the restrictions their societies placed upon them and created pedagogical practices that would help their students meet their civic needs.

Similar to both Enoch and Kates, the aforementioned David Gold's 2008 *Rhetoric at the Margins: Revisiting the History of Writing in American Colleges, 1873-1947*, fosters our understanding of rhetorical educations employed for Blacks, women, and working class students. Gold challenges our understanding of the relationship between conservative practices and conservative ideology with regard to these three groups of students (8). Seeking to disrupt the notion that the current-traditional paradigm further oppressed students from marginalized groups, he suggests that "what may ultimately serve to liberate and empower students may simply be the ability to write with confidence to contemporary rhetorical norms" (8). Gold's presentation and analysis of the students' experiences with conservative practices have complicated, our understanding of how students can receive such instruction.

Cheryl Glenn, Margaret Lyday, and Wendy Sharer's edited 2009 collection *Rhetorical Education in America* continues the commitment to build scholarship on rhetorical educations outside of the traditional. In doing so, this collection examines the ways in which race and gender have affected rhetorical educations. Investigating a wide variety of sites, this collection examines training in rhetoric from parlor rhetorics to rhetorical education at an Appalachian college. Glenn's introduction describes how despite the differences and varieties inherent in each site, each of the chapters both "explore and interrogate the practices and functions of rhetorical education in light of the links Bourdieu and others have made between institutional policies and the maintenance

of the status quo” while simultaneously demonstrating how rhetorical education “can be a means of empowerment for marginalized groups that wish to disrupt the status quo” (xi).

Shirley Wilson Logan’s contribution to Glenn, Lyday, and Sharer’s collection, “To Get an Education and Teach My People,” examines the way in which some in the Black community worked to create self-help schools as a means for literacy instruction during the nineteenth century. Logan demonstrates that consistent pushes for “social change has always been partially the result of rhetorical action, oral or written arguments crafted to elicit specific responses” (37). Calling our attention to the history of Blacks in America Logan notes how “few Americans have had a greater need to respond than have African Americans nor a greater desire to learn how to respond effectively” (37). Through her close examination of various contexts for rhetorical education and rhetorical performance of Blacks during the nineteenth century she is able to suggest a “usable” past for contemporary writing instructors (39).

Like Logan, Susan Kates’s chapter, “Politics, Identity, and the Language of Appalachia” seeks to recover rhetorical education for another group for whom “there is a notable silence” (75). Kates examines the work of educators in the Appalachian region out of a desire to contribute to conversations “about how we should address the linguistic differences of our students in the rhetoric classroom” (75). Her chapter focuses on James Watt Raine’s work to give the language of the Appalachian region creditability (80). Through her presentation of Raine’s role as an instructor of rhetoric, she is able to offer contributions to historical work aimed at respecting the languages and knowledge of students who do not fit the mainstream.

Glenn, Lyday and Sharer's collection is also important because it demonstrates that rhetorical education has taken place outside of the academy. Nan Johnson's chapter, "Parlor Rhetoric and the Performance of Gender in Postbellum America" falls into this category. Through Johnson's study on the nineteenth century American parlor movement she suggests that America's struggle with the "Woman Question" "was ongoing in the postbellum period and that the institutional power of rhetorical pedagogy was implicated in that struggle" (107). Her description reveals the way in which questions about the status of women in society "played itself out in popular rhetorical manuals of the day" (109). Johnson's work describes the complexity involved in understanding how training in rhetoric did not provide women with true access to power; but, instead inscribed "their roles as guardians of domestic morality by perfecting the rhetorical skills of enacting tender, humorous, or domestic sentiments" (125). Despite the promises training in rhetoric has offered (access to power, voice, citizenship) Johnson's chapter illustrates how rhetoric can be used to perpetuate the status quo.

Other scholars have looked outside of the academy for sites of instruction and practice in rhetoric. Anne Ruggles Gere's 1994 *College Composition and Communication's* (CCC) article "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition" calls us to look at alternative sites for the development of literacy practices. Gere's examination of writing groups outside of the academy reveal participants who are dedicated not only to improving their writing skills, but also their own personal well-being. Her work encouraged scholars to think outside of the halls of the academy to see students and teachers committed to pursuing power available through literacy. In her descriptions of two writing groups, the Tenderloin Women's Writing

Workshop and the Lansing, Iowa Writers Workshop, Gere advises us that these groups “represent a tiny portion of the enormous number of individuals who meet in living rooms, nursing homes, community centers, churches, shelters for the homeless, around kitchen tables, and in rented rooms to write down their words” (77). Her work bears testimony to the fact that writing instruction, development, and practices are not owned solely by traditional academic institutions.

Comparably, Jacqueline Bacon and Glen McClish’s 2000 *Rhetorical Society Quarterly* (RSQ) article, “Reinventing the Master’s Tools: Nineteenth-Century African-American Literacy Societies of Philadelphia and Rhetorical Education,” both attests to Gere’s claims about the power of writing and speaking instruction outside of the academy and, like Gold, complicates the notion that marginalized groups always have the same relationship with the use of instruction in dominant language practices. Bacon and McClish argue that the Black community has often used the dominant language tradition for their own liberation. Using nineteenth century Black literary societies in Philadelphia as their focus, they demonstrate how eighteenth century European rhetoricians Blair, Smith, and Campbell influenced the rhetorical educations and practices of these groups. This influence, they argue, should not be thought of as mimicry, but as a conscious and critical adaptation to meet the specific needs of their group: “Even when marginalized rhetors employ the forms of the dominant class, their rhetoric does not necessarily conform to prevailing societal norms. Acts of appropriation should not be seen merely as ‘borrowing’ but as reinvention and transformation” (21). Bacon and McClish’s close analysis of the rhetorical practices and educations employed by these literary circles

reveal themes similar to those shown by Gold's site. The use of the dominant language does not always necessitate being supportive of the status quo.

Also working in the nineteenth century, Jacqueline Jones Royster, provides a study of nineteenth-century rhetors in *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women* (2000). Royster surveys and analyzes the literacy practices of a group of elite Black women. She captures rhetorical practices of these women through a close examination of the way in which they used the essay in opposition to the racism and sexism that constrained their lives. She demonstrates the context of literacy acquisition and practice for these particular women and challenges the presumptions of those who assume that literate Black women did not exist during this time. Royster's develops a theoretical framework that allows her to look for and examine the rhetorical practices of a group that has been neglected and ignored by mainstream rhetorical canons. The histories she presents of Black women's use of the essay form work to both recover voices that have been silenced and allow us to see her development of ethical methods for doing such work. Royster's development of the Afrafeminist approach, which I will describe later in this chapter, acknowledges her personal relationship to this community and provides a useful framework for approaching her scholarship.

Like Royster, Logan's *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America*, also looks to the nineteenth century to understand how lessons in rhetoric were closely tied to survival. Logan focuses on sites outside of the traditional—literary societies, Black newspapers, places of worship, and military camps—to demonstrate how the Black community has acquired language in these places

that are often unrecognized as offered rhetorical training. Logan's work, like Royster's, is important also for the way it complicates histories about the Black community's relationship with language. Logan shows how "African Americans, especially in the century that finally recognized their right to themselves, acquired and developed the rhetorical astuteness to negotiate a hostile environment and at the same time established a common language employed both to interact with and to challenge and change this environment" (3).

Not all marginalized groups have sought to receive training in the "master's language." Stephen Schneider's description of the Black Panther Party's curriculum in his 2006 *CCC* article "Freedom Schooling: Stokely Carmichael and Critical Rhetorical Education" demonstrated just that. Carmichael showed little interest in having students receive training in American Standard English (ASE). Instead, he advocated the use of African American English Vernacular (AAEV) and encouraged students to interrogate the ideologies behind Standard English. Schneider describes how Carmichael's pedagogical techniques that demonstrated to students the connectedness of power, race, and language (Schneider 46). The attention given to language in Carmichael's Schools aided Black children in challenging "the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realities, and to find alternatives, and ultimately new directions for action" (Schneider 49). Likewise, Schneider's 2007 *College English* article, "The Sea Island Citizenship Schools: Literacy, Community Organization, and the Civil Rights Movement," illustrates another example of a site that sought to provide what he terms "counterhegemonic education" (146). The Sea Island Citizenship Schools, established to aid Blacks who wanted to vote and needed help passing the literacy test mandated by the state,

complicates “critical pedagogy’s belief that the primary means of affecting social change is to translate action into liberatory classroom practices” (144-5). Teachers in the citizenship school were “teaching to the test” but with intentions grounded in liberatory aims and actions. The ultimate goal was to have participants be eligible to vote and effect change in that way.

While the sites in these examples share some similarities, they are not uniform. This review demonstrates the rich tapestry of rhetorical educations and their attention to the specific needs of students who were marginalized. I do not mean to suggest that rhetorical educations are utopian. In chapter four, I will discuss how scholars in our field have interrogated the types of power and ideologies rhetorical education can both perpetuate and disrupt.

My project is a response to these themes, conversations, and questions that have been present throughout the history of rhetoric: Who has access to rhetorical education? What purpose does the training serve or, more importantly, who does the training serve? Through the analysis I provide of the Free School’s mission and curriculum I reveal how the rhetorical environment in which the school existed complicated its work to prepare students to become critical readers, writers, and speakers for democratic participation. This project also widens our understanding about literacy practices in K-12 settings, a necessary step as we seek to widen our histories and web of understanding about the literacy practices of our students’ before they arrive in college composition classrooms. I work to complicate master narratives told about *who* employs rhetorical educations and contribute to the ongoing recovery of Black experiences within histories of rhetoric. The

archival research and analysis of Free School artifacts also requires attention to our field's practices of historiography.

Mapping Our Origins, Challenging Our Borders: Rhetorical Historiography

In *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875-1925*, John Brereton writes that oppositionists seem to be “always defining themselves by their relationship to their origins” (xi). As I have demonstrated, those origins have often constructed a narrow view of sites where writing instruction and writing occurred. I have shown that there is a growing body of scholarship that provides more inclusive accounts through revisionist histories. Necessarily, the work of telling and creating these histories calls for innovative practices in historiography to allow us the means to gather, listen, and represent sites, stories and artifacts. My research also raises a number of questions about what is involved in *doing* history, questions that scholars in composition and rhetoric have been attending to for quite some time: How do we accurately represent those who have so often been pushed to the borders or simply ignored? How do we account for truth? How do we ensure that we are not co-opting their stories? How do we attempt to avoid inscribing a new dominant narrative with revisionist histories? What methods serve us in this type of work? How do we reconstruct histories when only fragments of artifacts are left?

One of the first spaces where conversations about historiography were made public in the field was at the 1988 Conference on College Communication and Composition's Octalog panel.¹⁰ The “Octalog” was a panel comprised of eight historians in rhetoric and composition. Unbeknownst to original panelist, two additional Octalogs

would follow in 1997 and 2010, continuing to take up many of the same pertinent issues and themes with regards to how histories of rhetoric are written. Each Octalog's subsequent publication in *Rhetoric Review* has cemented them as cornerstones for debates on rhetoric and historiography.¹¹

James Murphy's preface to the first Octalog captures one of the greatest obstacles involved in writing history: the work of recording. By locating Aristotle's definition of the goal of men working and living in a community, Murphy describes the goal of a historian as recording how a community works to pursue the "good:"

For Aristotle it is the choice of Final Causes (purposes), which determine the Efficient Causes (ways of action), which a community pursues. In Aristotelian terms, then, an historian's reason for writing his or her account of things will shape the way in which the task is undertaken. As reasons differ so ways will differ. The one event may be to one observer a biographical phenomenon, and to another a sign of demographic trend, or to another a proof of dialectical synthesis. (5)

With varying reasons for writing histories and countless ways to write them, as Murphy says, it is not surprising that this is a complicated endeavor. If one is attempting to follow Aristotle's goal, recording how a group pursues the "good," it goes without saying that there is much at stake for both historiographers and the field.

Building upon Murphy's assertion, James Berlin asserts that historians must be aware of this complexity when composing social histories: "We have to try to take into account and situate a rhetoric within the economic, social, and political conditions of its historical moment, if it is to be understood" (11). Acknowledging that this type of

contextualization is difficult work for anyone writing history, he suggests that “historians must...also strive for a dialectical relationship with the evidence, remaining sensitive to the impossibility of totally accounting for everything” (12). Berlin’s forewarning may seem grim or almost impossible to heed, but if one adopts the stance is that there is no *one* history, but rather *histories* of rhetoric as he describes, then his recommendation presents a doable charge and helpful guide for how we might remain *reflective* as we write and present histories.

While the idea of having multiple histories may cause some to fear difficulty or confusion, Berlin contends that it is from these various perspectives that writing teachers gain valuable insight on connections between discourse and power:

Rhetorical histories are important to the writing teacher. They explore the relationship of discourse and power, a rhetoric again being a set of rules that privilege particular power relations. A rhetoric explores discursive practices, ways of using language that are found in numerous political practices. (12)

Accordingly, a variety of histories give us the ability to see rhetoric employed in divergent places.

Victor Vitanza’s collection, *Writing Histories of Rhetoric* (1994) also arose from a conference and many of its chapters express the same concerns as those found in the first Octalog. Edward Schiappa’s chapter, “The Historian as Arguer,” makes the claim that writing history is rhetorical, thus affirming Berlin and Murphy’s claims about why the writing of history is so difficult: “The writing of history is a thoroughly rhetorical enterprise and can be evaluated with the traditional tools of rhetorical criticism, including

the analysis and evaluation of the first, second, and third personae enacted through the text of the historian” (36-37). Schiappa believes that accepting this claim may prove helpful for ongoing debates about theory and historiography because if one sees history writing as rhetorical, we may be able to understand why “one account succeeds over another” (37). His suggestion then is to ask: “What historical accounts succeed given what purposes?” (37). Schiappa’s question is one we must engage with as we seek to understand how master narratives are perpetuated and how we might challenge them.

During the Octalog III at the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication, scholars continued to stress the need for multiple accounts of history in the field. Ronald Jackson warned of the problems associated with having “one garment of epistemological singularity that some of us recognize as “mainstream rhetoric.”” (117). He challenged rhetorical scholars to remember that rhetoric did not “emanate in Greece or Rome” (117) and that if we care about effective progressive pedagogical practices we cannot ignore the “theoretic contributions from non-White scholars” (117). Jackson’s advocacy for acknowledging the implications of consistently making connections back to the Greco-Roman tradition were affirmed by Malea Powell’s argument for the acceptance of scholars who seek to broaden histories of rhetoric through the study of race: “Scholars who study, theorize, and write histories about race are almost always assumed to be *not* talking about rhetoric—at least we are told, not the kind of rhetoric that is generally useful to everyone or thought to generate theoretical frames and methodological practices that will be used by folks who ‘really’ or ‘just’ study rhetoric” (120). Powell sees the adoption of this stance as both troublesome and stifling for the field’s growth. Her claim pushes us to see past canon expansion as equaling the addition of rhetors to the traditional

boundaries drawn by the Western canon. Instead, she argues for scholars to understand that true growth cannot occur from consistently linking the rhetorical practices of “others” to the Greco-Roman tradition. Powell leaves us with the challenge to “learn to rely on rhetorical understandings different from that singular, inevitable origin story” (122). Doing the kind of work that consistently pushes for an expansion of our histories calls for rethinking what counts as evidence and what methods we select to employ.

Writing histories that include marginalized rhetors often requires using remnants of historical artifacts because these voices, groups, or practices have many times not benefited from the same types of preservation as others. Enos’s position in the first Octalog called upon rhetorical scholars to “dirty their hands” by engaging with primary sources, and avoiding armchair research (15). Tackling the question of how we evaluate historical research methods and what is counted as proof, Enos posited that we should embrace the kind of research that encourages us to dig for primary sources. He summons scholars to develop new methods that would aid us in unearthing these practices and artifacts. Accepting these new methods and the encouragement of “dirtying one’s hands” asks us to consider what happens when we only uncover fragments.

One such response to this concern came from Jan Swearingen in the first Octalog who warned that we need new ways of thinking about evidence if we are to truly expand the histories of our rhetoric: “We need to retrieve the women writers from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. There are traditions there that should be reclaimed as part of our history, in terms of which we define ourselves” (22). Like Enos, she wanted to get to the primary source material, but recognized the difficulty of doing so when often we cannot get to the original. This inherent difficulty she warns, should not be an obstacle,

even if one as Swearingen says, cannot get the original: “I am nonetheless interested in getting back whatever we can of those shards and so forth. I believe we can understand them. I don’t think problematics necessarily constrains people. It doesn’t constrain me” (23). Despite the inherent difficulty of working with shards, if we are to expand our histories of rhetoric, we must learn to work patiently with what we are able to find.

In the second Octalog, Linda Ferreira-Buckley also encouraged primary source work as a means to aid our desire for more diversity within our histories, asking: “Where were the women? The people of color?” (26). She acknowledged the importance of recovering these voices to disrupt master narratives. Her concern however, like that of Enos and others, is directed towards attitudes that undervalue the use of primary sources in doing such work: “primary materials should ground our projects, however slow and painstaking the work, however incomplete the records” (25). Similar to Swearingen’s concern for the implications of working with shards, her argument for starting with fragments of history and avoiding the imposition of narrative upon them, allows the artifacts to speak for themselves, and is an important response to those who ask what we do when our archives are incomplete. She acknowledged that the field might not be ready for histories that are built from fragments and therefore may appear incomplete: “How ready are we as a field to accept such disconnected accounts?” (26). These fragments are often all we have when trying to construct histories with some groups and should not stop our work, a sentiment also shared Swearingen in the first Octalog. As tempting as it may be to work with archives that provide extensive artifacts, these repositories can limit the attention we give to groups who have not had the means to store or document their artifacts.

In the second Octalog, Roxanne Mountford responded to the need for developing new methods and theories that will help us to move beyond doing work with only textual sources. Taking up Enos's challenge, she argued for looking outside the field to those who mix methods such as fieldwork, textual analysis, and archival research (33). Similar to Johnson in the first Octalog who argued for thinking of historical research as being akin to archaeology, she presented this mixing of methods and stretching our boundaries to "engage [d] in boundary-crossing and in the development of new ways to study rhetoric" (34). To further encourage not only our methods to push boundaries, Mountford also suggested that we broaden our exploration of rhetoric as she warned that "we must risk looking for rhetoric beyond narrow disciplinary interests" (35). Just as she calls us to look outside of our traditional methods to mix our methods and approaches, feminist historiographers have also encouraged us to rethink our relationship with both our methods and research.

Patricia Bizzell's 2000 article in *Rhetorical Society Quarterly (RSQ)*, "Feminist Methods of Research in the History of Rhetoric: What Difference Do They Make?" presents a feminist approach for understanding both the rhetoricity of writing history and the necessary reflection on the part of the researcher. Bizzell suggests that feminist researchers don't seek objective truth but work for truths that will help to support the interest and needs specific to their communities. Further, she identifies and examines the role of emotions in doing such work claiming that "what becomes critical, in other words, is the acknowledgement of the multiple functions of emotions and experiences in defining one's relationship to one's research" (13). Bizzell acknowledges that one of the reasons some have problems with feminist methodologies is because it is not the goal of

the feminist researcher to provide *one* truth as traditionalists often aspire to do. Bizzell's attention to Royster's ability to connect with and acknowledge the emotion involved in doing historical work provides an exemplary example of the kind of work Bizzell is encouraging. Royster's *Traces of a Stream* warrants attention for the way in which she examines and theorizes about her emotional connection to her research and the community it serves. Royster's practice of self-reflexivity is emblematic of feminist historiographers, and maintains a great deal of importance. For my project, Royster's work maintains a great deal of importance because of the position she takes with regard to how she approaches her sites and studies. Royster acknowledges the complexities involved in her position as she admits that she is unapologetically tied to the subjects she studies. Her close examination of the position she occupies as both a researcher of Black women and member of this community provides a response to this dilemma, she identifies one of her goals as an Afrafeminsit to her community:

As African American women intellectuals doing this work, we are obligated, as are our counterparts within the community, to be holistic, to remember our connectedness in both places. We are free to do our own intellectual business and at the same time we are also obligated to have that work respond to sociopolitical imperatives that encumber the community itself. (275)

Royster's methods speak to the importance of understanding how the position and stance of a researcher is important for both writing and the relationships we may have with the groups we study. Her acknowledgement and explanation of the "passionate attachment" she has to her work serves as an important reminder "that knowledge has sites and

sources and that we are better informed about the nature of a given knowledge base when we take into account its sites, material contexts and points of origin” (Royster 280). The acknowledgment and understanding of how these *passionate attachments* work and what implications they hold are integral to both the construction of knowledge and what action may come arise from it. Royster’s description adds great depth to further our understanding of the subjectivity of history and epistemological construction.

Christine Mason Sutherland’s “Feminist Historiography: Research Methods in Rhetoric” also provides an example of a researcher’s critically examining methods of research in light of her own stance as well as the importance of work with primary sources. Sutherland, like Enos and others, argues for the importance of doing primary research and engaging directly with sources. Secondary sources should only be utilized once we have gained our own perspectives. Sutherland values the importance of collaboration and building on the work of others as a component of feminist research. Similar to what Bizzell and Royster describe, she argues for understanding the importance of the emotional connection between researchers and the research critiquing “the emotionless model derived from the imitation of pure science is usually not appropriate when the subject is the lives of human beings” (115). The roles of emotion and relationship/location to our sites and subjects are further explicated through attention to our stance as researchers.

Gesa Kirsch’s *Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research: The Politics of Location, Interpretation, and Publication* encourages us to “analyze how the researchers’ identity, experience, training, and theoretical framework shape the research agenda, data analysis, and findings” (5). Kirsch demonstrates how feminist methods encourage us to situate

ourselves in our work as a necessary part of the research process. Kirsch posits how “the goal of situating ourselves in our work and acknowledging our limited perspectives is not to overcome these limits—an impossible task—but to reveal to readers how our research agenda, political commitments, and personal motivations shape our observations in the field, the conclusions we draw, and the research reports we write” (14). While these types of acknowledgements do not necessarily alleviate our issues with possible connections we may have, to our research they do provide readers with an understanding of how our work is situated in a particular moment and context (14). Citing Nedra Reynolds, Kirsch describes the work of feminist and postmodern scholars to “weave into their discourses explicit acknowledgements of their own positions and the limits to their claims but at the same time, these ‘limits’ are not—as they rein in traditional Western epistemology—blocks to the “truth” to be eliminated. They are instead incentives to see differently, to shift position, to make adjustments” (14). Further, Kirsch also describes the unique position of those who work from a marginalized position. This “double perspective” often provides one with the ability to understand both the dominant and marginalized cultures, which can in turn mean the ability to “offer more insightful, more complete interpretations of that culture than those who do not possess the double perspective” (Kirsch 14-15). The stance, or ethos, of the researcher of history towards the writing of history is of the utmost importance, as are the methods we use. For the writer of history, having an awareness of the complexity involved in accounting for the ways rhetoric may privilege particular power structures begs for the self reflexivity that allows for awareness of the power structures one writes and operates within.

In writing this history, I am concerned with many of the same issues as those before me: responsibly disrupting master narratives, readily acknowledging that my contribution is but one account, responsibly working with the resources I have, and the awareness that my position as a member of this community provides me with both a unique perspective and a heightened sense of accountability.

I turn now to an examination of the methods I employ to do this work.

Methods: Making Pathways and Fostering Connections through Archival Research and Lived Experience

In “Invigorating Historiography Practices in Rhetoric and Composition Studies,” Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch observe how “each of us wants history and our view of that history to contribute to the positive value of our daily life” (11). This is the intention I have for this project. As the quote in the epigraph from Mr. Edwards, Head Archivist of Virginia State University (VSU) attests, I too hope to contribute to Prince Edward’s history so that master narratives don’t swallow the stories of those who were left behind. To engage with this work, I rely on traditional archival and library research methods, rhetorical listening and analysis, and structured interviewing. I had multiple paths into this project and will describe each method in connection to the corresponding point of entry.

Entry Point 1, Family History: “Child, don’t you know they shut them schools down!”

As I relay in the preface, my first knowledge of Prince Edward came from my grandmother and because of this, I felt that starting with my family’s knowledge and experience was important. During early stages of the project my mother, Iris Epps,

recounted her experiences and connected me with family members I might contact. In the summer of 2010, what I intended to be my first informal interview ended up as more of a listening session at the kitchen table of my great-aunt, Mrs. Mildred Reid. My cousin, the Vice-Mayor of Farmville, Armistead “Chuckie” Reid, agreed to speak with me about his experience of staying behind in Prince Edward during the five-year school closure period. I began the conversation by telling him about my work, which in those early stages was more about gathering information. His response would be pivotal to my understanding about how events unfolded in Prince Edward. He began by questioning whether I really wanted to know *his* experience: “I don’t know if you want to talk to me. Most people want to hear about the 1951 walkout, but they aren’t interested in what happened after that.” His comment was a watershed moment for me because it demonstrated how master histories had enveloped and marginalized the stories of others. Chuckie’s proclamation also solidified my desire to understand how stories such as his have been pushed to the side.

Entry Point #2, Pathways in Dusty Halls: Finding a Way in and a Way Out of The Prince Edward County Free School Archives

The Free School papers were obtained by VSU’s Special Collections and Archives through a donation made by the Free School’s board of trustees once the school closed in 1964. VSU is a state funded Historically Black College/University in Ettrick County, Virginia and its Special Collections and Archives is primarily home to documents and artifacts that pertain to Black history. The holdings range from rare music recordings, prominent family papers, to the African American Teachers Association documents. The Free School holdings consists of 50,000 items and is comprised of

everything from bus schedules, handbooks, textbook orders, teacher applications, textbook order forms, curricula guides, varsity jackets, personnel files, faculty handbooks, to lunch menus. The holding description for the materials, a narrative in itself reads:

Prince Edward County (Free School), ca 50,000 items, Papers 1962-1964□Between the years 1959 and 1963, there were no public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia. After five long years the County and State allowed Prince Edward schools to reopen. Because the black children in the county had no school during this period of time (the White students attended an all White academy), it was thought best to organize a free school, which would pave the way for hundreds of young children to return to school after a five-year absence. The Prince Edward County, Virginia (free school) papers are the records of that effort. The papers contain correspondence, reports, photographs and other items, which document this sad period in Virginia History. Acc. #1969-38

The documents and materials were categorized according by type (memos, teaching handbooks, receipts, etc.) and further organized in chronological order. Mr. Edwards has been the head archivist for the over thirty years and was instrumental in providing me with both physical support (space to spread out materials, access to copy machines) and intellectual support (helping me to understand the catalogue list, organization of the archives, and suggesting secondary sources that might be useful). As I will relate in chapter four, conversations with Mr. Edwards also provided me with valuable information that could not be found in the documents.

Several chapters in Alexis Ramsey, Wendy Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo's *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*, proved to be helpful for the guiding principles they provided for archival work. Lynee` Lewis Gaillet's chapter "Archival Survival: Navigating Historical Research" provided a number of suggestions for the pragmatics of how to navigate materials and serve as an important reminder of why historicizing and contextualizing all documents is so important. Her discussion about the importance of understanding the cultural contexts of artifacts encouraged me to spend a great deal of time constructing timelines for the artifacts I uncovered.

Likewise, Katherine Tirabassi's glimpse of her own dissertation process in "Journeying into the Archives: Exploring the Pragmatics of Archival Research" provided four key principles for archival work, two of which were essential for how I worked across multiple boxes and folders: cross-referencing (searching across the documents for clues or clarification with regard to the rhetorical situation of a document) and closure (the understanding that there are going to be gaps in archival materials and that one must find an entrance and exit point) (171-172). Cross-referencing enabled me to understand historical contexts (pairing newspaper articles with memos for example) and to begin to trace conversations as they arose from the materials. I was also conscious of the need to pay attention to the gaps and silences found in the archive; for example, the lack of direct student voices in the archive prompted me to include interviews in this project.

After my initial visits, I realized the importance of maintaining a beginner's mind, but of also giving myself some parameters to work within. I constructed broad questions both generated from the documents I read during that first visit and from the knowledge I

received through family stories as well: What did a rhetorical education look like in these schools? How did the federal government's involvement affect the curriculum and the way the school was received within both the Black and White communities? How did a community that had been without public education respond to this school and its mission? What did this type of education look like in a space where students were being legally denied the right to attend school? How was the curriculum designed, enacted, and received? What effect did the curriculum have on both teachers and students? How were the teachers (who came from around the country with wide ranges of backgrounds) trained to provide this type of education through professional development opportunities?

Reading, listening, sorting, and making connections once I found responses or silences to these questions provided answers and additional questions. I revised and continued this process as my inquiry morphed and the project began to grow. Allowing myself the freedom to explore—moving between folders and boxes—allowed me to trace themes and conversations as they surfaced. This work also enabled me to think of questions for the student interviews that would complicate or close gaps found in the archive.

Entry Point #3: Interviews: “You might not want to hear my story.”

Interviews with former Free School students established a third pathway into this research. My goal has been to weave their voices into the stories from the archives. Their voices help us to understand first-hand what this experience was like for this group. To conduct these interviews I relied on standard interview practices that were also influenced by feminist interviewing practices. My interviews, six in total, were conducted with the intention of “understand [ing] themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own

perspectives” (Kvale and Brinkmann 24). As I related with that first conversation with my cousin, Chuckie, his hesitancy in talking about what happened encouraged me to exercise the utmost care, concern, and respect for those who agreed to participate. Not wanting to be perceived as a belligerent or intrusive, researcher, I realized that because of my age in relation to the interviewees and my position in this community respect and acknowledgement of my location was paramount.

In total, I interviewed six former students. All are still residents of Prince Edward County and are active in their community in a variety of roles. Four responded to an advertisement I placed in the local Robert Russa Moton museum newsletter and two responded through familial connections.¹² On average, each interview typically lasted between thirty and forty minutes. Most interviews began with my sharing both my familial and academic genealogies. I used a set of pre-established questions to ask each participant which can be found in the appendix. Participants vividly recalled their experiences both before the schools closed and during their Free School year. I recorded each using a digital recorder and transcribed the interviews afterwards. As I will show in chapters four and five especially, listening to the histories and experiences of the six participants enriched the themes that surfaced in the archive. Listening is an integral competent to any good interview, but I have found, as others in the field have also, that listening as an active practice rarely gets the attention (and description) it deserves.

Catching a Whisper and Finding Meaning: Rhetorical Listening and Analysis as Methods for Discovery and Discernment

I use the term *listening* frequently in this project to describe the action of working in the archives. This listening is theorized and connected to the type of listening Krista

Ratcliffe describes in *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, and Whiteness*.

Ratcliffe maintains that rhetorical listening “signifies a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture” (17). While Ratcliffe’s primary focus is rhetorical listening to aid cross cultural understanding, in particular with regard to conversations about race and gender, this type of listening is not tied solely to those conversations; as the definition implies, it can be used with any text or person to open the door for understanding. Adopting an *open* stance proved quite necessary because it allowed me to keep an open mind with regard to documents that are over forty-years old. Ratcliffe describes four moves as being part of successfully enacting the pragmatics of rhetorical listening. Of these four, I found two to be most fitting for my work in the archives. In the first move she differentiates between the type of listening and understanding as we commonly understand them: “*understanding* means listening to discourses not *for* intent but *with* intent—with the intent to understand not just the claims but the rhetorical negotiations of understanding as well” (28). For her this type of understanding means that one “stands under” discourses to see how they affect ourselves and others (28). With regard to my own work this practice has meant that as I read documents from some forty years ago, I acknowledge that they existed within their own time and space. To try to avoid placing my own paradigms upon them, I worked to listen to the items on their own terms.

It follows, then, that Ratcliffe’s fourth move, the process of examining claims within their own cultural logic, is necessary as well. She writes, “if a claim is an assertion of a person’s thinking, then a cultural logic is a belief system or shared way of reasoning within which a claim may function” (33). Adopting this stance was especially important

for me as a guide while I listened and traced conversations in the archives because it reminded me to historicize and contextualize the conversations and themes I found. Historicizing and contextualizing meant not only trying to frame the pieces for a particular time period, but also understanding their rhetorical situation. In reading and representing these documents I am also conducting rhetorical analysis so that I can understand the arguments being constructed, the audience they were intended for, the appeals made, and the intended purposes.

In addition to the type of listening theorized by Ratcliffe, to understand the rhetorics employed to close the schools and establish the Free School year, I have adopted an analytical framework that helps to uncover how arguments were constructed to promote such actions. To analyze the arguments made by segregationists in the White community, I rely on theories from Whiteness Studies that seek to explicate how the White community benefits from constructs of race that have historically placed them in dominant positions over the Black community, as well as rhetorical theories that seek to explain how groups create and maintain group identities in social movements. To explore the Black community's response I utilize the work of scholars in African American rhetoric who demonstrate how the position of the Black community has led to language practices developed out of a need for resistance and survival. The Free School found itself in the precarious position of having to deeply connect with the Black community and simultaneously establish connections with those in the White community. This meant that many of the public speeches given by Sullivan and teachers were carefully crafted to reach two distinct audiences, reflective of Du Bois's double consciousness. As will be demonstrated in the analysis provided in the next chapter, the very *being* of the Free

School (advertisements made to promote its opening and ongoing community programs, mission and philosophy statements, editorials, TV/radio spots, and a host of other communications) was carefully constructed to challenge the dominant discourses circulating about race and literacy.

Self-Reflexivity: My Place in this Space

I have made it a practice to be clear about my relationship to this project on both personal and academic levels at every step in this project. This transparency is a means by which I am able to critically question and remain aware of the commitments I maintain to two different communities. My connection to Prince Edward is larger than this project and I am forever connected to the people and events because of my family. I am not only a collector of stories, histories, and materials for this dissertation, but a granddaughter, great-niece, daughter, and cousin. At times it can be difficult to navigate between these roles. Royster's work in *Traces of a Stream* provides me a model and reassurance that my connection to this group both binds, drives, and complicates things in a way that makes me remain forever aware of the importance of this research as well as the importance of constantly reflecting on my connection and role as researcher.

