A CASE STUDY APPROACH OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF BROWN BARGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE CLOSING OF A. A. DIXON SCHOOL FOLLOWING AUGUSTUS VERSUS ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

by

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY APPROACH OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF BROWN BARGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE CLOSING OF A. A. DIXON SCHOOL FOLLOWING AUGUSTUS VERSUS ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Gayle Ann Alexandra Juneau

The purpose of this study was to examine case studies linked to three important historical time periods in the Pensacola, Florida educational community. These historical moments included the (a) Augustus v. School Board of Escambia County, Florida landmark legal case regarding desegregation in Escambia County educational institutions; (b) transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet School; and (c) closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. I used case studies to explore three historical time periods. I interviewed residents who experienced one or more of the three events defined by the cases. I compared and contrasted their responses with information I retrieved about the three events from newspaper articles and meeting minutes. The stories revealed participants' struggles with sacrificing their historical African American community schools as they supported school integration.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I used feminist theory as a lens to examine case studies linked to three important historical time periods in the Pensacola, Florida educational community. These historical moments include the (a) Augustus v. School Board of Escambia County, Florida landmark legal case regarding desegregation in Escambia County educational institutions; (b) transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet School; and (c) closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. In particular, the research methods were guided by three major theoretical components thematically integrated into feminist perspectives, which include the matrix of domination, relations of ruling, and representational politics.

Zillah R. Einstein (1999) says that, “theory must grow out of reality, but it must be able to pose another vision of reality as well” (p. 3). Mary Rogers (1998) expands on this idea by stating that “theorizing often shows up in ordinary conversations, mundane storytelling, or everyday banter, where people not only draw on but also constitute cultural resources such as argot and truisms” (p. 8). Thus, theory empowers us to understand others’ experiences, how they differ from our own, and how communities are shaped from hierarchy, domination, and oppression. Through these theoretical standpoints, I tried to demonstrate how *pulpit* theorizing about experiences of racism and classism seem to be based on assumptions that both forms of oppression remain fixed

and uniformly described. Specifically, in my exploration of the histories of Brown Barge Magnet School, A. A. Dixon Elementary School, and the Augustus Case, I gathered information that demonstrated ways racism and classism were fluid, personal constructs that shifted over time when stories of history were remembered and told by individuals who both lived through transformations of oppression and who also altered their perspectives from one decade to another. From this perspective, it becomes significant to understand the important question is not, "has racism and/or classism diminished?" The important question becomes, "how has the understanding of racism and/or classism shifted over time and been implemented in policy during the particular time?"

Mary Rogers (1998) defines hierarchy as a "structural phenomenon having to do with layering people or groups so that some have more and others have less in the way of opportunities and rewards" (p. 29). She defines domination as a "relational reality having to do with some individuals' or groups' socially constructed and routinely exercised right to regulate other people's actions, opportunities and outcomes" (p. 29). She then defines oppression as "an experiential notion concerning how people in the lower reaches of social hierarchies – those more dominated than dominating – react over time by way of their identities and emotions" (p. 29). For example, much of bell hooks' work centers on oppressions people face in their daily lives from intersections and layers of social injustices. Intersecting systems of domination are what Patricia Hill Collins calls the matrix of domination. Race, class, gender and other oppressive structures intersect while also remaining distinct from one another (Collins, 2000). Within our communities hierarchical systems govern the way in which people live or what Dorothy Smith labels the relations of ruling. The relations of ruling function within the matrix whereby some

people “get authorized to get their way more often than not and others learn that their preferences don’t much matter” (Rogers, p. 31). In this study, I relied on the matrix of domination to help me understand identity is multidimensional and layered in ways that either serve to strengthen personal and societal benefits or trap others on the social sidelines. Specifically, I used concepts of the matrix of domination to understand ways that constructs such as race, class, and gender combine to trap and marginalize individuals. I also used several concepts of relations of ruling to acknowledge how people’s voices have been silenced and how the dominant systems of hegemonic practices and politics prevailed.

This study explored three cases: (a) Augustus versus School Board of Escambia County, (b) the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School, and (c) the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. I examined school board minutes and newspaper articles that offered insights about whose voices were *heard* publicly and officially in ways that affected community change. Then, I compared public records with stories of individuals who experienced the three historical time periods to compare and contrast archival information with oral histories. I used the data to describe points of time in history witnessed by individuals whose lives were affected by the transformations.

The descriptions in this study reinforced feminist consciousness about how certain people get pushed to the social sidelines or margins of social situations in our communities. Specifically, the case studies of Augustus, Brown Barge, and Dixon shed light on how oppressive structures were imposed on individuals and how they chose to resist the margins to find space where others listened to their voices. Finding that space

critically influences what counts as knowledge. However, those living on the margins seldom find space for their voices to be heard and thus, do not count as persons worthy of opportunities. Mary Rogers (1998) reinforces that “since people who count occupy the upper reaches of social hierarchies, what counts as knowledge commonly reflects a privileged outlook” (p. 66). Foucault (1972) further supports this view by claiming that dominant messages are themselves powerful, rather than a source of power. How we act out knowledge determines oppressive or productive consequences. Therefore, I revisited history to begin telling the untold and unheard stories of three events that deeply affected African Americans regarding educational spaces embedded in their communities. In particular, I positioned my study around Dorothy Smiths’ (1998) relations of ruling framework to begin opening voices that have been silent and silenced. I discovered how decisions of policy-makers changed the lives of the community’s residents who already lived at the margins.

I worked from a theoretical standpoint to reopen the history and the voices of African Americans in the Pensacola community. I explored how the passage of time across 30 years of policy, although feeble and tentative in moments of fleeting positioning, opened education to African Americans through desegregation mandates enforced amidst heated racial and class struggles in the 1960s and 1970s. After 30 years of hard work and bitter struggles that succeeded, I explored how and why two predominately African American schools located in the center of their communities managed to experience district mandated closure. More specifically, one of the two, Brown Barge, was reopened as a magnet middle school to recruit more white students into the inner city school. The other school, Dixon, has transitioned into a school for

adult education. I used the landmark racial court case, Augustus v. Board of Education, as a baseline for documenting and describing the case histories of those who were affected by the three educational situations. The case histories were used to examine how policy, representational politics, and decision making in the name of educational and political revitalization affected a marginalized community in ways that further complicated and continues to complicate the economics of poverty in the Pensacola inner city community.

Description of the Three Cases

To establish a framework that helped me examine ways to explore the experiences of those living in one of the three historical time periods, I positioned the 1959 case of Augustus v. Escambia County Board of Public Education as the cornerstone of my work.

Augustus v. Escambia County of Public Education (1959)

The original action in this suit was filed in 1959 to require the school board of Escambia County and other school officials to reorganize the school system on a unitary, nonracial basis. The court retained jurisdiction of the matter in order to effectuate its orders. The core of this action was initiated by Dr. Charles Augustus on behalf of 11 African American students in Escambia County. The plaintiff's classification was later extended to address segregated actions that were occurring at Escambia High School after the original decree. I began with a description of the issues that led to the court case. Then, I highlighted later extensions of the first version of the case as it evolved and

intensified for 10 years with reference to particular actions that were developed in Escambia County.

During the first phase of the desegregation lawsuit, parents and advocates for 11 African American children sued Escambia County Board of Public Education and requested immediate desegregation at all levels and phases of the school system. The plaintiffs argued that a dual system of schools supported the idea that African Americans were inherently inferior to Caucasian persons and, consequently, were not allowed to attend the same public schools attended by superior white children. In addition, the plaintiffs and members of their class claimed that the policy of assigning teachers, principals, and other school personnel on the basis of the race of the children attending a particular school and the race of the person to be assigned discriminated against them. They argued that the assignment of school personnel on the basis of race presupposes that African American teachers, principals, and other school personnel were inferior to white teachers, principals, and other white school personnel and therefore, were not allowed to teach Caucasian children. Augustus v. Escambia County Board of Education was defended and won by the plaintiffs and forced desegregation to occur in all Escambia County schools. The Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education case served as a catalyst for the Augustus decision. The federal courts maintained review authority for all policies reviewed in the original Augustus decision.

A new class action in Escambia County occurred in 1973. The complaint alleged that Escambia High School's use of the name *Rebels* as its official name, its use of the Confederate Battle Flag as a school symbol, and the singing of "Dixie" at school functions deprived plaintiffs of their rights, privileges, and immunities secured by the

Fourteenth Amendment. Specifically, plaintiffs alleged that the use of these symbols made African American students feel inferior to white students. They claimed the symbols were a cause of violence and disruption in the school. The complaint sought preliminary and permanent injunction against their further use by either the school or individual students attending the school. The defendants, alternately, did not deny use of the symbols, but took the position that the student body had the right to choose their own symbols.

At the hearing to determine whether a preliminary injunction should be issued, the court found the use of the symbols had reinforced white racism and was offensive to a substantial number of African American students. The court also determined white students wore the Confederate Battle Flag to deliberately offend African American students. The court issued a preliminary injunction forbidding the School Board from (a) displaying the Confederate Battle Flag at Escambia High School, (b) using the name *Rebels*, and (c) and displaying or wearing the Confederate Battle Flag while attending school or any activity sponsored or organized by the school. In the original order and in a supplemental order dated January 26, 1973, certain exceptions to the prohibition against the use of the symbols were granted. These exceptions consisted of prior monuments, plaques, trophies, yearbooks, class rings and the gymnasium floor which bore inscriptions of the Confederate Battle Flag and the word *Rebels*.

After issuing the preliminary injunction, Nicky D. Scapin and others intervened on behalf of the residents and taxpayers of Escambia County as well as all students at Escambia High School. Their complaint alleged they had not used any of the disputed symbols in the manner designated by the court and its order dated January 24, 1973, and

therefore, they were denied rights guaranteed them by the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

Prior to the final hearing, the parties agreed to many factual matters. The following matters were stipulated. Prior to the 1966-1967 school year, Escambia High School was attended only by Caucasian students. Prior to the 1970 school year, a few African American students attended the school, but a substantial increase in African American enrollment occurred in 1970 when 349 African Americans enrolled (approximately 11% of the total enrollment); thereafter, the African American enrollment decreased somewhat. During the 1972-1973 school year, there were 252 African American students and 3,088 white students attending Escambia High School.

The hearing results stipulated that racial tension existed among students during the last school year. Major disturbances broke out on November 15, 1972; December 16, 1972; January 31, 1973; and March 22, 1973. During these disturbances, there was considerable interracial fighting. In fact, the school was closed on two occasions. In addition to major confrontations occurring on these days, disruptions and walkouts occurred on several other occasions. The State Patrol was required to maintain order for a certain time period in early February, 1973. Several meetings were held within the community to discuss the situation.

During this phase of legal action, it was undisputed that the symbols were used by the school as symbolic designations for the school and that such official use was the responsibility of the defendant school board. The symbols originated with the inception of the high school and were chosen by student vote. The Escambia County School Board authorized an additional student vote on the symbols on January 16, 1973. The results

supported the continued use of the symbols by a large majority. No record was made of the racial composition of the vote. Testimony indicated the results of the election were a foregone conclusion.

The African American demands for the abolition of the Confederate symbols were announced in the fall of 1972. The symbols became a principle focus of the dispute and were a source of considerable racial tension. There were also other racial irritants, both prior to, and after the symbols became a major issue.

Evidence showed that after the initial confrontation broke out, some Caucasian students used the symbols as a means of irritating and provoking African American students. Unidentified young people would drive around the school honking horns and waving the Confederate Battle Flag. There was testimony from both sides that African Americans were not taking part in school activities to the full extent possible. According to witnesses for plaintiff-interveners, this lack of participation was a result of racial hostility and of the school's use of the disputed symbols. A witness for defendant-interveners testified that African American students felt apathetic, and thus, chose not to participate in school activities. Also, they claimed that some African Americans had been elected to positions of leadership in the school.

The two sides disagreed on the effect the symbols had on agitating and irritating African American students. The plaintiff witnesses were unanimous in stating that the symbols reminded them of slavery and white domination. The defendant witnesses, however, were divided on the issue. One of the School Board's witnesses was Mr. Leeper, a member of the School Board and a principal mediator in the dispute. He stated that he felt the School Board had failed to educate the students properly on the meaning

of the symbols. His position on irritation is also set forth in a statement made by him at a board meeting held on January 5, 1973: “We realize...the waving of the Rebel flag, gangs of youths hitting and using abusive language, and playing of Dixie, disrespect for the national anthem and flag, and the label rebel are racially irritating” (*Augustus v. School Board of Escambia County, Florida*, 1975).

Other testimony of the defendant-interveners was that the symbols meant *Escambia High* had generally carried no racial meaning. That testimony also indicated that a small number of students (around two hundred) had used the symbols in a racially derogatory manner. Plaintiff-interveners’ testimony indicated that not all Caucasians considered the symbols as racially derogatory, but that many of them did.

Based on the evidence before the court, the following conclusions were made:

1. The name *Rebels* and the use of the Confederate Battle Flag were and still are racially irritating to a substantial number of African Americans at this school.
2. There were various causes of racial tension at Escambia High School, but the use of these symbols was a significant contributing cause.
3. As the dispute gained momentum, the continued use of the symbols became a focal issue, and the symbols became an even greater source of racial tension.
4. The use of the symbols was a significant obstacle to effectively operate a unitary school.
5. The use of such symbols at the school was likely to continue to be a source of racial tension and a cause of disruption and violence.

6. The symbols were not chosen as racial irritants, and most Caucasian students did not believe the symbols carried an offensive racial connotation. The symbols did carry an offensive connotation to a substantial number of the African American students, as well as to a minority of the Caucasian students.

Beyond Augustus, my study concurrently looked at the institutional history of two schools in the Pensacola community, Brown Barge School and A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Brown Barge School was closed and reopened as a magnet school to recruit white students into an inner city school. Dixon, a predominantly African American Elementary School located in a low-income neighborhood, struggled to demonstrate vigor and quality, but was forced to close its doors in 2003.

Brown Barge Elementary School

Brown Barge Magnet Middle School was formerly Brown Barge Elementary School. This transformation occurred twenty years earlier than the closures of Dixon, Byrneville, and Pensacola Beach Schools. However, the story of the school was significant to my study and to the Pensacola community because it similarly documented the closure of an African American elementary school that was considered extremely valuable in the Pensacola community.

Brown Barge Magnet Middle School, similar to the newer procedures for charter school transformations, was established from the closing of Brown Barge Elementary School that began in 1955. During the early years of the school, Brown Barge was considered a community school for African American children who commuted from distances as far as 15 miles away, such as Olive Road and Ensley. From this perspective, African American families supported commuting their children to Brown Barge because

it was an elementary school founded by and operated by members of their own race. It was the educational structure for hope, opportunity, and self-worth to African Americans in a rural, southern community. Historically, it existed prior to desegregation in Pensacola, so it represented the place where learning was endorsed for a race of people considered not deserving a chance to learn amidst white masses of students in classrooms. Until the Augustus Case, Brown Barge existed as one of the few places an African American child could experience a chance for educational empowerment.

Brown Barge Elementary School's history was built from the diligent work and leadership of African Americans who dedicated their lives to the education of young people in their own racially disenfranchised Pensacola community. The first principal of Brown Barge was Mr. Willie Brown, Sr. He served as the principal from the opening of the school in 1955 until his death in 1969. Although a history of the early days was difficult to determine, two stories managed to be recorded describing the beginning of the school's existence. The first story was a description of the luncheon program sponsored by the school. Education on table manners, appropriate behaviors, and interactions with others in society was significant and unique for African American students in the county. Brown Barge's creators introduced a human relations curriculum to African Americans in the elementary school. From this perspective, Brown Barge possessed a strong history of educating students in unique, real-world practices that highlighted the school.

The second story that was consistent in the limited history of Brown Barge describes ways that students and faculty were exposed to what would in present day be considered a dangerous health hazard, but in the early days did not even merit closing the

windows of classrooms. Specifically, on days when the wind blew in the wrong direction, the sulfur powder from the neighboring chemical plant would be blown in the direction of the school. Today, families who lived near the plant are receiving payments from the company because of a lawsuit that found them negligent of protecting the health and safety of local citizens.

Most of the limited research I discovered about Brown Barge's earliest history simply stated the school closed in 1985 with A. J. Boland as its last principal. One document suggested the school closed from gaining the reputation as a typical inner-city school with related problems of poverty, drugs, and violence. I hoped the history of Brown Barge would have been represented by the voices of the Pensacola community and would have become one of the discoveries of my study.

I found that some time during the month of June 1986, A.V. Clubbs Middle School on 12th Avenue closed. The following year, the former students and faculty of Clubbs reopened under the name of Brown Barge Middle School. This school only operated from 1986-1987. At the close of the 1987 school year, students and faculty were transferred into schools nearby in the community.

In 1987, Camille Barr was appointed principal of a new Brown Barge Middle School. It became Brown Barge Magnet School, "A School for Able Learners." It served as the school for cutting edge technology. The school received a magnet school assistance grant and within 2 years after closing, the school reopened with a new middle school mission.

The school has become a national showplace for curriculum streams and school-based management. Pensacola's magnet school for technology education receives

attention and visitors yearly. I wanted to listen to the history of the "rest of the story" of a school that has managed to sustain significance in a community across 50 years of time in varying ways.

In December 1990, the School District of Escambia County (Florida) proposed to restructure the inner city school and reduce its racial isolation by creating a school of choice that *broke the mold* of public middle school education (Jenkins & Jenkins, 1998). Restructuring involved creating a school of choice based on a nontraditional curriculum. During the 1991-1992 and 1992-1993 school years, the teachers and staff of Brown Barge Magnet Middle School designed and implemented an innovative thematic integrative curriculum based on assessed student and parent needs on a school-wide basis. They also integrated technology such as computers, scanners, video cameras, and copiers as tools readily available to both teachers and students. The curriculum and technology would be the *magnets* used to draw students throughout the county (Pearson, Pilcher, & Weeks, 1996). I wanted to discover how Brown Barge has also been a *magnet* in the Pensacola community. Even earlier than Augustus, this school existed. It preceded Augustus; it lived through Augustus; it remained open through desegregation. Then, Brown Barge closed and was reopened. Its history was somehow seemingly lost or at least recorded in minimal records. I wanted to capture the voices of Brown Barge's history as it related to Augustus and to potentially compare its history to A. A. Dixon Elementary School's history.

A. A. Dixon Elementary School

A. A. Dixon Elementary School closed its doors in the spring of 2003; three years after a state accountability program branded the school with an F label and offered its

students private school vouchers. Dixon drew national attention in 1999 when it became one of two Florida schools to lose students as part of the only statewide voucher program in the nation. Though the school had fallen victim to a mix of high overhead, state fiscal woes, and an enrollment drop that went beyond the modest direct impact of vouchers, the state's distinctive twist on accountability set the stage for its fate.

While local officials differed over the impact of the voucher policy, the role it played in the school's looming closure drew tremendous attention, particularly as the U.S. Supreme Court prepared to hear a voucher case from Cleveland, Ohio, during the same month and year. School principal, Judy Ladner said, “There was not declining enrollment before vouchers—our enrollment was up.” The combination of the F grade and the voucher attention, she said, “gave the community a bad impression about us” (LaCoste, 2002, p. 4A).

Even though Dixon Elementary's state test scores had improved enough to keep the school from landing again on Florida's list of failing schools, its enrollment had dropped by more than 25% over the period of one year. Dixon pupils qualified for vouchers for only one year. Jeanne Allen, the president of the Center for Education Reform, a school choice research and advocacy group based in Washington, said that Dixon's expected closure might ultimately be a positive development. “I don't think it's a bad thing for a school board to say let's close a school that is not well enrolled and that's not very good,” Ms. Allen said. “To go from an F to a D--even though they made a little bit of progress--really isn't saying much”(LaCoste, 2002, 4A).

Despite emotional pleas from parents, the Escambia County School Board voted 3-2 to close the school at the end of the academic year. Dixon Elementary School's woes

were compounded by the impact of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The attacks contributed to a fiscal crisis in Florida, a state that depends on tourism to bolster the sales-tax receipts that make up its main source of revenue. Consequently, the Escambia County district received $5.2 million less than expected from the state during that school year, and the district had been advised to prepare for an overall shortfall of $11 million out of a $210 million budget, said Superintendent Jim Paul. The district turned to school closures and consolidations to fill the budgetary gap while avoiding teacher layoffs.

Dixon had posted some gains in student performance as measured by state tests. It went from 28% of its students scoring a 3 or better, out of a possible 5 on the state writing assessment. By 1994, student scores improved drastically with 94% of students scoring a 3 or better out of a possible score of 5 on the same writing assignment. Ms. Ladner stated it was difficult to change the school's reputation after the state designated it as one of Florida's lowest performers.

Dixon and another Pensacola school, Spencer Bibbs Advanced Learning Academy, were the only two schools in the state to earn an F label for two consecutive years. Under Florida's accountability program, students in schools graded F for two out of four years qualified to receive vouchers that could be used to pay for tuition at private schools that accepted vouchers or students could transfer to higher performing schools in the district.

Only 26 students who would otherwise have attended Dixon requested vouchers worth up to $3,400 in 1999. The school's academic gains in subsequent years meant no additional students would become eligible for vouchers. However, the school's enrollment concurrently experienced a huge decline. A total of 460 students attended

Dixon in the 1998-1999 school year compared to 408 students in 1999-2000. The enrollment prior to closing was 340 students. The decline occurred as parents elected to send their children to other district schools.

Ms. Ladner commented that she understood the district's economic situation, but she was also concerned that the school's closure would be a significant blow to its students, who would be divided among a handful of nearby schools. All but three students at Dixon qualified for free or reduced-priced lunches and many parents failed to own reliable transportation, making it hard for them to transport their children to private schools. The school district transported children to selected higher performing district schools.

Nicole Brandon, the president of the PTA at Dixon, continued fighting after the principal and community resigned themselves to closure. Ms. Brandon teamed up with other community members to submit an application to transition Dixon into a publicly funded but largely autonomous charter school. School board members eventually denied the charter proposal. “Our main concern is keeping Dixon where it is,” said Ms. Brandon, who had a son and a daughter in the school, as well as two nieces. “Ninety percent of my parents don't have cars. It's unfortunate, but that's the situation. They have a hard enough time getting to Dixon without transportation” (Osburn, 2002, p. 4A). The charter school plan for Dixon never materialized.

The story of A. A. Dixon served as a major focus of my study for two overarching reasons: (a) it was a predominantly African American elementary school, and (b) it was described by Pensacola residents as a community school. However, A. A. Dixon Elementary School was not the only school in the Escambia County school district

slated to either be closed or consolidated. Media narratives seem to suggest Dixon's fate was a matter of simple economics and geography. As rebuttal, Dixon supporters pointed to elementary schools with approximately the same cost per pupil that did not have similar purposes to an African American neighborhood community. Specifically, Byrneville Elementary School and Pensacola Beach Elementary school were also designated for closure because of high operational costs. A comparison of operational costs in Escambia County Schools with the exact dollar figures per student in each of the three schools for the 1999-2000 school year is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Cost per Pupil for Schools Slated to Close

School	Cost per pupil	Estimated annual savings by closure
A. A. Dixon Elementary	$1,184	$413,000
Pensacola Beach Elementary	$1,932	$239,000
Byrneville Elementary	$1,105	$230,000

Superintendent Jim Paul consistently voiced particular schools were chosen for closure based on operating costs per student for each school. Paul had originally identified 11 schools for closure that affected all five districts in the county. In the end, Pensacola Beach, Byrneville, and Dixon were closed because their student costs surpassed financial affordability. According to Paul, schools were supported if cost per pupil fell somewhere between $900 and $1100. Interestingly, Suter Elementary School and Pensacola Beach Elementary School topped the cost list at $1326 and $1932, respectively. As is evident, both schools required greater financial spendings than Dixon's $1184. In the end, Suter was spared. The district agreed to assign one principal

to both Suter and Pensacola Beach Elementary Schools to reduce administrative costs. The following year Pensacola Beach Elementary was granted a charter. In essence, this district decision gave Pensacola Beach an extra year to create a charter plan. Dixon was not allowed that same opportunity.

Pensacola Beach Elementary School, in the initial stages of closure and consolidation, was offered one year to create and implement methods of becoming less of a financial burden on the school district. Parents of the mostly affluent community pledged their own money to make any necessary improvements to the school's facilities, including new construction and needed repairs. In short, the school maintained capability to defeat the closure no matter the terms or parameters mandated by the school district.

Dixon differed from Byrneville and Pensacola Beach Elementary Schools despite the harsh financial similarities the schools shared at the time of the closure decision. Presently, Byrneville and Pensacola Beach have transitioned into charter schools. Both schools certainly struggled and faced transformations, yet they sustained their schools in the same geographical locations. Both schools continue to operate as vibrant educational institutions in their original locations. Dixon no longer serves as a community elementary school. Rather, it houses the adult education programs that serve the entire school district.

When making the decisions to close the schools, Escambia County leadership described the circumstances among Dixon, Byrneville, and Pensacola Beach Elementary Schools as vastly different yet common. One measure of significance for making closure decisions, according to Paul, was school location. He considered the value of the school locations to the school district. Reorganizing school programs in either of the outlying

communities (Pensacola Beach and Byrneville) would have caused drastic increases in transportation costs. Specifically, Byrneville was described as an incredibly old building near the Alabama state line. It also had a small cafeteria and limited classroom space. Most of the students' classrooms were in portable trailers. Pensacola Beach Elementary School was located on and consisted of portable buildings that were of little or no value to the district. Santa Rosa Island Authority leased the property to the district for $1 a year. When the school closed, the property reverted back to the Santa Rosa Island Authority.

Expectedly, angered supporters of schools described closures as decisions made for political reasons, not financial ones. Presently, Dixon, Byrneville, and Pensacola Beach Elementary Schools have been closed as district public schools. Byrneville and Pensacola Beach have transitioned into charter schools. Dixon no longer exists as an elementary school for the local residents living in a poverty-stricken neighborhood. The former public elementary, neighborhood school has been transitioned into an adult education center.

Parents and leaders of Pensacola Beach Elementary School and Byrneville Elementary School enjoyed the luxury of time to prepare a charter school proposal. But the closing of Dixon, coming after the deadline to apply for a charter, left Dixon parents scrambling. Extending the deadline by about 30 days gave them barely enough time to get organized. In the end, they lost their school.

Charter schools approved by the Florida Department of Education and contracted by local school districts have been popping up all over the state in the last three years. They are promoted as schools formed to serve a specific population or to draw students

like magnets to particular strengths of the school. The law governing charter schools allows existing public schools to convert to charter schools. Generally, the students remain in the same building, and teachers are still paid through the school district, retaining their benefits and seniority. The benefits of charter school transformation include eligibility for federal, state, and private grant money and freedom from local bureaucracy on how to spend funds. Byrneville and Pensacola Beach defeated the possibility that their local school would be permanently closed. Dixon, on the other hand, lives a very different history and present reality.

When Superintendent Jim Paul took office in 1999, he examined the operating costs, excluding teachers' salaries, in each of the district's 58 schools. Because the cost of Dixon's administrative and support staff remained the same even as its enrollment declined, the school ranked as the district's 10th costliest school. Spencer Bibbs, like Dixon, was graded two consecutive years and also fell under the voucher program for a year. Spencer Bibbs Elementary School was allowed to remain open even though it ranked ahead of Dixon on the list of the district's most costly schools. Dixon was slated for closure over Spencer Bibbs, Mr. Paul said, because Spencer Bibbs had received grants to provide all of its students with computers. In addition, Spencer Bibbs had recently received a new 10 classroom addition and would soon get a new media center. In other words, Jim Paul said, Dixon was not targeted for closure because it was once graded F or because its students once received vouchers. “It has absolutely nothing to do with [the closing],” Mr. Paul said of the voucher policy. “I'm a conservative Republican. Why in the world would I want to close a voucher school when leaving it open is merely

going to confirm what the governor says, that vouchers do make a difference" (Osburn, 2002, p. 4A). A. A. Dixon permanently closed June 2003.

