

**“Black Pride Days,” 1965 - 1970: A Critical Historical Ethnography of Black Student
Activism, Curricular Reform, and Memory at
William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania**

by

DWAYNE C. WRIGHT

Under the Direction of Derrick P. Alridge

Abstract

On Friday, April 5, 1968, over 250 African American students at William Penn Senior High School skipped their classes to attend Black Pride Day. The student-led assembly and movement addressed the educational and social inequities in the York Public School District. In response to the students’ agency and activism, district officials implemented reform policies throughout the school system. This research utilizes historical and ethnographical methodologies in order to provide a panoramic view of African American education in York. Furthermore, this study addresses the paucity in the literature on African American students’ role and contribution to K-12 educational and social reforms.

INDEX WORDS: High school student activism, Curriculum reform, Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement, Black student activism, Black History

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WILLIAM PENN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN YORK, PENNSYLVANIA**

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family both biological and extended for giving me the support needed to finish this chapter in my life. More importantly, this is dedicated to the alumni of William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania, who risked their personal goals and careers to improve the education in the York City Public School District.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On Friday, April 5, 1968, the day following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 250 Black students at William Penn Senior High School (WPSHS), also known as York High in York, Pennsylvania, refused to attend class. Instead, the solemn yet resolved students barricaded themselves in the auditorium of the school to commence what became known as “Black Pride Day.” Unlike the disorderly and violent eruptions that occurred in high schools in other Pennsylvania cities such as Lancaster, Harrisburg and Erie, the York students did not find it necessary to use violence in staging their event, nor did they want to bring any negative attention to their cause.¹ Throughout the day long “Black-only” assembly, students celebrated Dr. King’s life and legacy by reading newspaper accounts about his life, poetry, and portions of his dissertation and speeches. Many perceived the student actions as a peaceful and thoughtful tribute to Dr. King. This was evident by the articles in the local newspapers, *Gazette and Daily* and *York Dispatch*.

The *Gazette and Daily*, the city’s liberal newspaper, was sympathetic to the Black community, which faced racial and social inequalities in York. The day after the student protest, *Gazette and Daily* published “William Penn Students Mourn King,” which covered the entire third page of the newspaper. See figure 1 below for the photograph taken by *Gazette and Daily* staff shortly after the 1968 Black Pride Day assembly.²

¹ Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, telephone conversation with author, York, PA, 19 October 2000.

² “William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King,” *Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968, 3.

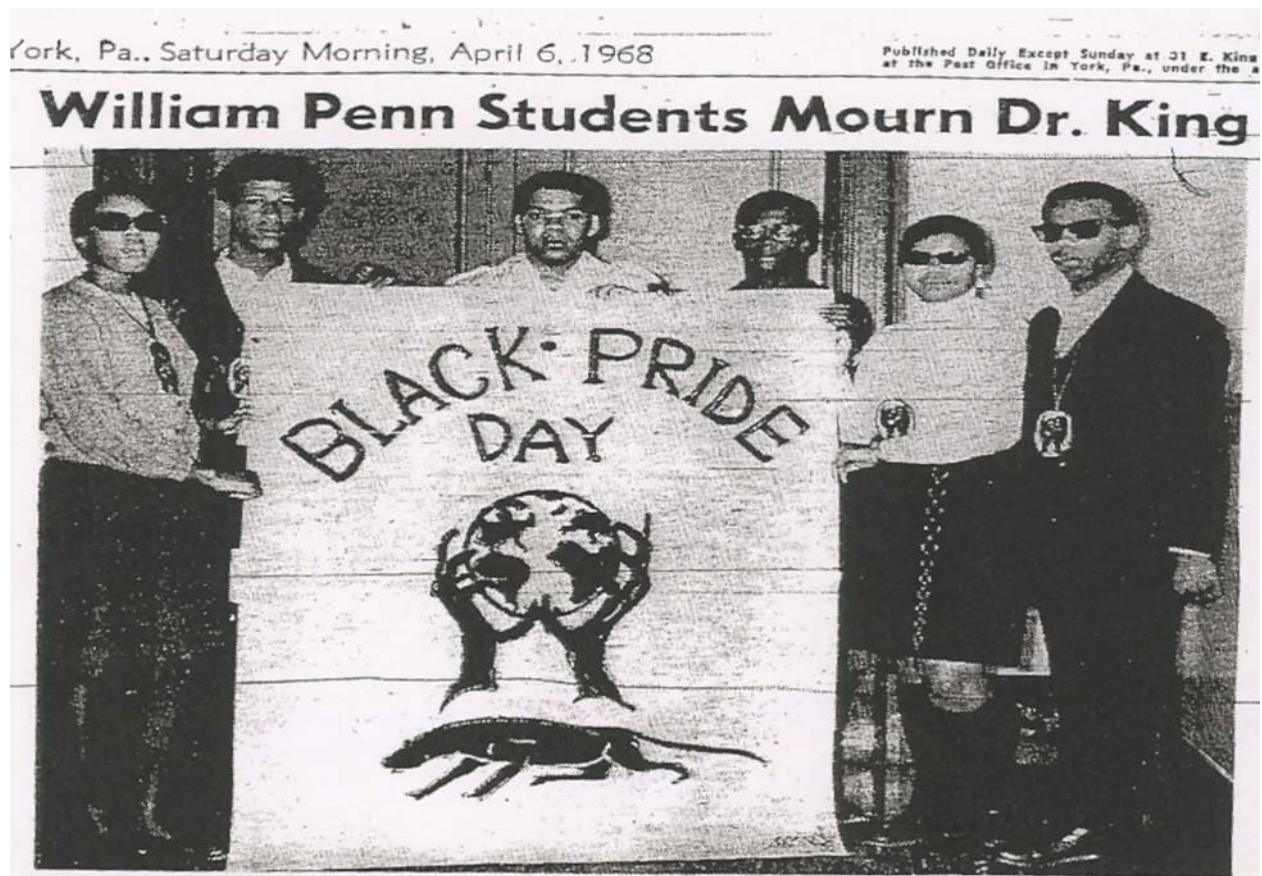


Figure 1. 1968 Black Pride Day

The full-page story included two photographs with captions that read, "Negro Students at William Penn Senior High School had scheduled yesterday as 'Black Pride Day.' . . . 200 Black students held a special assembly in the auditorium."³ On the other hand, *York Dispatch*, York's conservative newspaper, also known as "the mouthpiece for York governing officials,"⁴ printed a one-column article; entitled "Students Praised" was buried on page 30.⁵

³ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King," 3.

⁴ Jeffrey S. Hawkes, "J.W. Gitt's Last Crusade: Demise of the *Gazette and Daily*, 1961 - 1970" (master's thesis, Millersville University, 1985).

⁵ "Students Praised," *York Dispatch*, 6 April 1968, 30.

While the news agencies focused on the students' memorial to King, the students utilized the Black Pride Day to express their concerns about the social problems in the school, and the need for curriculum reform.⁶ For example, the students demanded that the school officials increase the number of Black faculty and staff and incorporate Black history into the curriculum. The "1968 Black Pride Day" and the events surrounding it were pivotal moments that eventually brought about social and curricular reforms in York Public School District. These changes in the late 1960s and early 1970s were the result of the collective efforts of Black High School students.

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of Black student activism on secondary curriculum reform during the Civil Rights Movement. In doing so, this study examines Black student activism, curricular reform, and memory at WPSHS in York, PA from 1965-1970. As a point of reference, this study focuses on the events of "Black Pride Day" at WPSHS in 1968. Several questions help guide this inquiry:

1. What were the events and issues leading up to the Black students' protest for culturally relevant curriculum at WPSHS in 1968?
2. What were the students' demands regarding improving the curricula and making it reflect the history, culture, and life experiences of Blacks?
3. Who were the major and minor players in the student movement for curricular reform at WPSHS?

⁶ For the purposes of this study, I use Paul Travers and Ronald Rebores' definition of curriculum, which can be defined two ways. It can be a program of studies, a collection of courses at a specific educational level; or it can be more broadly viewed as all the experiences a child or youth has in educational institutions. Paul Travers and Ronald Rebores, *Foundations of Education: Becoming a Teacher* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 93.

4. What was the aftermath of the student movement at WPSHS in terms of Black education and schooling?
5. How do participants in the Black student movement at WPSHS remember their experiences regarding activism, curricular reform, and the 1968 Black Pride Day?

The guiding argument in this study is that Black student activism played a significant role in reforming school curriculum during the late 1960s and early 1970s. I also contend that the memories of the informants regarding the 1968 Black Pride Day varies for each individual, yet it provides a subtext to the events that transpired between 1965 and 1970.

Despite efforts made by Black high school students to reform public education curricula, the historiography of Black education during the twentieth century revolves around eradicating the vestiges of legalized segregation, primarily in the South.⁷ My study of student activism at WPSHS accentuates the type of education related activism found outside the South, but also extends it by focusing on high school students' activism to bring about curricular reform.

Research on Black education is also dominated by events and actions spearheaded by parent groups and adult organizations in large cities in the North.⁸ For

⁷For histories on segregation in education, see David S. Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Robert Smith, *They Closed Their Schools: Prince Edward County, Virginia 1951-1964* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1965); Vanessa Siddle-Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); For histories covering Civil Rights in the South, see James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Robert J. Norrell, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

⁸ For histories of Black education in the North, see Jane Anna Gordon, *Why They Couldn't Wait: A Critique of the Black-Jewish Conflict over Community Control in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, 1967-1971* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001); Dionne A. Danna, "Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001); Jeanne Theoharis, "They Told Us Our Kids Were Stupid': Ruth Batson and the Educational Movement in

example, Black activists in Milwaukee demanded that public school officials hire college-educated Black teachers and improve the guidance programs for Black students.⁹ In Chicago, a coalition of Black organizations orchestrated a massive student boycott in the early 1960s to challenge de facto segregation in the public school system.¹⁰ In New York City, Ocean Hill-Brownsville parents and community members sought control of Junior High School 271 in the late 1960s.¹¹ These events in support of V. P. Franklin's argument that Black high school student activism in large public school systems should be included in the larger narrative of the Civil Rights Movement.¹²

While Franklin argues for an examination of large urban districts, I suggest that Black student activism in all schools, despite their size or location, be included in the narrative. For instance, in Farmville, Virginia, 16-year-old Barbara Johns organized and led 200 Black students on a strike regarding the unequal distribution of resources at Robert Russa Moton High School in Prince Edward County.¹³ Likewise, it was Black youth who led a social and educational reform movement in York, Pennsylvania, a small

Boston," in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, eds. Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Karen Miller, " 'We Cannot Wait for Understanding to Come to Us': Community Activists Respond to Violence at Detroit's Northwestern High School, 1940 – 1941," in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, eds. Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

⁹ Jack Dougherty, "More Than One Struggle: African-American School Reform Movements in Milwaukee, 1930-1980" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1997).

¹⁰ James P. Pitts, "A Case Study: Analysis of Black High School Students - a Generation of Change" (master's thesis, Northwestern University, 1971); Dionne A. Danna, "Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001).

¹¹ Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1990); Jane Anna Gordon, *Why They Couldn't Wait: A Critique of the Black-Jewish Conflict over Community Control in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, 1967-1971*, (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2001).

¹² V. P. Franklin, "Black High School Student Activism in the 1960s: An Urban Phenomenon?" *Journal of Research in Education* 10, no. 1 (2000): 3-8.

¹³ Richard Wormser, *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003).

city north of the Mason Dixon line. These events and countless other undocumented activities led by Black youth confirms that there is a need to reassess students', regardless of their location, role and impact on the Civil Rights Movement.

Significance of the Study

Much can be learned from examining Black student activism and its influence on curricular reform at William Penn Senior High School between 1965 and 1970. While the setting for this study takes place in the North, York, Pennsylvania was not known as a civil rights epicenter.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the student led movement in York shows that civil rights activities occurred outside the big cities in the northeast.¹⁵ While most studies regarding curriculum reform centers on events at the post-secondary level, the York study examines the struggle led by Black students at the secondary education level. Since little has been written about Black high school activism, particularly in the North, it is my contention that this study will help provide greater insight about the nature of Black secondary school students' activism.

To scholars of curriculum reform, the York study is an example of curricular change from the "bottom-up." The students demanded Black history courses and a curriculum relevant to their lives. As a result of students' activism, district officials in the York Public School District modified and revised curriculum at every educational level. For this study, I relied heavily on the memories and experiences of participants and observers of past events in York, rather than primarily focusing on the perspectives

¹⁴ For studies on movement outside of the South see Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles outside the South, 1940 – 1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); also see Matthew J. Countryman, "Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia, 1940 – 1971" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1999).

¹⁵ For studies on local movement in the Black Freedom Struggle see William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

of administrators, school bureaucrats, and school documents. This study, therefore, presents historical events through the eyes of Black students, parents, and community members in York. In regards to memory, this study provides ideas about how people remember events of and their participation in social movements. Last, this study helps address the paucity of studies about educational and curricular reform vis-à-vis Black student activism and provides an historical knowledge base for present day practices and problems in public school district across the country.

Overview of the Dissertation Chapters

This dissertation is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction, research questions, and significance statement for the study. Chapter 2 describes the research methods used in this study. Chapter 3 examines the relevant literature on the topic, which includes literature on Black student activism, culturally relevant school reform, and memory. Chapter 4 provides a description of York, Pennsylvania, and WPSHS and sets the context for Black student activism during the 1960s. Chapter 5 examines “Black Pride Day” at WPSHS and discusses it as a genesis of curricular reform at WPSHS in the York City Public School District. Chapter 6 appraises the aftermath of Black Pride Day and the impact of student activism in bringing about educational and curricular reform. Chapter 7 provides insight into the memories of individuals who witnessed or contributed to the 1968 Black Pride Day movement in York. Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation and provides implications of the student activism at WPSHS to contemporary educational issues in the York City Public School District and schools across the United States regarding issues of curriculum reform. The dissertation appendix includes a copy of the approved Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form, cover letter, interview questions, a list of Black literature implemented

into the curriculum at WPSHS after the 1968 Black Pride Day, and an original poem written by a Black student in commemoration of Dr. King.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

*Human problems present themselves as wholes. It is highly unlikely that those problems can be understood from the perspective of a single discipline.*¹⁶

-- Asa Hilliard

This study is interdisciplinary in nature employing methods in historical and qualitative research. According to Carter Good, historical research is an integrated narrative of past events, written in the spirit of critical inquiry to find the whole truth and report it.¹⁷ The goal of the York study is to locate the truth via the perspectives of those who experienced and witnessed the event at WPSHS. In terms of the historical aspects of the York study, it encompasses facets of educational history, oral history, social history, life history, social movement history, and “nearby” and local history.¹⁸

This study also employs methods in critical ethnography. As a “critical” study, the study challenges assumptions that curricular reform typically emanates from administrative structures or “top-down” educational change. Instead, this study shows that curricular reform is sometimes borne out of grassroots student activism. Likewise,

¹⁶ Asa G. Hilliard, "Either a Paradigm Shift or No Mental Measurement," *Psych Discourse* 76, no. 10 (1995): 6 - 20.

¹⁷ Carter V. Good, *Essentials of Educational Research*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 148.

¹⁸ John Bodnar defines social history as the study of small worlds and individual lives in *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty argue that nearby history includes the entire range of possibilities in a person's immediate environment that is sometimes limited by local, community, or family histories see *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*, (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2000). Ronald Butchart suggests that by studying nearby history, it is the most natural and logical way for understanding the broader historical currents in society and in the world. See Ronald Butchart's *Local Schools: Exploring Their History*, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1986); Robert Lowe and Harvey Kantor argue that the perspective of social history is indispensable to the study of contemporary education history particularly in regards to the educational reforms of the 1960s when groups excluded from the inner workings of government played a central role in shaping public events in “Considerations on Writing the History of Educational Reform in the 1960s,” *Educational Theory* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 1 – 9.

this study welcomes the insight and understanding of WPSHS students and ordinary people in the community who advocated and initiated educational reform in York. Furthermore, Jim Thomas states, “critical ethnography takes on seemingly mundane events, even repulsive ones, and reproduces them in a way that exposes broader social processes of control, taming, power imbalances, and the symbolic mechanisms that impose one set of preferred meanings or behavior over others.”¹⁹ In this tradition, the York study examines events pivotal to the Black high school student movement for curricular and educational reform. The York study is historical in the sense that it is a reconstruction of past events. In addition to being a critical historical study, the project is also ethnographic since it seeks to understand the past from the perspective of those who experienced it.²⁰ Therefore, this study is critical historical ethnography because it employs a critical conceptual approach and ethnographic and historical methods to tell the story of largely unrecognized activists and their struggle to improve the education of Black people.

Historical Research and Civil Rights Studies

According to Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, *history* is a chronological record of significant events, often including an explanation of their causes, and a treatise presenting systematically related natural phenomena.²¹ On the other hand, in Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past*, Trouillot offers his definition in the vernacular use of history as a means both the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts. In his book, Trouillot also illustrates the “silences” in written history i.e., omissions of

¹⁹ Jim Thomas, *Doing Critical Ethnography*, (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), 9.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Merriam-Webster Inc., *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1998).

historical facts, loss of records, distortions of historical narratives.²² In “What Really Happened,” Katrina Sanders and Joy Ann Williamson explains the importance of researching and finding “what happened” and “that which is said to have happened” in the past.²³ The authors point out the distinction between the two, which sometimes render different accounts of the past.

While several renditions of the past exist, the “official history” is often times the version of “what happened” which is preserved and perpetuated.²⁴ Early in his career, W.E.B. Du Bois addressed this issue and noted, “Americans lacked historical consciousness and moral foresight.”²⁵ Therefore, Du Bois challenged readers of American history to “reflect from the heart as well as the head and to acknowledge contradiction and paradox.”²⁶ In his new introduction to *Black Odyssey*, Nathan Huggins commends Du Bois’ efforts to challenge the American history. Huggins argues that the persistence of racism in American society makes challenging demands on history; therefore an understanding of the past cannot be fully comprehended through

²² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

²³ Katrina M. Sanders and Joy Ann Williamson, ““What Really Happened”: Implication for the Study of African American Educational History,” in *Inexcusable Omissions: Clarence Kerier and the Critical Tradition in History of Education Scholarship*, eds. Karen Graves, Timothy Glander, and Christine Shea (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 206.

²⁴ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 15. John Bodnar states that official expressions (official history) originate in the concerns of the authorities and people of prominence whose interest maintaining the status quo. It presents a past on an abstract basis of timelessness and sacredness. On the other hand, vernacular expressions (unofficial history) convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like. Its very existence threatens the sacred and timeless nature of official expression.

²⁵David W. Blight, “W. E. B Du Bois and the Struggle for American Historical Memory,” in *History & Memory in African-American Culture*, eds. Genevieve Fabre and Robert O’Meally (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 49; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Suppression*, in *W. E. B. Du Bois: Writings*, The Library of America Series (New York: 1986), 196 – 97.

²⁶ Blight, “W. E. B Du Bois and the Struggle for American Historical Memory,” 49.

the sanitized or innocent master narrative of American history.²⁷ In her article, “Dismantling the Master’s Narrative: Teaching Gender, Race, and Class in the Civil Rights Movement,” M. Bahati Kuumba defines the “master narrative” of the Civil Rights Movement as “the standard interpretation of the movement predominately focuses on the official leadership and organizations, chronicles the most visible and well-known civil rights battles, and presents the movement as harmonious with few internal splits or tensions.”²⁸ Kuumba also argues that the “master narrative” promotes a linear depiction of the struggle and provides little information about race, class or gender. Additionally, she states that the “master narrative” glosses over the many individuals, informal groups and communication networks which were vital forces in their respective movements.²⁹

In order to obtain perspectives of the past beyond the “master narrative,” Louis Gottschalk suggests critically examining records of survivals of the past when conducting historical research.³⁰ The process includes collecting sources and materials that may have some bearing upon those persons in that area at that given time of the event. The materials collected are either primary or secondary sources. Gottschalk contends that primary sources must have been produced by a contemporary of the events it narrates, while secondary sources are the testimonies of anyone who was not

²⁷ Nathan Irvin Huggins, “The Deforming Mirror of Truth,” in *Black Odyssey: The African American Ordeal in Slavery*, xiii (New York: Vintage Books, 1900).

²⁸ M. Bahati Kuumba, “Dismantling the Master’s Narrative: Teaching Gender, Race, and Class in the Civil Rights Movement,” in *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement: Freedom’s Bittersweet Song*, eds. Julie Buckner Armstrong, Susan Hult Edwards, Houston Bryan Roberson, and Rhonda Y. Williams, 175 (New York: Routledge, 2002).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 176.

³⁰ Louis Gottschalk “The Historian and the Historical Document,” in *The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology*, eds. Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn and Robert Angell, 8 (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1945).

an eyewitness and not present at the time the events.³¹ David Kyvig and Myron Marty refer to the hand written and printed letters, newspapers, books, and manuscripts as material traces of the past.³² Similarly, Michael Hill refers to physical documents as residual traces, which are the tangible, inter-subjective, or verifiable trace evidence frequently found in libraries, archives, and personal collections.³³ For instance, during the data collection process, this study required a thorough examination of the archives of the York City School District, York Heritage Trust (formally known as the York Historical Society), Pennsylvania State Archives and Museum, K. Leroy Irvis Collection at the University of Pittsburgh, the Charles Blockson Collection, and the Urban Archives -- both located at Temple University.

In addition to the text material, David Kyvig and Myron Marty consider artifacts, such as objects and photographs, material traces of the past. While collecting information for this study, several participants made reference to the homemade medallions sold and worn during the student movement in York. However, following the interview with Reginald Ellis in Cincinnati, Ohio, I discovered he preserved the medallion he wore in 1968. Figure 2 below is a photocopy of the Black Pride medallion Ellis preserved in his scrapbook.

³¹ Ibid., 8.

³² Kyvig and Marty, *Nearby History*, 46.

³³ Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques, Qualitative Research Methods* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), 2.



Figure 2. Black Pride Day Medallion

Prior to Ellis allowing me to physically examine the artifact, I attempted to describe the artifacts based on unclear photographs and other participants' descriptions from recall. Therefore, trace materials are not only a physical representation of history, but the physical artifact can also provide insight, explanation, and details of the past.

Even though trace materials are an important component of historical research, scholars cannot rely solely on them to fully depict the past. For instance, the documents written about the student activism and curriculum reform in York comes primarily from

the perspectives of the school officials, newspaper staffers, and others -- most of whom were white males. However, in this study I conducted oral history interviews with African Americans who were present during the movement which provide a perspective that helped the triangulation of the various data sources.

James Hoopes defines oral history as “the collecting of an individual’s spoken memories of his life, people he has known, and events he has witnessed or participated in.”³⁴ The purpose of conducting an oral history is to obtain personal and first hand recollections of the past. Oral history has sometimes been described as “alternative history” or “unofficial history.”³⁵ Oral history has been described this way because it provides a perspective different from histories “traditional” or “official” point of view. According to Michael Frisch, oral history serves as a source of historical information and insight in the formulation of historical generalizations and narratives.³⁶ Furthermore, Jack Dougherty maintains that oral history is a rich source that provides a better understanding of the significance of the past.³⁷ The illumination of neglected histories in recent times is attributed to the emergence of social history and the history of “ordinary” people. According to Eric Foner, this shift from “top-down” to “bottom-up” perspective of history provides historians with an opportunity to illuminate neglected

³⁴ James Hoopes, *Oral History: An Introduction for Students* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Joy Ann Williamson, “We Hope for Nothing; We Demand Everything:” Black Students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1965 - 1975.” (Ph. D. diss., University of Illinois, 1998).

³⁵ David Hey, “Editorial Preface,” in *Oral History and the Local Historian*, ed. Stephen Caunce, ix (London: Longman, 1994).

³⁶ Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York, 1990), 9.

³⁷ Jack Dougherty, “From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History,” *Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (1999).

and undocumented areas of the past.³⁸ Oral history provides a viable method for accessing the history of ordinary people and the telling of history from the “bottom-up.”

There are, however, some limitations to utilizing oral history sources. Louis Gottschalk contends that, in many historical circles, the recent past is not a proper subject for historians to engage.³⁹ Paul Thompson indicates that there is some academic mistrust of oral history methods.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Thompson notes that some historians mistrust oral history as evidenced by some history department’s low regard for *Oral History Review* as an important journal in the discipline. Even though oral history may not be regarded highly among some traditional historians, it is becoming more popular and acceptable as younger and respected historians use oral evidence as a primary source to bring to light history not found in archival or documentary materials.

Researching, preserving, and presenting the stories of individuals, organizations, and events of the Black Freedom Struggle is exhaustive and arduous work.⁴¹ Civil rights research can be painstaking; especially when written documentation does not exist or has not been well documented or preserved. Margaret Wilkerson notes that conducting and producing scholarship on civil rights is similar to archeological dig--it is slow and meticulous, but it rewards one with an occasional “find.”⁴² In most cases, civil rights

³⁸ Eric Foner, “History in Crisis,” *Commonweal*, 18 December 1981, 725; For more information on bottom up history see Jim Davidson and Mark Lytle’s chapter “The View From the Bottom Rail: Oral History and the Freedpeople” in *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, eds. James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000).

³⁹ Gottschalk, “The Historian and the Historical Document.”

⁴⁰ Paul Thompson, *The Voices of the Past: Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 218.

⁴¹ See Clayborne Carson’s *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). Carson uses the phrase Black Freedom Struggle to depict the movement in the United States regarding the push for equality among African Americans.

⁴² Margaret B. Wilkerson, “Excavating Our History: The Importance of Biographies of Women of Color,” *Black American Literature Forum* 24, no. 1 (1990): 75.

scholars rely on a variety of sources in the data collection process such as memoirs, autobiographies, public and private correspondences, news articles, and opinion editorial from newspapers. Some civil rights scholars also use magazines, journals, organizations' and civic groups' materials; classified government documents, oral interviews, and personal collections which contain photographs, scrapbooks, artifacts, and documents.⁴³

The Civil Rights Movement is not a monolith event or period. Furthermore, the people who witnessed, experienced, and endured the Movement did not follow the same trajectory toward freedom. Unfortunately, civil rights scholars often trace the life stories and trajectories of the great men, great events, and marquis places of the movement.⁴⁴ For instance, David Garrow's book, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, used King as the focal point to tell the story of the civil rights movement.⁴⁵ Garrow drew much of his research from archival data, over 700 interviews, and classified files from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).⁴⁶

In Taylor Branch's massive, 1000-plus-page, journalistic-style narrative biography, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954 – 63*, King is the primary focus of the manuscript. Like Garrow, Branch uses King to tell a story of the

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ This literature include books, monographs, articles and essays on individuals and topics such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, the Birmingham Bus Boycott, and the March on Washington.

⁴⁵ David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

⁴⁶ Sanders and Williamson, "What Really Happened," 206.

Civil Rights Movement. Branch states his attempt was to present the history of the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of strangers, foreigners, and enemies of King.⁴⁷ Since Branch solicited and provided multiple perspectives of King, the audience is privy to the multidimensionality of the civil rights leader.

Although more noted individuals, events, and places have garnered recognition in the national headlines and dominate civil rights historiography, unheralded and lesser-known individuals and events across the country tremendously influenced the development of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Freedom Struggle.

It is also imperative to broaden the scope of the movement to include some of the radical trajectories of the Black Freedom Struggle. In *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power*, Timothy Tyson presents a 402-page biography of one of the most influential African American radicals of a generation that toppled Jim Crow.⁴⁸ The life of Robert F. Williams illustrates that the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement emerged from the same soil, confronted the same predicaments, and reflected the same quest for freedom and equality for Black citizens in the United States. Robert F. Williams supported and endorsed Tyson efforts before he passed away. In addition, the Williams family granted Tyson access to personal documents, photographs and materials and from time to time verified facts.⁴⁹ Tyson indicated that the support of the Williams family, especially Robert's wife, Mabel R. Williams, made it possible for him to complete the manuscript.

⁴⁷ Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), xii.

⁴⁸ Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 379.

In an effort to preserve and present the efforts and contributions of local civil rights activists, Andrew Manis produced a 541-page oral-history biography on Fred Shuttlesworth. *A Fire You Can't Put Out: the Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* is Manis' interpretation of one of the nation's most fiery and courageous individuals who has not been given the whole-hearted respect credit for his contributions to the movement.⁵⁰ During the eleven years it took to complete his manuscript, Manis relied heavily on 75 hours of interviews with Shuttlesworth and those who knew him since traditional archival documents are rare or nonexistent for local and grassroots leaders.

Regardless of the perspective, "top-down" or "bottom-up," most civil rights studies focus on male figures despite the fact that women normally outnumbered the men as far as participation in the movement.⁵¹ Belinda Robnett argues that African American women in leadership positions often served as the "bridge" between local civil rights struggles and national protest organizations.⁵² In addition, women established links and connections with grassroots organizations that provided the mass support for civil rights goals and objectives. Therefore, examining the role of women is essential in providing a fuller picture of civil rights studies.

Chana Kai Lee's 255-page historical biography, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*, is a presentation of a local organizer who became a national icon. Lee argues that personal history gives a more comprehensive assessment of a person's

⁵⁰ Andrew Michael Manis, *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 2.