Knowing my connection is both personal and professional, I am reminded that my interactions are not only with artifacts, but real people. My interactions are with a site, a people, and a situation that continues to impact lives today. On many occasions, as I've recounted, I've had to provide my family tree before I could be formally introduced. While this can be a precarious position, it also means that I am able to have the *double perspective* that Kirsch describes. From this space, I can work to have the academic understand the implications this bit of history has for rhetorical education, race, and

citizenship. My commitment to the people of Prince Edward to work for spaces and outlets where their stories can be heard is equally as strong.

Chapter three provides extensive description of the rhetorical environment in and around the Free School. Arguments made by various groups within the Prince Edward community will also be explored, along with the larger cultural arguments that circulated in the nation about Blacks and education, and the response of the Black community.

Chapter Three

The Race to Erase Brown: Massive Resistance and the Preservation of Dixie

“You’ve given us your moral support, your financial support and your prayers. All this is fine. But now we are requesting your very presence--your body.”
Joseph Dancey, Jr. President of Virginia Union University’s NAACP Student Group,
Summer, 1963

I begin this chapter with a description of the theoretical framework I use to analyze the arguments made against integration. Through an analysis of the language used and arguments made against integration I show how resistance was expressed and enacted by Whites at both state and local levels. Finally, I examine the Black community’s construction of counter arguments in the Black press and through reflections provided in interviews.

My attention to the language and arguments of both communities arise from an understanding that through language we can come to understand a culture’s ideologies and beliefs. Marcyliena Morgan asserts that in order to understand “the meaning of a narrative or how a community can turn a song into an emblem and fact of everyday life, one must take into consideration how cultures reflect and express their ideological foundation” (37). Attention to the rhetorical practices of a community is one such way to do this. Kenneth Burke’s theory on the role of identification in persuasion provides a useful framework to examine how arguments made by both communities reflected long-held cultural beliefs. For Burke, in order for persuasion to occur, a speaker (or speakers) must first identify with their audience: “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your

ways with his” (55). Supporters of segregation utilized terms, ideas, and beliefs that had a history and connection with their audiences to successfully engage their audiences. To deepen my analysis, I employ Lloyd Bitzer’s understanding “that rhetoric is situational” as I demonstrate *how* the White community created a discourse and arguments because of the perceived threat of integration. Michael McGee’s theories on audience and social movements aid me in demonstrating how the White community relied on an imagined and created audience to sustain their established power base.

To understand the Black response, I utilize theories from scholarship in African American rhetoric to show the continued legacy of this community using language for resistance and survival. Elaine Richardson and Ronald Jackson present a definition of African American rhetoric as “the study of culturally and discursively developed knowledge-forms, rhetorical practices and persuasive strategies rooted in freedom struggles by people of African ancestry in America” (xiii). The counter arguments of the Black community exemplify communicative practices rooted in this freedom struggle. I use theories on Black language practices from Keith Gilyard, Marcileana Morgan and Geneva Smitherman to demonstrate the complexities involved in *how* Black speakers express resistance in the face of multiple audiences in America. Additionally, Gwendolyn Pough’s work on the Black public sphere provides a valuable theoretical framework to further understand the resistance I identify in interviews and newspapers.

Post Brown v. Board: Hope in the midst of Peril

The Brown v Board of Education rulings (1954, 1955) traditionally stand out as markers of success America’s civil rights timeline. The court’s intention, overturning

Plessy v. Ferguson, would not be an easy task for a country founded and grounded in constructions of race inextricably tied to power. While the law mandated that separate but equal be abolished, the psychological mindset of many Americans would require more than a mandate on paper. For both Black and White communities, the path to school integration and more full societal integration would be a slow and dubious journey.

The language of both Brown I and II echoed the hopes of integrated public education, how this would be enacted and the resistance it was to be met with differed greatly by region. Brown II (1955) provided a verbal push to those who resisted by stating that integration should occur “with all deliberate speed.” The Supreme Court’s decision to place the onus of deciding how schools would go about integrating meant that localities could determine their own speed. Despite the encouragement by the courts to act hastily, the lack of any definitive terms with which to guide communities would mean slow progress for some and staunch defiance for others.

Given the South’s history, it came as no surprise that most of the political leaders reacted with anger and opposition. The spectrum of attitudes ranged from outright defiance to slow acknowledgement that something would need to be done, at some point. As described in chapter one, Virginia became the leader on a national level for how best to model resistance. From the onset the most outspoken members of the White community (both politicians and citizens) made it known that they wanted no part of integration. This was especially the case for areas where there were higher numbers of Blacks than Whites and is one of the reasons why Prince Edward County became a cradle for activity, debate, discussions, and resistance organization.

The arguments made to keep schools closed for five years followed a well-established ideology of Whites casting themselves as the vanguards of rights to members of the Black community who were believed unable to think clearly or logically for themselves. Beginning with slavery, this relationship was constructed to provide Whites with the upper hand. For Whites in power, the distribution of limited rights was an attempt to encourage Blacks to believe they had some autonomy—as long as they stayed within the borders constructed by Whites. Virginia historian Douglas Southall Freeman dubbed this particular type of racism “The Virginia Way.” Freeman described it as being constructed within a notion of “separation by consent.” Titus describes the roles of this particular relationship in: “White elites styled themselves the ‘patrons’ and ‘guardians’ of the states’ Black population appropriating the right to determine when and where uplift should be championed and when Black aspirations should be squelched” (11). The perpetuation of the ‘Virginia Way’ was also linked to arguments about states’ rights in the South. The Civil War’s treatment of slavery as having been a states’ right issue began with the belief held by Southern leadership that the federal government should not intrude into local matters. For many White Southern leaders *any* intervention from the Federal government most always warranted resistance. Understanding how this particular attitude was developed through the ‘Virginia Way’ provides a history behind the *rhetorical situation* that is key to understanding the rhetorical appeals used by segregationists. Lloyd Bitzer defines the rhetorical situation in a series of seven descriptors. Three are most pertinent for understanding how the ‘Virginia Way’ functioned:

Hence, to say that a situation is rhetorical... (5) a situation is rhetorical insofar as it needs and invites discourse capable of participating with situation and thereby altering its reality; (6) discourse is rhetorical insofar as it functions (or seeks to function) as a fitting response to a situation which needs and invites it. (7) Finally, the situation controls the rhetorical response in the same sense that the question controls the answer and the problem controls the solution. Not the rhetor and not persuasive intent, but the situation is the source and ground of rhetorical activity [...]. (6)

The discourse born out of the relationship established through the “Virginia Way,” was first grounded upon a need to control and exploit Blacks for White dominance. The paternalistic rhetoric used by Whites was constructed from a desire to uphold power structures. This relationship also allowed Whites to feel as if they were more humane than other Southerners as they tried to convince Blacks that they had more to be thankful for than those who were not fortunate enough to reside in Virginia. Bonastia provides further insight on this relationship: “The surface cordiality between the races and the low level of White-on-Black violence likely made the day-to-day life of the average African American in Virginia more tolerable than in a state such as Mississippi” (25).

This control was also maintained by Virginia’s carefully constructed media image. As will be discussed later in this chapter, very little was written in the White controlled media about Blacks and their perspectives on civil rights. The absence of news coverage in the White press certainly did not mean there was a passive acceptance of this

relationship. As I will demonstrate, the Black response was present, but not recognized in the White public sphere.

For the White community, the newspaper and radio provided primary public venues where these arguments were made. Prince Edward's local press, *The Farmville Herald* was first established in 1832 as the Farmville Chronicle. The Farmville Coal and Iron Company would purchase and rename the Chronicle in 1890 ("About The Farmville Herald"). The most recognized editor, J. B. Wall, purchased *The Herald* in 1921 and the paper has remained in the Wall family ever since. According to *The Herald's* website, it is "one of the longest-running family-owned weekly newspapers in the nation" ("About The Farmville Herald"). Originally, the paper's primary audience would have been the White community as it was the only circulating newspaper in the Prince Edward, Cumberland, and Brunswick areas. More than likely, Blacks would have read it as well, even though the news coverage and editorials focused primarily on news stories and editorials for White audiences. In reaction to Brown, articles run in the Farmville Herald prophesized the end of society, called on parents to be aware of the degradation of White children should they be forced to learn with Black children, and warned of civil chaos.

The Richmond News Leader (one of the largest papers in Virginia) circulated similar warnings and fears. The News Leader, published from 1888 until 1992, was the capital city's daily afternoon paper. During the civil rights movement, editors Douglass Southall Freeman and James Kilpatrick were both known for their staunch support of segregation and news stories reflected these sentiments proudly. Editorials by Kilpatrick in the News Leader were credited with introducing the very language and ideas used to

resist integration such as interposition, the act of declaring a Supreme Court ruling null and void.

Whether in print or speech, the White community relied on fear, manipulation, and scapegoating to substantiate and perpetuate their arguments. Through the creation of a sense of urgency, Whites perpetuated fears about integration that rested on stereotypes about the Black community. In Virginia, the White controlled media used arguments that continued to make Blacks out to be feeble beasts who needed to be watched and controlled by Whites. While the history of the Black community demonstrated a people who were resilient, strong, and committed, those in control of “the official story” did not acknowledge that this self-determination existed. This was one way that White dominance could be maintained and also how the arguments made that advanced inferiority went unchallenged. In a society where Whites relied on power that was maintained by their investment in Whiteness, allowing Blacks any opportunity was viewed as a threat to the system created to maintain inequity. George Lipstiz, scholar of American Studies and race and ethnicity, calls this system of power “a poisonous system of privilege that pits people against each other and prevents the creation of common ground” (xix). Historically, this investment has divided the Black and White communities.

The primary voices for the arguments against integration covered in the local press came from Senator Byrd and the Defenders of Liberty, whose members’ editorials attempted to mask its fear and racism by maintaining the stance that the “Virginia Way” was beneficial for all citizens. In the section that follows, I will demonstrate how the three primary voices of opposition in the fight for integration crafted arguments based on

appeals to the emotion of fear, a logic grounded in the belief that integration would be hazardous because of its destruction of Virginia's traditions, and constructed an ethos that demonstrated their 'care' for *all* citizens.

The Defenders of Liberty: States Rights and the Protection of the Virginia Way

As described in chapter one, the Defenders were a grassroots organization comprised of prominent citizens from the community and political leaders. The group would eventually find that its multiple chapters throughout the state would influence the state government's Massive Resistance policy package. Despite their control and ultimate goal of maintaining segregation, leaders within the Defenders organization sought to distance themselves from groups they perceived to employ violence to gain similar goals such as the Ku Klux Klan.

The primary strategy employed by the Defenders was to make every attempt to show that integration was threatening the rights of all citizens in the state. To do this, the Defenders needed an audience who would believe that in issuing the Brown ruling the federal government attacked a matter that should have been decided by the states. That is, the Defenders had to imagine an audience who would respond to these claims and willingly back them. Michael McGee provides an alternate conception of understanding the development of audience in social movements. He asserts that rhetoric involves the creation of an audience, rather than addressing one that previously existed. McGee argues that "'the people' are more process than phenomenon. That is, they are conjured into objective reality, remain so long as the rhetoric which defined them has force, and in the end wilt away, becoming once again merely a collection of individuals" (242). McGee's theory aids us in understanding the shifting tactics used by groups like the Defenders. For

McGee, an audience is rhetorically constructed through a process of identifying the supposed interests and commitments of their perceived audience. McGee asserts that you can never *know* the interests or beliefs of an entire group, short of direct engagement. In the beginning Defenders articulated states' rights as the primary concern of their audience. They prompted their audience to connect the Brown ruling back to the same arguments (and histories) made to support slavery and Jim Crow. Creating an argument, and thus an audience, whose primary concern was that of the states' rights deflected attention away from issues of race and power. The Defenders mission statement outlines their concerns over the issue of legislative power:

That, the powers and authority of the Federal Government should be strictly separated, and that domestic legislation by decree, judicial decision, treaty, executive, or administrative order is foreign to the Constitution and an encroachment on the inalienable powers and authority of the several states and the congress of the United States of America;

That, attempts to change the lawful manners, mores, and traditions of any state...by any branch of the Federal Government is an infringement of the sovereignty of the states composing the Union;

That, the right to determine segregation of the races is a power reserved to the states. (qtd. Bonastia 55)

Attempting to distance themselves (and their audience) from groups like the Klan, the Defenders worked to assure that the issue at hand was more about the protection of states' rights and less about race thus making their audience not appear as bigots. The mission statement clearly reflects the events that led to the creation of the group as well

as their staunch commitment to maintain the traditions of Virginia. To maintain White dominance and control in Virginia, Blacks had to be locked out of any place that could act as an entry point that would disrupt White power. Through the distribution of pamphlets, town hall meetings, and editorials, the Defenders made quite clear their aim to defend the commonwealth from the encroachment of Federal government.

The chief goals of the Defenders were listed in their pamphlet, “To the People of Virginia” and they called upon the state to “remove the prohibition of appropriation of public monies to private schools,” repeal “compulsory education” in Virginia laws and provide protection against the “mongrelization of the races” (qtd. Bonastia 56). Through the rhetorical creation of an audience, “the People of Virginia,” the Defenders identified the group’s perceived fear of change. Certainly not all the people of the state feared the implementation of Brown. Despite the rhetorical nature of audience construction, it cannot be denied that the Defenders ability to identify with some of their followers was quite successful.

Bonastia’s analysis of the Defenders rhetoric affirms their success in knowing how best to appeal to their followers: “The dignity of the Defenders’ rhetoric was highly relative. The Defenders’ Plan for Virginia warned that integration once begun...like every other vile pestilence, will spread to the point where it has covered the whole body politic” (Bonastia 56). Making sympathetic references to the people of Prince Edward County and Virginia at large, allowed them to prey on their audience’s beliefs about the “the rank injustice of subjugating those people to the necessity of educating their children out of private funds, and at the same time compelling them to pay taxes to help the more fortunate areas of the state meet their public school expenses” (Bonastia 56). This

scapegoating attempted to convince followers and potential sympathizers that they were victims of the federal government being forced to pay for educations that their children weren't receiving. Their rhetorical strategy was successful in that most Whites in Prince Edward stood with the group and little opposition was heard. The attraction of the Defenders' rhetoric to some White community members illustrates how pervasive the investment in the concept of race as a connector was. While poor Whites in Prince Edward may have had more in common with Blacks, arguments for segregation made certain to dismiss any connections. *All* Whites had to be rhetorically constructed as victims; an identity that many came to believe was true throughout the fight over integration.

The "logical" angle Defenders worked tried to make claims that their action was just because Whites paid taxes for the schools: "No system of public schools not approved of by the people can exist. Virginians want nothing of an integrated public school system. Our White citizens who have paid the greater part of the taxes which educated both White and negro children will not submit to the enormous cost of maintaining schools to which they are not willing to subject their children" (Bonastia 56). Defenders emphasized economics when it benefited them, neglecting the fact that Blacks were taxpayers who often supplemented the pay of their teachers and provided out-of-pocket monies for school supplies and upkeep on a regular basis (Tillerson-Brown). These arguments, connected to economics, like those of states' rights, were meant to deflect attention from the issue of race further strengthening their attempts to construct an image (and audience) for themselves as not being racist. The Defenders did not want to be likened to the Klan or other "racist" organizations.

Members of the Defenders' also joined their arguments to claims made about the need to protect the "Virginia Way," as reflected in their mention of guarding "the lawful manners, mores, and traditions" in the group's mission statement. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Freeman's 'Virginia Way' was a form of racist paternalism predicated on the belief that Blacks needed masters to look after them. What this really meant was that Whites were afforded the opportunity to construct the rules and boundaries that would consistently keep them in power. They associated integration with a challenge to White supremacy "with a community plot to topple American democracy and an attack upon parental rights, private enterprise, and the traditional family" (Titus 18). For the Defenders and their followers it was both rational and necessary to believe that any threat to the 'Virginia Way' would result in the unraveling of society. Therefore, their appeals to logic attempted to direct attention to the need to maintain these traditions.

The Defenders attempted to mask their racist motives under a cloak of wanting nothing more than liberty. Their very name, "Defenders of Liberty," along with a platform formulated to show how they worked for the protection of all citizens is a rich example of McGee's theory of the ideograph, which he defines as:

An ordinary language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal. It warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be perceived as eccentric or antisocial, and guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable and laudable. (15)

McGee argues that members of society are conditioned to understand the vocabulary of ideographs and are socialized to learn what is acceptable and appropriate (15). The Defenders' rhetoric established terms such as liberty and citizenship to be suggestive of White dominance and rule without blatantly using the latter terms. These terms became codes easily recognizable to Blacks as meaning little more than racism and subjugation. Their language was not the only way they worked to maintain their stronghold. They ensured that leaders in their organization were vested in the "organs of government in Prince Edward," meaning that they were in all levels of office. They also made certain to present their argument as part of larger conspiracy theories connected to fears about Communism, seen as a prodigious threat in 1963. To liken the "threat" of integration to communism would have further strengthened their assertions about the need to perform their civic duty of protecting their communities.

Amongst White supporters, Defenders maintained a public face to portray themselves as working hard to protect and promote citizenship. The Black community recognized this face as the same brand of citizenship that denied them rights. As a group, the Defenders were short-lived; however, their influence remained. The group's numbers declined with the repeal of the states' Massive Resistance package and they dissolved around 1967. The legislative program and framework for *Defender* arguments served as a basis for the state wide Massive Resistance package passed by the General Assembly in 1956. With seven proposals outlined in the *Defender's* plan, the commission recommended two: first, that the General Assembly be allowed to provide tuition vouchers for parents who choose to send their children to private schools and second, that the General Assembly be given the power to withhold funds from any schools that might

choose to integrate. Along with the Massive Resistance Package, Senator Byrd's rhetoric provided a model for those states that south to resist.

The Byrd Machine: Assembling and Maintaining the Framework for Massive Resistance

The political force known as the Byrd machine was *the* creator of Virginia's political discourse. Historians and political scholars have classified Senator Byrd's political leadership as Virginia's oligarchy. Born into an aristocratic family who lost most of their fortune by the time he was born, Byrd had a thirty-three year political term, serving as governor from 1926 until 1930 and senator from 1933 until 1965. During that time he was one of the most influential and powerful political leaders. V.O. Key's 1949 analysis of Southern politics, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, details the simplicity of Byrd's strategy for gaining and holding power. Key noted that with only a small portion of Virginians actually voting it was quite possible for Byrd to control the numbers and dominate. Because of the small voting pool the "Byrd organization could thus nominate its preferred candidate for governor in the Democratic primary—which was tantamount to election—with the support of only five to seven percent of the adult population" (Bonastia 24). The Byrd organization was made even more powerful because of its ability to appear invisible. A Washington Post article from a 1957 series on the Byrd Machine cites its inherent power in its ability to appear undetectable:

There is almost no palpable evidence of its existence—no hall or clubhouse such as Tammany [the New York City political Machine] maintains, no letterheads and no one even willing to acknowledge leadership in it. Yet once the top brass sends out "the word" about a candidate or a policy, the

effect on the knife and fork boys, or office holders is as magical as if the command had been passed from Mt. Sinai. (qtd. in Bonastia 24)

Byrd's ability to make his power invisible combined with a strong hand on the state budget made him very popular. Known for his "pay as you go" fiscal conservatism he kept strict control over the budget. Notably, during Byrd's tenure he had little regard for increasing funding for *any* schools. In many ways his position was no different from that of other segregationists; however the power he held in Virginia's government secured him a large audience. Like the Defenders, Byrd used the same paternalistic language, albeit more forcefully, to suggest that Whites were struggling to maintain a way of life that *should* be accepted as good for all. Byrd's rhetoric employed many of the same terms as the Defenders: liberty, citizenship, and states' rights, continuing to establish these words as code for the preservation of White power. His speeches, like those of the Defenders, also worked to create an audience supportive of the notion that preserving segregation was a civic duty,

One of Byrd's first public outcries against integration was released moments after the Brown ruling. On May 17, 1954 Byrd released a statement on the Brown decision in which he predicted imminent danger: "The unanimous decision of the Supreme Court to abolish segregation in public education is not only sweeping but will bring implications and dangers of the greatest consequence" (Byrd, "Brown Press Release"). Byrd attempted to demonstrate the South's complacent nature in abiding by separate but equal. True to his fiscal conservatism, he warned that a reversal of the court's decision would result in money wasted: "One of cruelest results airing out of this "about-face" of the Supreme Court is that the Southern States, accepting the validity of the previous decision in recent

years have expended hundreds of millions of dollars for construction of new Negro school facilities to conform with the policy previously laid down by the Court” (Byrd, “Brown Press Release”). Byrd’s depiction of Whites as law-abiding citizens trying to meet the laws of waffling courts and constructs a victim persona for the White community. Committed to this argument, Byrd would make this claim many times, focusing on the idea that the federal government was specifically seeking out ways to punish the South.

Proceeding with his argument against integration, in a 1957 speech in Hampton Roads, Virginia, Byrd would continue to build on the distrust many White Southerners had for the Federal government. Fearful of what the intrusion of Federal government meant for the Southern way of life, Byrd maintained that the 1957 civil rights bill (which focused on voting) was meant only as punishment for the South: There are 15 or 20 of these civil rights bills, and while I regret to say so, this is punitive legislation to punish the South. That’s all it is. Their purpose is to punish us because we will not submit to the Federal Government in Washington—or may I say the Supreme Court—when we believe what we are doing is eminently constitutional, and to follow their bidding would destroy our public-school system. (Byrd, “Address to Hampton Roads”)

His use of *we* and *our* is an effort to create the perception of a shared experience between himself and his audience, strengthening his attempts at persuasion. Byrd goes on to provide a history of what he sees as the South’s struggle for independence: “We have fought for constitutional democracy. We fought for it in 1860. We fought to the last ditch with the most conspicuous bravery in human history” (Byrd, “Address to Hampton Roads”). His history lesson established what many Whites saw as a legacy of

infringement by the federal government on the South. Byrd argued that one of the civil rights bills would take away trial by jury for civil rights cases, again both instilling and building on a fear in his audience of the overreaching arm of the government. His primary aim in this speech seems to have been an attempt to make the case for an amendment to the civil rights bill that would allow the right to a jury trial, a right he argues that *Anglo-Saxons* have long held: “I never expected to see the day when the Attorney General of the United States appeared before Congress and requested the right to abolish in civil rights cases the inherent privilege that Anglo-Saxons have enjoyed for centuries” (Byrd, “Address to Hampton Roads”). His appeal through the victimization of Whites kept followers believing that they had been wronged and were due justice, and cleverly avoided the issue of Black suffering. Further, his use of the Anglo-Saxon marks a clear ethnic line around the group he is seeking to protect.

In a 1961 speech offered in celebration of the establishment of Buckingham County (which borders Prince Edward) Byrd took the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Whites in remaining steadfast in their will to resist. Vilifying the NAACP’s efforts in Prince Edward, Byrd blamed the NAACP for the continued school closures. Byrd questioned the group’s intentions: “In short, the NAACP is more interested in the integration of public school children than it is in the education of colored children; and the NAACP, alone is responsible for the fact that 1,700 colored children in Prince Edward County are not now attending good schools with qualified teachers” (Byrd, “Address to Buckingham County”). Byrd took every opportunity he could to demonize the NAACP. He was diligent about making the group appear to be a racist force Whites should fear. He described the efforts of the White community (who at one

point offered to help the Black community in the creation of a segregated Black school) as virtuous and praised them for their effort: “White people of the county deplore the fact that colored children of the community are being kept out of school; but everyone should be aware that so long as this condition can be maintained, the NAACP and others can make propaganda use of it to discredit the county’s efforts to restore full and complete educational facilities” (Byrd, “Address to Buckingham County”). Again, deflecting the focus of the argument away from any culpability that the White community had in the school closures, Byrd disparages the efforts of the NAACP and highlights the efforts made by Whites to create a segregated school for Black children as being heroic. Byrd’s rhetoric once again constructs a heroic and virtuous audience.

Like the Defenders, Byrd’s rhetoric harkens back to the protection of the relationship between Blacks and Whites established under the “Virginia Way.” He speaks about this in particular when he describes the response taken by NAACP members towards the offer of segregated private schools for Black children: “Accepting this kind of outside guidance for their “advancement” instead of the offers of assistance from their White neighbors who want to work with them for the establishment of schools, the colored people of Prince Edward County have ignored educational opportunities provided for them” (Byrd, “Address to Buckingham County”). Unquestionably, for Byrd the matter of Prince Edward was one to be handled locally and not from outsiders who did not have the best interests of Blacks or Whites in mind.

Byrd’s fiscal control, unquestioned authority, and undeniable allegiance to maintain the South’s fidelity to the separation of the races, made Byrd Virginia’s de facto leader of Massive Resistance. The South’s ultimate testimony to resistance, the Southern

Manifesto, was crafted under the guidance of Byrd and other segregationists and described the ultimate response against Brown and any progress made by the Civil Rights movement. The Southern Manifesto made clear the legal parameters by which the South would resist integration of races and the perceived interference of federal government.

The Southern Manifesto: A Creed Made Clear

The 1956 Southern Manifesto, known formally as The Declaration of Constitutional Principles, articulated the tenets and extreme level of resistance that segregationists would take. Created, drafted, and promoted by politicians from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia, it drew its framework from the foundation laid by the Defenders of Liberty. They continued to ground their rhetoric in a profession of defending states' rights.

The Manifesto blamed the Supreme Court for abusing their power against established law: "The unwarranted decision of the Supreme Court in the public school cases is now bearing the fruit always produced when men substitute naked power for established law" ("Southern Manifesto"). The Manifesto supporters argued for their protection through the Constitution. They presented their primary argument (and support for the claims) as originating from constitutional law:

The Founding Fathers gave us a Constitution of checks and balances because they realized the inescapable lesson of history that no man or group of men can be safely entrusted with unlimited power. They framed this Constitution with its provisions for change by amendment in order to secure the fundamentals of government against the dangers

of temporary popular passion or the personal predilections of public officeholders. (“Southern Manifesto”)

The temporary “popular passion” described in the Manifesto of course posed a direct threat to the security of the South and position of Whites. Again claiming states’ rights as part of their justification, authors of the Manifesto makes the case that that the Constitution does not speak of education, thus making it a state matter. Further, the Manifesto claims that in deeming segregation against the law, the government was encroaching upon the rights of states and local citizens to control education: “The original Constitution does not mention education. Neither does the Fourteenth Amendment nor any other amendment. The debates preceding the submission of the Fourteenth Amendment clearly show that there was no intent that it should affect the systems of education maintained by the states” (“Southern Manifesto”). Composers of the Manifesto pleaded for the need to keep the traditions of the South: “This interpretation, restated time and again, became a part of the life of the people of many of the states and confirmed their habits, customs, traditions and way of life. It is founded on elemental humanity and common sense, for parents should not be deprived by Government of the right to direct the lives and education of their own children” (“Southern Manifesto”). Like the mission statement of the Defenders, the Manifesto avoided overtly racist language, resting on the notion that it could demonstrate strengths in maintaining segregation by pointing to the age-old issue of states’ rights, importance of giving parents rights over their children. Further, the Manifesto tried to demonstrate that it was created in an effort to look out for both Black and White communities. In their attempt to speak to two divergent audiences, authors of the Manifesto imagined the Black

and White communities as *one* group who wanted the same outcomes. They directly state their aim as working to maintain positive relations between the two groups:

This unwarranted exercise of power by the court, contrary to the Constitution, is creating chaos and confusion in the states principally affected. It is destroying the amicable relations between the White and Negro races that have been created through ninety years of patient effort by the good people of both races. It has planted hatred and suspicion where there has been heretofore friendship and understanding. (“Southern Manifesto”)

Both the Manifesto and “The Virginia Way” were steeped in a commitment to White privilege. In Grace Elizabeth Hale’s *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*, she traces the construction of White identity in the South and posits that its formation rests on two principles:

And nowhere was this ambiguous middle, the contradictory, simultaneous need for race to be visible—blackness—and invisible—Whiteness—more apparent than in the South. Southern Whites constructed their racial identities on two interlocking planes: within a regional dynamic of ex-Confederates versus ex-slaves and within a national dynamic of the South, understood as White, versus the nation.

(9)

This construction of identity and identification as “us versus them” began during slavery, was perpetuated through Reconstruction with the advent of Jim Crow laws and continued to hold steady with Massive Resistance. The “us versus them” position allowed White

supremacists to create one audience, as McGee would suggest, who sought to uphold structures and ideals for the well being of all. The Manifesto described the ardent hope of its crafters to resist integration with all of its. Local press coverage as well as letters to elected officials often demonstrated that arguments made by some in the general public reflected the same sentiments as those in power: fear and a desire to keep the “Virginia Way.”

The White Community’s Public Perception

The Farmville Herald and Richmond News Leader were notorious for their editorials and articles supporting segregation. The News Leader’s coverage of the civil rights movement clearly demonstrated the paper’s bias. Freeman, the editor, who was known for saluting a statue of Robert E. Lee on his way to work every morning, kept the paper’s focus on the perceived negative impact the Civil Rights movement made for White life (“After 104 Years”). The News Leader ran an op-ed syndicated column from James Kilpatrick from 1951 to 1967, also known for his pro-segregationist bent and, as I describe in chapter one, it was Kilpatrick who was credited with introducing the theory of interposition into the discussion on resistance methods. Likewise, The Farmville Herald’s editor, Barrye Wall, was a local leader and voice in the community’s efforts to establish the private segregation academy.

On the day of the first Brown ruling, May 17, 1954, the *Richmond News Leader* released a response of both reserve and anticipation:

The people of the South, if they are permitted to work out this problem calmly and rationally, will see to it that education is preserved, for White and colored children alike. Not to maintain a sound system of public

education would be nothing short of calamitous. We are not about to return to some dark, medieval night of tutors and private schools for the well to-do, and illiteracy for everyone else. But the court should not misunderstand or underestimate the depth of resentment this opinion will create among a people who feel they have been wrongly imposed upon.

(“The Decision”)

The expressed commitment to preserving education may appear altruistic, but the rationale for such preservation was anything but. The message recognized the general feeling that many White Southerners seemed to share—that they were being imposed upon with no concern for any one else. A formidable warning that forecasted the resistance to come marks the editor’s declaration about avoidance of the “medieval night.” While the initial reaction of the paper offered a small glimmer of pessimistic hope, at least with the recognition that providing an education was necessary for both Black and White students, the second Brown ruling ignited a fire.

On June 8, 1955 an editorial in the *News Leader* titled, “Education Must Be Preserved,” would mandate that integration be avoided: “We are convinced that other, better solutions--better for both races--can be devised.” This editorial called upon citizens to maintain lawful resistance and pledged to see this resistance through to the end: “Let us pledge ourselves to litigate this thing for 50 years. If one remedial law is ruled invalid, then let us try another; and if the second is ruled invalid, then let us enact a third.” The writer calls for perseverance in what is perceived to be a battle. The attempt to offer a solution for “both races” is yet again a move to create one audience out of two divergent groups. The *News Leader* reflected hard opposition before the schools were closed in

Prince Edward and once closed, they offered their support for the White community's vigilance and efforts.

In Prince Edward, *The Herald's* approach was similar. Initial reactions to the Brown ruling were met with sober acknowledgement that while the Court had made its decision, the ultimate price would be paid by localities. Barrye Wall, editor, suggested that the best solutions would be made locally and aptly noted Prince Edward's relationship to the rulings: "The county was made part of the desegregation suit because we failed to seek a solution of our own," (qtd. Bonastia 51). The personalization of the court's ruling shows how sensitive the issue was for those who resided in Prince Edward. John Steck, then managing editor of *The Herald*, published "the definitive segregationists narrative, 'The Story of Prince Edward County, Virginia'" in March of 1960 (Bonastia 162). Steck's narrative provides his history of the events that lead up to the closings, beginning with the 1951 walkout. Given his position as a segregationist, he depicts the events of Prince Edward County Whites as being *reactionary* to the trouble caused by the Black community: "Forced mixing of the races meant the end of schools and that was an end no one wanted. Who could endure countenance strife, tension, possibly bloodshed?" Steck's claims would lead one to believe that the Black community used direct action and force in the streets, but as I will discuss later in this chapter, this couldn't be further from the truth. Steck's narrative gave an unbalanced description of the situation for the Black community. Steck's story also echoed claims persistently made about the Black community's lack of desire for education. These claims were also sustained by reassuring that depictions of Blacks showed them as being unworthy of education. Such stereotypes persisted for years in Virginia's South Side. Unlike other

areas of the country, no bombs, violent mobs, or police escorts were needed to keep Black children out of school. It was all done on paper. Whites continuously sought to blame Blacks for the closures as demonstrated in Byrd's attempt to blame the NAACP for preventing the Black community in Prince Edward from making progress with regard to education.

Certainly not all White people were supportive of Massive Resistance or closing the schools. Letters to local leaders and selected pieces published in the OP/ED sections of local papers provided perspectives that ranged from full support for integration to apathetic resignation that something needed to be done if Virginia did not want to lose face. Letters from the Library of Virginia's digital Brown vs. Board archive display some variance in White reactions. A letter from Frank Nesbitt of Front Royal, Virginia, to the Governor dated September 8, 1959 began with appreciative support of the Governor's efforts and ended with a plea for the Governor to find a means to keep schools open: "I have supported you and your views from the first and believe you done a good job as governor, I am not an integrationist but we must have public schools so we will have some integrating" (Nesbitt).

Other letters voiced similar complaints. In a 1955 letter from Eliza Fitch she recounted her surprise at the Governor's continued resistance and her dismay at Virginia political leaders expressing their commitment to resistance: "It is possible that there are a good many people who, like I did, assumed that the hot heads naturally blew their tops when the supreme Court decision was announced, but that it would all blow over, common decency would win out, and the decree would be accepted in time." Fitch's letter expressed support for integration, a feeling undoubtedly shared by some Whites,

but not one expressed in the Southern mainstream media, “I have no fear that my children (I have three—5 to 11 yrs) will be corrupted thru association with Negroes. Nor do I have any objection to colored children teachers for my children. If a teacher is qualified to teach she has a right to the job.” Possibly one of the most engrossing points made in Fitch’s argument is the parallel she draws between Army integration and school integration: “In the Army where desegregation was put into effect we are told the trouble predicted by one and all, simply never developed. It is my sincere belief that we would have the same experience in our state.” These voices of opposition provided counter arguments and a different audience perception than the one constructed by segregationists. Unfortunately, these voices of dissent were silent in mainstream media outlets.