Significance of the Study

The significance of these three cases came from narratives of African Americans who experienced either the Augustus v. Escambia County Board of Education Case, the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School, and/or the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to a magnet middle school. Their responses were used to describe the interlocking systems of oppression that occur when school and community politics drive mainstream administrative decisions. Specifically, I attempted to demonstrate ways in which the Augustus Case initiated desegregation of schools in Pensacola, Florida. The integration of schools mandated equal education across two races historically isolated from each other. At a grassroots level, the Augustus case promoted community activism by African Americans living in the Escambia County community to integrate into public schools. The Augustus Case was a powerful legal victory for minorities in Escambia County. Over time, the Augustus Case influenced policies associated with race in the local district for schools. From this perspective, the Augustus victory may have suggested that over time racism has been *fixed* and protected from educational unfairness and inequality. There were legal records with documentation that integration happened and continued to matter in Pensacola, Florida. There were concrete, written, legal success stories of school integration. However, these success stories downplayed potential inequalities of educational opportunities that have occurred over the past three decades. The actions, such as closing a school and transforming an inner city school, remain

within the legal bounds of the law and fit within the legal restrictions of The Augustus Case.

In Weis & Fine's text, *Construction Sites* (2000), the author defines two concepts: (a) space and (b) place. The Augustus Case was a classic example of difference between achieving place versus space. She defines place as legally or politically organized negotiations. Place does not provide liberation or freedom. It is fixed with parameters that protect power and status. Space, alternately, is defined by Weis & Fine as a platform for transformation and organization of voice. In the end, The Augustus Case provided what Fine labels place. Augustus offered integration with parameters. Decisions to close Dixon and transform Brown Barge indicated that The Augustus Case caused little influence for establishing a space for the voices of an African American inner city community.

Alongside a historical analysis of the Augustus case, I explored the lived experiences of A. A. Dixon Elementary School and Brown Barge Elementary School participants to uncover the intersecting injustices they experienced during the school closings. Weaving between the narratives of educational history, I listened to voices of people in the Pensacola community who reacted to the Augustus Case and the school closings. The experiences occurred in different decades but could possibly carry forward similar overtones today. African Americans who shaped the voice of history for my study were community members with long-term membership in this community. Most participants of this study have lived, continue to live, and possess memories comprehensive enough to span across the history of events. Somehow, though, the history of their experiences failed to be captured and recorded in history.

Research Questions

In my study, I triangulated information from historical documents, including Pensacola News Journal articles and Escambia County school board minutes, as well as focused, limited interviews with selected individuals who experienced the time periods of the Augustus case, the closing and reopening of Brown Barge Middle School, and the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. In this study, I used the conceptual lenses of the matrix of domination, the relations of ruling and representational politics to guide me as I explored the following research questions:

1. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the Augustus case?
2. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing and reopening of Brown Barge Schools?
3. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School?
4. How did individuals' lived experiences of The Augustus Case compare and contrast to those of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon schools?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences of selected individuals who witnessed events that occurred during three historical time periods, Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet School, and the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. The literature review for this study, consequently, weaves together several key components of a history shaped by voices of residents who experienced desegregation and racialized events since integration, as well as its implications, during and following the Augustus Case. The conceptual framework that blends the ideas of the matrix of domination, relations of ruling, and identity politics provides a basis for examining (a) ways in which representational politics made public by media often differed from oral dialogue of marginalized individuals who lived amidst the turmoil, and (b) the components of community living that become *sites of vulnerability*.

Matrix of Domination

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) created a framework called the matrix of domination to explore race, class, and gender as interlocking systems of oppression. In working from this conceptual stance, she moves away from using an additive, isolated, and compartmentalized system to describe oppressive situations. Rather, Collins helps us

understand how to interpret oppression through interlocking systems of race, class, gender, and other social injustices. According to Collins (2000), individuals are both participants in and victims of oppression in lived experiences. She writes, “All share some sense of a dual (or plural) identity developed through engagement with positioning within some kind of community as well as being excluded from a community” (p. 26). More clearly, the matrix of domination identifies ways cultural membership (i.e., race, class, and gender) are categories of identity that cannot be isolated from personal, cultural and societal affiliations.

Collins' notion (2000) is that each place in the matrix is both a site of oppression and a site of resistance. For example, individuals serve as active agents in one circumstance and oppressed victims in another. Through the matrix of domination, Collins explores the interplay of social structure and women's agency. Within the constraints of race, class, and gender oppression, women create life conditions for themselves, their families, and their communities. For example, women of color have resisted and often worked against the forces of power that control them. Collins describes how, through acts of either quiet rebellion or revolt and rebellion, women have struggled to shape their own lives.

According to bell hooks (2003), examining the multiple layers of domination that speak to a woman's ability to dominate is one way to deconstruct and challenge the oversimplified idea that women are victimized and oppressed by men. This aspect of thinking enables women to examine their own roles as women in the perpetuation and maintenance of systems of domination. bell hooks speaks to the position of women within the matrix of domination. She describes,

> Emphasizing paradigms of domination that call attention to woman's capacity to dominate is one way to deconstruct and challenge the simplistic notion that man is the enemy, woman the victim; the notion that men have always been the oppressors. Such thinking enables us to examine our role as women in the perpetuation and maintenance of systems of domination. Right now as I speak, a man who is himself victimized, wounded, hurt by racism and class exploitation is actively dominating a woman in his life – that even as I speak, women who are ourselves exploited, victimized, are dominating children. (p. 458)

According to Zinn and Dill (1996), applying a matrix of domination allows us to interpret power and domination through fundamental systems that work with and through each other. People experience race, class, gender, and sexuality differently depending upon their social location in the hierarchical, social structures. For example, people of the same race will experience race differently depending on their location in the class structure, such as working class, professional managerial class, or unemployed.

Zinn and Dill (1996) write about specific examples that blur positions of oppressor/oppressed in the lives of individuals with multiple cultural affiliations. The authors describe how white, Southern, slave-holding women were oppressors of black slaves at the same time they were themselves oppressed by their husbands and the patriarchal institutions of society. The authors' second example describes the lived experiences of Sofia Villenas. As a Chicana who was the first in her family to attend college, the authors illustrate how a person can be both a member of the privileged, oppressing group and a member of an oppressed group. While working on her Ph.D., Sophia was a member of a university project researching educational attitudes in a Latino

community in a Southern city. Although Sophia thought she would fit right in and be accepted by the Latino community as *one of us*, she was surprised to find herself regarded suspiciously as a meddling Anglo. The Latino community saw her as just one of the highly educated university representatives descending on them, not as a victim of racism like themselves.

At the institutional level, schools can be both oppressive and sites of resistance for those living on the social sidelines. For example, schools may be oppressive in their failure to teach about women's history or in calling upon males more frequently than females. At the same time, schools can be sites of resistance by providing literacy and other tools that women can use to empower themselves and fight back against oppression.

In summary, the matrix of domination reinforces that all forms of oppression share a common foundation that is designated by the way the oppressive conditions interlock with each other. Collins (2000) cites bell hooks' argument that racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression all share a common root, a belief in domination, that some groups are superior to other groups and that the superior groups have the right to rule over (or dominate) the inferior groups. However, this argument does not suggest that race, class, and gender oppression are entirely alike or necessarily operate in the same way.

In my study, I used the definition of the matrix of domination to guide me to understand how lived experiences of individuals collectively connect to each other. The voices of participants generated themes about the similarities that were built across cultural spaces (and over the passage of 30 years). Race seemed to serve as the focal

point of my work. Yet, it was important to see how these lived experiences were affected by social class and geography. For the purpose of this study, I used the matrix of domination to look at interlocking systems of race, social class, and geography. Specifically, I saw that categories of cultural capital served to either trap or elevate individuals in fluid, multidimensional ways depending on the context of a moment in their lives. Individuals in my study helped tell the untold stories of history. Their voices defined the historical barriers that aligned to the three cases in the Pensacola community. That is, this study described perspectives and reactions from individuals that have been marginalized or have witnessed marginalization in their respective settings over time.

In order to examine the matrix of domination at a deeper and more complete level, it was important to highlight and describe power, hierarchy, and domination. These terms represented sites of vulnerability from which discrimination and marginalization occurred, were reinscribed, and secured by individual and societal practices that relate to social hierarchy.

Power and Naming

In social and political theory, power is often regarded as an essentially contested concept (McLaughlin, 2003). Although the term *power* is generally understood in everyday life and seems to be a concept easily interpreted and internalized, the concept has sparked widespread disagreements among those philosophers and social and political theorists who have devoted their careers to analyzing and conceptualizing it (McLaughlin, 2003; Sterba, 1980). For example, the literature on power is marked by an expansive continuum of definitions regarding the basic definition of power. (McLaughlin, 2003; Sterba). McLaughlin defines power as getting someone else to do

what you want them to do (power-over) whereas others, such as Sterba defines it more broadly as an ability or a capacity to act (power-to). Many very important analyses of power in political science, sociology, and philosophy presuppose the former definition of power (power-over). For example, Max Weber (1997) defines power as the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance. Robert Dahl (1991) offers what he calls an *intuitive idea of power* according to which A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do. Similarly, but from a very different theoretical background, Michel Foucault's (1984) analysis presupposes that power is a kind of power-over. He describes that structures of power exist when certain persons exercise power over others.

Within the realms of feminist theory and as it relates to the matrix of domination, power is often aligned with language. My discussion of power focuses on how Collins (2000) and hooks (2003) speak about the use and power of language. In significant ways, they describe how women reclaim language, and thereby, the power to define reality for themselves and for all others from a different perspective. By reclaiming the power to define, women claim the power to name. Once named, their reality (the founding of a common language to describe their experiences) becomes a reality that recognizes a more expansive version of lived experiences, including marginalized and silenced voices. When referring to *naming*, Collins and bell hooks provide language for others to use to confront the institutionalized and personalized expressions of marginalization that affect their lives. By defining their language and reclaiming their power to name, women find

their once silenced voice(s) and are thus able to give voice to the oppression, domination and victimization they experience.

As Paolo Freire (2000) describes, words are more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible. Within words, there are two dimensions, reflection and action. He goes on to say “To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it” (p. 76). Friere's statements demonstrate an understanding that the process of naming is how we as humans come to understand our world and our place in it. At the same time, the process of naming, as a dynamic process, defines who we are as well as the world in which we interact. Naming is an action, and because all action occurs in a political context, naming is a political action.

Judith Lorber (2005) describes that men have been (and continue to be) in positions of power because of the way historical systems have been defined. Women (and others who are oppressed) are immediately at a disadvantage because the power that men have had to name has placed women and others in the margins. Lorber argues, for example, that even the name *wo-man* puts women in a position of being juxtaposed to men, not full and complete in their own right, but a prefix to a man, who continues to be the center, the foundation, the basis. Collins’ and bell hooks’ work suggests that when women and others enter into a dialogue to name their oppressive conditions, they begin the process of liberation.

Hierarchy and Bifurcated Consciousness

According to Mary Rogers (1998), hierarchy is a structural phenomenon having to do with layering people or groups so that some have more and others have less in the way of opportunities and rewards. Generally, social scientists call such systems of

inequality *social stratification*. Dorothy Smith's work (1998) focuses on how individuals process information to create and reinscribe social hierarchies. Smith highlights the nonuniversality and lack of neutrality of so-called *objective* sociological knowledge and the conceptual and methodological models of *objective* knowledge building as it relates to social positions individuals occupy across their lived experiences. In this way, she draws upon the idea of bifurcated consciousness. This concept speaks to the awareness of the disconnect and contradictions between lived experiences of marginalization and supposed *objective* methods, theories, and findings. Smith exposes the governance of the *abstract conceptual mode* as stemming not from objectivity and universality, but from its location within a specific set of historical, material, and social (patriarchal) relations. For Smith, knowledge is practice situated and embedded within specific historical systems of hierarchical power.

The concept of bifurcated consciousness also represents a position of possibility. This perspective reinforces a more inclusive worldview. Smith's description of bifurcated consciousness is significant in her discussion of the process by which marginalized individuals become alienated from their experience, an alienation which stems from the disconnect between how they experience, understand, and *think* their worlds and the concepts and terms that are imposed upon them. Smith's (1998) work on women's alienation, an alienation that promotes a loss of language and a deprivation of the authority to speak, has been key to the work of much feminist theory and research across disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, Smith cautions that while everyday experiences initially help us understand the world, we must not take that situatedness for granted but be aware of it, communicate it, be reflexive about it, and problematize it. We

must remember that experience and knowledge are always relational and changes as our experiences and understanding of the world changes. As Smith explains, “We must remember that as we begin from the world as we actually experience it we are located and that what we know of the world, of the 'other,' is conditional upon that location as part of a relation comprehending the other's location also” (p. 93).

Thus, as Smith (1998) suggests, we must begin with our everyday, lived knowledge and experience, but not end there. In our lived experiences, the link between larger social and material structures of capitalism and our own everyday experience is illuminated. In so doing, we will be engaging in what Smith calls *institutional ethnography*, a process of knowledge building which strives to fuse the microsocial and the macrosocial levels of inquiry. We begin with the everyday world, with the standpoint of the actor in everyday life, and seek to elucidate the relationship between everyday world activities and experiences.

Domination

Domination occurs when some individuals or groups socially construct and routinely exercise the right to regulate other people’s actions, opportunities, and outcomes. Mary Rogers (1998) suggests these relationships are often talked about in terms of exploitation, social injustice, and social problems. I focused on two concepts of domination, marginalized voices and on an ethic of care versus an ethic of justice.

Marginalized Voices. bell hooks (2000) writes about voices at the margins. More aptly, her work suggests there is much to write about regarding silence as it relates to those living in oppressive situations. Weis & Fine (2000) recommend that we

> Stretch toward writing that spirals around social justice and resilience, that recognizes the endurance of the structure of injustice and the powerful acts of agency, that appreciates the courage and the limits of individual acts of resistance but refuses to perpetuate the fantasy that *victims* are simply powerless. That these men and women are strong is not evidence that they have suffered no oppression. (p. 125)

As it relates to my study, the aforementioned authors describe lived experiences of historical changes as a series of records written in hegemonic versions that fail to describe experiences of those living on the social sidelines. As a solution to rewriting one-dimensional history, hooks posits the significance of using voices on the sidelines. From her perspective, voice refers to oral stories shared by individuals who participated in and can fill in the gaps of lop-sided histories. Hooks' work supports the notion that classism and racism are forms of oppression that exist on a continuum across history. She rejects that these forms of marginalization remain fixed experiences.

Howard Zinn's work (2003), *A People's History of the United States*, provides another example of writing history through the voices of those individuals living on the social sidelines. In this text, Zinn tells the story of this country from the point of view of the people usually left out of history books, such as women, Native Americans, working class, African Americans, and Latinos. His work reminds generations of Americans that democracy is fundamentally a conversation between people; one that has always been led by working people and those with the least to lose and the most to gain in a truly democratic society.

Using hooks' work, I reintroduce the significance of my study. My study included three cases, the Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board decision, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to a magnet school, and the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Specifically, the two schools were predominantly African American schools with long-standing presence and viability in the Escambia County community that somehow found a way to transformation and closure, respectively. Community residents who experienced one of these three critical events of history deserved to rewrite a version of Escambia County educational history in ways that documented their practices of advocacy and activism, their pain and sorrows, and their perspectives regarding the historical moments they individually lived.

Ethic of Care versus Ethic of Justice. Noddings' (2003, 2006) work compares an ethic of care and ethic of justice. She maintains *justice* practices are derived from legal standpoints driven by legal mandates and consequences. Consequently, an ethic of justice suggests there is a clear division between right and wrong in the simplest explanations and within rigid parameters. An ethic of care, alternately, works from the standpoint that is nonviolent, stems from moral societal *good* values, and protects the welfare of all individuals, particularly those who function at the social margins of society.

Noddings (2006) suggests that because we are professionals of education and related helping professions, we often make an assumption that all people care for themselves and care for others in equal, fair-minded practices. She states this assumption is made because we are professionals in helping disciplines. However, Noddings claims this is not universally true. She states that some people do not care at all. This may be the

case because of burn out, neutrality over time due to institutional barriers that prevent empowerment and genuine care, or just character deficiency for caring. For others, Noddings claims the practice of caring is driven by hegemonic value systems about society. Specifically, some people care for others by acting on what they think is best for them and right for society. She continues by suggesting that even for the majority who do care in the virtue sense—that is, they profess to care and work hard at their helping professions—there are many who do not adopt the relational sense of caring. She supports this statement by describing that they care in the sense that they conscientiously pursue certain goals for others, and they often work hard at coercing these individuals to achieve those goals. Noddings believes these professionals must be credited with caring in the virtue sense of the word. However, these same professionals may be unable to establish relations of care and trust. Noddings believes this inability to truly affect positive change stems from caring that is hegemonic and driven by what the professional believes is right for the individual being helped rather than driven by what the individual sees and interprets as *significant* in the practices of helping.

Noddings (2003) claims the relational sense of caring forces us to look at the relationship. In order to support this statement, she compares an ethic of care and an ethic of justice. The example she uses is the United States legal system. When applying an ethic of care, a person involved in the legal system would be regarded and treated as an individual rather than as a person who fits neatly into a particular category, such as typical victim of domestic violence or typical drug addict. Noddings continues by describing that in treating the person as an individual with an ethic of care, the person with power would ask questions and formulate a case for the individual by asking

questions about what is unique and relative to the person. She, conversely, describes the same approach by way of an ethic of justice. She states that justice is framed in black or white, either/or standpoints. So, for instance, the victim of domestic violence would be framed in terms of how many times disputes have occurred over time or who is the guilty party and who is the innocent party. Then, for the drug addict, an ethic of justice would presuppose questions such as what type of addiction and what role the person maintains in the conviction. Overall, an ethic of justice is most often approached in terms of legal mandates and fixed notions about practicing justice. Alternately, an ethic of care considers an individual and the context surrounding the circumstance of a particular individual action. An ethic of care does not work from a black or white, either/or continuum of evaluating or judging.

Noddings (2003) states that the phenomenological analysis of caring reveals the part each participant plays in a relationship. The one *caring* (or *carer*) is first of all attentive. This attention, which she labels *engrossment* is receptive; it receives what the *cared for* is feeling and trying to express. It is not merely diagnostic, measuring the cared-for against some preestablished ideal.

An ethic of justice, according to Noddings (2006), seems to work from an institutional standpoint that frames any person making decisions as worthy and credible to make decisions about individuals without considering how hegemonic systems automatically dominate some individuals more than others. She elaborates by claiming that justice is often practiced as though one person or several persons, with predictable majority status and positioning in society, is capable to reason what is right for all individuals regardless of their cultural affiliations or societal positioning. She moves to

the statement that justice is blind. She uses this statement to both praise and point out deficiencies of the legal system. As praise, she describes the statement is intended to send the message that decision making does not consider race, gender, or any other potentially marginalizing cultural characteristic. However, she points out that practicing justice with these blinders establishes a system that fails to consider those who lived on the social sidelines and experience injustices daily. Consequently, individuals become victims of neat categories of legal policies and mandates. Finally, Noddings (2006) claims that establishing a genuine ethic of care opens space for individuality of voice and circumstance whereas using an ethic of justice often results in individuals being treated as occupants of a fixed, rigid category.

According to Noddings (2003), a reason that the relational view is difficult for some individuals to accept is that people in almost all cultures have been taught to believe that "teacher knows best." Teacher, in this discussion, addresses any person who is a leader in society. In this way, Noddings states it is part of our duty as helping professionals to know and to use our knowledge to initiate the marginalized individuals into a community of knowing. She states we all feel this obligation at the forefront of our professional consciousness. But, she continues by suggesting the world is now so enormously complex that we cannot reasonably describe one model of an educated person. Specifically, Noddings states that what we treasure as educated persons may be very different from the knowledge loved or needed by other educated persons. Therefore, we cannot be sure (beyond a small but vitally important set of basic skills and concepts) what everyone needs to know. She closes her discussion of the ethic of care stating that every person in our society will need knowledge beyond the basic. What one individual

needs may differ greatly from what another needs. If we as helping professionals establish an ethic of care guiding our practices, then as caring professionals, we will begin to listen to individuals (in all their uniqueness) and help them acquire the knowledge and attitudes needed to achieve their goals, not those of a preestablished set of values and understanding about society.

In my study, I used the comparison of an ethic of care versus an ethic of justice to explore ways the selected participants described educational events they experienced. Specifically, at some level, the Augustus case, the closing and reopening of Brown Barge School, and the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School all addressed the ways individuals described their treatment or ways they perceived they were cared for as well as ways the justice system and educational community practiced legal mandates, decision making, and related actions.

Relations of Ruling

Initially, I used the matrix of domination as a guide to interpret information from participants who experienced one of the three historical events of my study. Race, social class, and geography framed the interlocking systems of oppression from one case to another. I examined the public, local, and historical reports to compare personal stories with public documents that described the same experiences. In order to frame the public historical perspective, I used Dorothy Smith's (1998) definition of relations of ruling as a guide. She elaborates some people seem to obtain momentum for upward movement in society while others do not. Smith refers to economic, educational, and public opportunities in which certain groups make decisions without considering the positions of those living in oppressive situations.

Smith's description (1998) of relations of ruling addresses oppression at institutional and societal levels where hegemonic practices are prevalent. Hegemonic practices refer to taken-for-granted processes and patterns in everyday life. Specifically, Smith suggests our society has moved forward to not marginalize people over personal practices. According to her perspective, we less often teach children to judge their peers by race, and as families, we do not often teach that one's family values are better than another's values. She builds this positive reality to describe, though, an absence of victory at the higher level of societal functioning. Smith suggests institutions and society in general have abstained from reexamining policies and processes that were initiated during historical periods when majority standpoints occurred from decisions made by those in power. Specifically, Smith claims educational institutions have failed in reforming archaic practices that have been tainted by misrepresentational politics. For example, she claims that an *accepted* family unit is the idea of a mother and father in a household despite the reality that two-thirds of marriages end in divorce. Also, she speaks to resegregation and class. She identifies statistics of urban schools in contrast to rural schools and differences in rates of graduation among minorities. Finally, Smith suggests societal practices reinscribe realities between *haves* and *have-nots* at a time when the economic gap is growing in distance.

How our knowledge of the world is mediated to us becomes a problem of knowing how the world is organized for us prior to our participation in it. As intellectuals, we ordinarily receive our world through media, images, journals, books, talk, and other symbolic modes. We often discard other ways of knowing or challenging what we understand the world to be.

Politics of Identity

Collins (2000) states politics of identity refer to ways that minority positioning drives group identity in overrepresented ways. She writes,

> Not limited to activity in traditionally conceived political spheres, identity politics refer to activism, politics, theorizing, and other similar activities based on the shared experiences of members of a specific social group (often relying on shared experiences of oppression).Groups who engage in identity politics include not only those organized around sexual and gender identities, but also around such identities as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and disability. (p. 86)

Specifically, Collins suggests members of minority groups join groups with whom they claim most representative of themselves. Consequently, they fall victim to and become participants in discrimination and oppression by simply being part of a group. In essence, identity politics relates to when individuals lose identity and conform to group identity that seems to support their daily needs, even when that decision marginalizes others.

Identity politics seem to reinscribe to members of a minority that they represent a group experiencing common oppressed, hegemonic practices. For instance, African Americans are individuals defined by race and impoverished individuals are victims of their class. Identity politics, at times, supports that minorities are victims of and not participants in oppression by a majority group. Sometimes minority groups fail to see themselves as fluid occupants of life, moving in and out of interlocking systems of oppression. On one hand, they become victims of learned helplessness (Rogers, A. 1998). They learn to see themselves as perpetual recipients of the decision making of others that affects their lives. They learn to react to conditions, rather than learn to seek

alternatives. On the other hand, identity politics inadvertently contribute to oppressive structures in society when individuals of a minority group fail to see that they too can marginalize others unlike them. From this perspective, they fail to see themselves as an oppressor and as someone being oppressed. Their oppression seems unique to a defined group. This standpoint allows individuals to see their experiences as most significant and to diminish the value of the lived experiences of others. According to Anner (1996), the politics of identity further deepen the experiences of oppression by suggesting to individuals they are constant recipients of their experiences in life and without voice or power. She suggests identity politics serve to convince individuals at the margins of society that their experiences are unique, greater than, and different from the experiences by others.

Calhoun (1994) states identity politics also refer to activism, politics, theorizing, and other similar activities based on shared experiences of oppression. Groups who engage in identity politics include not only those organized around sexual and gender identities, but also around such identities as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and disability. These groups engage in such activities as community organizing and consciousness raising, as well as participating in political and social movements.

According to Calhoun (1994), the most important and revolutionary element of identity politics is the demand that oppressed groups be recognized not in spite of their differences, but specifically because of their differences. Identity politics were an important, and perhaps necessary, precursor to the current emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity in American society.

Anner (1996) suggests proponents of identity politics argue that those who do not share the identity and the life experiences that it brings to members of an oppressed group cannot understand what it means to live life as a person with that identity. That is, people who do not share a particular group identity cannot understand the specific terms of oppression and thus, cannot find adequate solutions to the problems that members of the group face. Advocates of identity politics believe in self-determination on the part of the oppressed groups. They argue, for example, that gay people should determine the curriculum of queer studies departments, be responsible for developing social service problems aimed at queer communities, and be represented politically in all debates about laws and policies pertaining to gays and lesbians.

Identity politics has sometimes been criticized as naïve, fragmented, essentialist, and reductionist. Some critics, such as hooks (1992), question whether parts of identity are stable elements of an individual's personality and have questioned whether it makes sense to base a political movement on so broad a concept. She, for example, argues that identity is too narrow a basis for politics. More practically, several political theorists have pointed out that marginalized people are anything but united. On the contrary, they are divided by multiple and often competing identities based on race, class, gender, and ethnicity.

Anner (1996) states that traditional liberals have sometimes opposed identity politics in the belief that paying attention to difference merely highlights its salience in interactions. Anner suggests they promote the idea that minorities are just like everyone else and should therefore base their politics on factors other than their sexual or gender identities. They seem to believe that ignoring difference will do away with

discrimination. However, those engaged in identity politics believe that discrimination can only be overcome by drawing attention to the oppressed difference.

Anner (1996) suggests those with multiple oppressed identities have sometimes responded by forming new, more specific identity politics groups, such as lesbians of color. This fragmentation counters the original point of identity politics, which is to encourage recognition of the vast numbers of people who share identities that are outside the mainstream. However, these communities can provide and support consciousness raising to those who become involved in them. Moreover, they can also function to educate other communities, such as when lesbians of color demand acceptance and equality within their racial communities, even as they assert their identities as lesbians.

Identity politics is a controversial concept, subject to a range of critiques. However, as long as people are stigmatized and discriminated against on the basis of their class, race, gender, and sexual orientation, the politics of individuals are likely to continue to practice identity politics (Anner, 1996).

Summary of Theoretical Framework

I described the concepts of the matrix of domination, relations of ruling and identity politics to frame my study. This section highlighted the specific features of these three concepts that I used to guide my interaction with the participants of this study. Two researchers that are highlighted in the next section have done community-based work in a more detailed way than this study. That is, they spent years in the field to study marginalized individuals, street vendors in New York City and poor, black families in rural America. I used these ethnographic studies to guide me in my study. The next section provides an overview of these two ethnographies.

Examples of Community-Oriented Research

Changing economic and political relations, based on the ownership and control of information technologies and communication, raise important questions for community organizing in an increasingly privatized, postindustrial world of a knowledge society: (a) Who produces knowledge and for whose interests? (b) What are the implications of a changing economic and social order for the relatively powerless? And (c) Who are the *have-nots* in the knowledge society, and how do they organize against the new elements of oppression the knowledge society brings? Today's challenges call for rethinking knowledge production when organizing and analyzing communities. Social science researchers have studied community sites of resistance and struggle in changing societies. To guide my research, I explored research methodologies that social science researchers and community practitioners used to learn about the lived experiences of a group of people. I highlight Mitchell Duneier's book, *Sidewalk,* and Carol Stack's book, *All Our Kin*. I especially like the way they narrated stories of those who lived on the social sidelines. Mitchell Duneier studied street vendors in Greenwich Village. Carol Stack studied single mothers who received federal assistance.