⁵¹ Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

⁵² Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long?: African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

life because traditional studies and research on Black female historical figures often results in merely another story of a “strong black woman.”⁵³ In her study, Lee examined the social and economic challenges of rural Black poor people and Hamer’s efforts to help her community. While Lee used traditional historical methods, her methodology was also eclectic. For instance, in addition to examining documents in manuscript collections, Lee conducted a number of personal interviews and utilized interviews from oral history collections to weave together the story of Hamer.⁵⁴

Cynthia Griggs Fleming’s 224-page biography, *Soon We Will Not Cry: The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson*, also utilizes less traditional methods to tell the story of an African American woman who dedicated herself to the Movement. Although Robinson died at an early age of twenty-five years, many indicated that “she was the glue of SNCC,” despite ideological, political, and racial changes in the organization.⁵⁵ Robinson shunned the media limelight, remained in the shadows of other civil rights activists, and chose not to write an autobiography because she believed the movement was bigger than any single individual.⁵⁶ Since the scholarship about Smith Robinson was non-existent, Fleming relied on interviews with the Smith family to help her develop a narrative about Robinson’s participation in the movement. Fleming states, “Reminiscences helped me to understand Ruby the daughter, sister, wife and mother.”⁵⁷ While Fleming’s primary reliance on interviews created skepticism of its

⁵³ Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 180.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁵ Cynthia Griggs Fleming, *Soon We Will Not Cry: The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 190.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

validity, at the least her narrative provides a story of how people remember Ruby Doris and her participation in the movement.

Critical Ethnographic Research in Recounting Memory

In addition to a historical analysis, this study employs a critical ethnographic approach. Jim Thomas argues that critical thinking is an action and ideology.⁵⁸ As a social activity, critical thinking ranges from modest rethinking of comfortable thoughts to more direct engagement, which includes political activism. In addition to direct action, critical thinking is an “ideology” and a way of thinking that challenges traditional canons and beliefs.⁵⁹ According to Thomas, critical inquiry underscores and emphasizes the plurality, fragmentation, and “fractured totality of everyday experience.”⁶⁰ An aspect of critical research is the process of defamiliarization - a way of making the familiar unfamiliar by distancing ourselves from the “taken-for-granted” aspect of what we see.⁶¹ This study is critical for several reasons. It challenges the master narrative of the civil rights scholarship, reassesses the sources and data collected regarding past events and activities, and re-evaluates the development of reforms and policies stemmed from these reassessed actions.

According to Thomas, ethnographic work relies on qualitative interpretations of data. Thomas notes that there are two forms of ethnographic work – conventional and

⁵⁷ Ibid., ix.

⁵⁸ Thomas, *Doing Critical Ethnography*, 6.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁶¹ Ibid., 43.

critical.⁶² Even though critical ethnography is embedded in conventional ethnography, Thomas distinguishes the differences between the two. Conventional ethnography refers to the tradition of cultural description and analysis that displays meaning by interpreting meanings. In addition, Thomas argues that conventional ethnographers study culture for the purpose of describing it and they generally speak for their subjects, to an audience of other researchers.⁶³ Furthermore, Thomas suggests that conventional ethnography assumes the status quo and seldom reveals the perspectives of the research subjects in the study.⁶⁴ While Thomas describes conventional ethnography, he also delineates the characteristics of critical ethnography. Thomas argues that critical ethnography is a “subversion” worldview compared to the conventional logic of critical inquiry and does not stand in opposition to conventional ethnography.⁶⁵ Instead, Thomas contends that critical ethnography is conventional ethnography with a political purpose.

Scholars in the social sciences and humanities conduct ethnographic research and use ethnographic methodologies to collect data such as oral history and life history to help the informant’s frame their own stories.⁶⁶ The definition of *interview* is a meeting at which information is obtained from a person.⁶⁷ Valerie Yow describes the interviewee as the informant and Kvale describes the interviewer as a miner or

⁶² Ibid., 3.

⁶³ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., vii.

⁶⁶ Wolcott, *Ethnography*, 160.

⁶⁷ Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996).

investigator.⁶⁸ For the purposes of this project, I will use Kvale's notion of the qualitative interview.⁶⁹ Oral and life histories provide a context in which to question the rationale of ethnographic inquiry and ethnographic methods. For example, Esther Horne and Sally McBeth suggest that life stories enable people tell about themselves from their own perspectives.⁷⁰ In addition to enabling "the natives to do the talking," Clifford Geertz argues that ethnographic inquiry provides detailed thick descriptions.⁷¹

D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly's *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* explores clarifying others' actions and events through narratives. Clandinin and Connelly suggest that narrative inquiry enables the researcher to explore personal histories to understand how people act and are influenced.⁷² Stephen Caunce alludes that personal testimonies provide a new dimension to our understanding of the past.⁷³ Oral history creates its own documents, such as transcripts and field notes, which are explicit dialogues about the past. However, researchers must treat oral evidence as rigorous as they treat written or physical evidence.

In *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone indicate that the idea of contest is apparently a straightforward one: it evokes

⁶⁸ Kvale, *Interviews*; Valerie R. Yow, *Recording Oral History* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994).

⁶⁹ Kvale, *Interviews*.

⁷⁰ Esther Horne and Sally McBeth, *Essie's Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xi.

⁷¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 7.

⁷² D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 189.

⁷³ Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian*, ix.

a struggle in the terrain of truth.⁷⁴ To contest past events is a struggle to find the truth of these events and answer the question, "What really happened?" The authors argue that groups can provide the truth and answers to some questions in which knowledge has previously been discounted. As a result, the testimonies provided by the neglected may challenge dominant or privileged narratives. The authors also ask who or what event is entitled to speak for the past in the present. There is a certain level of certainty because the person who remembers past events was there at the time of the events. Oral historians solicit the voices of those who have been silent and ignored: the poor, powerless, minority groups, and women, who are often unheard in history.

Hodgkin and Radstone suggest that one should turn to memory in order to reveal "What really happened?" They argue that memories evoke counter-narratives or correctives to the assumptions made by traditional makers of history.⁷⁵ Furthermore, oral testimonies provide counterpoints to the official narratives. The authors acknowledge that memories make claims about the past which will not be acceptable to everyone. In his book, *Remembering Ahanagram: Storytelling in a Family's Past*, Richard White recognizes the difficulties distinguishing the differences of memory and history.⁷⁶ Dionne Danns explicates that memory is the lifeline of history, for it breathes emotion and heart into a story.⁷⁷ Hodgkin and Radstone also argue that the politics of memory of members of a group is not identical with the personal memories of individual activists, even though they may share events and concerns. Michael Frisch argues that

⁷⁴ Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁶ Dionne A. Danns, "Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001), 5.

⁷⁷ Danns, "Something Better for Our Children."

oral history is a tool necessary to study memory.⁷⁸ Memory adds perspective and authenticity to the view expressed by participants.

In his article, "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History," Patrick Hutton points out that early twentieth century historian R. G. Collingwood argue that the relationship between memory and history is fluid and uncomplicated.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Hutton points out that Maurice Halbwachs found that memory and history is antithetical. According to Halbwachs, "Memory confirms resemblances with the past while history searches for differences. Memory distorts the past, whereas the historian's obligation is to correct memory's inaccuracies."⁸⁰ Collingwood also explains that collective memory is a construction of the living imagination of historical actors of the past. Hutton acknowledges that historians of the past recognized the issues of memory and history, however, contemporary historians engage in a different kind of dialogue with the past. Contemporary historians are more suspicious of the distortions of memory and they are more cognizant of the transference of their own memories onto the histories they write.⁸¹

In "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," Susan A. Crane argues that collective memory is a conceptualization that expresses a sense of the continual

⁷⁸ Frisch, *A Shared Authority*, 22.

⁷⁹ Patrick Hutton, "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History," *The History Teacher* 33, no. 4 (2000): 535; see also R. G. Collingwood and W. J. van der Dussen, *The Idea of History*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

⁸⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), quoted in Hutton, "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History," 538.

⁸¹ Hutton, "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History," 535. One issue of transference that plagues historians is presentism which Derrick Alridge explains in his article, "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African-American Educational Historian," *Educational Researcher* 32, no. 9 (2003).

presence of the past.⁸² Crane further explains the difference between collective and historical memory stating that collective memory is the framework in which historical remembering occurs. Furthermore, historical memory is one form for the content of collective memory and always appears in the form of historical narrative.

The use of memory is imperative for this study. Unfortunately, historical records often exclude and do not provide a wide range of perspectives of many past events. Through oral history interviews, participants and observers provide memories and recollections of many events that have gone forgotten in history. Just as Thomas Webber examined a slave community and Vanessa Siddle-Walker investigated an exemplary segregated school, both studies give much credence to participants' voice and memory.⁸³ Furthermore, the narratives and memories of the individuals involved in the student movement in York is a departure from much historical work that continues to privilege traditional primary sources, such as government documents, school reports and newspaper articles. By placing the participant's voices and memories center stage in this study, I have provided a "critical" study of past events.

⁸² Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into the Collective Memory," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1372 – 1385.

⁸³ Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community 1831 – 1865* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978); Vanessa Siddle-Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Towards a Critical Historical Ethnography

There is a movement in academic and social circles towards revisiting issues that are taken-for-granted as truths.⁸⁴ In order to effectively engage in this type of scholarship, the utilization of multi-pronged research methods is necessary. For instance, this study regarding Black high school student activism for educational and curricular reforms during the late 1960s utilizes a multi-pronged research method. I argue that critical historical ethnography is a methodology that combines disciplines to enable the researchers to 1) revisit the historical record and educational reforms to explore overlooked aspects, issues, and perspectives, 2) reassess conventional source materials while excavating sources neglected or dismissed by traditionalists and 3) provide meaning and understanding of issues from the perspective of the people who were and are affected by the matter.

Some topics are neglected because of the narrow scope endemic to historical master narratives. For instance, Peniel Joseph argues that the periodization of the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1965, with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as watershed events, disappointingly silences various aspects of the Movement.⁸⁵ Joseph concludes that this periodization isolates organizations, such as the Black Panthers; places like Monroe, North Carolina – headquarters of the Monroe branch of the NAACP; individuals such as Robert and Mabel Williams; Ella Baker; and Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka) from the movement

⁸⁴ In *Doing Critical Ethnography*, Thomas describes taken-for-granted truths as extraordinary and mundane events accepted as true, as well as, researching and writing about neglected and misunderstood topics, 43.

⁸⁵ For further discussion on periodization see Peniel E. Joseph, "Waiting Till the Midnight Hour: Reconceptualizing the Heroic Period of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 2, no.2 (2000).

history. As suggested by Clayborne Carson, the Black Freedom Struggle includes all the movement for freedom and equality endured by Blacks.⁸⁶ Derrick Alridge suggests that historians adopt Vincent Harding's less restrictive periodization, rather than the common framework 1954 – 1968, to teach the history of the Black Freedom Struggle and its figures.⁸⁷ Therefore, in order to capture a fuller and more panoramic perspective of the Black Struggle for Freedom, it is imperative to examine figures and events which have gone unheralded in the civil rights master narrative. Studying the events in York, Pennsylvania not only contributes scholarship to the field, but also suggests that more work is needed that examines and explores other under-publicized historical figures and events.

Telling the stories of lesser-known figures is a means of empowering people whose lives were previously shaped by what Gary Okihiro calls “colonized history.” Okihiro alludes to the fact that the stories of the ordinary people could help ethnic groups understand their true condition and could help devise the means for their liberation from economic and social constraints.⁸⁸ Liberating and listening to the voices of the marginalized groups will permit scholars to triangulate their data and vice versa. Collecting and sharing the personal accounts of ordinary individuals who experienced and witnessed the events of the past provides an opportunity for their voices to become a part of the historical record. According to Alridge, voice is the community's worldview

⁸⁶ Carson, *In Struggle*.

⁸⁷ Derrick Alridge, "Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in High School History Courses: Rethinking Content and Pedagogy," in *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement: Freedom's Bittersweet Song*, eds. Julie Buckner Armstrong, Susan Hult Edwards, Houston Bryan Robinson, and Rhoda Y. Williams, 9 (New York: Routledge, 2000); Vincent Harding, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1986), xviii – xix.

⁸⁸ Gary Okihiro, "Oral History and the Writing of Ethnic History," in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, eds. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1996).

or articulation of their quest to improve their social, economic, and political conditions.⁸⁹ Alridge also relates agency to empowerment and the ability to influence the environment such that it serves one's best interest. Aaron Gresson argues that including both the written and unwritten accounts of known and unknown figures and events provides a "multivocal" narrative of Blacks struggle for freedom.⁹⁰

Similar to the works of Thomas L. Webber and Vanessa Siddle-Walker, the York study utilizes a combination of research methodologies to reconstruct and make meaning of past events. In Webber's classic text, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Community 1831 – 1865*, he acknowledges that his study is both anthropological and historical although it is better understood as a "culture history."⁹¹ His study is anthropological in the sense that the analysis and understanding of a slave society was based on the experiences and information elicited from former slaves. Webber's study is also historical since he examines a past era. Research of this nature engages discourse and dialogue amongst scholars in various disciplines that may not normally occur. According to Webber, his study "assumes that the primary understanding of how a group views the world and operates within it must be reached, as nearly as possible, from that group's perspective. Only through members of a given social system, through the attempt to see the world as they see it, can we hope to understand the subjective meaning with which that group and its individual members understand themselves and

⁸⁹ Derrick Alridge, "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African-American Educational Historian." *Educational Researcher* 32, no. 9 (2003): 25 - 34.

⁹⁰ Aaron David Gresson, *The Recovery of Race in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). Gresson indicates that the "univocal" narrative is the one dimensional view of truth seeking.

⁹¹ Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community 1831 – 1865* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 263.

the world in which they live.”⁹² While Webber described his study as a cultural history, Vanessa Siddle-Walker described her study of Black education in the segregated South as “historical ethnography” since she used historical and ethnographic methods.⁹³ Siddle-Walker acknowledges that the historical aspect of her study reconstructs the activities and events in a segregated Black school in Caswell County North Carolina from 1934 – 1969. Simultaneously, Siddle-Walker acknowledges the ethnographic facet of her study in relation to her analysis of the participant lives and their understanding of the school.

Telling a story from the perspective of those who have been traditionally marginalized offers broader insight to historically myopic views of a particular event or story. This type of work allows the others to imagine what it might be like to be in someone else’s shoes.⁹⁴ Critical historical ethnography also recognizes the integral role participants play in the research process and gives voice to their perspectives and experiences they share.⁹⁵ Therefore, the research in which I am conducting on northern Black high school students will examine the events that occurred during the spring of 1968, while highlighting the experiences of the students who participated in the activities.

Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability

In *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, Sharan Merriam states, “All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge

⁹² Ibid., 263.

⁹³ Vanessa Siddle-Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 221.

⁹⁴ Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁹⁵ Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research* (London: Sage, 1998).

in an ethical way.”⁹⁶ Even though some qualitative researchers debate over issues of assessing validity, reliability, and generalizability, it is addressed in this study.⁹⁷

Validity entails matching the research findings with reality. On the other hand, reliability is the consistency of observations yielded over repeated recordings for either one subject or a set of subjects.⁹⁸ The data is reliable if it’s consistent across other sources. Catherine Riessman argues that accounting for validity, reliability, and generalizability of a study ensures its “trustworthiness.”⁹⁹

Another aspect of trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry is the researcher’s acknowledgment of his or her biases. As the primary investigator in this study, I acknowledge my subjectivities. I am an African American male, born and raised in York, Pennsylvania, who also attended William Penn Senior High School. As a native of York, I provide an emic (insider) perspective to this study. I understand some of the existing contextual complexities with which an etic (outsider) perspective may not be familiar or provide.¹⁰⁰ As an “insider,” I share some commonalities with the informants based on the fact that we are from York, Pennsylvania or have some affiliation with William Penn Senior High School. Consequently, I am also cognizant of my role as an “outsider;” I no

⁹⁶ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 198.

⁹⁷ For the various positions on validity, reliability and generalizability in qualitative research see Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,” in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage 1994); Connelly and Clandinin “Personal Experience Methods” in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, eds. *Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994); Harry Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation* (Thousand Oaks: Sage 1994); Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln, *Effective Evaluation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981).

⁹⁸ Charles D. Hopkins, *Understanding Educational Research*(Columbus: Merrill, 180), 45.

⁹⁹ Catherine K. Riessman, "Narrative Analysis," in John Van Maanen ed. *Qualitative Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1993).

¹⁰⁰ Wolcott, *Ethnography*.

longer live in the community and I am at least one generation younger than the informants.

In his article on trust and memory, Alan Wieder suggests that the researcher has as a unique opportunity to ask questions which can yield significant material, so long as the interviewer is honest and avoids leading questions that trap the person into saying what the interviewer wants to hear.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Wieder argues that a level of trust be established between the interviewer and interviewee from the onset.¹⁰² Before many of the participants trusted me to share their stories, some checked and verified my background and credentials with their family members, friends and classmates. Some research participants indicated that they were delighted that someone was interested in their story. On the other hand, others felt compelled to participate because they wanted to help a young Black man from York complete the dissertation process.

Initially, I decided to interview Black student leaders depicted in a story and photographed in the April 6, 1968 edition of the *Gazette and Daily*. The article, "William Penn Students Mourn King," which included two photographs, covered the entire third page of the newspaper.¹⁰³ The full-page story detailed the actions of the Black William Penn Senior High School students. In addition, the photographs also captured the day's events. In the first photo, the Black student leaders posed as they held the Black Pride Day banner. The photographer captured a wide angle shot of the Black students assembled in the auditorium in the second picture. However, in order to

¹⁰¹ Alan Wieder, "Trust and Memory: Explorations in Oral History and Biography," in Craig Kridel, ed. *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research*, 113 - 119 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998), 113.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King." *The Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968.

acquire various perspectives, I interviewed individuals from different graduation classes, bystanders, participants, and organizers. The process I used to select the interviewees is referred to as purposeful sampling.¹⁰⁴ According to Merriam, purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select from which the most can be learned.¹⁰⁵ In addition to purposeful sampling, I used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling occurs after making a first interview contact, in which I contact additional references referred to me in the initial interviews.¹⁰⁶ I conducted follow-up interviews with some participants to either confirm stories or ask new questions. Following each interview, it was imperative to expand my field notes while the thoughts were fresh in my mind.

The next step in the process was to transcribe the tape-recorded interviews. Most people are unaware of the grammatical mistakes made when speaking. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba, I conducted member checks, which allowed the participants to review the transcripts so they could verify what I had transcribed as an accurate account of what they said.¹⁰⁷ However, this tends to be time consuming. For instance, one participant was satisfied with the oral interview, but was dissatisfied with the written transcript of the interview. Therefore, in some instances I edited portions of the transcripts to provide coherent sentences.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 61.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Yow, *Recording Oral History*; see also Dougherty, "From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History," 6.

¹⁰⁷ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1985).

In addition to their recorded stories, I examined documentary materials thoroughly. These primary sources included articles from the local newspaper: *The Gazette and Daily* as well as the *York Dispatch*; the two local newspapers that were in circulation and covered the events in 1968, York City School District annual reports, School Board meeting minutes, William Penn Senior High School yearbooks, York city planning and longitudinal study reports. For the purposes of this project, I also examined articles related to the death of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the actions and reactions of the community to the William Penn students, and other surrounding events which contextualize the research topic.

Wolcott encourages researchers to avail themselves of a wide possible range of techniques, rather than rely too exclusively on single source data.¹⁰⁹ This suggested research strategy, which converge the validation of multiple methods as well as the validation of multiple data collection and analysis techniques, is called triangulation. According Norman Denzin, triangulation is “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon.”¹¹⁰ The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation.¹¹¹ Therefore, multiple viewpoints provide the investigator with a greater sense of confidence and accuracy.

¹⁰⁸ For an example of edited interviews see Timuel Black, *Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Black Migration* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁹ Wolcott, *Ethnography*.

¹¹⁰ Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 291; Also see Todd D. Jick, “Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action,” in *Qualitative Methodology*, ed. John Van Maanen (Newbury Park: Sage, 1979).

¹¹¹ Uwe Flick, “Trangulation revisited : Strategy of validation or alternative?” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 22, no. 2 (1992): 194.

More importantly, triangulation involves cross-checking for internal reliability and external validity. For instance, the primary investigator in the York study cross-checked archival documents such as the news clippings from the *Gazette and Daily and York Dispatch* as well as testimonies and stories shared by various interviewees.

Research Process and Approach

During my first year at the University of Georgia, I began formulating my research agenda in a course entitled *Education, Schooling, and the Civil Rights Movement* with Professor Derrick Alridge. I realized that most people in the class were unaware of the injustices and movement activities outside the South. The majority of literature produced about the movement focuses on individuals and events in the American South. In addition to the heavy emphasis on the South, scholars of student activism focus on the events and activities that occurred on college and university campuses. Although some literature covered accounts of student activism in the North, they primarily have focused on the metropolises of New York, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, and Philadelphia. Being from a small town, it was evident that events that occurred in “small places” were critical to the historiography of the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, I began to consider a research agenda that would focus on Black student activism and education reform in small town America. Furthermore, I expected to explore the historical events that have attributed to the social and educational changes in York.

Before I started interviewing possible participants, I obtained approval from the University of Georgia’s Internal Research Board (IRB) to question and interview subjects. Before each interview, I required each participant to sign a University approved IRB consent form which permitted me to record our conversation on

audiotape. I provided each participant with a cover letter, which explains my research purpose, and a photocopy of the newspaper article that ran in the April 6, 1968, edition of the *Gazette and Daily* that includes a photograph of William Penn students holding the Black Pride Day banner. See Appendix A and B for a copy of the IRB consent form and cover letter. I began conducting telephone and face-to-face interviews with former students of William Penn and community activists. These conversations helped me better understand the climate of York during the 1960s and helped provide me with information and names of other former students who were present at the Black Pride Day activities.

My original intent was to interview students depicted as leaders or organizers. However, after conducting the initial interviews with student leaders and organizers, I realized it was necessary to include the experiences of participants with various levels of involvement as well as those who just observed.¹¹² These interviews contributed to the students' perspective of the conditions of WPSHS as well as insight into the events surrounding and including Black Pride Day. In addition to former students, I also interviewed former William Penn Senior High School teachers and staff, community members, and parents of the former students. The senior citizens interviewed during this study provide an adult perspective of the social context of York as well as the events that unfolded over 35 years ago. For this study, 53 individuals (26 were students during the BPD, 6 were York City School District employees, 4 were parents of former students, and 16 were community members) were interviewed.¹¹³

¹¹² William Chafe, *The Pear Stories: Cognitive, Cultural and Linguistic Aspects of Narrative Production* (Norwood: Ablex, 1980).

¹¹³ See appendix for list of interviewees.

I use “Black Pride Day” as the pivotal event to illuminate Black student activism, curriculum reform, and memory at William Penn Senior High School. The diversity of the individuals and perspectives also provides a clearer understanding of the events that transpired over three decades ago. In addition to the participants’ stories, I also sought access to their personal scrapbooks, yearbooks, and photo albums. My research questions were drawn from an interview guide, as well as, open-ended questions to provide students with an opportunity to talk about their experiences. Throughout the interview, I listened attentively and took field notes to remind myself to ask additional questions or to seek further information.

My findings allowed me to connect and make meaning of the local events as they related to those which occurred at the national and global level. I also realize that throughout my formal education I have been taught histories of people, places and events separately and in broad or no contexts. Until recently, during my own inquiry of York history was I able to relate and make sense of the historical events in my hometown to the events throughout the United States. This enlightenment has intrigued me to explore the topic even further and to pursue it as my dissertation topic. The research methods used in this study helped me to bring the Black high school students to center stage of Civil Rights history and to highlight their fight for social justice during the height of the movement. It is my hope that this research process will encourage others to engage in critical historical ethnography to explore the influences of Black student activism on secondary curriculum reform during the Civil Rights Movement.

My position in this study is clear. I am a critical historical ethnographer native of York, Pennsylvania and alumni of William Penn Senior High School. It is my position to

collect and analyze data to help understand a phenomenon such as the 1968 Black Pride Day as well as the Black student activism and curriculum reform from the perspective of participants and participant observers of past activities and events. I must also mention, that I was privileged the opportunity to obtain access to individuals and information based on the fact that I am a product of the York community. I am indebted to my parents and immediate family who I relied upon to gain entry and access to individuals in this study population whom are at least one generation older than myself. Indirectly, this study of Black student activism and curriculum reform is a self-reflective study by first examining the place and ancestors of the community in which I was raised.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the history of the Black Freedom Struggle, Black students played a critical role in the liberation of Black people in America. Along with adults, Black students fought on the front-lines and challenged social, economic, and educational injustices in America. It has been well-documented that Black students on campuses across the country challenged college and university officials to meet their demands.¹¹⁴ While the historiography of Black student activism primarily focuses on events at colleges and universities, Black student activism at the secondary level should not be overlooked. In some communities, Blacks demanded control over schools in which their children were enrolled.¹¹⁵ In other cities, Black parents and students demanded that districts provide culturally relevant curriculum and hire Black teachers and staff.¹¹⁶ Even though community control was not the issue in York, Black students demanded that the school district provide relevant curriculum and hire additional Black faculty and staff. Before examining the details of the 1968 Black Pride Day, a review of the relevant literature is necessary. The literature review includes an examination of primary and secondary sources in the area of Black student activism, curriculum reform, and memory.

¹¹⁴Raymond Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus : Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Donald Alexander Downs, *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); William H. Exum, *Paradoxes of Protest: Black Student Activism in a White University* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985); Harry Edwards, *Black Students* (New York: Free Press, 1970).

¹¹⁵ Jane Anna Gordon, *Why They Couldn't Wait: A Critique of the Black-Jewish Conflict over Community Control in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, 1967-1971* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001); Dionne A. Danna, "Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001).

¹¹⁶ Jack Dougherty, "More Than One Struggle: African-American School Reform Movements in Milwaukee, 1930-1980" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1997). Dwayne Wright, "Black Pride Day 1968: High School Student Activism in York, Pennsylvania," *Journal of African American History* 88, no. 2 (2003).

Black Student Activism

In his article, “On the Black Student Movement – 1960 – 1970,” Muhammad Ahmad argues that the Black Student Movement was an outgrowth of the other movement which the Black struggle for social, political, and economic equality. Ahmad traces the beginnings of Black student activism shortly after Reconstruction, when land grant colleges and universities were established for African people.¹¹⁷ He also notes that during the 1920s and 1930s, Black students conducted strikes on the campuses of Negro institutions, such as the Hampton Institute, Fisk, and Howard Universities. Students protested the stringent moral codes and the deplorable physical conditions of their institutions. According to Joel Rosenthal, during the mid 1930s, Black students at Howard, Morgan College, Virginia State and Virginia Union students vowed not to support the government of the United States in any war. While some students protested war activities, returned war veterans at Lincoln University protested segregation practices of local establishments in Oxford, Pennsylvania.¹¹⁸ Ahmad suggests that these events were the foundation for the mass student participation in direct action tactics in the 1960’s.

Ahmad also acknowledges the influence the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) had on the Black Student Movement. The author illustrated that RAM organized a student wing called Afro-American Student Movement (ASM), which called a student conference on Black Nationalism in Nashville, Tennessee in May of 1964. According to Ahmad, the conference is a watershed moment in the movement that shifted from Civil

¹¹⁷ Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement – 1960 – 1970” *The Black Scholar* 9, no. 2 (May/June 1978): 2 - 11.

¹¹⁸ Joel Rosenthal, “Southern Black Student Activism: Assimilation vs. Nationalism,” *Journal of Negro Education* 44 (Spring 1975): 120.

Rights to Black Power.¹¹⁹ Ahmad also notes that SNCC organized students on college campuses in the South, while RAM organized Black high school youth in northern cities such as New York and Philadelphia.¹²⁰ Just as the youth in major cities were influenced by radical organizations such as RAM, the youth in York were also influenced by militant individuals and organizations.¹²¹

In “Negro Students and Protest Movements” Donald Matthews and James Prothro suggests that the *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* decision raised Negroes’ expectations to new heights.¹²² Many Blacks expected to receive the privileges of first-class citizenship with the overturn of *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*. However, the clause “with deliberate speed” enabled Whites to continue the legal disenfranchisement of Negroes. The slow progress toward racial equality provoked some Blacks to shift from passive to aggressive protest tactics. As Blacks employed direct action protest tactics, southern Whites believed Blacks were moving too far too fast.¹²³ However, Whites’ concerns did not stop Blacks from challenging racial inequalities in America. The York study provides an understanding of the aggressive protest tactics utilized in Black protest movements.

¹¹⁹ Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement – 1960 – 1970,” 5.

¹²⁰ Matthew J. Countryman, “Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia, 1940 – 1971” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1999).

¹²¹ During several interviews, participants mentioned the influence of militant individuals and organizations such as Oclana Chalk, Lionel Bailey, Black Panther Party, and the Black Unity Movement (B.U.M).

¹²² Donald Matthews and James Prothro, “Negro Students and the Protest Movement,” in *Black Power and Student Rebellion*, ed. James McEvoy and Abraham Miller (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1969).

¹²³ Ibid.

Two of the most cited works regarding Black student activism are Howard Zinn's *The New Abolitionists* and Clayborne Carson's *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of 1960's*. Both texts address the inaccuracies and misconceptions of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). As an early advisor of SNCC, Zinn provides insight about the organization and its members. According to Zinn, "young people are the nation's most vivid reminder that there is an unquenchable spirit alive in the world."¹²⁴

Also as an insider, Carson provides a perspective of SNCC via volunteers and full-time members.¹²⁵ Carson presents a meticulous historical account of SNCC which emerged in the early 60s, thrived in the mid 60s, and died in the 70s.¹²⁶ Carson notes that the diverse composition of SNCC's membership challenged the status quo and the overwhelming American middle class values.¹²⁷ While Zinn and Carson examined a nationally recognized and structured organization, the York study examines local initiatives of a spontaneous yet orderly group of Black students.