Save for a few dissenters Bob Smith describes in *They Closed Their Schools*, there is little record of White opposition to segregation in Prince Edward. Smith, a reporter who spent five years living and covering the closures, does describe encounters with Dean Moss, dean of students and professor of history at Longwood College in Farmville, who did not support the school closures. Moss was told to remain silent about his support for the Black community or risk losing his position. Smith recounts that while Professor Moss made few if any public statements about his position, he did send his eldest son to the Free School once it opened. According to Sullivan’s memoir *Bound for Freedom*, there was one other White family who sent their children to the Free School. A tobacco farmer who refused to accept handouts in the form of tuition assistance from the Academy or tuition vouchers from the state government opted to send his daughter and son to the Free School as well. In the case of Moss’s son, having his son attend the Free

School would appear to be direct support and perhaps even a show of solidarity. It is impossible to know the intentions of the tobacco farmer, but Sullivan does suggest the father's primary concern was not wanting to be seen as a freeloader (Sullivan, *Bound* 63). However, it would seem that to risk the safety of one's own children might speak to a demonstration of support for public education to be restored to Prince Edward. These voices, though few and often overshadowed by the proponents of resistance, provide assurance that not all of Virginia was against integration.

The language used in arguments for Massive Resistance and segregation consistently strove to reveal that the White community needed to fear intrusion from Blacks because it would mean the breakdown of society. For those who did not subscribe to these beliefs, it would be extremely difficult to speak out or be heard. Constructions of race maintained power and control. It did not benefit those in power to allow for dissenters to be heard. The arguments created to support resistance were largely connected to concepts and ideologies that supported the American concept of race. This justification was necessary to build a class of citizens to be exploited so that another might profit. While White voices were at the center because they carried more power in mainstream media and through political leaders, the Black community's resistance was always present, even if from the margins.

The Response of the Black Community: Progressive Goodwill and Creative Altruism

If the primary arguments used by Whites to perpetuate segregation and Massive Resistance hinged on the demonization of Blacks to instill fear into the White community, then the initial response of many Blacks in Prince Edward can be read as a

persistent solemn resistance. The Black community consistently exercised a collective voice to oppose the White community's scapegoating and fear mongering. The history of the Black experience in America demonstrates that our use of language is rooted in "freedom struggles" (Richardson and Jackson II, xiii). Resistance to the closures was displayed in the courts, churches, Black newspapers, home, and eventually on the streets. These arguments were representative of the African American rhetorical tradition's commitment to "...gain acceptance for ideas relative to Black survival and Black liberation" (Gilyard 1).

To more fully understand the ways in which public arguments were made I use Gwendolyn Pough's expanded notion of Habermas's public sphere to account for the Black experience. Pough credits a group known as the Scholars of the Black Public Sphere for the initial steps towards this expansion. Pough asserts that the expanded version of Habermas provides more room to account for Black experiences:

The Black public sphere represents a looser and more expansive public space than the one Jurgen Habermas sets up. The Black public sphere does not represent a monolithic Blackness but rather shows variety and multiplicity. (34)¹³

Both Pough and Scholars of the Black Public Sphere Collective argue for this expanded version of Habermas to include "vernacular practices such as street talk, new music, radio shows, and church voices" (Pough 16). Pough's careful attention to a rereading and rearticulation of Habermas's notions of the public sphere are presented through her analysis of Hip Hop (Pough 33-34). Her method of complicating Habermas through attention to race, class, and sexuality allows for a fuller understanding of communicative

practices in the Black public sphere and provides a useful framework for my analysis. Many of the responses and roles adopted by the Black community in Prince Edward are representative of Pough's rearticulations of Habermas's spectacle, representation, and public/private split (16-17).

Since slavery, Blacks have struggled to use language and literacy as a means of liberation despite the fact that language and literacy have constructed the oppressions they face. The relationship between Blacks and the English language and Anglo-rhetorical tradition can at best be described as one of adaptation for survival. Jacqueline Bacon and Glenn McClish echo this sentiment: "Even when marginalized rhetors employ the norms of the dominant class, their rhetoric does not necessarily conform to prevailing society norms. Acts of appropriation should not be seen merely as 'borrowing' but as reinvention and transformation" (21). The Black Prince Edwardian response is representative of a paradigm that sought to challenge the establishment through the use of the Western rhetorical strategies blended with tactics and rhetorical practices found in the Black rhetorical tradition. As illustrated in chapter one, the most immediate efforts made within the Black community were to assist children and parents in their quest to find alternative spaces for education. The incessant effort made by Black parents to file appeals in the courts and still try to provide their children with as uninterrupted schooling as possible were the primary means of demonstration against the school closures in the beginning. Once these efforts were mobilized, they could attend to developing direct vocal counter arguments.

The Church Responds

Religious oratory is an integral component of African American rhetoric because of the role of the Black church. Keith Gilyard notes that the church was the “primary channel by which millions of Blacks came to comprehend and speculate about the social world of which they were part” (4). Dwight Hopkins’, scholar of Black Liberation theology, provides a description of the function of the contemporary Black church that resonates with Gilyard’s claim: “Today, likewise, we find black churches and related forms of faith institutions operating on the spiritual, economic, political, and cultural levels” (1). Hopkins provides an apt description of how the church’s function is more than Sunday morning worship. The Black church is a place where the “rituals of individual healing and celebration were to recharge the worshipers’ energy to deal with the rigors and racism of “a cruel, cruel world” from Monday through Saturday. Thus the church offers an armor of endurance, perseverance, self-esteem, and hope to allow people “to get over” with soulful dignity and psychic survival “for another day’s journey.” (1). Ministers served an important role for advancing arguments against segregation. Hopkins’s description aids in the understanding of why there is little delineation between public talk and faith talk. In the Black community, to speak of God or use language or rhetorical practices normally associated with church or worship is not taboo, but an acknowledgement that religion cannot be contained only within the walls of the church.

For Blacks in Prince Edward the church was the center of the community and Reverend Griffin, pastor of First Baptist, was the most recognized voice.¹⁴ While his sermons and papers remain in the hands of his family, his public arguments against the school closures display how his devotion to civil rights was intertwined with his faith. For Griffin, it was faith that would help him to express and demonstrate a commitment

that would sustain the community in some of its darkest hours. His commitment to avoid violence markedly shaped the efforts of the Black community and reflected the spiritual dimension that grounded resistance practices for many Blacks. Griffin's mantra against violence was intended as a reminder to his followers that "doing something to someone is not going to help" (qtd. Titus 47). Griffin was a strong spirit who felt that Blacks in Prince Edward needed to take control of the debates that were controlling their lives. Despite his advocacy for non-violence, in no way was he viewed as advocating passivity to White dominance: "No longer do we let others decide what we need, or choose our leaders, or direct our thinking, because we can do it ourselves" (qtd. Bonastia 115). His argument for control was definitely an affront to the arguments made by Whites that *they* were all the leadership the Black community needed.

One of the Black church's first public messages was a collective resolution submitted to the Richmond Afro-American newspaper from the Farmville Ministerial Alliance. In an article published on June 27, 1959, "School fund slash denounced by Prince Edward clergymen," Griffin and six other ministers (Reverends. C.H. Hill, B.H. Agnew, J.H. Hendricks, G.G. Cosby, E. Singleton, J.J. Gamble, A. I. Dumlop, B.F. Williams, and L. W. Bass) published a resolution against the closures. The written structure of the resolution was quite similar to the Board of Supervisor's resolution issued for the closing of schools. Adopting a format that mirrored the approach taken by the Board is one such example of both using and subverting the language and rhetorical strategies used by those in power to fit their needs. The ministers' resolution demonstrated that they were capable of developing a well-written coherent platform to respond. This would challenge the stereotype of Blacks being illiterate and unable to

clearly articulate their demands. For the Black audience, the resolution reaffirmed the community's commitment to democracy and social justice through Christianity.

The resolution began with an affirmation of American democracy and Christian justice: "We believe this action is contrary to the simple laws of decency, the American ideal of democracy, the Christian concept of justice, and moral law of God;" ("School Fund"). For the White community, this affirmation challenged stereotypes that Blacks were not committed to the same concepts the White community identified as having allegiance to America meant. While this was published in the Black press, the affirmation of "American ideals" suggests that it was also intended for a White audience as well. The repeated use of *we* suggests that the ministers are taking on the role of representatives of the Black community. Pough describes the history of this role in the Black community. Those who fulfill the role "have access to a public voice" (Pough 22). Pough suggests that some used this role "as representative to correct wrongs and replace stereotyped representation of Blacks in the United States with more positive images (22). This is certainly what these ministers seemed to do as they highlighted their beliefs in both education and obedience for laws, two attitudes Black stereotypes depicted differently.

Knowing the importance of making faith talk public for the Black audience, the resolution spoke to what it means to be both a Christian and a citizen: "And whereas we are ministers of Christ and servants of His Kingdom believing in the dignity and worth of every person, the due respect for law and order, and obedience without exception to the Constitution of the United States as interpreted by the United States Supreme Court" ("School Fund"). The resolution marries the commitment to being a believer and to the action of being a citizen. This was not an unnatural duality of roles-for the Black

audience the relationship between politics and religion. To further demonstrate the Black community's commitment to citizenship and issue a call for others to claim their rights the resolution reads: "And be it also resolved that the right thinking citizens of this County and State answer this call and stand up for right, free public schools, and obedience to the law of the land" ("School Fund"). This would show the White community that most Blacks were law-abiding citizens, another position necessary to challenge stereotypes. Pough provides a useful analysis of the civil rights movement that expands Habermas's notion of the spectacle. She suggests that during this time "...Black people created a form of spectacle in order to gain entry into the public sphere and attract the media...They wanted mainstream America to see that they were good people, respectable citizens who deserved civil rights" (25). The claims and language of the ministers emulate this type of spectacle performance. While these beliefs may have not been surprising to the Black community, many Whites were ignorant of what Black people were really like. The resolution continues with an affirmation of trust in both the Supreme Court and NAACP: "We reaffirm our confidence and support in the Supreme Court of the United States and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for their unrelenting struggle to assure basic Constitutional rights to every citizens regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin" ("Student Fund"). This reaffirmation was a necessary demonstration for White audiences that again, the Black community sought to be *fully* recognized citizens of America. As discussed in the speeches of Senator Byrd earlier in this chapter, the NAACP was often slandered and blamed for being agitators. The ministers needed to show that to be a member of the NAACP was not in contradiction to being American. The resolution ends with what can be perceived

as a warning aimed at the White community: “The resolution above has been made with keen awareness of the serious jeopardy that this unwarranted action by the Prince Edward Board of Supervisors imposes upon the economy of this County and the jaundiced opinion of world sentiment that will settle on this State and nation” (“School fund”). The Ministerial Alliance’s resolution reaffirmed commitments and beliefs long held by the Black community and sought to provide both explanation and a direct warning to the White community of the dangers of their actions. This warning was carefully constructed so as not to appear to be a threat, but more of a cautionary foreshadowing of why the White community needed to change their actions.

An August 1959 article in the Richmond Afro-American, “Prince Edward Residents Seek Solution to School Problems,” described Griffin’s stance on how problems would be solved: “We believe that all problems can be solved within the framework of the Christian doctrine, without hatred, malice or ill will being shown against any people, we shall dedicate ourselves to the practice of constructive goodwill” (Rufus). His reliance on a faith-based approach is not surprising, nor is his direct response displays a confidence and assuredness in the face of hatred. While some, as it will be discussed in the section to follow, advocated for a more direct approach to resistance –demonstrations, sit-ins, economic boycotts-early on, Griffin wanted to take make as peaceful a response as possible. In this same article, Griffin further advised members of PECCA to pray daily at noon for “the spreading of love” and to “refrain from physical conflict against any oppressor” (Rufus). Griffin’s quiet resolve and expressed commitment to non-violence demonstrated a resolve to remain accountable to both his faith and people.

A subsequent article, “Prince Ed asks aid” (September 1959) continued Griffin’s request for fundraising efforts to support the PECCA training centers and asked for continued spiritual support. Griffin also encouraged people to write to the President expressing their displeasure, reminding them to take make their voices heard. Griffin remained steadfast in his commitment to practice non-violence, despite challenges from younger Blacks in the community.

Early on, the Black Community received Griffin’s creation of PECCA and organization within the churches favorably. As described in chapter one, PECCA developed a network of “training centers” in Black churches and assisted with the placement of children in homes outside of the area. PECCA provided comprehensive mobilization efforts: “Black residents used PECCA to work toward the restoration of public schools, engineer a comprehensive voter registration campaign, and supervise the placement of older students in accredited schools” (Bonastia 38). The designation and alignment with a group with a Christian identity was “a strategy for drawing upon the flourishing social, political, and voluntary networks of the black church” (Bonastia 39). The PECCA handbook provided the mission for the group and a thorough outline of its platform for countering claims made in support of the closures. The handbook, titled “Operation 1700,” to reflect the number of children who were without education, reported the events that lead up to the closures from the perspective of the Black community. Griffin, presumably the author of the text, described the “deep scars” felt by the Black community, and revealed the ways in which the “Virginia Way” affected the Black community: “Negro parents, having been conditioned by the innumerable overt and subtle practices of racial discrimination, found themselves at the mid-century mark

frustrated and in a position bordering on utter despair” (“Operation 1700” 2). The handbook outlined the court cases and efforts made by the White community to continue segregation, and Griffin draws attention to the fact that both Black and White children were “confronted with the specter of educational malnutrition” (“Operation 1700” 3) because of the “undemocratic action” taken by the Board to not appropriate funds. Recording the history from the Black experience was an important task because it was certainly not told from this perspective elsewhere.

Griffin also recounted the importance of public education to a democracy: “We realize that in a representative democracy such as ours, our governmental processes will become stagnant unless the education of citizens is broad enough to encourage maximum interest and participation according to one’s ability without being hampered by artificial barriers and restrictions” (“Operation 1700” 3). With a full context and history in place for how the closures affected both Black and White children, Griffin further established the ethos of the Black community through an acknowledgement of their imperfections: “As Negro citizens of Prince Edward County, we recognize our shortcomings. We, who constitute roughly 43% of the total population, unequivocally declare that our political and civic shortcomings are many” (“Operation 1700” 3). The handbook did not try to depict the Black community as perfect beings nor as victims who are not trying to act on their own behalf: “We have elected not to spend these precious days at the “wailing wall”” (“Operation 1700” 3). PECCA was instrumental in the community for its organizational action. Not only did members facilitate the placement of juniors and senior out of the area for completion of high school, but efforts to organize opportunities for the

elementary school children were also made. PECCA's focus was to promote a non-violent Christian response that placed the needs of the children first.

The position of non-violence did not go without critique in the Black community. Titus notes that there were criticisms from youth on the direction taken by Griffin and their parents. Titus cites one teenager's lament to a community organizer, Ruth Turner: "The older people just don't want to move," he complained to Turner. "They think they are living just fine." (qtd. Titus 129). Other teens did leave the area, an act that afforded them a different level of perception, criticized their elders for being Uncle Toms (Titus 129). A part of the disconnect between generations was also caused by the inability of some youth to see how the social and economic structure of Prince Edward made it frightening for many residents to see direct action as a fruitful measure

The Black Press

The adaptation and appropriation of language described by Bacon and McClish was born out of a need to develop a language that could serve the unique linguistic needs of the Black community. Marcyliena Morgan calls these linguistic practices a "counter language" and defines it as being a communicative practice "that was based on indirectness and functioned to signal the antisociety (e.g. ideological black audience) and provided a means for a speaker to reveal a social face (Goffman, 1967) that restrained and contested the practice of racial repression" (24). This counter language allowed Black speakers a sense of agency and enabled them to be co-creators of meaning. In this speaker/audience relationship, understanding the full meaning of the conversation or text was predicated upon the audience knowing what the speaker was alluding to without using any language that could be interpreted by Whites as a threat to their power (Morgan

24). Morgan accentuates the complexity involved in the act of speaking for Black Americans, in particular those in the South during the 1960s when she describes Black speech communities as antisocieties that “emerge when those who dominate individuals require that the subjugated display an attitude that reaffirms the dominator/dominated relationship—in the presence of others—by verbal or physical confirmation (e.g. bowing heads or saying, “Yes sir/ma’m”) (23). Similar to the reappropriation and negotiation described by Bacon, McClish, both Pough, and Morgan recognize the ways in which Blacks have consistently negotiated the larger public sphere for change.

As was the case in most of the South, Prince Edward’s unwritten rules of conduct dictated strict observance of politeness and respect in the face of Whites, despite maltreatment. While these responses may be required by the dominant group, Morgan stresses that they should not be read as submission. Like McClish and Bacon, Morgan challenges us to see the antisocieties from the perspective of the non-dominant group who view antisocieties as “very much above the ground and a significant aspect of everyday speech” (23).

Another framework for understanding the complexity involved in Blacks speaking about issues of race is Morgan’s description of the layers of audiences for Black speakers. Within the concept of counter language the audience is viewed as not only those present to hear the speech act directly, but also “included all black hearers and potential hearers, as well as the likelihood that there were spies and overhearers/reporters. Thus the audience and hearer, whether immediately present or presumed present through gossip, spies, etc. were socially and culturally constructed entities” (25). These multiple audiences created a necessity for Blacks to employ both direct and indirect speech.

Morgan labels two primary forms of indirectness employed by Blacks: pointed indirectness and baited indirectness. Pointed indirectness results when a speaker says something that is not intended for the direct audience present, but for someone else and it is recognized as such by the audience present. Morgan notes that these “verbal acts also function to save face as they address multiple audiences, some aware and some unaware” (47). Morgan’s concepts aid us in understanding how Blacks indirectly addressed White claims. While the national (White) press was devoid of coverage of the aftermath of the school closures or the effect on the Black community, Black newspapers kept vigil of Prince Edward and continued coverage when everyone else seemed to have forgotten.

In Prince Edward most public Black opposition came most often from leaders from within the NAACP and Reverend Griffin. Members of the community not in positions of leadership found ways to express their support for community efforts through participation in articles and interviews that focused on the individual experiences. As I will show, many of these voices of opposition are reflective of the counter language and appropriation described above. The Afro American Press (from Richmond) and Chicago’s Daily Defender (one of the oldest and most influential Black newspapers) kept constant vigil on the Prince Edward story. Despite the lack of coverage in the mainstream media, arguments articulated by the Black community were present and consistent.

The local Black press provided positive articles of PECCA and the nonviolent approach. A brief article, “Richmonders aid Prince Ed pupils,” describes fundraising attempts made by Blacks to help raise money for PECCA. Like PECCA, those participating in the fundraising efforts made certain to draw a line between their support of PECCA’s mission and the notion that they were supporting segregated schools. The

reporter noted the group's hope for resolution: "They expressed a belief that eventually Prince Edward county officials would find the private school arrangement inadequate and would return to the use of public schools." Their statement reflected the hope still felt early on in the movement and it also describes the organizational efforts that many in the White community believed were nonexistent in the Black community.

In-depth coverage of local responses within Prince Edward's Black community were presented in Rufus Wells's "Inside Prince Edward Co, VA: What Happens When Schools Are Killed." Rufus followed the efforts of several families who made alternative schooling arrangements for their children. Rufus keenly noted, "These residents are not idle." His choice to follow four families made the story more personal. Rufus cited the views of a Mrs. James Wiley, Sr., mother of five as being typical of Blacks in Prince Edward. Reacting against the private academy developed by Whites she responded, "I'm glad they have used their trump card because that's their last card. The school closings should help the colored people to appreciate the value of education. It will be a good lesson for the White people too. Their private school system will fail some day soon, and they will learn a lesson." Wiley's response operates interestingly on two levels. First, her direct affront to the White community demonstrates her courage and conviction. Second, Wiley's expression that the school closings would help "the colored people to appreciate" addresses the notion that Blacks did not value formal education. In some ways her statement does support the perception held by Whites—perhaps her own way of recognizing that her statement could be seen and interpreted by more than one audience. It is important to recognize that her statement is still couched between her own analysis of the White community's action and the fact that she thinks both communities will learn

a lesson. Her use of counter language here provides her with a means to both address White perceptions, as she takes on a representative role for the Black community, advocating for education. Wiley's opinion on why she choose to keep her children, especially her son, a senior in high school, in Prince Edward rather than finding a schools outside of the county spoke to her resolve and commitment to the struggle: "One year out of school won't hurt him It's better to stay here and try to solve this thing. You can't solve any problem by running away. Once you start running, you will be running all your life." Her response demonstrates a view of formal education as secondary to gaining lived experience in one's own community. Wiley's opinion and action also marks the very difficult decisions that many parents were faced with.

Rufus's coverage also included stories of families who were forced to separate as they networked to find schools and home for their children. Rufus interviewed one mother for whom this was a reality. Mrs. Doris Ward, mother of three children, whose ages ranged from 13 to 18, sent her children out of Prince Edward to continue their educations uninterrupted. Despite the fact that the Ward children were in school, the separation faced by the family was difficult and her action to break up her family shows how strongly she felt about continuing her children's education. Mrs. Ward still displayed concerned for those who remained in the county without schools: "I was shocked at the closing of the schools. I didn't think they would do it. I hope something will soon turn up for the children who are out of school." Ward and her husband worked with PECCA to provide support for the children in the community.

During an interview with a former resident of Prince Edward during the school closure period I heard first-hand about the difficulty families faced in having to be split

up so that children could go to school. Ms. Debra Hicks, who was six when the schools closed, stated: “I remember that the schools were closed. Even that young, I may not have known what was going on, but I knew something was going on because my older brothers and sisters weren’t going to school. By 1959, 1960 my older brother and sisters were leaving, the house just emptied out.” Hicks’ response, like the family in Rufus’s article, showed part of the resistance to school closures was demonstrated through difficult decisions involving disassembling families. Black efforts showed that families would make their best efforts to let their children receive educations by any means possible.

Other interviews with former Free School attendees speak to the complexity of how the economic structure complicated potential acts of resistance. Mrs. Clara Gibson Johnson, a resident of Prince Edward who was eleven when the schools first closed, spoke of the reality of realizing how complicated direct action was:

There was talk. The perception I had as a young person before going away was that’s the way things are, not that you didn’t want to change. When my mom went to a White person’s house she had to go in the back. When I went downtown I couldn’t go in the College Shop to eat. It was a time that your livelihood depended on the White person and surviving economically. That’s the way things were. You had to survive, you had to eat. We knew things weren’t right, but you were kind of limited in what you could do.

Johnson’s response acknowledges the difficulty in determining how the Black community would resist and perhaps helps to explain why methods that worked in other

communities in the South were not readily adaptable for Prince Edward. White economic control prevented large-scale mobilization of overt Black direct action because the residents' basic survival depended on Whites. In some parts of the county the relationship between Blacks and Whites was not quite as strained. In rural farm communities Blacks and Whites often had better relationships because of the cooperative community efforts needed to maintain family farms. Prince Edward's size and geographic location made it difficult for the Black community to mobilize in the same ways possible in larger cities like Birmingham and Montgomery.

Reverend Everett Berryman Jr., who was also eleven when the schools closed, provided a unique perspective on the relationship between Blacks and Whites:

We really didn't believe they were going to close the schools. We learned about it through the fact that the schools just didn't open. I didn't really realize it until they didn't open. Then, your mind went to work after that. We lived in the country. Now really, now this was a unique thing about it, where we lived Whites and Blacks got along well. So it was not necessarily a White/Black thing that closed the schools to us until we really got into the depth of it. Its like, it ain't no way in the world you can close the schools because you don't want to go to school with Black children. Well, we're together, what is this? And you learned more about it as time goes on."

Despite Prince Edward's racist climate it was still a shocking revelation for Blacks that Whites would go so far as to close the schools. Despite the fact that Blacks and Whites did get along in the country, Berryman did not remember his White neighbors becoming

allies in the fight for reopening schools and this speaks to the pervasiveness of racism. Berryman's account also speaks to the way in which the borders around appropriate or inappropriate behaviors around race were drawn in such a way as to be beneficial for Whites.

The range of responses from the Black community speaks to the persistent resistances displayed during the five-year closure period. White control of the economic and social structure shaped early resistance efforts and resulted in a variety of Black responses. When four years yielded no change in the courts or public sentiment, tactics had to change.

The Summer of '63: "Now we are requesting your very body."

While Prince Edward saw little violence or direct action despite the closures, the summer of 1963 made the divide between those for direct action and those against in Prince Edward's Black community more pronounced. The range of responses from within the Black community demonstrated the variety of resistance approaches generated. Bonastia describes four possible methods that could have been employed by the Black community in Prince Edward in the fight to reopen schools:

Blacks in Prince Edward could consider four main tactics to hasten the resumption of public education: (1) moral persuasion of county leaders; (2) greater influence at the polls through increased voter registration; (3) economic pressures on county businesses, which would result in the White business community convincing authorities to reopen schools; and (4) dramatic confrontations that would draw the attention of the media and prompt federal intervention. (Bonastia 194)

Bonastia's description of the options available is accurate and outlines the reasons why no single approach could work. The first option was all but nonexistent; even for those Whites who may have felt somewhat remorseful for the school closures, those who exercised the most power were not going to allow for any change. White voters met efforts for increased voter registration with steady increase and resolve in their registration processes. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the population of voters in Virginia was quite small even amongst Whites. Boycotting local business would have been difficult for Blacks. Without a public transportation system in place and with a large proportion of Blacks living in the rural areas of Prince Edward, it would have taken great effort to orchestrate support and infrastructure needed so that people could get food and other goods if they boycotted White owned businesses. The suggestion of direct action is one that was often raised but dismissed. Griffin was committed to peaceful demonstration and his belief shaped the actions of the community. While there were sporadic sit-ins and demonstrations against the school closures, there were not any constrained efforts to organize until 1963.

1963 was a pivotal year for action in the Civil Rights movement. Medgar Evers was killed, fire hoses and dogs were turned on demonstrators in Birmingham, and elsewhere in Danville, Virginia, Black protestors were met with violence by baton bats. It is worth mentioning that the summer of 1963 marked a period of unrest in Prince Edward and surrounding areas as well, in response to the general attitude of the country.

Richmond saw an increase in student-led demonstrations. The words of Joseph Dancey Jr., president of Virginia Union University's NAACP chapter called for the a need for physical support from adults for the next phase of resistance: "You've given us your

moral support, your financial support and your prayers. All this is fine. But now we are requesting your very presence--your body.” The belief that direct action was now a necessary element in the strategy for integration in Virginia was not arrived at lightly.

Griffin along with the Reverend Goodwin Douglass from the African Methodist Episcopal Beulah Church of Farmville organized efforts with the NAACP Youth Council for protests. The demonstrations lasted much of the summer, with jails filling up quickly. Some have suggested that the onset of demonstrations and unrest helped lead to more acceptance of the Free Schools on the part of Whites. Whites in Prince Edward stressed that the crux of the school issue was about maintaining local autonomy and individual freedoms in decision making (Bonastia 188). The Black community’s dedication to supporting the cause for desegregation through consistent legal efforts exhibited to Whites that the relationship sanctioned by the “Virginia Way” was coming to an end: “The unspoken compact between the races-that Whites would help Blacks progress separately, so long as Blacks did not contest when and how such progress would occur-had been shattered” (Bonastia 189). This assertion is perhaps one of the most important things to recognize because it demonstrates that the Black community did contest and were not silent or complacent. The primary avenues of resistance were the courtroom, the streets, and the church. Given the racial and economic climate of Prince Edward the methods of resistance for Blacks were different from those of other Southern localities. The local historical context drove community members to make certain decisions about the best course of action.

The legal battle in Prince Edward waged for over ten years, beginning with the Moton walkout of 1951. The NAACP’s heavy involvement and focus on action through

litigation versus direct action raised the question of whether or not the latter might have proved to be a better course of action because of the slow movement and stalemates in the courts. Litigation was important despite its slow nature and it is difficult to say how well direct action would have worked given Prince Edward's location and the resources within the Black community (Bonastia 189). The court cases and battles as described in chapter two served their purpose and there are numerous reasons why demonstrations and direct-action weren't employed earlier than the summer of 1963. No public schools meant difficulty in organizing groups and dispersing communications. Further, the generational divide amongst the Black community meant competing notions of what methods were better to employ and a lack of local leaders and organizers made it difficult to plan for large sit-ins or demonstrations (Bonastia 191). Reverend Griffin was stretched thin in his attempts to balance his position as minister of First Baptist, and smaller rural churches scattered throughout the county, as well as his leadership in Virginia's NAACP. While the NAACP saw litigation as the primary means by which to pursue civil rights, groups such as the Southern Christian Leadership Committee viewed demonstrations and sit-ins as an important part of the process. Griffin was placed in a precarious position-- trying to sustain hope and morale within a group that no doubt saw a multitude of ways to get their point across.

A discussion of Griffin's contributions to the local and national Civil Rights movement would not be replete without attention to his philosophical and theological grounding in Black liberation theology which argues for an understanding of the gospel that is deeply rooted in a commitment to justice for oppressed people. His commitment to a theology grounded in liberation theology and relationship with the NAACP meant that

there would often be a constant tension between balancing direct tactics with litigation.¹ Griffin believed that there was value in the toilsome work of the NAACP's legal quest because of the foundational support they could provide for court action. The level of commitment and effort Blacks demonstrated in pursuing quality educations was necessary for the obstacles they faced. The resistance through action and language on the part of the Black community was continuous, resolute, and never without hope. Despite the lack of coverage in mainstream media, the Black community was never without optimism and steadfast belief that this mountain would be moved.

This optimism ultimately led to the formation of the Free School, a process I will describe in the next chapter. Following the description, chapter four will examine the rhetorical education of the lower unit.

Chapter Four

Design within Constraint: Facilitating the Maximum Learning Experience for all

Children

“The experience gained from documenting our philosophy will prove of lasting value to all of you personally and to all children attending the Free Schools.” (Neil Sullivan, *Bound for Freedom*)

“Learning English, learning to speak the alien tongue was one way enslaved Africans began to reclaim their personal power within a context of domination. Possessing a shared language, black folks could find again a way to make community, and a means to create the political solidarity necessary to resist.” (bell hooks, “Language is Power”)

Considering the spaces beyond those of the “normal” histories of composition classrooms allows us to find innovative teaching practices often within unimaginable constraints. The recent recoveries of various forms of rhetorical education that served groups excluded by traditional access to education—Black, Brown, Asian, and Native people, the poor and working-class, women, and a variety of immigrant groups—challenge our conceptions about writing and speaking instruction for marginalized groups. The excavations and recoveries have shown the ways in which preparation in rhetoric was often connected to liberatory aims. Scholarship in composition and rhetoric has demonstrated that while the commitments to social justice may be similar, the methods are inextricably and rightfully tied to the needs of the particular community they serve—the Free School was no exception.

While marginalized groups have often used rhetorical education for liberatory purposes these methods have not gone without critique. Some forms of rhetorical education have worked to maintain dominant paradigms through the indoctrination or restriction of specific language practices while others have equipped students with tools

to resist the dominant hegemony. With that said, I do not mean to suggest that these are the *only* two paradigms rhetorical educations follow. Scholars such as Cheryl Glenn have demonstrated that rhetorical education's connections to language and power can make for a slippery slope with regard to *how* liberation takes place. In her introduction to *Rhetorical Education in America*, Glenn asserts: "However broadly it might be defined, and wherever it manifests itself, rhetorical education perpetuates the principles of participation appropriate to a specific cultural moment" (vii-viii). Glenn's analysis demonstrates the "slipperiness" of how rhetorical educations are created, taught, and received (viii). The *power* of rhetorical education lies in its ability to instruct groups in the literacy and discourse practices needed to disrupt *or* maintain a society's structure or some combination of both. For Glenn, problems with rhetorical education are deeper than content taught and disseminated. Instead, the issue lies with the students who *receive* the education. Glenn encourages us to question how America welcomes (or not) those who attempt to reproduce and enact the rhetorical instruction they have received:

But American society at large has not always welcomed the rhetorical productions of Others... When, despite great odds, members of traditionally marginalized groups received a measure of rhetorical education, they were often prevented from displaying their education and expertise... When they did exhibit their rhetorical expertise, that expertise was received with suspicion. (ix)

Glenn's claim is consistent with the experience of students at the Free School. Despite receiving a rhetorical education that prepared them to speak, write, and read in Standard English, students would still be viewed with "suspicion" as Others. As was the

case for many Black communities, most Whites in Prince Edward did not equate the acquisition of Standard English with acceptance. The question then remains: Why did the Free School focus on teaching Standard English and Western rhetorical practices despite the power and hierarchy embedded within these practices? What purpose would this type of education serve? These questions along with early curricular conversations between Sullivan and his lead curriculum developers reiterate the same concerns within the Black community about the purpose of education.

Booker T Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois: Success through Excellence

Initial questions about the school's curriculum reflect the longstanding debate about the purpose education should serve for the Black community, which was frequently associated with Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois valued education as a means by which a select group of Blacks (known as the talented-tenth) could prosper through careers as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Washington preferred vocational training and encouraged the Black community to concentrate on uplift through hard work, primarily through industrial, farming, and craftwork. These two positions dominated conversations in the late 19th and early 20th century about education and the Black community and continue to be present in contemporary conversations about education in the Black community, racial injustice, and the role of Black leadership.

During my initial research in the archives, I had several conversations with Mr. Edwards, head archivist at the VSU Special Collections Archive, that shed light on the controversy the Free School faced with regard to determining the curriculum. In addition to having worked in the archive since shortly after the arrival of the Free School papers in 1964, Mr. Edwards, a native of Virginia and a Professor of History, was well acquainted

with the stories and conversations that surrounded the Free School's development. He remembered that some of these stories circulated through the Black community and for that reason are difficult to trace back to archival sources. Mr. Edwards's memory about early curricular debate deserves attention and there were some artifacts that suggested this might have been a point of contention. One of the primary discussions between Sullivan and teachers that Mr. Edwards recalled was about the design of the curriculum. Sullivan, he recounted, wanted a remedial or basic education while local teachers, such as Willie Mae Watson, wanted a curriculum that would be reflective of what White state accredited schools would have offered their children. In the archive, early documents between Sullivan and the Trustees discussed the possible need for "remedial" and "vocational" training for students (Trustees Minutes). Once Sullivan arrived in Prince Edward, the plans for this type of education changed. While there is not a paper trail to follow this change, it was possibly Sullivan's deep trust and reliance upon teachers from Prince Edward and surrounding localities that changed his opinion. The resulting curriculum demonstrated a balance of Du Bois and Washington's commitments to education for economic uplift and independence through gaining skills or crafts.