Sidewalk

When framing my study using the matrix of domination, identity politics, and relations of ruling as each concept speaks to voice, I selected Duneier's work (1999) to represent a powerful model of shaping voices of those living on the social sidelines. Duneier wrote a narrative about the lives of street vendors on Sixth Avenue in New York City. Specifically, his work is significant in the introduction of reflexivity as central to

writing through the voice of Collins' (2000) "Other." Reflexivity refers to the process of embedding a researcher's perspective and history in the process of writing about the lives of individuals who are different from the researcher. In the introduction of his text, Duneier models reflexivity through his narrative. He opens by describing the methods he uses to differentiate his voice and the ways his own standpoint helps him write text that tends to paint a reality through his individual biases. Consequently, he frequently writes about differences between himself and the street vendors in examples he feels affect his ability to write truly through the voice of the participants. For example, in the following passage, he describes differences in socioeconomic positioning. This excerpt is a good representation of writing that uses the matrix of domination as a theoretical framework. He states,

> Although in race, class, and status I am very different from the men I write about, I was myself eventually treated by them as a fixture of the flocks, occasionally referred to as a *scholar* or *professo*r, which is my occupation. My designation was Mitch. This seemed to have a variety of meanings, including a naïve white man who could himself be exploited for loans of small change and dollar bills; a Jew who was going to make a lot of money off the stories of people working the streets; a white writer who was trying to state the truth about what was going on. More will be said about these and other perceptions in the pages that follow. (p. 12)

Duneier demonstrates openness about his background and applaudable hesitation to describe his narrative as one-dimensional truth. His work is humble and reliable. Moreover, he uses others' voices to make sure his descriptions of the participants' lives

and experiences are accurate and credible. In addition, Duneier speaks to the significance of understanding postmodernism. According to Butler (2003), postmodernism refers to the concept that identity is a fluid, temporal construct that shifts over time and by way of lived experiences. Specifically, he suggests *truth* does not vary because it is inherently *untruth* in a moment of telling. Rather, truth shifts. Realities of lives change through shifts in society and personal circumstances. In the following passage, his words speak to abstaining from using the writer's perspective of truth as the authentic reality of the participants. He writes,

> But as I will explain, there were times when the truth I thought I had developed was nothing more than an illusion--deep suspicion lingered despite an appearance of trust. In some cases, perhaps it always will. Surely it takes more than goodwill to transcend distrust that comes out of a complex history. Though participant informers often remark on the rapport they achieve and how they are seen by the people they write about, in the end it is best to be humble about such things, because one never really knows. (p. 14)

In summary, his work stresses that any version of telling someone's story is dangerous territory. It is treacherous because some people interpret published text as *fixed truth*. Duneier ruptures this interpretation by writing that the continuum of identity is just as important as any narrative of someone's life. In the preceding passage, he describes *knowing* as contextual and constantly transforming. He provides a way for his readers to build an understanding of how stories shift based on life circumstances and *misrepresentational* politics when society reinforces fixed social injustices.

In essence, it is impossible to reform any injustice once and expect the solution to work for all time because there are too many components to arriving at truth including facts as well as emotions. Duneier addresses this reality in the following passage, which describes the rationale of selling particular kinds of books on street corners. For Duneier, there seemed no good explanation for selling books he thought most individuals had the ability to access at no charge through their home mailing addresses. However, the passage below speaks to an alternate truth for individuals living at society's margins. It speaks to relations of ruling or Duneier's tendency to evaluate the individuals of Sixth Avenue based on their identities as unhoused, African American men. He states,

> What manner of man would expect someone to pay money for a catalogue that was originally sent out by the company free of charge and now has been picked out of a bundle of trash? The answer, it turns out, is simple: a man who knows his market. The vendor who sells a free catalogue, usually for a dollar is actually redistributing written matter to people who don't have ready access to it in their neighborhoods. Some of the customers who patronize these tables come from Harlem, the out boroughs of New York City, and certain parts of New Jersey, ZIP codes in which L.L. Bean and Lands' End do not ordinarily solicit much business. (p. 73)

Finally, Duneier's work is significant in its commitment to write through the true voice of participants who live the experiences of Sixth Avenue. Hakim, the key participant, writes the ending of the text. Also, there are several powerful narratives by participants that not only support his findings, but at times, challenge neat categories of academic theory. For instance, in the beginning, Hakim writes "my suspicion is couched

in the collective memory of a people who have been academically slandered for generations. African Americans are at a point where we have to be suspicious of people who want to tell stories about us" (p. 23). Duneier creates participatory spaces for reflexivity in his text while acknowledging that he, the writer, speaks from a privileged voice. Through mindful writing and interactions with the participants on a daily basis, he works to develop a deep, yet suspicious trust with the street vendors on Sixth Avenue. The language of his ethnographic text moves readers through the process he makes to de-center privileged positions and, in turn, begins building trusting relationships.

Alongside his commitment to writing with reflexivity, Duneier's work addresses how the deep meanings of language differ across social positions of individuals. Particularly, Duneier writes about how viewpoints differ as a person making choices that lead him to be on the street and when he is without a home after the choice has been made. Duneier addresses the differences in the way individuals speak of possibilities in life when they are homeless or a housed person. For example, Duneier states that unlike the middle classes, who are accustomed to seeing psychiatrists when they are clinically depressed, many of the street vendors do not have access to drugs like Prozac and this often leads to the alternative of abusing drugs. Duneier writes about language and deep meanings of the street vendors in the passage below. In this excerpt, he shows that society's positioning of marginalized individuals decreases their worth in society. He states,

> My fieldwork suggests that the form of retreatism whereby a person says "Fuck it!" or "I don't give a fuck" has at least four distinct characteristics. First, it is pervasive in that it affects most major aspects of his life. Second, he becomes

> indifferent to behavior that he once thought of as basic, necessary, and natural, such as sleeping in a bed or defecating in a toilet. Third, he feels extreme embarrassment and/or share for having hurt loved ones who paid a high price for his drug or alcohol abuse. This leads him to become distant from family, friends, and loved ones, who he hopes will not see him in his new state. Fourth, he feels freedom that comes from having given up all responsibilities to others. Together, these characteristics make the "Fuck it!" mind set an extreme form of retreatism, rather than a form of resignation. It enables a person to give up an apartment and sleep in his own and others' urine and feces on the street or among rats in the Bat Cave of the subway. It often involves a fundamental resocialization of the body. As we shall see, some aspects of this extreme "I don't care" mentality have an explicitly political justification, especially when a person believes that his attitude is the result of an indifferent society rather than of his own addictions and personal weaknesses. (p. 61)

The following passage provides another example of how Duneier speaks to the street vendor's self-worth. He rewrites the lived experiences of the street vendors on Sixth Avenue by reframing the idea of homeless people as indecent to neighborhood communities. Additionally, he writes about the ways that public perspective reinscribes and further complicates the marginalization of the homeless. This passage describes how identity politics transform into personal politics by individuals who exist at the margins of society. Duneier writes,

> Ultimately, their indecency feeds back into the community structure of action toward them and belief about them. As more and more local pedestrians refuse to

> help, their stigmatized behavior spirals to new extremes. For example, the conviction based on experience that he is not permitted to use a bathroom leads a person to urinate in public places where he makes his life. In so doing, he confirms local residents in their view that men like him are indecent. As residents become colder and more implacable in their reactions, the men on the street come to believe the residents are beyond their reach socially; since the men can't change the minds of the people in the neighborhood, they take the opportunity to subvert social conventions that make normal interaction possible. And, a few of them engage in "interactional vandalism" further reinscribing the sense they cannot be trusted. (p. 306-307)

In summary, I used examples of Duneier's work to show how a researcher's perspective shapes narratives and how important it is for a researcher to balance diverging and converging perspectives. Duneier paints a balanced picture of those living on the social sidelines. He warns us against misunderstanding oppression as one sided; instead, he suggests for us to view it as a circumstance in which individuals are both participants in and victims of life consequences. He helps social science researchers understand that good ethnographic writing does not romanticize life at the margins nor does it place judgment on those who live on the social sidelines.

All Our Kin

Stack's (1974) public ethnography is equally significant to describing the three concepts of the theoretical framework of my study. Her work describes the lived experiences of single mothers who receive and have been part of a familial network that depend on federal, financial sustenance for financial and economic survival. Similar to

Duneier, Stack writes through reflexivity and carefully negotiates the space for crafting narrative through voices of a marginalized group in which she is not a member. She also stresses that writers gain humility when they know truth is fluid and depends upon societal and personal variables. Stack's work demonstrates voice more aligned with Noddings' ethics of care. Her work is powerful and seemingly reliable by way of tightly weaved theory, frequent examples of reflexivity, and multidimensional instances of voice by the participants in her study. Stack's work is powerful in her ability to write not only the voice of the participants of her study, but also the heart and character of their lives. She tackled welfare in the 1970's, much earlier than Duneier tackled homelessness. Stack understood it was critical to paint reality through everyday ideas of care because discrimination continued to be prevalent and sometimes accepted. Stack's work shows it is important to write through the pain and sorrows of people living at the margins because statistical data related to poverty are often interpreted out of context. She believes the confusion between statistics and cultural patterns underlies most interpretations of African American family life. This work shows good examples of how the politics of identity works to define people's lives.

Stack frames the following excerpt as representative of how African American families internalize their collective identity that defines how they are labeled over time. She writes about how participants of her study negotiate ways to take care of each other in a time period when their race was considered inferior and outside the scope of help by the majority. She provides an example of the extended familial cultural network of African Americans in The Flats in the following passage,

> That day I went over to visit Samantha, I don't know how the good Lord told me, since I hadn't been seeing her for some time. The last old man didn't like me, so I stayed away. He sure was no good. Left her right before the baby come. I went over to her place. She had a small, dark little room with a kitchen for herself and those two babies. The place look and smell bad. I knew she was hurting. I took on look around and said to her, "Samantha, I'm going to take your boy." She didn't come by my place for over a month, but her younger sister brought me a message that Samantha was feeling better. A week or two later she came by to visit. Her boy hardly knew her. She came by more often, but she still seemed pretty low. I told her one day, "Samantha, I don't have any sons, just daughters, so why don't you just give me this boy." She said that if he didn't favor his father so much she'd let me keep him, but she was till crazy over that man. Her boy stayed with me three or four months, then she came and got him. Soon afterwards she moved to Chicago and her two kids and her old man. (p. 77)

Stack describes when friends in The Flats have good social dealings with one another they often call each other by kin terms and conduct their social relations as if they were kinsmen. She writes about these strong bonds and alliances throughout her text through stories the participants share with her regarding their experiences in very close friendships.

Similar to Stack, I hoped to rewrite historical moments through my participants' voices as they experienced changes in the African American community in Pensacola over 30 years. As Stack describes, members of the middle class in America can cherish privacy concerning their income and resources, but the daily lives of individuals living at

the margins are open for public discrimination and judgment. Their lack of income made them invisible to society. To help us understand these invisible consequences, Stack uses The Flats to rewrite the people's struggles living in poverty. The following narrative describes how African Americans in her study "took care of their own" during a historical time period when the majority-based policy decisions failed to understand much less provide alternatives for marginalized individuals living in poverty. She states,

> Cecil lives in The Flats with his mother Willie Mae, his oldest sister and her two children, and his young brother. Cecil's young sister Lily lives with their mother's sister Bessie. Bessie has three children and Lily has two. Cecil and his mother have part-time jobs in a café and Lily's children are on aid. In July of 1970 Cecil and his mother had just put together enough money to cover their rent. Lily paid her utilities, but she did not have enough money to buy food stamps for herself and her children. Cecil and Willie Mae knew that after they paid their rent they would not have any money for food for the family. They helped out Lily by buying her food stamps, and then the two households shared meals until Willie Mae was paid two weeks later. A week later Lily received her second ACD check and Bessie got some spending money from her boyfriend. They gave some of this money to Cecil and Willie Mae to pay their rent, and gave Willie Mae money to cover her insurance and pay a small sum on a living room suite at a local furniture store. Willie Mae reciprocated later on by buying dresses for Bessie and Lily's daughters and by caring for all the children when Bessie got a temporary job. (p. 37)

Similar to the work of Duneier, Stack describes difficulties during her study in assessing whether her interpretations were accurate from her standpoint as the person with power. She became friends with Ruby and wanted to work hard to provide a representative narrative of her stories. Stack (1974) states, “At times over the three years of our friendship, we would find many ways to test our perceptions of one another” (p.14). In this statement, Stack is speaking of her relationship with Ruby, the primary informant of her study. Stack describes ways Ruby and she struggled with their own matrices of domination. It reaffirms ways individuals believe their race, class, and gender differences seem to dictate appropriate ways of relating to another outside their own cultural affiliations. As it relates to Ruby, Stack describes the following experience:

> Sometimes when Ruby and I were alone we would act out a parody of one another, imitating one another’s walk or dancing style, and sometimes this mime would be continued in front of friends. She and I went to White *hillbilly* taverns not frequented by Blacks with our boyfriends. We dressed “White in dressy dresses, the men in ties, and we danced the Foxtrot to an electric guitar. The reaction to us was silence. People thought we were imitating them. At the next dance, we broke into “black” dance. Ruby and her friends took her boyfriend and me to black nightclubs to observe the reaction of their Black friends to us. They bought us outfits so we would dress “Black.” At times the reaction at the clubs was patronizing or even hostile, but Ruby was amused. (p. 15).

Stack provided language of single, welfare mothers before most other texts addressed this social injustice, but instances paint a portrait of the historical time period. Using Stack’s work as a model, I selected a case study of the Augustus Case, the closing

and reopening of Brown Barge School, and the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School to identify struggle, pain, and injustice predominantly forced by local educational inequalities and misrepresentational politics. Significant to Stack's work is her suggestion that oppression is mostly unintentional. She offers this perspective to both comfort and awaken individuals who enjoy the luxury of being in a dominant role in society. She describes majority status as exempt from needing to consider multiple perspectives in arriving at truth. She reiterates throughout her text that privilege affords us the ability to be neutral about issues and to not have to reflect on alternative interpretations. Therefore, truth for those in the majority tends to become fixed and constant. Stack suggests it is difficult to open up space to consider multiple truths because these constructs then become a part of individual values.

I relied on Duneier and Stack's work as models of researcher mindfulness and reflexivity. These two ethnographies helped me understand how to centrally position my participants' voices to rewrite the history of three educational events in Escambia County, Florida, during and since desegregation.

Summary

In my study, I used three concepts: (a) matrix of domination, (b) relations of ruling, and (c) identity politics grounded in feminist theory as a lens to examine case studies linked to three historical time periods in the Pensacola community. I explored ten participants' descriptions of their lived experiences of desegregation beginning with The Augustus Case and concluding with the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. I selected ten individuals who provided an oral history of their participation in one of the three educational events of my study. Juxtaposed with these interviews, I examined

Escambia County School Board meeting minutes and articles from the *Pensacola News Journal* that address the same events the participants were asked to describe. Using concepts framed in this literature review, I completed my research study. The methods used are described in chapter III.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

My work told stories of selected Pensacola residents who experienced one of the three historical, educational events: (a) The Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board Case, (b) the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School, and (c) the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. My study built a historical, theoretical standpoint for revisiting the educational histories that selected African Americans in the Pensacola community experienced prior to and following the landmark case of Brown versus The Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas that served as a catalyst for the Augustus Case in Escambia County, Florida. Specifically, I explored how the passage of time across 30 years of policy interpretation opened education to African Americans by way of desegregation policies, yet existed amidst heated racial and class struggles that have occurred since the 1960s.

I wanted to write about the lived experiences of African Americans who experienced the Augustus Case, the Brown Barge transformation, the closing of A. A. Dixon, or experienced more than one of these events of educational history. In building the framework for my study, I discovered that minimal written histories exist to describe educational events that changed the schooling experiences over several decades for African Americans living in the Escambia County community. To help people understand these histories, I highlighted a chronology of individual's lived experiences described in

archival information located in newspapers and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes. I also described how the Augustus Case provided a purportedly positive change for African Americans in educational settings in Escambia County. This information was used to gain a better understanding of the major thrust of my study, understanding individuals' lived experiences associated with the three cases.

In this study, I used a case study approach to address the following research questions:

1. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the Augustus case?
2. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing and reopening of Brown Barge Schools?
3. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School?
4. How did individuals' lived experiences of the Augustus case compare and contrast to those of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon schools?

I defined three cases in this study aligned to the above research questions. The cases were defined as the Augustus Case, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School, and the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School.

Description of the Escambia County School District

The Augustus Case, Brown Barge, and A. A. Dixon all contributed to the educational history of Pensacola, which is located in Escambia County, Florida. Escambia County has about 360,000 residents. The City of Pensacola, in the downtown

and urban areas of the county, has an additional 60,000 residents. According to The Pensacola Chamber of Commerce, the city of Pensacola is of moderate size. The latest census data ranked Escambia County as the 17th poorest county in the nation. Of the City of Pensacola residents, 53% are female and 47% are male. In order to provide comprehensive demographic data of the city, I gathered certain statistics for 2004 from the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce. In terms of race, nearly 64% of the city is comprised of white, non-Hispanic residents. African Americans comprise approximately 31% of the city's population. Also, nearly 85% of Escambia County residents currently possess high school diplomas. There are approximately 44% of the community's residents who have earned bachelor's degrees. In 2004, the unemployment rate was close to 7%. As it relates to employment, the majority of Pensacola residents work in education, health, and social services (25.3%), followed by retail (12.6%), followed by arts, entertainment, and food services (11.3%).

According to the Florida Schools Indicator Report (Florida Department of Education [FDOE], 2004), Escambia County school district educated 13% more African American students than the state average. Percentages of students in various ethnic groups for the Escambia County School District and the State of Florida percentages are shown in Table 2. Information related to these figures came from the FDOE's School Advisor Council Report and Florida School Indicators Report 2003-2004.

Table 3 displays information from the Florida Department of Education's School Advisory Council Report and Florida School Indicators Report from 2003-2004 regarding drop-out and graduation rates in Escambia County and the State of Florida.

Escambia County had a lower percentage dropout rate than the state average (2.5% to 3.1%), and a lower graduation rate (64.9% to 69%).

Table 2

District and State Percentages by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	District percentages	State percentages
Caucasian	56	51
African American	37	24
Hispanic	2	21
Asian	3	2
American Indian	1	1
Multiracial	2	1

Table 3

District and State Drop-out and Graduation Rates

Event	District percentage	State percentage
Dropout rate	2.50	3.10
Graduation rate	64.90	69.0

The amount of money that Escambia County School district spent per student for different groups of students compared to the state average is shown in Table 4. District expenditures for a student are mostly less than the state averages except for these students categorized *at-risk* students. This information was also obtained from the Florida Department of Education's School Advisory Council Report and Florida School Indicator's Report from 2003-2004.

Table 4

District Costs Per Student and Average State Cost Per Student

Student category	District cost	State cost
Per exceptional student	$7,690	$8,500
Per regular student	$4,132	$4,488
Per at-risk student	$7,903	$5,775
Per vocational student	$4,786	$5,089

The percentage of schools receiving grades in five categories is presented in Table 5. The school year 2004 Florida Department of Education statistical information provided the percentage of schools receiving school grades in five categories based on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores. Escambia County School District received information on 60 schools for the school year 2004-2005. Of these 58 schools, 30% received an A grade, 13% received a B grade, 27% received a C grade, 23% received a D grade, and 7% received an F grade. For the school year 2005-2006, 61 schools in Escambia County earned school grades. 41% received an A grade, 15% received a B grade, 26% received a C grade, 11% earned a D grade, and 3% earned an F grade. The most significant change in FCAT scores over the two school years was evidenced in the D grade category. The percentage of schools that earned the letter grade of D dropped by 12% over the two years. The next most significant change in scores occurred in the A grade category. Escambia County schools moved from 30% of schools earning grade of A to 41% of schools earning grade of A. The B grade schools and C grade schools remained nearly the same over the two years. In 2005 – 2006, schools earning grade of F decreased from 7% to 3%.

Table 5

Percentage of Escambia County Schools Receiving School Grades A-F

Grade received	School percentages 2004-2005	School percentages 2005-2006
Grade A	30	41
Grade B	13	15
Grade C	27	26
Grade D	23	11
Grade F	7	3

As current school district demographics compared with the information from The Augustus Case and demographics during the time, I obtained information from the 1966-1967 school year. At the time, Escambia High School was attended only by Caucasian students. Before the 1970 school year, a few African American students attended the school, but a substantial increase occurred in 1970 when 349 African American students enrolled (approximately 11% of the total enrollment); thereafter, the African American student enrollment decreased somewhat. During the 1972-1973 school year, there were 252 African American students and 3088 Caucasian students attending Escambia High School.

The number of African Americans in the Escambia County School District for 1986 was 11,907, or 28.6% of the total student population. This was approximately during the same time that Brown Barge Elementary School was reopened as Brown Barge Magnet Middle School. Escambia County School District had approximately 27.6% of African American students in 1974-1975.

Participants

In my study, I used feminist theory as a lens to examine case studies linked to three important historical time periods in the Pensacola educational community. From this perspective, the participants selected were asked to describe their own interpretations of the experiences they lived during one of the three events (Augustus Case, the transformation of Brown Barge, or the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School).

The emergent nature of qualitative research allows researchers to select sampling procedures that will contribute to gathering more insightful data to answer a particular question. I used purposeful sampling to select participants. According to Charmaz (2006) purposeful sampling "helps us to define the properties of our categories; to identify the contexts in which they are relevant; to specify the conditions under which they arise, are maintained, and vary; to discover their consequences" (p. 116). Patton further describes using purposeful sampling to capture rich information to provide an in-depth understanding of the defined phenomena. Patton (2002) explained,

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selected information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry; thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations. (p. 230)

I selected individuals who could provide in-depth information about the three historical cases in my study. Specifically, I interviewed three individuals who participated in the Augustus Case, three individuals who participated in the history

and/or closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School, and four individuals who participated in the history of Brown Barge Elementary School. I interviewed four individuals, rather than three individuals, for the Brown Barge piece of my study due to the absence of history attached to this school in the historical, archival information.

The interviewees for Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board were the following individuals: (a) Ben Roberts, (b) John Blake, and (c) Mable Smith. Mr. Roberts served as an educator in Escambia County K-12 School District for 27 years. In addition, he has been a resident of East Hill since the Augustus Case and also worked with Willie Junior, former (deceased) County Commissioner for 12 years. Mr. Blake was selected as an interviewee for Augustus because of his experience as educator for 20+ years in the Escambia County educational system as well as he maintained a position as an Escambia County School Board member for 16 years. Finally, Ms. Smith was selected as an interviewee because she has been a lifelong resident in the East Hill community, and she was a community activist during the Augustus Case. She was also the first African American pharmacist in Pensacola, Florida. In addition, her belated husband was an educator and activist in Escambia County as well as a friend of Dr. Charles Augustus.

The interviewees for Brown Barge Elementary School were the following individuals: (a) Thomas Baker, (b) Bill Marks, (c) Martha Waters, and (d) Deon Jordan. Mr. Baker was selected as an interviewee because his father was the first principal of Brown Barge Elementary School. Mr. Marks was a Health and Physical Education instructor/coach at Brown Barge Elementary School for almost 10 years. Ms. Waters was a former student of Brown Barge Elementary School during the time of desegregation.

Finally, Mr. Jordan was a former educator of the summer enrichment program at Brown Barge Elementary School and a lifelong resident of Pensacola, Florida. Also, Mr. Jordan grew up in Attucks Court, one of the housing projects in the A. A. Dixon area.

The interviewees for A. A. Dixon Elementary School were as follows: (a) Clare James, (b) Anita Williams, and (c) Theresa Clark. Ms. James served as a principal of A. A. Dixon Elementary School during its existence. Ms. Williams was selected as an interviewee because of her status as lifelong resident of Escambia County and 20+ years as educator in Escambia County K-12 public schools. In addition, she has been an activist for equality of African Americans in education for her entire tenure as an educator. Finally, Ms. Clark was selected as an interviewee because she was identified as an advocate of the voucher program. Ms. Clark was raised in inner-city Pensacola and attended A. A. Dixon Elementary School years ago. She became a supporter of the voucher initiative because she believed it was the only method of fighting for higher educational standards for her daughter's K-12 educational experiences. However, Ms. Clark's daughter did not attend A. A. Dixon Elementary. A. A. Dixon was one of the first schools that made school grades low enough for their students to qualify for vouchers to attend other schools. Eventually, A. A. Dixon was closed.

Research Procedures

Using a case study approach framed within three notions of feminist theory (matrix of domination, relations of ruling, and identity politics), I addressed the four research questions of my study. The first three questions defined the three cases of the study and the fourth question provided a way to investigate the common threads of information and the unique components of the cases. For questions one through three, I

used three major sources of information to investigate the case. The sources included school board minutes, archival newspaper articles and semistructured interviews. The information gathered was triangulated with other information to describe the lived experiences of selected individuals living during the historical time period when the cases occurred.

According to Schensul and LeCompte (1999), triangulation "permits the researcher to modify, elaborate, confirm, or adapt his or her own interpretations of the cultural scene in an ongoing, recursive manner" (p. 134). Triangulation was applied to research strategies to serve two distinct purposes when analyzing the data, confirmation and completeness. I mainly used triangulation to cross-check information and conclusions I drew from the data. Multiple sources helped me validate my findings. Rather than serving as a duplication of effort, I used three sources of information to refine my interpretations of the information. I compared information within each source and information across sources.

In order to explore the collaborative process of conducting community-based research, the case study approach seemed to be the most appropriate method of recording people's stories. Case studies can be particularly useful for studying a process, program or individual in an in depth, holistic way that allows for a relatively deep understanding of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2002). As Merriam points out, "a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (p. 19).

Although similar in nature, there are some differences in how researchers define case study. Some researchers think of case study as the object to be studied (Stake, 2000), while others define case study as a process of investigation (Creswell, 2002). Creswell defines case study as "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection" (p. 485). Creswell recommends case study as a methodology if the problem to be studied "relates to developing an in-depth understanding of a 'case' or bounded system" (p. 496) and if the purpose is to understand "an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 496). Patton (2002) suggests that case studies are valuable in creating deep understanding of particular people, problems or situations in comprehensive ways. For this study, I relied more on Merriam's and Creswell's definitions.

This study was particularly suitable for a case study design because it was a study of community, it was contextual, and it was a study of process (Merriam, 2002). As previously mentioned, Creswell (2002) defined case studies as the study of a "bounded system" (p. 436). According to Creswell, "Bounded means that the case is separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries" (p. 485). In other words, it is possible to create limits around the object to be studied (Merriam). A case study can focus on a variety of different things. Merriam points out a case could be an individual, a group, a school, and/or a community. The bounded systems in my contrasting case studies were sets of participants who shared stories of their lived experiences in three different historical periods where the Escambia County School District's administration made decisions that affected African American citizens. The boundaries of three cases (Augustus, Brown Barge, and A. A. Dixon) were determined

by the people who experienced life during a defined time span across thirty years of Pensacola educational history.

I chose a case study design because it involved "detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 2002, p. 61). Context is a key factor. According to Merriam (2002), when focusing on a particular phenomenon in a case study, it is impossible to separate the phenomenon from its context. In this study, it was important for me to understand that the context established for each time period became an integrated part of the research process. As Yin (1994) said, "you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study" (p. 13). Thus, each selected participant created a dialogue with me to describe a specific context designated by a point in time in history when a particular event occurred.

Data Collection

I used three major sources of information to help me describe the lived experiences of my participants. The information included Escambia County School Board meeting minutes, newspaper articles, and semistructured interviews. First, I used archival information or school board minutes and newspaper articles to provide a context for each of the three cases. Second, I used this archival information to help facilitate semistructured interviews with the participants of this study. I then conducted ten semistructured interviews with selected participants within each of the three cases.

Escambia County School Board Meeting Minutes

The ten participants who were interviewed regarding one of the three events of Escambia County educational history described their experiences with a particular event. I used Escambia County School Board meeting minutes to examine voices recorded in an official capacity and compare the minutes with the participants' versions in their interviews. Another aim of examining the minutes was to describe and explain the actions of political and community agents. I explored how political discourse and decision-making documented in the minutes affected community members' lives. Finally, I analyzed the meeting minutes to provide a more comprehensive history of political and community standpoints that drove the fate of educational institutions associated with the three cases.