In his book, *Black Students*, Harry Edwards explores and analyzes the historical development of the Black student movement during the 1960s. Although contested by others, Edwards argues the Black student movement in the 1960s was the first movement led by young Blacks.¹²⁸ Edwards also notes that the Black student movement

¹²⁴ Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), ii.

¹²⁵ V. P. Franklin, "Black High School Student Activism in the 1960s: An Urban Phenomenon?," *Journal of Research in Education* 10, no. 1 (2000).

¹²⁶ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1

is imbedded within the Black liberation struggle in America.¹²⁹ He attributes the 400 years of oppression along with the idealism of Black youth to the rise of the Black student rebellion.¹³⁰ Like others, Edwards alludes that the 1960s Black student movement changed over the decade. In addition to more aggressive protest tactics, Edwards notes that the student slogans and chants shifted from peaceful to militant -- “We Shall Over Come” to “Freedom Now” and “By Any Means Necessary.” While Edwards indicates that Black students activism progressed more militantly towards the end of the decade, the 1968 protest activities by the students in York were, for the most part, peaceful, however, there were some militant elements within the movement.

An example of a Black militant student movement was presented by Donald Downs in *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University*. Downs chronicles the student activism at Cornell University during the late 1960s. According to Downs, the student movement at Cornell was the first campus conflict in which students armed themselves with guns and ammunition. The majority of the source materials for his book derive from interviews from the Cornell Project of Oral History.¹³¹ Downs also argues that opposition to the war in Vietnam and the energy of the Civil Rights Movement together stimulated student radicalism. However, he notes that Cornell's administration actively recruited “extremist” and “radical” minority students to campus. Downs concludes that the ideal of integration gave way to the ideology of Black Power,

¹²⁸ Edwards, *Black Students*, 1; For a study of the student movement of the 1920's which precedes the movement in the 1960's see Raymond Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus : Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

¹²⁹ Edwards, *Black Students*, 5.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹³¹ Werner J. Dannhauser, review of *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University*, by Donald A. Downs, *Academic Questions* 12, (Fall 1999): 87 – 91.

especially in the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.¹³² Even though many sources refute the argument, the local newspapers cited Dr. King's death as the impetus for the Black student movement in York.

While Black students carried guns at Cornell, Richard McCormick provides an examination of a militant, yet unarmed, student movement in New Jersey. McCormick's *Black Student Protest Movement at Rutgers* chronicles the campus conflicts at Rutgers University during the late 1960s and early 1970s. McCormick's manuscript is a follow-up study of a historical paper memorializing the Rutgers movement. His narrative utilizes perspectives taken from local and national newspapers, as well as, interviews with former Rutgers students. McCormick argues that the Black student movement at Rutgers coincides with the national Black student movement that embraced a more militant doctrine. McCormick also notes that not all Black students participated in the conflicts on campus.¹³³ He also suggests that militancy among Black students was similar to the tone of White American youth in the anti-war movements, feminist movements and other protests against the "establishment."¹³⁴ Some of the former students in the York study indicated that they protested against the establishment; however, there were several students who did not participate in the 1968 Black Pride Day or other protest activities.

During the 1960s, Black student unrests on White campuses, such as San Francisco State, Harvard, Cornell, Columbia and Rutgers, received national media

¹³² Downs, *Cornell '69*, 190.

¹³³ Richard Patrick McCormick, *The Black Student Protest Movement at Rutgers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 20.

¹³⁴ During the 1960s the term establishment was utilized by dissenter to describe the authorities and or leaders of the political structure, government, or ruling class; which was predominately White.

attention.¹³⁵ In his sociological study, *Paradoxes of Protest: Black Student Activism in a White University*, William Exum offers an understanding of the larger phenomenon of Black student activism. Exum accomplishes this by examining and illuminating the dynamics of the Black student movement at University College, an undergraduate liberal arts division of New York University, which was undetected by national media services. Exum states that “social protests and social movements are collective activities aimed at producing a measurable alteration in some aspect of the world deemed unsatisfactory or unacceptable by those seeking change.”¹³⁶ Exum notes that larger societal issues were the primary goals and focus of both White and Black student movements in the early 1960s. In addition, most student activists employed non-violent protest tactics. On the other hand, students after 1965 localized their protest energies towards the educational institutions they attended. Confrontational and sometimes violent tactics were utilized during post-1965 Black student activism. Exum attributes the increase of Black youth involvement in riot activities to the “hot summers” from 1964 – 1967. In York, Pennsylvania, the *Gazette and Daily* reported that 1966 was the first hot summer which contributed to the outbreak of Black violence in the city.¹³⁷

Inspired by Exum’s study, Joy Ann Williamson also offers a historical case study of Black student activism on a predominately White institution (PWI) in *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois 1965 – 1975*. Unlike most studies of Black student activism at PWI’s, Williamson suggests that the debate about blackness and race should

¹³⁵ “Rising Unrest,” *New York Times*, 4 April 1965.

¹³⁶ Exum, *Paradoxes of Protest*, 14.

¹³⁷ The York Dispatch Online, “Before the Riots,” York Dispatch, <http://www.yorkdispatch.com/Stories/0.1413.138%257E27257%257E.00.html> (accessed November 15, 2004).

include gender, socio-economic status, individual and collective responsibility.

Williamson also notes that the University of Illinois Black students focused on immediate issues instead of the goals and agenda set by Black national organizations. Similar to Williamson's study, the Black students in the York movement focused their energies on the issues that affected their lives directly; however, the age group of the students differs in the two studies.

While most historical accounts on student activism focus on institutions of higher education, few studies exist on student activism at the secondary level. Lloyd W. Ashby and John A. Stoops' edited book, *Student Activism in Secondary Schools: A Practical Outlook*, grew out of the Lehigh University Conference on Student Activism. The purpose of the 1969 conference and the proceeding was to address the widespread activism at the secondary level.¹³⁸ In another conference-based book, *Student Unrest: Threat or Promise*, Richard L. Hart and J. Galen Saylor offer suggestions and strategies for administrators by administrators regarding secondary student uprisings and activism.¹³⁹ Both texts responds to and recognizes that student activism at the secondary level was a growing phenomenon in American education. In York, school district officials arranged for personnel to attend similar conferences that addressed these problems.¹⁴⁰

While the previous books provided administrators and teachers with strategies to combat secondary student activism, Marc Libarle and Tom Seligon present insights and

¹³⁸ Lloyd W. Ashby and John A. Stoops, *Student Activism in the Secondary Schools: A Practical Outlook* (Danville: Interstate Printers & Publishers, 1970).

¹³⁹ Richard L. Hart, J. Galen Saylor, and ASCD Council on Secondary Education, *Student Unrest: Threat or Promise?* (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1970).

¹⁴⁰ William Brantley, Director of Student Personnel, attended the Lehigh University Conference on Student Activism in 1969.

explanations of secondary level activism from the students' perspective. In their book, *High School Revolutionaries*, Libarle and Seligon provide first-hand accounts of student activism which included rationales for radical change.¹⁴¹ For the most part, the York study relied on the first hand accounts of individuals who experienced the 1968 Black Pride Day. Hence, the York study furthers and elaborates to this important discussion.

Curricular Reform

Throughout the Black Freedom Struggle, Blacks have played a critical role in curricular reforms regarding the education prescribed for and provided to its people. Following the Civil War, much has been written about the educational and philosophical differences between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. During Reconstruction, Washington advocated vocational education; which is often called the Hampton/Tuskegee model, for the newly emancipated people; on the other hand, Du Bois staunchly supported liberal education.¹⁴² However, White northern and southern politicians and philanthropists overwhelmingly supported the Hampton/Tuskegee model for Black education.

In his essay, "That Evil Genius of the Negro Race: Thomas Jesse Jones and Educational Reform," Herbert M. Kliebard examines one of the architects of the Hampton/Tuskegee model, Thomas Jesse Jones. Kliebard notes that Jones, a professional reformer, used his position to define the problems and impose solutions for Black education. The author also notes that Jones and his followers perpetuated an inferior political status for the people they intended to elevate. According to Kliebard, Jones inadvertently laid the groundwork for a relatively permanent inequality of power

¹⁴¹ Marc Libarle and Tom Seligon, *High School Revolutionaries* (New York: Random House, 1970), vii.

¹⁴² W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

between wealthy Whites and poor Blacks. Kliebard notes that W. E. B. Du Bois questioned Jones' motives, "Who needs a White man to define problems and prescribe solutions for African-Americans?"¹⁴³ Du Bois also criticized and called Thomas Jesse Jones, the "evil genius of the Negro race."¹⁴⁴ Similarly, during the movement in York, Blacks questioned the motives of White administrators of Black education and pondered the type of curriculum they believed Blacks needed.

In his classic, *The Miseducation of the Negro*, Carter G. Woodson explains that the education for Blacks in the United States did not evolve and develop by chance; instead, the formal education was derived from purposeful planning by influential White stakeholders and architects in American society.¹⁴⁵ Woodson also argues that conventional schooling in America brainwashed Blacks into a belief in the superiority of Whites and in Blacks' lack of history or culture.¹⁴⁶ In York, Blacks demanded that public school officials cease "miseducating" its population vis-à-vis culturally skewed and irrelevant curriculum.

One of the classic texts on the development of and curricular reform in American urban education is David Tyack's *One Best System*. Tyack's argues that reforms in urban education, which he calls one best system, have ill-served society.¹⁴⁷ Tyack also notes the rhetoric and intentions of equal educational opportunity has systematically failed

¹⁴³Herbert M. Kliebard, *Changing Course: American Curriculum Reform in the 20th Century* (New York: Teachers College Press), 36.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ For more information on the White stakeholders and architects of Black education see William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁶ Carter G. Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Negro* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1969).

¹⁴⁷ David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 11.

the poor and people of color because of the imbalance of power to the privileged and institutional racism throughout the system. In his chapter, “Victims Without “Crimes”: Black Americans,” Tyack states that “the promise of American education did not extend to Negroes.”¹⁴⁸ His premise is supported by the fact that Blacks were labeled and treated as inferior as a result of “bogus” scientific measurements as well as subjective and intentional classification practices. As a result of the victimization of Blacks, Tyack suggests that Black educational leaders as well as a few Whites sought both curricular and societal reforms.¹⁴⁹ Even though curriculum reform is one of the major focuses of the York study, the movement at William Penn Senior High School addressed societal issues as well.¹⁵⁰

In *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*, David Tyack and Larry Cuban suggest that Blacks have suffered from the unequal education system.¹⁵¹ Tyack and Cuban indicate that the caste system in the South perpetuated the idea that Black was inferior to Whites. The authors also argue that the poor Blacks that migrated to urban centers received substandard education. Tyack and Cuban describe the bureaucracy of education as a “closed system” to minority groups, especially people of color.¹⁵² Tyack and Cuban also allude that the *Brown* ruling was the catalyst for

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 217

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ The Black students also addressed issues beyond the scope of this study. For instance, students demanded that the school district implement the suggestions in the Temple Report, which addressed poverty issues in the city as well as building and grade level structural changes.

¹⁵¹ David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 22.

¹⁵² Ibid., 26.

subjugated groups to gain footing and enabled them to take part in reforming schools.¹⁵³ Education centered around the issue of equal opportunity which provided an equal educational opportunity for all young people regardless of race, class, gender, or creed, contributed to the demise of the public education system.¹⁵⁴ Despite the rhetoric of equal education, the funding disparities and achievement levels between Whites and Blacks were grossly unequal.

Shortly after *Brown*, America lost the space race to Russia in 1957, and a “crisis” was declared in American schools.¹⁵⁵ In *Second Rate Brains*, Kermit Lansner notes that demands were placed on American schools to strengthen its curriculum, especially in the areas of math and science. This pedagogical revolution was an attempt to solve the crisis; educators utilized and experimented with innovative ideas and techniques. Both governmental agencies and philanthropic groups funneled resources to rectify the problem. For instance, York school officials offered math and science programs that were funded by federal and private resources.

Educational historian, Diane Ravitch documents the movement against ignorance in the post World War II era, in her classic text, *The Troubled Crusade*.¹⁵⁶ Ravitch argues that the education reformists and politicians burdened the American public school system with the unfeasible task of solving societal ills. Ravitch also notes that conflicting philosophical, political, social, and economic interests had an impact on the curriculum provided in the American public school system.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁵⁴ Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, xii.

¹⁵⁵ Kermit Lansner, *Second-Rate Brains* (New York: Doubleday, 1958).

¹⁵⁶ Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945 -1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), xi.

Coupled with the change in curriculum, Ravitch contends that the status quo in every area of endeavor was under examination during this era in her essay, “Reformers, Radicals, and Romantics in School Reform.” Also, Ravitch notes that the social unrest of the sixties influenced the students but also had an impact on the curriculum.¹⁵⁷ To address the disparity of achievement between White and Black students, school districts implemented ability tracking systems. Ravitch points out that liberal ideals permeated federal social programs appeasing Black demands. For instance, as a result of Lyndon Johnson’s war on poverty, schools shifted its focus away from math and science to address the needs of the disadvantaged. Ravitch’s work indicates that the equal opportunity movement was supported by federal legislation such as Title VI of the 1965 Civil Rights Act and Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, Ravitch notes that social scientists produced a vast amount of literature on the demise of urban education. To remedy the decline of urban education, compensatory education programs were developed. Social scientists studied the relationships between race, social class, and learning. Social scientists generated books, articles, and held conferences and seminars on how to teach the Black child who were given labels such as culturally deprived, culturally disadvantaged, underprivileged, and the lower-class child.¹⁵⁹

In *Black Activism*, Robert Brisbane notes that the American education system forced Black students to survey White civilizations, read and write White prose and poetry, study White families, analyze White music, examine White culture, and think in

¹⁵⁷ Diane Ravitch, “Reformers, Radicals, and Romantics,” in *The Jossey-Bass Reader on School Reform*, 24 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

¹⁵⁸ Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, 148 and 163.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 150.

White psychological terms -- all which deprives Blacks of their culture.¹⁶⁰ Brisbane concludes that Black students realized that the problems they faced in their communities have roots in the curriculum provided by the American education system.

In *Introduction to Black Studies*, Maulana Karenga notes that the Black Studies movement emerged as a self-defined discipline, which builds on a long intellectual-activist tradition.¹⁶¹ Blacks sought a relevant education to counter the irrelevant and useless education provided by White society. Therefore, the Black Studies movement advocated a relevant education that addressed both academic and social concerns of Black people.¹⁶² While the Black Studies movement occurred on the campuses of colleges and universities, the movement mobilized Blacks at the primary and secondary level to initiate change for culturally relevant curriculum.

In their book, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton argue that "The American educational system continues to reinforce the entrenched values of the society...which support a racist system; we find it incongruous to ask Black people to adopt and support most of those values."¹⁶³ One of the objectives of the Black Power Movement was the call for curricular reform in schools attended by Black children. In addition, Ture and Hamilton note that many of the White administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and staff were not only racially biased but also imposed middle class values on Black children.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the authors

¹⁶⁰ Robert H. Brisbane, *Black Activism: Racial Revolution in the United States, 1954-1970* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974), 224.

¹⁶¹ Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1993), 3.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶³ Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 37.

argue that ghetto schools utilized a traditional and irrelevant White dominated curricula. Black Power advocates demanded that schools reorient their programs and curricula to reflect the history, culture and contributions of Black people. During the height of the Black Power Movement, some Black high school students in York demanded that school officials reorient the education it provided.

In his article, "Education and Black Self-Image," Alvin Poussaint argues that curriculum reform is necessary to improve the self-image of Blacks. Poussaint attributes the sense of pride and dignity exuded by Blacks in the rural south and northern ghettos to the Civil Rights Movement and the rise of militant Black Nationalism. Poussaint also notes that most American schools knowingly and unknowingly teach White racism. Furthermore, history is presented almost entirely according to the White man's mythology and Black history is disparaged or ignored. Poussaint argues that Blacks wanted and needed curriculum reform because textbooks and other teaching materials have presented White middle-class values to be emulated and aspired. This is divorced from the realities of Black life. In addition, many textbook publishers fail to present contributions and Black heroes. Poussaint suggests that this presentation negates a Black man's sense of self.¹⁶⁵ The author concludes that educational curricula should stress Black achievement, Black participation, and power sharing in the education process which is crucial for Black youth.¹⁶⁶

In his edited volume, *Too Much Schooling Too Little Education*, Mwalimu Shujaa contends that there are distinctions between education and schooling especially for

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 166.

¹⁶⁵ Alvin F. Poussaint, "Education and Black Self-Image," *Freedomways* 3, no. 4 (1968): 335.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 339.

Blacks. Shujaa indicates that schooling is a process intended to perpetuate and maintain the existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements. Conversely, he describes education as the process of transmitting from one generation to the next knowledge of the values, aesthetics, spiritual beliefs, and all things that give a particular cultural orientation its uniqueness.¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, the American educational system transmits and perpetuates the culture of the oppressor or dominant group. Case in point, Woodson notes that the oppressor has provided an educational system that has justified slavery, peonage, segregation, and lynching.¹⁶⁸ In agreement with Carter G. Woodson, Shujaa notes that it makes no sense for African-Americans to expect schooling or education of their interest which is provided by the politically dominant culture.¹⁶⁹

In *The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890 – 1995*, David L. Angus and Jeffery E. Mirel argue that Black leaders wanted to end the second-rate education provided to Black students. The authors allude that the racist practices of school officials contributed to the assignment of overwhelmingly large numbers of Black students into general tracks, which were meaningless dead-end high school programs. Angus and Mirel note that the educational and curricular reforms suggested by Blacks in the 1960s and 1970s were rooted in the Progressive philosophy of the 1920s. The curricula reforms suggested and argued by Black Power advocates included:

- 1) the primary function of the schools is to meet the “needs” of young people;
- 2) the key to meeting these “needs” are relevant courses and curriculum;

¹⁶⁷ Mwalima J. Shujaa, ed. *Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies* (Trenton: African World Press, Inc., 1994), 15.

¹⁶⁸ Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Negro*, xxxii.

¹⁶⁹ Shujaa, *Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education*, 32.

- 3) different students need different types of curricular materials and courses;
- 4) learning about oneself and one's social community is a prerequisite to learning about the wider world; and
- 5) promoting positive self-images and self-esteem is a central goal of education.¹⁷⁰

In *SBA: The Reawakening of the African Mind*, eminent scholar on Black education, Asa Hilliard, notes that any discussions on curriculum change must start from the reality of the falsification of the African experience because of slavery, colonization, segregation, and racism.¹⁷¹ Hilliard argues that schools are guilty of spreading damaging, racist attitudes that have poisoned the minds of Black and White students.¹⁷² Other scholars on Black education reform, H. Prentice Baptiste, Jr., and James E. Anderson, suggest that many urban schools failed in their role to responsibly educate their students to deal with the realities of life.¹⁷³ Baptiste and Anderson argue that the lifestyles, value systems, and behaviors of urban children and the traditional educational system are not congruent. The authors allude that one of the major functions of curriculum, especially in urban schools has been to maintain the society status quo. Furthermore, Baptiste and Anderson note that urban curriculum must be an active force for transforming the society and meeting the needs of the students it serves

¹⁷⁰ David L. Angus and Jeffery E. Mirel, *The Failed Promises of the American High School, 1890 – 1995* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 128.

¹⁷¹ Asa G. Hilliard, *SBA: The Reawakening of the African Mind* (Gainesville: Makare, 1997), 132.

¹⁷² A. Leroy Willis, "Great Influence by the Black Community," in *The Campus and the Racial Crisis*, ed. David Nichols and Olive Mills, 289 (Washington: American Council on Education, 1970).

¹⁷³ H. Prentice Baptiste, Jr., and James E. Anderson, "Developing Curriculum in an Urban Context," in *Urban Education: The City as a Living Curriculum*, ed. Claude Mayberry, Jr. 46 (Alexandria: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1980).

– to transform a culture, not perpetuate it.¹⁷⁴ The school district was guilty of not meeting the needs of the Black students in York, which was the impetus for the reform movement in 1968.

In her seminal work, *The Dream Keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, Gloria Ladson-Billings suggests that educators provide culturally relevant curriculum for African American students.¹⁷⁵ Ladson-Billings describes culturally relevant pedagogy as “a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools perpetuate.”¹⁷⁶ Ladson-Billings scholarship is significant to the study of the curricular reform in Black education. Even though her study focuses on African Americans, the theories she developed is transferable to other learners that are not African American.

In his classic text, *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, James Banks credits the ethnic movements throughout the America’s past for the curricular reforms which implemented cultural content.¹⁷⁷ More specifically, Banks notes that African Americans initiated the movement that integrated cultural content into the curriculum during the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁷⁸ Banks also argues that African American

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dream Keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).

¹⁷⁶ Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (1995): 469.

¹⁷⁷ James A. Banks, ed. *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1995), 5.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

history be interwoven into the context of mainstream history, otherwise a distorted and inaccurate history will continue to prevail.¹⁷⁹

Memory

This study also addresses how students remembered their activism and advocacy for curricular reform at William Penn Senior High School. Notably missing from the archival historical records are the accounts regarding and surrounding the 1968 Black Pride Day at WPSHS in York, Pennsylvania.¹⁸⁰ This study, therefore, has relied heavily on individuals “memory” of the events that unfolded nearly forty years ago. In this study, I employed Luisa Passerini’s interpretation of memory. In her book, *Fascism in Popular Memory*, Passerini defined the term as the transmission and elaboration of stories handed down and kept alive through small-scale social networks, interactions and interviews.¹⁸¹

Several works have provided me with some insight into how people remember events and how researchers might begin to reconstruct those events. In David Thelen’s “*Memory and American History*,” Thelen argues that people reshape, omit, distort, combine, and reorganize details from the past in an active and subjective way in construction of their memories. The memories of the audiences are different from the memories of professional historians. Therefore, Thelen suggests that people challenge, adapt, and construct memories instead of accepting interpretations that

¹⁷⁹ James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994) 128.

¹⁸⁰ Jim Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania* (York: York County Audit of Human Rights, 2000); James McClure, *Never to Be Forgotten* (York: York Daily Record, 1999).

¹⁸¹ Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19.

others seek to impose on them.¹⁸² Thelen also notes that the construction and narration of memory comes from the oral and epic tradition of storytelling which is the tradition that gave birth to the chronicle and then to history.¹⁸³ Unlike many western cultures, which prefer to transmit history via written texts, non-western cultures, such as, Africans and Asians value and embrace storytelling. Storytelling is the process of passing family information, history, experiences, cultural values and songs by word of mouth from one generation to the next.

Early pioneer and advocates of African American rights, Frederick Douglass, deeply understood that peoples and nations are forged and defined by history. Douglass claimed, “It is not well for his people to forget.”¹⁸⁴ Following the Civil War, Douglass believed memory was the freedmen’s best weapon for resisting southern White schemes to establish more oppressive race relations. In David W. Blight’s “For Something Beyond the Battlefield”: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War,” he argues that when memory is not preserved and passed on, there is a chance for monumental events to be excluded from history. Blight also states that historical memory of any transforming or controversial event emerges from cultural and political competition, from the choice to confront the past and debate and manipulate its meaning.¹⁸⁵ Just as Douglass rigorously campaigned for the preservation of memories of the Civil War, it is my intention to preserve and pass the memory of Black students’ activism at William Penn Senior High School.

¹⁸² David Thelen, “Memory and American History,” *Journal of American History* 75, no. 4 (1989): 1129.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1118.

¹⁸⁴ David W. Blight, “‘For Something beyond the Battlefield’: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War,” *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (1989): 1156 – 1178.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1158.

In his often cited essay, "The Memory of History," Michael Frisch notes the differences between history and memory; history is what happened while memory is how people remember what happened. In addition, Frisch argues that the disturbing content of the first is constantly being edited out by the second.¹⁸⁶ In *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone indicates that the idea of "contest" evokes a struggle in the search for truth.¹⁸⁷ To contest the past, they argue events are a struggle to find the truth and ask "What really happened?" Hodgkin and Radstone also argue that the politics of memory of members of a group is not identical with the personal memories of individual activists, even though they may share events and concerns. The authors argue that groups may provide information that has been previously discounted. Testimonies provided by the neglected, they argue, may challenge dominant or privileged narratives. Therefore, the arguments made by Frisch, Hodgkin and Radstone inform the York study especially, since memories and testimonies of those who witnessed and experienced past events, may refute in some cases and fill gaps in the historical record.

In *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*, Donald Ritchie argues that memory is a montage of significant personal incidents in a reasonably orderly, chronological and verifiable narrative. Ritchie also indicates that the memories of direct participants are far too rich a source for historical researchers to ignore.¹⁸⁸ According to Ritchie, the passage of time enables people to make sense out of

¹⁸⁶ Micheal Frisch, "The Memory of History" in *Presenting the Past: Essay on History and The Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig, 11 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

¹⁸⁷ Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1.

earlier events in their lives. Certain people become more important in the story, while the influence of others is downgraded. Individuals reinterpret their historical memories and recast earlier judgments.¹⁸⁹ This helps to explain that some of the informants' current status and position affects their hindsight perspective of the role and involvement in the York movement.

While Ritchie recognizes the importance of memory in historical research, he acknowledges the risk utilizing memory in *Doing Oral History*. Ritchie suggested that the oral historian move the interviewee away from nostalgic memory in order to confront the past candidly and critically. The author also noted that some people lose portions or all of their memory while others are able to remarkably recall past events.¹⁹⁰ Ritchie indicated the historical actors; those at the center of past events can recount their own actions, while the witnesses, those on the periphery, are often better able to make comparison between principal actors. Therefore, oral historians should collect a wide range of interviews in order to piece the puzzle together from various perspectives.¹⁹¹ During the data collection process in the York study, interviews were solicited from Black Pride Day organizers, as well as, by-standing students, school officials, parents and community members.

Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer's book, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement: From the 1950s through 1980s* also presents little known aspects of the Civil Rights Movement. The authors base their book on interviews with

¹⁸⁸ Donald Ritchie, "Forward" in *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience* eds. Jaclyn Jeffrey and Glenace Edwall, ix (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., viii.

¹⁹⁰ Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 11.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 13.

extraordinary and ordinary people who lived during the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁹² This work confirms that the York study, an unheralded event, is an important contribution to the Black Freedom Struggle.

Despite the issues raised about memory, some historians find the utilization of memory as an important aspect of historical research. According to Thelen, it is important that the memory be authentic for the person at the moment of construction, not that it be an accurate depiction of a past moment. However, it is standard technique for historians to confirm a persons' recollection by other people and or historical documents.¹⁹³ Ritchie urges today's oral historians to use artifacts, such as, newspaper clippings and photographs to trigger recall which unlocks the memories of interviewees.¹⁹⁴ Interviewees in the York study were given an introductory cover letter about the dissertation as well as April 5, 1968, Gazette and Daily news clippings to help reacquaint them with the 1968 Black Pride Day and surrounding events.

In "*Power and Memory in Oral History: Workers and Managers at Studebaker*," progressive historian, John Bodnar questions the "truth" provided by interviewees in his study of former automobile assemblers in South Bend, Indiana.¹⁹⁵ Bodnar points out that complete reconstruction of the past is impossible through memories alone. Therefore, as an oral historian in the search of the "truth," Bodnar combines and cross-checks archival material with oral data. The focus of the York study

¹⁹² Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990).

¹⁹³ Thelen, "Memory and American History."

¹⁹⁴ Ritchie, "Forward," viii.

¹⁹⁵ John Bodnar, "Power and Memory in Oral History: Workers and Managers at Studebaker," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 4 (1989): 1201 – 1221.

attempts to find the “truth” in what participants remembered in York. This was done by cross-checking individual memories with others, as well as, archival documents.

In her study of civil rights activists in New Orleans, Kim Lacy Rogers points out that the interpretation of memories can be problematic. Rogers argues that interpretations by others will almost invariably contradict the essence of an actor’s vision of himself/herself as a maker of history.¹⁹⁶ She also alludes that the actual memory of the struggle and the recollection of that experience in the interview process allows activists to “re-experience” their best and purest selves – people who took risks at moments of crisis and created history. Furthermore, Rogers notes that remembering became an act of identification with social transformation for the activists. Rogers also notes the activists insisted that she, the interviewer, understand the past as they experienced it.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, in my interviews with activists for the York study, some interviewees repeated and rephrased themselves to be certain that I, the interviewer, would not misunderstand or misrepresent their experiences.¹⁹⁸

In *Bridges of Memory*, Timuel Black presents African American life in Chicago.¹⁹⁹ Black’s monograph of the “Windy City” is drawn from the living memories and experiences of three generations of Blacks who grew up or spent most of their lives in Chicago. Studs Turkel argues that Black’s work on Chicago is not only revelatory but is similar to the work done by Zora Neale Hurston in the Deep South during the

¹⁹⁶ Kim Lacy Rogers, “Memory, Struggle, and Power: On Interviewing Political Activists,” *Oral History Review* 15, (Spring, 1987): 169.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁹⁸ Reginald Ellis, interview by author, tape recording, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11 February 2002.