Both Washington and Du Bois were dedicated to advancing the Black community in the face of systematic discrimination; however, each of their perspectives was grounded in *their* day-to-day reality of being Black in America. Washington favored industrial education, based upon his experience in the South, where the threat of violence from Whites was a constant and people had to rely on their own industry and skills for survival (Meier 98). Washington believed that if Blacks could prove themselves to be productive through skilled labor and economic independence from Whites, assumptions

about Black inferiority could be defeated. Du Bois was skeptical that industrial education would assist Blacks in moving from low status in society and feared it might only exacerbate the problem. A proponent of an education complete with arts and sciences, Du Bois saw the uplift of the Black community coming from careers in teaching and medicine (Meier 192). While Du Bois and others such as William Monroe Trotter and Ida Wells criticized Washington for appearing to appease Whites, there was common ground between Du Bois and Washington. Both believed in excellence, self-respect, and recognition as full citizens regardless of method.

The idea of active citizenship leans toward the theoretical ideals based in the arts and sciences approach of Du Bois. The school's attempt to offer as "normal" a curriculum as possible, one that would match other public schools in Virginia so as to receive accreditation from the state is reminiscent of Du Bois's commitment to education for advancement. The vocational program offered to the high school students might also be viewed in light of the uplift through industry Washington favored, essentially proving them worthy to larger society by providing marketable skills that would allow students to support themselves and their families in the rural economy of Prince Edward. The arguments that made against Blacks pursuing educational opportunities influenced what both teachers and administrators felt was necessary for students to learn.

Free School Infrastructure: Design within Constraint

As described in chapter one, the Free School's process of moving from concept to brick and mortar building occurred in less than a year. The petition from Black residents made its way to the desk of President Kennedy in the fall of 1962. It would be seven months before one of the first meetings between Burke Marshall, William Vanden

Heuvel, Virginia's NAACP leaders, Governor Harrison, and Reverend Griffin occurred. The summer of 1963 found Marshall and Vanden Heuvel working frantically to put final plans into place and turn the reins over to the Board of Trustees who would eventually turn the decision making and organizing over to Sullivan.

One of the first tangible ways the Free School made a counter rhetorical statement to Prince Edward was through its use of space. Unlike the PECCA training centers that needed to utilize improvised spaces, Free School creators decided to lease public school buildings and buses (those used by both Blacks and Whites in the past) to house their schools. This was, in part, to demonstrate that the Free School was, in fact, a real school, not a substitute. It can also be viewed as an effort to utilize resources that were intended for the education of *all*. The school board agreed to lease the schools but made clear that the local government's position had not changed (Bonastia 143). Logistically, the use of the school buildings also meant that there was existing infrastructure (desks, blackboards, playground equipment) in place to enhance the learning environment. The use of traditional educational spaces by the Free School marked a difference from other freedom schools that typically utilized spaces such as churches or storefronts.¹⁵ Rhetorically this made a spatial statement that said the Free School was a part of the Prince Edward community. With buildings in place, Sullivan's next task was to hire and train a faculty.

Most of Sullivan's success in finding good teachers came from his first two hires, the upper school principal, Mr. James B. Cooley and director of elementary education, Ms. Willie Mae Watson. Prior to his employment with the Free Schools, Cooley worked as Assistant Principal of the Brunswick County Negro High School and was renowned for both his skills as an administrator and commitment to students. Watson, a former

Peace Corp volunteer, teacher, and administrator for the Norfolk Public School System, brought a wealth of experience and energy to Prince Edward. Sullivan said Watson “radiated spirit and zest, and she had the courage to match her convictions” (*Bound for Freedom* 62). Watson would prove to be indispensable in Sullivan’s process of hiring new teachers and providing assistance and training for new faculty. Finding qualified teachers in August was difficult because most public school teachers were already under contract. Sullivan cast a wide net and sent letters of invitation to school superintendents, college and university teacher training programs, the U. S Employment office, armed forces, Peace Corps, National Education Association, church groups, commercial teacher agencies, and friends (Bonastia 150-151). Despite his best efforts, by September 12, only 35 teachers had been hired—short of the projected 140 needed by the 16th. VSU agreed to supply some of its own education students to hold temporary intern positions until full time teachers could be hired. By the end of 1963, the Free Schools would employ a total of 97 full time teachers across four schools. Of the 97, 85 identified as Black and 12 as White (“Teacher Totals”). This would be the first integrated teaching staff in Virginia

With such a large group of teachers from varied backgrounds, the “Prince Edward County Free Schools Handbook” served not just as a log of policy details, but as a means to establish community, morale, and explanation for how this school would do more than “teach the 3 R’s.” Sullivan opened the handbook with a letter to teachers that served as welcome, warning, and a morale booster for teachers who were about to embark on a unique year. Describing the situation as “Herculean” in size, Sullivan reminded the teachers this was a task that no other group had faced (Sullivan, “Handbook,” 1). Some of the first pedagogical offered was to prepare for the school year by *not* thinking of the

traditional methods of teaching: “I urge you to forget quickly the conventional school and realistically come to grips with our unique problem” (Sullivan, “Handbook,” 1). He reminded teachers that students had gone without formal education for four years and he hoped the innovations and methods used in the Free School might be able to “help us close this intolerable gap” (Sullivan, “Handbook,” 1). Both his warning and intention served as markers for his commitment to both students and teachers. Sullivan ended his letter with a request for teachers to “treat these youngsters with kindness, tact and dignity; to prepare every lesson with the greatest care; to dedicate yourself completely to meeting the needs of the individual child” (Sullivan, “Handbook,” 1). His final words demonstrate the importance of treating students with respect in a place where they had little outside of their own homes and communities.

Following Sullivan’s introduction, a short section titled “Objectives of Education” and “Imperative Needs of Youth,” described the importance of having a school philosophy be “a guide for curriculum development” (Sullivan, “Handbook,” 2). The “Imperative Needs of Youth” was comprised of a list of quotations from the National Education Association. The needs ranged from physical education and fitness, understanding the significance of family, how to purchase goods and services, the importance of science, to an explicit call for youth to understand what it means to be a citizen: “All youth need to understand the rights and duties of a citizen of a democratic society, and to be diligent and competent in the performance of their obligations as members of the community and citizens of the state and nation, and of the world” (Sullivan, “Handbook,” 2). Most notable is the focus on skills and attitudes needed to be a citizen and positive contributor to society. Sullivan includes this list before the

description of the curriculum, perhaps as a precursor to understanding what holistic perspective on education the curriculum would support.

A description of the Free School's curriculum follows this list and reinforced the connection between citizenship preparation through education and literacy: "We would like to define our curriculum as all the planned activities of the Prince Edward Schools, concerned with facilitating the maximum learning experience of all children who attend our schools, and designed to help them acquire the knowledge, attitudes, ideas, and skills required for effective citizenship in a democratic society" (Sullivan, "Handbook," 2). The curriculum was comprised of eight educational objectives drafted with a special concern for both encouraging self-respect within students and displaying respect for students. Each objective carried a description for course content. While the objectives and content descriptions provide overall guidelines for teachers in the creation of their classroom practices they were not overtly prescriptive and provided room for creativity and further development based on the ideas of each teacher and student needs. The eight objectives are best categorized as: showing loyalty and respect for democracy and one's community, the need to preserve and improve our democratic government through literacy, and the promotion of a "healthy" defense of our democracy through mental and physical health. Although each of the objectives work in concert, four are most important for understanding the work done in the language arts classroom.

Given the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the Free School it would seem difficult to grasp why one of the primary objectives would be the promotion of loyalty to democracy. Why would students demonstrate loyalty to a community that didn't see them as citizens? Further, why would students even be interested in

participating in a community that perpetually disregarded them? In a move that seemed paradoxical, the first and second objectives spoke to developing loyalty and respect for their community:

1. To promote loyalty to principles upon which our democracy was founded.
 - a. Content should develop an interest in and understanding of basic American culture along with technological advancements, which have affected our way of life. Students should learn that there are obligations connected with our various freedoms if our democracy is to be preserved and perpetuated.

2. To develop respect for and appreciation of the community in which we live.
 - a. Content should establish and reinforce an understanding of our historical background and growth. Local resources and resource programs within the community should be fully utilized.

The focus on promoting loyalty and respect to a democracy and community that worked hard to deny them civil rights can be troubling. While one might suppose that the federal government's initial involvement with the Free School would mean students were indoctrinated with patriotic rhetoric, this does not appear to be the case. Instead, a

cultivation of respect for America and democracy was constructed through the display of respect for students themselves and the acknowledgement that they were in fact *full* citizens despite local actions to the contrary.

Student respect was displayed in numerous ways. There was for example, a great deal of attention given to developing knowledge about Black history. Ms. Watson created a pamphlet for Free School teachers to use in their classrooms that highlighted important public figures in Prince Edward's Black community. Watson's pamphlet depicted a legacy of Black citizens who stood against the racist discourse that permeated the area. She provided a history of Prince Edward for Black residents beginning with slavery and ending with the 1960s. Watson's history lessons, unlike others, placed the experience of the Black community at the center rather than the margins. It was revolutionary for Black students to learn in a school setting that the Black community had countless examples of active agents rather than passive recipients. Watson provides a litany of achievements of Black Prince Edwardians. There were nineteenth century leaders who held citizenship positions: James W. D. Bland represented the county in the Constitutional Convention of 1867-8, John Goode served as a temporary chairman of a county convention in 1875, and Mary Branch served as president of Tilloston College in Austin, Texas. Watson's lesson in history also included Prince Edward's Black community's educational history as well: One of the first private schools for Blacks opened in 1897, the first 22 public schools in Prince Edward were divided equally between Black and White residents—with enrollment in the Black school exceeding that of Whites, the first graded school in Prince Edward was for Black children, and Robert Russa Moton who grew up in Prince Edward would become the leader of Tuskegee

Institute after the death of Booker T. Washington (Watson “About Prince Edward”). Watson’s pamphlet demonstrated a history of respected, Black people who were active citizens in a variety of ways. In turn, for Free School students, histories such as this helped to show how respect was cultivated from an affirmation of the students’ humanity and the acknowledgment that the Black community had an established legacy of countering White supremacy. Students were not expected to blindly follow or submit to the brand of citizenship that was being constructed by Whites in Prince Edward—or by anyone who might equate Black citizenship as *defined* by Whites. As described in chapter three, maintaining the “Virginia Way” meant that Whites saw themselves as the distributors of rights for Blacks. The Free School would challenge this through the provision of opportunities that allowed students to construct expressions of citizenship independently. Through understanding the importance of their history, Black students were encouraged to see themselves as a part of the Prince Edward community and America—despite racists arguments that said otherwise. The need to counter the definition of citizenship manifested through White privilege drove teachers to acknowledge the importance of recognizing and respecting the dignity of their students.

Displays of respect for students on the part of teachers also supported the idea that students were a valued part of the Prince Edward community. Teachers of the Free School were required to complete bi-monthly evaluation forms for school administration. These forms asked a wide range of questions, from assessing supply needs and equipment functionality to the evaluation of student attitudes. It appears that the evaluations were meant to both assess the progress and difficulties teachers encountered while simultaneously encouraging reflection.¹⁶ During the archival research portion of my

work I read through close to 300 of these evaluations. Many were anonymous and only noted the class or grade level, but not the teacher. These documents provided to be invaluable windows into classroom activities. I do realize that they have to be read rhetorically—they were constructed with a particular audience in mind—the administrators.

An evaluation dated October 7, 1963, asked teachers to respond to the following: “What was the most amusing statement made by a child?” One teacher responded that a student was doubtful of the school’s intention, and asked, “I wonder what they plan to do to us now?” Other evaluations follow a similar pattern of inquisition. Another teacher wrote that a student felt that as a result of the closures he had been “delayed his opportunity for becoming a good citizen of the U.S.” These students lived in an environment where their basic humanity was disregarded, and would not easily trust outsiders coming in to “save them.” A large number of teachers were recruited nationally and even with careful screening, the question remained: How would the trust of students and parents be gained to allow true engagement?

Ironically, segregation helped provide the answer. Charged by the actions of Massive Resistance, many of the teachers from outside of Prince Edward (both Black and White) were unable to secure room and board when landlords heard they were with the Free School. Teachers were put up in Black church basements converted into dormitories or with supportive host families. As a result, many of the teachers, ate, slept, worshipped, played and then taught their students. This meant suffering some of the same injustices: being denied meals at restaurants, barred from shopping in White stores, and hateful taunts. Those teachers unfamiliar with this brand of racism were unfortunately schooled

in the South's disdain for Blacks. The experiences of the instructors allowed them to know first hand how important it was to display respect was for these students, especially the White teachers. A greater understanding of the South's treatment of Blacks also helped teachers to understand why Sullivan's suggestion of utilizing local resources was a valuable practice for showing students that all of the county was open for them to experience.

Students had field trips to the bank, post office, and fire station in the town of Farmville to give students different experiences in the community. Many students lived in the rural parts of the county and coming to Farmville was not an everyday occurrence. For the first time, students visited sites important to most citizens because of what they represent, the seats of power for our democracy: Washington D.C. and Richmond, Virginia's capital. There were cultural and historical trips to attend the symphony as well as to Booker T. Washington's home. An additional trip was made to Colonial Williamsburg and students enjoyed the living history lessons that were sometimes provided by Blacks. Visits from individuals both locally and from around Virginia who were supportive of the school allowed students to feel supported despite the actions of their town. (Sullivan 184). One of the most popular visits came from Assistant Attorney General Robert Kennedy who toured the school. Students recited poetry, sang, and presented him with a donation for the late President's library.

Other visitors included groups of exchange students from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Japan, Brazil, and India (Sullivan *Bound* 184). Washington Redskins player Bobby Mitchell visited with students and encouraged them to take all of the opportunities offered (Sullivan *Bound* 183). These visits and opportunities for travel countered the

arguments that were so pervasive—namely those that attempted to suggest that *all* White people felt the same way about integration. Not only did this help provide students with new opportunities, but it also helped them to see that they were respected. All of these field trips were opportunities for students to not only see new places, but they also reaffirmed the fact that the Whites in Prince Edward (and elsewhere) did not define them. Sullivan reflected on the visits by saying that: “Our students, so long shut off from the world in which they lived, now found the world coming to them. To provide these information-hungry youngsters with a varied diet of enlightenment, experience and culture, we encouraged, indeed invited, many visitors to come to the Free Schools” (Sullivan, *Bound* 183). Developing self-respect and a positive image of one’s self-worth is necessary for the cultivation of a citizen—one has to feel that he or she has a stake in the community in order to be an active participant.

Countering the definition of citizenship manifested through White privilege led teachers to consistently find ways to acknowledge the dignity of their students. For the students of the Free School displays of self-respect took on interesting presentations. In a teaching evaluation dated November 3, 1963 an instructor recounted that an upper school student refused to stand for the pledge of allegiance and sing the national anthem. During morning announcements the young woman stood with her back to the flag and quietly sang a hymn while classmates recited the pledge. The teacher was uncertain as to how best to respond to what she described as a “minor disruption.” This example speaks to respect created in constrained conditions as well as a demonstration of citizenship. The student was allowed to express her resistance and encouraged to share her rationale with the class. This student’s display of resistance was a choice to enact a type of citizenship

and allegiance rather than the one mandated by the schools. Teachers reported that within the lower unit classrooms students were well behaved almost to the point of shocking their teachers. Teacher reflections from November 3, 1963 describe the quiet demeanor of some students:

“They are quiet, almost too quiet.”

“I’ve never seen children like this before; behavior problems are practically non-existent!”

“They are eager to share their stories and speak only when spoken to.”

The respectful decorum of the students in the classroom was also a means by which students could construct display citizenship. Many of the students in the lower level had never been to formal schools and were quite proud of the fact that they were now attending school and as such, they showed this through their behavior and eagerness to learn. Other manifestations of citizenship (voter registration, articles written for the school newspaper, and speeches made to the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors) were more prevalent in the Upper School and are discussed further in Chapter five.

As I described earlier the eight objectives that appeared in the handbook began with attention to respect. They moved to reflect the desire of teachers and administrators to connect literacy as a necessity for democratic preparation was made clear in the curricular objectives:

3. To promote the improvement and preservation of our democratic form of government through a literate populace.

- a. Literacy presumes more than the teaching of the “3 R’s”. It presumes training to think and observe carefully, and the effort to formulate answers that are important to our civilization. Content must influence students to think clearly, so as to be able to sift the truths from the untruths when scrutinizing our democratic processes as well as the governmental processes of other world peoples.
4. To promote the defense and perpetuation of the democratic processes through a populace that is healthy both mentally and physically.
 - a. Content should promote mental health to the extent that fear, propaganda, and the prejudice will find no base in which to propagate. Mental strength must be nurtured through day-by-day decisions which are important to both the individual and the group. As our civilization becomes more complex, so does the demand for thoughtful persons increase.

Teaching evaluations show that writing, reading, and speaking were some of the most difficult subjects for the students. In a set of evaluations from October 1963, teachers were asked to respond to questions about the language skills and activities of the

students. Five separate evaluations from teachers across the lower unit offered similar responses and concerns about their students' writing and speaking:

“Writing seems most difficult. Speaking difficulties were largely a matter of fright. Children defined themselves not threatened and with a sympathetic ear to listen will start using in school those skills they use outside of school.”

“They have had insufficient practice and training; also, they write as they speak.”

“Writing seems to be the hardest skill for the children to recapture. They are so eager to learn to read that they are learning fast but writing skills are returning painfully slowly.”

“I think writing has been the most difficult skill for the children to recapture because they have been exposed to speaking and reading (to a limited degree) during the four year period of absence from school. However, not may have had a need to do any writing.”

“It is my opinion that reading and writing are the most difficult skills to recapture because many students read very little and wrote less during the time they were out of school. I find that students are able to verbalize and use many words they cannot read.”

These reflections from lower level Language Arts teachers provide us with a small sense of the relative needs of the students. To attend to these needs, lower unit language arts classrooms included instruction in phonics, grammar, drills, themed writing exercises, and oral recitations. The literacy curriculum resembled a traditional curriculum that might have been found in any language arts classroom during this time period. In fact, during the interview with Mrs. Bernetta Watkins who was nine when she began her Free School year, she recounted that there was very little that stood out in terms of the work she did in the classroom:

We did a lot of reading aloud and we had worksheets. I know I remember lots of worksheets and tests. You know standardized tests? We had a lot of those. But other than that, I don't remember anything unusual. You went to the board, worked problems on the board. And like I said, in reading, everybody took turns reading aloud and did worksheets afterwards. Those are the things I remember and I don't remember anything we did any different that stood out from that next year.

Mrs. Watkins's recollection supports the kind of work that I will describe as being a part of the curriculum. The fact that she did not remember noticing any differences between her Free School year and the resumed public school speaks to the desire of teachers and administrators to provide students with a traditional school experience.

I do not have the space to provide a history of language arts instruction in American public schools; however, it is important to have some grounding in what language arts instruction was like during the 1960s in elementary school to understand

the Free School's curriculum as being representative of traditional approaches utilized. Richard Allington and Anne McGill-Franen, scholars in reading education, reflect on the history of reading instruction and the major themes in approaches to teaching reading in "Looking Back, Looking Forward: A Conversation About Teaching Reading in the 21st Century." In their historical timeline, they note that the controlled-vocabulary basal reader dominated the era from 1930 to the late 1980s (3). These types of readers would have been akin to the *Dick and Jane* series created by William Gray and Zerna Sharp. They utilized readily identifiable sight words, short sentences, and repetition. While the basal reader and sight words were the most popular methods, instruction in phonics began to rise during this time as well. Phonics instruction, teaching students the sounds associated with letters, provides students with the ability to decode and read words (Brown). This compilation of techniques—controlled vocabulary readers, a shift away from oral recitation towards silent reading, and phonics—were some of the most popular methods employed in public schools.

The 2002 revised edition of Nila Banton Smith's *American Reading Instruction* provides a thorough history of America's experiences with reading instruction beginning in the Colonial Era. P. David Pearson's epilogue, "American Reading Instruction Since 1967," like Allington and McGill-Franen's article, this piece recounts what reading instruction was like during the 1960s: "The period that spans roughly 1935 to 1965 is best viewed as a time in which we engaged in fine-tuning and elaboration of instruction models that were born in the first third of the century" (Pearson 419). These methods included both the "look-say" approach that relied on recognition of sight-words and the use of phonics (419). Pearson notes that this process was quite popular during the 1960s:

“Over 90% of the students in the country were taught to read using one commercial variation of this approach or another” (419). These commercial approaches were packed curricula made available to schools.

Literacy scholar, Jeanne Chall summarized what she identified as a broad set of principles that best described the process of instruction during the mid-twentieth century.

They included:

Reading for interests, comprehension, interpretation, and application, as well as word recognition.

Instruction that began with silent reading of stories grounded in the interests of students.

Development of a corpus of sight-words before instruction in phonics.

Phonics instruction that was spread out over a number of years and contextualized.

Frequency of sight words in the early years.

Use of a readiness program for pre-reading instruction.

The use of small groups for instruction. (qtd. in Pearson 420)

Reflecting on Chall’s list, Pearson agrees that this description represented “the conventional wisdom of the 1960s” (420). Pearson notes: “When all is said and done, the underlying model of reading in the 1960s was still a pretty straightforward perceptual process; the simple view—that comprehension is the process of decoding and listening comprehension (RC=Dec*LC)—still prevailed” (422). My brief sketch certainly does not encompass the wide ranges of practices that were utilized, nor does it get at the debates that were present about the “best way” to teach reading. What I aim to show is how the Free School replicated instruction practices similar to those of the time period.

Give the local environment that surrounded the Free School some might question why this type of approach was taken. Why not a curriculum more that focused on instruction in African American Vernacular and Black History, or Black History and Literature in addition to instruction in voting preparation like the Black Panther Party and SNCC Freedom Schools?¹⁷ Why would teachers and administrators, choose to provide students with a traditional language arts curriculum in Standard English?

As the history of the county demonstrates, the White community did everything within its power to prevent the Black community from receiving equitable educational opportunities. The Free School's attempts to provide an educational experience comparable to that of White counterparts across the country demonstrates a complex motive and intention. This instruction was not done with the intention of having students replicate the power structures that stratified them, but instead, as the mission statement indicates, the teaching of literacy was to be a transformative force, students needed the most basic of reading and writing skills to gain the skills necessary for full participation in multiple communities. My understanding of the choice to have students be taught and encouraged to use American Standard English (ASE) is that this knowledge was believed a necessary component of the core competencies students needed to express their citizenship in a myriad of rhetorical actions. Their traditional methods might encourage us to dismiss the revolutionary spirit I believe the establishment of the school attests. As Gold warns us "we are sometimes too quick to draw clean causal lines between conservative practices and conservative ideology" (8). Revolutionary spirits aren't entirely extinguished by a traditional curriculum. The struggle described in chapters one and three: Prince Edward's racist regime, commitment to disregard the law and uphold

segregation, and attempts to fully sever the Black community from any opportunity to be a part of the community through education makes the teaching and learning of ASE one of the most rebellious courses of actions that Free School teachers and administration could take. Many Whites felt that Black students would have no need for an education, at least not a complete one because they were never ever to be full citizens of the community. Teaching in this manner asserted that the students were going to insist on being seen and included in White society rather than a separate world.

Gold challenges us to rethink the connection between the traditional or current-traditional approach being coupled with conservative ideology. His analysis and argument points to experiences in the Black community where the teaching and use of ASE was an empowering move. The use of the English language in the Black community is a tradition of negotiation, struggle, and hope. For example, the women Royster writes about in *Traces of a Stream* wield the essay as an instrument of resistance and sociopolitical action and refused to be bound by the use of English in such a way that minimizes its effectiveness for change (45). The Black community's connection and dedication to literacy as a vehicle for liberation despite the complicated history as "the master's language" are also demonstrated in Logan's sites of "free floating literacy" where rhetorical educations took place (Logan, *Liberating Language*, 11). The Free School established itself as part of this history of liberatory and subversive experience with language.

In response to the concerns instructors displayed early in the school year about the students' lack of skills in writing and reading, several teaching memos and bulletins outlined suggestions for the approach and attitude that were to be taken. Weekly bulletins

to teachers provided both general announcements and expanded guidance on the curriculum, including pedagogical guides and suggestions. In the November 20, 1963 teaching Bulletin #20, Sullivan dedicated an extensive section on providing suggestions for teaching and assessing in the language arts classroom. He begins by asking: “What are some simple improvements in the oral and written work of the elementary grades that every teacher could bring about?” (Sullivan, “Bulletin #20,” 4). He provided three suggestions:

1. Make certain that every pupil understands clearly the purpose of every oral and written language assignment. In other words, he must know why he is doing a given task.
2. Be more selective in the exercises chosen for practice of a skill. Exercises which do not bear directly upon a given skill are just busywork.
3. Give pupils simple criteria for evaluating their work. All children need to know where they have succeeded, where they need to improve, and something of how to go about it. (Sullivan, “Bulletin #20,” 4).

Sullivan’s suggestions display a desire for creating a student-centered classroom devoid of work whose sole function was to keep students occupied. The classroom Sullivan describes would provide students with sound instruction as well as an understanding as to why he or she is doing the work. In addition to providing students the why behind their lessons, he advocated for a necessary scaffolding of assignments to aid in the

development of oral and written communication skills. His attention to providing students with criteria for self-evaluation and assessment speak to a desire for helping students become independent learners and thinkers with an ability to take charge of their own learning.

In this same bulletin, Sullivan provides examples of how students might be able to evaluate oral language performance:

1. Did the speaker have an interesting or an important topic?
2. Did he have a vivid, attention-getting opening sentence?
3. Did he know a great deal about his subject?
4. Did he avoid tiresome expressions such as “well” “uh”, and the overuse of “and”?
5. Did he use complete sentences?
6. Did he speak clearly enough?
7. Did he look at his audience?
8. Did he use a good vocabulary?
9. Did he have an interesting closing sentence?
10. Did he bring his main points together in a summary? (Sullivan “Bulletin, #20,”4)

Sullivan’s evaluation shows an order of concerns that does not start with grammar over substance. The first concern gives attention to the topic or substance before there is any attention given to style. This demonstrates a need for encouraging students to think about content or subject before interjecting grammar. The heuristic, while seemingly representative for the time period, speaks to a curriculum that demonstrated support for

the ideas of its students first. Sullivan's rubric does not suggest a curriculum so concerned with grammar and correctness that students lose focus on the importance of developing their ideas. Once students had a grasp on the content of their message, they would be encouraged to polish and revise for their audience. The importance of the "ordinariness" of this approach is that it provided students with the opportunity to learn in a supportive space, despite being in an environment where local government took that opportunity away. While the curriculum resembled that of other public schools what made the Free School unique were the circumstances in which it existed.

Sullivan's concerns for evaluating oral language performance with regard to audience are particularly noteworthy. In Prince Edward, as was true for most of the South, Blacks were normally instructed to *not* look directly at Whites when they were speaking. Morgan describes this in *Language, Discourse, and Power*, when she describes the "verbal or physical confirmation" developed by the Black community when engaging with White audiences. To instruct students to face their audiences and make eye contact was a radical move given the fact that many had White teachers for the first time. While it may be unusual in our contemporary spaces, Sullivan recognized that many students found it difficult to even speak to White teachers during the early days of the Free School (Sullivan, *Bound* 64).

Sullivan's suggestions for written language activities show a similar concern with providing support for students to express their ideas: "Written language activities make many of the same demands found in oral language. For example, a student must have something to say and strong motivation for saying it if it is to be done well" (Sullivan, "Bulletin #20," 4). Sullivan knew the importance of having students be genuinely

interested in the content or topic of their writing or speaking and speaks to the importance of respecting students and showing them that their thoughts matter. He continued to stress the importance of having students understand why they are being asked to complete assignments: “But again, the pupil must know what he is supposed to be learning when he is asked to carry out a given assignment” (Sullivan, “Bulletin #20,” 5). Sullivan’s instructions emphasized the value he saw in having students not only do their work but also to be able to comprehend *why* they are being asked to do it so that they might understand the significance.

He provided a list of suggestions for different types of written work with “indications of the skills each activity is designed to develop” (Sullivan, “Bulletin #20,” 5). His list presents the method by which students were encouraged to use both academic and home experiences to learn, communicate, and develop their writing skills. It also shows an awareness of the importance of having students’ lived experiences be a source of knowledge in the classroom:

Summaries. A good summary represents the most important facts or ideas in a given article. Summarize the most important ideas in each paragraph of a front-page news story.

Records. Records can be made to represent statistical information in graphic form. Keep records of daily weather condition, temperatures, and cloud formation; personal records of height and weight; money earned or spent.

Story writing. Story writing develops imagination, vocabulary, and understanding of plot, story development, and climax. Write original stories which center on children's family life, trips, and firsthand experiences. For example, "Moving Day at Our House"; "How We Surprised Mother"; "The Night Our Tent Blew Down."

Biography. Biography demands accurate information from family records. Write an autobiography after consultation with the family about details.

Diaries. Diary writing calls for brevity in recording details of daily life. Keep a diary of class events, for one month. At the end of that time, review the worth of interest of the items recorded.

Evaluating Through Proofreading. Proofreading requires a pupil to observe his own work carefully, indicates to him where the mechanics of writing need to be improved, aids scholarship, promotes confidence in independent writing, and saves teacher-time. (Sullivan, "Bulletin #20," 5).

Sullivan's writing assignments are suggestive of an approach that valued a variety of writing assignments and that sees writing as a means of learning and creating knowledge, not just rote skill.

While grammar was taught, instructors were advised to not stress grammar over content in the early stages of student writing and teachers encouraged students to use oral

methods for early drafting stages: “Never stress the mechanics of writing at the expense of ideas and enthusiasm for writing. Undue emphasis on form crushes the imagination and skills originality. Correct form will come when pupils are taught the mechanics of writing and are encouraged to proofread everything they write” (Sullivan, “Bulletin #20,” 6). Sullivan’s emphasis on avoiding undue instruction in grammar is exemplary of his desire to have the school meet students where they were developmentally, socially, and culturally. As I will demonstrate in the next section, in the classroom, suggestions for how to best adopt this kind of stance came from Willie Mae Watson’s curriculum guides and memos.

Sullivan’s handbook was a compilation of ideas that came from his previous teaching and administrative experience and his general philosophy on education. One of his old handbooks from his years as an administrator in New York show similar goals and methods as described for the Free School. However, as I will show in the next section, Watson’s supplemental curriculum guide was able to locally adapt Sullivan’s manual and make it relevant for Black youth in rural Virginia.

“Facilitating the Maximum Learning Experience of All Children:” Willie Mae Watson’s Guidelines to Curriculum Development

Watson’s separate, detailed guide for curriculum provided a localized version of the curriculum Sullivan set forth. Given Watson’s experience and knowledge of Prince Edward’s Black community, she was able to craft concrete practices, aims, and outcomes for assessment that were reflective of the needs of these students. In the forward, Watson described the need for a curriculum to provide “unity” throughout the lower school and to suggest guidelines that “might be a common approach toward improving the learning

experiences of children” (ii). Watson’s guide covered all of the subjects of the lower school: Language Arts which included listening, speaking, reading, and writing; Arithmetic; Social Studies; Science; Music; Physical Education; and Speech for students with communicative disorders.

Watson began the section on Language Arts with listening, which is suggestive of how important she felt this first action was in the process of developing student communication abilities. Watson lists the aims of listening as being:

- I. To help the child enjoy and increase his knowledge of the world about him.
- II. To help the child learn new words.
- III. To help the child learn new uses for the words he knows.
- IV. To help develop good listening skills.

These aims included four outcomes:

- I. That the child will develop skill in listening and listen alertly to understand.
 - II. That he learns to listen interestedly for pleasure as well as attentively and courteously.
 - III. That he learns to form mental pictures from what he hears.
 - IV. That he understands relationships and learns to summarize.
- (“Lower Unit Guide”)

The first aim described listening for one’s own enjoyment and knowledge and not for following the instruction or directions of others. I believe this speaks to the school’s

desire to display respect for these students first and to encourage students to foster their own self worth. Respect seems an obvious practice woven into our curriculums but even more so for this group of students who were denied education by the local government. Watson would have known this because of her own work with these students before the Free School. Watson suggested that students were to practice listening in a variety of audience situations: informal and formal conversations, stories, poems, following directions, and announcements (Watson 1). In Ratcliffe's *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, and Whiteness* she writes that "listening is rarely theorized or taught" (18) and while we don't name and claim it, it is an unwritten and assumed practice. While Ratcliffe argued for a type of listening that is first practiced when we listen to others, Watson's aim speaks to listening to yourself first. The act of listening to one's self *first* was important because of attempts at silencing Blacks through Massive Resistance. Providing students with an opportunity to hear their own thoughts first suggests the importance of both recognizing their knowledge and encouraging them to do the same. What this offered Free School students was an opportunity to practice listening to their world, a necessary precursor before entering into the many conversations that surrounded them.

In the classroom, students were often given opportunities to practice listening in a variety of audience situations: conversation, stories, poems, plays, reports, directions, and announcements (Watson "Guide," 1). Students were given ample opportunities to listen to radio, television, and other media recordings. These were occasions for students to connect with the world around them and to assert that they did have a relationship with the wider world, in spite of the ways in which the White residents seemed determined to

claim that this was not the case. Media recordings also gave students an opportunity to practice listening for a variety of purposes. Sullivan's school wide objective declared that writing and reading were to be more than repetition of fact, and Watson demonstrates the importance of active listening being the first component of this process.

After listening, Watson describes the aims, outcomes, and content for developing speaking. This progression from listening to speaking follows a necessary movement. One must listen before being able to interject or argue. Watson describes the aims of speaking as:

- I. To make the child realize the importance and worth of his own experiences.
- II. To develop the ability to use words and sentences accurately and vividly.
- III. To extend the child's vocabulary and develop the ability to tell things in correct sequence.
- IV. To develop the ability to maintain poise and to use acceptable voice, articulation, and correct usage.