Newspaper Articles

I examined archival records from the *Pensacola News Journal* to examine ways the Augustus Case, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School, and the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School were shared by newspaper reporting with the Pensacola community. According to Schensul and LeCompte (1999), the analysis of newspaper articles in historical research provides three perspectives for analysis: (a) letters to the editor/editorial replies, (b) analysis of breaking news, and (c) deep background. I analyzed comments from these perspectives to examine whether voices of participants in this study aligned with commentary in newspaper editorials.

Semistructured Interviews

In order to answer the four research questions of my study of the Augustus Case, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School, and the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School, I used semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They can be used to give and receive information.

Unlike the structured questionnaire framework where detailed questions are formulated ahead of time, semistructured interviewing starts with more general questions or topics. From this perspective, not all questions are designed and phrased ahead of time. The majority of questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues.

Semistructured interviewing is guided only in the sense that some form of interview guide is prepared beforehand and provides a framework for the interview. Using a developed interview guide (Appendix A), I conducted interviews with ten participants, three for each case plus one additional interviewee for the Brown Barge study. The interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes. The interview place was negotiated between me and the participant.

Duneier (1999) suggests that a researcher should consider how to present oneself, establish rapport with the subjects, and gain their trust. As the interviewer, I presented myself as a doctoral student, who is an administrator at The University of West Florida, and an instructor of a diversity course for teacher education majors. I read a preinterview script to ensure that all participants were informed of the purpose of my research and

their rights with respect to the activity in which they were negotiating agreement to participate. I asked each participant to sign the consent form agreeing to participate (Appendix B). After each interview, I asked for permission to contact the participant for a follow-up interview to evaluate my understanding of their narratives. Permission to conduct the study was granted from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of West Florida (Appendix C).

In the second interview, participants were asked to validate my interpretations and to provide additional information from our conversation. Specifically, the second meeting consisted of my presentation to the participant of a draft of my themes and results.

I tape recorded the interviews, which were transcribed by a paid transcriber. As I received hard copies of transcribed interviews, I listened to the interview tape while reading the hard copy for accuracy. This process enabled me to make clarifications and corrections as well as begin preliminary coding. While interviewees provided their perceptions of the events in the interviews, I respected the need to develop my own understanding of the context in which I entered and tape recorded.

I made every attempt to let the case *tell its own story* (Stack, 1974; Duneier, 1999), while always remembering that even when mindful, reflexive, empathetic, and respectful of each person's realities, the researcher decides what the case's own story is, or at least what will be included in the report. I kept in mind that, holistically, qualitative methods offer the opportunity to collect the most complete and meaningful data for analysis. Qualitative research seeks to understand "how people interpret their worlds, and how we can, in turn, interpret their interpretations" (Stake, 2000, p. 81). Information

collected from my carefully selected participants as well as archival records in the form of school board minutes and Pensacola News Journal articles generated data for analysis. I used this information to describe how racial history was developed within the three historical cases and how these histories compared and contrasted.

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) defined data analysis as "the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others" (p. 153). LeCompte and Priessle (1993) explained,

> The task of analysis, which makes interpretation possible, requires researchers first to determine how to organize their data and use it to construct an intact portrait of the original phenomena under study and second, to tell readers what the portrait means. (p.10)

Data analysis, then, is the process by which the researcher makes interpretations from the collected information. I followed Patton's suggestion when I created an approach to analyze the data of this study. Patton (2002) suggested for researchers to, "methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capture and describe how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (p. 104). He recommends that this type of data gathering process requires researchers to undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have lived experience as opposed to second-hand experience. Therefore, I collected data through interviews and archival information that were organized,

analyzed, and interpreted to describe the participants lived experiences as residents of Pensacola during significant racial, historical events in the local community.

Throughout my analysis, I constantly reviewed themes and patterns to help me interpret the data. I maintained and organized the data in order to code and analyze the information from the three data sources. I tried to be mindful and reflexive as I approached each phase of the interpretation process. Using my data to guide me, I described the interview sites, interviews, and minutes/articles for each case. Also, I described how the selected participants and research settings influenced my interpretations within each context (Stack, 1974).

I followed several steps to analyze the collected information. First, I filed all field notes ordered by their dates of when they were created and all interview transcripts were filed alphabetically by participants' names. I created other organizational structures for analyzing the documents including a matrix identifying interviewees and their demographics to be used for the purpose of the study. My research questions were reviewed and compared against the data I collected to identify missing data and prompt me to return to the field to collect additional information to fill in the gaps.

Second, field notes, interview transcripts (Appendix D), and archival documents were repeatedly read to identify themes within and across cases that were relevant to my research questions. Coding categories were grouped together based on similarities of patterns that might enable me to describe and explain the lived experiences of the residents of Pensacola, Florida.

In summary, I triangulated the three sources of information by looking for patterns within each case to answer research questions 1 – 3. I then compared the

patterns of responses for each of the three cases to respond to research question 4. Chapter 4 describes the major themes I found to describe the lived experiences of the selected participants of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences of selected individuals who witnessed events that occurred during three historical time periods in the Pensacola, Florida, educational community. These historical moments included the Augustus vs. School Board of Escambia County, Florida (cornerstone legal case mandating desegregation in Escambia County public schools); the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School; and the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Specifically, the research methods I used were guided by three major theoretical components thematically integrated into feminist perspectives, which included the matrix of domination, relations of ruling, and identity politics.

Ten participants were selected to represent one of the historical events of my study. Initially, I planned to interview only nine participants, three participants per case. However, following the initial nine interviews, it became apparent there was an absence of historical information and participant knowledge related to the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School. Specifically, the three interviewees I selected for this case lacked either personal knowledge or experience in ways that limited my understanding as well as prevented me from creating an accurate history about this event. As a result, I decided to interview a fourth participant associated with the Brown Barge events.

I organized interviews by selecting three individuals (four individuals for the Brown Barge section) in the Pensacola community per educational event to serve as experts who could build accurate historical accounts for one of the three events of my study. The participants lived experiences either as educators, community activists, former students, or administrators. Some of the interviewees, because of their multiple involvements in educational events, possessed historical knowledge to speak across roles as teacher, resident, and administrator or some combination of roles to address questions from multiple perspectives. My study describes the lived experiences of individuals who experienced the transformation in three educational realms since desegregation in Escambia County, Florida. Specifically, I compared public records of the time periods with the stories those individuals told about their lived experiences.

I used a case study approach to focus in depth on the relatively small, purposively selected participants. I selected this method to try to create an understanding of complex issues surrounding the three historical events. Case studies allow the researcher to provide a more detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships to each other. The case study approach was appropriate to use because I wanted to capture individual stories about their lived histories in a certain time period. I focused on the analysis of a process rather than the analysis of fixed ideas about truth concerning these events of Pensacola history. As outlined in chapter 3, my study involved ten cases and two additional sources of evidence for analysis, *Pensacola News Journal* articles and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes.

My study examined the ways historical events have been retold by the ten participants and ways their stories compared and contrasted with information written and

recorded in *Pensacola News Journal* article archives and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes. Variations between the information collected through interviews as it differed or aligned with information from the two additional sources were identified and analyzed.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the information gathered from the participants' interviews, *Pensacola News Journal* articles, and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes, and to use this information to answer the four research questions. This chapter includes three sections: (a) overview of research procedures, (b) data analysis and archival information, and (c) data analysis of the interviews.

The first section provides an overview of research procedures. The purpose of this section is to present the organizational processes and framework used to collect information. It describes the actual steps taken in sequential order when I entered the field as it aligns to the information described above. The second section includes the data analysis of archival information. The subheadings are archival information by three cases. Within this section, I coded the data and categorized data into groups that show common patterns. In addition, I described each major category with narrative, and I used examples from the text. The third section includes the data analysis of the interviews. Again, the subheadings include interview information by the three cases. Also, I used narratives to describe each major category and used examples from the interviews.

Overview of Research Procedures

I selected semistructured interviews as one of three sources to capture the educational experiences of the ten individuals who experienced the Augustus Case, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle

School, or the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary school. I organized the interviews by selecting three individuals in the Pensacola community per educational event to serve as experts who could tell their stories about one of the three historical time periods. The interviews were scheduled according to time available by participants to commit to a particular interview time. I believe the random occurrences naturally contributed to my understanding of each interview more thoroughly. Each interview opened a broader and deeper understanding of the 30 years of Pensacola history. My interviews were conducted during the time period of June 1, 2005, through August 3, 2005. As originally anticipated, the initial interview sessions required approximately one hour. The second interviews required approximately 30 minutes per session since the purpose of the follow-up interview was mainly to check for clarification and accuracy of my notes. I used the interview guide for each interview. Second, I selected three articles from the *Pensacola News Journal* and related Florida news publications (for the section about A. A. Dixon Elementary School) that addressed one of the three educational events and presented interviewees with public sentiments from records to focus the discussion on specific historical events. Although many of the interviews varied from questions I posed, I was still able to demonstrate evidence that each question had been answered by all participants.

As it related to the Augustus Case, I collected articles describing different phases of integration of public schools in Escambia County from 1959-1972. The articles were a combination of editorials and descriptions of occurrences as the mandate shifted and moved toward complete integration by 1972. I also collected articles that spoke to

African American experiences of racism during the 20 year period in which Augustus became the law of the land for the Pensacola community.

Next, I searched for articles regarding Brown Barge Elementary School, its closing, or articles about the transformation to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School. I was unable to find any articles that discussed or even mentioned Brown Barge Elementary School, prior to becoming Brown Barge Magnet Middle School. Also, I was unable to find any articles that discussed the closure of the school. The only articles I was able to uncover that mentioned the area and community surrounding Brown Barge were articles that discussed the hazardous chemical plant that existed in the community. Although these articles do not directly mention Brown Barge Elementary School, they were significant in that all four interviewees mentioned their awareness of the plant and the ways they experienced and interpreted the hazards of the plant. Articles concerning Brown Barge Magnet Middle School were fairly easy to access; however, none of these articles addressed the transformation of the elementary school to its current state as a magnet middle school. After research queries through The University of West Florida Library and Pensacola Regional Library failed to lead me to any articles about the original Brown Barge Elementary School, I resorted to searching for similar, alternate sources of literature by visiting the Brown Barge Magnet Middle School's media coordinator and school secretary. With the exception of pictures of the school's first principal, William Brown, Sr., two copies of William Brown's death announcement, and three pictures of the school's cafeteria from 1967, this search, too, failed to produce any written records or articles about Brown Barge Elementary School. At this point and upon suggestion, I then called the Brown Barge Magnet Middle School's former principal,

Camille Barr. Principal Barr indicated all historical records had been donated to the serials department at The University of West Florida Library. After extensive research, this lead ended without any discovery of historical literature. Somehow, the written history of Brown Barge Elementary School has either been lost or remains somewhere deeply hidden.

Third, I researched articles from the *Pensacola News Journal* regarding the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. This search provided a wealth of information about the school's closing since this historical event occurred amidst the introduction of the voucher program in the State of Florida. There were many editorials, articles, and expansive resources that debated the reasons and addressed the opposing sentiments regarding the school's closure. Through article references mentioned in the *Pensacola News Journal* about local, state, and national interest concerning the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School, I was led to articles published about the historical educational event in Florida State University's newspaper, *The Torch, The St. Petersburg Times,* and was able to access transcribed information from an interview with Nyree Mims, a proponent of the closing and one of the interviewees in my study who was interviewed by *20/20,* the ABC national news program.

I collected Escambia County School Board meeting minutes as they related to and addressed discussions about one of the three historical events of my study. I was able to access this information with the assistance of three employees from The Escambia County School Board. Specifically, I used school directories to approximate time periods in which meeting minutes would align with one of the events of my study. Specifically, I copied meeting minutes for the Augustus Case that were recorded between 1959 and

1972. Then, I copied meeting minutes that either addressed Brown Barge Elementary School before 1985 or since the inception of the magnet school. Finally, I copied school board minutes that were recorded during 2003 that addressed the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School.

I analyzed the responses to the interview questions and compared and contrasted these responses to the *Pensacola News Journal* articles and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes. The next section explains the steps used to describe and analyze the collected information.

Data Analysis of Archival Information

For my study, I analyzed archival information from the *Pensacola News Journal* as this information compared and contrasted with Escambia County School Board meeting minutes. The first section of the data analysis of archival information was crafted from themes generated by the three events of Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School, and the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Under the subheadings, I supported the themes with narratives from the newspaper articles and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes.

Themes from newspaper articles and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes are shown in Table 6. For the Augustus Case, the historical information revealed four themes. They are summarized in this way: (a) the Pensacola case was misinterpreted as equivalent to the Brown vs. Board case, (b) Augustus was held up in local and state courts because of confusion about time limitations for implementation of desegregation, and (c) Augustus was generally remembered as the case that addressed removing rebels

as the mascot of Escambia High School. For Brown Barge, the table shows that information for my study relied exclusively on interviews since I was unable to find any archival records. For A. A. Dixon, Table 6 shows that archival information revealed four themes about the closure of Dixon Elementary School. They were as follows: (a) Dixon did not have enough time to complete the charter school application process, (b) Dixon was an easy target for closure due to the perception that parents were not actively involved in education of their children, (c) Dixon was shrouded by the implementation of the State of Florida voucher program, and (d) Dixon gained attention at the local, state, and national level.

African American majority schools with white segregated schools in ways motivated by and identical to the Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas Case. However, through reviewing articles printed in the *Pensacola News Journal* during the beginning of the Augustus Case, it was demonstrated that the suit was actually twofold and not the clear point of integration for Escambia County Schools. Consequently, the Augustus Case should not have been viewed as identical to the Brown vs. Board of Education Case. Specifically, the initial suit in Escambia County addressed two educational issues: (a) racial balance of teacher and staff personnel of schools, and (b) balance of African American and white students in Escambia County public schools.

Table 6

Newspaper Articles and School Board Meeting Minutes Major Themes From Three Cases

Themes from published articles	Augustus case	Brown Barge	A. A. Dixon
Integration	Clarification of general misrepresentation of the Augustus Case as equivalent to complete integration of mandates from Brown vs. Board of Topeka, KS Case Lingered in local and state courts of Florida due to ambiguity of time frame of integration required as action toward integration by school boards and an implementation of *Freedom of Choice* in Escambia County Schools Clarification of final stage of Augustus Case as only one part of integration process in Escambia County rather than the major force of the case		
Community attention		Closed without local or state attention by way of newspaper articles, but closed as a historically and predominantly African American School	Closure gained local, state, and national attention in terms of articles for and against the school's closure

(table continues)

Themes from published articles	Augustus case	Brown Barge	A. A. Dixon
Community attention			Closure achieved national attention as it was one of Florida's F schools and its closure occurred amidst implementation of Florida's voucher plan initiative
Politics			Perceived as a school for closure due to absence of perceived and practiced parental voice as well as politics of zoning
Publications about school closures		Information about closure of Brown Barge school relies on interviewee accounts of history as no documentation could be found in newspapers or school historical files	Closed without the same options as Byrneville and Pensacola Beach schools. There was no time for application and submission for Charter school status
			Closed as a sort of public spectacle with close attention at the local, state and national level. Closed as a historically and predominantly African American School

The main plaintiff, Charles Augustus filed suit of the two aforementioned requests using Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas as a model. The judge for the case stated Brown vs. Board of Education could not serve as a guide for making a decision on the racial balance of teachers and staff of schools. The judge ruled that Brown vs. Board of Education mandated nothing in the form of assignment of teachers and racial balance thereof. The second request addressed integrating students into schools without labeling them as African American schools or White schools. Again, Charles Augustus cited Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas as the frame of reference for this suit. However, from archival information, it seemed Pensacola residents believed since the Brown vs. Board of Education case was the law of the land, they also believed the Augustus Case would immediately mandate desegregation in Escambia County Schools. From the archival information, I learned the Brown vs. Board of Education Case ruled that schools must either be integrated or must be in the process of integrating. Archival newspaper articles related to the Augustus Case at this time claimed the Brown vs. Board of Education Case mandated integration of American schools; however, within the specifics of the landmark case, the Brown vs. Board of Education Case did not describe how or by when desegregation needed to occur in schools. On June 24, 1960, in an article printed in the *Pensacola News Journal* entitled *Court Narrows Scope of Suit on Integration*, the Pensacola community was provided the first opportunity to read about ways integration would be handled as well as challenged by the African American community. The Augustus Case awakened the reality of Pensacola to the federal case, Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas. Dr. Charles Augustus, on behalf of his own child as well as 11 additional African American

children in Escambia County, Florida, filed suit for desegregation of schools in the Pensacola community.

Secondary to school desegregation and different from the Brown vs. Board of Education Case, the Augustus Case addressed racial ratios of teachers in schools. On June 24, 1960, Judge Harrold Carswell denied the part of the lawsuit that addressed teacher to student racial balance in Escambia County. The judge said students can no more complain of injury to themselves in the present selection of teachers than they could bring suit to enjoin assignment to their schools of teachers who are too strict or too lenient. Students have no choice in curriculum or assignments, so they should have no choice in their teachers. The politics of this historical time period represent an era when student and teacher race ratios were disregarded. The following is a statement in alignment with this example: Judge Carswell stated "I've made a decision on school personnel, you make a decision on where students go to school--you have 20 days to figure out what to do with students" (Frye, 1960, p. 7A). While it was easy to initially determine the Augustus Case mandated desegregation in Escambia County public schools, this article demonstrates the implications of the law were not so cut and dry. The case was actually two fold. The plaintiffs requested reconsideration of placement of teachers in ways more racially balanced as well as reconsideration of placement of students in integrated school settings. The judge mandated that this request be denied as it did not fall under any segment of the Brown vs. Board of Education Case. For the second request, the judge made the decision that the Escambia County School Board would be allowed 20 days to decide how schools would deal with student desegregation in individual schools. Because the Augustus Case was multifaceted, the comparison of

the case to the Brown vs. Board of Education Case was not appropriate because the particular elements of each case were different in significant ways.

Theme two from archival information about the Augustus Case addressed the reasons integration in Escambia County happened so slowly. The historical documents from the case revealed school districts were protected as long as they had already integrated or were in the process of integrating public schools. Unfortunately, the length of time was not stipulated by the Brown vs. Board of Education Case. Consequently, there was no historical precedent in place to use to force schools to move toward desegregation. In an article written on April 4, 1969 by Joel Gaston entitled *Intervention Suit Tossed Out*, one method the Escambia County School Board used to meet the 20 day mandate for dealing with student desegregation was addressed. Specifically, the article describes that from 1960 to 1967, The Escambia County School Board moved toward desegregation of schools by implementing the Freedom of Choice initiative for all schools. In this plan, the article describes that any parent of a student in Escambia County was provided opportunity to move the student from a school in which the child was a majority to a school in which the child would be a minority. For African Americans, this meant parents could enroll their children in any school in which white students were the majority. The article goes on to describe the problem with this plan was that no white students volunteered to transfer to African American schools. Thus, the problems with African American schools and desegregation remained. As a result, the Augustus Case remained in appeals in Florida courts for many years.

In the *Pensacola News Journal's* article titled, "Mix Suit Includes Students" (1969), a different perspective is offered with regards to the reasons the Augustus Case

lingered in local and state appeals courts for such a long period of time. In this article, the News Journal describes how a group of parents asked that they be made third party to the suit against The Escambia County School Board and Superintendent J. E. Hall on grounds their case was not being adequately defended and students were being adversely affected by the continued segregation of schools in the county. In this article, Judge Arnow is quoted saying, “There may be doubt about whether the parents come here too late; but there is no doubt they come here with far too little” (p. 1A). The article goes on to describe how parents of African American students failed in the burden placed on them to state a good claim with legally defensible alternatives. Dr. Charles Augustus wanted a better integration plan than The Freedom of Choice Plan. In 1967 Judge Arnow agreed The Freedom of Choice Plan had not worked. A substantial number of schools were attended only by African American students and only by white students in exclusion of each other. In the article, Judge Arnow claimed Escambia County had practiced token integration. However, he also made it clear that the court was powerless to force The Escambia County School Board to continue moving forward toward actual integration without a desegregation plan.

As it related to the appeal made by parents to become active participants in the Augustus Case, the judge stated that parents asked for change, but did not come to court with viable alternatives as suggestions for improvement to The Freedom of Choice Plan. The court and mandates driven by the Brown vs. Board of Education Case also ruled that it was the burden of the plaintiff to provide suggestions if satisfaction had not been obtained with the plans in place for integration. The article closed by stating The Freedom of Choice Plan implemented by The Escambia County School Board was

considered token integration by the judge, but he could not rule in favor of the plaintiffs because they failed to offer a better alternative than this plan. Eventually, a plan was brought to and accepted by Judge Arnow. This action forced the Escambia City Schools to integrate students and faculty.

Theme three from archival information about the Augustus Case addressed the general, historical memory that the Augustus Case mostly concerned the revolt by African American students at Escambia High School against the use of the rebel as the school mascot. As it related to theme three, the final time Augustus was challenged was the most heated and controversial segment of the case which referenced the Escambia High School mascot, rebels. This was considered a racial irritant. Through research of archival information, I learned this final segment of the Augustus Case was probably the best remembered part of the case and used most often as narrative to support what the Augustus Case represented in Escambia County. I am not sure if the popularity in print was because it was the most recent appeal or if it was because by 1973, the media made issues more public to greater masses. In any case, the final stage of the Augustus Case was the segment most often cited by residents in describing their memories and understanding of integration in Escambia County, Florida. The judge ordered removal of the rebel symbol, and then left the power with the school board to work with the NAACP to implement procedures for doing so.

In an article printed on July 24, 1973, by Mike Henderson in the *Pensacola News Journal*, the particulars of the last appeal made by the Augustus Case were highlighted. This segment of the case seemed the way most people remembered the definitive actions of the courts regarding desegregation in Escambia County. The article was titled *Rebels,*

Flags Banned by Judge. Specifically, the nickname rebels and the Confederate Battle Flag were banned as symbols of Escambia High School by Judge Arnow. The symbols were considered racially irritating to a substantial number of African American students who attended the school. The article went on to state that at the time of this appeal, Escambia High School had 252 African American students in the student population as compared with 3088 white students. The article also stated both symbols were used for 14 years of the school's history.

In 1975, an article related to the Augustus Case was printed for the last time. The article was printed on January 24, 1975 in the *Pensacola News Journal* by Jackie Brooks. The title of the segment was *Rebel Name a School Board Matter*. Similar to the article written in 1973 by Mike Henderson, the article described the ways the school board requested authority to mandate changes defined in the court case. Following the decision of the court to remove the rebel mascot and Confederate flag from Escambia High School, this article described Escambia County's request to implement changes by way of school board power instead of state court power. Specifically, the court case ruled that Escambia High School must change their mascot to be raiders rather than rebels. The school board requested permission to direct the transformation of the school's mascot from rebel to raider. In essence, the school board requested permission to submit their own regulations and permission to deal with any potential racially motivated violence within the parameters of the local district. The article ended by stating that on January 5, 1973, Escambia County unanimously adopted a conciliatory agreement worked out with the NAACP in an attempt to resolve the racial disturbances at Escambia High School.

The state court provided permission for the Escambia County School Board to set up comprehensive procedures to deal with the mandated school transformations.

The Augustus Case has historically been positioned as Escambia County's equivalent to the Brown vs. Board of Education Case. Through the aforementioned three themes, it was apparent the Augustus Case certainly served as a catalyst for integration in Escambia County; however, it was also quite different in specifics of requests. As a result, the state judge was unable to directly use the Brown vs. Board of Education Case as a model for integration in Escambia County. Second, as identified by themes of The Pensacola News Journal articles, it became clear that the complications for integrating schools were due to the implementation of the Freedom of Choice Plan. The Brown vs. Board of Education Case mandated that as long as a school district had a plan to integrate, the school district was in compliance.

Brown Barge Elementary School

My study examined the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School as one of the three historical events of the Pensacola community since the Augustus Case. In this way, Brown Barge Elementary School existed from the 1950s to 1985. It was a historically segregated African American school. Similar to searching for articles related to the school's closing in the *Pensacola News Journal*, I researched archives from the years defined as key to the school's closure. Specifically, I searched for articles related to Brown Barge in the *Pensacola News Journal* archives. Through my search, I was unable to find any newspaper articles describing the closing of Brown Barge Elementary School. Upon advice by local administrators as well as interviewees, I opted to arrange a meeting with

current administrators of Brown Barge Magnet Middle School. Specifically, I arranged a meeting with the media specialist as well as the school secretary. I assumed, first, the media specialist would be able to direct me to archival information. Second, I assumed the secretary would know places the records were stored. After an extensive search in the school's library, the media specialist was unable to locate any records of history. When I met with the secretary, she provided a thin file she labeled old school records. This file contained a picture of the first principal and a copy of his death announcement. The folder also contained a picture of students in the school's cafeteria. This was the only information I obtained. Next, I contacted the past principal of the magnet school, Camille Barr. She indicated the archival records of the old school had been donated to The University of West Florida Library in a ceremonial sort of event. She felt certain I would find these records in the serials department. I immediately contacted the department and, again, no records were discovered. Next, I contacted and arranged a meeting with Teenie Wehmeier, certification specialist in the Escambia County school district. Together, we searched through every year's school directory in order to establish a timeline of Brown Barge's history. She directed me to the archival department of the district office and, again, this search led to no information. Next, I contacted Gordon Eade, local K-12 educational historian. He searched through the Hall Center Administrative Offices and found nothing. I was not able to find any information about the school's history. My information for this study relies exclusively on interviewee information.

A. A. Dixon Elementary School

The third case examined was the closing at A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Four themes were revealed through the analysis of Pensacola News Journal articles as well as

Escambia County School Board meeting minutes that addressed the closure of A. A. Dixon elementary school.

As it related to theme one, the *Pensacola News Journal* printed that the closure of Dixon was approved on January 8, 2002, by The Escambia County School Board. As an alternative to approving the closure, the school board granted that schools receive time to submit an application to form a charter school. The schools were given until January 31, 2002, to develop plans. Specifically, the advocates, parents, and teachers of Dixon were allowed 23 days to write, organize, and submit a charter school application. Amidst the turmoil of closure and the rigid requirements for completing a charter school application, this was quite simply not enough time. Consequently, advocates of Dixon could not complete the request to transition the school into a charter school in the community.

In Escambia County School Board meeting minutes from January 8, 2002, there was unanimous approval for Byrneville and Pensacola Beach School closings. For Dixon, Dr. Jenkins expressed concern of where Dixon students would be placed if the school was closed. He noted that the schools suggested school placements of students (Semmes, Spencer Bibbs, and Weis) had approximately the same minority African American population and approximately the same percentage of students on free and reduced lunch. He suggested that if closed, Dixon students be sent to schools in middle-class neighborhoods such as Suter, Cordova Park, Scenic Heights, and N. B. Cook, even if the district had to provide transportation. The vote to close the elementary school was 3 to 2 with Linda Finkelstein and Dr. Jenkins voting no. Specifically, it was stated by Dr. Jenkins that Dixon was closed because fewer parents were involved in their child's

education. As a result, there would be less voice and media spectacles in the closure of Dixon than if Semmes or Weis were closed.

As it relates to theme two, the articles from the *Pensacola News Journal* suggested Dixon was compared with Weis, Hallmark, and Bibbs when considering school closures in the same geographical community. Weis was exempted due to its history of the most recently built school with technology and building codes up to par. Hallmark was framed as the school with the most history in the community. Similar to Weis, Hallmark had recently been upgraded with technology to meet higher building codes.

Spencer Bibbs was most comparable with Dixon. Both were labeled inner city schools with students living in poverty. However, as written in articles in the *Pensacola News Journal*, Bibbs differed from Dixon due to its composition of students with more parents owning homes and more families with two parents in the home. During the January 8, 2002, Escambia County School Board meeting, Gary Bergosh (school board member) stated that he believed the circumstances surrounding the closure of Dixon were different from Byrneville and Pensacola Beach Elementary Schools. He did not believe that the charter application would be successful based on what he believed to be a lack of parental support, and therefore, would not support the charter application. Not only was Dixon offered only about 30 days to complete the charter application, the politics of this historical time seemed to represent an idea that parents of children from Dixon would not be capable or willing to work toward a successful application for charter school status.