¹⁹⁹ Timuel Black, *Bridges of Memory: Chicago’s First Wave of Black Migration* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003).

1930s.²⁰⁰ Black notes that the salient theme revealed by the first generation was their experiences with racial prejudice. The themes of the second generation were common cultural heritage and the necessity for developing “strategies of survival” due to racial discrimination. Lastly, Black indicates that the final generation points out that the theme of the third age group was a variation of the issues faced by the previous generations.²⁰¹

In conclusion, this study on the 1968 Black Pride Day at William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania is informed by research in the areas of black student activism, curriculum reform, and memory. Since the Black youth initiated and engaged the Black Pride Day, it was necessary to examine the literature on Black student activism. Because the literature is limited on secondary student activism, I examined post-secondary Black student activism. Coupled with their activism, the Black students in York also demanded educational and social reforms. Therefore, a survey of the curriculum reform literature was also necessary for this study. In addition to examining Black student activism and curriculum reform scholarship, I also examined research in the area of memory because this study relied heavily on memories of individuals who participated or witnessed past events in York.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., ix.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 600.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before examining Black student activism in York, Pennsylvania, I will provide some historical context about the city, its Black population, and William Penn Senior High School, and Yorkers' memory about Black life in York. Such context should help provide a better understanding of the history, community, and people that propelled Black student activism for curriculum reform at WPSHS in 1968.¹

York, Pennsylvania 1741 - 1950

Springett Penn, grandson of the state's founder William Penn, founded the town of York, Pennsylvania, in 1741. York was the first county seat west of the Susquehanna River; and is approximately eighty miles west of Philadelphia and forty-seven miles north of Baltimore, Maryland. During the American Revolutionary War, September of 1777 through June of 1778, York was the headquarters for the Second Continental Congress when colonial officials fled Philadelphia, which the British army occupied. While in York, the Continental Congress drafted the Articles of Confederation that first established the official government of the thirteen original states. To this day, many Yorkers consider York the first Capital of the United States; because it was in York that the words "The United States of America" were first proclaimed.²

Although the Laws of Pennsylvania, "AN ACT FOR THE GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY" was passed on March 1, 1780, it was not until a little more than half a

¹ Derrick Alridge defines "deep contextualization as the historian's task of thoroughly immersing the events and ideas in their historical and intellectual contexts when assigning meaning or interpretations to them." in "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African American Educational Historian," *Educational Researcher* 32, no. 9 (2003): 28.

² Jim Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania* (York: York County Audit of Human Rights, 2000); See also Better Government Associates, "The City of York School District, York, Pennsylvania Long-Range Development Plan," (York: The City of York School District, 1973).

century before slavery was abolished.³ White Yorkers' sentiment towards slavery and people of color varied from place to place. Some Yorkers greeted abolitionists such as Martin R. Delany, Thaddeus Stevens and Lucretia Mott, while others scorned the anti-slavery leaders in the abolitionist movement. These wavering political positions varied in the York newspapers especially since it was not common to find advertisements of slave sales or rewards for escapees, along with stern anti-slavery sentiments.⁴

At the turn of the nineteenth century, members of the Black community protested the racial inequality in York. In 1803, the judicial system convicted a Negro woman for attempting to poison two White women. The Black community responded with outrage by taking to the streets and setting fire to several downtown buildings in York. White governing officials tried 21 Negroes for their direct participation while sending several others to prison for their involvement in the torching of the city.⁵ To prevent Negroes from engaging in destructive behaviors, the Justices and Burgesses of York issued the following statement on March 21, 1803:

*To the Inhabitants of the borough of York and its vicinity to the distance of 10 miles, You are hereby notified, that such of you as have Negroes or people of color, to keep them under strict discipline and watch, so as they may be under your eye at all times. You are not to let them come into the borough of York on any pretense whatever without a written pass.*⁶

Slave owners were required to keep a close eye on their "Negroes."

³ Pennsylvania Legislation. *An Act of the Gradual Abolition of Slavery*. Laws of Pennsylvania, 1810, CH. 870, P, 492-497. Passed (1 March 1780); see also Richard R. Wright, *The Negro in Pennsylvania: A Study in Economic History, American Negro, His History and Literature* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 203.

⁴ James McClure, *Never to Be Forgotten* (York: York Daily Record, 1999).

⁵ Charles L. Blockson, *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Above Ground and Underground an Illustrated Guide* (Harrisburg: RB Books, 2001); Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*.

⁶Blockson, *African Americans in Pennsylvania*, 160.

Located on the “free side” of the Mason Dixon Line, York was a freedom gateway that acted as an escape route for runaway slaves. Harriet Tubman, on several occasions, passed through York County on ‘the Underground Railroad.’⁷ With York’s southern border adjacent to the Mason Dixon Line, the Fugitive Slave Law permitted slave catchers to return escaped slaves captured in Pennsylvania back to bondage. This is one of several reasons many escaped slaves did not make York their final destination. In addition, many Blacks preferred to make their homes in more welcoming cities with better-established Black communities. It was common for Blacks to leave rural areas such as York for cities that paid higher wages, provided more excitement, and afforded greater opportunity for self-expression and adventure.⁸

Although some Blacks bypassed York for other cities, many made York their home. One prominent figure in York’s Black community was William Goodridge. Goodridge, a wealthy mulatto, was instrumental in aiding and abiding runaway slaves who passed through York, Pennsylvania. Goodridge was said to have transported runaway slaves on his railroad freight cars. Historians note that Goodridge concealed Osborn Perry Anderson, one of John Brown’s compatriots in the raid on Harpers Ferry.⁹ Goodridge was also known to stow slaves in the backyard and basement of his home as well as Centre Hall, a five-story building in the square of downtown York.

During the Civil War, Confederate troops occupied York. Southern slave owners along with U.S. officials placed a bounty on the head of Goodridge for his involvement in

⁷Ibid.

⁸ Wright, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*, 100.

⁹ Blockson, *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Above Ground and Underground an Illustrated Guide*, 159; Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 12.

the Underground Railroad. In fear of his life, Goodridge and his family fled to Minnesota to never return to York.

Following the Civil War, emancipated Blacks migrated to the North for employment, economic opportunities, and social mobility. Many Blacks in York migrated from southern cities such as Bamberg and Orangeburg, South Carolina.¹⁰

Population in York County 1870 – 1970¹¹

Year	Total Population	Negro Population
1870	76,134	1,223
1880	87,841	1,359
1890	99,489	1,566
1900	116,413	1,675
1910	136,405	2,113
1920	144,521	2,092
1930	167,135	2,977
1940	178,022	2,970
1950	202,737	3,800
1960	238,336	5,301
1970	330,000	7,046

Table 1.

Black Life in York

According to a 1960 census, 55,000 people resided in the City of York, in a space that encompassed 5.21 square miles. Even though York was not an urban center, a majority of Blacks, (14% of the total population in York), lived in slum areas of the city. York personified a city increasing towards urbanization.¹² As southern Blacks migrated to York for opportunities, many settled into the older houses and sections that were

¹⁰ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 24.

¹¹ University of Virginia, "Census Report," <http://www.fisher.lib.virginia.edu>. (accessed January 15, 2003).

¹²For information regarding demographics of York see the York City Bureau of Planning and Zoning, "Data Report: Planning Unit Analysis Part I" (June 1973); Also see Appendix for a map of York.

central to the city. According to the Department of City Planning, eleven regions divide the city of York, the majority of York's Black residents dwelled in five of the eleven units: C, F, G, J, and I. For a map of the city of York see figure 3 below.¹³

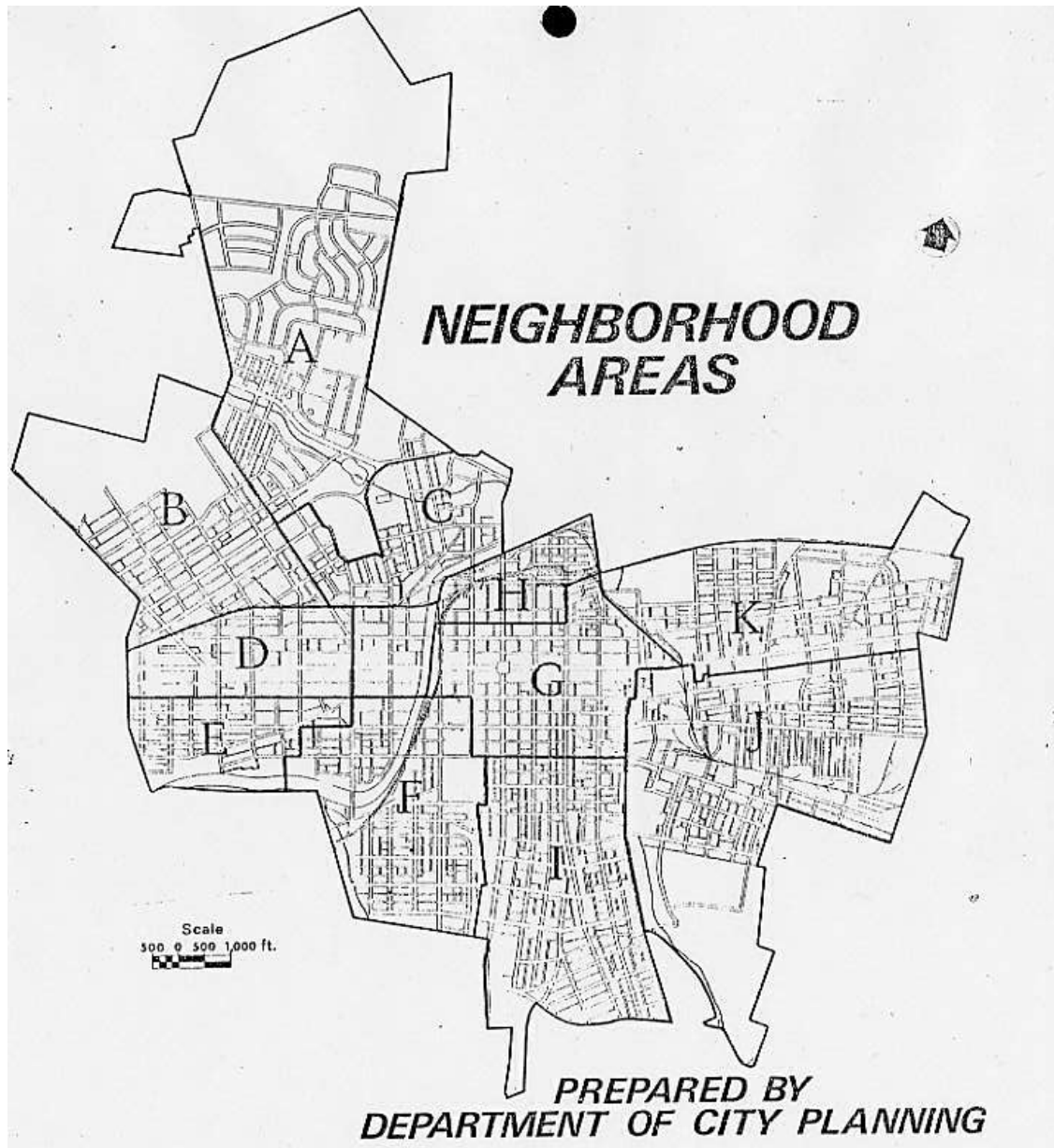


Figure 3. Map of York

¹³York City Bureau of Planning and Zoning, "Data Report: Planning Unit Analysis Part I."

Slums and ghettos developed as Blacks piled in rudimentary and cheap clapboard houses in the unpaved alleyways and side streets of York. According to Mary L. Armstrong, WPSHS class of 1938, “Blacks could only live in rodent and roach infested shacks on alleys and side streets... Blacks just did not live in big houses on major streets such as Market, George, Queen, Duke, and King.”¹⁴ It was also common to find Blacks living in row-type houses without commodes and/or running hot water. For example, Willie J. Williams, WPSHS class of 1966, recalls growing up in his parents first home on 225 West Hope Avenue. Williams said the two-story house did not have a toilet inside the house; instead, the latrine was located in an extended room at the back of the house.¹⁵ As a child, Williams recollected taking baths in a metal tub, with buckets of water that were heated on a wood stove. Blacks continued to dwell in side streets such as Codorus and Newberry Streets, Mason Alley, Cherry and Charles Lane, and Fries and Newton Avenues.¹⁶ According Ahmad Seifullah (Clair Sexton), Blacks resorted to residing in the alleys so that they remained inconspicuous to travelers who passed through the main streets of York.¹⁷

Before the “Black flight” and demolition of the back alley shacks and run down apartment buildings, for which many Blacks lived, Seifullah mentioned that, “We had everything in our neighborhoods; Blacks owned the corner stores, newsstands, restaurants, boarding houses, sandwich shops, dry cleaners, shoe shine shops, barbershops, beauty salons, beer gardens, and soda pop shops. Even the coal/wood man

¹⁴ Mary L. Armstrong, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 16 February 2002.

¹⁵ Willie J. Williams, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 4 January 2003.

¹⁶ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 47.

¹⁷ Ahmad Seifullah (Clair Sexton), interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 15 January 2004.

and garbage collector were Black.”¹⁸ Adults were not the only entrepreneurs in the Black community; Julia Harris indicated that as a child, she sold the flowers grown in her backyard during holidays and funerals.¹⁹ In addition to the Black-owned business, White and Jewish merchants also operated businesses in the Black community. According to Jahmee Shabazz, “On the days the butchers would slaughter pigs, we use to go to Fisher’s [a White-owned butcher shop] with our buckets and the butcher would give us the chitterlings and other scraps for free.”²⁰ Peggy (Wright) Lemon recalled that her parents had a line of credit at the White-owned store on the corner of Penn and Princess Streets.²¹

Black communities in York faced sub-standard living conditions with the economic and social circumstances looking bleak for most Blacks in York. While the White community flourished from urbanization growth in business, and industrial developments, Black development eluded York’s Black community. Even though businesses and industries prospered, a majority of the employed Black people filled domestic services and unskilled labor positions in which they earned one-third the wage paid to white laborers.²² According to the *ABC’s of Good Will for Yorkers*, Blacks did not have the same job opportunities as Whites. Among the 99 employers who participated in this study, 75 percent did not have any Black employees; ten percent

¹⁸ Seifullah, interview.

¹⁹ Julia (Muldrow) Harris, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 2 March 2002.

²⁰ Jahmee Shabazz (Dale Preston), telephone conversation with author, York, Pennsylvania, 22 June 2004.

²¹ Peggy (Wright) Lemon, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 14 January 2004.

²² Wright, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*, 232.

stated they would not hire Black workers; only five percent agreed to hire Black people with reluctance.²³

Blacks were likely to experience overt forms of discrimination at their places of employment or when they tried to patronize local restaurants. Local movie theaters, bowling allies, and other business owners were wary of Black patrons, but several did not bar Black dollars from their facilities, which included private golf courses and swimming pools.²⁴ As a child, Hal Brown remembered that Black kids walked several miles to swim in Cow Shit Run, a water hole down stream from a local dairy farm.²⁵ Mr. Maurice Peters, former leader of the local chapter of the NAACP and the Peaceful Committee for Immediate Action, challenged individuals, institutions, and systems that sanctioned racism towards Blacks because he was not satisfied with the second-class treatment of Blacks. Angered by the “white only” policy and the fact that Black children swam in unsanitary waters, Peter jumped in the public pool as a sign of protest.²⁶

Social Unrest in York

The 1960s was one of the most racially volatile eras in the history of the United States. Sudhi Rajiv, autobiographic historian, suggests that Blacks were not free to decide for themselves because of subconscious and institutional racism, they were forced to lead a kind of double existence which tore their personalities apart.²⁷

²³York County Council For Human Relations, *ABC's of Good Will for Yorkers* (York: York County Court House, 1961).

²⁴ Harry Boyer, “Investigatory Hearing Report,” (York: Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, 1968); 65.

²⁵Hal Brown, interview with author, San Diego, California, 22 January 2004.

²⁶ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 35.

²⁷Sudhi Rajiv, *Forms of Black Consciousness* (New York: Advent Books, 1992), 152.

According to historian, C. Eric Lincoln, hardly anyone in America wanted to be a “Negro” in the late 1960s.²⁸ However, some Blacks identified with the Whites, while others preferred to identify with any other non-white ethnic group. Many of the Blacks who preferred the identifier “Negro” sought accommodation within the White society. The Black youth of the sixties recognized the problems with gradualism and tokenism, which pacified previous generations. Young militants stressed that patience, reasoning, and non-violence did nothing whatsoever for the Negro. According to Ron Karenga, “The only thing non-violence proved was how savage Whites were.”²⁹ Horace Mann Bond states, “We live in “a crazy quilt world of unreality” – a society that proclaimed equality, opportunity, and democracy as its goals as it “brutalized, degraded, and dehumanized” Blacks by every instrument of culture.”³⁰ The Kerner Report indicates that White America professes egalitarianism, bigotry, and practices racism for which hypocrisy prevails. The Kerner Commission observed, “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, and one white – separate and unequal.”³¹

According to the Investigation Hearing Report, there was racial, Black vs. White, polarization and tension in the city of York.³² For instance, city police officers resorted to the use of firearms on repeated occasions. The police also used canines in making

²⁸ C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Grand Rapids: Africa World Press, 1994).

²⁹ “Watts Gained by ‘The Revolt,’” *Gazette and Daily*, 25 March 1968, 17.

³⁰ Horace Mann Bond, “Main Currents in the Educational Crisis,” *Freedomways* 8, (Fall, 1968), 308; David B. Tyack, “Strategies for Educational Change,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 40, no. 3, (Summer, 1971), 193.

³¹ Otto Kerner (Chairman), National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968); Marvin J. Fruth and Richard P. Chait, “Integrated History For a Segregated Society,” *The Negro Educational Review* 20, no. 2, (April, 1969).

³² Boyer, “Investigatory Hearing Report.”

arrests of non-white citizens and to control and disburse congregating juveniles. Many Blacks in the community believed the police used the canines to instill fear in the Black youth by letting the Black youth “fight the dog.”

During the 1960s, the York City Police Department was notorious for harassing its Black residents. For example, on Friday, July 19, 1963, police arrested two Black men --James Padgett and McCoy Moore. While the two men were in the custody of the police, the arresting officers allowed their dogs to maul Padgett and Moore.³³ This brutal event outraged the Black community and a unified protest and street march ensued on City Hall.³⁴ Stella (Richardson) Banks confirmed that police used K-9 units to disperse and frighten Black children. Banks reflected back on her experiences, “At the different dances or social events the cops would come out and the first thing they would get was those German Shepherds to chase the kids away.”³⁵ According to Willie Howard:

It was not a problem for them [police] to pull up on Duke and Maple or Duke and South Streets anywhere like that. It could be three, four or five brothers. They would pull up and say ‘hey spread it out get off this corner.’ Once they opened that back door [to the police cruiser] you better be hitting it [running]. If not, that German Shepard would jump on that butt [attack a victim] and they’ll [the police officers] stand there laughing and smiling and after a while they would then pull him [the canine] off of you.³⁶

In response to the racial injustices in York, a group led by Teddy Holmes established the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Some Yorkers perceived CORE as a militant organization. Despite this, the local branch played a vital

³³ “Three Men Bitten by City Police Dogs as Cops Yell Kill,” *Gazette and Daily*, 20 July 1963.

³⁴ “York Negroes Want End to Police Dogs, Protest is Planned,” *Gazette and Daily*, 22 July 1963, 1.

³⁵ Stella (Richardson) Banks, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 20 September 2001.

³⁶ Howard, interview.

role instilling a sense of pride in Black youth. According to Lionel Bailey, the national platform and call for direct action appealed to young adults and youth.³⁷ CORE also attracted Blacks who grew frustrated with conservative organizations and committees that did not address their issues and concerns.³⁸ Shortly after the establishment of CORE, some members splintered to form the Black Unity Movement (BUM), which was even more militant. The organization sponsored a conference in York with workshops on self-defense, Black culture, guerilla warfare, and Black history.³⁹ This brash organization attracted Black youth resulting in some Black youth emulating the militant organization. Howard recalled, “We would sit on the steps of the Crispus Attucks Community Center and wait outside while the members of the BUM met inside. After their meeting, they would teach us to strategize and organize in large numbers in order for the establishment to yield us power.”⁴⁰

In addition to the militant organizations, the students were influenced by militant individuals whom imbued with pride and dignity, such as, Ocania Chalk. According to Ray Crenshaw, “Chalk was an individual before his time.”⁴¹ Crenshaw recalled that Chalk quoted Frederick Douglass during city council meetings, “the only way to make change is to agitate, agitate, agitate and if there is no struggle there is no progress.”⁴² According to Lionel Bailey, Chalk intimidated White people at public meetings, “Chalk would begin by speaking very softly and calmly, gradually raise his voice louder, then

³⁷ Lionel Bailey, telephone conversation with the author, 20 January 2004.

³⁸ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 58.

³⁹ Ibid, 66.

⁴⁰ Howard, interview.

⁴¹ Crenshaw, interview.

⁴² Crenshaw, interview.

bang his fist on the table, which would cause some Whites to jump out of their seats."⁴³ Willie Howard indicated that Chalk also owned the only Black bookstore in downtown York. Howard noted that Chalk frequently invited students to meetings in the back of his bookstore where he would teach them Black history as well as how to strategize and organize themselves.⁴⁴

Black Education and Schooling in York

As early as 1900, Blacks attended WPSHS because it was the only high school in the district. George Bowles was the first Black to graduate from York High in 1904.⁴⁵ Even though the high school admitted Black students, socializing with White students was unacceptable. These types of social norms were common throughout the United States, and acts of White supremacy (paternalism) perpetuated the ideological superiority/inferiority that White people were superior to Blacks.

Educational institutions served as critical components of the Black community in York. In 1931, the Crispus Attucks Community Center (CA) opened its doors as a community facility for the Black community at 123 East Maple Street. As a social and recreational facility, the CA also provided social, economic, and educational programs to the Black community in York. A year after the CA opened; Helen Reeves Thackston created and directed the first pre-school program. For 33 years, Black parents entrusted Thackston with Black children as she prepared them for elementary school. Thackston not only taught Black children to read and write, but also taught them to appreciate their arts culture and community. Julia Harris (class of 1958) stated, "The CA was

⁴³ Bailey, interview.

⁴⁴ Howard, interview.

⁴⁵ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 18.

where we learned our songs [Negro spirituals].”⁴⁶ During an interview, Harris indicated that the importance and impact that Thackston made on the lives of Black children in York was significant. In addition to child rearing, the CA also offered early child care development, after school recreation, educational tutelage, and social development activities for Black youth in York. Ahmad Seifullah (Clair Sexton) said that, “Participating in the programs at the CA taught us discipline and social skills.”⁴⁷

Before the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, most of Black children attended either James Smallwood or Aquilla Howard Elementary Schools. The segregated elementary schools were located near the densely populated Black communities. James Smallwood Elementary School was located on 243 S. Pershing Avenue and Aquilla Howard Elementary School was located on 427 E. King Street.⁴⁸ Although Smallwood and Howard were part of the York City School District, Black principals and teachers were used to staff both schools. Harris recalled that the Smallwood teachers prepared Black children to achieve by forewarning them of the possible racial hostility they would encounter in society. Harris also indicated that Black teachers did not socially promote students until they were academically prepared for the next grade level. Also during this period, Black teachers and principals lived in the communities in which they taught. Seifullah remembered Mr. Grayson, principal of the Smallwood School, lived a few doors away from his family on Cherry Lane.⁴⁹

Schools in the York City Public School District 1948-1968

⁴⁶ Harris, interview.

⁴⁷ Seifullah, interview.

⁴⁸ Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Brown V. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1961); Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 20.

⁴⁹ Seifullah, interview.

Elementary Schools	Region	Address
Central	F	48 W. King Street
Devers	A	801 Chanceford Avenue
Ferguson	C	525 N. Newberry Street
Franklin	J	1050 E. King Street
Goode	K	251 N. Broad Street
Lincoln	D	599 W. King Street
Hartley	E	165 S. Hartley Street
Howard	J	427 E. King Street
Jackson	I	177 E. Jackson Street
Madison	B	609 Madison Avenue
McKinley	F	600 Manor Street
Noel	I	226 E. College Avenue
Pine Street	K	301 E. Philadelphia Street
Princess Street	I	368 W. Princess Street
Roosevelt	K	200 N. Albemarle Street
Smallwood	F	243 S. Pershing Avenue
Junior High Schools	Region	Address
Phineas Davis	J	300 S. Ogontz Street
Hannah Penn	F	415 E. Boundary Avenue
Edgar Fahs Smith	B	701 Texas Avenue
Senior High School	Region	Address
William Penn	F	101 W. College Avenue

Table 2.

Even though the majority of York's Black population attended the Negro elementary schools, some Black parents enrolled their children in the predominately White elementary schools. Nevertheless, many of the White schools made it difficult for Black parents to enroll their children. Some of the White school principals required Black parents to file petitions to the district if space was available. For instance, Mary (Todd) Armstrong, WPSHS class of 1938, recalled that her grandmother filed a petition to attend Noel Elementary because the neighborhood elementary school was in eyesight of their Susquehanna Avenue home.⁵⁰ The parents of Justine (Green) Warfield, WPSHS class of 1958, enrolled her in Jackson Elementary School, because it was closer to their

⁵⁰ Mary (Todd) Armstrong, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 16 February 2002.

East Boundary home.⁵¹ While some Blacks sent their children to predominately White elementary schools, others faced discriminatory enrollment practices by school officials in their attempts to enroll their children. According to Alice Bowers, shortly after their family moved to York, her husband, Wade Bowers, director of the Crispus Attucks Community Center, attempted to enroll their son in Central Elementary School. The Bowers were told the school did not have any space available and their son must attend Smallwood Elementary. A few days after the Bowers were denied admittance to Central because of lack of space, a White family, who were neighbors to the Bowers, was permitted to enroll their four children in the second grade.⁵² Another educational option for Blacks at that time was to send their children to one of the parochial schools in the city: St. Patrick's, St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, St. Rose of Lima and York Catholic High School. After the Supreme Court's decision in the *Brown* case, Blacks in York no longer were required to challenge the district to attend predominately White elementary schools. While the *Brown* ruling opened doors for Blacks, the high courts' decision eventually resulted in the closing of both Black educational institutions in York following the 1957-58 school years.

During the Civil Rights-Black Power era, William Penn Senior High School served city students from grades ten through twelve. In addition, the school accepted students from surrounding districts who wanted to enroll in the vocational education programs, such as, graphic arts, mechanical drawing, as well as metal and wood shops.⁵³ The three-story school building and campus occupied one city block on York's south

⁵¹ Justine (Green) Warfield, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 18 January 2004.

⁵² Alice Bowers, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 2 July 2004.

⁵³ *William Penn Senior High School: 68 Tatler* (York: Trimmer Printing, Inc., 1968), 26.

side. The main entrance to the school was directly across from Penn Park at 250 West College Avenue. St. Patrick's Catholic Church and primary school was adjacent to York High at 231 South Beaver Street. The natatorium entrance and faculty/staff parking lot were on the Princess Street side of the school.

The school district employed very few Black teachers at the senior high level. During the 1967-1968 school year, 1,526 students were enrolled at York High.⁵⁴ While Black students comprised nearly 23 percent (350) of the student body, the Black faculty and staff only accounted for nearly three percent of the 150 employees at York High. The four Black employees at York High were Theresa Johnson (English), John Jones (Foreign Language), Bernie Manning (Special Education), and Frank Spells (Custodian).⁵⁵ Even though the majority of the teaching staff at York was White, many came from working class households. Furthermore, most teachers held middle class values despite the fact that many were not economically middle class.⁵⁶ According to the *Investigatory Hearing Report* (1968) published by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, York High's administrators subscribed to strict disciplinary practices, which treated Black students unfairly.⁵⁷ It was also reported that there had been frequent recourse to corporal punishment of Black students. Furthermore, the commission found that the corporal punishment was a reflection of a racist attitude on the part of teachers.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ For educational and demographical data in York see the Data Report: Planning Unit Analysis Part I.

⁵⁵ *William Penn Senior High School: 68 Tatler*,

⁵⁶ Boyer, "Investigatory Hearing Report."

⁵⁷ Boyer, "Investigatory Hearing Report," 20.

⁵⁸ Boyer, "Investigatory Hearing Report," 20.

In 1966, James Coleman conducted the landmark study of Equality of Educational Opportunity. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 called for a survey "concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunity by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels." Following this act, Coleman studied 600,000 children at 4,000 schools and found that most children attended schools where they were the majority race. Further, schooling between White and Black schools was similar. Teachers' training, teachers' salaries, and curriculum were relatively equal. The results, however, found that Black children were a few years behind the White students and that the gap widened by the high school years. Coleman concluded, the academic achievement was related to family background in the early years, but going to school allowed for a greater disparity between the academic differences between Whites and Blacks. The report released by the Coleman Commission also found that the Black community demonstrated skepticism and hostility towards the education system and alleges schools were unresponsive and irrelevant. According to the Coleman Report, there were cultural differences between the White teachers and the Black students. Teachers are often inadequately equipped to either motivate or educate students and they are unfamiliar with Black history and Black heritage; resulting in teachers displaying little sympathy for the pupil's life and little appreciation for the pupil's educability. The traditional absence of the Negro from the pages of American history has bred an undesirable response among some thinkers.⁵⁹ Therefore, students did not learn about Black accomplishments in school. This may be partly because the teachers did not teach it and it was not part of the curriculum.