The outcomes of these aims included:

- I. That each child learns to speak clearly and correctly, in complete sentences when necessary.
- II. That he recognizes and uses complete units of thought.
- III. That he takes part in-group discussions, keeping his ideas in order and using new words.
- IV. That he respects the opinions of others.

V. That he learns to give and accept criticism. (“Lower Unit Guide”)

The first objective speaks to a desire not to create drones—speaking and listening passively—but instead to foster within students the belief that their words and thoughts mattered. The first aim of speaking was to have students “realize the importance and worth of his own experiences” depicts a curriculum that sought to make the students’ experiences the center of learning. That the focus on the student comes before any talk of correctness suggests a pedagogical approach that valued students as producers of knowledge, not just receptacles for knowledge. It is only after the aim about students realizing the importance of their own worth through speaking that any mention about using words and sentences “accurately” is made. This type of structure reinforced the suggestions I referred from Sullivan’s bulletin where students are encouraged to first express their thoughts about their experiences before being concerned about the structure. Watson’s description for content to support this type of work included: talking about pictures, real or imagined experiences, relaying messages and giving instruction, participating in conversation and discussions, and evaluating classroom activities of his or her own and others. The range of activities suggested by Watson provided a variety of learning experiences and ways for students to participate in class. Teacher reflections found in evaluations show that Watson’s aims and suggestions for content were quite successful in practice.

Young children were encouraged to talk about pictures and to share their experiences both real and imagined (Watson “Curriculum Note #11”). In evaluations from the early part of the school year, many of the teachers spoke of the difficulty they had in following the stories of children who often blended real events with the imaginary

and relied heavily on folk wisdom and knowledge. Instead of shutting out this kind of knowledge, teachers encouraged students to tell their stories. Watson's curriculum notes and memos advised teachers to grant students time in the classroom to do all kinds of speaking—from stories, jokes, and riddles to more formal speaking activities such as giving directions, relaying messages, to giving oral reports in class (Curriculum Notes #11). At all levels of the lower unit students were expected to engage in discussions and to evaluate the activities of themselves and their classmates in class activities and discussions. Teaching evaluations speak to the benefit of Watson's suggestion of starting with the experiences of the student. In response to a question asked about the best teaching technique instructors have employed, one language arts instructor described the importance of "talk time:" "The technique or method of beginning each day with 'Talk Time' has gradually caused each pupil to make a contribution as they talk about: weather reports, news events, etc. This 'sets the stage' for effective learning throughout the day" (Shipp 1). Another instructor described the benefits of utilizing student experience as a practice for building conversation and connection in the classroom: "Using examples based on experience where everyone can contribute" (Pener 1). There were also opportunities for students to participate in choral speaking and dramatizations in both classroom activities and extracurricular activities that encouraged expression through speaking.

Following Watson's work on speaking, she described the importance of reading. Both reading and writing have historically been tied to citizenship for the Black community (either through having to prove that one can do these activities in order to

vote or through being forbidden to do these things because of the fear of power inscribed in literacy). For reading, Watson listed three primary aims:

- I. To give each child maximum competence in the mechanics of reading.
- II. To increase his mastery of reading as a thinking process.
- III. To help him acquire a life-long love of good books.

And two outcomes:

- I. That every child learns to read for enjoyment, comprehending what he reads.
- II. That he learns to apply the established basic principles to all of his reading activities in order to grow in independence. (“Lower Unit Guide”)

The aims show a desire to arm students with the mechanics needed so that they might be able to read. Teachers wanted students to see reading as a part of the thinking process and to genuinely feel a connection to books as a source of gaining independence. That teachers and administrators wanted to connect the “basic principles” of reading to independence reinforces an implied desire to help students gain literacy skills so that they might engage with the world as independent thinkers.

The content section on reading provided very prescriptive details about the methods that should inform the reading courses. As I have shown in my earlier description of reading instruction in the 1960s, these methods do not appear to be any different from methods used to teach reading in other schools during this time period.

Depending on the level of the child, instruction varied. The range included readiness practices, initial reading from textbooks, and developmental reading. Watson provided a progression that started from the basic methods students needed to cover to begin to learn to read such as the recognition of sight words to the use of phonics. Again, these were methods that literacy scholars have identified as typical of this time. Watson reminded teachers of the need to have students learn that texts are read from left to right, the importance of matching words with pictures, the use of context clues, and the need to have students independently practice phonics to sound out words. For students who were taught to read or who had lost four years of practice this would allow teachers to reach a variety of levels. Each of these objectives worked towards the primary aim of having students be able to learn to read independently.

Of all the language arts sections, the writing section had the shortest aims:

- I. To instill in the child the desire to use writing as a means of communication and expression.
 - a. Through the effective use of writing skills:
 - i. Proper spelling
 - ii. Punctuation
 - iii. Good handwriting
 - iv. Correct grammatical form
- II. To make adequate provisions for individual differences. (“Lower Unit Guide”)

Watson's suggestions for the writing curriculum are reminiscent of elementary composition practices during this time. The skills presented to Free School students represented what students needed to obtain fluency and comfort expressing themselves with the written word. Further, they also represented resistance to the view that Blacks were inherently unable to learn what would have been considered higher-order language skills. We do well to remember that it was Watson who was committed to avoided a remedial curriculum for students. As shown in the teacher comments, teachers frequently cited writing as one of the most difficult task for students and for this reason many would need more structure than others. The first of the two aims is the most basic recognition of what we do when we write and what we hope for—that people will be able to understand us as we communicate. After this comes the attention to spelling, grammar, and handwriting. The second aim of writing instruction, unique to the needs of Free School students, was the encouragement of teachers to make accommodations for individual differences. Watson knew that students would come in with varying abilities that would mean teachers had to adjust their curriculum and pedagogy accordingly.

Watson described a plethora of content for writing, all afforded to meet the level of the student. Beginning with handwriting she describes the importance of good letter formation, punctuation for understanding, and grammatical form (“Lower Unit Guide”). Phonics is suggested for the use of developing independence in spelling and reading. The content guide also describes the importance of having students use the dictionary independently, learn how to build using root words, and memorize non-phonetic words. Watson distinguished practical writing from creative writing and establishes content for each. Suggestions for creative writing included a variety of practices that range from

writing about images to suggesting and writing a new ending for stories. Other examples of creative writing include: responses to musical recording, responses to new art experiences, writing about holidays, or plans for a play. (Watson, "Guide," 4). Practical writing content included: writing to parents, the PTA, classmates, requests to the principal, and thank you and business letters. Again, the writing content does not appear to be radical in the political sense that was dominant at many Freedom Schools that sought to prepare students to resist in the Black nationalist fashion. The curriculum is suggestive, however, of teaching writing as a skill, that could be used for a variety of purposes. Teachers did not overtly stress writing as a means of resistance to racist discourse; but, the curriculum allowed for enough range for practicing writing in a variety of settings. The writing content and instruction were rooted in types of writing that encouraged reflecting on one's own experiences and the validity of one's own ideas. The curriculum validated that they were intelligent people and it prepared them, as children, to do more as they grew into adults.

Following the aims, Watson listed outcomes for writing:

- I. The child learns to write correct sentences, short and original stories.
- II. He uses capital letters for:
 - a. The names of persons and places.
 - b. The names of months.
 - c. The names of days of the week.
 - d. The first word in a sentence.
 - e. The word, "I"

- f. The first word in a line of poetry
 - g. The headings and addresses of letters
 - h. The names of holidays.
- III. He uses the correct form for:
- a. Simple “thank you” notes and invitations.
 - b. Friendly letters.
 - c. Simple business letters.
- IV. Writes well formed paragraphs using good beginning and ending sentences.
- V. Makes and uses simple outlines. (“Lower Unit Guide”)

While the overall language arts focus appeared to be a very prescriptive, structured method, Watson’s curriculum memos urge teachers to engage students with expressive free forms of writing and language. In a memo dated April 4, 1964 Watson prompts teachers to reflect on methods for encouraging self-expression, communication, enjoyment, and development and enrichment (Watson, “Memo” April 4, 1964). She encourages her teachers to try “freeing ourselves, and the children to talk, write, and dramatize spontaneously with growing sense of form to convey ideas and feeling” (Watson, “Memo” April 4, 1964). This advice advocates an approach that seems to be less about getting the writing right and more about helping students to feel comfortable with expressing their thoughts and feelings. To help establish this as a practice for the children in the classroom, she encourages a type of self-reflectiveness in teachers.

Watson writes that teachers had “Barriers to overcome in ourselves as adults and teachers, in order to listen and look with sensitivity” (Watson, “Memo” April 4, 1964).

Her practice and intention for listening acknowledges the difficulties Ratcliffe describes in cross-cultural communication.

In Watson's "Curriculum Notes #11," she described what she believed to be the necessary trajectory for having the students learn to use language. Watson's trajectory, much like the path used by other language arts scholars included having students first learn to listen so that they might then develop the ability to speak. She encourages the teachers to allow students to do more talking to one another rather than to the teachers only. To encourage student participation at all levels, she argued for teachers to be able to structure classes that would provide opportunities for all levels of students to participate in class discussions. Learning to value the thoughts of others not only gave students a space to use their rhetorical agency, but also taught them to value the ideas of others. Allowing students the opportunity to listen to one another instead of only the teacher reinforced the notion that they had valuable worthwhile contributions to make to the classroom. It deflected attention away from the teacher as being the sole source of knowledge and allowed for student knowledge to be valued. Watson described a variety of speaking activities that could be used in the classroom: nursery rhymes, telephone conversations, introductions, oral compositions, dramatizations, and choral speaking activities (Curriculum Notes #11). These activities would provide children with opportunities to practice speaking that would have been beneficial both inside and outside of the classroom—thus preparing students with the skills they needed as both students and community members. These speaking opportunities also reinforced and appreciated knowledge students would have gained from home (folk tales, nursery rhymes, etc) and school.

Free School principals were required to submit an end of the year report at the close of the school year. Lower school Principal, Mrs. Vera J. Allen, reflected on what she felt was the overall success of the Free School with regard to reading and writing: “Since major emphasis was in the Language Arts area, children were able very early to have tangible results. They developed better speech patterns, they were able to write, they were able to spell, and they were even able to write original stories and poems” (Allen 3). This supports the idea that students were given opportunity to express themselves creatively and learn mechanics as well. Allen’s report also suggested that co-teaching was an effective means of instruction for students in the lower school. As described in the mission, considerable attention was placed on reading and to make the program most effective team teaching was employed: “Two teachers were selected for the teaching of reading only. One of these teachers worked with pupils who were reading above the third-grade level, while the other worked with all non-readers through the third-grade level” (Allen 2). This method allowed teachers to have one-on-one focus and gave students the attention they needed. Allen’s report described the benefits teachers found through the guidance of the Director of Instruction, Watson, regular curriculum meetings, curriculum notes, and directives from the office of the Superintendent and of the principal. The report revealed the encouragement and support teachers had for using their past experiences as teachers as well as their creative abilities to make the curriculum work in the classroom: “With the initiation of such a program as outlined by the Superintendent of the free Schools, and the freedom given administrators and teachers to use their own initiative and creative abilities, success is inevitable” (Watson 6). This supportive teaching environment encouraged innovation and creativity from its teachers.

Mr. Charles Jarrell, principal of another elementary school in the Free School System, also revealed the importance of the language arts program for the development of the children: “During the 1963-1964 school term the stress and emphasis on communicative skills has relieved the children’s feelings and had awakened a response that has influenced their attitudes and behavior. Now they are able to express different shades of meaning that would have been impossible otherwise” (Jarrell 4). This last statement is a bit presumptuous, as students did in fact have language and communicative traditions upon entering the school, but I believe it does get at the power and importance of language for the development of the students’ self-confidence. Jarrell continues with a fascinating comment on instructing students in ASE: “Our aim has been to train children in the understanding and use of their native language” (Jarrell 4). Jarrell’s statement suggests a position in which the Black community has a right to ASE. Full citizenship and access to rights were at the heart of the issue in Prince Edward. He continued: “Our program of emphasis on Language Arts is to train children to read quickly and with understanding, to speak fluently and accurately and to write intelligently” (Jarrell 4). I believe that Jarrell’s reflection in particular speaks to the complexity of language ideologies and politics. Values are embedded in language, whether we realize it or not. This school believed these students had a right to ASE.

Former students of the lower school attest to the desire of many students and parents to obtain educations. In fact, many of the former students I interviewed, were learning long before their first free-school day. Throughout the interviews I learned that of all skills, reading was one of the most important and it was often taught at home first. During an interview with former Free School student, Mrs. Bernetta Watkins, who was

six when the Free School opened, she reflected on a strong ever-present desire to attend school. Her first day of the Free School was actually not her *first* day of school:

I was not enrolled but I did have an opportunity to unofficially attend. I laugh at that because when I was five I wanted to go to school and so my mother told me to go. I went for two or three months until they checked birth certificates and then they said, “Uh-No, you can’t come back.” I was very disappointed with that. I call it my unofficial kindergarten. My sister was in first grade and I just went with her, caught the bus, my mother packed my lunch and I just went with her.

Watkins’s story reveals the importance and value her family saw in education. Her mother saw her desire for learning and fully supported her, despite the possible trouble it could cause. Her story and her family’s support are in direct opposition to the lackadaisical attitude many Whites believed that Blacks had about education and hard work. During the interview, Watkins recounted that she learned to read before attending any school and her enjoyment with playing with words:

I had learned to read. And somewhere in there, for some reason I was spelling and it was intriguing to me to spell backwards as well as forwards. I don’t know how much of that I learned at the school or at home. During that time period that was one of the things I would do...Education was always a high priority within my immediate and extended family. My Uncle Otis and my grandfather were all completely involved in the fight for the school openings and getting buses.

Watkins's recollection stands in stark contrast to the propaganda used to argue against equal opportunity for education in the Black community. While editorials in *The Herald* and *News Leader* propagated that Blacks were unappreciative for the educations they once had, Mrs. Watkins's story provides a decidedly different story. She enjoyed language; her family supported her education, and worked to provide better educational opportunities for *all* in their community.

Like Watkins's story, Reverend Hicks shares a similar memory and attests to the fact that many of the Free School students were prepared before they even got there. Hicks was reading before she got to school because of what she learned at home. She shared with me that her lingering question about the Free School had more to do with *when* the government sought to interject themselves in the Prince Edward dilemma:

But the question, what I think about now is how the government will have so much authority to be involved in a situation and no one is able to change it. The young people had to get involved in order to get a solution. Where is the government authority? Where were the national organizations? We have to be encouraged by what has happened and then be influenced by what happened to the point that we want to take a stand for doing what we must for our county.

Hick's questioning and analysis demonstrates two important points. First, while the Free School was welcomed, it was not at all a remedy that would heal all the wounds in this community. Second, her acknowledgement that there is still work to be done in the county shows that the school closures have contemporary repercussions. Hick's own desire to *do* for the county demonstrates the type of citizenship that has always been a

part of the Black community, despite the systematic denial, constraints, and threats faced. While the practice of active citizenship was present long before the Free School, the commitment of Free School teachers and administrators to connect their school's mission directly with preparation for citizenship demonstrates an awareness of the Black community's dedication to action in their community.

In many ways, the School's commitment to citizenship is of course no different from other public school missions to provide training necessary for participation in a democracy and their focus on traditional methods for teaching reading, writing, and speaking certainly reflects common practices for this time period. This traditional curriculum was not devoid of cultural competence. Teachers and administrators were aware of the unique situation of their students and worked to encourage students that their experiences were valuable, to learn about other people and the world outside of the restrictive environment of Prince Edward and that they might be able to pursue citizenship through reading, writing, and listening despite being consistently told they shouldn't even try to achieve a place in public life.

In chapter five, I present the rhetorical education received by students in the Free School's upper unit. While the upper unit, or high school as it was referred to, shared similar objectives and goals for teaching the realities of teaching a population where many of the students were adults (18-23) meant different pedagogical practices were employed. Students in the high school were interested in displays of citizenship both inside and outside the school. The teachers in the high school took on roles as both instructors and sponsors as they supported students' development and display of their own manifestations of citizenship.

Chapter Five

The Moton High School: Vicars of the Democratic Traditions

“I’m almost as old as some of these teachers!” (Anonymous Upper School Student, circa October 7, 1963)

“I officially request that this school be accredited by the Virginia State Department of Education” (James B. Cooley, Moton High School Principal)

“Cooperation in this department was at a high level, and we feel that this factor contributed greatly to the achievement evidence by the students, many of whom tested as much as two grades in their advancement at the end of the school year” (Lemuel Bland, “Upper School End of Year Report,” June 1964)

The upper unit, affectionately known as Moton after the former local Black high school, crafted a curriculum with a variety of students in mind. Moton teachers, like those in the lower unit, were committed to encouraging students to complicate and resist the brand of citizenship demonstrated to them by Whites in Prince Edward through education. As such, students needed preparation to respond to multiple discourses. If adapting to the Free School was difficult for the younger students, it was equally so for those a few years older, many of whom had been working full time jobs and even started families.

To understand the curriculum of the upper school, I utilized the same methods that allowed me to trace the development and practices in the lower unit. Unfortunately, the archival materials for the upper unit were not as abundant as those I found for the lower unit. The archival materials I used for analysis of the upper unit included: the Moton handbook, statement of philosophy, high school accreditation report, student textbook order forms, memos and the teacher’s classroom evaluations. I was able to

acquire textbooks through purchases corroborated with titles and publishers found on the school's textbook order form. Placing the school-wide and upper unit handbooks in conversation with teaching memos, evaluations, and interviews demonstrated that some of the same themes present in the lower unit were present in the high school as well: Respect for students and their experiences, a traditional approach to education in reading, writing, and speaking, and pedagogical practices that sought to connect literacy and active citizenship were well-established practices in the upper unit as well.

The upper unit was comprised of students aged 14 to 23. In 1963, young people of this age group were considered eligible for employment. During the closure period, many young people in the Black community left Prince Edward to work full time during the years of the school closures. This young workforce provided a most unusual set of circumstances for both students and teachers. Many of the same debates that surrounded the Free School's lower units were part of the discussion about the best approach to meet the needs of these students. As described in chapter four, the thread of this conversation has origins in the Du Bois and Washington debate, with the Free School appearing to take a middle-of-the-road approach which meant students had the option of taking vocational classes in addition to academic coursework.

There was a particular concern with negotiating the best trajectory for meeting the needs of the adult learners. The Free School was fearful that a primary focus on vocational training would make students think that there were not possibilities beyond the tobacco fields, factories, or in the homes of White families— all of which were where many of the students had already found employment. In several letters between the Free School and the American Friends Service group, representatives describe their wish to

give older students vocational training and preparation. Jean Fairfax, the National Representative for Southern Programs for the American Friends Service group, wrote a letter to each member of the Board of Trustees in October of 1963 offering the suggestion of a special program targeted at the older youth returning. In this letter, Fairfax outlined the concerns she and her group had over the older students:

I do not believe they will come to school and stay unless a special program with job-training is planned for them. However, I doubt that the kind of program which would be adequate will get off the ground soon. I believe that a good vocational counseling project located wherever one can find these young would give them the incentive to return to school. Perhaps a special basic education course could be set up for them with a pre-vocational emphasis while plans are being developed for the training program. (Fairfax letter to Board of Trustees Members)

Based on my archival research and interviews, there does not seem to be evidence that such a plan ever came to fruition; however, the Free School would create a work-study program.

Jobs were made available for students interested in work. Several became employed as bus drivers, library aides, or in secretarial positions. Sullivan described the positive outcomes related to this program: “Jim Cooley made them responsible for their own actions; he also gave them an opportunity to earn spending money (and self-respect) as cafeteria workers, library assistants or playground supervisors. They became first-class citizens almost overnight because they were treated as the adults they were” (Sullivan,

Bound 121). This was an opportunity for students to be recognized as adults with responsibilities and earn small salaries as they continued their education. This type of creative work-study arrangement serves as an example of how teachers and administrations demonstrated understanding for the very unique position of the students and gave them the ability to practice citizenship skills, such as leadership and responsibility, in a work environment. Reverend Berryman, employed as one of the bus drivers for the Free School, believed that this gave him an opportunity to gain self-respect:

The first thing I can remember is they were looking for bus drivers. Being a student school bus driver that was a tremendous responsibility in and of itself. I also got to play basketball. Coach Jones was hard on us. There was a confidence I built in myself.

Berryman's responsibility of driving younger students tempered with the typical fun of joining a high school athletic team provides an excellent example of the complex situation of some of the upper school students: caught between the responsibilities of being adults, while still yearning to enjoy the activities of their school years that had been lost.

In addition to the practice of hiring students, there was an established set of objectives for academic instruction made through the upper unit's philosophy statement. This document outlined the importance of respect, clear instruction in language arts, and commitments to pedagogical practices to support the mission of the school. The upper unit operated under the guidance of the shared school-wide handbook whose themes have been discussed at length in chapter four. While the upper unit shared similar overall goals

for instruction, teachers had to develop different approaches to meeting these needs of older students. Much like the adaptation provided by Willie Mae Watson for the lower unit, an upper unit statement of philosophy and handbook provided teachers with ways to cultivate and establish the curriculum in a manner relevant to the needs of the older students. Teachers and administrators also worked towards obtaining accreditation for the Free School, a necessary step so that graduating seniors would receive a recognizable diploma for college admissions and to provide students in the lower units an example of what was possible.

Robert R. Moton High School: Vicars of the Democratic Tradition

The upper unit's philosophy statement outlines ten beliefs and intended outcomes for the Free School. The beliefs included: having students understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy, the importance of self, full guidance and support for students as they prepared for further academic pursuits and careers, the importance of offering a non-graded system, and the significance of an athletics program. James B. Cooley, principal of the upper unit, began the philosophy statement with a bold proclamation that linked the school closures of Prince Edward to the hindrance of progress all over the world:

While the Prince Edward County Public Schools were closed for four years, Virginia, the United States, and the world were restrained from some degree of progress. Now that these schools are open, the administration, faculty, and staff of Robert R. Moton High School of the Prince Edward Free School Association, as vicars of the Democratic Tradition, propose to set forth certain principles of

philosophy upon which our program must be maintained. (Philosophy

1)

The statement continued with a well acknowledged commitment to democracy, much like the Free School's school wide handbook: "First we believe that all our students should be aware of their rights, responsibilities and roles as tenants of our democracy" ("Moton Philosophy" 1). Like the school wide handbook's attention to cultivate and preserve the "democratic processes" of our country and world, the upper school's statement of philosophy reflects the same commitment through its awareness of the complexity of dealing with older students, many of whom were legally adults. Understanding the special student population helps to explain the consistent mention of "self" development that occurs in the philosophy. While the curriculum and teachers placed heavy emphasis on reading, writing, and language arts, no curriculum or pedagogy would be useful if it did not take into account the very experience that the students faced. For that reason, the statement's attention to the development of the self was crucial for the respect teachers and administrators would need to display towards students and allow students to display:

We believe in the development of 'self.'" Having the community involved was key to this action: "By nurturing and encouraging 'self' development, we strive to create and maintain a climate of 'mutual respect' among students, parents, the administration, and faculty which should produce strong individuals who can meet the challenges of an ever-changing and interdependent world. ("Moton Philosophy ")

Teaching with a focus on development of 'self' for these high school students suggests a recognized awareness of the importance of aiding students in their journey to become

individuals who would contribute to their communities. This reflected the belief that students needed to become more than simple repeaters of facts and figures. Instead, the hope was that students would be engaged members of the community. The mention of the desire to have students be able to “meet the challenges” of an “ever-changing and interdependent world” also suggests that the development of the individual was important for producing people who could think independently.

The philosophy clearly stated the belief that teachers and administrators should be true representatives of democracy: “The administration, faculty and staff of Robert R. Moton High School of the Prince Edward Free School Association, as vicars of the Democratic Tradition, purpose to set forth certain principles of philosophy upon which our program is to be maintained” (“Moton Philosophy”). Teachers and administrators would need to show students another approach to democracy in action. The use of the term vicar, is an interesting rhetorical choice. To be a vicar, or representative of democracy, suggests that one is standing in for another or those who are absent. The choice to define themselves in this way suggests that they saw their efforts in the school as being that of those who were *standing in* for the absence of democratic leadership. Cooley ended the short two page philosophy with a focus of the importance of the school as both an academic and social hub, as well as outlining objectives dedicated to the development of traits, habits, and activities “desirable for assuming family roles and responsibilities” as well as “respect for other cultures and people” (“Moton Philosophy”). Cooley’s desire to have the school and teachers be “vicars of the Democratic Tradition” demonstrates his desire to have the Free School’s upper unit provide students with another example of democracy in action. While those in the White community

demonstrated their civic action, as I will demonstrate, both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities of the Free School's upper unit would be an alternative form of democracy in action.

The upper school's objectives, as outlined in the Philosophy, ranged from a focus on academic competency, grouping of students according to ability in the classroom, the development of character traits necessary for both life as a citizen and life within family, as well as the promotion of ideas that would help students to find wise ways to use their leisure time. While each of the objectives provides general programmatic understanding, several directly speak to the creation of a rhetorical education that would meet the needs of this older group.

First, the attention to citizenship is yet again reiterated as part of Moton's Philosophy: "To develop the attitudes and knowledge necessary for effective citizenship ("Moton Philosophy"). The appearance of this objective in each of the core documents of the Free School demonstrates the importance of this theme and commitment to the school. It also served as a reminder of the school's desire to challenge the notions of citizenship that were being perpetuated by Whites and the fact that this had to be a group effort. Like the lower unit teachers and administrators, knew the importance of having the community and parents involved in the education of the students:

To practice sound principles of guidance which have their origin in the classroom, encourages early vocational selection, and includes sympathetic, pupil-centered counseling aided by home, school, community and national resources.

As described in chapter four, despite the hostility faced by Blacks in Prince Edward, many still found spaces, their homes, churches, and shared (Black) public space, where respect was given despite White opposition. Keeping the needs of the students at the forefront and involving the entire community in efforts to help support them were integral to encourage student development and awareness. This would also establish the Free School as an ally with a community whose struggle at times seemed to be theirs alone. The desire to involve the families of students encouraged a community effort towards education. This is quite different than one in which the school assumes a position of hierarchy and holds all the knowledge or knows without question the best interests of the students. These objectives provide us with an understanding of the theories and sentiments that were foundational for the upper unit, while others help us to visualize the curriculum.

Two objectives, in particular, provide further indication of how the curriculum was crafted and delivered:

To provide a flexible, balanced, and remedial curriculum which emphasizes reading and build other skills associated with the language arts geared to the needs, aptitudes and abilities of our students for their practical value;

To promote realistic grouping of our students by recognizing their present skills, ages, abilities, and achievement. (“Moton Philosophy”)

Initial conversations between Sullivan, Cooley, and Watson suggest a great deal of struggle regarding the term “remedial.” Cooley, as described in chapter four, was familiar with the Prince Edward community and worked as an administrator prior to taking his

position at the Free School. He felt strongly about the cultural relevance of student work. As my conversation with Edwards from Virginia State's archives suggested, Watson, while not a part of the upper unit faculty, did not hesitate to make her views on remediation known during initial conversations about the Free School's mission and curricula. She worried that the damage done to the students during the closures and providing a remedial education would cause further harm. Her thorough development of a traditional elementary school curriculum and Cooley's push to have the upper unit accredited by the state challenge any notion that the school provided the students with a remedial environment. The desire to give students an education that was comparable to that of traditional high schools (thus meaning primary focus on academics with options for vocational training) came under criticism from the Friends Committee. In a document titled, "Narrative of the American Friends Service Committee's Work in Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1959-1965" the lack of remedial programs available to students was cited as problematic:

Although the program was elaborate with many field trips and extra-curricular activities, there was little attention to remedial efforts, so that many of the children were left behind. (18)

It is unclear how the AFSC determined that "many of the children were left behind" as there were no data to support this claim. It does provide a layer of complexity with which to think about how and why the term remedial was used in the Free School document.

The Philosophy statement provides an excellent summation of the way in which the upper unit struck balance. The curriculum needed to be both adaptable and respectful of the needs and desires of the students who were at various levels and had their own

ideas about what to study. Interestingly, while the term remedial does appear in the final document, the term is complicated when the objectives of the list are read together and along with additional archival materials and interviews. In my research and analysis I believe this term did not speak to a particular type of pedagogical or curricular approach that sought to stiffly students; but instead, allowed students in the upper unit who needed an approach that was below the “normal” level of high school students to have access to such methods. As I will show, students were provided with work that would meet their level and not patronize them. As such, a bit of history on the use of remedial is important here.

The history of remediation in the field of rhetoric and composition is quite tenuous. The term garners much critique for what it has come to stand for. Often, when we hear the term we think of Mina Shaughnessy’s work with basic writing students and the implications of systems that track and label these terms place around students. Many scholars have described the positive outcomes of remedial or basic writing instruction for providing access to people of color, such as Deborah Mutnick in “The Strategic Value of Basic Writing: An Analysis of the Current Moment” where she defends the work of these courses in their ability to “open the doors of higher education” (69). Others, like Keith Gilyard, have at times, found fault with the “inane recycling of students through non-credit courses, the skill and drill silliness, misdirected-but hey, cost effective-testing crazes, and exploitative personnel practices” (39). The sides and terms of the debate are too large to cover in this project and the issue continues to be a contested topic in our discipline. However, to put the Free School curriculum into its appropriate historical context, one must understand that the idea of remediation was not always connotative of

the kind of trapping/tracking situation that it has now come to describe. For example, in Smith's *American Reading Instruction* she traces the history of remedial reading instruction. Smith notes that during the early part of the twentieth century remedial reading instruction was linked to the terms "reading disability and reading deficiency" (241). Early researches in this area lead educators to give more attention to "readiness at the beginning level" (243). Research and scholarship encouraged practices for reading readiness. During the late 1940s, an interest in teaching reading at both the developmental and advanced levels was suggested. One of the first places this concern showed up was in William Gray's *Reading in the High School and College*:

A heightened appreciation in the importance of reading a growing recognition of the nature of the reading problems faced by students, wider and more aired use of reading required by recent curriculum changes, greater ability needed to interpret critically, the unsatisfactory character of the personal reading of many students, wider recognition and concern for the poor reader, and competence in reading acquired through continuous development. (89:1-4) (qtd. in Smith 275)

Thus, remediation in this context does not suggest the same kind of entrapment we have come to identify. Instead, it speaks of a process to help strengthen students' reading skills. Further, Gray articulated a need for instruction in reading that gave attention to advanced instruction as well:

A rigorous attack on reading problems at the more advanced levels is a responsibility of all high schools and colleges. The effort made during

recent years to correct the deficiencies of poor readers is only one important aspect of the problem. (qtd. in Smith 275).

The Free School appeared to be following direction of others during this time period who sought to provide attention to reading at the high school level.

Instruction in the upper school was presented in such a way as to provide students with material that would benefit them both for future employment and in their personal lives:

To develop a realistic economic outlook for students who will not attend college by providing basic training for vocational competence;
To develop traits among all students which are essential and desirable for assuming family roles and responsibilities.

While it might seem that moving from school into the personal lives of students would have no real place in the curriculum, we must remember the remarkable circumstances of the Free School. Blacks in Prince Edward were expected to place work over education, and in most cases, work meant serving Whites to support their own families. The philosophy statement details commitments deemed most important for empowering this group and served as introduction to the guidelines and policies of the handbook.

The upper unit's handbook was as much a repository for guidelines and policies as it was a means to rally teachers and advise them on the best practices for use with these students. The handbook included the teacher roster, a description of committee assignments, the program of studies, bus supervision duties, and teacher and classroom checklists.

A “Principal’s Message” from Cooley opens the handbook and outlines the document’s general purpose: to provide teachers with guidelines for the operations of the school, to remind them of the need to remain flexible as the year progresses. Cooley writes: “as the program develops, adjustments and changes will be made involving assignments and other responsibilities” (“Moton Handbook”). Like Sullivan’s warning and acceptance of the “Herculean” task described at the beginning of the school-wide bulletin, Cooley reminded teachers that this endeavor will be difficult and as such, he asks them to be full partners in this effort:

It is my hope that each of you will assume equal responsibility in all areas of operation. Our success will depend on the maximum cooperation of all teachers and will require concerted effort and a dedication to duty. We have accepted the challenge; let us prove we are equal to the task ahead. (“Moton Handbook”)

The guidelines for teachers were similar to what one would expect in any school: attendance at faculty meetings, submission of reports, monitoring student absences and late arrivals, avoiding fraternization with students, responsibility for the planning and implementation of all learning activities, and working to carry out the overall mission and values of the school (“Moton Handbook”). The Free School’s school-wide objectives are reflected through the Moton handbook. Each of the objectives for the curriculum focused on promoting citizenship through a range of content aimed at developing what was believed to be requisite knowledge for a good citizen.

Students were required to have twenty-three units for graduation. While the school was n-graded at the lower level, the upper unit was divided into four levels from

freshman through senior years. The only courses *required* of the students were English and government. Electives included a range of course options: algebra, geometry, trigonometry, chemistry, physics, sociology, foreign language, music, agriculture, industrial education, home economics, art, and commercial subjects. The diverse array of electives and the fact that they were open to all students meant that students had some agency in deciding what they wanted to study. As one former student reflected during an interview, for many, these electives had a lifelong impact on career options post-graduation:

I remember the reading and the writing classes. The other thing, I had never touched a typewriter. I didn't know what shorthand meant, how to read it. Those things would help me out later in life in my career.

(Johnson)

The requirement to only take English and Government again attests to the commitment of the school to provide students with literacy training as preparation for citizenship. Students were required to decide between two courses of study as a means of determining electives. They could either take electives towards fulfilling agreements for a preparatory program for those who intended to go beyond high school or a terminal program for those who wanted to work as soon as they graduated. This allowed students to have some agency in what type of life they wanted to prepare for post-graduation and avoided tracking them into working only in certain areas. The attention given to language arts included speaking, reading, and writing. Much like the students in the lower unit, students were provided with instruction in ASE that was respectful of the students' culture and community.