Theme three from archival information about A. A. Dixon Elementary School showed how the school's closure occurred around the same time as the implementation of the voucher program in the State of Florida. Theme four from the historical information demonstrated how Dixon's closure occurred amidst local, state, and national attention on the school's low school grades that led to the school being one of the first voucher schools in Florida. As it relates to themes three and four, the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School spawned local and national articles about equity and fairness of vouchers in public school settings. For example, in the ACLU of Florida publication, *The Torch,* Rebecca Hale states, "Let's make our public schools better. The voucher program dismantles the system. If this is truly for the benefit of the children, give the schools the resources they need" (Connor, 1999, p. 2). This statement represented the perspective that many people held about voucher programs potentially weakening schools that were already disadvantaged. In the same paper, the following statement was made: "Here we go again. The Black community is being used as pawns for someone else's political agenda. There is a somewhat elitist and arrogant assumption about private schools. Without the public school system, what other element can we depend on to educate the poor?" (Connor, p. 3). Again, this quote addressed the perspective that African American schools and students were being violated by politics that misunderstood and misrepresented the deep issues of race and poverty. Finally, this statement was also made in the same publication:

> Standing up for children is the common bond linking these parents who are defending public education and challenging the Florida voucher scheme. I don't agree with taxpayers through the use of school vouchers to fund religious

> education unconstitutional. But it will also further impoverish an already troubled public school system. Rather than improving the public schools by reducing class size and ensuring needed supplies, the state has decided to take money out of the areas that need it the most. (Connor, p. 3)

The three quotes used to support themes three and four about A. A. Dixon Elementary School addressed ways the closure of the school amidst the implementation of the State of Florida's voucher program forced the school to gain local, state, and national attention.

Four themes were revealed through the archival information about the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. The first theme addressed the perceived inequality of stakeholders of the elementary school to gain the same opportunity as Byrneville and Pensacola Beach Elementary Schools to apply for and submit a charter application. The second theme from the archival information revealed the perception by the community and media that Dixon was closed more easily than other elementary schools being considered for closure due to absence of parental voice. Related to this theme, the closure of Dixon was blamed on politics of geography that protected some schools and made others like Dixon vulnerable to challenge the school board's decision. The third theme generated from archival information about A. A. Dixon Elementary School was the notoriety the school gained since its closure occurred amidst the rise of the voucher program in the state of Florida. The final theme revealed from archival information addressed the local, state, and national attention the closure of Dixon received.

Data Analysis of Interview Information

I analyzed interview information from narratives collected from the 10 selected participants. Three interviewees were selected per case except for the Brown Barge School case. Because I was only able to access minimal information, I selected a fourth interviewee to fill in where gaps in my knowledge existed. For each case (Augustus, Brown Barge, Dixon), I transcribed interviews for each participant. I then created themes from the coded narratives from the interviews. Table 7 summarizes four major themes for the Augustus Case; three major themes for the Brown Barge case; and four major themes for the A. A. Dixon case. In this section, I will describe each theme.

The Augustus Case

The three interviewees for the Augustus Case were Ben Roberts, John Blake, and Sara Smith. At the outset some immediate commonalities about their lived experiences were evident, such as race and similar life experiences as residents of Pensacola. They also experienced situations different from each other, yet these situations intertwine in unique ways. Mr. Blake was a former school board member and educator. Ms. Smith was the first African American pharmacist in Pensacola in 1957 and was a neighbor of Dr. Charles Augustus, the foremost plaintiff in the Augustus Case. Her husband (not interviewed) was a lifelong educator, friend, and fellow activist for equal educational rights with Dr. Charles Augustus. Mr. Roberts was a principal for 25 plus years and worked after his retirement with Willie Junior, a former county commissioner, in his funeral home in Pensacola for many years. He also has been a lifelong resident of East Hill, the neighborhood in which the Augustus children desired to attend school.

Table 7

Themes Emerging from Interviews

Emerging interview themes	Augustus case	Brown Barge Elementary School	A. A. Dixon
Integration	The case was perceived as a common sense rationale for integrating students into *school of neighborhood community* as well as a late reaction to Brown case. Interviewees expressed a desire for integration yet believed segregation would be maintained.	Although community school experience was valued, each interviewee perceived integration as significant.	
Community and race	Each interviewee described overt practices of racism experienced impersonal community realms. Interviewees found strength and conviction in the Black community. Augustus represented holistic potential for freedom in Black community.	Interviewees described the school as a Black community school.	Dixon's represented a neighborhood community center of educational and social significance. Conversations opened regarding quality of Black educational experience by teachers and students.

Emerging interview themes	Augustus case	Brown Barge Elementary School	A. A. Dixon

(table continues)

Hazard concerns		Interviewees described creosote plant as a source of a hazard unknown at the time as school's existence.	
Politics			Dixon's closure was surrounded by misrepresentational politics about lived experiences of poverty. Dixon's closure opened conversations for and against vouchers amidst conversations of politics at play.
School closing		Brown Barge closed without local or state attention by way of newspaper articles. Brown Barge closed with the similarity of existing as a historically and predominantly African American school.	Dixon closed as a sort of public spectacle in which local, state, and national attention was paid to the closing Dixon closed with the similarity of existing as a historically and predominantly African American school.

Each of the interviewees spoke about common themes. They all described Dr. Charles Augustus as a father with children who lived a quiet life on 12th Avenue. Nearly 10 years after the dust had settled from Brown versus Board of Topeka, Pensacola remained segregated and practiced educational zoning in ways that further reinscribed the separate but equal mentality. Particular to the case, Dr. Augustus wanted his children to attend O.J. Semmes Elementary School rather than Spencer Bibbs Elementary School. At the time, Semmes was an all-white school, located closer to his residence. Ms. Smith explained how black children attended Spencer Bibbs Elementary School, regardless of their residential proximity to another school for as long as she could remember. She said,

> My husband, when he was a boy, lived on Eighth Avenue. As a result, he was zoned to attend Spencer Bibbs. So, he had to walk across that bridge on Cervantes every day to go to school and back home.

All of the interviewees described Dr. Augustus as a strong man. When discussing his strength, they mentioned that he endured vandalism and violence to his home and property during the court case, which lasted from 1959-1972. When I asked the interviewees if he was inspired to speak out because the community did not act on the Brown vs. Board of Education case, they all suggested this to be the case. However, Ms. Smith expanded on a specific historical series of events that led to the filing of the case against the school board. She stated,

> Reverend Matthews, a friend and community church leader in Pensacola at the time, had been to one of the NAACP meetings and when he came back, and this is not a direct quote or exactly correct, but the story goes something like this…there was a young minister here at United Methodist Church, Dr. Reverend

> Dobbits, you might have heard his name in your studies. Anyway, he encouraged Dr. Augustus to put the suit in, and it didn't take much encouraging. Because to show you how stupid it was, in my eyes, Dr. Augustus lived right here near Hatton Street and 12th Avenue. Anyway, he wanted his child to go to O.J. Semmes School, which was in walking distance of his home.

The three interviewees described the making of the Augustus case by a man, who was a quiet and respected professional in the medical field. Rather than being a powerful voice that was only fighting to have more for his children, he was described as a man who wanted his child to attend the school closest to their home. They agreed that he was encouraged to pursue the case because he knew the Brown vs. Board of Education case was not being adhered to in Pensacola. They reiterated that his inspiration grew more from his desire for his child to attend a school in the community of his neighborhood. He fought for fairness and what *made sense*, rather than making his focus an activist agenda to push or force integration.

The second theme from my analysis of the three interviewees concerned the effect the Augustus case had on the participants. From this question, I learned more about Ben Roberts, John Blake, and Sara Smith as people who learned to practice their lives in unique, creative ways amidst the turmoil of integration. Early on, I sensed from all three individuals that they guarded against conversation speaking directly to injustice and racism. Perhaps it was because I was a stranger and not of the same race. However, their responses revealed situations where they had lived with overt racism in the community. Their stories were unmistakably descriptive of negative, if not heart-wrenching trials and tribulations of segregation to integration.

Ms. Smith claimed,

"Well, I knew that we might be in for tough times. I observed a lot of the *goings on*. And I'm going to talk about your people right now (addressing me personally as a native of Louisiana). During a visit at about the same time as Augustus, I went to Canal Street one day with my college roommate who was from Lafayette, LA. We went in D.H. Holmes and I saw a dress and I said, "Annette, I'm going to try that dress on. I love it and I have a little money this week. I grabbed the thing and she said, "Where you going?" She said, "You can't try that dress on" I said, "What do you mean I can't try it on?" She said, "You have to buy it and take it home and if it doesn't fit, then you bring it back." That was similar to the stuff going on in Pensacola. They also had separate fitting rooms for whites and colored. Some stores wouldn't serve you period if you were black."

Mr. Blake addressed this perspective by stating,

Have you ever been to Cantonment and Century? You've been north towards the county line? Well, when I first ran for school board member…do you know where Nine Mile road is? Well, when I first ran, black folks called Nine Mile Road the Mason-Dixon Line. Because once you crossed Nine Mile road you had some different white folks up there. They were prejudiced. Now, when I was running countywide, I had to go up there and campaign and my wife would go with me. And they didn't show us any respect. You might get a few of them to vote for you. But I had a few friends up there who voted against me even though I was a college professor. I literally ran against a teenager who almost beat me because it was countywide and he was white and I was black.

These stories were shared in ways that suggested to me there was still sadness and disbelief about people who could and did practice against the advancement of African Americans. In these stories, I saw the three interviewees as people who still could not understand the reasons people worked against equality for all people. In their cases, the disbelief was even deeper as they were all professional, educated and seemingly fair minded. None of them struck me as irrational or highly vocal people. They were people genuinely desiring to promote fairness and even more so, people working for good causes such as education, community activism, and opportunities for themselves and their children to better themselves and their community.

My third interview theme revealed that the individuals desired integration even when they felt that segregation would most likely be maintained in Escambia County. From this perspective, Ms. Smith stated,

> Well, at the time, a lot of us who worked together and worshipped together feared for Dr. Augustus. So we organized times to go and stay with his family at all times so they would be safe. They also discussed his case in the black churches and a lot of them raised money to finance the case because it was long and expensive. We discussed rallying around Dr. Augustus and his family.

Ms. Smith continued,

> Well, actually it went fairly well for me because I was lucky enough to fall into a good position. I was hired by the Moulton drug stores. But I could not work in the drug store. I was an assistant buyer in the warehouse with a white lady who was a registered pharmacist who they did not want to put in the drug store on a regular basis because they didn't think that people were ready for a lady

> pharmacist. Then when I came along they wouldn't put me in the store because they told me that they didn't think the people were ready for neither a lady pharmacist nor a colored pharmacist. This just shows you how lopsided it was. Mrs. Penny was white and she was allowed to work in the drug store if they needed extra help. But, in reality, we were making decisions and ordering drugs for eight stores.

Mr. Roberts addressed his desire for integration and beliefs about segregation in this way:

> You know I was a teacher and I taught it is a natural phenomenon from the standpoint according to social theory years ago. It stated that people of like kind tend to cling together. I taught that people aren't acting out of malice or dislike for somebody else or some other group. But, think about it. When you go to an open concert or public affair and get there and find a mixed group of races, the first person you look for is a white person (directing comment to me)…somebody you can relate to. We tend, a theory called gregariousness, to cling together with like kinds. So, I can't separate it. It is a natural thing. You feel more comfortable and more at ease, unless you happen to know someone in another group. That is a different thing. But if you just go in a total strange group and the first thing we do is stand and look, we want to spot someone like us. And you try to move toward that person and when you get close and they are friendly to you, you are at ease.

My fourth interview theme concerned the strength individuals found in the Black community. Within this theme, I hoped to hear about conversations they remembered among their families and friends regarding the case of Augustus. I also anticipated

hearing about topics that buzzed in the community and sentiments that seemed to separate white consciousness from black consciousness.

Mr. Roberts described the experience in this way:

> I want to tell you regardless of what is being said, there are a lot of people who still feel they are being pushed back into stereotypical situations. I don't buy this 100%. We asked for a lot of things. We didn't realize once we go it, we didn't really want it. As African Americans, we made blunders and still are making some. We were upset because we thought you all (directing comment to me) were getting a better part of education, so we asked for more. So, I don't believe that segregation and resegregation is a willful thing. They're pulling back toward groups in sameness – not malice, just comfort. I don't think anyone wanted to plan to keep or get us back into separation – we are doing it on our own. Now, in freedom of integration, we choose to reidentify with our own because it is more comfortable.

Ms. Smith described her participation with members of her racial community in this way:

> Well, I didn't take part in demonstrations, but we would take our lunch hour and walked down to Palafox Street and sit in during lunch time. The lunch counters would not serve us, colored people. You could go to the back door and tell them what you wanted and they would hand it to you. But you couldn't go in and sit at the counter and order a drink or sandwich. So, at lunch time, a bunch of us would walk in and sit together. They had to acknowledge us. So when they'd asked what we wanted, we'd say we'll let you know or something like that. We figured

in big groups, they'd have to say something to us and it felt good to make them wait.

Mr. Blake discussed the theme of strength in the black community. He stated, Well, actually when I first came here as a professional, we had an all black community college and that was Washington Junior College. In the summer of 1965, the two faculty at Washington Junior College were transferred to Pensacola Junior College. I was one of the two. Actually, we were the only two they selected from the black junior college to go to Pensacola Junior College. So he and I were the first black professors at Pensacola Junior College. At the time, the community colleges were under the school board so those who did not go there were reassigned to jobs in the high schools. But, the important point, was when I was transferred to Pensacola Junior College (PJC) my salary increased significantly. The last year I was at Washington Junior College, I was making $6200 a year. When I was transferred to PJC, they had to pay me $8900 per year. This shows the disparity in pay between the black community college and PJC. You know, at first, there were twelve junior colleges in the state of Florida. Washington Junior College was in Pensacola from 1949 through summer of 1965. However, no one remembers this. I appreciated the raise in pay, but I knew it was because I was being hired in a white community college as opposed to teaching in the black community college.

My final theme concerned differences that occurred in the Pensacola community because of the Augustus Case. I wanted to learn about the ways the interviewees reflected on history and current realities because of the positive outcomes of the case in

Pensacola. I hoped to hear about grand strides and successes in the face of nearly 20 years of struggle.

Mr. Blake stated,

> Well, I was on the school board for a long time and the only thing I remember that is left in place presently because of the Augustus case is the ability of kids to transfer to different schools. The rest of the statutes of the case have been dismantled over time. Specifically, a child can transfer from a school where his race is a majority to where his race is a minority. More broadly, I think the Augustus case opened the eyes and minds of fair-minded people. We had some whites who fought to the end. Because you know 1950 was the year that the Supreme Court voted unanimously to outlaw segregation in school. You remember the case; I'm sure, the Brown case. That was 1950 and the school here did not fully integrate until 1972, 22 years later. Yes, we are in the south and at that time, you weren't even born then (addressing me), the southern states passed legislation that got around the issue. I forget exactly what they did, but all the southern schools came up with different things to get around it. Before the schools became fully integrated here, things happened at Escambia High School that forced the issue.

Ms. Smith described,

> I'm not sure I can answer that one, but I do tell you this. Every time you look in the paper now, you see where a black teacher has been given what they say is a higher position, but then they replace the black principal, most of the time, with a white principal. Right now, I'm just waiting to see who gets Mrs. Eaton's place.

> And, in fact, I'm not just talking about blacks. I'm talking about women; I'm talking about poor people. I'm talking about other races. In this day and time, I see we're going back to the places we've already been.
>
> Mr. Roberts answered this question by describing freedom in this way:
>
> I think it provided freedom of knowledge. In the beginning, it was strange to see a mixed couple in streets anywhere. Then states changed regulations about marriage. Now it is not strange, it is a way of life. You might not like it, but what difference does it make? Black and whites have always been mixed. Masters had wives and concubines….leading to strange white babies by black women. Even now, I can't be friends with all black folks. There is segregation between us as a group. I never could get along with them and I'm not saying I was trying to not get along with anybody. But that is life. You'll be dead and gone and it will still be happening and changing. For example, we African Americans started out as blacks and didn't like that, so we changed and changed again. Now, we're African Americans. In 10 years or so, we'll change again to something else because races mix all the time now. You can't always go to bed with an upset stomach because you don't agree with something. You have to go with the flow. For me, I thought life would always be separate. I go with the flow. Life changes and you have to go with the flow.

Five themes were revealed through the responses to interview questions about the Augustus Case. The first theme revealed that interviewees believed integration was just good, common sense in that it could potentially provide access for black students to attend K-12 public schools in their own neighborhoods. Related to the first theme, the

interviewees also perceived the Augustus Case, at some level, was the Pensacola African American community's reaction to Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, KS. They described that individuals realized the national case was a victory over segregation nearly 12 years earlier, yet Escambia County public schools remained segregated at the time the case was filed. The second theme from the interviews was revealed in the form of personal narratives that detailed overt practices of racism practiced against those individuals interviewed. The third theme from the interviews was a collective belief that integration may open opportunities for fairness and improved educational quality for African American children in public schools; yet, at the same time, the interviewees were equally convinced integration would not become a reality in Escambia County. The fourth theme from the interviews referred to how the three participants described in the African American community. For the final theme, none of the interviewees could speak directly to the events of the Augustus Case. Time has been erased from their memories about the main purpose of the Augustus Case. Rather, they answered the question by referring to their race-related rights.

Brown Barge Elementary School

To capture stories about Brown Barge, I interviewed individuals I felt certain would be capable of filling the gaps where literature failed to provide information. I interviewed Ms. Waters, a student of the elementary school; Mr. Jordan, a teacher who grew up in Pensacola and also taught during the summer program at Brown Barge Elementary School; and Thomas Baker, the son of a principal of Brown Barge. I anticipated these interviews would build knowledge where literature failed to lead to a path of recorded history. This, however, did not occur. The history of Brown Barge

Elementary School is a mystery that I could not uncover with interviews and recorded documents, including school board minutes and newspaper articles. Unfortunately, even the interviews left enormous gaps, but I still worked to provide a voice where there was virtually none. To build from Mr. Jordan's words, "the experience of Brown Barge is to study a school that has been largely forgotten." During his interview, I failed to realize the enormity of his sentiments. The initial thought was reinforced by all others I interviewed about Brown Barge. Brown Barge Elementary School existed from 1955-1986. This is the most concrete information I gained from the interviewees. However, little, if any literature exists to support its history much less its story. When visiting the Brown Barge Magnet School for a day, I was only able to access pictures of the lunch room and an obituary of the first principal from the former Brown Barge Elementary School staff. Also, I was able to copy a brief biography of the woman for whom the school was named. Through recommendations by both the magnet school staff and Teenie Wehmeier, a current school district employee, I was encouraged to contact Camille Barr, a former principal of Brown Barge Magnet School. Principal Barr informed me that all records of the old Brown Barge School were donated to The University of West Florida Library in a ceremony dedicated to the history. However, the library resource staff fell short in locating the documents. After several attempts (3 to be specific), neither the library director, the historical documents specialist, nor the education-related coordinator were able to locate any information similar to the description of literature described by Camille Barr. Therefore, I relied on interviews to provide a historical framework where documents from the school board and literature were absent. For this reason, I added a fourth interviewee, Bill Marks. Mr. Marks was a

former physical educator at Brown Barge Elementary School who possessed a historical memory and many years of experience in the actual school.

Several informants of my study suggested Mr. Baker would also be able to provide historical information regarding my study. Equally significant, I interviewed Ms. Waters, a former student of Brown Barge and Mr. Jordan, a lifelong resident of Pensacola and summer educator of the Brown Barge enrichment program. One strong theme ran through the conversations with the interviewees when discussing the school's history. They reinforced that they understood Brown Barge to be a community school that no longer serves in that capacity.

Mr. Baker stated,

> Yes, it was definitely a community school. And when integration came, it was the end. Because you know, you had the busing. Kids were bused out of and away from their neighborhoods. I am not going to say it was a bad thing all the way around, but the system we were under was a bad thing…separate but equal. Integration was bound to come, but it destroyed the cohesiveness of a neighborhood. But about it being a community school, Brown Barge Elementary School provided opportunity to go on to better things because teachers cared and pushed all kids. I consider the importance was it was a forgotten school – the condition of the building, the plant across the street, no paved parking lot. But somehow when the school was reopened, much money was suddenly put in the school. I hated to see the school close. My father put his heart and soul into that school.

In describing her experiences of a community school, Ms. Waters stated,

Generations of families made up the school. Yes, it was a community school. It was family of family or communities like the older child would attend then siblings on down for even as much as 20 years or so. I had two sisters and one brother to attend before I did. And in that way, the teachers knew you because of the performance and presence of your brothers and sisters. And they had no problem with discipline because they went straight to your house and communicated with your parents. Also, we all walked to school. It was safe. All teachers knew all parents so that made interaction important and frequent. We all took care of each other because they took care of us and showed us how to do the same things.

Reinforcing the community school theme, Mr. Marks stated,

It was definitely a community school. The thing that strikes me most is that people still come up to me and say, hey coach, do you remember such and such? Or coach you taught me and influenced my life in such and such way. I don't know if this is what you mean by community school, but it was a place where teachers cared, parents cared, students cared and we all intermingled in school and in the community. You know, I was a PE instructor and I was in charge of first aid. We worked with little kids and little kids have accidents. I had to take more than one or two over to Baptist Hospital for stitches and tetanus shots from little accidents. I was close to their families, so I would call them and we would spend most of the day together at the hospital.

In describing a community school, Mr. Jordan thoughtfully suggested that African American schools experienced common patterns of schools that were closed. He stated,

> I speak to Brown Barge as a former student and former educator. I saw Brown Barge as a black school. My cousin's father, William Brown, Sr. was the first principal. Many black students attended there and have gone on to do very well. But some students did well and some did poorly. That is life. The cream always rises to the top. There will always be students who do good no matter what environment you put them in, good or bad. Brown Barge was an exceptionally good school. My feelings are that when integration came, they closed down a community school because they didn't want to put the money into a black community. So they started pushing out students to Workman school and other schools that were outside of that community. The community loved the school and wanted the school. When it came down to dollars and sense, just like with Washington High School, the school board didn't want to put money into an old, dilapidated building. But, then somehow they moved and rebuilt a new Washington High School. The old Washington became the Hall Center. To me, it was a biased thing. Like Washington High. If you notice, Washington High School is a high class facility and the Washington part is larger, but the Booker T is in small letters. I think this is by design. The same thing happened with Brown Barge. How did they all of a sudden find the money to reopen as a magnet school when there supposedly was no money to fix the old school? Decisions made were biased by a school board at 215 W. Garden Street. As I said before, the

> Brown Barge community was very close. Willie Brown could tell you sisters and brothers of family he had taught way back and for many years. Everyone is raised by the school community. When you lose that kind of school, you lose the sense of family that is important to education. Also, when you lose this, you lose the people who would have been on the borderline and would have made it if they were taught by black instructors who knew them and their families personally. With black teachers in our own schools, we demanded things and had very high expectations for our children. And when integration came, of course, I think the (other races) teachers were not familiar or concerned with blacks. All they knew is what they were taught and that equaled lower expectations. We didn't know anything, we could not learn, we could not produce, and so if there aren't expectations, the child suffers. Then, the additional cush of knowing family, it was accountability. All that is missing now. It's gone now. It wasn't like that before. It was so good.

My second theme addressed the belief by interviewees that integration was *for the greater good*. I anticipated learning what the school represented to each interviewee personally.

Mr. Marks stated,

> Of course, I was sad to hear it closed. By this time, I wasn't at Brown Barge anymore. I stayed there for 10 years, and then went to Washington Junior High on A and Strong Street. But I have to tell you that I think integration is more good than bad. I think the new magnet school has turned out some great students. I think it serves the community in a fine, fine educational way. Besides, they

> received with the new school better equipment, better materials. I think it provided good educational opportunity for the African American students.

When responding to the positives of integration, Ms. Waters perplexedly said,

> You know, I'm torn because I think we had a good thing. I would not trade that experience for anything in the world. I think we had some very caring teachers back then and they forced us to learn and retain what was taught. They taught us what it meant to care in a community. I am sure I would not have had the personal attention and also the relationships with the teachers in an integrated school. Those of us who attended Brown Barge are still friends. It caused us to maintain a strong connection to each other. In fact, there are still groups of families who are in that community and who are close knit. But, I also know the new school provides some different and even better opportunities in terms of equipment and such. For instance, I am certain we used to get used textbooks that were old from other schools. For PE, our teacher Mr. Steen played kickball with us. It was nothing fancy. The playground was not elaborate. Our only equipment was a merry-go-round and a swing.

Mr. Jordan again reinforced the idea of Brown Barge serving as a community school. He suggested,

> Again, it was a community school. I used to teach there in the summer. I grew up in Attucks Court and I remember how Dixon provided summer enrichment programs. Brown Barge did the same sort of thing. We offered programs and learning programs to students during summer time. I hated to see that school close. It was such a vital part of the community. It cut off an important

relationship to students and their families in terms of the roles it played in their lives.

Mr. Baker suggested,

> You know, I didn't go to school there. My father began being principal there in about 1955. What really strikes me personally is the relationship I had with the school during the summer time. During that time, there was summer recreation school. And, my brothers and sisters went to St. Joseph Catholic School. So, during the summer, we had the chance to experience Brown Barge with my father. It had arts and crafts and field trips. They also put on some mighty good music shows and I remember the cafeteria food was very good. I just remember how many things Brown Barge did for the community and I can only speak to that from the summer time programs I experienced.

My third question addressed a hazardous plant in the neighborhood of the Brown Barge School and the perceptions of the families at the time. In 1994, The Environmental Protection Agency started digging up hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of polluted soil in the area of Brown Barge Elementary School property. The stirred-up chemicals made residents sick. Officials with the Citizens Against Toxic Exposure believe 70 people died from the repeated exposure. This event led to the filing of the Rosewood Case on behalf of residents who lived in the Brown Barge neighborhood community. In response to the case, the EPA had to move nearly 400 families out of harm's way. By January 2002, the government had purchased 170 properties in the neighborhoods of Rosewood Terrace, Oak Park and Goulding. At present, the site continues to pose serious health and environmental risks. I asked interviewees to describe their memories of the

plant during a time before EPA or any other organization paid attention to the potential hazards of the company.

Mr. Baker stated,

> That is a hard question, I was a child, but I would imagine the people in that area thought it was very unjust. But at that time, it wasn't the same. I remember my dad working there on Saturdays. I can remember the differences in black versus white systems. Although it was said that things were separate but equal, there was no way the facilities were equal to the facilities in white areas. Also, I remember the plant across the street. I remember vividly the plant and the orange smoke that would choke you if you went outside to play. I just think the adults must have looked at that plant and looked at the equipment and felt the treatment was unjust. But, I also know they must have felt it was unjust to close their school, an all black school. I just remember how much my dad said he loved the close feeling of it.

Mr. Jordan addressed his memories of the plant in the Brown Barge community this way:

> We never knew of the *unsafety* because we didn't know Rosewood Terrace had all that contamination. The Creole plant was quite an industry. And, of course, blacks were employed there. Of course, they made less money than white supervisors. It's almost like St. Regis. We always say that is the smell of money. We say this because it offers jobs in an area in such a way that you don't think about the implications. We didn't know contamination; we only thought it was good because it was employing people. Creole Point is the area around Brown

> Barge. We saw it as employment, not as possibly hazardous. Blacks needed as much possibility for employment as possible. There weren't questions asked. It offered a decent living. It was going on right under our noses, but all we saw was employment. It took the coming of the magnet school to pay attention to contamination. Rosewood contamination became public because many began to die of cancer in the community. They took years – ten years to realize it was environmental racism. They filed a suit. So, this is what I think of when I think of affect to the community.