⁵⁹ Ronald J. Rousseve, "Dealing Responsibly with the Black American," *The Negro Educational Review* 20, no. 4 (1969), 99.

However, Carter G. Woodson and other Black intellectuals set out to disprove Toynbee and other likeminded individuals. One of the most profound exclusions suffered by the Negro people in America was the banishment from the pages of our country's recorded history.⁶⁰ Neither Du Bois nor Washington felt that the education should be "irrelevant" to the perceived and expressed needs of Black people.⁶¹ Black history should appear as a distinguishable yet inextricable thread of the American chronicle.⁶² Unfortunately, secondary textbooks used in the 1960s for the most part excluded any contributions of Blacks. Peggy Lemon remembered, "The only thing we learned about Black people in school was that we were slaves."⁶³

The Coleman Report also indicated that awareness of heritage and history sharpens self-identity, self-esteem, and self-confidence, to the extent to which an individual feels control over his destiny bears a primary relationship to scholastic achievement.⁶⁴ The students recognized the curriculum was not relevant to their lives. Black students in the 1960s began to examine themselves introspectively and ask, 'What educational process do we feel will elevate our people? And, do we have the right to determine our destiny?' Furthermore, Tretten says Black Power provides the Negro with an image of himself consonant with that of a participating adult, and, at the same time,

⁶⁰ Rousseve, "Dealing Responsibly with the Black American."

⁶¹ Allen B. Ballard, *The Education of Black Folk: The Afro-American Struggle for Knowledge in White America*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1973): 26.

⁶² Furth and Chait, "Integrated History for a Segregated Society," 54.

⁶³ Peggy (Wright) Lemon, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 14 January 2004.

⁶⁴ Furth and Chait, "Integrated History for a Segregated Society," 55.

serves as a rallying cry for the kind of power that will result in social and economical elevation.⁶⁵

In addition to the irrelevant curriculum, Black students received inadequate guidance from the White guidance counseling staff at WPSHS. Due to systemic racism in the school district and the city, Blacks were provided limited educational and occupational opportunities. Therefore, for the most part guidance counselors recommended General and Vocational track programs for Black male students and Business/Clerical track programs for Black female students.⁶⁶ Very few Blacks were enrolled in college preparatory courses. Some argue that White counselors made decisions to place Blacks based on the reality of racism in society. This prompted many counselors to advise Blacks to be realistic with their aspirations, therefore, staff advised and placed Black students in educational tracks which prepared them for semi-skilled and unskilled occupations.

On the other hand, the rest of the Black students [in general and vocational tracks] were together in the basement, not getting much of an education.”⁶⁷ According to Sam Manson, an overwhelming number of Black students were assigned to the “romps;” special education and low academic level classrooms held in the basement also known as the dungeon of the building.⁶⁸ Seifullah indicated that the Blacks enrolled in vocational tracks were not permitted to take metal or machine shop courses which local

⁶⁵ Joseph A. Jr. Payne, "The Problem of Student Unrest," *The Negro Educational Review* 20, no. 4 (1969).

⁶⁶ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 48.

⁶⁷ Wendy (Woodyard) Bryce, interview by author, tape recording, Durham, North Carolina, 20 September 2001.

⁶⁸ Sam Manson, interview with author, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1 July 2004.

business demanded. Instead, Blacks took up wood and carpentry shops, trades that were of lower value to students for life after high school.

Peggy Lemon indicated that most of the Black parents, who migrated from the South, did not have college degrees let alone high school diplomas. Therefore, her parents for example, entrusted the White guidance department staff to advise and make decisions in the best interest of their children. “My parents were happy just to see us graduate.”⁶⁹ For instance, John Mitchell, WPSHS class of 1968, indicated although he was in above average courses. However, his guidance counselor did not encourage him to apply to college, instead Mitchell, like most Blacks were advised to enlist in the armed services and possibly go to Vietnam.⁷⁰

While some parents did not intervene in the guidance of their children’s education, Lemon mentioned that a few parents were proactive in the decision making process. These parents made sure that their children were placed in the proper level so that their children were prepared to go to college. According to Wendy (Woodyard) Bryce, “White students dominated all top sections; those of us [Black students] in the top sections were separated. The guidance department did not encourage Blacks to go to college. Only a few of us were in college prep.”⁷¹ Even though Cheyney State and Morgan State Colleges and Howard and Lincoln Universities were within a 100-mile radius of York, the guidance staff failed to invite Black college and university representatives to the high school. During a school board meeting, Ocania Chalk pointed out that only 14 of the 400 minority students took College Board examinations for which

⁶⁹ Lemon, interview.

⁷⁰ John Mitchell, telephone conversation with author, Ellicott City, Maryland, 26 June 2002.

⁷¹ Bryce, interview.

he accused the guidance counselors of acts of negligence against Black students. Taking matters into his own hands, Chalk established Youth Bound for College, a program to assist poor minority students in obtaining higher education.⁷²

Secondary schools generally have assumed the responsibility of providing a comprehensive curriculum designed to meet the needs of all youth. In Robert W. Frederick's *The Third Curriculum*, he notes that student activities are those school activities voluntarily engaged in by students that have the approval of and are sponsored by the faculty and which do not carry credit towards promotion or graduation.⁷³ Student activities play a major part toward fulfilling these comprehensive curricular goals as they relate the major educational needs and problems of adolescents in a democracy. Leonard Koos suggests student activities contribute to the total educative experience of adolescents.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, in York, Black students were not provided the opportunity to fully participate in the activities at WPSHS without racism or racial undertones. Some Black students participated in school sponsored student organizations; however, many activities prevented few Blacks to join. According to Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, Blacks were rejected in their attempts to join Euterpean Literary Society (ELS) and Clio Literary Society (CLIO), two of the school districts' prestigious majority white debating organizations; however, we [Black students] could join athletic clubs and service-

⁷² Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 65.

⁷³ Anne Richardson Gayles, "A Statement of Philosophy and Guiding Principles for Student Activities in a Secondary School," *The Negro Educational Review* 22, no. 1 (1971), 37; See also Robert W. Frederick's *The Third Curriculum* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959), 6.

⁷⁴ Leonard Koos, *Extra Curricular Activities* (Bloomington: Public School Publishing Company, 1926), 43.

oriented organizations like the business and nursing clubs.⁷⁵ Willie Williams indicated that Black parents provided private music lessons that enabled many Black students to compete with Whites to earn first chairs and lead roles in the band and orchestra.⁷⁶

While Black student participation was low in clubs or organizations, Reginald Ellis indicated that Black students were represented in large percentages on athletic teams. Despite the high percentage of Black participation in sports programs, Black students encountered racist and prejudice practices. According to Keith Beatty, WPSHS class of 1968, the coaching staff did not start an all Black team even though the Black athletes were more talented than their White counterparts.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Blacks were unable to obtain leadership roles in organizations, such as, theatrical productions or team sports.

Up to this point, a Black student was never elected to the executive cabinet of student council or senior class offices. Since Blacks were prevented from holding leadership roles in school sponsored activities, Black students held “outside class” elections. The Black senior class office positions provided students leadership opportunities among themselves. The “outside class meetings” were not officially organized nor recognized by the school. The outside meetings gave Black students the opportunity to participate in the decision making process as well as an outlet to socialize with other Black students. Some Black students used the outside class meetings to discuss and address the social and political injustices they encountered, while other Black students challenged the racism they faced at York High.

⁷⁵ Woodard, interview.

⁷⁶ Williams, interview.

⁷⁷ Keith Beatty, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 24 November 2001.

Since most Blacks did not participate in school-sponsored social activities many Black students occupied their time at Black operated establishments. The Three-Ten (3:10) Club, supervised by James McNeal, was located in the back of the old News Agency building on the corner of Pershing Avenue and Princess Street, less than a block away from York High. The 3:10 Club was open from 3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. and from 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Students listened to music on the jukebox and purchased drinks from the soda machine. Freddy Sexton also owned and operated another popular teen hangout. Freddy's spot was a grocery store and restaurant located a few blocks from York High on Newberry Street. Peggy Lemon recalled going to Freddy's to play ping pong, dance, and listen to music.

Ruby (Wright) Reeves, a member of the class of 1956, stated, "It was socially unacceptable for Blacks and Whites to mingle and party together, Black students held "outside class" meetings to plan and organize our own after prom party and senior class picnic."⁷⁸ Therefore, the students took pride in "Black senior class" social events, which the entire Black community embraced and supported. During a conversation with Reginald Ellis, vice president of the "Black senior class," stated, "The goal was to have a bigger and better after prom party and class picnic than the previous class."⁷⁹ As the senior prom and picnic approached, members of the Black senior class met bi-weekly to plan and discuss the developments of "outside class" activities.

On the afternoon of Thursday, April 4, 1968, members of the Black senior class met at the home of Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and plan fundraising opportunities and activities. In an effort to celebrate Black

⁷⁸ Ruby (Wright) Reeves, telephone conversation with author, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 8 January 2003.

⁷⁹ Reginald Ellis, interview by author, tape recording, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11 February 2002.

culture, awareness, and unity, the students decided to have a school-wide Black Pride Day on Tuesday, April 9, 1968, that also served as a fundraiser to defray some of the senior class expenses. Reginald Ellis suggested to the group that they sell John Mitchell's medallions, since the necklaces were a popular item and inexpensive to produce. The design on the medallions consisted of two Black hands holding up the world above a black panther as if it was on the prowl. The fifty-cent necklaces were white cardboard cut outs painted with the "Black Pride Day" logo, which also had a hole punched at the top for a string. In addition to the medallions, the group also painted the logo along with the words "Black Pride Day" on a white bed sheet to serve as a banner that they intended to hang in the school's cafeteria.

Shortly after 6:30 p.m., while the students were assembling the fundraiser materials, a distraught underclassman interrupted the group meeting. Sobbing and crying, Louis Woodyard, WPSHS class of 1969, delivered the startling news. "They killed King -- you guys have got to do something, you got to do something."⁸⁰ In response to Woodyard's plea, the seniors deviated from their original plan to stage the school-wide Black Pride Day on Tuesday, April 9th. Instead, they collectively decided not to attend class and hold the Black Pride Day in the school's auditorium the following day, Friday, April 5, 1968.

While the central focus of this study is the 1968 Black Pride Day at William Penn Senior High School, it was imperative to situate the event in its historical context. This context includes a brief history of the history of York, Black life in the White Rose city, as well as the public educational system in the town. In addition to the local history, an

⁸⁰ Ellis, interview.

overview of the larger societal context during the 1960s sets the stage for the events that unfolded on April 5, 1968.

CHAPTER 5: BLACK PRIDE DAY DEMANDS

Dr. King's murder caused a variety of outcries and emotions in the Black community. Dr. King's followers, although angry and saddened, urged the world to continue to practice peace and to love thy enemy - even in the wake of violence. While some Black leaders preached messages of peace and calmness, many within the Black communities of the United States were driven to a more direct course of action – some even suggested the Black community retaliate. Quoted in an interview shortly after he learned the news of Dr. King's death, Kwame Ture said, "I think White America made its biggest mistake when she killed Dr. King. She killed all reasonable hope. King was the only 'soul brother' both militants and revolutionaries would listen, to even if they did not always agree with him. When White America killed Dr. King, it declared war on us."⁸¹ CORE leader, Floyd McKissick, expressed similar sentiments; "Dr. King's assassination was also the death of the non-violent civil rights movement. Black Power advocates told you what was coming but you don't seem to listen." McKissick also, announced, "Black Americans no longer will tolerate this killing of its males."⁸² The York Local chapter leader of CORE, Theodore N. Holmes stated, "Dr. King's death will tend to galvanize the Black community. They [Black people] will realize they must organize and attempt to control their own communities."⁸³ Dr. King's murder persuaded the skeptics of non-violent action that a more direct, militant course of action was called for in the defense of their communities.

⁸¹ Washington UPI, "Carmichael Tells Negroes: Retaliate For Death of King," *Gazette and Daily*, 5 April 1968.

⁸² Cleveland UPI, "'Nonviolence' Idea Now Dead, C.O.R.E. Chieftain Declares," *Gazette and Daily*, 5 April 1968.

⁸³ "King's Assassination Stirs Action in York."

This new black, radicalism resonated throughout the United States and abroad, and was backed by a philosophical framework that touched on politics, culture, and economics. Groups, such as, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), The Organization Us, and the Black Panther Party encouraged Black people to study and embrace their heritage and culture.⁸⁴ In cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York, Black community leaders attempted to use principles of Black Power to make their neighborhoods self-reliant and self-supporting. Slogans, such as, “Black is Beautiful,” “Black Power,” and “I’m Black and I’m Proud” were not meaningless phrases; many Black people put these words into action, held their heads high, and confronted the power structure.

Before Dr. King’s death, Reginald Ellis, Kerry Kirkland, and several other Black students at William Penn Senior High School had already initiated and established what was known as “Black Pride Days.” According to Ellis, the students held Black Pride Days every other week, usually on Fridays.⁸⁵ Jahmee Shabazz (Dale Preston), WPSHS class of 1969, and a member of Black INC. (Improvement of Negro Communities) did not participate in the Black Pride Days. However, he remembered that the Black Pride Days developed shortly after the 1968 Negro History Week celebration, held in February.⁸⁶ On designated Fridays, Black students wore black clothes, dashikis, bulus, African and wooden beads, Malcolm X pins, and other attire to display pride in Black culture.⁸⁷ Ellis

⁸⁴ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994); Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

⁸⁵ Reginald Ellis, interview by author, tape recording, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11 February 2002.

⁸⁶ Jahmee Shabazz (Dale Preston), telephone conversation with author, York, Pennsylvania, 22 June 2004.

⁸⁷ Reginald Ellis, interview by author, tape recording, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11 February 2002.

recalled, “The Black Pride Days started out as a small thing that a few of us did. On a given Pride Day, we would ask each other, ‘Where is your pride?’ ‘Where is your Black?’”⁸⁸ The students wore medallions, beads, dashikis, and other items to display their pride. Shortly after the small group of students established their bi-weekly pride celebrations, other Black students increasingly started to participate. They also decided to hold a school-wide Black Pride Day on Tuesday, April 9, 1968. According to Ellis, the purpose of the school-wide Black Pride Day was “to instill a little pride in all the Black students.”⁸⁹

Several members of the Black senior class met at the home of Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan on Thursday, April 4, 1968 in preparation for the school-wide Black Pride Day scheduled to be held on Tuesday, April 9, 1968. Holding meetings in one another’s homes to discuss “outside class business” was a tactic used by national and local organizations, which often met in churches, business establishments, and schools in the Black community to plan, organize, and strategize. The purpose of the students’ meeting was to discuss a plan for the school-wide Black Pride Day.

With the understanding that their efforts required some capital, the students established a fundraiser. Ellis remembered, “It just seems like everyone [Black students at the school] wanted a medallion like I was wearing. The businessman in me realized that there was a demand for a product [John Mitchell’s homemade medallions] and I figured that we could make a profit off of it.” They agreed to sell Black Pride medallion for fifty-cent each. The artist among the students, John Mitchell, designed the medallions for the fundraiser. Mitchell created two logo designs for the medallions. The

⁸⁸ Ellis, interview.

⁸⁹ Ellis, interview.

first logo consisted of two Black hands holding up a globe of the world above a black panther as if it was on the prowl, while a pair of Black hands embracing the words “Black Pride” made up the other design. The medallions were inexpensive and easily mass produced. The homemade necklaces were cut out of white and black construction paper with hand written words “Black Pride Day.” The students also decided to make a Black Pride Day banner out of a white bed sheet to hang in the school’s cafeteria on the day of their event. The medallions represented much more than a source of finance for the students’ activities. Medallions and flags signified their commitment to the movement.

At that meeting on April 4, 1968, the students received the devastating news that Dr. King had been murdered in Memphis, Tennessee by James Earl Ray. Distressed and saddened by the news of Dr. King’s death, Louis Woodyard, arrived at the gathering of students pleading, “They killed King - you guys got to do something! Gotta do something!”⁹⁰ The students who met at the McMillan home that day managed to compose themselves and respond effectively to Woodyard’s plea. Since the students shared different beliefs and ideologies, the suggestions varied among the group regarding their collective response. According to McMillan, some students wanted to display their anger by throwing rocks and pulling fire alarms; while others wanted to do something in the spirit of Dr. King’s non-violent philosophy. The students decided to hold Black Pride Day the following day, Friday, April 5, 1968 instead of the scheduled date of Tuesday, April 9, 1968.⁹¹ They quickly sketched a plan that incorporated a

⁹⁰ Ellis interview.

⁹¹ Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan, interview with the author, York, Pennsylvania, 20 March 2002.

mourning dedication to Dr. King, as well as, calls for black consciousness on Black Pride Day.

The students decided to hold the Black Pride Day assembly in the school's auditorium. Ellis indicated that the auditorium was the only space large enough to accommodate all the Black students. He also noted that the auditorium's format allowed the students to lock the doors and isolate themselves from the rest of the school.

Although they agreed that they would hold an all-Black assembly the following day, they left McMillan's home without a detailed agenda for the event the next day.⁹² The group did agree however to wear black as a sign of solidarity and a way to pay homage to Dr. King. Around 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 4th, Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, Cissy Day, and Wendy (Woodyard) Bryce met at Woodard's to discuss their attire for the next day.⁹³ In addition to their black clothing, the high school trio decided to wear Afro hairstyles to compliment and complete their appearance. Even though most females wore their hair in pressed or processed hairstyles, Bryce remembered that she washed her hair with vinegar to "kink it up" in order to obtain the Afro look.⁹⁴

During this time, organizations and groups presented demands to the "authorities" to change or challenge the status quo. For example, the Black Panther Party issued their 10-point program, CORE followed a six-point program, college students at Columbia, Cornell, Jackson State, and other schools presented lists of

⁹² Ellis interview.

⁹³ Bryce interview.

⁹⁴ Wendy (Woodyard) Bryce, interview with the author, Durham, North Carolina, 20 September 2001.

demands to their school's administration.⁹⁵ Similarly, the Black students in the York movement presented a list of demands to public school officials.

While some members planned and prepared their physical appearance, Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan, a member of the class of 1968, drafted a list of demands around 11:00 p.m. McMillan formatted the demands similar to the Student Code found in a Trinity College catalogue. McMillan also consulted her father, Reverend Adam Kittrell, regarding the list she prepared. Rev. Kittrell suggested she include items of substance rather than just a list of things on a shallow level. Therefore, McMillan stayed up until 4 a.m. to revise and type the list of demands.⁹⁶

Black Students Demands

We, the Black students of William Penn High School... dedicate ourselves to the purpose of insuring a well-rounded curriculum for the students of William Penn. In order for this to come about, we demand the following:

Article I.

Section 1. Black History must be mandatory for all students at William Penn. (By Black teachers.)
Section 2. More Black teachers must be hired. Especially in areas such as:
1) gym teachers for boys and girls;
2) head coaches in sports;
3) teachers in the arts and sciences. If Black teachers don't qualify under set standards, standards must be lowered.

Article II.

Section 1. Better counseling for Black students must be brought about.

⁹⁵ James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1972); August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); James McEvoy and Abraham Miller, eds., *Black Power and Student Rebellion: Conflict on the American Campus* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969).

⁹⁶McMillan, interview.

Section 2. Black counselors must be hired.

Section 3. Scholarship services must be known by all Black students (sic). They should be told at the beginning of the year and at the time of application to colleges.

Section 4. Black college representatives must be scheduled to talk to Black students during every school year.

Article III.

Section 1. Black recognition must be made in areas such as:

1) heads of school committees;

2) more Black student in school societies.

Section 2. No discrimination in school plays, best people must be got (sic) for parts no matter if there are color differences in the lead roles.

Article IV.

Section 1. More respect from the personnel in the main office.

Section 2. Black cafeteria personnel such as cooks and people in serving line(sic).

Section 3. Black guest speakers in assembly programs must be scheduled.

Section 4. Black minister (sic) must be considered for the baccalaureate services.

Section 5. School holiday should be given for the commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's death.

Article V.

Section 1. We want the Temple Report implemented.⁹⁷

On the morning of Friday, April 5, 1968, the country was still in a state of shock as it mourned Dr. King's death. Although the mood was somber, students and staff in the York Public School District also reported to school. In York, most establishments remained opened for business as usual. Dr. Woodrow W. Brown, superintendent of York Public Schools advised individual building principals to use their judgment in the type of tribute their pupils would pay in memory of Dr. King. Willie Howard, a member of the class of 1969 remembered, "Everyone was first on edge, we didn't really know

⁹⁷ "Students Praised," *York Dispatch*, 6 April 1968.

what to do or what was going to happen, but we were pissed off because they [White people] shot him [Dr. King] down. They [school officials] just wanted us to come to school and act as if it was business as usual. We didn't want to go on with business as usual that day.”⁹⁸

Around 7:45 a.m., some student organizers met in Penn Park near the main entrance of WPSHS. They finalized plans and divided tasks amongst themselves. Shortly before the entrance bell rang, some organizers flanked the perimeter of the school to encourage Black students to skip their classes and attend the Black Pride Day in the auditorium. Other student organizers sold homemade medallions.

The students entered the building around 8:00 a.m. While most students headed to their homerooms, Black Pride Day organizers approached Dr. Meredith O. Parry, WPSHS principal. The organizers told Parry that they were going to utilize the auditorium to hold a Black-only assembly. Although the activity was not planned or arranged by his staff, Parry obliged to the students request. Although Parry did not rule against the students using the auditorium, he did not permit the organizers to use the school's intercom system to make any announcements about the assembly. Therefore, throughout the morning, organizers stood in the hallway outside of the auditorium flagged Black students inside while others went from classroom to classroom recruiting fellow students.⁹⁹

While some of the organizers recruited students to the auditorium, McMillan met with Ruth Ann Hall, a member of the senior class, in the yearbook office. McMillan said, “I had her [Ruth] retype it so that it would look better and also be presentable, because

⁹⁸ Howard, interview.

⁹⁹ Kerry Kirkland, interview with author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 22 October 2001.

she was a better typist.”¹⁰⁰ Once the demands were retyped, McMillan and Hall left the yearbook office and headed to the auditorium.¹⁰¹

Inside the auditorium, the organizers developed and modified the agenda of activities as the day proceeded. Mitchell stated, “That morning things were chaotic, we did not have a plan, we just went with the flow.”¹⁰² Unlike most school assemblies, the Black Pride Day activity was not supervised by school personnel. However, on several occasions Parry, without interrupting the assembly, checked in on the students for very short periods.

During the morning portion of the program, a few teachers entered the auditorium to witness the event. During his planning period, Bernie Manning, a Black teacher, stopped in and watched from the rear of the auditorium. Before he returned to his class, Manning told the assembled Black students, “I have no comments to make either positive or negative, and I just hope you look upon me as someone who respects what you’re doing.”¹⁰³ During a recent interview, Manning indicated that he admired the high school students and what they accomplished.¹⁰⁴ Wearing a black armband in recognition of Dr. King, Max Frye, a White teacher, also went to the auditorium to support the students. Even though some students welcomed Frye in the auditorium, an argument started regarding his presence. Frye did not want to disrupt the students meeting. In a recent interview, Frye stated, “I went up to the microphone and explained

¹⁰⁰ McMillan, interview

¹⁰¹ McMillan, interview.

¹⁰² Mitchell, interview.

¹⁰³ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King," *Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968.

¹⁰⁴ Bernie Manning, interview with the author, telephone, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 9 February 2003.

that I was there to show support and felt very much in sympathy with what they were doing. I was not there to participate so I left.”¹⁰⁵ Wendy Woodyard remembered, “The White folks were trying to come in to see what we were doing because we were supposed to be in class...This one White teacher was sitting up in the balcony for a while before they made her get up and leave. After she got up and left, somebody said, ‘Lock the doors.’”¹⁰⁶ After the commotion settled about the presence of White teachers at the assembly, the students continued with their makeshift agenda. As students grieved and consoled one another, others reflected on Dr. King’s life, accomplishments, and political views. Some students read Dr. King’s speeches and portions of his dissertation, while others read poetry, sang songs, and played instruments. Some students addressed the problems Black people faced in York, especially with the York Police Department.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the student presentation, Lionel Bailey, an activist in the community, addressed the audience assembled in the auditorium. Bailey recalled that he reminded the students that they were a powerful force if they would unite in their cause.¹⁰⁸

At 11:46 a.m., the entire auditorium of Black students emptied into the hall to proceed to the cafeteria to eat together during the C lunch period. After the lunch period, the students returned to the auditorium. Although the organizers were glad to see that majority of the Black students attended the assembly, they realized that some Black students did not get the message that the Black Pride Day activities were taking place in the auditorium. Determined to inform other Black students of the day’s

¹⁰⁵ Max Frye, interview with author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 16 March 2001.

¹⁰⁶ Bryce, interview.

¹⁰⁷ Howard, interview.

¹⁰⁸ Lionel Bailey, telephone conversation with the author, Temple Hills, Maryland, 20 January 2004.

activities, one unknown student was able to briefly inform the student body of the gathering in the auditorium. Bruce Murdaugh, an underclassman, was sitting in science class when he distinctively heard a Black voice over the intercom system say, “All Black students report to the auditorium.” Murdaugh remembered, as the only Black student enrolled in his science class, all the white students in the classroom turned in their seats to look at him shortly after the ordinary announcement. Murdaugh indicated that he just simply looked up to the teacher who signaled him to go to the auditorium.¹⁰⁹

After lunch, the Black students returned to the auditorium with swelled numbers to conclude the day’s activities. Ellis recounted, “By the time we resumed the afternoon schedule, the auditorium was packed.”¹¹⁰ The two local newspapers reported that anywhere from 200 – 300 Black students attended the Black Pride Day assembly.¹¹¹ The organizers of the assembly capitalized on the fact that they had the attention of majority of the school’s Black population. Even though some students were somber and sad, Reginald Ellis took to the auditorium stage and addressed the crowd on the microphone. Ellis remembered getting the audiences attention. He said, “Hey! What are we going to do about this [Dr. King’s death]?” Ellis also remembered that he mentioned something about the injustices and inequities at York High, particularly that school did not teach Blacks about their history or culture.¹¹²

After Ellis prepped the audience, he turned the stage and microphone over to Kerry Kirkland, president of the Black senior class. Kirkland remembered that there was

¹⁰⁹ Bruce Murdaugh, telephone conversation with the author, York, Pennsylvania, 4 March 2002.

¹¹⁰ Ellis, interview.

¹¹¹ There is a discrepancy in the number of students who attended the assembly reported by the *Gazette and Daily and York Dispatch*.

¹¹² Ellis, interview.

so much going on that day, he did not get a chance to thoroughly go over the demands before he reached the stage.¹¹³ According to Ellis, Kirkland delivered a powerful speech and read the demands to the assembled audience. 250 Black students erupted in a loud applause after Kirkland's oration. The students' actions and demands initiated during the Black Pride Day event was symbolically the beginning of the movement for educational and social change in the York City School District.

On Saturday, April 6, 1968, some students joined adults who organized commemoration activities for Dr. King on the bandstand at Penn Park. Reggie Ellis, a York High student and representative of the Black student council, explained to the crowd the issues and concerns they raised during Friday's Black Pride Day. Hannah Penn Junior High School student, Keenan Preston, addressed the mass assemble on the park and read a poem entitled, "The Great Martin Luther King," which he wrote the day before as he attended school (See appendix: insert a copy of the poem).¹¹⁴

Over the weekend, various organizations and groups throughout York County held memorial services for Dr. King. Most Black Yorkers, including York High students, attended services and programs hosted by Black churches and civic groups Saturday and Sunday. A group which called itself, "residents and friends of the intercity," comprised of groups of Black ministers and leaders in the city sponsored a tribute to Dr. King on Monday, April 8, 1968, at Penn Park. Despite the scattered showers, the *Gazette and Daily* reported between 400 and 500 people stood in the rain to hear the local leaders speak against violence.¹¹⁵ Some 700 Yorkers attended an inter-

¹¹³ Kirkland, interview.

¹¹⁴ "Hannah Penn Boy Writes of King," *Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968.

¹¹⁵ "King Memorial Speaker Hit Violence," *Gazette and Daily*, 9 April 1968, 1.

faith service co-sponsored by the York County Council of Churches, the YMCA, the York Deanery of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Monthly Ministers Fellowship at St. Rose Lima Catholic Church.¹¹⁶

The momentum of the Black Pride Day assembly carried over to the weekend and caused a disruption in the York City School District on Monday, April 8, 1968. The student organizers encouraged not only York High students - they also recruited students from the junior high schools. Phineas Davis, Edgar Fahs Smith, and Hannah Penn, who were among the students that participated in Black Pride Day, skipped school and join the rally on the park. Instead of going to class, roughly 150 students participated in the memorial service in Penn Park. Even though the crowd met peacefully, police officers and K-9 units stationed themselves on the other side of the park. According to Willie Howard, the couple hundred students were together: "If something [referring to inappropriate police action] would have gone down, we had each others back."¹¹⁷

Even though a critical mass of Black students participated in the walkout, some parents returned their children back to their respective schools. According to Stella Banks, WPSHS class of 1968, some parents did not want their children to "rock the boat."¹¹⁸ Banks indicated that many students' parents, as did the parents of Allen Garnett, would have taken their children back to school if they had known that they were not in school.