In addition to the classes required for graduation, the handbook listed the types of extracurricular activities available for students and cited these as being “an integral part of the high school program” (“Moton Handbook”). Students could play basketball or baseball, run track, work on the student paper, serve in the student patrol, and participate in the creative dance group, the dramatic club, choral society, or Future Black Leaders of America. Again, these activities provided students with an opportunity to experience *real* school activities and enhanced classroom activities. Sullivan reflected on the need to host a wide variety of activities to meet the needs of older students: “To meet the needs of so diverse a student body, and to hold those students who might be discouraged by the seemingly monumental odds against them, the Moton faculty kept activities going at full tilt until five-thirty each afternoon and on Saturdays too. The library and science labs, the art and music rooms, all stayed open” (Sullivan 120). Allowing for these spaces to stay open longer and providing activities for all students helped to meet the core curricular goals of providing students with activities that would not only develop their ability to think but also to express their thoughts as citizens of this school community.

Opportunities to read, speak, study, and use language provided students a chance to practice in diverse spaces outside of the typical constraints found in traditional classroom spaces.

This also supported the school’s mission of education for the whole student. In addition to the extracurricular activities, students were given the opportunity to construct their own student government council. This council, comprised of a group of elected student representatives, was charged with drafting a set of guidelines for school-sponsored activities. Sullivan found the students’ self-governance quite remarkable:

At the same time, a student council, elected by the students themselves, was given the responsibility for drafting ground rules covering all activities. Their rules were more rigid than I had expected, and I was pleasantly surprised at the positive reaction of the student body to the code of conduct established by their peers. Especially encouraging was the continued attendance of the older men and women. (Sullivan 120-1)

Students were allowed the space and control to develop their own rules for governance and were able to put the mission of the school into practice. They were given the opportunity to be agents in this space, to create rules, negotiate, and enact the kinds of change and development they wanted to see. The Moton handbook further supported this type of involvement. For example, homeroom teachers were asked to “organize homerooms with officers or student leaders to plan activities which will meet the interest and needs of members” (“Moton Handbook”). The homeroom period was also to be an extension of the learning classroom and gave students a different time/space to practice their rhetorical skills by arranging “panel discussions, student debates and other discussions” (“Moton Handbook”). Free Schoolteachers encouraged students to use language and participate in a variety of discourses for different purposes. Language and argument were not restricted to just the language arts classroom, which demonstrated the importance of rhetorical training in all parts of their lives.

The objectives outlined in the school-wide handbook, as found in chapter four, are key in helping us understand the parameters that helped set the foundation for reading, speaking, and writing instruction in the high school. In particular, the focus on

citizenship, respect, and academic competence were key. As I have suggested in chapter four, this focus on respect could easily be read as submission and, as I have indicated with regards to the lower level, this must be complicated. While it may appear that this could suggest loyalty to a wider community (namely Whites) who did nothing to reciprocate, contextualizing it with the lived realities of 1963 Prince Edward County challenges our perception. However, the efforts made on the part of teachers and administrators to link students to people outside of Prince Edward who were supportive of their plight and needs suggests that maybe the schools had a wider vision of community. Having teachers project and demonstrate genuine respect for the school, subjects, and students created a positive atmosphere.

Like the Lower level teachers, Upper unit teachers were encouraged to incorporate lessons on national Black history, and more explicitly, contributions to Prince Edward by the Black community as well. Watson's pamphlet on local contributions by Blacks was circulated throughout the school and students attended weekly assemblies where every effort was made to provide programs that discussed civil rights, Africa, and Black history. The school-wide handbook made such activities a part of the curriculum: "Local resources and persons within the community should be fully utilized" ("Moton Handbook" 3). For many of these occasions, instructors invited speakers to come in for presentations. Many of these visits ranged from locals in the community to those of national prominence: Virginia's former Governor Colgate Darden, Bobby Mitchell, a player for the Washington Redskins, and Robert Kennedy (Sullivan 196-199). High school students were also able to venture outside of Prince Edward County. Presenting

students with both Black and White speakers further spoke to the school's intention of resisting the type segregation so prevalent in Prince Edward.

There were visits to the United Nations in New York, a visit to the home of Jackie Robinson, and the opportunity to visit the Supreme Court (Sullivan 189). The trips and speakers were necessary for students to learn about their history and to witness opportunities where Blacks (or allies) were in positions of power and could speak to them and with them in ways that consistently challenged racist discourses. Students were to gain critical perspectives, listen to different ideas, and witness a multitude of rhetorical approaches that challenged and resisted the racist rhetoric that permeated Prince Edward.

The accreditation material, in addition to the philosophy and handbook, is also key to understanding how the mission of the Free School was implemented. This was one of the most telling documents in the archive. Although the school was to be in existence for only one year, the administration wanted to provide graduates with a state recognized diploma. Cooley's role as faculty member was integral to the success of the upper school because of his local knowledge and experience in being an administrator in a locality not far from Prince Edward. As an administrator from Brunswick County, Cooley was both aware of the needs of this student population and the necessary measures that would have to be taken for the state's accreditation procedures.

In January of 1964 Cooley and Sullivan filed a preliminary annual High School report to Virginia's Department of Education. The request for accreditation would make visible to the entire state that this school and its students wanted to be recognized for the work they did in the classroom. This document would also demonstrate the type of learning that was occurring in this school, further seeking to disrupt the established ideas

and stereotypes about what kinds of learning could and should take place for Blacks. The document outlined the types of courses offered and provided a description of the facilities, as well as the background of instructors. Again, all of this information challenged the position that these particular students were not worthy or capable of receiving a *real* education.

In addition to the information outlined above, the accreditation report consisted of information on the textbooks used for each course and library acquisitions. In the section that follows, I provide a close analysis of the textbooks illuminates the school's approach to teaching reading, writing, and speaking ASE. The textbook analysis must also be placed into conversation with the evaluation and reflection remarks from teachers and interviews from students to gain a holistic understanding of how instruction in ASE was locally adapted to meet the needs of these students.

Building Better English

Despite the extensive nature of the Free School archive, there was not the same type of material in the archive that spoke explicitly to curricular work done in Moton's language arts classroom. To understand the way in which writing, reading, and speaking were taught, I analyze the textbook series used in the upper unit. The titles of textbooks were listed on textbook order forms I found in the archive as well as in the accreditation report. I purchased these books through online bookstores. The primary textbooks used were part of a series from Harper and Row Publishers called *The New Building Better English Text and Grammar Handbook*. There were a total of five listed for use in grades 8-12 and of those I was able to obtain four total textbooks and one handbook of exercises for the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: *The New Building Better English, 9, The New*

Building Better English 10, The New Building Better English 11, and The New Building Better English 12.

As might be expected, the textbooks' approach and design were similar to allow for continuity in the series and the lessons to be scaffolded in a way that would build upon the skills learned from the previous year. The twelfth grade textbook is the only one in the series that differed tremendously and as such, will be discussed on its own. The preface, identical for each book of the series except the twelfth grade version, opened with a response to the following question: "What qualities, then, should distinguish a good English series?" The answer to this question provides an understanding of the curriculum and pedagogical stance of the series. The editors first describe the need for the book's contents to be clearly organized: "The content must show careful, logical organization; and that organization must be clearly apparent...The arrangement of material must be such as to make it readily adaptable to varied types of curricula" (*Building Better English 9*, iii). Second, editors outlined the need to have all areas of communication—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—as receiving "ample treatment, not merely token recognition" (*Building Better English 9*, iii). Third, the preface suggests a need for instruction in all matters of direction to be clear and for practice exercises to be both useful and appealing: "Instruction must be clear and specific, with rules, definitions, and guides easily distinguishable from introductions and exercises. The practice material must be useful, varied, and appealing" (*Building Better English 9*, iii). Fourth, the editors presented the work of the textbook and class to be relevant to the lives of students outside of the classroom: "An integral part of the texts should be concrete provision for applying English skills to the work in all subjects as well

as to life outside school” (*Building Better English 9*, iii). This desire to make the work of the textbook applicable to real world experiences was in direct accord with the upper unit’s mission and the mission of the school overall. Finally, the editors were aware of the need to make the texts logical for their audience: “The content must ‘make sense’ to the students who use the books. It is the belief of the makers of this series that boys and girls do not object to hard work if they understand what they are to do and how they are to go about it” (*Building Better English 9*, iii). The straightforward design of the textbook would be invaluable for most classrooms, but even more so for this particular group of students.

Students were understandably doubtful and suspicious of outsiders. It was probably not a coincidence that the texts’ transparency with regard to expectations and methodology served as a good match for students who would not want to lose anymore time. As one teacher recounted a student who was tired of not making progress during the past four years said:

We’ve been out for four years. I’m tired of talking about it now. I’m here to work.

The transparency highlighted in the textbook was complementary of the school’s overall approach to working with students.

Each of the first three textbooks in the series was divided into three sections with multiple chapters making up each section. The first group of chapters were categorized as *Speaking and Listening* and was further divided into four chapters: Becoming a Better Speaker, Talking with Others, Speaking in Special Situations, and Learning to Listen. The second set, *Reading*, included chapters on learning to use the library, dictionary use,

building a vocabulary, reading newspapers and magazines, and interpreting symbols and pictures. A section on *Writing* included chapters on capitalization and punctuation, writing paragraphs and themes, writing for special purposes, writing letters, and writing for fun. Each book in the series included a concluded section about building sentences. While these three sections, *Reading*, *Speaking*, and *Listening*, and *Writing* are found in each of the textbooks their order of appearance differs. In the ninth grade text the section on *Speaking and Listening* comes first, followed by *Reading* and *Writing*. For tenth grade, *Speaking and Listening* starts the text, then *Writing*, and then *Reading*. In the eleventh grade version, the titles for the section change slightly but the order matches that of what students had in the tenth grade textbook: *Speak and Listen!*, *Read and Grow!*, and *Write and Refine!*. The tenth grade book also included a grammar handbook called *Know the Structure!*.

The overall approach this series utilized was to emphasize training in speaking, reading, and writing as skills necessary for both school and public life. Through descriptions of what counted as “good” or “bad” habits related to these skills, students using these textbooks received a fairly traditional high language arts curriculum. As I will show, placing the textbooks against curriculum memos, the handbook, teacher reflections and interviews, demonstrates an approach to language instruction that was adapted to meet the unique needs of these students.

Each book’s section on speaking and listening began with instructions on how students can work to become better speakers alongside specific instructions aimed at helping students talk with others, speak during special occasions, and follow practices for good listening. Students are encouraged to think of listening as an “art” and are apprised

of how this can help them make great gains in the world: “The skill of listening is important for achievement in the world of work and in the world of social relations. Listening to and following directions, remembering and restating messages accurate, and hearing each word and each inflection of the voice of a speaker—all are necessary to success” (*Building Better English 10*, 8). The however do not rely on instructing students in listening as a *passive* skill. Students are also taught to think of listening as a necessary component to analysis: “Listening with full attention means more than merely being aware of sound. This kind of listening requires careful attention of the mind, intelligent understanding of the ideas heard, and thoughtful analysis of the meaning by consideration of these questions: *What? How? Where? Why? Who?*” (*Building Better English 10*, 8). This type of listening was very much aligned with the Free School’s desire to create students who would be prepared to “sift the truths from the untruths.” A textbox of guidelines for becoming a better listener accompanied the listening section in each of the three chapters and included suggestions such as:

To listen with full attention and take notes to concentrate on what is being said.

Ask questions in class when you don’t understand some point. If you do not understand, your interest and attention will fail.

Listen with full attention so that you will not have to ask people to repeat remarks addressed to you. (*Building Better English 9 and 10*, pages 59 and 9 respectfully)

This attention to listening as an activity that should help students learn the importance of asking questions, understand, and improve their life complemented the Free School’s

desire to prepare students to be thoughtful participants in a democracy. Like the pattern established in each section of the textbook, once students were introduced to the topic covered, they were given a series of exercises to put these skills into practice. Some of the activities included having all students listen to a talk on the radio or television and take notes. Students would compare their findings to learn what similarities existed amongst what they heard (*Building Better English 10*, 10). Other activities asked students to practice “taking assignments” or listening for note taking. Students were advised to practice jotting notes and to think of them as guides for their lessons (*Building Better English 9*, 62). Some of these practices were encouraged in the upper unit as many of the former students recounted giving and listening to oral recitations as part of class. The small class sizes in the upper unit also allowed for students to practice speaking and listening without the pressure of performance in front of large groups (Sullivan “Bulletin #10”). The textbooks deemed listening important in a variety of spaces, not just school, and included a chapter on listening with regard to media consumption.

Students were encouraged to be *active* recipients of TV and radio programs and to think and evaluate them critically. This particular portion of the textbook would have been a compliment to the school’s objective of helping students effectively discern propaganda as outlined in the school-wide handbook. In this section students are asked to analyze television programs and move past responses that provide just “good” or “bad” as reactions. The editors encouraged students to think about their reaction and practice sound methods of evaluation: “Since good programs do not just happen, however, it is to your advantage to learn how to decide why one program is better worth your attention than is another of the same type” (64). Free School teachers did have the capability of

using audiovisual equipment to supplement instruction in school. Television shows and movies were often shown for educational purposes and this text could have provided useful grounds for discussion (“Audiovisual Memo”). Again, this type of activity suggests that this textbook could have been used to encourage students to take an active role in their media consumption, further assisting in the Free School’s mission of creating critical participants in society.

There was a great deal of attention given to the use of body movements as a component of speech giving. Similar to the instruction provided by classical theorists and eighteenth-century elocutionary practices, students were instructed in “The Use of the Body in Speech” sections to acquire the proper body language as part of their delivery. Students found numerous cartoons, sketches, and images depicting good and bad mannerisms. The section opens with a short reading and discussion prompt that asks students to consider how stage fright might be a means of generating more positive speaking habits: “Strange as it may seem, good speakers know that stage fright is actually an aid. They know that this feeling grew out of their sense of responsibility toward the audience and that consequently it stimulates them to do their best” (*Building Better English 9, 3*). The editors encouraged students to think about how their body language was also a means of gaining and displaying confidence: “Knowing how to use your body during a talk will help you gain confidence” (*Building Better English 9, 4*). A guide for effective use of the body during speaking focused on posture, eye movements, and the body:

Posture. Stand in a comfortable position with your feet a short way apart and with one foot slightly ahead of the other. Let your arms hang easily at your sides.

Do not hunch over a speaker's stand or lean on a desk, for such positions not only look awkward but also interfere with proper breathing and use of the voice.

Eye movements. Look at your audience. Move your gaze from one person to another so that each feels you are talking to him. Do not look out the window, down at the floor or up at the ceiling.

Body. Avoid repeated movements that many irritate or distract your audience. (*Building Better English 9, 4*)

Awareness of audience and body language might be a challenge for those students not accustomed to direct interaction with White teachers. This type of training could have perhaps encouraged students to feel more confident and comfortable speaking to a variety of audiences. This was the first integrated school in the county, and only the second one in Virginia. As I described in chapter four through Morgan's descriptions on how the Black community in the South developed language practices because of race, simply speaking to a White teacher could have proved uncomfortable. It would suggest that teachers saw this as an important practice for these students given their experiences in Prince Edward.

A litany of postures and behaviors to avoid, such as slipping hands into and out of pockets, fastening and unfastening buttons, fingering the hair, or rubbing the nose or an ear were listed as things to avoid. Further, students are provided with activities meant

to cultivate control and build awareness about the body. In these exercises, students were encouraged to assume various roles or situations as they practiced pantomime as a means by which to communicate their ideas through the body. Instructing Black students in the South to be aware of their audience was complicated. The rules of conversation between Blacks and Whites were constructed around strict unwritten rules about how these two groups were to interact. As I demonstrated in chapter three, these *codes* both acknowledged and challenged power structures. One of the interview participants provided insight on how the relationship between students and White teachers *could* have been awkward for some. Ms. Johnson reflected on how her previous experience in a Northern school helped prepare her for the Free School year:

I knew that Ms. Strauss and the other white teachers that were teaching me weren't monsters because I had gone to school. We didn't have have White teachers in elementary school. So, by going to school in Connecticut I knew that you couldn't broad paint the whole White race with one brush. I learned that in Connecticut. They were concerned about us learning. They were really nice.

From her experience we can see how some students might have been uncomfortable having White teachers for the first time.

After close attention to the importance of body language, the next sections called on students to analyze their voices through a series of exercises that would help one to ascertain the good or bad qualities of one's voice. Sections such as "The Use of the Voice," discusses how voice and speech were connected to personalities: "Your speech, good or bad, is an important part of your personality. It reveals at once both your training

and your background. The ability to speak correctly and pleasantly will help you in making a living and in getting along with people” (*Building Better English 9, 7*). This attention to language and voice as markers of identity may not seem noteworthy now, but it is important given the lives of students and the Black community’s developed patterns of techniques that were reflective of the position they occupied locally.

A list of questions meant as a diagnostic for determining poor speech offered students the opportunity to analyze their voices and speaking patterns:

Is my voice too weak?

Is it unpleasantly loud and shrill?

Is the rate too rapid or too slow?

Do I send my voice to all parts of the room?

Do I pronounce words correctly?

Do I enunciate distinctly each part of the word?

Do I change rate and tone to fit the meaning? (7)

The series encouraged students to record their voices, listen to themselves, and analyze their speaking patterns. Just as I have described in chapter four, teachers encouraged attention in the lower unit on recognizing their speaking patterns and learning to adjust for different audiences, and upper school students were encouraged to do the same. None of the students I interviewed commented on these types of speaking practices or exercises and there isn’t a sense from the materials in the archive about how this might have been utilized in the classroom. Both Sullivan’s memoir and the yearbook indicate that students were interested in choral speaking which suggests that some enjoyed public speaking. Given the climate of the Prince Edward and the attempted silencing of those throughout

the South, the textbook's focus on public speaking doesn't take into account why this might have been a complex issue for Black students. I do imagine that the small class sizes and group work might have made it easier for students to speak in front of others. Despite Prince Edward's unjust treatment and efforts to silence the Black community, Free School teachers were dedicated to supporting their students as they worked to develop their voices and empower themselves. Free School students welcomed opportunities that allowed them to use their voices in a variety of spaces.

Given the opportunities for activities both inside and outside of the classroom for students to participate with regard to public speaking, it seems that this textbook series would have contributed to the school's general mode of instruction. The speech section provided a number of exercises that ranged from individual oral presentations and reading passages aloud, to peer collaboration on oral projects, all aimed at helping students to practice delivery given a range of speech making situations.

In addition to oral performances, students were given guidance on how best to develop strong conversational skills: "Since much of your waking time is spent in talking with others, you form stronger and stronger conversational habits every day. Why not make them good ones!" (*Building Better English 11*, 56). They were encouraged to be good listeners, speak clearly, face their audience, choose topics that would be of interest to the group, and to always learn to have a wide range of topics to discuss. Each book in the series outlined a number of ways in which students could recognize their conversational shortcomings: "The activities that follow should start you to thinking seriously about your possible shortcomings. Recognizing your conversational failings is the first step toward becoming a more likable person" (*Building Better English 11*, 57).

This textbook series gave students multiple opportunities to assess their skills through small group activities, a practice that seemed to be encouraged throughout the Free School in Sullivan's teaching bulletins. Throughout several of these bulletins Sullivan encouraged teachers to provide students with a means of assessing their own progress. This gave students the power and agency to determine their own progress as learners. The independent learning process was strengthened through actively contributing to the direction of the classroom.

Teachers were instructed by the upper school handbook to allow students to have free time for talking and discussion. Reflections from teachers in the Upper Unit also often commented on the positive contribution of "Talk Time" in the classroom. This activity meant setting aside time during homeroom for students to bring any topic of interests to the class as a point of discussion. In one evaluation a teacher recounted:

The technique or method of beginning each day with "Talk Time" has gradually caused each pupil to make a contribution as they talk about: weather reports, news events, etc. This sets the stage for effective learning throughout the day.

This practice seemed to prove a useful method for encouraging students to speak, something that was quite necessary as many of the students were found to be very quiet during the beginning months of the school, especially when talking with White teachers. Despite the entrenched codes of the South, in no way were students told to change their stance, divert their eyes, or use different language for White audiences. Sullivan reflects on the change in behavior he noticed from students who would not look at him in the beginning of the school year.

Students were provided with instructions for giving oral presentations, which included instructions on how to choose a topic, make outlines, and project one's voice appropriately for your audience (*Building Better English 9*, 30). The section includes numerous activities for students to practice giving individual talks. Some of the exercises included providing students with hypothetical situations to create talks about:

Give a talk suggesting an original kind of work that a person could do if he were unable to find a job. Note the following examples.

- a) One girl bought interesting magazines and went from house to house in her neighborhood, renting them daily for a small fee.
- b) A boy kept bees and from their honey earned three hundred dollars a year.
- c) Two sisters cared for pets during the owners' vacations (*Building Better English, 9 31*)

This type of role-play was an opportunity to practice speaking and listening skills for a variety of situations. As students moved through the book series, the situations were often provided more complexity and were also more geared towards prospective speaking circumstances on the job. Again, all of these are meant to prepare students for what awaited beyond school.

The *Reading* section provided a wide range of instructions on everything from developing strong reading habits, strengthening vocabulary, how to use the library, to approaches for reading comprehension. The opening of one section on reading extols the virtues of readings: "Books can teach you much. They can give you pleasure; they can serve as inspirations to you; they can become old and trusty friends. In addition, books

can help you in many daily-life situations” (*Building Better English 11*, 87). As I have suggested, this was not an approach to remedial instruction in reading that stifled the development of students. Teachers made all attempts to meet the needs of their students regardless their level.

Students were given general instructions in the ways in which reading comprehension might be used to achieve given a variety of tasks. With a total enrollment of 599 students in the upper unit spread across grades eight through twelve, teachers were assigned to small reading groups so that students could receive reading lessons and practice in groups that resembled tutoring sessions more than a traditional classroom structure (“Accreditation Report”). For students in the upper unit, teaching reading in this method was believed to be the best procedure, because the process could account for the different levels of skill and ability. Because these students’ educations were interrupted for four years prior to the establishment of the Free School meant that a strong reading program would be needed. A teaching evaluation report from a teacher who visited an upper school class, tells the story of a young woman who could not read and her visceral reaction to the language arts classroom:

A 14-year-old girl got sick to her stomach because she doesn’t know how to read.

Thankfully, this type of physical reaction to reading seems to not have been a normal occurrence, it does speak to the power and gravity of the situation students faced.

Providing students with individualized approaches to the teaching of reading was a useful method that would enable them to work in small groups, lessening the embarrassment felt by many who were not reading at their levels. This method would allow for students to

receive individualized attention and because of the non-graded system, they could move quickly through the material, advancing to whatever level best met their needs.

The largest portion of the textbook's Reading section covered topics on how to read for tests, rapid reading for light texts (novels and short stories), and skimming for understanding. Students were provided guidelines and sample passages to use for practice. Reading comprehension was also covered, as students were encouraged to take notes, look for central ideas, outline lengthy or heavy pieces for understanding, and use summaries as a means of understanding. All of these exercises were important for students who had been told that they were not capable or worthy of the opportunity of this type of learning. It also helped to facilitate skills necessary for the development of critical thinking.

Sullivan's "Bulletin #10," dated September 26, 1963, described the laboratory approach to instruction he believed to be the best method for allowing the maximum amount of material to be covered as comfortably as possible for students. Sullivan indicates this approach and the relationship between teachers and students as one that more closely mirrored a tutoring session:

Some of the students should be placed in a highly individualized teacher-pupil relationship, especially for advanced courses, with the teacher acting primarily as a consultant to the student who in turn, would use independent study materials and procedures to the fullest extent. ("Bulletin #10," 1-2)

This structure allowed students attention, privacy, and agency with regard to practice reading. Sullivan noted the usefulness of this approach for the Language Arts classroom

in particular: “The team teaching approach in the school can be invaluable to the improvement of instruction in the Language Arts Program” (“Bulletin #9,” 4). Further, this approach would allow for teachers to place students in subgroups when necessary for writing and reading exercises and to come back to large group for “activities such as extension of vocabulary, dramatization, choral speaking, presentation of oral reports” (“Bulletin #9, 5). Again, this textbook seemed to be a wonderful match to the curriculum and practices of the school’s language arts program.

The third component to each textbook, *Writing*, began with the importance of capitalization and punctuation. Students were reminded of the importance of these two features as being integral to the undertaking of any writing activity: “If you want to be sure that people will not be baffled or annoyed by what you write, you must learn to capitalize and to punctuate” (*Building Better English 9*, 145). A series of instructions for periods, colons, semicolons, commas, and capitalization follow. Students were taught to think about the importance of good spelling and provided suggestions for improving spelling that ranged from developing a genuine desire to spell correctly, the importance of pronunciation, mastering spelling rules, and keeping track of the words that are most troublesome. The section continues with learning activities, vocabulary lists, and homonyms. This method of introducing the *skills* before beginning writing is a traditional skills based approach that highlights the importance of knowing the rules before proceeding. As with the lower unit, teachers of the upper unit also reported on the difficulty students had with regards to writing quite early in the school year. Teaching reflections from September 1963 note the following concerns:

Writing-They have had insufficient practice and training.

To me writing seems to be the most difficult for the children to recapture.

Reading-Writing. I have so many that cannot seem to remember the words. Some try to memorize. Those that have had schooling since '59 are doing well; however, I can say progress is being made by those who have not been in school.

These reflections help to explain why a pragmatic approach to the teaching of reading and writing was taken. The traditional approach combined with the benefit of the non-graded classroom would give students the ability to learn the basic skills necessary at their own pace.

The final section of the Writing section included suggestions on how to write for fun, such as autobiographies and short stories. The instructions in these sections were also reflective of an approach to teach writing that would place rules even upon the “creative.” For example, in a section titled “Ways to Achieve Forceful, Original Writing” students are encouraged to make their “ideas vivid and real with the use of words and phrases” (188). With ten suggestions for how to do this, students were encouraged to think about the importance of creating relationships with readers. Students are advised to avoid wordiness, repetition, flowery expressions, and choose accurate substitutions for words that are overused. The admonishment of these practices certainly does not speak to an awareness of the importance of African American rhetorical practices. Given the time period, it would have been unlikely that teachers would have even known that an African American rhetorical tradition existed. Sullivan, however, did work to encourage students to balance the skills and drills approach to the teaching of writing with methods that

respected the *play* and *craft* students needed to become better writers: “Never stress the mechanics of writing at the expense of ideas and enthusiasm for writing. Undue emphasis on form crushes the imagination and skills originality. Correct form will come when pupils are taught the mechanics of writing and are encouraged to proofread everything they write” (Sullivan, “Bulletin #20,” 6).

The textbook’s first mention of writing as a practice *slightly* divorced from rules about grammar and spelling comes in sections where students are encouraged to think about the importance writing serves in their lives:

Are there certain situation in which the ability to put your thoughts down on paper is a help to you? What advantages does the written word have over the spoken word? What would happen to books, newspapers, and other printed materials if no one learned to write? Are there times when the only practical way to communicate is through writing? If your discussion of the preceding questions has led you to the conclusion that writing is an important form of communication, then you will want to learn to write well. (*Building Better English 9*, 182-3)

What followed were suggestions giving students various ideas for topics: favorite sports, being left-handed, gym class, first dates, high heels, and square dancing (*Building Better English 9*, 184-5). Students are reassured that while it is often easier to write about yourself, numerous topics can be pursued:

Yes, the easiest subject for your write is you: your thoughts, your attitudes, your interests, and your experiences. These offer you more

topics than you can possibly use in the entire school year. Remember, too, that you need not be limited to your own experiences. Think of your many secondhand experiences—those you secure from reading, from watching motion pictures or television, from listening to the radio from talking with people. All these experiences offer you subjects. (*Building Better English 9*, 184)

From teaching evaluations it seems that most students in the upper unit had a plethora of topics they enjoyed speaking and writing about. As I described, “Talk Time” during homeroom allowed students an opportunity to open up about topics of interests. Students were also given the ability to write about their interests in an effort to make school a more pleasant environment. This desire on the part of teachers to make school a pleasant learning environment seemed to also extend to grading practices for some. One teacher recounted the need to mark and assess for error less in an evaluation from November of 1963:

Make school a more pleasant place to be for the child. Less red lettered POOR on written assignments of students who can't write and couldn't possibly understand the words of those mimeographed papers they have to finish and fill in for homework or class work or whatever.

This teacher's reaction, as well as those of others who name writing as one of the most difficult skills for students to master, is perhaps a good marker of how the curriculum and textbook recommendations were adapted to meet the needs of students and not just followed from whatever the textbook suggested. It is clear that these students worked through their textbooks and traditional reading and writing assignments, but it is also

evident that their experience with rhetorical education meant the inclusion of other opportunities to practice literacy.

The twelfth grade version of *Building Better English* was intended to be more of a handbook rather than a textbook according to the forward:

This book is designed as handbook, or textbook, or both. It is organized for easy reference in classes using it as a manual in connection with various language projects...It contains material useful to all young citizens,, those who will attend college and those who will seek remunerative employment. The materials of the book are sufficiently diversified to meet the varied needs of individuals.

(Building Better English 12, 5)

The editors note in the forward their intention to have the book serve students both inside and outside the classroom: “throughout the book the student is encouraged to apply the principles learned to his own speaking and writing needs inside and outside of school”

(Building Better English 12, 5). For those students in the twelfth grade of the Free School this textbook would certainly have supported the school’s mission to prepare them to become thoughtful and engaged citizens.

The twelfth grade text begins with a review of grammar. Students are provided instruction in sentence structure, verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and how to develop clear ideas in sentences. Next, instruction on “clarity in phrasing” is provided through directions and exercises on giving direct explanations, providing context, using concrete language, word choice, and the purpose of pictures, diagrams, cartoons, and graphs. There is an interlude on the importance of

proofreading before students move onto building paragraphs. The final sections served as preparation for writing research reports or writing in the workplace, both topics that speak to life after school. The research component provided students with a comprehensive list on how best to approach a project as well as the importance of research: “the thoughtful student is one who insists upon accurate facts before he draws conclusions. He knows how to find the facts that are available. He knows also how to report to others the facts that he has found” (*Building Better English 12*, 269). Through instruction in a four-step process, students are assured that no matter the topic, they can prove to be successful researchers. These four basic steps included:

1. Selecting and Defining the Problem
2. Finding the Facts
3. Organizing the Facts
4. Reporting the Facts (*Building Better English 12*, 269)

For each of the three steps students are provided with exercises to practice the skills associated with each step. All of this would have been useful for students regardless of their choice to attend college after graduation or to join the workforce. The prescriptive approach to teaching writing in this manner was not remarkable or unique to the Free School. This method of teaching writing was clearly a reflection of the time period. It reflected a belief that to teach writing meant one had to teach rules. What was remarkable was that after four years, these students were finally given the opportunity to learn.

The section on “Using English in Business” consisted of comprehensive chapters on professional writing. Students began with information covering how to read job advertisements, complete applications, write cover letters, and directions for prepare for job interviews. Next, a variety of different types of business writing opportunities are covered: the letter of purchase order, requests for payment, telegrams, and interoffice

memos. Instructions are provided on the use of filing and filing systems, as well as methods for indexing and record keeping. Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop skills that would aid them in finding jobs outside of the fields and homes of White families provided them ideas on options available that were outside of the traditional.

In addition to the textbooks, Moton students had access to a well-stocked library. The very fact that students were supplied with textbooks and a library of close to one thousand books was monumental. Many Black schools in the South had neither textbooks for each student or a library so vast (Sullivan 53). Magazine order forms in the archive point to the purchase of a number of Black periodicals such as newspapers and *Ebony Magazine*. In addition, subscriptions to other popular periodicals were purchased to provide variety: *Life*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Farm Journal*, *Consumer Report*, *Science Digest*, *Seventeen*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *School Musician*. Teachers were also made aware through the circulation of flyers from Watson, the lower unit's language arts curriculum lead, of courses that used books from Black writers. A March 10, 1964 Memo from Willie Mae Watson to instructors of both the upper and lower units advertised a course being offered at Wayne State University whose focus was "American Negro Authors" and described the course's focus and the possibility of having a course where students could even focus only on Black authors:

Dr. Donald B. Gibson, Dept. of English of the College of Liberal Arts announced that the proposed course grew out of an awareness that it is possible for a student to complete a doctoral degree in English or American Literature without encountering a single Negro author in his

formal training at either the undergraduate or graduate level. (Watson, “A New Course of Study”)

Watson, as I described in earlier, was a known advocate for utilizing Black history in the classroom. Circulating this flyer was perhaps another attempt at having instructors think about the contributions of Black writers and how they might be useful in Free School classrooms. Her memo continues with a quote from an article by Dr. Gibson in *The Michigan Chronicle*:

The fact that the teachers themselves have not learned about Negro authors accounts in part for the exclusion of the Negro author from the classroom on all levels of instruction. The student in the classroom today is the teacher of tomorrow. Ignorance perpetuates itself unless something happens to change the course of things. Hopefully, this course will have some roll in producing that change. (Watson, “A New Course of Study”)

Having the knowledge and awareness of these types of texts could have also allowed for teachers to make attempts to incorporate these types of authors in their classes. While textbook order forms I uncovered do not account for the purchase of books by Black authors, this memo speaks to the type of attitudes and awareness that was supported in the Free School—one that pushed the importance of recognizing the need to produce positive accounts of Black history and language use.

In addition to these classroom practices that sought to help students prepare for active lives as citizens, students in the upper school were eager to participate in what could be seen as a pinnacle of citizenship, voter registration. Sullivan recounted:

Then there was the matter of voting rights. A group of our high school students asked if they could assist in a voter registration drive. For a period of six weeks, with the help of an interested staff, some twenty-four young people from the free Schools spent all their spare time traveling to a remote section of the county and preparing prospective voters for registration. As a result, over two hundred persons were added to the voter rolls of Prince Edward County. (Sullivan *Bound For Freedom*, 204)

Interestingly, in Sullivan's own reflection of students success in this endeavor, he mentions two principles that also made the Free School a success: first, the students knew the community they were working with and second, they were committed to the work (Sullivan, *Bound For Freedom*, 204). The dedication and understanding students used as they worked to register voters in their community mirrored the respect and commitment of their Free School teachers. I cannot ascertain whether students modeled their voter registration program after their own teacher's pedagogical approaches. I do believe however, that the students' desire to participate in the voter registration drive *and* their request for permission and assistance of a staff member demonstrated the students' awareness of the school's desire to make training and preparation for citizenship a lived practice.