Mr. Marks strayed from the question to stress what he considered an important point. He stated,

> Well, what I remember is that we at Brown Barge had a unique history. What I remember is we started at J.D. Pickens School because Brown Barge was under construction at the time the school year began. It wasn't completed for the beginning of the school year 1955-1956 so we had double sessions at J.D. Pickens Elementary School. That was on Haynes Street at the time. We had the afternoon sessions and the J.D. Pickens had the morning sessions. And we, Brown Barge occupied the new building on Fairfield at the later part of that semester. And, I don't know if this answers your question, but a lot of people don't know this. Brown Barge wasn't even supposed to have been the school it was. It was originally earmarked for Washington Senior High School. But somehow, the contractors put the wrong bathrooms in the school. He put the lower facilities that were suited for younger children. For that reason, the plans

had to be reversed. That is how Brown Barge even got to be the school in the community it was in.

My final theme for these interviewees concerned how they felt the community at large was different because of the closing of Brown Barge. I hoped hearing about the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School and the reasons the interviewees felt the transition was approved. Again, I anticipated the responses to this answer would fill in the gaps where literature was absent. In the end, my questions were not answered as the interviewees seemed to possess as many questions as I did regarding the closure and implications for the Pensacola community.

Mr. Marks suggested,

> You know, I don't really know. I think integration was a good thing. It was necessary and bound to happen. But I do have this question; I wonder where my trophies are now. I can't find anything from the old school. You know, we had a real good basketball team, but we didn't even have a gym. We played and practiced at Washington Junior High School. Also, we had this reputation in the area of what do you call it – modern dancing. And, I was the coach. We won all over the place in competitions for modern dancing.

Ms. Waters answered,

> I'm just not sure. In some ways it was a good thing. We were transferred to O.J. Semmes – an integrated school. At Brown Barge, every single one of us walked to school. But, I think it was a good thing in some ways as I remember the plant across the street. Of course, we as children did not realize it was a health hazard.

> There were these huge clouds of orange dust. Then, we didn't know how bad it was. It was just seen as a place that provided opportunity for employment to some of the kids' parents, so it was a way of sustaining living. There was lack of knowledge about its danger and we didn't know better. So, in this way, I think the effect was also good.

Similar to Ms.Waters, Mr. Baker stated,

> You know, I'm just not sure. I unfortunately lost my father very young. Right after I got married in 1969, my father passed away. We had left Pensacola and when we returned, I was teaching at Ferry Pass. Other than knowing its history because of my father, I had little contact or knowledge about it as an adult, even though I was a teacher. I just know many professionals came from that area who I respect very much now – Joe Banks, Lauren Lovely. It was a poor area, but good people were born and educated there.

Three themes were revealed through the responses to interview questions about Brown Barge Elementary School. The first theme was a description of the ways the interviewees characterized Brown Barge as a community school. The participants defined a community school as an educational space in which faculty, parents, and students worked closely to enrich learning as well as instill values in the children. The second theme from the interviews about Brown Barge was the revelation that although the experience of community-based education was rich in scope of learning and valuable as it relates to the comprehensive system of support that surrounded the students, the interviewees also believed integration was a positive movement. They believed integration would open opportunities for educational equity and provide easier access to

resources for higher learning. The final theme from interviews about Brown Barge Elementary School were stories shared by the participants about the chemical plant in the school community. As it relates to this theme, the participants described the daily lived experiences amidst environmental toxins with consequences that eventually led to The Rosewood Case in the Brown Barge neighborhood community.

A. A. Dixon Elementary School

I selected three interviewees based on the diversity of their experiences with A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Theresa Clark, a single mother and voucher supporter, offered a perspective opposite from the other two participants; yet insightful in its ability to provide an alternate standpoint. She attended Dixon as a child, but her child had not attended public schools in the Escambia County School District. Anita Williams, former educator and lifelong resident of Pensacola, was selected because of her history in the community. Clare James was selected because she was a principal of the school and had worked in her position for eight years.

My first theme from these interviews concerned memories they possessed of the time surrounding the school's closure. Ms. James stated,

> I remember being very, very concerned – deeply concerned about it. There were so many things to think about that no one seemed to talk about. For instance, many of my kids were not transported by their families. Most of them were walkers if they had a choice. Because we had four major roads around us, they did eventually come to us by bus. But, they all could have walked and would have chosen to walk to school. But because of the four major highways, they got a bus to ride them. But then I would say maybe about three-fourths of them rode

the bus and a quarter walked because they weren't in the hazardous walking conditions. That was like their community area. It was a community center for them and had been for a very long time. They would use it whenever they needed to – like a church was there at one point in the cafeteria. We had scout troops in and out of the school. It was a focal point for the community. They were very concerned their children were going to be bused away from them in areas distant from their homes. Dixon had been there since the 1950s I think. We were all sad to realize, in the end, they would close us down. They liked Dixon. They enjoyed Dixon and all of the extra services we provided. Gradually, we were getting trust of parents so they would come to school and help and participate in their children's education. It was not an easy thing to do, but it was happening.

Ms. Williams stated,

We all thought it was very sad because Dixon was there for a long time. My husband used to teach at Dixon summer school. It was a community school. It stayed open in the summer. All students congregated at Dixon who lived in that area. During the summer, they offered extra services such as coloring, games, arts, crafts. Dixon worked hard to keep children away from the dangers of the streets. They made programs out of checkers, ping pong, and volleyball. That was the significance of Dixon school. That is what Dixon was.

Ms. Clark, with a different perspective stated,

Dixon was a failing school and that was the bottom line. At the time, they had failed three out of four times, so at that time, they gave all parents a voucher to

transfer their child to another school or to attend a private school. The school wasn't performing; our children deserved a fair chance to learn in quality ways.

Remember that Ms. Clark attended Dixon as a child, but her child did not attend Dixon. However, because they lived in the Dixon school district, her daughter qualified for the voucher program.

My second theme concerned decisions by policymakers that affected individuals living in poverty. I expected to hear a wide range of emotions and reactions because of the diversity in roles they maintained regarding the event.

Ms. Williams stated,

> It was closed because money they put into it could be better served in other places, according to the school board, if it was closed. When I heard that, it reminded me of what we went through with Brown Barge. All of a sudden, then, it opens back up and now we have the adult school. You have all facilities located there and before they "couldn't" put money into it. Pickens was the same story. It was off Maxwell and we experienced the same thing. It is a Book Depository now. The bottom line is when integration came, they couldn't get white students to go to school in those neighborhoods. Same now. Booker T. Washington, Dixon, Clubbs. But again, if you were a black principal during the time, you operated on shoe string budgets because they didn't pour money into your schools. I also think, why would you want to take money and put it into a parochial school. I went to parochial school and paid to go there, so it was a choice made and paid for by my parents. They made sacrifices so we could attend private school. But if it's public money, then it should go to public education.

They should have smaller classrooms so teachers can teach. There were sometimes 40 in a classroom. So, I feel public money should go to public schools. Again, to me, legislators are saying it is another school choice. I think Dixon and these words are political ploys.

Ms. James stated,

I so did not want it to close. I feel like our children were getting the best education they could possibly get. They were – we were able to get some excellent teachers through year long internship programs. The inner-city schools like Dixon know through yearlong internships whether teachers have what it takes to handle a school like Dixon. You need people to get along in the community and understand the complexities of curriculum and learning as it relates to the inner city and poverty. Remember behavior is a different kind of treatment in children in low SES communities. When you get and keep their attention, the children trust you. They have to know you're there for their best interest. You have to do extra things you don't have to do at other schools – like we had a teacher who bought brand new shoes and kept them in his closet for any students who needed them. We bought a million pairs of socks because our students always needed new ones. We kept a supply of socks and underwear. They don't have washers and dryers. So, some of our teachers would take their clothes home and wash them. They'd bring a pair of clothes to change. We tried to go to uniforms – tried and tried. We finally got them donated, but after wearing a uniform for a week, they were filthy. We tried to get washers and dryers in our schools, so parents could wash and dry. We eventually got them donated, too.

Two of each were donated. I think they are still some place in the county because there was no place to safely put them. There had to be hookups in safe places. We had no where. But these were the extra things. When you're dealing with a child who is out of control, you have to be careful. Lots of them have emotional problems – stemming from home life – not from anything that you put your finger on, but maybe they've been at home without sleep because they heard people screaming in neighbor's building or brothers and sisters sleep 3 or 4 in same bed and the little one wet the bed. So, they all come to school smelling like pee. You're dealing with so many variables with these children and we took care of them. It was more of a family. I had to learn that this is not easy. I was in Title I schools a long time before I was a principal. Their children and families need it. Moms called me for transportation. A mom went into labor early and she had no one to call to get her to the hospital. I took her and she lost baby. They would call and say (mom) there won't be anyone home, will you make sure my children make it home safe? Calling me and telling me they were in jail and who to take kids to. I had to find the place of whoever was going to take the child. I was the only person available with teachers. In homes and in the projects. There were four projects: Attucks Court being the biggest, Morris, Sanchez Court and one more. The other one started with an M. My teachers were in their homes. It just saddened me so much to think there would be no more Dixon to take care of the issues and realities these students and their families faced every single day.

My third theme concerned how the community reacted to Dixon's closure. I expected this question would generate conversation about grassroots organizations,

voucher plans, and pros and cons of freedom of choice in public schools. Ms. Clark had a different perspective than Ms. James and Ms. Williams.

Ms. Clark stated,

> Everybody was for it. Everybody thought it was a good thing they were doing. And like I said, it was better education for a child, so why would anyone be against that? My daughter got to attend Montessori. She was getting foreign languages and stuff I never even thought about. And just the quality of the teachers, they don't teach like public school that I remember. I see the difference in my daughter from my education. Within her first year of public school versus her last six years of private school, there's a dramatic change in her. So everybody was for it. We got a lot of attention. We'd get a lot of people together to go to Tallahassee with lawyers to fight for the voucher case. And, at times, we were getting people off the street that were supportive to go with us on the bus. One time, we had over 75 people on the bus. I think a lot of people saw it the way I saw it. Maybe because we're in a low income area. But if I can get a better education for my child and maybe move her into something more important than what she see around here. Why wouldn't that be good?

Ms. Williams confessed her belief and commitment to the public schools. She claimed,

> If they had done it right, the charters and vouchers for failing schools, with people who had backgrounds in education, then it would have been ideal. But they opened it up to a political nightmare and politics made the decisions. Now, there are some families who don't support their children. Then send them to

school hungry. But, as a former educator, I do think we can do better without playing games of vouchers and charter schools. I think this is also the way the black community felt. When you're spending portions here and there, how can you have a strong system? When you're giving out here and there, it becomes like credit cards. You end up never paying them off because you're spread too thin. And that's the way we see spending money that could have been spent to improve Dixon.

Ms. James spoke to the politics of the decision. She suggested,

I think they saw the experience of Dixon as a political pawn. As teachers, we had to be all things to children. During the upheaval, we had a couple of teachers who wanted Dixon to be a day and night school. The families and teachers saw Dixon as a family and safe environment. Because when the children left school, the next day we had to start from scratch again. There were so many things happening in the home that the parents shared with us. This is a rarity, but there were homes without food and those were drug related most of the time. The rest of the families had food stamps that helped them to get by. I also thought vouchers were ridiculous and many of our families felt the same way because they trusted us. I think vouchers give the false impression to parents. They try to make the public think Dixon and the teachers are not good. So, they suggested private schools were the answer. At the time, private schools didn't have to and did not test for accountability like FCAT. How do you know whether they're doing well? We always said at Dixon, we welcome testing, but do it in this way: Test every kid in August and then test again in March/April and let's measure growth this way.

> Let's don't compare apples to oranges. Let's see what the kid has done. Of course, this never happened. Now, it's even more ridiculous, they want to make the bell curve impossible. They want the bottom 25% to rise to the top--impossible. You can only move so much. Now, schools are having to sweat to bring kids and scores up. This was the reality we knew as true at Dixon. Yes, they'll make improvements. But the politics of it all were unfair. This is the way I think the community saw the experience of Dixon.

My last theme focused on how the community at large is different because of Dixon. I expected the interviewees to reach a personal conclusion regarding the event. Ms. James stated,

> Now, a couple of years after the closing of Dixon, I would say only a handful of teachers wouldn't return to Dixon. They would have gone back in a heartbeat had it opened back up. They are unhappy in what they consider as elitist schools. They miss the kids from Dixon and the sense of community we had that was unique. You know, often Dixon is compared to Spencer Bibbs. But, Bibbs only had one lower income housing project in its community. Also, more Bibbs' families own their homes. More of them have a biological parent raising a child. There are more males involved in the raising of children. We were both poor schools, but we had 99.9% free lunch. Bibbs only had 80 something. At Dixon, you became a para-parent. We didn't then and still don't understand the closure of Dixon. It was a political move, I'm sure. Dixon had the smallest enrollment of Yniestra, Hallmark, and Weis as competitors. Of all schools, we had the lowest projected growth. The others would grow. Also, Dixon was a two story school

and the repairs would have cost a fortune. We didn't have a new library, but were slated to get one. We hadn't gotten the new library the other schools had gotten. So, without this facility, Dixon was easier to target. It was also because of the make up of our parents. We had fighting parents, but they knew it wasn't going to be a big fight that would matter. Hallmark would have been a big fight because of its history. Yniestra would have been even harder. Weis was newest, so Dixon was easier all the way around. Did they look at it for the children's' sake? No. It was just the easiest way to go.

Ms. Williams suggested,

When I look at what has been done in the past such as closing schools predominantly black and moving students out of their black neighborhoods, I see it as racist. What else could it be? When they go back and say they cannot keep a school open because of the expense of reconstruction, but then a new school replaces the one that is closed, I think this deeply affects the black community. It is an insult to intelligence. I feel vouchers are another way of the powers saying this is the good choice. It is an insult to educators and all the hard work of teachers at schools such as Dixon who are seen as not competent after the school is closed. All this has been coming about since integration. I'm glad it has happened, but I don't want to go back. However, teaching and teachers meant something in their community schools before all of these changes happened. The School Board in closing schools such as Dixon diminishes teacher competence. I think it represents a downhill movement in school board leadership.

Ms. Clark's position strongly opposed the other two participants. She was not directly involved with Dixon, but was an advocate for the voucher system. Ms. Clark believed,

> It's good in a way, because that's not an option anymore. Dixon's not an option anymore. So you don't have to worry about your child not getting a good education at Dixon. Everybody had an opinion. I think it was an exaggeration to say Dixon parents didn't take care of their children and the meals they received at school were their only meals. I mean you can go to the trailer park where the white people live at. And sometimes the project children are eating and living better than them so you just can't go around saying poor black children only eat at school. I just wonder are the people saying this stuff – have they even been to the people's home or are they just racist. I just know Dixon still had some of the same teachers as when I went to the school. They were old 10 or 15 years ago, so I can imagine how they are now. So the quality of the teacher does make a difference on how you get your education. And you have kids that are only used to a certain way of living. You know the project children are used to violence and single homes. So if you bring a teacher in that has no experience with that sort of living there is going to be a conflict because the experience isn't there. So if you teach these white, educated teachers on how our children grow up, it might help. But that didn't happen. We had a lot of support for the voucher program. Because we had governor Bush come out. We had a lot of people behind us and my daughter is well educated because of this.

Four themes were revealed through the responses to interview questions about

A. A. Dixon Elementary School. The first theme revealed that Dixon's closure represented what the interviewees perceived as the dismantling of the neighborhood's hub of events. Dixon served as the community's central space for educational and social activities. The second theme from the interviews about Dixon was conversation about how the community at large and the media misunderstood and misrepresented the real lived experiences of impoverished individuals and families. The third theme from the interviews addressed the ways that Dixon's closure captured local, state, and national attention due to its relationship and participation in the legislation of the state of Florida's educational voucher program. The final theme from interviews about A. A. Dixon Elementary School concerned realities of the African American educational experience as it related to teachers and students in Escambia County K-12 Elementary Schools.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight and describe the main points of my study, provide an overview of research procedures, generate themes from archival information, and organize themes from the interviews. In reiterating the purpose of my study, I addressed the relevance of the three events as they aligned with the four research questions that informed my study. Next, I presented the organizational processes and framework that guided my research procedures. Then, I described data analysis procedures of the archival information I collected for the three events. For this section, I coded the data and categorized information into themes that demonstrated common patterns. I supported the themes that were generated with examples from newspaper articles and Escambia County School Board meeting minutes. The final section of this

chapter was the data analysis of the 10 interviews that informed my study. The interviews were organized and presented per case. Again, I used narrative from the interviews to support the claims I made as the major learning points of my study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of my study was to describe the lived experiences of selected individuals who experienced events that occurred during three historical periods in the Pensacola, Florida educational community. These historical moments included the Augustus v. School Board of Escambia County court case, the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School, and the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. I used two sources of information to help describe the lived experiences of individuals during the three historical moments. The interviews were the main sources of information and the documents helped me understand the context of each time period. I also used the documents to guide the interviews. The research questions for my study were as follows:

1. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the Augustus Case?
2. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing and reopening of Brown Barge Schools?
3. How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School?

4. How did individuals' lived experiences of the Augustus Case compare and contrast to those of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon Schools?

Summary of Research Questions

Research Question 1

My first research question addressed how individuals described lived experiences with the Augustus Case. I used archival information and the interviews of three individuals who experienced the case to organize commonalities and differences among the historical information and the narratives of the interviewees. The major similarity for this question between the sources of information was the belief that the Augustus Case represented the possibility of educational equality for African Americans in the Pensacola educational school system. There was a common theme in their belief that the Augustus Case opened the potential for African American students to have the chance for integrated schools that provided better curricula, improvements in physical classroom buildings, and more educational resources made available to African American students. The newspaper articles and school board meeting minutes on the Augustus Case opened conversation in Pensacola about the rights of African American students to attend school in an integrated school system. The Augustus Case was guided by the Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas Case, the landmark national desegregation case. Newspaper articles and the Escambia County School Board meeting minutes opened the eyes and minds of local residents to the desire by African Americans to experience equality in educational systems in their community. A second commonality between the narratives of the interviewees and archival information for the Augustus Case was a

desire for integration. One of the interviewees stated he believed integration was important in his community because there was a need for standardization of curricula among predominantly white and African American schools. Yet, he also felt racial segregation was natural in his statement that “people of like kind naturally stick together.” The two other interviewees addressed the length of time the Augustus Case remained in the court systems and discussed the various impediments to its implementation that occurred with each court ruling. Similarly, the archival information described the complications associated with decisions made at the local and state levels that impeded integration. One example of a barrier to integration was recorded in the documents reviewed. The landmark desegregation case mandated schools must have been integrated or be in the process of integrating. The problem with this statement, as related to the Augustus Case, was the length of time for completing integration was not defined. As a result, the case was legally allowed to linger in the courts because of the implementation of the Freedom of Choice Plan. Initially, Judge Arnow mandated that Escambia County schools would be allowed 20 days to formulate a plan for racially balanced schools. Consequently, The Escambia County School Board implemented The Freedom of Choice Plan. In this plan, parents of students who attended schools in which they were the racial majority were allowed to transition their children to schools in which they were minority. The problem with this plan in Escambia County was that no white students opted to transition to African American schools. In the end, the court system ruled that as long as schools were in the process of developing plans for integration, they could not be punished or cited for being in violation of compliance. So, although the Judge Arnow claimed that the county was practicing *token integration*, the laws were not

clearly defined in ways that allowed forward movement toward integration. Consequently, interviewees addressed impediments to integration and a general suspicion for the obtainment of educational equality as a real possibility.

In terms of an unexpected theme generated from research question one, I learned the ways Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, KS served as a catalyst for Charles Augustus to file on behalf of integration for his child and 10 other neighborhood children. Yet, the case also served to impede progress since the particulars of the national landmark case reached a decision more broad than the racial integration of American Schools. Through the narratives of the interviewees, the Augustus Case opened conversation about the need for Escambia County to integrate schools 6 years after a national court case had defined the right of African American students to attend K-12 schools without a racial divide. The interviewees spoke about the Augustus Case in ways that demonstrated they understood the case as the method for making Escambia County schools comply with the national law. They were not able to talk about the details or the major events of the Augustus Case. However, through information from archival records, I learned how the Augustus Case differed from the Brown vs. Board of Education Case. The initial suit in Escambia County addressed two educational issues: (a) racial balance of teachers and staff in schools, and (b) balance of African American and white students in Escambia County public schools. The judge for the Augustus Case stated the Brown vs. Board of Education case did not address or mandate assignment of teachers in terms of racial balance.

The Augustus Case has been positioned as Escambia County's version of Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, KS. Although it was clear in narratives of the

interviewees as well as archival information that the national case certainly motivated Charles Augustus to file suit on behalf of 11 African American children in his community, the Augustus Case and the Brown vs. Board of Education case were different in terms of particular requests. As a result, the decision making bodies for the Augustus Case were not able to use Brown vs. Board of Education because this case had no model implementation strategy for integration. In regard to the particular Augustus Case decision, as long as The Escambia County School Board appeared to be formulating plans for integration, the plaintiffs were unable to affect the changes they desired in the school systems. Consequently, the Augustus Case continued to go through various appeals until a different plan was presented in 1967 that Judge Arnow could act on to mandate integration.

Research Question 2

My second research question addressed how individuals described lived experiences with the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School. In order to answer this question, I used the interviews of four individuals who experienced the case to organize commonalities and differences to build understanding. I selected four instead of three individuals for this educational event since I was not able to locate archival information for the case. As a result, the answer to this research question was organized exclusively from interview information. The guiding theme to answering the question of how individuals described Brown Barge was the description of ways it served as a community school. Without any interaction among the interviewees during my study, each of them used the word community school

specifically. Within this description, the interviewees defined community school as a place where parents, teachers, administrators, and students worked together to provide a quality education for the students enrolled at Brown Barge. They uniformly described the limited access they possessed in getting current textbooks, decent physical education equipment, and improvements to the physical school building. They continuously referred to Brown Barge as a community school. In addition to community school being a term that described the community members working together to provide quality education for students, the interviewees also addressed the negative stereotypes about African American students. Once schools integrated, they felt many White teachers failed to understand how to educate African American students. They claimed the practices of a community school like Brown Barge worked with African American children to see them reach maximum success in school.

A third commonality of interviewees who experienced Brown Barge was a discussion of the hazardous plant in the community. Each interviewee acknowledged the consequences of the plant in the neighborhood of the school with descriptions of orange dust on desks and windows covered with thick smut as well as descriptions of haze that filled the air on some days. The interviewees also believed, even prior to the Rosewood Case, that the plant must have been hazardous at some level to their health. However, they overlooked the potential harmfulness because of the employment opportunities it provided to African American residents.

Through the narratives of the four individuals who lived the Brown Barge educational event, I was surprised by two findings. The first surprise was not being able to locate any archival information for Brown Barge Elementary School. Although I feel

my attempt to locate the information was thorough, I still wonder if there is a person or place where the information is stored. Through the narratives of the interviewees, I sensed Brown Barge Elementary School was an important part of history for the African American educational community. I was surprised to find there is not at least one public record readily accessible in archival information of the history of the school. The second surprise was hearing the advantages of the African American schools, yet all four interviewees supported integration. Through their descriptions of living the experience of Brown Barge Elementary School, it was evident the school was an important part of their lives in comprehensive ways. They discussed mentors, the strong networks they made that have lasted across their lives, and the quality of education they received from the school. Yet, they all supported integration despite statements made by them that addressed the concerns they possessed for the safety and educational quality of the children as a result of integration. All of the interviewees supported the value of desegregation and placed hope in the possibility of the process providing educational equality and freedom.

Through interviews with four individuals who lived the Brown Barge experience, I learned about the value of a community school for African Americans in Pensacola, Florida. I also learned the ways the creosote plant in the community both harmed and sustained the residents who lived the reality of that experience on a daily basis.

Research Question 3

My third research question addressed how individuals described lived experiences with the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. I used archival

information and the interviews of three individuals who experienced the case to organize commonalities and differences between the historical information and the narratives of the interviewees. In organizing similarities across the interviewees' perspectives, it was important to address the differences in beliefs held by the three individuals. Ms. James and Ms. Williams agreed in nearly all accounts of their answers to the questions I asked. Ms. Clark, alternately, espoused beliefs that did not align with the beliefs of Ms. James and Ms. Williams. It was important to begin this conversation by stating A. A. Dixon was closed during the same time that Florida initiated the voucher program in the state. Both Ms. James and Ms. Williams opposed this program, while Ms. Clark was a supporter of the choice plan for students. The implementation of this program affected the way differences in the perspectives of the three interviewees were described. As a result, I have organized similar themes based on the perspectives of Ms. James and Ms. Williams. As I shared these themes, I have also included Ms. Clark's contradicting perspective.

The first theme from interviews with the three individuals who experienced the closing of A. A. Dixon was the belief that the school was being targeted because it was African American and, as a result, the pawn of the state and local political agendas at the time. In this discussion, Ms. James and Ms. Williams addressed ways A. A. Dixon had a harder challenge to become a charter school and therefore, needed more time to complete the application. Within this conversation, the two interviewees denounced the voucher program and described how A. A. Dixon was vulnerable to closure since many of the students' parents were poor, uneducated, and not socially or politically involved in educational decisions. Ms. Clark, on the other hand, supported the closure of A. A.

Dixon Elementary School and supported the implementation of the voucher plan. At the outset, it appeared the three interviewees did not share commonalities about the school being the political pawn of the local and state decision-making bodies. However, it was important to note that although Ms. Clark supported the voucher plan, she also stated in answering a different question that many times decision makers did not accurately understand the lived experiences of the impoverished. She also stated that often times white teachers did not understand or desire to understand ways of reaching poor, African American students in effective ways. I believe the three interviewees described a similar theme of politics affecting decision making, although their frameworks for making personal points were driven by differing standpoints.

As it connected to the interviews, the archival information for the case of A. A. Dixon supported the ideas espoused by the interviewees that the elementary school was being closed due to its vulnerability as an African American school in an impoverished neighborhood. The Escambia County School Board meeting minutes and the interviewees described how students who relied on transportation by foot would be transported to other schools by bus. In addition, the school board meeting minutes recorded several comments made by supporters of A. A. Dixon that it was an injustice for the administrators to not have been provided with what some considered a fair application timeline to transition to charter school status.

A second theme from the interviews and archival information about A. A. Dixon Elementary School was the representation of Dixon as a neighborhood community center of educational and social significance. Again for this theme, the interviews of Ms. James and Ms. Williams aligned to comments in the archival information; however, the

perspective of Ms. Clark differed from the other two interviewees. Ms. James addressed poverty as it affected the closure of the school. She and Ms. Williams described the school as a community hub that supported their surrounding community. The transition of students to other schools was disruptive to the families' day-to-day experiences. Ms. Williams also discussed the ways Dixon benefited the African American community. She compared the Dixon closure to the Brown Barge Elementary School closure. She stated Dixon and Brown Barge were schools in need of funds to renovate the facilities to compete with other schools. She addressed the reality of shoe string budgets in African American schools. Ms. Clark also spoke of students living in an impoverished neighborhood and having educational needs not being met. She believed in providing children an educational opportunity that offered a better quality of education that she thought the voucher program offered.

Ms. James and Ms. Williams also spoke about voucher programs and the consequences it had for a school like Dixon that served as a community center. They believed that when minimal funds were stretched to serve outside schools, there was not an opportunity to build stronger schools with highest needs. Ms. James addressed the daily realities of being a principal in a school embedded in an impoverished neighborhood. She spoke about fighting for washing machines, buying clothing for students, and serving as a para-parent. Yet, both spoke to the need to believe in the value of the community Dixon served despite their extra needs. Ms. Clark also discussed this community need and her own educational experience at A. A. Dixon. However, she believed she was forced to buy into education outside of the neighborhood community so her daughter would have the chance to be educated outside of poverty. She addressed the

way decision makers saw the Dixon community as populated by people who do not eat regularly and do not care about values such as educational empowerment. In a newspaper article that addressed the geography of Dixon, the writer claimed the community members would be less vocal in the closure of Dixon than if Semmes or Weis were closed. A. A. Dixon was compared with Weis, Hallmark, and Bibbs when the school board considered the closure of one of the schools in a common geographical area. The article claimed Weis was exempted due to its history of being the newest school with technology and building codes that met standards. Hallmark was labeled the school with the most history to the Pensacola community. The school was exempted due to its historical presence and the thought that families would fight vehemently and loudly for its continuation. The article claimed that Spencer Bibbs was most comparable with Dixon. Both were labeled inner city schools with poverty related issues. Both Dixon and Spencer Bibbs were the first two voucher schools in the State of Florida. However, Bibbs' parents owned more homes and had more families with two parents in the home than did Dixon's. Consequently, Bibbs was seen as more equipped with families who would fight for the continuation of the school.