¹¹⁶ "700 Yorkers Pay King Tribute in Inter-Faith Memorial Rites," *Gazette and Daily*, 8 April 1968, 1.

¹¹⁷ Howard , interview.

¹¹⁸ Stella (Richardson) Banks, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 30 September 2001.

Returning from the morning's activities During the second lunch period, the congregation of students entered WPSHS to eat lunch. According to Henry Blockzeyl, director of Food Services, the cafeteria staff fed all the Black students, even the junior high students who did not attend the school.¹¹⁹ After lunch, the organizers decided not to rejoin the adult-led rally at the bandstand. Instead, they met amongst themselves at the Civil War Memorial statue to address issues pertinent to their movement. Shortly after the dialogue, the entire group marched two-by-two to the administration building, located at 329 South Lindbergh Avenue. In route to the administration building, the students chanted "Freedom."¹²⁰ The 300 block of South Lindbergh Street swelled as the students gathered outside of the administration building, which caused some students to stand in the street. As the students filled the sidewalk and street, the organizers requested that Dr. Woodrow Brown, superintendent of York City Public Schools, meet with the group on the steps of the administration building. McMillan remembered:

[We] stood in front of the Administration Building and we asked the superintendent to come out. He came out and talked to us and we were sort of angry. We really want things done. So he said, 'We will get the school board and we will discuss these things.' And we said, 'We have a list of demands that we're going to present.' So he seemed kind of surprised with that. So when he saw them he said, 'Okay, the school board will consider these things. We need time to look over it. We don't want any body to get upset. There is no need to do these things rash' several times. He said he wanted several representatives to come to the school board meeting and talk about these [list of demands] to them [school board members]. Most people [students] were kind of upset because everybody wanted to come to the school board meeting. So he just chose several people and asked, 'Who wrote this? Who wrote the list of demands?' So I raised my hands up and then he said, "You come too."¹²¹ So we went into the school administration building and we talked just for a brief time. He said, "Well I

¹¹⁹ "Classes Disrupted at William Penn," *York Dispatch*, 8 April 1968.

¹²⁰ "Classes Disrupted at William Penn."

¹²¹ McMillan, interview.

*want you to read them and then we will discuss them. We'll give you the time and date. We want your parents there as well."*¹²²

Brown then invited students; Kerry Kirkland, Reginald Ellis, Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan, and two adults, James Colston, vice president of the NAACP, and James McNeil, detached youth worker for McKinley-Cookes Service Center to meet with him in his office. The group met in Brown's office very briefly. Brown invited the students along with their parents to the school board meeting held on April 18, 1968 to present their demands to the Board. Brown also suggested that the students modify their list to petition format. The students succeeded in bringing their concerns to the forefront of local politics, however, after leaving the mini conference, Ellis said, "It's too early to tell if the conference has been fruitful."¹²³

Nearly two weeks later, on Thursday, April 18, 1968, accompanied by their parents, Deborah Kittrell, Kerry Kirkland, and Reginald Ellis attended the York City School Board meeting. Nearly 90 people filled the 75-seat second floor conference room, and nearly 200 supporters gathered outside the Administration Building. Tension filled the room as the board members and the audience could hear the protesters outside singing Negro spirituals. Two weeks prior, Brown had invited the Black students to the meeting to read their demands and express their concerns, however on this day the Board did not place the students on the agenda. Because the students did not prepare their list of demands in petition form, Board President, L. Jeanette Krone attempted to adjourn the meeting without allowing the students to speak. However, W. Russell Chapman, the only Black Board member, interjected and recognized the Black students

¹²² McMillan, interview.

¹²³ "Classes Disrupted At William Penn."

who had waited patiently to be called. Chapman reminded the Board that the public has a right to speak at the meetings and that right was extended to the Black students.

With the Board's attention, McMillan and Ellis shared the duty of reading the prepared speech. According to McMillan:

I remembered sitting sort of in front, at the end of the table and the board members sat around us. There were lots of people in the audience on both sides. They would only let a certain number of students in. So Reggie may have read some of the demands, I read some. I also tried to start a small history lesson of people, Black Americans who had made contributions to history. They were sort of like okay. After that, we then started reading the demands. The thing that really impressed me was that, as we went down the demands and read them, they were very critical of, like semantics. I think some things were spelled wrong and so that was pointed out to us. Once you look and maybe some of the sentence structure was a little bit off so they pointed to make sure we were aware of that. I never went back and corrected that. I figure, you got the demands that's, enough. I should have.

At 10:13 p.m., after two hours of back and forth dialogue between the student supporters and board members, Krone adjourned the meeting. However, Krone announced that a "special meeting" would take place on Tuesday, April 22, 1968, to further discuss the demands. Although the students' presence at the board meeting was reported in both local newspapers, their attendance or presentation was not recorded in the meeting minutes of the School Board.¹²⁴ Whether the oversight by Charles S. Warner, the school board secretary, was deliberate or unintentional, the actions of the students are not included in the school board's meeting minutes.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a critical moment in the history of the United States. People responded in different ways to his death. Some engaged in riotous activities and other simply mourned. The day after King's assassination, the Black students at William Penn Senior High School in York,

¹²⁴ "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board," *York Dispatch*, 19 April 1968; "Students Present 'Black Demands' to School Board," *Gazette and Daily*, 18 April 1968.

Pennsylvania responded by organizing a Black Pride Day assembly. Students mourned and celebrated the life of the slain leader during their “closed ranks” meeting. In addition, the students addressed the social and educational injustices at the school for which they created a list of demands. The actions of York High School students after the murder of Dr. King reflect the greater role played by youths as the Black Power Movement gained momentum.

CHAPTER 6: THE AFTERMATH

The 1968 Black Pride Day and its aftermath that occurred in the York Public School District was a microcosm of wider calls for educational and curricula reforms, which occurred during the late 1960s and early 1970s throughout the United States. The activism of the Black students at William Penn Senior High School warranted mixed responses from the York community. Although the reactions to the Black students' actions varied, their movement influenced the administration to address the educational and curricular inequities in the York City School District.

The Responses to Black Student Activism

The 1968 Black Pride Day was a historic event at WPSHS. This was the first time a critical mass of Black students assembled themselves to initiate a movement with lasting affects. As these events unfolded, both of York's local news agencies provided its readership with coverage. The editors of *The Gazette and Daily*, York's liberal newspaper, provided more coverage of the York Black student movement. On Saturday, April 6, 1968, *The Gazette and Daily* staff published a feature article "William Penn Students Mourn King," which covered the entire third page of the paper.¹²⁵ The full-page story included two photographs with a caption that read, "Negro Students at William Penn Senior High School had scheduled yesterday as 'Black Pride Day.' ...200 Black students held a special assembly in the auditorium."¹²⁶ On the other hand, *The York Dispatch*, the town's conservative newspaper published a one-column article "Students Praised" buried on page 30 of the Saturday evening edition.¹²⁷ Furthermore, between

¹²⁵ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King," *Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968.

¹²⁶ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King."

¹²⁷ "Students Praised," *The York Dispatch*, 6 April 1968.

April 6 and April 27, 1968, the newspaper editors at *The Gazette and Daily* published three times as many articles relating to the Black York High students than the editors at *The York Dispatch*.¹²⁸

While the two news agencies provided different perspectives of the student led events, the sentiments varied in both the White and Black communities. As the Black students assembled and supervised themselves in the school's auditorium, administrators and faculty attempted to operate as "business as usual." As word spread around the school about the "Negro-assembly" some White students attempted, although unsuccessful, to enter the auditorium in support of the student-led movement. Some White students walked out of school in protest of the exclusive meeting inside the school.¹²⁹ According to Bernie Manning, a black teacher at the school, some of the angered white students waited in the park across the street from the school with rocks and sticks.¹³⁰ Manning recalled that he and other faculty members kept the Black students at bay to avoid a confrontation outside of the school. The reactionary sentiments of the white students reflect the attitude of many within York's white

¹²⁸ "Black Students Ask More Recognition at William Penn after Rally on Park," *Gazette and Daily*, 9 April 1968; "City School Board Schedules Parley on Temple Report," *Gazette and Daily*, 23 April 1968; "Hannah Penn Boy Writes of King," *Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968; "History of Negro Will Be Taught at William Penn," *Gazette and Daily*, 23 April 1968; "King Memorial Speakers Hit Violence," *Gazette and Daily*, 9 April 1968; "King's Assassination Stirs Action in York," *York Dispatch*, 5 April 1968; "Mixed Reactions on Assassination Given by Yorkers," *Gazette and Daily*, 5 April 1968; "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board," *York Dispatch*, 19 April 1968; "School Directors Told Negro 'Teachers Not Coming to Us'," *Gazette and Daily*, 11 April 1968; "School Upgrading Said Key Effort to Halt Race Shift," *Gazette and Daily*, 19 April 1968; "Students Praised," *York Dispatch*, 6 April 1968; "Students Present 'Black Demands' to School Board," *Gazette and Daily*, 19 April 1968; "Three Groups Urging Action to Improve Schools in York," *Gazette and Daily*, 24 April 1968; "Two Negro Students Elected to York High School Offices," *Gazette and Daily*, 27 April 1968; "Vote Tomorrow," *Gazette and Daily*, 22 April 1968; "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King," *Gazette and Daily*, 6 April 1968; "York High to Offer Course on Negro History," *York Dispatch*, 23 April 1968.

¹²⁹ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King,"

¹³⁰ Bernie Manning, interview with the author, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 9 February 2003.

community. For example, one white female teacher said, "When the assembly is over, we'll have to fumigate the auditorium."¹³¹

In the wake of Dr. King's death and the unrelenting calls for reform, the conflict between Black students and the dominant culture intensified. There were different responses to these rising tensions. In Philadelphia, School Board President Richardson Dilworth issued a court order to ban demonstrations at public high schools.¹³² Normally, the police agitated and disbursed groups of congregated Blacks.¹³³ In the same way, Philadelphia police, under the orders of Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo, arrested protesting high school students.¹³⁴

However while the student led events transpired, the police observed from a safe distance to avoid creating havoc and to allow the Blacks to mourn their slain leader. Willie Howard remembered that he could see the cops and their dogs on the other side of the park near the school administration building.¹³⁵ The space that the police provided the Black students was unusual.

While Black students, who engaged in protest activities on college and university campuses, often faced expulsion, were placed on judiciary probation, or stripped of their scholarships and financial aid, the Black students at WPSHS did not face disciplinary

¹³¹ "Students Praised."

¹³² V. P. Franklin, "Black High School Student Activism in the 1960s: An Urban Phenomenon?" *Journal of Research in Education* 10, no. 1 (2000), 3.

¹³³ During the interview with Stella (Richardson) Banks indicated that it was common for police to disburse Black students following social events and activities. See Stella (Richardson) Banks, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 30 September 2001

¹³⁴ Franklin, "Black High School Student Activism in the 1960s," 3.

¹³⁵ Willie Howard, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 24 December 2001.

measures for taking part in the demonstration.¹³⁶ The York School Board did not create any policy to ban students from protesting, however, they did implement a policy that required all visitors to the school to report to the main office for a pass. Lionel Bailey explained that the school adopted the policy to prevent people like himself from causing disruptions in the school.¹³⁷ Some members of York's White community protested the students' actions by criticizing Principal Parry for his decision to allow the students to hold a Black-only assembly. Parry also faced criticism from his staff for not punishing the Black students who skipped their classes to attend the meeting. *The Gazette and Daily* quoted an unidentified White female teacher who stated, "The Black students should have been forced to go to class or face expulsion."¹³⁸ Parry dismissed his critics in his statement to reporters, "I am running this ship."¹³⁹

Although he was in the minority among the White faculty, Max Frye publicly supported the students and their cause.¹⁴⁰ Frye recalled that some teachers feared the possibility of losing their jobs or identified as a rabble-rouser.¹⁴¹ In addition to the marginal support of the faculty and administration, some Whites bolstered the actions of the Black students. Stella (Richardson) Banks recalled that Jim Furman and Dennis Fry, both White students, supported the Black students' actions.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ Joy Ann Williamson, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-75* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

¹³⁷ Lionel Bailey, telephone conversation with the author, Temple Hills, Maryland, 20 January 2004.

¹³⁸ "William Penn Students Mourn Dr. King."

¹³⁹ "Students Praised."

¹⁴⁰ "Students Praised."

¹⁴¹ Max Frye, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 16 March 2001.

¹⁴² Banks, interview.

The members of the school board were also split in their reception of the students' attempts to voice their demands. Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan believed that the actions of Dr. Woodrow Brown were supportive of their cause. McMillan supported her claim with the fact he extended an invitation to the students to present their demands to the school board and suggested they revise their list of demands. But despite Brown's invitation, Board President L. Jeanette Krone attempted to adjourn the meeting without allowing the students to speak. However, W. Russell Chapman, the only Black board member, interjected and recognized the Black students who had waited patiently. Chapman reminded the Board that the public has a right to speak at the meeting therefore the Black students had a right to be heard.¹⁴³ After two hours of back and forth dialogue between the student supporters and board members, Krone adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m. However, Krone announced that a "Special Meeting" would take place on Tuesday, April 22, 1968 to further discuss the demands. Although the students' presence at the board meeting was reported in both local newspapers, their attendance or presentation was not recorded in the meeting minutes of the School Board.¹⁴⁴

While, at that particular time, the actions of the York police appeared neutral, majority of the Black community supported the students' actions. Several Black leaders supported the students' cause. Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan mentioned that her father, Rev. Adam Kittrell, gave her suggestions for the demands and accompanied her during the school board meeting. Detached youth worker, James McNeil, and James Colston, vice president of the local chapter NAACP, publicly displayed their support for the Black

¹⁴³ "History of Negro Will Be Taught at William Penn," *Gazette and Daily*, 23 April 1968.

¹⁴⁴ "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board," *York Dispatch*, 19 April 1968; "Students Present 'Black Demands' to School Board."

students as they chaperoned the student leaders as they met with Superintendent Brown.¹⁴⁵ Bernie Manning displayed his support in his public announcement during the Black Pride Day assembly, declaring that he admired the students for their boldness and fortitude.¹⁴⁶

Manning was among several faculty members that supported the students efforts, though did not do so publicly. Reginald Ellis indicated that other teachers exhibited their support privately.¹⁴⁷ Ellis also mentioned that his uncle, Voni B. Grimes, a prominent figure in the entire York community, “did not try to reel me in.” According to Ellis, Grimes did not try to stop him from standing up for his beliefs.¹⁴⁸ Rachel (Mulkey) Sims, mother of Barbara Mulkey Woodard, supported the Black students’ activities. Sims remembered that she permitted Barbara to host meetings in her home.¹⁴⁹ Another individual who supported the Black students’ actions was Lionel Bailey. Bailey was a community activist, who often held rallies in Penn Park, during which he acknowledged the Black William Penn students.¹⁵⁰ Ellis remembered that Bailey pulled him on stage during a rally shortly after the Black Pride Day.¹⁵¹

While the Black students had the support of majority of the Black community, some Blacks opposed the student demonstrations. Stella Richardson alleged that her

¹⁴⁵ "Classes Disrupted at William Penn."

¹⁴⁶ Manning, interview.

¹⁴⁷ Reginald Ellis, interview by author, tape recording, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11 February 2002.

¹⁴⁸ Ellis, interview.

¹⁴⁹ Rachel (Mulkey) Sims, conversation with the author, York, Pennsylvania, 12 January 2004 .

¹⁵⁰ Bailey, interview.

¹⁵¹ Ellis, interview.

mother did not approve of these types of activities, recalling that “she did not want us to rock the boat.”¹⁵² For this reason, Richardson did not tell her mother about the student walk out so that she could participate. Richardson remembered that Alan Garnett’s parents took him back to school during the walkout. Tim Garnett, Alan’s younger brother, remembered that his parents said, “If we are paying taxes, your behind belongs in school.”¹⁵³ Some Blacks did not participate in the movement activities in fear that they might lose their jobs. Barbara Woodard indicated that her father, as most men of that time, did not participate as much as women did because men had to provide for and protect their families.¹⁵⁴ Ralph Luker notes that men commonly dominated leadership positions in major civil rights organizations, however, twice the number of women participated in the organization and went to jail for the freedom cause.¹⁵⁵

The Black students who organized the 1968 Black Pride Day influenced Black students in later classes to engage in activist activities at York High. In his end of the year report, Principal Parry indicated that the 1968-1969 was his most difficult year in his twenty-seven years as a high school principal.¹⁵⁶ Parry further indicated that the student walk-outs and riots in the city were largely in response to concerns about the curriculum and instruction provided by the district and was also fueled by the murder of

¹⁵² Banks, interview.

¹⁵³ Tim Garnett, telephone conversation with author, York, Pennsylvania, 10 March 2002.

¹⁵⁴ Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, telephone conversation with author, York, Pennsylvania, 19 October 2000.

¹⁵⁵ Ralph Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 2.

¹⁵⁶ Charles H. Walters, *York Public Schools Annual Report 1968 - 1969* (York: York Public School District, 1969), 5.

Dr. King. In the report, Parry also made several suggestions to resolve some of the pressing issues which include the following:

- *The curriculum must have relevant content and instructional techniques, must be keenly attuned to relate learning closely to the lives of those it attempts to serve.*
- *Staff must be carefully screened for background and attitude when building faculty of the future.*
- *Teachers must be increasingly aware of the best teaching methods proven for ghetto children.*
- *The school district should provide in-service training in this area and then insist on this philosophical approach and concomitant techniques required for successful teaching of minority groups.¹⁵⁷*

Parry's suggestions implied that Black students were marginalized by the school system. However it appears that the district not only denied its Black community intellectual resources, but financial resources as well. In August and September of 1968, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission conducted Investigatory Hearings in the City of York. The Commission reported the injustices throughout the city, as well as, problems in the York City School District. Black residents were systematically denied employment in the district.

York Public City School District Personnel Demographics 1968 - 1969

Professional Staff	Total	White	Negro	% Negro
Administration	32	31	1	3.12
Guidance-Counseling	15	13	2	13.33
Teachers	510	490	20	3.92
Others	25	25	0	0

Non-Professional Staff	Total	White	Negro	%Negro
Clerical	76	76	0	0
Custodial	64	52	12	18.75
Maintenance	15	15	0	0
Cafeteria	98	98	0	0

Table 3.

¹⁵⁷ Walters, *York Public Schools Annual Report 1968 – 1969*, 5.

The report indicated that the discrimination in employment of Negroes in the City of York had done much to add to the social problems in the entire community.¹⁵⁸ In addition to discriminatory employment practices by the district, the Investigatory Report found that school officials failed to adequately and equitably prepare the poor and Blacks with the requisite educational foundation for either higher education or acceptance into the mainstream society. The district has not incorporated the curriculum contributions of Negroes and other minorities.¹⁵⁹

During the 1968 - 1969 school year, the Black students held a Black Pride Day to commemorate the one-year anniversary. As a senior, Willie Howard remembered, "We had to continue the fight '68 started."¹⁶⁰ Black student protests and walkouts occurred during the next two years. The 1969-70 school year was not one of all sunshine and roses. Like many school systems, the York City District was torn by students' unrest. The early occurrences were the aftermath of the riotous conditions in the City in late July and August of 1969. Inter-groups conflict continued sporadically until April 3, 1970 when a student melee at William Penn Senior High School forced the schools to close for several days. After school was reconvened, there appeared to be an uneasy truce which existed until the closing of the schools in June. Out of this emergency, a group was formed called the "Intergroup Emergency Board" which included representation from the State Human Relations Commission, faculty non-professional employees, students, parents and school directors. This group investigated all the definable causes of the disruptions. Certain recommendations were effected immediately. Others were referred

¹⁵⁸ Harry Boyer, "Investigatory Hearing Report," (York: Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, 1968).

¹⁵⁹ Boyer, "Investigatory Hearing Report."

¹⁶⁰ Howard, interview.

to the Board of School Directors since these suggestions were in the form of broad district policy changes. The group resolved in June to disband in favor of district-wide committees to aid and assist the Board of three committees – one for elementary schools, one for junior high schools and one for the senior high school.¹⁶¹

An Analysis of the Demands for Educational and Curricula Reform

Although the communities' sentiments varied, the student led Black Pride Day influenced educational and curricula reforms in the York Public School District. After the students publicly presented the demands to the York School Board addressed the inequities in the district. Even though the students' appeals were poignant, the district was unable to resolve all the issues.

Black History must be mandatory for all students at William Penn

Alvin F. Poussaint, a foremost scholar of Black education in the United States, argues that the curricula in most American schools intentionally or inadvertently teach white racism.¹⁶² He posited that in order to prevent the internalization of white racism by Blacks, the educational system needed to include the accomplishments of Black men and women: "Black children in their schools become proud of being Black by learning of the many contributions of Blacks to the achievements of the world and America."¹⁶³ Perhaps becoming aware of Poussaint's claims by way of experience, the Black students at WPSHS demanded that a mandatory Black history course for all students instructed by a Black teacher. During the school board meeting, the students necessitated the need

¹⁶¹ Charles H. Walters, *York Public School District Annual Report 1969 - 1970* (York: York Public School District, 1970), 8.

¹⁶² Alvin F. Poussaint, "Education and Black Self-Image," *Freedomways* 3, no. 4 (1968), 335.

¹⁶² C Vann Woodward, "American History (White Man's Version) Needs an Infusion of Soul," *New York Times Magazine*, 20 April 1969.

¹⁶³ Poussaint, "Education and Black Self-Image," 338.

for a Black history course.¹⁶⁴ They argued that such a course and its curriculum could curtail the miseducation of both Blacks and Whites by emphasizing and legitimatizing the accomplishment of Blacks.¹⁶⁵ Reflecting back on the demand, Keith Beatty said, “We wanted a Black history class that would teach us to be proud, not prejudice. We also wanted to let people [Whites] know we were equal.”¹⁶⁶ C. Vann Woodward suggests that White people need to know the history and contribution made by Black people.¹⁶⁷ Surprisingly, a White student in York expressed the necessity of Negro history as a way to educate and dispel the prejudices of White students.¹⁶⁸

Students’ demand for a Black history course did not fall on deaf ears. At the state government level, Dr. K. Leroy Irvis, the first African American Speaker of the House of Representatives in the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, supported House Bill No. 13. House Bill No. 13 was an amendment to the school code to require that schools teach the major contributions made by Negroes and other ethnic groups in the development of the United States and Pennsylvania.¹⁶⁹ This bill supported the students’ plea to the York City School Board.

Despite the fact the Pennsylvania state legislation passed an amendment the previous year concerning this matter, some Board members resisted the Black students’ request. Robert Bowers, the sole dissenting member, stated, “the idea of creating a Black history course is an act of discrimination.” He indicated that his conscious would not

¹⁶⁴ McMillan, interview.

¹⁶⁵ Ellis, interview.

¹⁶⁶ K. Beatty, interview.

¹⁶⁷ Woodward, “American History (White Man’s Version) Needs an Infusion of Soul,” 111.

¹⁶⁸ “Students Present ‘Black Demands’ to School Board,”; “Negroes’ Demands Stir School Board,”

¹⁶⁹ Legislative File, 1971, K. Leroy Irvis Papers, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

allow him to vote in favor of any policy that supported segregation. He also stated that “there would be repercussions on both sides if the course was implemented.” Bowers perceived their demands as acts of separatists, and stated “I wonder if they really want this, in light of their recent struggle to eradicate Jim Crow?”¹⁷⁰ In response to Bowers’ remarks, Russell Chapman, the only African American on the school board, also supported the students demand for a Black history course. Chapman, a former student of Dr. Carter G. Woodson at Howard University, stated, “Blacks [should] know their background; therefore, in order to gain this knowledge, the students need “Negro” history.”¹⁷¹

Dr. Woodrow O. Brown, superintendent, also argued against the implementation of Black history into the curriculum. Dr. Brown claimed the district could not afford to absorb the costs that would support the program. The superintendent stated, “No Black history textbook was available, and supplemental materials were too expensive.” In addition, he stated, “to hire a Black teacher would strain an already tight budget.” In response to Dr. Brown comments, Deborah (Kittrel) McMillan stated, “students do not want to wait ten years before a well-integrated textbook is developed.”¹⁷² Students felt that this was a small price to pay for the discrimination they faced over the years. Even though there was some resistance, the school board voted 5 to 1, to implement a ‘Negro History’ course the next school year. However, the board decided to implement the Negro History course as an elective at the high school level, not mandatory as suggested by the Black students. Dr. Brown explained that the Commonwealth [of Pennsylvania]

¹⁷⁰ Floyd B. Barbour, ed., *The Black Power Revolt: A Collection of Essays* (Boston: Extending Horizons Books, 1968).

¹⁷¹ "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board."

¹⁷² "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board."

specifies which courses are to be mandatory and therefore local districts could not overrule the mandate.¹⁷³ Dr. Parry directed the vertical social studies committee to meet during July to create the course outline and description, and present it to the board during the August school board meeting.¹⁷⁴ In addition to establishing a Negro History course, the school board decided to incorporate contributions of Blacks and use Black authors in all subject areas in every grade level.¹⁷⁵

The Black History course at WPSHS was well attended by the students. In the 1968-1969 Annual Report, the WPSHS History Department reported that during the first year of the Black History course, it was capped at 30 students and achieved full enrollment. The History Department expanded its resources to accommodate 90 students for the 1969 - 1970 school year.¹⁷⁶ The English Department at WPSHS implemented Black Literature throughout its curriculum as well.¹⁷⁷

The change that the students' efforts helped to bring about had a widespread affect not only on their school, but their community as well. At the junior high level, five of the six members of the Social Studies Department at Hannah Middle School participated in the in-service on Black Studies History Courses provided by the district.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board."

¹⁷⁴ "York High to Offer Course on Negro History."

¹⁷⁵ "History of Negro Will Be Taught at William Penn."; York Public School Board, "Meeting Minutes," 22 May 1968.

¹⁷⁶ Walters, *York Public Schools Annual Report 1968 - 1969*, 7

¹⁷⁷ Walters, *York Public School District Annual Report 1969 - 1970*.

¹⁷⁸ Walters, *York Public School District Annual Report 1969 - 1970*, 29.

During the 1968-1969 school year, Julia Muldrow Harris, who was hired to teach the Negro History course, established and served as the advisor for the Carter G.

Woodson Society.¹⁷⁹ The caption next to the year picture states:

*"'Breaking the bonds of ignorance.' The study of contributions made by Negroes to society is the purpose of this newly formed club, named after the man who started promoting this long neglected area of interest."*¹⁸⁰

According to Harris, she was inspired to start the club after she attended the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History annual meeting in New York City.¹⁸¹ Harris taught the course for two years before the district hired Marshall Peterson to teach the Black History classes at York High.¹⁸²

Hire More Black Personnel

In their list of demands, Black students also urged the district to hire additional Black employees. They were successful in bringing about change in this area as well. During the 1967-68 school year, there were only four Black employees: three teachers and one custodian. This small group was comprised of Theresa Johnson (English), John Jones (Foreign Languages), Bernie Manning (Science), and Frank Spells (Custodian). Charles H. Walters, Assistant Superintendent of York School, remarked his visits to Hampton Institute to recruit counselors and teachers of color were unsuccessful.¹⁸³ In an effort to recruit and hire Black teachers, the school board hired William E. Brantley to join the school's administration. Brantley, an African American, was the director of

¹⁷⁹ *William Penn Senior High School: 1969 Tatler* (York: Trimmer Printing Inc., 1969).

¹⁸⁰ *William Penn Senior High School: 1969 Tatler*, 46.

¹⁸¹ Julia (Muldrow) Harris, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 2 March 2002.

¹⁸² *York Hi-Lites*, 20 Oct 1970.

¹⁸³ "Share Guard Costs, City Asks School," *York Dispatch*, 11 April 1968, 48.

pupil personnel. In addition to recruiting, he supervised each guidance department in the district.¹⁸⁴

The district responded to the students' demand to hire a Black history teacher by hiring someone within the district. Julia (Muldrow) Harris was transferred to William Penn Senior High School from Ferguson Elementary, where she taught special education. Wanda L. Brantley filled a vacant position in the Business department.¹⁸⁵ As a result of Black students being discriminated against by clerical and cafeteria workers, the district hired Helen Ritter to fill a secretarial position in the English department, while Irma Woodard was hired as the first Black to work in the school cafeteria.¹⁸⁶ Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan recalled, "Within a year of our movement, you started seeing African American Cooks come into the school systems, serving African American foods."¹⁸⁷ Former custodian, Frank Spells received a promotion to home school visitor. His promotion was in response to Black students' initiative that they demanded all students and staff address him properly and respectfully. Willie Howard indicated that the students were adamant about this issue. Howard said, "He [Spells] was a grown man and they [White people] needed to respect him as a man and call him Mr. Spells."¹⁸⁸ Spells' promotion did not occur without resistance from people on the school board. According to Wanda Spells Dorm, the daughter of Frank Spells, board members voiced their dissention about her father's transition from custodian to a semi-professional.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Walters, *York Public Schools Annual Report* 1968 - 1969.

¹⁸⁵ York Public School Board, "Meeting Minutes," 17 July 1968.

¹⁸⁶ York Public School Board, "Meeting Minutes," 15 May 1968.

¹⁸⁷ McMillan, interview.

¹⁸⁸ Howard, interview.