A Prescription for Action

In addition to the teaching practices and non-graded system I've described above, teachers were asked to follow a three-phase plan for their lessons and for transparency with students. The first phase, 'Orientation' was intended "to stimulate interest and develop readiness for a school learning situation, and for readjustment in grouping," ("Moton Handbook"). This would have given the teachers the opportunity to reassess the student's progress and make notes about who might need to be moved. The second phase, 'Basic Skills,' was described as "instruction [that] should be adjusted to ability levels of students with special emphasis on fundamental skills, health, study skills, and habits, school and social adjustment, until students are brought up to their normal grade level for their ages," ("Moton Handbook"). This phase would look different in each class but was meant to provide students with the bare minimum needed for the particular course, again a way to move expediently through so that they might be able to cover as much ground as possible in this year. The third phase, 'Regular,' was intended to have students progress at their own pace, allowing them to cover as much as possible: "students should be grouped according to ability and placed in regular classes in which they follow the Virginia curriculum guides for their grade levels," ("Moton Handbook"). These levels and phases were meant to maximize time and allow students agency and control regarding advancement. This speaks to the type of pedagogical stance teachers had to take in the classroom as well. They could not be *owners* of the material or knowledge – deciding when and where students could move through materials--but co-creators as they allowed for students to work through the curriculum.

First, teachers were provided guidance to ensure that there was consistency among courses. In a section of the Moton handbook titled "All Teachers," a list was

given to follow with regard to course development, lesson plans, and the management of student records. The first five points on the list relate to the development and necessity of preparing yearlong courses of study and lessons plans:

1. Teachers are to prepare a course of study for the year. They will be checked by the principal at a later date.
2. Lesson plans are to be available to the principal for each lesson taught.
3. Each lesson plan should be prepared from your course of study for the year.
4. A copy of all examinations is to be placed in the principal's office before the examination is given.
5. All examinations should be in keeping with the daily lesson plans and the course of study. ("Moton" 11).

The above list, when placed in conversation with the school's mission and commitments, suggests a type of transparency that teachers needed to keep for the benefit of both students and administrators. With only a year to work with these students, it was important that time would not be used wisely. The encouragement to creating lesson plans and a yearlong vision for the course could be indicative of micromanagement. Alternatively, this may have been a way of ensuring that students' needs were met. This also speaks to the difficulty of developing a school and curriculum with teachers from all over the country. Time was at a premium so it was imperative that teachers immediately begin to think of ways they would work with students. Despite the organic nature of the pedagogical practices used, teachers needed to have some baseline or guidelines with which to work. The requirement to have teachers keep copies of lesson plans and exams in the principal's office helped to maintain alignment with the goals of the school and

allowed for administration to deal with any trouble that might arise sooner rather than later.

The second half of the list instructs teachers on the importance of keeping good records for their classroom and students:

6. Report cards are to be prepared for each student with all the necessary information included. One copy is to be given to the student and one copy placed in the principal's office.
7. Registers are to be in the proper order at all times.
8. Departmental courses of study are to be prepared. A deadline date will be given later.
9. Registers are to be submitted to the Register Committee at the end of each month.
10. Cumulative records will be checked regularly.

The same level of attention given to the transparency needed for courses and administration was required with regard to the records of students. Teachers needed to ensure that these records were kept and maintained because they knew that all Free School students would possibly face a great deal of scrutiny from the public or any other institution where they might wish to continue their educations.

In addition to policies on records and course management, teachers were also presented with a classroom checklist. Some of the materials on the list were to be expected: assessing supply levels, functionality of the room, and the roster. Other items on the checklist I believe speak to the desire to demonstrate for students the commitment and respect teachers were giving them:

My desk to see that it is neat and attractive and representative of me as a professional worker.

My reference and teaching materials to be sure that these very vital teaching devices are at their best.

My smile to be certain that my personality and friendliness. [sic]

My teaching plans to be sure that I am ready to meet my class with something worthwhile to offer them that will better prepare them to meet their problems.

This checklist demonstrates an awareness of the importance of the attitudes of teachers towards both students and courses. Students needed the assurance of teachers' commitment. One way that teachers could demonstrate this would be through their delivery of not only the materials but also their presence in the classroom. One of the most important components of their teaching was the way in which teachers were encouraged to link the classroom activities with the lived experiences of their students. Teachers needed to present themselves and their lessons to students in a way that would both connect with the interests of students and show them that they were respected in this space.

Broadening the Boundaries of the Writing Classroom: The Moton Eagle

The school also sought to emphasize the importance of writing when they allowed the establishment of a student newspaper. Students requested the establishment of a school newspaper as a means to share news and provide editorial space for them to voice their opinions. The *Moton Eagle* became a space that covered serious topics like the school closures; and also more lighthearted concerns about entertainment and social happenings. Despite that only one issue of the school newspaper existed in the archive, it appears through statements in both Sullivan's memoir, the yearbook, and the newspaper's

circulation information, that the paper was published monthly. The issue I found, was dated Monday, February 17, 1964 and covered a wide range of news stories and opinion pieces. This issue made a direct plea to its readers for contributions to the paper in a column titled, “We Want To Know,”

This paper is written by a group of Moton High School students but it is our desire that it will benefit all the student body. We want you to feel free to comment at any time on any article or editorial which may appear in the Eagle. If you have a poem, article or any information which you would like printed in the Eagle, consult one of the editors or a staff member.

Encouraging all students to participate in the paper opened this as a space for any number of things to be shared: poems, articles, or any information thought to be relevant and important for the students.

Additional methods of encouraging student responses came in a section called “The Students Speak” where students were asked to respond to what *The Eagle* staff described as a “controversial subject.” This month’s question asked: “Should girls be allowed to wear slacks to basketball games?” A range of responses ensued, from those who thought it was “not lady like” to others who suggested it was “a disgrace” for the school. These statements, while they may seem trivial, provide an excellent example of how the school’s commitment to developing citizenship through literacy was also a part of activities that also happened outside of the classroom. This paper and these activities , such as the question/answer sections, gave students the opportunity to voice their own opinions on matters.

Other columns included reports on Moton athletic teams, the honor roll list, and a short piece on the school-sponsored dance. Two of the pieces that stand out with regard to the students providing their voice in the matter were an anonymous editorial about the school closures and possible reopening and a poem. The editorial, "What About Schools In 64-65" recounted the school closures and provides important points on that history. The author, an unnamed student, prompts readers to think of Prince Edward's original role in the Brown case, recounts the court's role and asks the simple yet puzzling question: "How can this be constitutional since the Supreme Court outlawed compulsory segregation in 1954?" The author reminds readers that while the outcome for what would happen in the 1964-65 school years was "important to all Prince Edward County citizens," particular importance for the sophomore and junior Moton high school students because "it could mean the difference between finishing school or becoming dropouts by necessity." While the article acknowledges the possibility of schools not opening again, it maintains hope that citizens of the county will allow the schools to reopen: "Let us all hope that the people concerned will make their responsibility the best possible education for us all." This statement attests to the persistent hope and resolve of Prince Edward's Black community as well as the students' demonstrated understanding of the connection between citizenship and schooling.

Moton High End of Year Report: "Cooperation in this department was at a high level"

An end of year report filed by Mr. Lemuel Bland, teacher and curriculum lead, reflected upon the accomplishments of the Moton English department. Bland describes the department's agreement on what they felt was their primary aim:

To close (as far as possible) the gap made by the lack of schooling for the four years and to advance those students who had had the opportunity of training during these four years the schools in Prince Edward County had been closed. In order to adopt a program geared to the needs of the group to which assignment was made and on the level of the ability of the individuals. (Bland 1)

Bland's report illustrates several techniques that were useful in carrying out this mission. First, the reliance on recurrent meetings between teachers to continuously assess student needs: "Frequent conferences were held by the personnel of the department for a continuation of such grouping, for sharing observations, for planning, for identifying problems, for outlining methods of attack, for evaluation and for reporting pupil progress" (Bland 1). This type of monitoring and assessment was necessary not only to allow students the opportunity to progress but also allow for faculty to understand the needs of students and reassess their delivery.

In addition to the textbooks, teachers were also encouraged to supplement the traditional classroom work with additional materials and activities:

Aside from the textbooks, all possible suitable materials were made available. Among them were the SRA Kits, Skill Builders of several kinds, Reading for Meaning Series, Current Pamphlets and Magazines. As a means of improving self-expression and interpretation, the dramatic club made several presentations and participated in both the district drama tournament and the state festival at Virginian State College. (Bland 2)

The Free School's upper unit was committed to using an approach that allowed students to read broadly and to have ample practice in expressing themselves.

The brief end of the year report closes with a positive reflection from the committee: "Cooperation in this department was at a high level, and we feel that this factor contributed greatly to the achievement evidenced by the students, many of whom tested as much two grades in their advancement at the end of the school year" (Bland 2).

If the end objective of the Free School was to provide students with opportunities to gain skills desirable for citizenship and, as much as possible, to close the four-year gap, Moton's end of the year report suggests that teachers and students were successful. As Bland's closing line reads, students made great leaps despite the hurdles they faced. The year closed with a small graduating class of twenty-three students. Half of the graduates would go on to colleges both inside and outside of Virginia. Graduation was not the only means of gauging success, as I will describe in the concluding chapter, the Free School's brief existence made a lasting impression on Prince Edward. In many ways, the school's commitment to citizenship through literacy left a challenge in the hands of its residents that has yet to be fully realized.

Chapter Six

Ending with my Beginnings

“This is my last interview. I’m not telling this story again!”
(Mrs. Watkins, Interview)

“Just as we use words to obfuscate meaning or to buy time, we use silence. The question is not whether speech or silence is better, more effective, and more appropriate. Instead the question is whether our use of silence is our choice (whether conscious or unconscious) or that of someone else.” (Cheryl Glenn, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*)

In this conclusion, I begin with reflecting on the school year and complexity of its legacy. I want to begin with one of the last acts of the Free School year, its graduation ceremony. Next, I provide contemporary reflections on the Free School’s impact on the Black community. While it is difficult to make resolute claims about the Free School’s impact on conceptions of citizenship for former students, reflections from the interviews I conducted do provide some notion on what the five-year closure period means for some former students. I also discuss the current dialogue that exists in the county about the county’s contribution to the civil rights movement.

Finally, I present the larger implications this project holds for the field of composition and rhetoric. There are three primary areas where this project contributes to current discussions in the field: the expansion of histories of writing instruction, pedagogical practices that welcome diverse epistemologies, and how we might think about the ways in which we assess the efforts of rhetorical educations. I conclude my dissertation with my final thoughts on my own personal connections to my work.

Pomp and Circumstance

On June 15, 1964 the Free School Association celebrated their graduation ceremony. The graduated class of ’64, twenty-three students total, marched down the

aisle of the Moton High School in front of families, friends, teachers, and other students.

Sullivan reflected:

How many good memories this year had brought to these young people—not just these twenty-three graduates, but all fifteen hundred and seventy-eight of the students enrolled in the Free Schools. And how great had been the accomplishments of these once almost-forgotten children of Prince Edward County; in only ten months' time, they had (by test proof) advanced an average of two years scholastically. Some boys and girls had advanced three and even four years in that time” (Sullivan, *Bound For Freedom*, 211).

It would be easy to have the story end here with Sullivan's reflection on the improvements the school helped the students to make. But there is, of course, always more to the story. Sullivan's memoir ends with his reflection on what he felt were the positive outcomes of the school for both students and the community. At the time of the Free School's end of year celebrations, it was still unclear as to how schools would reopen the following year. On May 25, 1964 the United States Supreme Court ruled that schools had to reopen in Prince Edward. The County's infamous board of supervisors requested \$339,000 to run the public schools for the next year, an estimate that came from the belief that only 1600 students would be in attendance (the number of children in Prince Edward who were attending the Free School). Members of the board believed that schools would remain segregated, with the county's White students going to back to The Academy (Sullivan 202). Free School administrators agreed to help the community with the transition. Sullivan recounted the efforts made:

The Free School Board of Trustees, in an effort to encourage the reopening of public schools, had authorized me to announce that we were ready to turn over textbooks, library books, audio-visual equipment, etc., worth probably \$250,000 or more, as well as all our school records to the County Board of Education. (Sullivan, *Bound*, 201).

The Free School also tried to assist with teacher recruitment for the following year as well. Sullivan writes:

But, with the previous September's experiences still fresh in my mind, I knew that the biggest problem, unless plans were made well in advance, would be teacher recruitment. Early in March, I had surveyed our Free School teaching staff and found that more than half wanted to stay on in Prince Edward County for the following year 1964-65 if possible. (Sullivan, *Bound*, 201)

Once the Free School year was over, in many ways the county went back to what could have been considered its norm. The segregated academy continued to grow and the public schools struggled to readjust. The story of Prince Edward County's public education system post 1964 is beyond the scope of this project, but it does bear mentioning that true racial integration was slow moving in the county. The Free School's six White students and White teachers was a first crack at integration; it would take years for a fuller shift to be recognized.

As a result of his experiences in the county, Sullivan would travel around the country to talk about integration and his work in Prince Edward. He eventually relocated

in Berkley to help with their integration efforts. Sullivan's story would be easy to tell with hagiography. He came to Prince Edward from a comfortable position and did the unthinkable. In just under two months time he hired a faculty and developed a school system in a most undesirable of circumstances. However, Sullivan was human and, as such, had his own lenses through which he viewed the experience discussed earlier that there was some tension in the beginning over how best to craft a curriculum for these students. The teachers from the area knew that to provide students with anything less than normal would be both a disservice and disrespectful. Sullivan mentioned early in his meetings with the board of trustees a goal of implementing a "remedial" curriculum.

It has also been noted that once Sullivan left Prince Edward he lacked full reflection and insight about the particular conditions he encountered. Within his own memoir, there are moments where he seems to be viewing the children through his lens of Whiteness. At one point he describes the children who lived in the rural areas of the county in a manner that does not take into account the realities of what rural life would have been:

Early Tuesday morning I visited two sections in Farmville where many of the poorer Negroes lived. I drove into these ghetto areas, parked my car, and walked around. I was familiar with slum conditions in New York and Boston, but this tour gave me new insights into rural deprivation. I felt as if I had been very quickly and very suddenly dropped back into the nineteenth century. There were no sidewalks, there was no water supply, no sewerage, no lighting...At some houses I saw children forming bucket brigades to carry water for the daily

routine of chores from outside pumps into their homes. Some houses were unpainted and in need of repairs. (Sullivan *Bound*, 20).

Sullivan's comparison of "rural deprivations" to "slums" does not seem to take into account what the realities of rural housing were like for both Blacks and Whites. His description of the lack of sidewalks, water, and electricity depicts his position as outsider. There is no reason to wonder why during this particular outing he was not successful with communicating with any of the residents: "I tried to talk with some of the Negro residents of these areas, but I was unsuccessful. The people avoided me, and I soon gave up my efforts" (Sullivan, *Bound* 20). Perhaps some of the reflection that Sullivan required of his teachers would have proved useful for him in the early phases of relationship building with the community. There is no doubt that Sullivan had his own lenses for understanding the county and its communities. It does appear that Sullivan was at least somewhat aware that he operated with and within racial constructions that could possibly distort his own perspective. He reflected on one of his first meeting with a group of Black teachers and parents from the area:

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit with the hospitable McClenneys and several other interesting families in the Petersburg-Lawrenceville area whom I met that evening at an informal social gathering. The few timeworn stereotypes of Negroes which I may still have had in the recesses of my mind were quickly and completely wiped out. These people had charm, intelligence and great dignity. The home I stayed in, the books I saw in the family room, the topics discussed were no

different from the homes, the books, the discussions I had left behind me on Long Island. (42)

His own recognition and admission are noteworthy yet still questionable as he only seems to find comfort in the fact that the books and conversation are like those *he* knows. At points, Sullivan seemed to understand early on in this journey that he would be facing his own personal challenges. This awareness did not always seem to translate into recognizable action on his part. Others have pointed to Sullivan's at-times questionable description of his Free School students and the experience:

Some Free School teachers and students also felt that Sullivan's accounts exaggerated the extent to which black Prince Edward youth lacked all ties to the outside world. Teacher Connie Rawlins recalled attending a talk by Sullivan in Charlottesville, where he described children not knowing how to hold pencils or use toilets. "It was all I could do to keep from jumping up and having something to say." After the talk, she said, "we got up and laid him out.... We asked him had he been out there [at the schools where this purportedly occurred]" He had not been out. He was going on hearsay. (Bonastia 156)

Perhaps it was Sullivan's desire for attention and sainthood that was both his strength and weakness. He did show altruistic intentions with his desire to accept the job offered to him by the Free School's board of trustees. His legacy is still tempered by his exaggerations and a lens of privilege that at times clouded his views. Sullivan still deserves credit for his role in the Free School's development and showing a willingness

to leave his desires for remedial education in order to meet students with a curriculum that embraced the totality of their lives thus far.

More than any supplies, curricula, teachers, or pedagogical implications, the legacy of the Free School goes beyond what happened in the classroom. Yes, it was important that the students were able to return after a four year exile, but what is perhaps most important for us is the recognition of the strength and emphasis in the power of the community. The Black community knew how to mobilize their strengths and refused to accept anything but a real school. In the face of crash courses, makeshift classrooms, and a four-year absence of any *positive* government interference their actions and words said, “We’re still here” in a multitude of ways. That message ran regardless if it was through a demonstration or the refusal to spilt up a family. As I have shown, the community’s efforts were aided by the federal government’s assistance, but it was that first petition, that reminder that “we’re still here” that lead to the Free School’s creation.

Prince Edward’s Black Community Today

As I described in chapter two, in the summer of 2010 a conversation with my second cousin, Armstead “Chuckie” Reid, vice-mayor of Farmville, helped to set the trajectory for how I would approach this project. That conversation encouraged me to think about the rhetoricity of history and to gain a better understanding of the contemporary realities for those affected by the school closures. When we sat down in my great-aunt’s kitchen, the house where my grandmother and all of her siblings grew up, one of the first things he did was to offer a disclaimer: “I don’t know if you want to hear my story.” I was struck by this statement and warning. I listened to his reasons and

now know how important that conversation was in shaping my project and helping me to understand the precarious positions inhabited by those affected by the closures.

As Chuckie (and later others I spoke with would say the same) went on to tell me, often when reporters, researchers, students, or camera crews come to Prince Edward it is to recall and remember Barbara Johns and the walkout of 1951. As he recounted and as the title of this dissertation reflects, it is as if people think that after the walkout in 1951, the victory was won. After the walkout, after the closures, “We’re still here,” he said. The lack of recognition and discussion about what happened after the walkout suggests that somehow, the story of over a thousand Black children without schooling was not nor still is, as important or compelling.

The Johns walkout and strike story is deserving of its place amongst histories of the civil rights movement. However, the walkout isn’t the only courageous moment in the civil rights movement’s struggle for education, and having it is the beginning and ending is not an accurate way to track the effects of that movement. In July 2008 the Virginia Civil Rights memorial was erected on the grounds of Virginia’s capital to commemorate the state’s role in the civil rights battle. The statue depicts such figures as Barbara Johns, Thurgood Marshall, Oliver Hill, and the Reverend Francis Griffin. Each person is a seminal figure in Virginia (and the nation’s) history of civil rights and education movement. A plaque at the monument describes Virginia’s contribution to the civil rights movement through the Moton walkout and subsequent *Davis vs. Prince Edward* case. The description for the memorial from Virginia Civil Rights Memorial website reads:

It could be said that Barbara Rose Johns is Virginia’s Rosa Parks.

Unfortunately, very few people have ever heard the story of how this

brave young 16-year-old caused a quiet revolution in the small town of Farmville, Virginia, the ripples of which would be felt throughout the state and the nation for years to come.

The Capital Square Civil Rights Memorial will, once and for all, recognize and celebrate Barbara Johns, her fellow students from Robert Russa Moton High School, their parents, and community leaders and civil rights attorneys. These Virginians risked everything in the struggle to gain full and equal rights for all. (Virginia Civil Rights Memorial)

There is no mention in the memorial, the placard, or the Virginia Civil Rights website (the official state website for the memorial and marker) about the five years of closure in defiance after the Brown ruling. Yet again, the aftermath of Brown is ignored. It is as if we want so badly to claim Brown a success that we don't acknowledge all of the battles that ensued after the ruling. This selective presentation of history is one way that contemporary factions continue to develop in the community. Other factions are a direct result of the ruptures caused to families as a result of the displacement the school closures caused.

As I describe in chapter two, there are several groups within the larger community of those affected by the closures in Prince Edward. Some stayed because their families refused to split them apart, others did not have the connections or networks to be able to send them out into other areas, and others still did not have the resources to be able to allow for all of the children in the family to leave. In my interview with Ms. Watkins,

who was six when schools closed, she recounted the complexity of emotion and difficulty of those who were *selected* to leave the area because of their intelligence:

A friend had a cousin who was identified as being extremely bright.

He was actually in my class and even after schools closed and people were still compensating and grabbing and doing stuff, they sent him to a prep school as a result of Free School. When he came back, like I said he was identified and put in a gifted program or something and they pulled him out and he went to a prep school. She said he struggled with that a long time and everybody else is looking at him like “*He* got to go somewhere!” And the opposite side for him was “Why did *I* have to leave?” Although it was for his good, there’s that opposite side too. The people who had to leave have issues too.

Ms. Watkins story demonstrates the difficulties faced by numerous students and families. Leaving and staying should not be looked at for winners and losers. There was sacrifice with any decision. The only real losers are those who forced those decisions to be made.

I have observed at many public events in the community (readings at the museum, sponsored book-signings, or reunions) that the factions and divisions amongst people are quite real. First-hand experience has shown me that they even exist amongst families, including my own. The disruptions caused to families and the communities are innumerable and difficult to even ascertain. There are stories about those who left to get educations not coming back, or coming back to find their families were suspicious of their new “city educated ways.” Or, there are those who left, obtained educations and wanted so badly to come back, but found that those family members who remained were

resentful of the fact that they felt they had to bear the burdens back at home. It goes without saying that the reasons that caused some to stay and others to leave are numerous and complex. No matter the reasons, the closures caused great ruptures both in families and the community because of the displacement of children and families. Through this project I have come to realize even more the importance of allowing each person the right to tell their stories on their own terms.

During the research and writing stages of this project, I had numerous conversations and listened to a number of stories from my family members. Most often, they would be generous with their time at a family function or on the phone, talking about what their experiences were like both during the time of the school closure or the Free School year. Many of those stories are about strategies for survival during those years. With that said, these stories and histories were shared in a safe, private space and because family would request that their stories not be made public for others, I am respecting those requests. Their purposeful silence is not intended to harm this project, but to protect their stories, emotions, and selves, from further scrutiny and persecution. For others, it was simply too hurtful to discuss what happened at all. For them, the silence serves as a way to keep living. In the end, only one of my family members chose to talk to me about his experience. The other six interviews came from people who responded to ads I placed in local papers and newsletters. As difficult as this was, I am honored that my family members trusted me enough to share, even in private.

As a researcher, I wanted to include some of these rich stories and histories, but I know that their absence, or silence, serves a purpose. As discouraging as it was at times, I fully understand their distrust and desire to separate themselves from this work. There

have been far too many people who come into the county, ask questions, take pictures, record things, make notes, offer suggestions, and then leave, with participants never knowing how their voices, stories, or images will be used. Perhaps, one of the goals of the Free School is being met in the students' refusal to participate in these interviews—they are exercising their right to silence.

In Cheryl Glenn's *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, she works to “expand our understanding, construction, and production of silence as a rhetoric, as a constellation of symbolic strategies that (like spoken language) serves many functions” (xi). Glenn's work provides us with a deeper understanding of silence as being more than “simple passivity in situation where it has actually taken on an expressive power” (xi). I do not mean to suggest here, nor does Glenn's work, that there is always power in silence, however, intentional silence is powerful:

Employed as a tactical strategy or inhabited indifference to authority, silence resonates loudly along the corridors of purposeful language use. Whether choice or im/position, silence can reveal positive or negative abilities, fulfilling or withholding traits, harmony or disharmony, success or failure. Silence can deploy power; it can adhere to power. It all depends. (xi)

In the case of Prince Edward County and the silence that operates on several fronts, Glenn's analysis of silence as a rhetorical act holds true. For some, the silence acts as a coping mechanism because the memories are too painful. For others, the silence may be a means to reject the identity of victim they believe has been constructed for them and that they seek to disrupt and reject.

During one of my last interviews, Ms. Watkins began by telling me, “This is it. I’ve decided that this is the last interview I’m going to do. I’m not telling my story anymore!” Honored to be trusted to be her last interview, I was also a bit concerned with her proclamation and wondered what could have led to such a resolute claim. What Ms. Watkins would go on to say was that she was tired of being identified with others who told their stories about the closures and “identified themselves as victims.” She was clear that this was not to say that there had not been real atrocities experienced but that continued identification as victim continues to plague members of the community today and does not help people to move forward. Her self-imposed silence would be a means of shaping a new agency, a new identity.

In a similar way, Reverend Berryman was quite adamant during our interview about not having ever perceived himself as a victim and it was for this reason that he is selective about when and where he tells his story. For Rev. Berryman, it is his Christian faith that has helped him to put the closures into perspective and to view them as a part of his greater life story. Like Watkins, he does not want to be defined by this one moment:

It affected me in a different way. I really do not know how to be able to say why this really happened to me this way when I was just like everybody else. Well, I’m not going to put it on being at the right place at the right time, I’m not going to put it on chance encounters, I’m not going to put it on fate. I really believe when I look back on my life, before the schools closed all the way until now. I really believe that God had a plan, a purpose for my life. I really do. And I look back, the older I get the more I look back and I can see that these were

experiences that he had me to go through for His purpose...Today,
without the experience I wouldn't be in the place God wants me to be.

Berryman's testimony gives credit to his faith as being the means by which he has been able to persevere and to think of his experiences as being a part of his greater legacy. While his attitude and perspective may seem difficult to grasp, it does appear that his ability to overcome the bitterness and pain have enabled him to glean a telling of the story that does not construct him as victim, but victor:

I'm hooked into faith. I've taken all these things, each experience in my life...see, its never about what I go through, because I'm not my own. The reality of it is, the more I accept the experience the greater the joy comes from it. Not the negative, but when you accept His plan and the perfection of what he has for you, you will find a different form of reality. Segregation, yeah. Oppression, yeah. Second class citizen, yeah. But the joy of the Lord was still present and that's the thing I believe made the difference with me is because my desire my whole life was to do nothing but to read what's between Genesis and Revelations and make it practical.

If Berryman's desire has been to take Biblical stories of struggle and triumph, war and resolution, and make them applicable for everyday life, the experiences of growing up and living in Prince Edward have provided him with the experiences that he can draw upon to do so. The strength that he found in his faith has assisted him in thinking about his life in a way that has made his perspective one of triumph over tragedy. However, he realizes that this has not been the case for everyone and was quick to say that this was

“his story” only. Berryman is aware that others have not been able to see much if anything positive happening as a result of the closures, which is why he says “I don’t tell my story to everybody.”

While Watkins and Berryman’s primary goals because of their experiences have been to find ways in which they can tell their stories and make meaning in a positive manner, they both have chosen different paths for doing so. For Watkins, no longer wanting to tell her story and to be possibly identified or counted as “another Prince Edward victim” is her attempt at purposefully constructing an identity in which she is not oppressed yet again. For Berryman, there is no silence that seems to overtly operate in his life, as he is quite vocal and willing to share his story with those who ask. Berryman’s decision to not tell his story around others who were also affected is a rhetorical choice because he realizes that the positive perspective he maintains is not accepted by all audiences. This *selected* silence in certain situations is a means of not hurting or offending fellow members of the community. Berryman in fact began our interview by saying, “This is *my* story. You’re gonna hear others, but I can only tell you mine.” The silences that both Berryman and Watkins choose to utilize do not appear to be a chosen means by which to exert their interpretations and protect their stories. As Glenn writes:

In much the same way we inhabit spoken discourse, we inhabit silence: in a kaleidoscopic variety of rhetorical situations. Ever sensitive to *kairos*, to the appropriateness and timeliness of the occasion, of words, or of silence, we attempt to fashion our communication successfully...Just as we use words to obfuscate meaning or to buy time, we use silence. The question is not whether

speech or silence is better, more effective, more appropriate. Instead the question is whether our use of silence is our choice (whether conscious or unconscious) or that of someone else.

(13)

Berryman and Watkins' choice of silence mirrors what Glenn is referring to as a conscious choice to utilize silence both "purposefully and effectively" given their locations and intentions (Glenn 13).

Silence is, of course, not the only means by which those affected by the closures have chosen to display their agency and discuss the past. As Glenn posits, at times, silence is not used as a manner to exert power, but to strip people of power. There are many people, both inside and outside of Virginia, who do not know this story. They don't know about the 1951 walkout and they certainly don't know that public schooling was stopped for five years as a means to resist integration. Dominant narratives have done a phenomenal job of silencing this story as it does for many stories about people of color. To challenge this silence there are those who speak as both a means of providing healing and remembrance. I have had the pleasure of attending and presenting at a variety of functions in the Prince Edward community since my research first began in the fall of 2009. Some of these events included: a reunion of students who attended Kitteral college to complete their high school years, Brown Bag lunches hosted by the museum, and an event hosted by Hampden-Sydney University to commemorate the closures. At these various functions there are almost always large numbers of community members in attendance who want to have their voices heard. Sometimes these experiences challenge the theoretical findings and implications that historians, psychologists, and educators

present. I am reminded of an event I attended in the fall of 2010 at Hampden-Sydney where a historian challenged audience members to see the importance of constructing a single narrative about Prince Edward. The historian held that this would be more powerful than the “multiplicity” of stories that circulate. In essence, his argument seemed to be for creating a “brand” of experience that could be utilized for a variety of reasons. This one story, he argued, would be a means to solidify what happened and make it easier for those outside of the county to understand this complex history. One of the audience members, who identified himself as a member of the “locked-out generation,” challenged this position. I remember this gentleman arguing that he saw the multiple voices and stories as being *a stronger* way of challenging the discourse that still surrounds the story of Prince Edward because there is strength in numbers. This debate and the conversation that ensued after the presentation have stayed with me. We need multiple histories and accounts of what transpired in Prince Edward to avoid the creation of yet another dominant master narrative. For those of us who seek to do revisionist histories, we would do well to remember that a variety of accounts and histories can help us to see rhetoric employed in a variety of manners. My own project has examined the rhetorical environment in which the school existed and the rhetorical education the students received, this is but a small slice of the story and there would be countless other ways to construct histories. I tell this story and provide this history with the understanding that this is but *one* version.

Despite the voices and constructive silences, a new threat has arisen seeking to tell the story of Prince Edward’s resistance from the standpoint of the post-racial. This theoretical paradigm holds that our society is now devoid of racism, racial preference,

and discrimination. It first appeared around the time of President Barack Obama's election and was originally a means of describing the idea that we have moved past race as a defining factor in society. Others have now suggested that the post-racial is a discursive frame for how we might *now* talk about race. As Ash Sharma and Sanjay Sharma describe in "Post-Racial Imaginaries:"

Unquestionably, the Obama presidential victory was a significant event in the history of race in the USA, and to global race politics. As a result the specter of 'moving beyond' racism inevitably informs scholarly as well as popular discussions of race. The Obama event is a if not, the, symptomatic exemplar of how 'post-racial' now over-determines discourses of radicalization and racism. Arguably, while post-race is not explicitly articulated, it acts as the discursive frame for race talk now; a sort of 'racial unconscious' that structures the political, social and theoretical struggles over race and racism.

If the post-racial is a real concept that operates, obscures, and complicates how we understand race then we would do well to understand *how* it functions in a variety of spaces. One of the spaces where this currently operates is in Prince Edward.

There is a group in the community right now who are becoming quite successful at telling the story of Prince Edward without the lens of race. The group is primarily made up of county leaders (both Black and White) who sit in a variety of posts: some work with the Moton museum, others are elected county officials, and community members with social capital. As I have described earlier, the Moton museum inhabits the space of the original Black high school from which students boycotted in 1951 and it was

also a building used during the Free School year for classes. The museum houses a permanent exhibit, that at the time of this writing was still under construction, that examines Prince Edward's contributions to the civil rights movement. For this group, the purpose of retelling the story highlights appears to direct the attention to a more positive interpretation. In the edited collection by Hicks and Pitre that I discuss in chapter two, Lacy Ward, director of the Moton museum describes what he sees as the museum's mission:

The Robert Russa Moton Museum is dedicated to the preservation and positive interpretation of the history of Civil Rights in Education, specifically as it relates to Prince Edward County and the role its citizens played in America's struggle to move from a segregated to an integrated society. The museum is operated to promote positive discussion of integration and to advance positions that ensure racial harmony. The museum offers a local exploration of a nation's transition.

This positive interpretation is one that tells the story without race.

From the conversations I have had with those who subscribe to this belief, it does not appear as if they believe race makes this too painful a subject, rather they think the story of the closures can be told without it and that this retelling can help to garner support and interests from a wider population of people. I have observed (through conversation and meetings) that most who subscribe to this particular way of telling the history understand that their view is not generally accepted or welcomed by others in the community, particularly by those in the Black community who lived through this

experience. With that said, this group has a great deal of backing and support in the community because of the funding they have been able to garner for the museum.

The group tells the story from a post-racial paradigm that directs the focus to constitutional law and states' rights. My own observation is that this is a modern day retelling that resonates with the continued discourse practices of the "Virginia Way" and state's rights rhetoric that have been entrenched in the discourse of the South. This retelling reduces the issue to being solely about how court actions were mitigated, resisted, and further stalled by noncompliance. It would seem almost impossible to tell the story of Prince Edward without the mention of Black or White as operating racial constructs and codes, but it is still happening.

When I think about what the Prince Edward community today I must remind myself that several lenses color my own perspective. First, I don't live in the county. My current home in Richmond, is an hour northeast of Prince Edward. While I spend a great deal of time there conducting research and visiting with family, my lived experiences are not the same as someone who works, lives, worships, and resides daily in Prince Edward. My visits are with family or with community members whom I have been introduced to through family. What I have seen and heard through my participation in public forums and discussions about the closures and their effect on Prince Edward today is that there still remains much to be done.