Since A. A. Dixon was the most recent educational event of my study, I was at least aware of most of the arguments for its continuation or its closure. As a result, the interview answers as well as archival information represented most of the points of view that were made public in the Pensacola community during that time. I was not surprised by themes generated from the two sources of information. The archival information and interviews about A. A. Dixon Elementary School suggested that Dixon was closed for

political reasons that were not necessarily supported by the educational and African American communities.

Research Question 4

My fourth research question addressed how individuals described lived experiences with the Augustus Case in comparison with experiences of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon schools. I used archival information and the interviews of the individuals who experienced the cases to organize commonalities and differences between the historical information and the narratives of the interviewees.

The first theme across the four educational events is the participants' comments that reflected race issues. Throughout the Augustus Case, it was evident through interviews and archival information that race was at the forefront of the event. Charles Augustus was concerned with equality of education for African American children attending integrated schools in Escambia County. Brown Barge and Dixon interviewees also described similar themes of their race being at the forefront of the closing of two important African American community schools. For the Brown Barge case, the four interviewees stated the school was closed because at one time it had been a segregated, African American school. In addition, they also spoke to its significance as a community school in that it provided quality education for all African American students. They stated they believed once integration occurred, the unique care for students who once attended Brown Barge was lost in integrated schools. For Dixon, the interviewees also spoke to the school's closure by suggesting that both race and social class influenced the closing. Amidst its closure during the implementation of the voucher program, the

interviewees also spoke of Dixon as the pawn of local and state politics. They described it as an African American school whose fate was being determined by privileged members of local and state level policy makers.

The second theme that was revealed across experiences of the three cases was the struggle African American community members experienced to gain justice for their community schools and their rights for their children to attend integrated schools. In terms of the Augustus Case, the interviewees claimed the case was born out of desire for justice in a community 20 years after Brown vs. Board of Education. For Brown Barge, the interviewees described a struggle between valuing a community school, but also supporting integration for the common good of providing African American children the same educational opportunities as other students. In reference to Dixon, the individuals interviewed addressed the full reality of a school that the Dixon principal, teachers, and many of the children's parents wanted to survive. This school's demise also broke up a community center that supported children and their families living in poverty

Recommendations for Future Research

Transformations to education for African Americans in the Pensacola educational community began to occur in 1961 when Charles Augustus filed for 11 children to be able to attend a school in their own neighborhood community. Through archival information and interviews with three individuals who experienced this educational event, I learned the Augustus Case was inspired by the Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, KS. However, I also learned the Augustus Case differed from the Brown vs. Board case in that the Augustus filing was twofold: (a) balanced ratio of teachers in

schools, and (b) equal access to schools in one's own neighborhood. The Brown case did not address teacher student ratios at all. As far as integration, the national case mandated that as long as school counties were in the process of developing an integration plan, they could not be held liable for noncompliance. The Brown vs. Board of Education did not provide a plan for integrating students. In Escambia County, I learned about the Freedom of Choice plan and various other impediments to complete integration. In the end, the road to integration was long and complicated in Escambia County. In terms of recommendations for further research, it is suggested that more research be conducted about how Pensacola compared with other school districts when integrating schools after the Brown vs. Board decision. This information would provide a frame of reference for how the Augustus Case compared with the rest of the State of Florida or with the nation in terms of struggles African Americans experienced when fighting for educational equality.

As it relates to the Brown Barge part of my study, I learned about this educational event exclusively through the interviews of four individuals who experienced the event. In terms of future research, it would be critical to access archival information to better understand how individuals' lived experiences compare and contrast with recorded history.

In addressing recommendations for further research for A. A. Dixon Elementary School, I learned the school was closed amidst the implementation of the State of Florida voucher program. As a result, the school's closing was largely viewed as a pawn of local and state politics. In addition, I learned about ways educators and activists for A. A. Dixon described and practiced education in an impoverished community. For future

research, it would be important to hear accounts from individuals on how the school's closure has affected the parents and children living in the community. Dixon was described as the community's center and possessed social and educational significance beyond the 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. school day. It would be valuable to describe how the community is different after the closure. In addition, it would be educational to study the children and families that chose voucher options or chose to send their child to a higher performing school in the county.

Limitations

Given this study spans 30 years, I only interviewed 10 individuals. Although the participants' stories are powerful and well interconnected with each other, they surely cannot serve as representative of the reality of all Pensacola residents who experienced one of the three events of my study. In alignment with the matrix of domination, there is a need to understand that due to the variations of lived experiences, there is no uniform version of truth as it relates to desegregation and the African American experience of public education in Pensacola, Florida. In addition, I believe more reflective information could be retrieved by asking participants to communicate with each other during an interview. Individual interviews did not allow for individuals to challenge perspectives and debate issues.

Another limitation of this study was access to reinterview individuals a third time. In reflecting upon and writing truthful stories, there was a need to explore my themes for accuracy and to fill in the gaps that the other interviews did not cover.

A third limitation of my study was the lack of information for Brown Barge. I relied exclusively on interviews for analyzing information. Although the interviews provided new insights, there was no archival information to compare their responses.

A final limitation of my study was the way questions were organized and asked. Although I certainly was provided with valuable information, I was not able to invoke answers that specifically aligned with the three theories or opened conversations on ways the participants experienced race and/or social discrimination. I always felt as though I was reaching for answers that did not naturally reveal themselves. The interviews and archival information, therefore, did not provide enough information for me to comfortably build on my conceptual framework. I hoped to use the information to help me blend the three components of my conceptual framework (matrix of domination, relations of ruling, and identity politics) to explain the 30 years of educational history using the three cases as significant events. The interviewees had forgotten or never knew the details of the court case and the transformation of Brown Barge. This lack of knowledge in and of itself is an important finding for this particular group of participants who had relationships in some way with people involved in each case.

However, an important theoretical component consistently appeared in my study. Through interviews with interviewees from Brown Barge in comparison with interviewees from A. A. Dixon Elementary School, I discovered that race remains in the forefront of school closings. Brown Barge Elementary School existed during segregation. The school board voted to close Brown Barge, an African American school. In 2003, the school board voted to close A. A. Dixon, which was considered an integrated school. However, A. A. Dixon’s students were almost all African American.

Although the Augustus Case forced desegregation, years after this decision a purportedly integrated school was closed in a manor similar to the closing at an African American elementary school prior to integration.

Summary

I studied the lived experiences of selected individuals who experienced one of the three historical time periods, Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board, the transformation of Brown Barge, or the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School. My study revealed the long and difficult road the color of skin and the social status of an individual had on building a road for equality of education in Escambia County, Florida. The data revealed that token integration in the Pensacola community was allowed to exist as compliance to integration for seven years. Through the interviews with the three individuals who spoke about this experience, I heard stories about how African Americans struggled during the era of Civil Rights and during a time of significant changes in educational opportunities for minorities. They continued to fight for civil rights issues in the schools so their children would have access to equal education. However, the three participants could not speak directly to the events of the Augustus Case or the Class Action that was spawned by the Augustus Case.

Both Brown Barge Elementary School and A. A. Dixon Elementary School were African American community schools. Brown Barge interviewees described the school as a true community school, taught by, cared for, and valued by residents who lived in the school neighborhood. In addition, I had great difficulty in accessing archival information that must exist about the school's history. This difficulty in accessing

information about Brown Barge Elementary School demonstrates that little value is placed on preserving the history of African American schools. People associated with Brown Barge have very fond memories of the school, yet their memories seem to be all that exist of the school's history. Unfortunately, most of what they know or do not know is forgotten.

Searching for historical information related to the Dixon experience was easy. There were articles available about the school at local, state, and national levels. Thirty years after integration, we are still able to evidence injustices and oppression in schools that enroll predominantly African American students. In addition, with a greater divide between *haves* and *have-nots,* the closing of Dixon was certainly about race embedded in an impoverished neighborhood.

In examining the three events, I studied integration in two Escambia County schools since the Augustus Case. In the Augustus Case, the interviewees and archival information revealed conversations of African American versus white differences in access and opportunity. The consequence of Brown Barge's closure and then transition into a magnet school leads one to wonder how much its existence as an African American school in its later years embedded in poverty contributed to its closure. The interviewees labeled its fate being due to its racial population. From Dixon, there is a new and different conversation of race. The conversation was shaped around the voucher program, the use of politics by decision makers to close the school, and the struggles of educating a community living in poverty. This study of the three educational events showed how our communities of long ago and today continue to struggle with building effective integrated school systems that work for all children.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Question One: How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the Augustus Case?

- What are some personal memories you possess about the time period when you first heard of the Augustus Case?
- How did your thoughts change over the 16 years of multiple appeals of the Augustus Case?
- What are examples of conversations within your family that you remember about the Augustus Case?
- What are examples of conversations you remember from work or other social spaces about the Augustus Case?
- How has the Pensacola community been affected by the Augustus Case?

Question Two: How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing and reopening of Brown Barge Middle School?

- Since I am not able to find any archival information about Brown Barge Elementary School, please share all details you remember of its history in Pensacola.
- What are some personal memories you possess of working at or being a student at Brown Barge Elementary School?
- How was your family involved in Brown Barge Elementary School?

- How do you think people in the Pensacola community viewed Brown Barge Elementary School?
- How has the Pensacola community been affected by the transformation of Brown Barge Elementary School to Brown Barge Magnet Middle School?
- What do you remember about the chemical plant that was in the same neighborhood as Brown Barge Elementary School?

Question Three: How did selected individuals describe their lived experiences with the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School?

- What are some personal memories you possess about the time period when you first heard of the Dixon's possibility of closing?
- Did you participate in trying to keep Dixon from closure?
- What are examples of conversations within your family that you remember about the closing of Dixon?
- What are examples of conversations you remember from work or other social spaces about the closing of Dixon?
- How has the Pensacola community been affected by the closing of Dixon?
- Please address your perspective about the Florida Voucher Program as it relates or does not relate to the closing of Dixon.

Question Four: How did individuals' lived experiences of the Augustus Case compare and contrast to those of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon schools?

- Consider ways the closing of Brown Barge and Dixon build conversation about how integration is an ongoing process in Escambia County Schools.

- Ask interviewees with multiple roles and long history as residents of Pensacola community to comment on the ways Dixon's closure could possibly be compared to Brown Barge's closing.
- Ask interviewees to describe how they believe the Augustus Case can be seen through the closing of Brown Barge Elementary School and A. A. Dixon Elementary School.
- Ask interviewees to comment on the fact that both Brown Barge Elementary School and A. A. Dixon Elementary Schools were predominantly African American schools selected for closure.
- Do interviewees believe there is a common reason the African American schools were selected for closure?
- How do interviewees believe integration has played out in Escambia County schools since the beginning of the Augustus Case?

Appendix B

Consent Form

Participant Informed Consent Form

Title of Research:

A Case Study Exploration of the History and Transformation of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon Schools following Augustus versus Escambia County School Board.

I. Federal and university regulations require us to obtain signed consent for participation in research involving human participants. After reading the statements in section I through IV below, please indicate your consent by signing and dating this form.

State of **Procedure:**
Thank you for you interest in this research *project* being conducted by Gayle Ann Alexandra Juneau, a doctoral student at The University of West Florida. The introductory letter enclosed with this consent form provides an overview of the research project. Research will require that the researcher select and survey residents of Escambia County who have participated in experience of Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board, Brown Barge Elementary or Magnet School, and/or A. A. Dixon Elementary School. Escambia County school board minutes and archival newspaper records will always be used as data for analysis.

I understand that:

(1) Participants voluntarily participate in this research study that may use surveys, interviews, and document analysis methodologies to generate data.
(2) The researcher will share study results with related schools and community residents if requested.
(3) At no time will the name of a participant be referenced in the study results and/or reports.
(4) I may discontinue participation in this study at any time without penalty or repercussions.

IL Potential Risks of the Study:
(1) There are no foreseeable risks involved with this study.

III. Potential Benefits of the Study:
(1) Data obtained from this study may provide history of African-American education struggles during and since Augustus versus Escambia County School Board.
(2) Participants may be more aware of their own voices and gains in educational movements for positive change in Escambia County

IV. Statement of Consent:
I certify that I have read and fully understand the Statement of Procedure given above and agree to participate in the research described therein. Permission is given voluntarily and without coercion or undue influence. It is understood I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which it may otherwise be entitled. I will be provided a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Name (Please Print)

Participant's Signature (Please Print)

Date

Appendix C

Approval From the Institutional Review Board at The University of West Florida

University of West Florida

Research and Graduate Studies
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514-5750

FILE COPY

May 24, 2005

Ms. Gayle Ann Alexandra Juneau
1519 E. Lloyd Street
Pensacola, FL 32503

Dear Ms. Juneau:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Research Participant Protection has completed its review of your proposal titled "A Case Study Exploration of the History and Transformation of Brown Barge and A. A. Dixon Schools Following Augustus vs. Escambia County School Board" as it relates to the protection of human participants used in research, and has granted approval for you to proceed with your study. As a research investigator, please be aware of the following:

- You acknowledge and accept your responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research participants and for complying with all parts of 45 CFR Part 46, the UWF IRB Policy and Procedures, and the decisions of the IRB. You may view these documents on the Office of Research web page at http://www.research.uwf.edu. You acknowledge completion of the IRB ethical training requirements for researchers as attested in the IRB application.

- You will ensure that legally effective informed consent is obtained and documented. If written consent is required, the consent form must be signed by the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative. A copy is to be given to the person signing the form and a copy kept for your file.

- You will promptly report any proposed changes in previously approved human participant research activities to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. The proposed changes will not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participants.

- **You are responsible for reporting progress of approved research to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at the end of the project period. Approval for this project is valid for one year. If the data phase of your project continues beyond one year, you must request a renewal by the IRB before approval of the first year lapses. Project Directors of research requiring full committee review should notify the IRB when data collection is completed.**

Phone 850.474.2824/2825 Fax 850.474.2082
Web research.uwf.edu

- You will immediately report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to human participants.

Good luck in your research endeavors. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at 857-6378.

Sincerely,

Karen Rasmussen

Dr. Karen Rasmussen, Chair
IRB for Human Research
Participant Protection

Ms. Sandra VanderHeyden
Director of Sponsored Research

cc: Ms. Lucretia Burnette
Dr. Joseph Peters

Appendix D

Interview Transcriptions

Thomas Baker

Juneau: Please tell me about your relationship with Brown Barge Elementary School.

Interviewee: My father was the first principal. I didn't go to school there. My father was principal around 1955. What really strikes me is the summer recreation school. My brothers and sisters and I went to St. Joseph Catholic School. But, the county had a recreation program. It had arts and crafts and field trips.

Juneau: Do you have any memories of the closing of Brown Barge Elementary School?

Interviewee: My father passed in 1969. We had left Pensacola, but came back at that time. So, at the time of the closing, I was teaching at Ferry Pass. Other than knowing it was going to close, I didn't have any knowledge or contact.

Juneau: In your opinion, do you think the community considered the school's closing just or unjust?

Interviewee: That is a hard question. I would imagine the people in that area thought it was injust. But at that time, it had changed. Everything had changed with integration. It wasn't a neighborhood school anymore. I would say it was because of the plant across the street. I remembered the plant and the orange smoke that would choke you some days if you went outside to play.

Juneau: Was Brown Barge Elementary an inner-city school?

Interviewee: I couldn't tell you. At that time, I don't even know the areas the kids came from. The area was poor, though. The area was low income. However, many professionals came from there like Joe Banks and Lauren Lovely. It was a poor area, but good people were born and educated there. My father liked the school because it was a community school. It was because he loved the kids out there. I can remember my dad working on Saturdays. I can remember, too, the black versus white system. Although they said it was separate but equal, there was no way it was equal with facilities in white areas. He loved the community feeling anyway, though. Because it was poor, everyone worked together to educate the children.

Juneau: Do you think integration was the end of the community school for Brown Barge?

Interviewee: Yes, because you know, you had the busing. Kids were bused out of the neighborhood. I am not going to say it was a bad thing, the system we were under was the bad thing. It was separate and unequal. Integration was bound to come. Integration destroyed the cohesiveness of the neighborhood. But you still can't say it was a bad thing. When integration

came about, somebody had to move. Some white kids had to move, too. It opened eyes to what needed to be done. Brown Barge provided opportunity to go on to better things because teachers cared and pushed all kids. I consider the importance was it was a forgotten school. The building, the plant across the street, the parking lot was not paved…etc. Then when it was reopened, there was suddenly money put into the school. I hated to see the school close, though. My father put so much heart and work into his school.

Ben Roberts

Juneau: Please tell me about yourself and your relationship to the Augustus Case.
Interviewee: I'm participant 1 and I live at 1026 E. Strong Street, Pensacola, Florida. I served in the school system approximately 34 years in Escambia County as both principal and teacher. I retired in 1980. I've been retired for approximately 25 years. It is nice. I'm still moving around and staying as active as much as I can. I have refused, however, to get back in the education system.

Juneau: What is your reason for your last statement about not being involved in schools any longer?
Interviewee: The reason is because of a letdown in the behavior of the students. Of course, they are not responsible in some ways for what is happening. It is the adults who have allowed discipline to go on without control. Everybody seems to be going with the flow and because of that, I refuse to take part again.

Juneau: What do you remember about the Augustus Case?
Interviewee: I remember distinctly that Dr. Augustus lived on 12th Avenue near the 2600 or 2700 block. He was located where the old A & P grocery store was located. At the present time, it is a home for children because the old grocery store was demolished. I imagine it's operated by the county, but I don't know the status. Because he lived in that vicinity and the school was approximately 2 blocks from his house, he decided it was unfair for his child and children to have to go somewhere else when they could have attended the school nearest to them. So he filed suit against the county for not allowing his children to attend there.

Juneau: Were you hearing reports of the Brown Case at the time? Or do you feel the case filing was independent?
Interviewee: I really wasn't keeping up with Brown, so I can't answer for sure.

Juneau: How did you feel about the Augustus Case at a personal level?
Interviewee: Personally, segregation did not upset me because it had been the way of live ever since I was in the world where there is separation between

groups. There was separation in everything we were involved in, so it was a way of life. I had learned to go with the flow. I didn't get upset about it. I didn't go picketing and such. I had to live, so there was no reason in upsetting myself.

Juneau: When integration happened many years after the initial filing, how did you feel?

Interviewee: Naturally, I was elated when he came out successful. I think it was normal to feel elated about that big an accomplishment. So as things go right now, things are a bit better and people think somewhat different. It relieved a lot of pressure on your mind and people began to feel they could move up in life. But I do want you to know this, regardless of what happened before and now, it will never come a time, not in my lifetime, when things will be to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. There will always be a certain amount of friction between people. Not just in the U.S., but people period. Regardless of what you do and think, the mind has been set for generations and not just in the present, but also in biblical times. I mean there has always been a tendency to separate between people. If you have never take time to read the Bible, basically there were two groups of people and the same two groups are still fighting in present times. I'm talking about the Jews and Israelites.

Juneau: There is conversation about resegregation despite the fact that integration occurred 20 years ago. What is your perspective?

Interviewee: I think it's a natural phenomenon from the standpoint according to social theory years ago. It stated people of like kind tend to cling together and it has just followed the same generational trend. I don't think they are doing it out of malice or dislike for somebody. But when you go to an open concert or public affair and get there and find a mixture of races, the first person you look for is a white person – somebody you can relate to. And we tend to – a theory called gregariousness – to cling with like kinds.

Juneau: Do you think the theory you just described can be related to education and integration?

Interviewee: I can't separate it. It's a natural thing. You can attempt to separate, but you feel more comfortable. You feel at ease. You got somebody to relate to. It's not that you don't want to be with the other people, unless you happen to know someone in another group. That is a different thing. But if you just go into a total strange group and the first thing you do is stand and look, you want to spot somebody who looks like you. And you try to move toward that person and when you get close and they are friendly to you, you feel at ease. It's not that you dislike the other persons, naturally, we deal with people we feel we have something in common with. So I don't think resegregation is a willful thing. They're pulling back toward groups in sameness. It is not malice; it is comfort. I don't think anybody has a plan to get us back into this separation; we're doing it on our own.

In freedom of integration, we choose to re-identify with our own because it is more comfortable.

Juneau: How was the Augustus Case perceived by the African American community?

Interviewee: Well, this idea of separate but equal was based on the fact we are all human beings and even though some argue and still argue and really demanded that groups stay apart and fought for generations. They use instances in the Bible to say people should not mix. They should stay separate. So people used it to get the point over about the mixture of races and how it shouldn't happen. They preached about it. What I'm saying is you shouldn't let your mind get so tied up on all this mixing and that sort of thing. It will make you crazy. You should try to keep your mind open to accept things as they are. I'm not saying you go around and keep folks doing wrong, but you try to know you can't change it. There is no point in getting so upset you can't sleep and night. You'll be dead and gone and it will still be happening. For example, as black people, we now call ourselves African Americans. In 10 years or so, we'll change designation again to something else because there is a huge mixture within races now. I'm not giving a lecture on history, but for generations we were brought here from Africa. A lot of people survived and many died and never reached the shores. After we got here and our forefathers went to plantations, they took most desirable females and put them in a compound away from us. The ones they liked the most were educated and went to school. It isn't recorded, but it is history. We know this and the strange thing is that white males want to keep black males from white females. Young people have discovered their roots and a few more are willing to accept truth.

Juneau: Is this a positive statement about young people?

Interviewee: It's freedom in knowledge. In the beginning, it was strange to see mixed couples in the street anywhere. Then, there were regulations about marriage. Now, it is not strange, it is a way of life. You might not like it, but what differences does it make. Blacks and whites have always been mixed. Masters had wives and concubines. It was strange white and black colored babies. Even now, I can't be friends with all black folks. There is segregation between us as a group. I never could get along with them and I'm not saying I was trying to not get along with everybody. We were black and living in a predominantly black neighborhood. And when I moved here, I wouldn't say I was seeking to move among white people. We lived 4 blocks down on corner of Desoto and Haynes. The next street was the railroad track and that was all black. We moved here because I-110 was being built and it would displace us. The Department of Transportation gave us a list of houses and this house I live in now was not vacant, but the lad had it for sale. The lady was the wife of the grocer on Jordan and Lee Street. When I was little, I used to pass by this house

with white people in their white school. This (pointing across the street from his home) was Cook. The moved it out and rebuilt a new school after integration. Now it's more or less a liberal arts school. This school, instead, is for kids in trouble. I don't even know the name. I know they play basketball most of the day. So, in summary, we accidentally moved to a white neighborhood when we were displaced. We wound up here. It was somewhere to stay regardless of integration. I paid cash for it and have been here since 1975.

Juneau: Do you have any closing thoughts about the Augustus Case?

Interviewee: I want to tell you regardless of what is being said, there are a lot of people who still feel they are being pushed back into stereotypical situations. I don't buy this 100%. We asked for a lot of things. We didn't realize once we got it, we really didn't want it. As African Americans, we made blunders and are still making some. We were upset because we thought you all were getting the better education, so we asked for more. We had situations where we put in requisitions at the end of the year for materials the next year and they ended up in white schools. I was in science and many of my request materials ended up at Pensacola High Schools. They can't say it wasn't ordered, but it surely wasn't given to me. We found this out after integration. We'd get old books that were turned in by white schools. The new books went to Pensacola High School and the other white schools. It was the decisions of the School Board. In spite of that, we turned out some mighty good students – with our without the good equipment. Kids are kids and they either give a damn or don't about education. It's not about being white or black.

Martha Waters

Juneau: What do you remember about Brown Barge Elementary School?

Interviewee: The most memorable thing I remember is how close the teachers and students were. It was a public school, but more like a community school because families were very involved with teachers and the education. It was generations of families or communities like the older child would attend then the siblings on down. And back in those times, it was not two children to a family. It was 5 or more children in most cases. There were five children in my family; 3 girls and 2 boys.

Juneau: What was your relationship to Brown Barge?

Interviewee: All of my brothers and sisters and I attended Brown Barge. My teachers knew me and my family very well and they cared about us. They had no problem contacting our parents for discipline.

Juneau: What do you remember about the closure of Brown Barge?

Interviewee: I don't actually remember the reason it closed. The class I graduated with was the first graduating class from Brown Barge. We went from 7th grade to Washington Junior High School and then to Washington Senior High School.

Juneau: My paper looks at justice versus injustice of Brown Barge's closing. How do you think the community would look at this issue through this standpoint?

Interviewee: I would have to think more about that. I am sure the community was not happy since the school was in the neighborhood and it was a place they were used to for generations. There was also the problem with transportation to another place to attend school. The children were transferred to O. J. Semmes Elementary School. It was the integrated school. Semmes was about 4 miles away and we were all used to walking to Brown Barge.

Juneau: You stated Brown Barge was a community school. What was the role of the teachers from your perspective?

Interviewee: As I said, all teachers knew all parents so that made interaction important and frequent. It wasn't a big deal for a teacher to come to your home and meet with your parents.

Juneau: How did you feel about Brown Barge closing at a personal level?

Interviewee: You know, I'm torn because I think we had it good. I would not trade that experience for anything in the world. I think we had some very caring teachers back then and they made sure our education was solid. But integration was needed to make the educational experience more equal between African American and white schools. I'm sure, though, I would not have had the personal attention and also the relationship with a segregated school. I think we got much more from our teachers than we would have in an integrated setting. You know, it was hard. We were used to going to school with people of our race. It was intimidating back then because of all the racial barriers and the violence that was happening.

Juneau: What do you remember about the creosote plant in the Brown Barge neighborhood?

Interviewee: I remember it well. Of course, as children, we didn't realize it was a health hazard. There were big clouds of dust in the air on some days. But it was the place that provided opportunity for many of the parents to make a living. It was a lack of knowledge, really.

Juneau: Was Brown Barge an inner-city school?

Interviewee: Most of the families back then had a father and mother in the home. They provided the very best opportunities for their children. A lot of them worked at NAS which is where my father worked. My mom stayed at home most of our childhood. We didn't have the best of material things,

but what we had we appreciated and it met our needs for education and for life. So, I don't think it was like inner city schools of today. Yes, we did have less than the white schools and there was more poverty. We had used textbooks and didn't have proper facilities. For our Physical Education classes, Mr. Steen had a kickball and nothing else fancy. We didn't have an elaborate playground. We just had a merry-go-round and some swings. But, we didn't have all of the problems of the inner city schools that are part of schools today.

Juneau: Do you have any additional thoughts about Brown Barge?
Interviewee: The group of us who attended Brown Barge is still friends. Brown Barge made us into a strong community. It is what I consider the beginning of my core as a person.

Bill Marks

Juneau: What do you remember about Brown Barge Elementary School?
Interviewee: Well, I remember we started at J.D. Pickens School because Brown Barge was under construction. It wasn't completed for beginning until the school year 1955-56, so we had double sessions at J. D. Pickens Elementary School. That was on Haynes Street. We had the afternoon session and Pickens had the morning session. We occupied the building of Brown Barge during the later part of that semester. It was on Fairfield. And, a lot of people don't know this, but the school was originally ear-marked for Washington Senior High School. But, somehow, the contractor put the wrong bathrooms in the schools. He put the lower facilities for smaller children. For that reason, it was designated the elementary school.

Juneau: What was your relationship to Brown Barge?
Interviewee: I taught P.E. for 10 years at Brown Barge. I had some good years there. It was a place where teachers cared, students cared, and people intermingled in the community.

Juneau: What do you think was the community's reaction to the closing?
Interviewee: It wasn't a closing in my mind; it was a transformation in curriculum. Although at that time, I wasn't at Brown Barge. I stayed at Brown Barge for 10 years, and then went to Washington Junior High School on A and Strong Street.

Juneau: On a personal level, how did you perceive what you call a transformation from elementary school to magnet school?
Interviewee: I think it was good and there was a need for integration to make education more equal between races. I think the new curriculum brought forth great students. I don't see a problem with that.