Better Guidance Counseling Needed

Another important aspect of the students' demands was their request for better counseling and to hire Black guidance counselors. The district hired Sam Manson (full-time) and Julia (Muldrow) Harris (part-time) during the summer of 1968. Muldrow spent the other half of her day teaching the Negro History class. The purpose of the two Black hires was to better serve the Black student population. According to the 1969-70 Annual Report, Muldrow and Manson were, "the two factors that contributed to the effectiveness of individual counseling."¹⁹⁰ Under the leadership of William Brantley, the guidance department, in collaboration with the Community Progress Council, adopted the Talent Search Program that assisted poor minority students in finding opportunities to obtain higher education.¹⁹¹ The Talent Search Program was headed by Ocania Chalk, a militant community activist that had accused the guidance counselor staff negligence since only 14 of the 400 minority students took the College Board examinations.¹⁹² To accommodate the needs of Black students, the guidance department hired Wanda (Spells) Dorm, class of 1966, as a "Case Worker." Dorm coordinated the Special Education Work Study Program.¹⁹³ In the face of such radical reform, Dorm indicated that some of the same people who stood in the way of her father's promotion, created

¹⁸⁹ Wanda (Spells) Dorm, interview with the author, York, Pennsylvania, 7 January 2004.

¹⁹⁰ Walters, *York Public School District Annual Report 1969 - 1970*, 16.

¹⁹¹ Walters, *York Public School District Annual Report 1969 - 1970*, 60.

¹⁹² Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 65.

¹⁹³ Charles H. Walters, *York Public School District Annual Report 1970 - 1971* (York: York Public School District, 1971), 17.

similar problems for her in 1970. Presently, Dorm is the principal at WPSHS and in here words, “Things have come in full-circle.”¹⁹⁴

Even though the media portrayed the 1968 Black Pride Day at William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania as a peaceful one-day tribute to Dr. King, the event and its aftermath had a far reaching impact on the district. The student led movement and the demands they presented to the school board received both criticism and support. Nonetheless, their voices were heard. While the district did not concede to each of the students’ mandates, however many positive changes did take place. Negro History was implemented into the curriculum, additional Black employees were hired, and Blacks gained seats on the boards of decision-making organizations.

¹⁹⁴ Dorm, interview; Dorm is currently the Principal of WPSHS.

CHAPTER 7: REMEMBERING BLACK PRIDE DAYS

Unlike many studies of the Civil Rights Movement, this study presents a “bottom rail” view of the Black Freedom Struggle. In the tradition of Nell Painter, whose 1976 bottom-up monograph on Black migration was part of the “radical revisionism” movement in historical research and writing this study provides a local and grassroots interpretation of the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁹⁵ In an effort to shift the gaze away from the South, Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodward published an edited volume of eleven grassroots movements in the North.¹⁹⁶ In their most recent text, Theoharis and Woodard argue that local people drove the Black Freedom Movement: they organized it, mobilized and cultivated; they did the daily work that made the struggle possible and endured the drudgery and retaliation that building a movement entails.¹⁹⁷ The movement in York for educational and curriculum reforms initiated by Black students over 35 years ago reflect the type of grassroots activism that was occurring in communities throughout the United States.

In order to gain an understanding of William Penn Senior High School and the 1968 Black Pride Day at WPSHS from a grassroots level, it was imperative to interview people involved in the movement. For this study, I interviewed student observers and organizers of the Black Pride Days, WPSHS faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and members of York’s Black community. The interviewees’ memory of their participation,

¹⁹⁵ David L. Lewis, “Radical History: Toward Inclusiveness,” *Journal of American History* 76, no. 2 (1989), 471; Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

¹⁹⁶ Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles outside the South, 1940 – 1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁹⁷ Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1.

as well as the events that transpired reveals the complex political nature of the movement. This study also reveals the variety of ways people remember their participation in Black Pride Days, I believe, reflect the diversity of ways people remember their participation in social movements. From the interviews, I identified salient themes which emerged across testimonies of interviewees. These themes include participants' ideas that 1) educational inequality in the York Public School District was a reflection of the social inequalities Blacks faced in York, 2) Black and social consciousness was developed among the Black students at William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania, 3) Black Pride Day and surrounding events in York was a manifestation of the political and social context of late 1960s and early 1970s, 4) the 1968 Black Pride Day was a united front, and 5) the 1968 Black Pride Day, as a living memory, has made an impression and impact on the social and educational policies in the York Public School District.

1968 Black Pride Day: A Manifestation of the Times

The 1968 Black Pride Day at WPSHS was a manifestation of the social and political context of the late 1960s and early 1970s. During this period, the direction of the Civil Rights Movement changed especially since federal legislation was passed to assure Black equal rights with the Civil Right Act of 1964, Title VI of the 1965 Civil Right Act and Elementary, and Secondary Education Act in 1965. Despite the passage of these particular legislations, Blacks continued to endure acts of discrimination and racism in this country.

During the late 1960s, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) reported there was racial polarization and tension between Blacks and Whites in the city

of York.¹⁹⁸ The Commission reported that several factors contributed to the racially tense climate: Blacks were confined to dilapidated ghettos, the lack of recreational facilities in Black communities, and the police treated Blacks unfairly and unjustly. Most Blacks lived in slum ghetto sections of the city. Majority of the housing in the slum areas were originally constructed for and occupied by the early European immigrants that settled in York. Several interviewees recalled the substandard housing and living condition in which they resided. Willie J. Williamson mentioned that the home his family resided was made of clapboard and did not have toilet facilities inside the main part of the house; instead, the restroom was a closet in the rear of the house.¹⁹⁹ Williamson also recalled that he bathed in a metal tub with water boiled on the woodstove. In addition to the lack of indoor plumbing, others mentioned some of the dangers they were exposed to such as “bootleg electric wiring” and frequent furnace fires.²⁰⁰

In addition to the dilapidated housing conditions, interviewees also mentioned to the lack of recreational facilities available to Black youth during the late 1960s. Since few social outlets existed many Black youth congregated on street corners and in city parks, however, the police harassed them for loitering. Conversely, police permitted White youth to loiter a few blocks away on the square of downtown York until midnight.²⁰¹ According to Stella Banks, “Around 9:00 or 9:30 p.m. Cops would tell us to home! It is past your curfew.” Banks indicated that she did not know there was a curfew

¹⁹⁸ Harry Boyer, "Investigatory Hearing Report," (York: Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, 1968).

¹⁹⁹ Williamson, interview.

²⁰⁰ Matthews, interview; Lemon, interview.

²⁰¹ William Keisling, *The Wrong Car: The Death of Lillie Belle Allen* (Harrisburg: Yardbird Books, 2002).

that early.²⁰² Another example of police harassment occurred following a Friday night football game in October of 1967. The racist police dispersed a crowd of congregating Black youth with batons and canines. In response, several Black reacted to the mistreatment and threw rocks at the police and the dogs. The incident fueled the tension between police and Black youth. Willie Howard recalled, “One of the biggest things we protested against was the York Police Department. We [Black youth] use to go down and join the marchers in front of the police station.”²⁰³ Rachael (Mulkey) Sims remembers that Blacks picketed several times regarding the unnecessary use of force and the misuse of police dogs.²⁰⁴

The social context of the time and mitigating factors contributed to the movement for social and educational reform in the public school system in York. While the April 5, 1968 Black Pride Day is the focal point of this study, the event is a culmination of events and activities that challenged the unjust educational system in York. There were several instances in which Black students were successful challenging the status quo and racial barriers within the district. During an interview with Hal Brown, he indicated that he was the first Black president of the Alpha Debate Society.²⁰⁵ According to Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, several elite school sponsored societies and organizations denied Blacks opportunities to join or engaged in tokenism – only offering membership to only one or two Blacks.²⁰⁶ In 1962, Bernie Manning was the first Black to

²⁰² Stella (Richardson) Banks, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 20 September 2001.

²⁰³ Howard, interview.

²⁰⁴ Sims, interview.

²⁰⁵ Brown, interview.

²⁰⁶ Woodard, interview.

run on the WPSHS cross country team. Because competition distances have changed, Manning continues to hold many team records. Five years later, Manning became the schools' first Black track coach in 1967, the year which his team won the state championship. During the 1963-64 school year, Stevie Harley was the first Black female elected to the homecoming court.²⁰⁷ Three years later, Linda Woodward was crowned as the schools' first Black homecoming queen.²⁰⁸ Peggy Lemon recalled the jubilation and excitement expressed by Black students after Linda Woodward was crowned.²⁰⁹ Lemon said, "It was a historic moment, it made us proud to have a Black queen, especially since we lived in a White dominated world."²¹⁰ In addition to Lemon, other interviewees indicated that they thought teachers and the White students who counted the votes in previous homecoming elections assured that the White contestants were victorious.²¹¹ During the fall of 1967, several Black varsity football players, including Keith Beatty, boycotted the team that season because of the discrimination and favoritism practiced by the York High coaching staff.²¹² These individuals' efforts and accomplishments gave the student leader of 1968 courage and confidence to challenge the status quo in the York Public School District.

Besides the unjust social aspect of the York Public School District, interviewees also mentioned problems with the prescribed curriculum and advice from the guidance

²⁰⁷ Geraldine Wright, telephone conversation with author, York, Pennsylvania, 4 January 2003.

²⁰⁸ *William Penn Senior High School: 67 Tatler*, (York: Trimmer Printing, Inc., 1967), 146.

²⁰⁹ *William Penn Senior High School: 67 Tatler*, 146.

²¹⁰ Peggy (Wright) Lemon, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 14 January 2004.

²¹¹ Woodard, interview; Wendy (Woodyard) Bryce, interview by author, tape recording, Durham, North Carolina, 20 September 2001.

²¹² Keith Beatty, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 24 November 2001.

department. Black history and culture was not prescribed in the curriculum guides of the public schools. Therefore, students involved with the 1968 Black Pride Day urged public school officials to cease the “mis-education” of Black youth in York. Kerry Kirkland stated, “We need to know about ourselves, so we demanded a Black history course.” Willie Howard remembered, “There were not enough Black teachers or enough Black culture in the education we were getting.”²¹³ During an interview with Reginald Ellis, he said, “One of the major injustices at York High was that they did not teach Blacks about their history or culture. They don’t even teach us about ourselves. We didn’t know about our own historical figures.”²¹⁴ The Black students demanded that a Black history course, taught by a Black teacher, be mandatory for all students. Ellis also mentioned that the demand for Black history in public schools was common during the 1960s.

In addition to the lack of a culturally relevant curriculum provided by the district, interviewees also recalled the discrepancies in the guidance department in York Public Schools. As a result, the White guidance department placed most Black students in general, business, and vocational tracks, as well as, low level courses. Ahmad Seifullah recalled that the guidance department enrolled him in a vocational trade that did not prepare him for the industrial job market after high school. Community activist, Alice Bowers noticed that Black high school students were not given the opportunities to work in the offices at school and were not prepared to secure professional employment.²¹⁵

²¹³ Howard, interview.

²¹⁴ Ellis, interview.

²¹⁵ Alice Bowers, interview by author, York, Pennsylvania, 22 July 2004.

Sam Manson indicated that he entered York at a desperate time. Most Blacks were at the bottom in economics and education.²¹⁶

According to William R. Corson, the consolidated high schools in a sense put all the Black children under one roof, in a building that looked good on the outside but whose intellectual offering was about the level of TV's *Romper Room*.²¹⁷ As a guidance counselor, Manson discovered that most Black students were enrolled in either one or two level courses. Manson also discovered that many Blacks were identified as special education students for which they were tested in elementary and had not been tested in high school. During an interview, Manson spoke about the misplacement of Black student in York.

*I believe we called the opportunity room – “the romps.” This room was comprised of the one and two level students, the slow learners. For the duration of the education they stayed in that room. They could paint, paint each other, and they. Some spent... five, six, seven year in a wrong class. The irony of this situation is, when they graduated they were offered a certificate of graduation instead of a diploma. A high school diploma itself was basically useful in terms of making the transition... but as far as preparing them ... it wasn't... and so they gave these kids a certificate of graduation therefore they were programmed for defeat.*²¹⁸

Manson indicated that he reviewed the files for all the Blacks students and attempted to enroll as many Blacks in level three and four courses so they would have the proper courses to prepare them for college if they chose.²¹⁹ Manson realized that Black students were not primed or prepared to go to institutions of higher education.

²¹⁶Manson, interview.

²¹⁷ William R. Corson, *Promise or Peril: The Black College Student in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970) 45.

²¹⁸ Manson, interview.

²¹⁹ Manson, interview.

John Mitchell, WPSHS class of 1968, indicated although he was in above average courses his counselor did not encourage him to apply to college, instead the counselors told Blacks to go into the service since Viet Nam was going on then.²²⁰ Similarly, Kerry Kirkland stated that it was a repressive time for Blacks as far as education. “We were encouraged to go into the army instead of college prep courses.”²²¹ Manson also noted that when he arrived at WPSHS in the fall of 1968 there were not any Black college catalogues in the guidance department office, nor were there any efforts invite recruiters from Black colleges and universities to York. According to Juanita (Green) Kirkland, “If there was anyone at York High I admired it was Sam Manson. He had a genuine interest in the students.”²²² During an interview with Keenan Preston, he mentioned that Sam Manson was responsible for giving him the proper guidance and advice, which prepared him to go to college.²²³

While Mason worked within the school system, other adults in the Black community assisted in the efforts to prepare Black youth for higher education. During an interview with Geraldine Wright, she remembered working with Tim Warfield, a social worker in York. “Tim and I were primarily was trying to do a lot of motivation for college kids, getting them ready for college, trying to introduce them for school. Tim Warfield, Sam Manson and I would do programs. We would take kids away for a weekend to colleges like Cheney and Penn State.”²²⁴ During a school board meeting, Ocania Chalk pointed out that only 14 of the 400 minority students took College Board

²²⁰ John Mitchell, telephone conversation with author, Ellicot City, Maryland, 26 June 2002.

²²¹ K. Kirkland, interview.

²²² J. Kirkland, interview.

²²³ Preston, interview.

²²⁴ Wright, interview.

examinations for which he accused the guidance counselors of acts of negligence against Black students. Taking matters into his own hands, Chalk established Youth Bound for College, a program to assist poor minority students in obtaining higher education.²²⁵

Black Pride Day – Organized Chaos

Similar to local and national organizations, the Black student movement in York was not immune to the logistical and organizational problems. On Thursday, April 4, 1968, the nation came to a halt after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Without a detailed plan in place, members of the Black senior class organized and commenced the first school-wide Black Pride Day at William Penn Senior High School. Ellis and others informed Principal Parry that they intended to use the auditorium for their Black-only assembly.²²⁶ Willie Howard remembered, “Everyone on edge. We didn’t really know what to do or what was going to happen.” Ellis remembered, “In the morning, it was maybe 25 people in the auditorium, but they were all seniors. However, by word of mouth the news spread around the school about the Black Pride Day assembly.”²²⁷ Stella Banks remembered that she heard rumors about the assembly. Banks indicated that her curiosity led her to the auditorium.²²⁸ During his interview, Ellis stated, “Basically, a few of us stood in the hall, outside the auditorium, as Black students passed by we said, ‘Come on in. We are having a Black Pride Day meeting. Just

²²⁵ Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania*, 65.

²²⁶ Ellis, interview.

²²⁷ Ellis, interview.

²²⁸ Banks, interview.

come on in.” The Black student leaders were able to persuade fellow students to skip class and join them in the school auditorium to attend the Black-only assembly.²²⁹

Since the Black students proceeded with the impromptu assembly, the 1968 Black Pride Day assembly, for the most part, was unsupervised by school personnel. However, on several occasions Parry, without interrupting the assembly, checked in on the students for very short periods. Bernie Manning, one of the four Black faculty members, visited the students from the back of the auditorium during his planning period. Before he returned to his class, Manning told the assembled Black students, “I have no comments to make either positive or negative, and I just hope you look upon me as someone who respects what you’re doing.

During his interview, Bruce Murdaugh mentioned that he was startled to hear a Black voice on the intercom system with the announcement, “All Black students report to the auditorium.” Murdaugh remembered, as the only Black student enrolled in his science class, all the White students in the classroom turned in their seats to look at him after the announcement was made. Murdaugh indicated that he just simply looked up to the teacher who signaled him to go to the auditorium.²³⁰

As indicated by many, the Black Pride Day assembly was chaotic and unorganized. However, the student leaders were strategic with their plan and purpose. During the first half of the day, organizers directed their efforts to console the crowd of mourners and elaborated on the accomplishments of Dr. King. Ellis recounted, “By the time we resumed the afternoon schedule, the auditorium was packed.”²³¹ The Black

²²⁹ Ellis, interview.

²³⁰ Bruce Murdaugh, telephone conversation with the author, York, Pennsylvania, 4 March 2002.

²³¹ Ellis, interview.

Pride Day organizers capitalized on the fact that they had the attention of majority of the school's Black population. Ellis remembered getting the audiences attention. He said, "Hey! What are we going to do about this [Dr. King's death]?" The student leaders used this time to disclose and educate their fellow classmates about the social and educational injustices at WPSHS.²³²

Black Pride Day as a Living Memory

The 1968 Black Pride Day has had a profound affect on the public education system in York, as well as, the people who participated and lived through it. During the time of the student movement for curriculum reform at WPSHS, national news agencies did not carry the story. Fortunately, the two local papers covered and followed the Black students' actions and objectives. It is unfortunate that the two publications, which focus on Black life in York, overlook the Black student movement at William Penn Senior High School.²³³ Nevertheless, the memory of the event exists. As a living memory, contradictions emerged as interviewees recalled events regarding Black Pride Day. In retrospect, many participants acknowledged that valuable lessons were gained from their experiences. Therefore, it is important to acquire memories from a wide range of individuals in order to obtain the "truth" about the past.

While there were consistencies among those who remembered past events, there were some instances in which interviewee's memories were contradictory. For instance, Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard and Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan had conflicting recollections of the location of the Black senior class meeting on April 4, 1968.²³⁴ Since

²³² Ellis, interview.

²³³ James McClure, *Never to Be Forgotten* (York: York Daily Record, 1999); Jim Kalish, *The Story of Civil Rights in York, Pennsylvania* (York: York County Audit of Human Rights, 2000).

they both held class meetings in their homes, they both claimed this event. Other contradictions involved the alleged participation level of students. During interviews, several individuals informed me that Ruth Ann Hall played a critical role in the movement. However, after speaking to Hall she dismissed those claims. Similarly, Charles Green also minimized his role in the movement during a telephone conversation. In addition, the two local news agencies reported contradicting facts about the Black Pride Day. The *York Dispatch* conservative staff, minimized the students actions, whereas, the liberal staff at the *Gazette and Daily* detailed the student movement.

In addition to the conflicting position on racial identifiers, the composition of the Black students involved also clashed. The Black student movement at WPSHS was comprised of students who espoused racial peace through non-violence. On the other hand, extremist who wanted inflict violence on against to those whod wanted to do Majority of the Black student leaders, such as Debora (Kittrell) McMillan professed a non-violent position regarding the student movement in York. However, McMillan also noted that some students wanted to display their anger by throwing rocks and pulling fire alarms. For instance, Jahmee Shabazz, a member of Black I.N.C. (Improving Negro Communities), noted “We were not as concerned with what was going on in school. We put most of our energies directing our aggressive behavior towards the establishment and the police.”²³⁵ Likewise, Walter Woodyard noted that he spent most of his time and

²³⁴ Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, telephone conversation with author, York, Pennsylvania, 19 October 2000; Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan, interview with the author, York, Pennsylvania, 20 March 2002.

²³⁵ Jahmee Shabazz (Dale Preston), interview with author, York, Pennsylvania, 22 June 2004.

energy challenging the racist social system in York.²³⁶ While vast majority of the identified leaders of the Black student movement in York were members of the senior class, Walter Woodyard vehemently argued that the Black senior class of 1968 undeservedly received all the notoriety for the events which transpired, when it was the underclassmen, classes of 1970 and 1971, who were the foot soldiers and ground troops of the Black student movement in York.²³⁷

Many participants mentioned lessons learned from the Black Pride Day. Keith Beatty, who forfeited a football career, looking back on the situation, Beatty indicated that he would do it all over again.²³⁸ During an interview with Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, she stated,

Others wished they did things differently, I think I regret not and I don't know why I didn't do was write my class poem. (Laugh). It might sound silly to you, but as I look back I also wrote and I loved to write, and today I am still writing. I can express myself with pen in hand, and I did not write our class poem. I just think that from what I can remember, I can remember me being picked and not knowing when the poem had to be turned in, but I did not submit a class poem. Whether it would have been chosen or not, probably not, that's how I feel now that it would probably have not been chosen and they would have given it to the white student, but I said that to my children more than once, the talent that I had I do regret not writing my class poem. I might sound silly, but I feel that I fulfilled generally most of the things that I wanted to do during that time.²³⁹

In retrospect, the interviewees in the York study spoke about the importance and impact of the 1968 Black Pride Day. According to Juanita (Green) Kirkland, "The Black Pride Day inspired all of us to do something."²⁴⁰ Although she was not elected to class

²³⁶ Walter Woodyard, telephone conversation with author, Atlanta, Georgia, 15 July 2004.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ K. Beatty, interview.

²³⁹ Woodard, interview.

²⁴⁰ Juanita (Green) Kirkland, interview with author, York, Pennsylvania, 21 July 2004.

president, Kirkland credited her successful appointment as Service Secretary of Student Council to the unorthodox campaign strategy employed by her campaign team headed by Reginald Ellis, Kerry Kirkland, and John Mitchell. Mitchell created placards and signs that read: Make her our queen vote for Green. They also performed a skit during the campaign assembly. The Service Secretary position afforded her an office space in the main office. Kirkland believes her physical presence in the office discourage the principal talking about Blacks in derogatory ways.²⁴¹ As seniors, Black students of the class of 1969 held a Black Pride Day to commemorate the one-year anniversary. Willie Howard remembered, “We had to continue the fight ’68 started.”²⁴² In ensuing years, Black student activism increased at WPSHS.

Stephen Woodyard, class of 1970, indicated that the powerbrokers in York solicited Black students to provide suggestions and opinions to resolve problems that vexed the Black community. Stephen Woodyard concluded, “Quiet as it has been kept, our input was important to the changes that were made in York.”²⁴³ As a teacher at York High during the late 1960s, Manning remembered that he was proud of the Black students for standing up for themselves. Manning indicated that a paradigm shift occurred in the school district as a result of the students’ actions and demands.

Students remembered the good that came out of their movement. Although York High’s Black students were unaware of the historical significance of their actions in the late 1960s, when the former students reflected on Black Pride Day and their actions of nearly 35 years before, one declared, “We did not think it was... heroic, we just had to do

²⁴¹ Juanita (Green) Kirkland, interview with author, York, Pennsylvania, 21 July 2004.

²⁴² Willie Howard, interview by author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 24 December 2001.

²⁴³ Stephen Woodyard, telephone conversation with author, Atlanta, Georgia, 25 June 2004.

something.”²⁴⁴ While looking back some students did not think that their actions were heroic, the class of 1968 had foresight to historicize their movement, they placed an ad in the 1968 Tatler, see figure 4 below, for which Mitchell designed.²⁴⁵

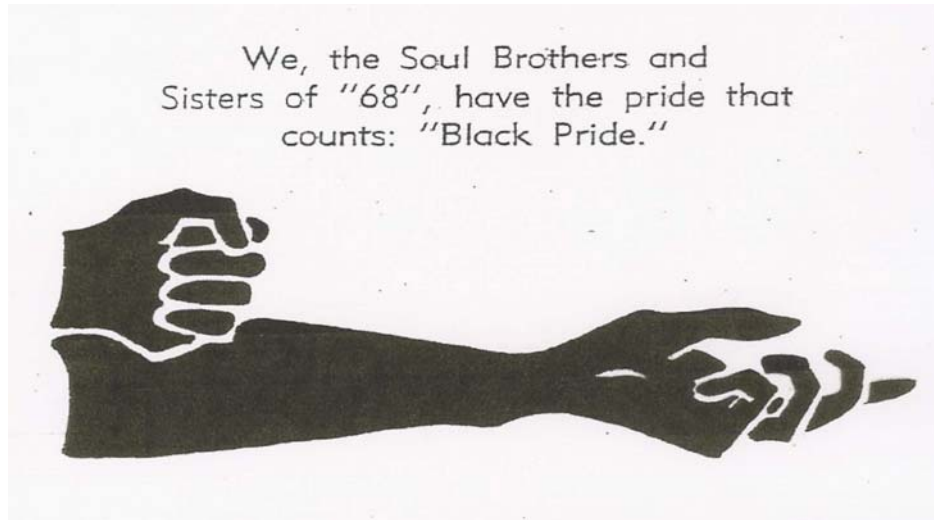


Figure 4. 1968 Black Senior Class Yearbook Ad

²⁴⁴ Kerry Kirkland, interview with author, tape recording, York, Pennsylvania, 22 October 2001.

²⁴⁵ *William Penn Senior High School, 1968 Tatler*, 204.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Throughout the Black Freedom Struggle, Black people have fought for the right to obtain an equal and relevant education. This was evident during the late 1960s with efforts to reform education and schooling for Blacks at every academic level across the country. Black people demanded an education relevant to their lives; therefore, curriculum reform was a means of obtaining the goal. On college and university campuses Black students demanded that institutions provide Black Studies courses, programs, centers, and departments. For example, at San Francisco State College, the Black Student Union demanded and prompted school administrators to implement a Black Studies Program.²⁴⁶

While students influenced programmatic and curriculum reforms at the college and university level, reform efforts at the secondary level, in many cases, was situated in the movement for community control. For instance, parents and community leaders took control of schools in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville area of New York City in order bring about educational change, which included curriculum reform. Similarly, Black community leaders in Chicago organized to effectively change the way the public school system educated their youth.²⁴⁷ While adults and community leaders organized educational reform efforts, Black students from various school buildings in Philadelphia staged a massive walk-out and marched to the Board of Education. Black Philadelphian

²⁴⁶ Dikran Karagueuzian, *Blow It Up!: The Black Student Revolt at San Francisco State College and the Emergence of Dr. Hayakawa* (Boston: Gambit, 1971).

²⁴⁷ Dionne A. Danna, "Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001).

students demanded that district provide culturally relevant curriculum.²⁴⁸ In York, Pennsylvania over 250 Black students at William Penn Senior High School skipped class and barricaded themselves in the schools' auditorium to commence a "Black-only" assembly known as the 1968 Black Pride Day. As a result of the student movement, additional Black faculty and staff were hired, Black history was implemented into the curriculum, and Black students were elected to leadership position in school sponsored clubs and organizations. By and large, the 1968 Black Pride Day spurred curriculum and social reforms in the York Public School District.

The Black student movement at WPSHS in 1968 reflects characteristics of William Exum's development model of Black student movements at predominately white institutions of higher education. According to Exum, "Social movements do not appear full-blown in a society or an organization. Rather, they develop over a period of time, though the emergence of a movement may appear."²⁴⁹ The Black student movement that commenced on April 5, 1968 at WPSHS did not suddenly appear; instead, it developed over time. A combination of mitigating issues and events were the impetus of the 1968 Black Pride Day. This study examined the developments of the 1968 Black Pride Day and the influence of Black student activism on secondary curriculum reform during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since Black students were in the forefront of education reform movement in York, it was imperative to solicit the experiences and memories of individuals who had first hand knowledge of 1968 Black Pride Day and surrounding events.

²⁴⁸ V. P. Franklin, "Black High School Student Activism in the 1960s: An Urban Phenomenon?" *Journal of Research in Education* 10, no. 1 (2000): 3-8.

²⁴⁹ William H. Exum, *Paradoxes of Protest: Black Student Activism in a White University* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), 20.

The Black student movement in York was situated within the social, political, and economic context of the late 1960s. There were several issues and events that led up to the Black 1968 Black Pride Day. Many of the issues were noted by the Pennsylvania Commission on Human Relations (PCHR). The Commission reported that there were several reasons for the racial tension and polarization between Blacks and Whites in York. For example, due to housing discrimination, majority of York's Black population lived in dilapidated and sub-standard dwellings in slum sections of the city. In addition to housing discrimination, White employers openly discriminated against Black, which contributed to the high unemployment rate of Black residents in York.²⁵⁰

Discriminatory practices were also utilized by the York Police Department, which they unjustly harassed and brutalized Black residents including Black youth. The Commission also indicated that city officials failed to provide adequate recreational facilities and opportunities for the Black youth.

In addition to being socially conscious of the issues Blacks faced in York and throughout the country, racial consciousness and cultural pride movements peaked during the mid to late 1960s. Black students indicated that the social and educational problems existed in the York Public School District. Furthermore, the education provided was not reflective or relevant to Black life. For example, the students noted that the history curriculum did not survey or include the societal contributions of Blacks. Therefore, some students took it upon themselves to acquire Black history and knowledge and share it with others. Keith Beatty said, "We wanted a Black history class that would teach us to be proud, not prejudice. We also wanted to let people [Whites]

²⁵⁰ York County Council For Human Relations, *ABC's of Good Will for Yorkers* (York: York County Court House, 1961).

know we were equal.”²⁵¹ Students argued that changes in the curriculum could curtail the “mis-education” of both Blacks and Whites by emphasizing and legitimatizing the accomplishment of Blacks.²⁵² C. Vann Woodward suggested that White people need to know the history and contribution made by Black people.²⁵³ Surprisingly, a White student in York expressed the necessity of Negro history as a way to educate and dispel the prejudices of White students.²⁵⁴ The social and cultural consciousness development coupled with students individual feats against the status quo contributed to the mass protest for culturally relevant curriculum.