There is no current curriculum in the public schools that mandates or encourages teachers to make the Prince Edward story a part of the curriculum. While the Moton museum does open its doors to numerous visitors, which includes K-12 educators and students, within the schools in Prince Edward there is no requirement that makes the

history of the county a necessity to teach about. Because of the silence that pervades many of those who were affected, there seems to be a great deal of disconnect between people talking about what happened with those of the younger generation. The community needs its full voice heard in order for people to hear the full story, a difficult yet necessary endeavor in the face of post-racial discourse.

Implications for the field of Rhetoric and Composition

The rhetorical education of the Free School has numerous implications for contemporary students and teachers in rhetoric and composition. I believe three are most important: what this does for our field's history, pedagogical practices that are transferable and adaptable, and how this project adds to understanding how we assess rhetorical educations.

The story of the Free School association is important for the history that it gives us. We have countless histories of how writing, reading, and speaking were taught in dominant spaces, but still work to fill in the gaps for how rhetorical educations work for those on the margins. What happened in Prince Edward for these students was one approach for one particular time.

The Free School's story is at once both simple and complicated and troubles the categories and binaries we often use as a means of understanding. Complicated because there was the most unusual set of circumstances for a school had to be created in. The solution came from collaboration amongst divergent communities—the federal government, Michigan State University's team of researchers, the Black community of Prince Edward, White law makers at the state level in Virginia, teachers both local and from around the country, students, and administrators. After a four-year absence

traditional public education was offered to students. As Ms. Watkins's reflection in chapter four attests, there was nothing any different about the education children received in the Free School and what they did in other classroom experiences. The type of continuity and normality Free School teachers sought to replicate seemed to be a success, as Ms. Watkins said:

We did a lot of reading aloud and we had like worksheets. I know I remember lots of worksheets and tests. You know standardized tests? We had a lot of those. But other than that, I don't remember anything unusual. You went to the board, worked problems on the board. And like I said, in reading, everybody took turns reading aloud and did worksheets afterwards. Those are the things I remember and I don't remember anything we did any different that stood out from that next year.

The curricula I have presented and reflections from students have shown the importance of understanding the historical context and spending time in the gray areas when arguments appear to be black and White. The Free School's story demonstrates that what was done in the classroom wasn't as remarkable as the community's demonstrated effort in standing up for education and their refusal to accept just anything that White people gave them. This history provides our field with an opportunity to witness a relentless strength greater than a county's will for racism to prevail and a stalwart belief in education.

While the Free School is unique and its pedagogical practices and curricula cannot be replicated, there are some that serve as timeless reminders about good

pedagogy and that can be adapted for our classrooms. The Free School desired to give students a rhetorical education that would prepare them to be active citizens despite dominant voices telling them the opposite. Today, we teach students, some of who may still be in environments where their voices are challenged or ignored. The Free School experience reminds us of the importance of listening to our students, working to make sure that what we present to them in the classroom is relevant for their needs, being respectful of their knowledge and locations, and encouraging them to ask questions of what they are being taught. Through the Free School year, we understand the importance of an organic classroom—especially when our mission in that space seeks to empower or liberate students. Writing instructors concerned with how best to prepare students for active citizenship must remember that a one-size fits all approach does not take into account the needs of the students we are serving. As we enter into our students' classrooms and communities we must ask: What types of discourses are they engaged with? Likely to engage with? What rhetorical skills and techniques might they already bring with them that can be utilized to build from in the classroom? The teachers and administrators of the Free School seemed to ask these questions before they entered the classroom as well as throughout the school year.

Teachers of the Free School utilized local and national Black history to recognize the unique spaces their students inhabited. Teachers were also encouraged to allow students' stories, both real and make believe, to become part of the discussions in the classroom. In the upper unit, the implementation of "Talk Time" gave students an opportunity to voice their interests in things that were of interest to them. As the upper school handbook reminded teachers, in a way that closely resembles Freire's philosophy

on pedagogy, that the work of the students must reflect their realities, their concerns, to be meaningful to the students. Again, while this may all seem like standard good pedagogical practice, it's a simple lessons that we all too quickly forget in the face of everyday complexities in the classroom.

Finally the Free School asks us to consider *how* we can assess our curricula and pedagogies. How do we assess whether a rhetorical education that sought to create active citizens actually worked? How do you measure citizenship? While I think Sullivan and others might have had some concrete ideas in place, we can learn more about performances or embodiment of citizenship if we trouble original definitions of what expressions of citizenship look like. For example, Reid's service as vice-mayor is probably one of the most recognized actions of citizenship by a former Free School student. Not only is this his second term in the position, but he also works as a postman and as such is known by many in both the Black and White communities. Mrs. Mickie Carrington who serves on the Board of the Moton museum and is involved in countless efforts aimed at keeping former Moton students connected, maintains a very public role in the community. It was her own tireless perseverance that helped me to get a seat at many a table and listen to many stories; she is a gatekeeper for many in the community. These two, Carrington and Reid, both have very public roles in the community and it would be easy to label them as *active* citizens. If we complicate and broaden that notion, then we can see citizenship displayed in ways that might go under the radar at first. If we are to think of citizenship as a rhetorical performance, we allow ourselves to see roles and actions that might go unnoticed. Then, for example, Chuckie's leadership as vice mayor is an act of citizenship, as is Ms. Watkins's refusal to tell her story any more so that she

might construct an identity separate from victim in her community. Neither of these acts can be traced back to the Free School explicitly and it is true that not one of my six interviewees seemed to be able to recollect an expressed mark of citizenship that they felt originated from the Free School. With the stated desire to prepare students for roles as active citizens it would be easy to claim some former Free School students as success stories, but I believe the contemporary conversations in Prince Edward demonstrate a more complex understanding of how citizenship is performed. The silence that operates is a display of citizenship as is the post-racial attempts of retelling the story to gain support. To think about citizenship as a rhetorical performance allows for more possibilities to see it in action and more opportunities to imagine how we might prepare students to become engaged.

Ending with my Beginnings

I came to the study of the Free School as both a scholar and granddaughter. One of my primary scholarly interests was how rhetorical educations are crafted and delivered for students of color and others who are marginalized. Of infinite assistance during this project was remembrance of the education my grandmother gave me at her kitchen table, her dresser, and on the porch. I drew strength from her stories and was propelled forward by her love and guidance.

My work as a teacher has always been shaped by a commitment to understand how diversity can shape and drive a curriculum. I don't mean here the kind of diversity that simply follows a recipe of "add more people of color" and stir, but instead diversity that comes from a commitment to challenge the idea that difference means deficient. My own journeys with this work have included analyzing simplistic constructs of race that

deem the problem as being no longer relevant or that use race as a status marker for citizenship. My commitment to working with students to evaluate, analyze, and respond to claims such as these and other dominant rhetorics serve as strong reminders as to why projects such as this one are important for both our theory and practice.

From the time of the Greeks, and well before, groups have been concerned about how best to teach people to be critical thinkers, speakers, and listeners so as best to participate in the democratic process. My own concern acknowledges that many of these democracies were constructed without the intention to ever fully recognize all participants. Additionally, these democracies were not always constructed with people of color in mind as teacher or participant. Given my own history and rhetorical education, it seems fitting that the roots for this project began with my first teacher, my grandmother, Kathryn Anderson.

My grandmother's stories about Prince Edward kept me both haunted and mesmerized. Those stories were my first introduction to race and rhetoric. For some, it may seem unthinkable that an entire county would stop funding public schools for five years. In my own home, however, this behavior was interrogated and explained as another example of the divide between Black and White. It also demonstrated how words had the ability to spin actions into reality. I did not find it difficult to see how a community would shut a school system down when, at the same time, young Black boys in Prince Edward were put on display in candy shop windows, Blacks couldn't walk on the same sidewalks as Whites, and the reality of walking home in the dark could mean never coming home at all. Despite those physical and mental threats, I was amazed at the steady resolve to face those challenges and persevere. The very title of my dissertation,

“We’re Still Here!” attests to the strength, resolve, and voice of my community that speaks in action and quiet purpose. It is an outcry that still demands to be heard.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “About the Farmville Herald.” *The Farmville Herald*, 2013. Web. 1 Mar. 2013
- “After 104 Years, Richmond Newspaper Closes.” *The New York Times*, May 1992. Web. 2 July 2011.
- Allington, Richard and Anne McGill-Franen. “Looking Back, Looking Forward: A Conversation About Teaching Reading in the 21st Century.” *Reading Research Quarterly*. 35.1 (Jan/Feb/Mar 2000): 136-153.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Benjamin Jowett, trans. Dover Publications: 2000.
- Bell, Derrick. *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990.
- Berryman, Everett, Reverend. Interview. September 2012.
- Bitzer, Lloyd. “The Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. 1 (1968): 1-15. Illinois: University of Chicago UP, 2012.
- Bizzell, Patricia. “Feminist Methods of Research in the History of Rhetoric: What Difference Do They Make?” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 30.4 (Autumn 200): 5-17.
- Bland, Lemuel. “End of Year Report.” Prince Edward County Free School. June 1964.
- Bonastia, Christopher. *Southern Stalemate: Five Years without Public Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia*.
- Brereton, John. *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875-1925: A Documentary History*. Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996.
- Brookover, Wilbur. “Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1953-1993.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 62.2 (1993): 149-161.
- Brookover, Wilbur, Arthur Dudley, and Robert Green. “Prince Edward County, Virginia, 30 Years After: “A Pretty Good Place to Live.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 62.2 (1993): 162-170.
- Byrd, Harry, F. “Statement on Brown.” Richmond Capital. Richmond, VA. May 17, 1954
- Byrd, Harry, F. “Hampton Roads Speech.” Maritime Association. Norfolk, Virginia, May 9, 1957

- Byrd, Harry, F. "Civil Rights Speech." Richmond Capital. Richmond, VA. July 16, 1957
- Byrd, Harry, F. "On Prince Edward." Richmond Capital. Richmond, VA. May 17, 1961.
- Cooley, James. "Preliminary Annual High School Report for Robert R. Moton High School, Farmville, VA." Memo. Prince Edward County Free School. Jan. 1963.
- Cooley, James. "Prince Edward Free School Association: R.R. Moton High School Handbook for Teachers." Prince Edward County Free School. Sept. 1963.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" *Journal of Negro Education*. 4 (1935): 325-335.
- Enoch, Jessica. *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2008.
- Ely, James. *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia: the Byrd Organization and the Politics of Massive Resistance*. Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1976.
- Farmville Ministerial Alliance. "School Fund Slash Denounced by Prince Edward Clergymen." *Richmond Afro-American*. June 1959.
- Fitch, Eliza. Letter. *Library of Virginia Brown v. Board: Virginia Responds Exhibit*. June 1955. Web. 10 July, 2012.
- Fore, William. "Prince Edward County: A Brief History." *Prince Edward County, Virginia 250th Anniversary Celebration*. Web. 1 Jan 2011
- Gaillet, Lynee` Lewis. "Archival Survival: Navigating Historical Research." *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods fro Rhetoric and Composition*. Eds. Alexis E. Ramsey, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 2010.
- Gates, Robert. *The Making of Massive Resistance: Virginia's Politics of Public School Desegregation, 1954-1956*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1962.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles. "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition." *CCC* 45 (1994): 75-92.
- Gilyard, Keith. "African American Contributions to Composition Studies." *CCC* 50.4 (1999): 626-44.
- Glenn, Cheryl. *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.

Glenn, Cheryl and Jessica Enoch. "Invigorating Historiography Practices in Rhetoric and Composition Studies." *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*. Eds. Alexis E. Ramsey, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 2010.

Glenn, Cheryl Margaret Lyday, and Wendy Sharer eds. *Rhetorical Education in America*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004.

Gold, David. " "Nothing Educates Us Like a Shock": The Integrated Rhetoric of Melvin B. Tolson." *CCC* 55:2 (2003) 226-253.

Gold, David. *Rhetoric at the Margins: Revising the History of Writing Instruction 1873-1947*. Southern Illinois UP, 2008.

Green, Robert L. *The Educational Status of Children in a District Without Public Schools*. Michigan: Michigan State University, 1964.

Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. Vintage: 1999.

Hicks, Shelia. Interview. August 2012.

Hicks, Terrance and Abul Pitre, eds. *The Educational Lockout of African Americans in Prince Edward County, Virginia (1959-1964)*. University of America Press, 2010.

Hopkins, Dwight. *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*. Orbis Books, 1999.

Johnson, Gloria Gibson. Interview. August 2012.

Johnson, Nan. "Parlor Rhetoric and the Performance of Gender in Postbellum America." *Rhetorical Education in America*. Glenn, Cheryl Margaret Lyday, and Wendy Sharer eds. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004.

Kates, Susan. *Activists Rhetorics and American Higher Education, 1885-1937*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2001.

Kates, Susan. "Politics, Identity, and the Language of Appalachia." *Rhetorical Education in America*. Glenn, Cheryl Margaret Lyday, and Wendy Sharer eds. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004.

Keys, V.O. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

Kirsh, Gesa. *Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research: The Politics of Location, Interpretation, and Publication*. New York: SUNY Press, 1999.

- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. SAGE Publications: July 2008.
- Lee, Brian. "We will Move: the Kennedy Administration and Restoring Public Education to Prince Edward County, Virginia." *The Educational Lockout of African Americans in Prince Edward County, Virginia (1959-1964)*. Eds. Terence Hicks and Abul Pitre. Maryland: University Press of America, 2010. 19-32.
- Lipstiz, George. *The Possesive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Pennsylvania: Temple UP, 2006.
- Logan, Shirley Wilson. *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2008.
- Logan, Shirley Wilson. "To Get an Education and Teach My People." *Rhetorical Education in America*. Glenn, Cheryl Margaret Lyday, and Wendy Sharer Eds. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004.
- Mann, Horace. "Twelfth Annual Report to the Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education." Web 10 Dec 2012
- "Minutes of First Meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Prince Edward Free School Association." Richmond, VA. Aug 1963.
- "Minutes of The Third Meeting of The Board of Trustees of the Prince Edward Free School Association." Lawrenceville, VA. Aug 1963.
- McGee, Michael. "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 66.1 (1980): 1-16.
- McGee, Michael. "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 61.3 (1975): 235-249.
- Morgan, Marcyliena. *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Murrell, Amy. "The 'Impossible' Prince Edward Case: The Endurance of Resistance in a Southside County, 1959-1964." *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia*. Matthew Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis, eds. Virginia: The University of Virginia Press, 1998.
- Nesbit, Letter. *Richmond News Leader*. May 1959: Letter. *Library of Virginia Brown v. Board: Virginia Responds Exhibit*. Web. 10 July, 2012
- Octalog. "The Politics of Historiography." *Rhetoric Review* 7.1 (Fall 1988): 5-49.

- Octalog II. "The (Continuing) Politics of Historiography." *Rhetoric Review* 16.1 (Autumn 1997): 22-44.
- Octalog III. "The Politics of Historiography in 2010." *Rhetoric Review* 30 (2010): 109-134.
- "Opening Closed Doors." *Narrative of the American Friends Service Committee's Work in Prince Edward County, Virginia. 1959-1965*. AFSC Publication: 2004.
- PECCA. "Operation 1700: A Special Report." Prince Edward County Christian Association. Farmville, VA: May 1960.
- Pearson, P, David. "Epilogue: American Reading Instruction Since 1967." *American Reading Instruction*. Rev. Ed. International Reading Association 2002
- Pough, Gwendolyn. *Check it While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere*. Northeastern Press: 2004.
- Pratt, Robert A. *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-1989*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993.
- Prendergast, Catherine. *Literacy and Racial Justice: The Politics of Learning after Brown v. Board of Education*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2003.
- "Prince Edward Residents Seek Solution to School Problems." *Richmond Afro-News Leader*. August 1959.
- "Prince Edward Seeks Aid." *Richmond Afro-News Leader*. Sept. 1959.
- Quintilian. *De Institutione Oratoria*. H. E. Butler, trans. Harvard, UP: 1980.
- Ramsey, Alexis, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier, and Lisa S. Mastrangelo, eds. *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois, UP, 2010.
- Ratcliffe, Krista. *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2006.
- Ravitch, Diane. "Education and Democracy." *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society*. Eds. Diane Ravitch and Joseph Viteritte. Connecticut: Yale UP, 2003.
- Reese, William. *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"*. Maryland: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2011.
- Reid, Armstead, "Chuckie." Interview. July 2010

- “Richmonders aid Prince Edward Pupils.” *Richmond Afro-News Leader*. August 1959.
- Royster, Jacqueline Jones. *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000.
- Schiappa, Edward. “The Historian as Arguer.” *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*. Victor Vitanza, ed. Illinois: Southern Illinois UP, 1994.
- Schneider, Stephen. “Freedom Schooling: Stokely Carmichael and Critical Rhetorical Education.” *CCC* 58.1 (2006): 46-69.
- Schneider, Stephen. “The Sea Island Citizenship Schools: Literacy, Community Organization, and the Civil Rights Movement.” *College English* 70.2 (2007): 144-167.
- Sharma, Ash and Sanjay Sharma. “Editorial: Post-racial imaginaries—Connecting the Pieces.” *Darkmatter: In the Ruins of Imperial Culture*. July 2012.
- Steck, John C. *The Prince Edward County Virginia Story*. Farmville: The Farmville Harold Press, 1960.
- Smith, Bob. *They Closed Their Schools: Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1951-1964*. Farmville: Martha E. Forrester Council of Women, 1996.
- Smith, Nila Banton. *American Reading Instruction*. Rev. Ed. International Reading Association: 2002.
- “Student Evaluation Reports.” Series 1: The Prince Edward Free School Association. Oct 1963.
- “Student Evaluation Reports.” Series 2: The Prince Edward Free School Association. Nov 1963.
- “Southern Manifesto.” *Congressional Record*, 84th. Congress Second Session. Vol. 102, part 4 (March 12, 1956) Web. 10 July 2012.
- Sullivan, Neil. “Bulletin #9.” Prince Edward County Free School. Sept. 1963.
- Sullivan, Neil. “Bulletin #10.” Prince Edward County Free School. Sept. 1963.
- Sullivan, Neil. “Bulletin #20.” Prince Edward County Free School. Sept. 1963.
- Sullivan, Neil. *Bound for Freedom: An Educator’s Adventures in Prince Edward County, Virginia*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company Publishers, 1965.
- Sullivan, Neil. “Prince Edward County Free School Association Handbook.” Prince Edward County Free School. Sept. 1963

Sutherland, Christine Marie. "Feminist Historiography: Research Methods in Rhetoric." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 32: 1 (Winter, 2002): 109-122.

"The Decision." *Richmond News Leader*. 17 May 1954.

Tirabassi, Katherine. "Journeying into the Archives: Exploring the Pragmatics of Archival Research." *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*. Eds. Alexis E. Ramsey, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 2010.

Tillerson-Brown, Amy. "Grassroots Schools and Training Centers in the Prospect District of Prince Edward County Virginia, 1959-1964." *The Educational Lockout of African Americans in Prince Edward County, Virginia (1959-1964)*. Eds. Terence Hicks and Abul Pitre. Maryland: University Press of America, 2010. 1-17.

Turner, Kara Miles. "Getting It Straight": Southern Black School Patrons and the Struggle for Equal Education in the Pre- and Post-Civil Rights Eras." *The Journal of Negro Education* 72.2 (2003): 217-229.

Watkins, Bernetta. Interview. September 2012.

Watson, Willie Mae. "A New Course of Study." Memo. Prince Edward County Free School Association. Mar 1964

Watson, Willie Mae. "About Prince Edward." Prince Edward County Free School Feb 1964

Watson, Willie Mae. "Curriculum Notes #5." Prince Edward County Free School Association. Apr 1964

Watson, Willie Mae. "Guidelines To Curriculum Development for Primary School and Middle School." Prince Edward County Free School Association. 1963

Watson, Willie Mae. "Language for Self-expression, communication, enjoyment, development, enrichment." Memo. Prince Edward County Free School. Apr 1964.

Wells, Rufus. "Inside Prince Edward County, Virginia: What Happens When Schools are Killed." *Richmond Afro-News Leader*.

"What About Schools in 64-65?" Editorial. *The Moton Eagle*. Vol. 1.2 (Feb. 1964): 2

Williams, Samuel Reverend. *Exilic Existence: Contributions of Black Churches in Prince Edward County, Virginia During the Modern Civil Rights Movement*. AnchorHouse Publishing: 2011.

Woodson, Carter G. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Washington: Africa World Press, 1990.

Notes

¹ The ideologies that supported the common school movement have recently been critiqued for some of their antidemocratic aspects. In particular, the anti-Catholicism and desire to create “the American” through immigrant assimilation are troubling. See Diane Ravitch’s “Education and Democracy” in *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society* for an insightful analysis.

² For more on the Black struggle as it relates to language and literacy see: Geneva Smitherman’s *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America* (1985), *Talkin that Talk: African American Language and Culture* (1999) and Marcyliena H. Morgan’s *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture* (2002).

³ I do realize that many groups in America have faced obstacles to literacy. While my dissertation focuses on the Black community, I am aware that there are numerous stories and histories similar to ours.

⁴ As momentous as Brown’s decision was, it has not gone without critique. Critics of Brown have evaluated the ruling’s implementations for falling short of providing truly equitable educational opportunities. See Derrick Bell’s *Silent Covenants: Brown v Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (2005).

⁵ George Lipstiz uses the phrase “possessive investment in Whiteness” to describe the attitude of those Whites who benefit from the identity politics of being White. I do realize that not *all* White people have such an attachment. For more on the history of the construct of Whiteness see Lipstiz’s *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (1998).

⁶ In *Bound For Freedom*, Neil Sullivan describes Dean Gordon Moss of Longwood College in Farmville as a lone voice of opposition in the fight for integration. Moss, Dean of Students and Professor of History, believed that he would be “a traitor” to the democratic ideals he taught if he went along with segregation (23). Dean Moss’s son, Dickie, would enroll in the Free School as a senior.

⁷ Robert Pratt (*The Color of their Skin*) suggests that Almond was more fearful of impending jail time than having had a true change of heart.

⁸ PECCA carefully defined its existence and creation as not intending to “replace any organization in the County. Rather, its chief objective is to coordinate and strengthen

those agencies already in operation. It seeks to render a much needed religious emphasis to its acts of coordination” (PECCA 4).

⁹ The PECCA training centers and home school efforts by Black women in the Prospect area, continued intermittently. Due to lack of funding, the programs were not always run on a consistent basis.

¹⁰ I realize that scholars in the field certainly theorized and debated about revisionist histories and historiography before this, see for example the 1987 Pre/Text issue on revisionary histories.

¹¹ The first Octalog included James Berlin, Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, Victor Vitanza, Susan Jarratt, Nan Johnson, Jan Swearingen, and Richard Leo Enos, as panelist with James Murphy as chair. Almost ten years later in 1997, a second Octalog at the Conference on College Composition and Communication would include Janet Atwill, Linda Ferreira-Buckley, Cheryl Glenn, Janice Lauer, Roxanne Mountford, Jasper Neel, Edward Schiappa, and Kathleen Welch as panelist. Efforts by Lois Agnew, Zosha Stuckey, and Laurie Greis would culminate in 2010’s third Octalog. Panelists included Vicki Tolar Burton, Jay Dolmage, Malea Powell, Jessica Enoch, Ronald L. Jackson, LuMing Mao, Art Walzer, and Victor Vitanza as respondent.

¹² The Robert Russa Moton museum in Farmville was the site of the 1951 walkout I describe in chapter one. The building that houses the museum was also one of the buildings used in the Free School and is responsible for a number of community events aimed at public discussions about Prince Edward’s history.

¹³ Pough writes that scholars of the Black Public Sphere were a collective who “edited a 1994 special issue of the journal *Public Culture* and then a 1995 anthology on the Black public sphere” (16). Pough’s work describes how the group rethinks Habermas’s theories to be more reflective of the Black experience.

¹⁴ James Cone, noted for his seminal work presented Black Liberation Theology as showing Christianity as not being a means to oppress people of color but with a reading of the gospels that instead linked Jesus’ mission and life as being one that struggled with and for the poor and oppressed. Cone and others argued that this matched the struggle of Blacks in America and as such, many ministers who subscribed to this, preached the gospel in a way that would make it incumbent for Christians to work towards social justice for Blacks.

¹⁵ Many of the freedom schools during the civil rights movement utilized spaces that existed outside of public or were government sponsored for the obvious reasons-these schools had to exist to some extent off the radar. For example, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee used church basements in the Mississippi freedom schools. See Ron Miller’s *Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy After the 1960s* (2002) for further histories on the use of space and freedom schools.

¹⁶ For a sample of the questions asked in both sets of teaching evaluations please see Appendix A.

¹⁷ See Sandra Adickes's *The Legacy of a Freedom School* (2005) for more on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's freedom school legacy.

Vita

Candace Epps-Robertson

239 H.B. Crouse Hall
Syracuse, New York 13244

rceppsro@syr.edu
804.901.1687

EDUCATION

PhD in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric, Syracuse University, expected May 2013

Dissertation: *We're Still Here!': The Rhetorical Education of Prince Edward County's Free School Association, 1963-1964*

Committee: Lois Agnew (Chair), Gwendolyn Pough, Eileen Schell, Scott Strickland, Jessica Enoch

Comprehensive Exams: American Ethnic Rhetorics, Writing Program Administration, and Critical Pedagogies

MA in English, Virginia Commonwealth University, May 2003

Thesis: *Rhetorical Analysis for Thoughtful Response: A Burkean Analysis of Osama bin Laden's Post-9/11 Videos*

Areas of Emphasis: Contemporary Rhetoric and Composition Pedagogy

BA in English and Religious Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University, December 2000

Areas of Emphasis: American Literature, Creative Writing, Liberation Theology, and Islam and Modernity

GRANTS, AWARDS AND HONORS

Certificate in University Teaching, Syracuse University, Expected 2013

Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Summer Fellowship, Syracuse University, 2011

Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Summer Research Award, Syracuse University, 2010

Scholars For the Dream Travel Award, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Louisville, KY, March 2010

Virginia Community College System Mini-Grant Recipient, John Tyler Community College, Spring 2004

Black History in the Making Award, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, Spring 2003

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY (2007-2011)

Instructor of Record (2007-2011)

Developed course syllabi, assignments, and inquiries for each class.

WRT 104 SummerStart, Introduction to College Writing

WRT 104 HEOP, Introduction to College Writing (non-traditional students)

WRT 105, Practices of Academic Writing

WRT 120, Writing Enrichment

WRT 205, Critical Research and Writing (face-to-face and online)

Practicum Consultant, WRT 670, Practicum: Teaching College Writing (2008-2009)

Writing Consultant, Syracuse University Writing Center (Fall 2007, Fall 2010)

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA (2003-2007)

Adjunct Faculty, English Department (2003-2007)

ENGL 101, Writing Workshop I

ENGL 200, Writing Workshop II

Adjunct Faculty, The English Language Program (Fall 2006)
ELP Advanced Writing and Grammar I

John Tyler Community College, Chester, VA (2002-2005)

Adjunct Faculty, Humanities and Sciences Department

ENG 01, Preparing for College Writing I
ENG 03, Preparing for College Writing II
ENG 111, College Composition I
ENG 112, College Composition II
ENG 241, American Literature I
ENG 242, American Literature II

Administrative and Research Experience

Graduate Associate, Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society, Department of English, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, VA (2010-present)

- Provide intensive archival and database research assistance.
- Assist with conducting community focus groups.
- Collaborate with group on writing documentary book about civil rights leader, Barbara Rose Johns.

Assistant to the Conference on College Composition and Communication Program Chair, Syracuse University (2009-2010)

- Provided logistical support for presentation scheduling and room assignments.
- Developed correspondence for prospective presenters.
- Organized materials to be published in the conference bulletin.

Teacher Practicum Consultant, WRT 670: TA Practicum, The Writing Program, Syracuse University (2008-2009)

- Assisted with summer orientation for new graduate teaching assistants (TA).
- Facilitated small groups and large group discussions on programmatic and pedagogical concerns.
- Co-led weekly TA groups to discuss concerns related to curriculum.
- Observed and wrote teaching evaluations for monthly reports.

Administrative Assistant to the Chair of Mechanical Engineering, School of Engineering, Virginia Commonwealth University (2005-2006)

- Served as registrar for students taking department courses.
- Managed both the department budget and budget for faculty grants.
- Streamlined a database for all money transactions across funding streams that fed into the larger University fiscal systems.
- Monitored state procedures for purchasing, budget, and reimbursement as well as the grant reporting requirements for each faculty grant.
- Performed editing duties for the chair and several faculty members for grants, accreditation materials, conference proposals, and book chapters.

Researcher, Recipient of a Virginia Community College System Mini-Grant, John Tyler Community College (Spring 2004)

- Designed a research project to collect data on how instructors were adapting to the new course description for Composition I and II courses.
- Compiled and disseminated research findings for faculty teaching the courses.

Program Support Technician, Human Resources, Virginia Commonwealth University (2000-2002)

- Processed workers compensation claims.
- Reconciled claims with insurance companies, maintained medical records, and facilitated payment for disability related leave.
- Archived, sorted, and stored a library of materials for new employees.

SCHOLARY ACTIVITY

Publications

"Bridging the Gap: Using Blackboard to Establish Community in the Composition Classroom." *Emerging Technologies*. Virginia Commonwealth University. April 2004. Web. 3 July 2011.

Review of Robert Glenn Howard's "A Theory of Vernacular Rhetoric: The Case of the 'Sinner's Prayer' Online." *K.B. Journal* 4.2 (Spring 2008): n. pag. Web. 3 July 2011.

Forthcoming

Interview with Dr. Gwendolyn Pough. *Composition Forum*. Fall 2013

Work Under Review

"Radical, Conservative, Extreme: Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School, 1963-1964" *Alternative Histories: Composition in Normal Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1839-1969*. (Invited Chapter)

Conference Presentations

"'I hope you don't read this and think I'm a racist!': Support for Teachers in the Online Contact Zone."

Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association. Washington, DC; March 2013 (Abstract Submitted)

"Digital Archives and Traditional Archival Research Methods: Keeping a Beginner's Mind in the Move From Dusty Boxes to Digitized Records." *Computers and Writing*. Frostburg, Maryland; June 2013 (Abstract Submitted)

"'Teaching Must be Our Demonstration!': The Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School, 1963-1964." Rhetoric Society of America. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; May 2012

"'When will they take this school too?': Teaching for Liberation in the Prince Edward County Free School, 1963-1964." Conference on College Composition and Communication. St. Louis, Missouri; March 2012.

"Reviving and Remixing: Learning from the Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School Association." Rhetoric Society of America, Old Dominion University Symposium. Norfolk, Virginia; July 2011.

"The Free Schools of Prince Edward County, Virginia: A Site for Emancipatory Composition." Conference on College Composition and Communication. Louisville, Kentucky; March 2010.

Invited Presentations

"Writing Histories for Change with Your Family at the Kitchen Table: Strengthening Connections

between Home and Academic Communities.” The Robert Russa Moton Museum, Farmville, VA; August 2012.

“Catching a Whisper: *Listening* and *Learning* Reflectively through Archival Research.” Invited Speaker. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia; September 2011.

“The CCR Comprehensive Exam: Finding Your Scholarly Pathways.” Guest Speaker. Graduate Colloquium. The Writing Program, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; November 2010.

“Listening to the Archives and the Voices of the Prince Edward County Free School Students.” Invited Presentation. Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Community Day, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; August 2010.

“Finding Your Way In and Being Successful at Getting Out: Navigating the Comprehensive Exam Process” Invited Presentation. Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Course Community Day, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; August 2010.

“What to Expect as a CCR Graduate Student: The Second Year.” Guest Speaker. Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Visiting Days, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; Spring 2009.

“Teaching the Burkean Parlor: Preparing to Work with Students on Critical Engagement with Sources.” Invited Presentation. TA Practicum. The Writing Program, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; Spring 2009.

““How I Got Over”: Connecting Our Home Roots with Our Scholarly Communities.” Guest Speaker. WRT 420: Rhetoric and Politics of the Black Sermon. The Writing Program, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY; Fall 2008.

“Preparing to Teach: Looking Ahead to WRT 105.” Invited Presentation. TA Training. The Writing Program, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; August 2008.

“Preparing for the GRE Verbal Prep.” Guest Speaker. School of Nursing, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA; Fall 2006 and Spring 2007

SERVICE

Institutional Service

Committee Member, The Graduate Committee, Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Program, Syracuse University, 2009-2010.

Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Community Day Planner, Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Program, Syracuse University, August 2008.

Adjunct Faculty Representative, English Department Faculty Meetings, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2005-2006.

Committee Member, The Composition Committee, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2003-2004.

Academic Service

Reader, Drexel University Freshman Writing Program Assessment Project, Summer 2012

Faculty Participant for InSight Technology Pilot. Virginia Commonwealth University, 2004

FIPSE (Funds for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) Reader. John Tyler Community College Composition Project, Summer 2003 & 2004

Community Service

Room Parent, Our Lady of Lourdes School, September 2011- Present

Volunteer ESL Instructor, Richmond Catholic Diocese Office of Immigration and Refugee Services,
Summer 2002, Summer/Fall 2003

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

American Ethnic Rhetorics	Classical Rhetoric
Creative Nonfiction	Race and Composition Studies
Writing Program Administration	Online/Hybrid Teaching
TA Training and Faculty Development	Curriculum Development
First Year Writing	Digital Archives and Research Methods

MEMBERSHIPS

National Council Teachers of English Administrators	Council of Writing Program
Modern Language Association	Rhetoric Society of America
Conference on College Composition and Communication	

REFERENCES

Dr. Lois Agnew
Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric
Writing Program Director and Chair
Syracuse University
315.443.1083
lpagnew@syr.edu

Dr. Gwendolyn Pough
Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies Department
Chair, Women's and Gender Studies Department
Syracuse University
315.443.6745
gdpough@syr.edu

Dr. Eileen E. Schell
Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric
The Writing Program
Syracuse University
315.443.1009
eeschell@syr.edu

Dr. Louise Wetherbee Phelps
Professor Emeritus of Writing and Rhetoric, Syracuse University
Visiting Scholar of Writing and Rhetoric, Old Dominion University

757.693.2603
lwphelps@syr.edu

Anne Fitzsimmons
Teacher Training Coordinator
The Writing Program
Syracuse University
315.443.1305
afitzsim@syr.edu