Juneau: What are some of your memories of Brown Barge as a school?

Interviewee: I was a P. E. instructor. I was in charge of first aid. Little children had accidents and I had to take them to Baptist Hospital for stitches and such. The important part was that I was close to their families, so I'd call the parents and we'd wait together at the hospitals.

Juneau: What are your thoughts on integration?
Interviewee: It was a good thing. There was a need to get materials in African American schools up to par and we couldn't get that to happen in segregated times.

Juneau: Do you have any other statements to share about Brown Barge?
Interviewee: Yeah, where are all of my trophies? We won so many trophies in basketball and modern dancing, but everything is gone. Can you find out where these things are?

John Blake

Juneau: What are your memories of the Augustus Case?
Interviewee: Well, Dr. Augustus tried to get his daughter into O.J. Semmes because it was in his neighborhood. I forget the exact year, but it seems like it was 1959. It was somewhere close to that year. At the time, O. J. Semmes was an all white school and Dr. Augustus had built a home on 12th Avenue. He tried to get his daughter and children in that neighborhood into the school because that was truly the neighborhood school. But at the time, they hadn't integrated schools. Since schools didn't fully integrate until the 70s, Dr. Augustus sued. He brought a suit against the school district. That first case last four or five years. While he was doing that, vandals came by and vandalized his home and called him names and so forth.

Juneau: My project looks at whether ways the community perceived the Augustus Case. What is your perspective about this question?
Interviewee: Culturally, at the time, the races were almost completely separate. We went to black schools and at the time, no blacks were attending white schools. And Dr. Augustus was a young physician and it kind of made the headlines because when he sued, at the time very few blacks lived on 12th Avenue, and Dr. Augustus had build a fashionable brick home there. Later he moved from 12th Avenue to Hatton and 13th Avenue. He had to move his home. They threw things at his home and so forth. They made life miserable for him. Dr. Augustus was my friend and fraternity brother.

Juneau: What is your relationship to the Augustus Case?
When I first came here, we had an all black community college and that was Washington Junior College. They phased out Washington Community College, though. In the summer of 1965, two of the family from Washington Junior College were transitioned to Pensacola Community College. I was one of the two. We were the only two they

selected from the black junior college to go to Pensacola Junior College. So he and I were the first black professors at Pensacola Junior College. Also, at the time, the community college was under the school board, so those who did not go to Pensacola Junior College, got jobs in the high schools. You know, when I transferred to Pensacola Junior College, my salary went up considerably. The last year at Washington I earned $6200 per year and when I went to Pensacola Junior College, I was hired in at $8900. That shows you the disparity in Washington and Pensacola Junior College. In talking about Augustus, you know Washington was established as an all black college. I've always though segregation was wrong, but the South was like that. So, they established black junior colleges in Florida for black students. At the time, we were one of the twelve black junior colleges in the state of Florida. So, I lived the experiences of segregation versus integration. Washington Junior college was established in 1949 and it was phased out in 1965.

Juneau: How did the Augustus Case affect you in personal realms?

Interviewee: At the time, I had two young daughters who were 3 and 4 years of age. I became involved because I always thought segregation was wrong and I thought that if he lived in a neighborhood of Semmes, he should be allowed to send his children there. So it was a class action suit. A lot of us joined in and helped him out. However, some years ago, the court came in and they removed most of the restrictions that were outlined in the Augustus Case. I was on the school board at the time and the only thing they left in place was the ability of kids to transfer from one school to another where a child was majority to minority.

Juneau: What do you perceive were reactions by the community to the Augustus Case?

Interviewee: Well, at the time, a lot of blacks feared for Dr. Augustus, so they would go over to his home and stay with his families sometimes. And they discussed it in the black churches because a lot of the black churches raised money to finance the case, and they rallied around Dr. Augustus and his family. We discussed the case at Washington Junior College, too. We discussed what was happening with students, so they would be informed. As a result, some of the students became activists. They would have black sit-ins downtown at the lunch counters. Reverend Dobbins led the Methodist Church on the Westside of Pensacola and he led young people to sit-ins downtown. Reverend Sam Matthews worked with Reverend Dobbins to organize the sit-ins.

Juneau: How are Escambia County Schools different because of the Augustus Case?

Interviewee: I think the Augustus Case opened the eyes and minds of fair-minded people. We had some whites who fought it to the end. Because you know 1950 was the year the Supreme Court voted unanimously to outlaw

segregation in schools. You remember the case, I'm sure. It was the Brown Case. That was 1950 and the schools did not fully integrate here until the 1970s. That was just how the south was. You weren't even born then. But at the time, the southern states local legislature was passed to get around that in any way they could. I forget exactly all the ways they got around it, but they all had creative ways to get integration to not happen. Are you familiar with Escambia High School for instance? We had some heated times there. We had Reverend Matthews, Reverend Leveret and some other preachers who fought for integration. I was involved in Escambia High School. Smokey Pete was the policeman at the time; although, he is dead now. He and Childers were leading the white students to raise hell. They want the Escambia High School campus to prevent blacks from coming there and they led riots for students. The white students were led by Smokey Pete, who is dead now, and Senator Childers, who is still living. This is what catapulted Childers into politics. He got his initial fame form causing students to raise hell at Escambia High School.

Juneau: Because you've experienced multiple roles in Escambia County educational realms, do you have another other thoughts on the Augustus Case?

Interviewee: Are you familiar with where this county is outlined now? Have you ever been to Cantonment and Century? You've been north toward the county line? Well, when I first ran, do you know where Nine Mile Road is? Well, when I first ran, black folks called it the Mason-Dixon Line. This was because once you crossed Nine Mile Road; you had some white folks up there who were very prejudiced. When I was running countywide, I had to go up there and campaign and my wife would go with me. They didn't show us any respect at all back then. You might get a few of them to vote for you. But, I even had a few friends up there that basically voted against me even though I was a college professor and voted for a teenager. The kid almost won because it was a county-side election and he was white.

Juneau: There is conversation in present day about schools becoming resegregated. What is your perspective?

Interviewee: Well, it is true, but we forget there are options. You can send a student to a school of choice, but you have to provide transportation. My baby daughter was born in 1977. Her neighborhood school was O. J. Semmes, but I sent her to Cordova. They allowed for this choice, but I had to provide transportation. That is the only remaining part of the Augustus case that prevents from resegregation. You can transfer your children to a school where there is majority versus minority difference.

Juneau: Do you have any other thoughts to share?

Interviewee: Another thing, see a school like Cordova, there is a large number of rich and influential parents. You know what I'm talking about – doctors and lawyers. And those schools have more than schools like Dixon and Bibbs. In those schools, the houses are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, what I'm saying is if you have rich, influential parents, then the dog that barks the loudest is heard. You have probably seen it. Now the money might come in here, but those people are able to raise extra money and they have more influence on the school board than a parent from Marcus Court whose child went to Dixon. There's not much we can do about that. So the well being of schools is largely dictated by the influence and voices of the parents. It makes a difference. If all the rich kids go to one school and all the poor kids go to a different school, then their needs will most likely not be represented and listened to in equal ways.

Sara Smith

Juneau: What is your relationship to the Augustus Case?

Interviewee: Well, I wasn't a teacher or anything, but I will tell you what I remember. My husband was a teacher and we were friends and a neighbor of Dr. Augustus. My church was also involved in the Augustus Case at the time. We all tried to support the Augustus family and stayed with them sometimes because of all the threats made to his family. I worked as a pharmacist in Pensacola for 42 years. Also, I was involved a lot in my church as my choir director did so many things to get us involved. Dr. Augustus was trying to get into Semmes' school and he was turned down. He wanted her to go to a school close to her. By the time he started the case, he lived on 12th Avenue. He had a very good medical practice that he built up in Pensacola. That was I think when equal rights was really beginning.

Juneau: Do you think the Augustus Case was inspired by the Brown Case?

Interviewee: It did. Reverend Matthews had been to one of the NAACP meetings and when he came back, now this is not a direct quote, there was a young minister here at St. Paul Methodist Church. Dr. Reverend Dobbits, you might of hear that name in passing, but he encouraged Dr. Augustus to put this suit in, and it didn't take much encouraging because to show you how stupid it was, in my eyes, Dr. Augustus lived right here in this same neighborhood. He wanted his child to go to O. J. Semmes School, which was in walking distance of his house. It didn't make sense for his child to have to take the bus to Bibbs. O. J. Semmes was a white school and that was what initiated the case. You know, my husband went to school and lived over here on Eight Avenue which is very close to here. He had to go to Bibbs everyday by walking across that bridge on Cervantes. It was awful. That is why I want you to read this article here because Dr. McDaniels came here and they wanted him to teach science. They had no

science lab, no test tubes, no equipment at all, and he put them through a lot about this. And, he was eventually out, I'm saying fired, but they said they let him go because he was fighting for equal materials in black schools.

Juneau: Please tell me about your experience as a pharmacist in Pensacola during the time of the Augustus Case.

Interviewee: Well, actually it went fairly well for me because I was lucky enough to fall into a good position. I was hired by the Molton drug stores to work for them. But I could not work in the drug store; I was an assistant buyer in the warehouse with a white lady who was a registered pharmacist. They did not want to put her in the drug store on a regular basis because they didn't think that people were ready for a lady pharmacist. Then when I cam along, they wouldn't put me in the store because they told me that he didn't think the people were ready for neither a lady pharmacist or a colored pharmacist. But it just shows you how lopsided it was. Because Ms. Penney was white and she was a registered pharmacist and she only worked in the drug store if they needed extra help, it was not fair. But she and I bought the drugs for eight stores.

Juneau: Please tell me about your educational experiences to become a pharmacist during the time of segregation.

Interviewee: Well, I knew that I might have a tough time, because I had seen a lot of things that went on. And I'm talking about your city now, when I got to college, it wasn't as bad here to me as it was in New Orleans. I went to Canal Street one day with my roommate who was from Lafayette, LA. And we went in D.H. Holmes and I saw a dress and I said, "Annette, I'm going to try that dress on, I like that dress and I got some money this week." I grabbed the thing and she said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to try it on." And she said, "You can't try that dress on!" I said, "What do you mean I can't try it on?" And she said, "You have to buy it and take it home and if it doesn't fit, then you have to bring it back." That was even more stupid than what was going on here.

Juneau: Do you have any other thoughts about the Augustus Case?

Interviewee: I will tell you this, every time you look in the paper now you see where a black teacher has been given what they say is a higher position, but then they replace the black principal with a white principal. I am waiting right now to see who gets Ms. Eaton's position. You know, during Augustus, I did take part in demonstrations. We would take our lunch hour if the guy who delivered to the drug store wasn't there, then we would walk down to Palafox Street and sit in during lunch time. The lunch counters would not serve colored people. You could go to the back door and tell them what you wanted and they would hand it to you. But you couldn't go in and order and drink or sandwich at the lunch counter. So, we'd go in anyway

and they would ask us what we wanted and we'd say that we'd let them know.

Clare James

Juneau: What is your relationship to A. A. Dixon Elementary School?
Interviewee: I was principal of Dixon for 8 years. I was curriculum coordinator/assistant principal for one year. So, I was at Dixon for 9 years. I was also the last principal of the school.

Juneau: How did you react to the closure of Dixon in personal realms?
Interviewee: I did not want it to close. I feel like our children were getting the best education they could possibly get. There were – we were able to get some excellent teachers through year long internships. They don't have it anymore. The inner-city schools like Dixon know through year long internships whether teachers will be able to handle Dixon. You need people to get along in the community and understand complexities of curriculum and learning. Because in year long interns, they are able to see the inner city and the complexities of poverty. Remember that treatment of behavior is different in lower SES communities. When you get and keep their attention, the children have to trust you and know you have their best interest. You have to do extra tings you don't have to do at other schools. Like we had a teacher who bought brand new shoes and kept them in his closet for any student who needed a pair. He kept them in his classroom. We bought a million pairs of socks because kids don't have socks. We kept a supply of socks and underwear. They don't have washers and dryers. So, some of our teachers would take their clothes home and wash them. They'd bring a pair of clothes for change. We tried to go to uniforms. We got them donated, but after wearing them for a week, they were filthy, too. We tried to get washers and dryers in our schools, so parents could have access to clean the clothing. We got two of each donated. I think they are still sitting some place in the county because there was no place to put them. There had to be hook-ups and the dryers had to be safe and in a safe place. We had nowhere. But these were the extra things. When you're dealing with a child who is out of control, you have to be careful. A lot of them have emotional problems stemming from their home lives. It isn't anything you can put your finger on, but maybe they've been at a home without sleep people they heard people screaming in a neighbor's building or brothers and sisters sleep 3 or 4 in the bed and the little one wet the wed. So, they all come to school smelling like pee. You're dealing with so many variables with these children and we took care of them. It was more of a family. I had to learn that this is not easy. I was in Title I schools for a long time before I was principal. Moms at Dixon called me for transportation. A Mom went into labor early and she lost her baby. She had no one to take her to the

hospital, so she called me. Sometimes they'd call me and let me know that no one would be home for the child to return home, so they'd ask me to make sure their child was safe. Sometimes they called to let me know they were in jail and let me know who the child should be with in their absence. I was the only person, along with the teachers, to do these things. There were four major housing projects around Dixon: Attucks Court being the biggest – Morris, Sanchez Court, and one more. My teachers were in the homes on a regular basis. A lot of times, our children couldn't get socks or shoes. Parents didn't want to send children to the first week of school without something new on. You know, they probably couldn't afford it, so they chose to just not send their child to school. They didn't send them to school if the first day wasn't at the beginning or the end of month when they got paid. They don't think ahead. They also don't think of bus schedules. They would know school started because the bus passed by their homes. It wasn't like they watched TV or read the newspaper, so they didn't know school started in a week. It wasn't part of the business of their days. The other thing is shots. So, we'd have to go into the projects and tell them we need birth certificates so we could get them signed up for shots. It literally took months to get everything we needed. Jeb Bush tried to help by going into the home of a child we knew was supposed to start school and need shots. The parents would come to the door and not know who Jeb Bush was. He'd called to remind the parent and there was no action. We ended up having to get transportation to get parents to get their children's' shots.

Juneau: What are your perceptions of the way the community reacted to Dixon's closure?

Interviewee: There were very concerned about it. Most of my kids were not transported. Most of them were walkers. Because we had four major roads around us, they were forced to come by bus. But, they could have walked. It was called hazardous walking conditions. But then I'd say may about one-fourth rode the bus and the rest walked. Dixon was a community area – a community center for them. They would use it when they needed – for church, scout troupes…etc. It was the focal point of the community. They were concerned their children would be bused to distant areas. Dixon had been there since the 1950s. They were sad about the closing because they had built trust in us and the extra services were offered. Gradually, we were getting the trust of parents so they would come to school and help and participate in their childrens' education. It was not an easy thing to do, but I believe it was happening. Dixon represented many things. We had to be all things to our students. We had a couple of teachers who wanted Dixon to be a day and night school. It was a safe and family environment. Because when they had to go home, we had to start all over again the next day because of things happening in their homes. There was much drug addiction. I would say ¾ of students don't live with either parent. They lived with a grandparent, auntie, friend, etc. There may have

been a parent in the home, but they weren't being raised by the parent. Sometimes a church family adopted a child. Some family members were in jail – off and on in jail. Some times, parents would walk off and leave a child. The majority were being raised by families. It was very rare that males were involved in raising the children. We used mentors. I begged for men. Most of the men who volunteered were from Baptist Hospital and Pensacola Junior College. On another note, I would go into homes often. There were homes without food and those were drug related. The rest had food stamps and such. Many are up at night and sleep during the day. So, we had problems with parents getting students to school on time. In Dixon, teachers become para-parents. You bring home problems. You are always thinking about ways to solve problems.

Juneau: What is your perspective about the voucher program being implemented at the same time of Dixon's closure?

Interviewee: I thought vouchers were ridiculous. I think they give a false impression to parents. They suggest Dixon and the teachers were not good. They don't teach them anything. So, they suggest here, private schools are great. At the time, private schools didn't have to and did not test for accountability like FCAT. How do you know whether you're doing well in that case? We always said at Dixon, we welcome testing, but do it in this way: Test every kid in August and then again in April for growth. Let's don't compare apples to oranges. Let's see what the kids within their context have done. Of course, that never happened. Now, it's even more ridiculous, they want to make the bell curve impossible. They want the top 25% to move up. This is impossible beyond a point. Now, schools are having to sweat to bring students and scores up. Yes, they'll make improvements. Ransom is a mess. Wedgeweood is a mess. You can't change quartiles that way.

Juneau: Do you have any closing thoughts about your experiences with Dixon?

Interviewee: We didn't understand Dixon's closure. It was political. I was told that Dixon had the smallest enrollment of Yniestra, Hallmark, Bibbs, or Weis. Dixon was least likely to grow in terms of enrolment. Also, Dixon was a two story building and need big repairs that would have been very expensive. Hallmark was two story, too. We didn't have a new library, but others did. Because of parents, too, it was easier to close. Hallmark would have been fought by parents because of the history of the school. Yniestra was the same story. Weis was the newest school. They did not think of the children and consequences when they closed the school.

Theresa Clark

Juneau: What is your relationship to A. A. Dixon Elementary School?

Interviewee: My daughter was given to chance for the scholarship program and I was a student a Dixon.

Juneau: What do you think about the closure of Dixon in personal ways?
Interviewee: Dixon was a filing school and at the time, they had failed three out of four times, so they at the time, they gave all parents a voucher to transfer their child to another school or attend a private school. I thought it was a good thing.

Juneau: If you had to say the closure of Dixon was just or unjust, what would your answer be?
Interviewee: Like I said, they were failing so they weren't proving they could teach the children. So it was a good choice since they failed three times. I don't know why it was such a controversial thing about wanting your child to have a better education. That is what I never figured out. Why was it so bad for parents to want the best education for their child?

Juneau: How do you think the community reacted to the closure of Dixon?
Interviewee: Everybody was for it. Everybody thought it was a good thing they were doing. Like I said, it was a chance for better education, so why would anyone be against this? My daughter was getting foreign languages and stuff I never even though about. And just the quality of the teachers, they don't teach like the public school. I could see the difference with her. She knows much more than I knew at her age. So, as I said, people were for it. We got a lot of participation because we had to go to Tallahassee a couple of times with lawyers to fight for the case. And, at times, we were getting people off the street that were supporting with us to get on the bus and go. One, time we had over 75 people. We were fighting for the scholarship program.

Juneau: How is the community different because of the closure of Dixon?
Interviewee: It's good in a way because Dixon is not an option anymore. You don't have to worry about your child not getting a good education at Dixon. And another thing, because of the school's closing, the kids are having to be bussed off, so they might have to get up a little earlier to be bussed off. A lot of kids walked to Dixon. It was a lot of low income apartments and projects that are right around the area, so I'm sure some parents were against it because it was inconvenient to get up early and worry about transportation.

Juneau: Many community members opposed the voucher program by stating it further weakened public schools. How would you respond to this statement?
Interviewee: That's true, I can understand that. And if you've got a school that's failing and you want to take the option, isn't it still the best thing to find ways for

the best education of the students. Everybody had an opinion. Maybe they need to work with teachers more to make them teach better.

Juneau: So people suggest schools are resegregating in present times. What is your perspective?

Interviewee: I think it's an exaggeration. It's exaggerating to the point that I'm pretty sure that even if people are poor, they are feeding their children. I mean I'm sure you can go to a trailer park where the white people live and there are the same problems as the black children. I just wonder if the people who are saying these things have ever been to the communities, to the black schools, and in the houses or are they just racist. That is what I think of people who say stuff like that.

Juneau: Please tell me about your own educational experiences at Dixon.

Interviewee: Well, it was the same school I went to as a child, and when it was my child's turn to go, I seen some of the same teachers and they were old. They were bad when I was there, so I could just imagine how bad they'd be 15 years later. So the quality of the teacher made a difference at Dixon and it wasn't good. You know the project children are used to violence and broken homes, so if you bring in a teacher that has no experience with dealing with students like that, then there is going to be so type of conflict because the experience isn't there. So if you take these white educated teachers and educate them on how our children grow up sometimes, it might help. But then it might be a different situation because the teachers are just thrown into the schools and they don't know what to do or how to deal with the children.

Juneau: Do you have any closing thoughts on the Dixon experience?

Interviewee: You can't expect good education when teachers don't understand the students. You know, it is the music, the clothes, the way kids talked…it's just not the same. And these teachers aren't going to change and try to understand. So, there are failing schools and teachers are underpaid. And no one wants to train them. So, they keep doing the same things over and over again. The school board, the teachers, and the school system have to change if things are to get better.

Deon Jordan

Juneau: What is your relationship to Brown Barge Elementary School?

Interviewee: I was a former educator. Brown Barge was an all black, community-oriented school. My cousin's father, William Brown, Sr., was the principal. I know the students have gone on to do well. Some did well and some did poorly. That is life. The cream always rises to the top. There will always be students who do good no matter what environment you put them in – good or bad. Brown Barge was a solid school. Everyone was

involved. I never heard any problems like inner-city schools of all black students like today. My feelings, when integration came, they consolidated schools, and I felt they closed Brown Barge because they didn't want to put money into a black community so they started pushing students out to Workman School and other schools in the community. The community wanted the school, but the school board didn't agree. When it came down to dollars and sense, just like with Washington High School, the board didn't want to put money into an old dilapated building. Then they moved and rebuilt a new Washington High School and the old Washington High School became the Hall Center. To me, it was a biased, racial decision just like Washington High School. If you notice, Washington High School is a high class facility and Washington is printed large, but the Booker T. is in very small letters. I think this is by design. It is the same as Brown Barge. Then, schools of choice came up and a parent had decision of where children could attend school. With that, all of a sudden, they found money to reopen Brown Barge as a high tech magnet school. I'm wondering where the money came from. Just like Washington, it was previously said that there was no money to fix up the school. So, the school was closed and students from the community were bused to other schools. The decisions were made by a board from 215 W. Garden Street and they were biased decisions.

Juneau: What was your perspective regarding the closure of Brown Barge Elementary School?

Interviewee: Personally, the cream will rise to the top. But, my thing, too, is when you lose a school like Brown Barge, you lose the people who would have been on the borderline and would have made it with the support of a community of motivated parents and Brown Barge instructors. With black teachers in our own schools, we demanded certain things and we had very high expectations for our children. And, when integration came, of course, I think the teachers of other races were not familiar with or interested in the black race. They had not lived or worked with us and were taught to think we were inferior. All they knew is what their families and history taught them about black people. They had low expectations. They didn't expect anything and thought we didn't know anything. They thought we could not learn, we could not produce. In these sorts of thoughts, the children suffer. Then, the additional cush of Brown Barge being a school that worked closely with family and what that meant. It was accountability. All that is missing now. It is gone now. It wasn't like that before. I mean it loses the sense of family that is important to education. That's why to me, a lot of things going on now-a-days as far as teachers not relating and discipline is different. It is because we aren't connected with the families. You don't have the feeling of "you taught my daughter or son" and whatever the teacher says goes because that teachers has been respected for a long time by the family. That is the way it went back then. If you got in trouble at school, you got whooped at school, then

when you got home, you got whooped again. Now, teachers are afraid to discipline students in strict ways. Here you are an adult, and you can't tell a child what to do. This was done by the courts. I think due process undid a lot of good work in the area of discipline. I think we lost this control with integration. It was sort of like we were protected from this in the community, all black schools like Brown Barge.

Anita Williams

Juneau: What do you remember about the closing of A. A. Dixon Elementary School?

Interviewee: I used to teach at Dixon summer school. It was a community-based school. It stayed open all summer, so kids could be educated on a year long basis. The students considered Dixon a central hub. Dixon had enrichment activities in the summer. There were arts and crafts for activities. This sort of continuation of the school year helped to keep children from the negative activities of the streets. There were activities like checkers, ping-pong, and volleyball. That was the heart of Dixon. It was a school that tried to keep children involved in education for all twelve months of the year.

Juneau: How did you feel on a personal level when Dixon closed?

Interviewee: I feel it was closed because the school board considered the money they put into the school could be better utilized in other places. When this was going on, I was reminded of the history of Brown Barge School. All of a sudden, we witnessed Brown Barge reopening as a magnet school. For Dixon, it was reopened as an adult school. As the adult school, the facilities are in working condition and better than they were as Dixon Elementary School. But before, when Dixon was considered for closure, the school board said there was no money to improve the facility so students would have better educational opportunities and experiences. The situation with Pickens School was similar. It was closed and is a book depository now. The bottom line, I feel, is that when integration occurred, there was The Freedom of Choice Plan. But, the school board could not convince white students to attend schools in black neighborhoods. So, nothing improved. You can't really criticize the parents for their hesitation to make the decision. If you know the reality of black schools in Escambia County, then you know they were forced to operate on shoe string budgets because the county did not fund black schools very well. The only funding provided was for very basic operations of our programs. There was not consideration for improvement.

Juneau: A. A. Dixon Elementary School closed amidst the implementation of the voucher program. What is your perspective concerning the voucher program?

Interviewee: I wonder, and it angers me, to question the reason why anyone would support the taking of public money and placing it into parochial schools. You know, I attended parochial school. My parents paid for my attendance in parochial school, so I respect it was a decision they made for my educations. They were willing to make a financial sacrifice because it was important to them that I was educated with religious values as part of the curriculum. However, if it's public money in the first place, then I think it should be channeled only to public schools. This would maybe provide the opportunity for smaller classrooms, so teachers can have the real chance to prove they are capable in teaching. I feel strongly that money should be directed only to public schools. You know, if the decision were made about vouchers by educators, I don't think the consequences would have been the creation of a voucher program. But the decision and planning was left up to CEOs of school board and administrators. These and individuals who mostly have never taught in public schools, so they didn't understand the full implications of their planning. So I think it's politics even above racism in the end that voucher programs came to be for Pensacola.

Juneau: There is conversation in present day about schools resegregating. What is your perspective regarding this statement?

Interviewee: I don't think that is necessarily a correct statement. There are surely some families who don't support their child and they are often in impoverished, black communities. So, I believe they sometimes send their children to school without feeding them. But let's think about the nature of public schools. It is a system that was created to educate the masses. To me, that is a great opportunity. If we were Chinese, then only students with specific IQ measures would be allowed to attend school. Here, we say that all people deserve the chance to attend school and make the most of learning. As a former educator, I think we need to improve schools without the use of programs such as the voucher plan. When you're dividing funds here and there, it diminished the chances to build a stronger system. With the division of funds, it becomes more difficult to pay teachers better, work toward smaller class sizes, and improve curriculum materials in classrooms. When you're giving out public funds here and there, it is like spending too much on credit cards. You end up never able to pay them off because too much is spread across too many cards. That is the way I see what they're doing with public money in voucher programs. It diminishes the chance to have the strong educational program that is needed for success on measures such as the FCAT tests.

Juneau: What is your perspective related to the way you think the community reacted to the closure of Dixon?

Interviewee: I think the African American community the closure as largely racist. When I consider what they have done in the past such as closing schools predominantly black and in black neighborhoods, then what else can we

think the decisions are? In this, I'm referring to decisions made by the school board. In knowing they state they couldn't make repairs to schools like Brown Barge and Dixon, but then new schools transition to the building spaces and are renovated, then it is an insult to intelligence. I also feel the community felt vouchers were an insult to educators. It suggests that people within the educational system are not able to perform their duties, even though they've been certified by rigorous tests within teacher preparation programs. It is so difficult to teach now. Teachers feel intimidated. They are limited in discipline practices and overlooked in terms of realities of the classroom such as class size. Yet, they are accountable for making the impossible happen.

Juneau: What are your closing thoughts about your experiences with the closure of A. A. Dixon Elementary School?

Interviewee: I think what is happening now is a result of integration. I'm glad it's happened, but there are still complexities and issues to deal with that have not been addressed in real ways. Before integration, teachers were respected and often times, families were interested in and involved in the education of children. Now, teachers are crucified at every level and the school board diminishes the notion of teacher competence. I think teachers and schools are being brought down by the actions of school board leadership. The closure of A. A. Dixon is a perfect example of what I'm saying.