Besides demanding a culturally relevant curriculum, the Black students requested that the district hire Black guidance counselors to provide better counseling. The all White staff in the guidance department placed most Black students in general, vocational, or business tracks. In addition, majority of the Black students were enrolled in low level academic courses. As a result, students were not prepared or trained to acquire high skilled employment after high school. On the other hand, the few Black students enrolled in college preparation courses were not encouraged to pursue post-secondary education. Instead, many were encouraged to enlist in the armed services or apply for secretarial positions.

Besides guidance counselors, the Black students also demanded that the district hire additional Black teachers and staff members. Some of the faculty and staff held racist view points. Bernie Manning, a former Black teacher at WPSHS, indicated that on

²⁵¹ Keith Beatty, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 24 November 2001.

²⁵² Reginald Ellis, interview by author, tape recording, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11 February 2002.

²⁵³ C Vann Woodward, "American History (White Man's Version) Needs an Infusion of Soul," *New York Times Magazine*, 20 April 1969, 111.

²⁵⁴ "Students Present 'Black Demands' to School Board,"; "Negroes' Demands Stir School Board,"

several occasion he debated with White teachers with racist outlooks.²⁵⁵ In addition to the racist attitudes, some teachers despite growing up poor as their students, held middle-class values and frowned upon those with lower economic status. Therefore, Black students wanted teachers who mirrored them physically and were empathetic to the economic situation.

The social and educational issues that the Black students had to endure coupled with the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1968 contributed to the commencement of the 1968 Black Pride Day. Most people were saddened and distraught over the fact that the leader of peace was slain mercilessly in Memphis, Tennessee. Despite this, Black students leaders at WPSHS, whom were socially and culturally conscious, seized the opportunity to turn tragedy into triumph. With little notice, student leaders organized a “Black-only” assembly at William Penn Senior High School on Friday, April 5, 1968. While emotions were high, student leaders not only organized and unified majority of the schools’ Black population to celebrate King’s life, they also educated the audience with the social and educational inequalities in the school. A list of demands, drafted by Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan, was read by Kerry Kirkland, which outlined the grievances with school officials. Following Kirkland recitation of the demands, the auditorium emptied as the Black Pride Day leaders and 250 Black students marched out of school to the district administration building to deliver the list of demands to Dr. Woodrow Brown, Superintendent of York City Schools.

The April 5, 1968 Black Pride Day was an event which unified a group of diverse Black students. Despite their collective differences, ideological and philosophical, the Black students were able to initiate and influence educational and social reforms in the

²⁵⁵ Bernie Manning, interview.

York Public School District. Interviewees identified the following individuals as “leaders” of the 1968 Black Pride Day: Kerry Kirkland, Reginald Ellis, Barbara (Mulkey) Woodard, John Mitchell, and Deborah (Kittrell) McMillan. Each “leader” contributed to the movement which has had lasting effects in the York Public School District. In addition to the identified leaders, other students contributed to the movement for educational and social change in York such as Keith Beatty and Wendy (Woodyard) Bryce. While leaders were identified, it is important to mention that a unified body of Black students joined and supported the leaders as they presented their grievance to the district.

The student led movement and the demands they presented to the school board received both criticism and support. While the district did not concede verbatim to the students’ mandates, concessions were made. For instance, Negro History was implemented into the curriculum, additional Black employees were hired, and Blacks gained seats on decision making organizations. As interviewees reflected on their experiences and memories of the 1968 Black Pride Day at William Penn Senior High School, many did not think of the magnitude of the movement at the time, however, changes in the district were direct result of their actions.

Implications for Contemporary Issues

The movement for culturally relevant curriculum spread across the nation during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The black student movement influenced and created educational and curriculum reforms at every level of education. As a result of the Black student movement for educational and curricula reform, there are implications for contemporary issues in the York City School District and the American public education system. The study of the student movement in York indicates that this could have just

as well happened in any city in the United States. Therefore, a reassessment is need of the role students played in educational and curricular reforms.

Immediately after the 1968 Black Pride Day, the Black faculty and staff doubled at WPSHS. The demographics of the school personnel shifted as a result of the Black student movement. In 1974, the York City School District hired Dr. Frederick D. Holliday, the first African American to hold the position of Superintendent of Schools. In 2001, the district hired Carlos Lopez, the first Hispanic American superintendent in York. African American alumni of York High have acquired position in the York city school system. Jeff Kirkland, class of 1967, is currently the school board president. In 1999, Kirkland's brother, Kerry Kirkland, class of 1968, recruited and politically trained several Black Yorkers to run for seats on the Board of the York Public School District. Kerry Kirkland successfully orchestrated a plan for which majority of the current voting members on the school board are African American, which was an unheard of thought 35 years ago.

Presently 17 of the 114, roughly 15%, teachers at York High are African Americans.²⁵⁶ The current Black literature teacher, Keenan Preston is a member of the class of 1971. As a ninth grader, Preston wrote "The Great Martin Luther King", a poem memorializing Dr. King, that *The Gazette and Daily*.²⁵⁷ Wanda Dorm, class of 1966, originally was hired the district as a case worker in guidance department at WPSHS in 1970. Dorm is currently, the Principal at WPSHS. Dorm also advocated and supported the institutionalization of Black College Bus Tour, a program that provides an opportunity for underclassmen students, primarily African Americans, to participate in

²⁵⁶ For the ethnic breakdown of instructional staff at William Penn Senior High School, see School District of the City of York, *Together Everyone Achieves More*, (September, 2002).

²⁵⁷ "Hannah Penn Boy Writes of King,"

a weeklong bus tour of historically Black colleges and universities in the southeastern region of the United States.

While the Black student movement was effective changing the demographics school personnel, the movement also had an impact on the curriculum in the district. As shown in the York study, the actions of the Black students prompted school officials to implement educational and curriculum reforms. Stephen Woodyard, class of 1970, indicated that the powerbrokers in York solicited Black students to provide suggestions and opinions to resolve problems that vexed the Black community. Stephen Woodyard concluded, "Quiet as it has been kept, our input was important to the changes that were made in York."²⁵⁸ It is my belief that the students of the 1960s made significant gains in their efforts to make curricula change. However, the challenge to make curriculum meaningful and relevant to the lives of Black youth continues to be problematic in public education today. Many Black youth find themselves disconnected from the education provided in today's schools.

Jean Ward also provides another innovative strategy for educational and curricula change. Ward suggests that a combination of teaching students traditional African traditions, values, and norms along with the long history of struggle against systematic oppression, which restricted Black life, fosters a sense of hope and new possibility for equality.²⁵⁹ Many of the people involved in the 1968 Black Pride Day are still alive, so they can share their stories with the Black youth of today.

Intergenerational dialogue and storytelling was an important tradition in African and African American culture and community.

²⁵⁸ Stephen Woodyard, telephone conversation with author, Atlanta, Georgia, 25 June 2004.

²⁵⁹ Jean Ward, "Cultivating a Morality of Care in African American Adolescents: A Cultural-Based Model for Violence Prevention," *Harvard Educational Review* 65, no. 2 (1995).

The study of Black student movement for educational and curricula reforms in York, Pennsylvania may inspire today's Black youth to call for social transformation. Studying the local events, people of the movement, and contextual issues enables today's Black youth to connect past and present struggles. Student activism can be a vital force socially and politically to continue to make educational reforms. For instance, students can have an impact on reforms affecting the unequal education practices, standardized testing, and unequal school funding issues.

School officials and governing bodies have the authority to implement educational and curricula reforms in American public education. Recently, Philadelphia Board of Education mandated that all high school students are required to take African and African American Studies.²⁶⁰ In Maryland, the Department of Education created a curriculum of African American history and culture that was implemented in the public school system.²⁶¹ Even though the demands for Black history were called over 35 years ago, it confirms that studies like the one in York are important in understanding the critical role Black students have shaped and molded the education and curriculum provided in public school systems. Today, Black students at William Penn Senior High School who enroll in culturally centered courses and obtain instruction from non-white teachers can thank the "soul brothers and sisters of '68" for making it possible.

²⁶⁰ Maryclaire Dale, "Philadelphia District to Require Black Studies," *Plain Dealer*, 10 June 2005.

²⁶¹ Ericka B. Danois, "Maryland Schools Embrace Black History," *The New Crisis* 111, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2004): 14.

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APPENDIX A

IRB CONSENT FORM

The Civil Rights Movement in York, Pennsylvania: The Class of 1968, William Penn Senior High School

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *The Civil Rights Movement in York, Pennsylvania: The Class of 1968, William Penn Senior High School*, conducted by Dwayne C. Wright from the Department of Social Foundations of Education at The University of Georgia. For this project, I will be investigating the personal experiences of the northern Black high school students who engaged in civil disobedience during the Civil Rights Movement in York, Pennsylvania 1965 - 1970.

Reason/Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the personal experiences of the northern Black high school students who engaged in civil disobedience during the Civil Rights Movement in York, Pennsylvania.

Procedure

This project will entail a 90-minute interview concerning your personal experiences as part of my dissertation research supervised by Dr. Derrick Alridge. Several open-ended questions will be asked regarding your personal experiences during the Civil Rights Movement in York, Pennsylvania. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and video taped and later transcribed in order to interpret the data.

Benefits

You will not benefit directly for this research. You may benefit from having your name or family name, photograph, and voice made public. Your participation in this research may lead to documenting significant historical information concerning persons and events related to the Civil Rights Movement in York, Pennsylvania. You will receive no payment. Your participation will be solely of a volunteer nature.

Discomforts or Stresses

No discomforts or stresses are expected for participants in the study.

Risks

Likewise, no risks are anticipated for participants.

Explanation regarding the extent of confidentiality

The information provided by the participants in this study will be made public. Any information shared with the interviewer that is of an illegal nature could be legally incriminating and may be subpoenaed by the courts. The interviewer will allow the participants to make "off the record comments". Audiotapes will be transcribed and will be stored indefinitely by the interviewer. Written information will remain the sole

property of the researcher. However, you retain the right to review upon your request the information whether transcribed or on audio/video and to have your name deleted. Also, if you decide at a later date to have your name withheld from public use, you have that right to do so, prior to the completion of the study.

Further questions

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call Dwayne Wright at 706-542-8931. You will enjoy this opportunity to share your experience with others. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Your signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all your questions to your satisfaction and that you consent to volunteer for this study. You have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Indicate by initialing below each of the mediums that you agree to have your records released.

1. Records can be used for academic publications.

Audio _____ Video _____ Photographs _____
[Please use initials]

2. Records can be shown at meetings of researchers

Audio _____ Video _____ Photographs _____
[Please use initials]

3. Record can be shown in classroom to students.

Audio _____ Video _____ Photographs _____
[Please use initials]

4. You agree to have your actual name, photograph, picture, portrait, likeness, and voice used in connection with the oral history project.

Audio _____ Video _____ Photographs _____
[Please use initials]

I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of the records as indicated above.

Signature of
participant: _____

The Institutional Review Board oversees any research-type activity conducted at the

University of Georgia that involves human participants. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Dr. Christina Joseph, Institutional Review Board, Office of the Vice President for Research, The University of Georgia, 606 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411 Telephone: 706/542-6514 or IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

COVER STORY

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I am currently working on my dissertation on Black Northern High School Student Activism during the Civil Rights Movement. I am interested in learning more about the experiences of those high school students who participated in the activities during the 1967– 1968 school year at William Penn Senior High School. Although the events have occurred over 30 years ago your recollections of your involvement and actions will be helpful in developing a complete story of the Class of 1968. The purpose of my study is to provide information to students, teachers, and community members about the Civil Right activities that occurred locally and how they were related to the national movement. Descriptions of your real life experiences will be very helpful to me.

This study will consist of three interviews, which will be recorded and later transcribed. It has been Institutional Review Board approved. If you'd like, you may choose a pseudonym for yourself. Your identity will not be revealed.

In the first interview, I will ask you questions about your background so that I may learn more about you and will better able to formulate questions for the second interview. In the second interview, I will ask you to tell me about people or experiences in your life that have had a critical influence on your activism. In addition, I want you tell me about the impact the students had on the social and educational changes in York. After the second interview, I will ask you to read over the transcripts. We will then conduct a third interview. At this time, you will have the opportunity to reflect on our previous interviews, make any corrections you may have found in the transcripts, and to expand on anything if you so choose.

I will provide you with a copy of the final transcripts so that you may review them. I hope to submit a paper based on this study to a professional journal later this spring, and present my findings to the Association For The Study of African American Life and History conference in September.”

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your family history.

How did your family come to York?

2. Tell me about Black Pride Day, April 5, 1968.

Walk me through the day and tell me what happened from your perspective.

3. Tell me what led up to this movement.

4. Tell me about the curriculum before the 1968 Black Pride Day.

5. Tell me about the curriculum after the 1968 Black Pride Day

6. Tell me about how the student movement at York connected to the larger Civil Rights Movement. Locally? Nationally?

7. What contributions do you think the students of York made in the Civil Rights Movement?

8. Looking back, do you think what happened in York had any effect on the Civil Rights Movement? Tell me about it.

APPENDIX D

BLACK LITERATURE IMPLEMENTED INTO CURRICULUM

Recommendation by the English Department in the 1969- 1970 Annual Report.
Efforts are now under way to increase the amount of black literature in the 10th and 11th grade and to find appropriate literature for 12th grade.

10-2 Level

"A Choice of Weapons"	Gordon Parks	Short Story
"Mother to Son"	Langston Hughes	Poem
"A Raisin in the Sun"	Lorraine Hansberry	Play
"I, Too"	Langston Hughes	Poem
"Beauty Is Truth"	Anna Guest	Short Story
"Tall Freedom"	Peter Abrahams	Short Story
"The Story of Moses"	Holy Bible	
I include this because the biblical story is so relevant to the black man history and because it is a popular piece with black students.		

11-2 Level

"The Night Man"	Don McKinney	Short Story
"Louis Armstrong"	Langston Hughes	Short Story
"Yes I Can"	Sammy Davis, Jr.	Short story
"He Was Fired"	Arna Bontemps	Short story
"Doctor Dan" -	Springboards	
About Dr. Daniel Hab Williams		
"A Raisin in the Sun"	Lorraine Hansberry	Play
Poems	Langston Hughes	
"	Gwendolyn Brooks	
"	Frank Horne	
"	Margaret Walker	
"	Marie Evans	
"	Alice Childress	

12-2 Level

"My Dungeon Shook"	James Baldwin	One Essay
"Victory Over Myself"	Floyd Patterson	One Chapter
"The Night Man"	Don McKinney	Short Story
"Our Faces, Our World"	Lillian Smith	Short Story
"One Top of the World"	"Springboard"	Short Biographical Sketch
"Jackie Robinson"	Thelma Feld	Short Biographical Sketch
"The Daybreakers"	Arna Bontemps	Poem
"The Umpire"	Larry Merchant	Short Biographical Sketch

"Mary McLeod Bethune"	Thelma Feld	Short Biographical Sketch
"I Have A Dream"	M.L. King Jr.	Speech
"Freedom's A Hard Bought Thing"	Stephen Vincent Benet	

11th Grade

"A Raisin in the Sun"	Lorraine Hansberry	Play
"Clothe the Naked"	D. Parker	Short Story
"Notes of a Nature Son"	James Baldwin	Essay "Excerpts"
"Ay Human to Another"	C. Cullen	Poem
"A Light and Diplomatic Bird"	G. Brooks	Poem
"Life For My Child..."	G. Brooks	Poem
"The Explorer"	G. Brooks	Poem
"Spirituals"		Songs
"B.B. King Sings the Blues"		Essay
From The New York Times Magazine		

10th Grade

"Tell Freedom"	Peter Abrahams	Short Story
One of the main composition assignments is based upon this story.		
"The Judge's Son"	Abioseh Nidol	Short Story
"As The Night The Day"	Abioseh Nidol	Short Story
"Return—Two Poems"	Abioseh Nidol	Poem

APPENDIX E

DR. KING POEM BY KEENAN PRESTON

"Hannah Penn Boy Writes of King"

*A poem memorializing the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,
was written by 14-year old Keenan Preston, 133 East Maple Street,
yesterday while he was attending classes at Hannah Penn Junior
High school.*

THE GREAT MARTIN LUTHER KING

*For black man's ideas he fought and died,
Equality for all men he did try,
Six foot under Great Mr. King now lies,
All prejudiced white men from their mouths can be said,
"Martin Luther King is now dead."
But all black men can proudly say,
"Martin Luther King's spirit will always stay."
He has reached the top of his mountain and seen all things,
And now we mourn the death of our Great Martin Luther King!!
We all praise his name and to him we sing,
We'll always remember the Great Martin Luther King!!
Think of all the glory for us he did bring,
We'll always remember the Great Martin Luther King!!
He fought not for Black Power but for Black Pride.
Remember his name and his idea—it is for you that he died.
His death means for black men a great change.
Remember him well and praise his name.
Yes, his death will change all things,
Remember the Great Martin Luther King!!*

High				
Status in		School		
April	Graduation	Current		
Name	1968	Class	Residence	Contribution/Relevance to study
Ronald Allen	Student	1968	Harrisburgh, PA	Presented demands to school board.
William Armstrong	Out of town	1961 York Catholic	Silver Springs, MD	Described social context of York.
Mary Armstrong (Todd)	Community Member	1938	York, PA	Described social context of York.
Lionel Bailey	Community Leader	1958	Temple Hills, MD	Helped to organize students.
Stella Banks (Richardson)	Student	1968	York, PA	Bystanding student
Keith Beatty	Student	1968	York, PA	Boycotted the 1967-68 football season.
Gary Beatty	Out of town	1965	York, PA	Member of the state champion track

team.

Alice Bowers	Community			York, PA	Wife of Wade Bowers, director of CA.
	Leader				
	Out of town				H.S. Basketball star. President CORE -
	Community				San Diego Chapter
Hal Brown	Leader	1952		San Diego, CA	
Wendy					Popular student BPD participant
Bryce					
(Woodyard)	Student	1968		Durham, NC	
Barbara					Wife of community activist, Ociana
Chalk	Community				Chalk.
(Maxfield)	Member			York, PA	
Ray	Community	1950 Port			Community leader
Crenshaw	Leader	Arthur, TX		York, PA	
Wanda					Former H.S. student hired by guidance
Dorm					
(Spells)	Out of town	1966		York, PA	department in 1970.

Reginald Ellis	Student	1968	Cincinnati, OH	VP of the Black senior class and BPD organizer.
	H.S.			Supported student' cause.
Max Frye	Teacher		York, PA	
Tim Garnett	Student	1973	York, PA	Opposed the BPD
Serena Giles				Participant in BPD. Later hired as a teacher at WPSHS.
(Frost)	Student	1970	York, PA	
Charles Green	Student	1968	York, PA	Star athlete
	Guardian of student/			Community leader
Voni B. Grimes	Community Leader		York, PA	
Debra Ham (Newman)	Out of town	1966	Baltimore, MD	Howard University student during the movement in York.
Name	Status in	High	Current	Contribution/Relevance to study

		April 1968	School Graduation Class	Residence	
Julia Harris (Muldrow Hines)		E.S. Teacher	1958	York, PA	E.S. Teacher. Hired to teach Negro History and guidance counselor at WPSHS after BPD.
Willie Howard	Student	1969	York, PA	BPD participant	
Virginia Hunter (King)		E.S. Teacher	1960	York, PA	E.S. Teacher.
Kerry Kirkland	Student	1968	York, PA	President of the Black senior class and BPD organizer.	
Jeffrey Kirkland	Community Member	1966	York, PA	Community leader. Later elected as President of the York City School Board.	
Juanita Kirkland	Student	1969	York, PA	BPD Participant. Elected to Executive Cabinet 1968-69.	

Peggy
Lemon
(Wright) Out of town 1967 Baltimore, MD Noted that Black parents entrusted school officials to do the right thing.

Bernie Manning	H.S. Teacher	1962	Harrisburgh, PA	Supported students' cause and 1st Black track coach at WPSHS.
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Richard BPD participants

Manning Jr. Student 1970 York, PA

Sam Manson	Out of town		Cincinnati, OH	Hired as guidance counselor at WPSHS after BPD.
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Rose BPD participant enrolled in the 1st
Matthews Negro History course.

(Wright) Student 1969 York, PA

Deborah McMillan (Kittrell)	Student	1968	York, PA	BPD organizer and drafted student demands.
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John Mitchell Student 1968 Ellicott City, MD BPD artist and designer of the BP medallions.

Bruce Murdaugh	Student	1969	York, PA	BPD participant
Ruth Ann				Typed final draft of student demands
Natoli (Hall)	Student	1968	Coatesville, PA	
Remela Parker	Student	1968	Atlanta, GA	BPD participant
Keenan	J.H.			Basketball star. Read poem at Penn Park
Preston	Student	1971	York, PA	rally.
Dorothy Preston (Gilbert)	Student	1970	York, PA	BPD bystander
Mary				BPD bystander
Preston (Hall)	Student	1970	York, PA	
Ruby Reeves (Wright)	Community Member	1956	York, PA	Noted that Black class activities existed as early as 1954.
Name	Status in	High	Current	Contribution/Relevance to study

April 1968	School Graduation Class	Residence	
Ahmad Seifullah (Clair Sexton)	Out of town 1958	York, PA	Noted that educational tracking system ill-prepare Black students.
Jahmee Shabazz (Dale Preston)	Student 1969	York, PA	Militant student leader attempted to change the entire social system.
Rachel Sims (Mulkey)	Parent of student	York, PA	Participated in protest activities in York and permitted students to meet in her home.
Charles Smallwood	Out of town 1965	York, PA	
Justine	E.S. 1958	York, PA	Only Black teacher at Lincoln

Warfield (Green)	Teacher			Elementary School.
Larry Washington	Community Leader	1967	York, PA	Noted that the CA was critical to the lives of Black children.
Gregory Williams	Student	1968	Diseased	BPD participant. Later elected to York City School Board.
Willie Williamson	Out of town	1966	York, PA	Noted the importance of the WPSHS music program.
Barbara Woodard (Mulkey)	Student	1968	York, PA	BPD organizer and attended protests in York, Lancaster, and Washington, D.C.
Walter Woodyard	Student	1970	Atlanta, GA	BPD participant and noted the progression aggressive protest tactics.
Stephen Woodyard	Student	1970	Atlanta, GA	BPD participant
Geraldine Wright	Community Leader	1964	York, PA	Community orgnizer

Vertice				Described social context in York.
Wright	Out of town	1966	York, PA	

Thematic Supporting Statement from Interviewees (Table 5)

Curriculum Inequalities	United Front	BPD a Manifestation of Time	BPD a Living Memory
<i>Cultural Knowledge Centers</i>	<i>Philosophy and Ideology Differences</i>	<i>Social Ills</i>	<i>Contradictions</i>
A. Seifullah - CA provided the Black York community information about Black life and culture.	D. McMillan - late bloomer - peace and non-violence	W. Williams - lived in a 2 story clapboard house w/out inside toilet	B. Woodard & D. McMillan – April 4 th Class meeting at my house
G. Wright --“The people at CA were the ones who were instrumental in my own awareness....people were very resourceful and had lots of material for you	B. Woodard - Non-violence in the spirit of Dr. King.	M. Amrstrong - Black confined to rat and roach infested homes	W. Woodyard - '68 and '69 get all the noriety because they were seniors and juniors when we were the soldiers doing all the work.

to read up on to know your history.”			
J. Harris – Helen Thackston, director of daycare/preschool program at CA, instrumental in fostering and ingraining into the children to take pride in themselves and their culture.	R. Ellis - defiant yet resolve	A. Seifullah - Black relegated to side streets so visitors would not see them on major thoroughfares	K. Beatty – Skin color hang-ups
L. Washington - Taught Black history and the arts by Mrs. Helen Thackston. CA a critical role in the	K. Kirkland - Calculated confrontation	G. Wright - CA was important to community but was run down	<i>Lessons Learned</i>

lives of Black children.			
B. Woodard - At the CA - Thackston taught us our songs.	W. Howard - Prepared to throw down if comrade attacked	P. Lemon - Boys tried to pulling trains at Freddy's	B. Manning - the students actions and demands changed the paradigm in York.
W. Williams - We learned our history at Smallwood Elementary	J. Shabazz - By any means necessary	<i>Encounters with Police</i>	D. McMillan - It fells good to go back and see a number of Black teachers and staff.
L. Bailey - Chalk held Black history sessions in the back of his bookstore	W. Woodyard - Confrontational	S. Banks - I didn't know there was a 9:30 p.m. curfew	J. Kirkland - Black Pride Day gave us power and courage to do more.
W. Howard - Chalk was a deep brother. He exposed us to more than Malcolm and Martin	<i>Influence</i>	Wendy Bryce —"they (cops) would turn loose those German Shepard's on us like we were animals."	S. Woodyard - Quite as kept we made and impact on the education system in York

K. Kirkland —My brother Jeff gave me his book. —“I got my medicine reading Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, Elridge Cleaver, Che Guevara, Marcus Garvey, and Paul Roberson.”	K. Kirkland — admired Ernesto “Che” Guevara	Willie Howard —“cops would release the German Sheperd and you better hit it [run] or the dog would get you.”	
<i>Lack of Black Content in Curriculum</i>	W. Woodyard - Black Panther Party; street hustlers	R. Sims - We marched on city hall about them dogs	
K. Kirkland —“We need to know about ourselves, so we demanded a Black history course.”	B. Woodard - influenced by activist mother and readings	W. Howard - You didn't want to get caught out late alone, police would beat you for no reason.	
W. Howard --“There were not enough Black teachers or enough Black culture in	W. Howard - influenced by Malcolm X and Ociana Chalk	L. Bailey - We watched the pigs	

the education we were getting.”			
R. Ellis -- “One of the major injustices at York High was that they did not teach Blacks about their history or culture. They don’t even teach us about ourselves.”	D. McMillan - influenced by parents - mother - community worker; father - preacher	J. Shabazz - We were concerned with the racist police department	
D. Preston - I never had a Black teacher or Black history class	R. Ellis - influenced by uncle - Voni B. Grimes		
Curriculum Inequalities	United Front	BPD a Manifestation of Time	
<i>Unequal Curriculum Tracks</i>	<i>Participation Level</i>	<i>Racial and Cultural Awareness</i>	

<p>W. Bryce--“Whites dominated all top sections, and majority of the Black students were in the basement, not getting much of an education. Teachers in the basement did not take the time for the students down there. The students weren’t learning anything in there. Students were passed on to the next grade.”</p>	<p>K. Kirkland—Black senior class president, organized Graze in the Grass</p>	<p>R. Ellis -first to wear afro and started Pride Days</p>	
<p>S. Manson - “Black students were not primed or prepared to go to institutions of higher</p>	<p>R. Ellis—long history of leadership; VP Black senior class; organized class fundraiser; trend setter -</p>	<p>R. Ellis - Even though I was light skinned I thought I was blacker than most people.</p>	

education. Many Blacks were identified as special education students for which they were tested in elementary and [had] not been tested in high school.”	afro and cultural pride.		
A. Seifullah —“Blacks were guided into carpentry and wood shops, while their White counterparts learned metal and machine shop trades.”	B. Woodard —organized and hosted meeting at her home.	S. Banks - I did not want to be called Black - I am brown	
A. Bowers - Black high school students were not given the opportunities to work in the offices at	D. McMillan -- drafted list of demands for 1968 Black Pride Day	K. Beatty - A lot of people had hang-ups about color	

school and were not prepared to secure professional employment.			
K. Kirkland --“We were encouraged to go into the army instead of college prep courses.”	J. Mitchell --Designed and created medallions and banner for Black Pride Day;	J. Mitchell - everyone wanted a medallions	
J. Mitchell —even though I was in 3's and 4's, the counselor did not encourage me to apply to college. Instead he told me to go into the service.	K. Beatty - organized people and participated in football season boycott	W. Howard - We started wearing wooden beads instead of silver and gold chains - Afros got bigger	
	W. Bryce - popular among classmates - influenced others to participate	W. Bryce - I put vinegar in my hair to make it nappy to get an afro	

	S. Banks - curious observer	<i>Students Buck the Status</i> <i>Quo before BPD</i>	
	B. Murdaugh - observer	H. Clayborne - Bernie Manning was the first Black to run cross country.	
	S. Gillespie - observer	G. Wright - Stevie Harley was first Black to make Homecoming Court	
	A. Garnett - non-participation - didn't want to rock the boat	P. Lemon - jubilated that Linda Woodard was crowned Homecoming Queen	
		K. Beatty - boycotted football season	
		W. Williams - Blacks who received private music lessons earned first chair in	

		orchestra	
		<i>Organized Chaos</i>	
		R. Ellis - Without a detailed plan in place, Black senior class organized and commenced the first school-wide Black Pride Day at William Penn.	
		W. Howard - On Friday, we went to school but did not know what was going to happen	
		K. Kirkland - We went to class rooms pulling Black students out	

		B. Murdaugh - I was surprised to hear a Black voice delivering a message over the intercom system	
		S. Banks - I thought it was a memorial or vigil or something	
		R. Ellis - there were a handful of students in the morning by the end of the day there was over 250 students in attendance	
		M. Frye - Students argued whether or not I should be there	
		W. Bryce - They kicked a White teacher out who was	

		sitting in the balcolny	
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