

University of North Carolina at Asheville

“A Powder Keg that Could Very Easily Explode”:
Race, Paternalism, and Protest in Morganton, North Carolina.

A Senior Thesis

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“My brother in law lived right behind me in a trailer and he spotted them lighting [a cross] so he came out shooting and calling me in between shots. And I got out there with my rifle and they were gone and the other brother in law was putting out the fire because it was on his grass. And a highway patrolman came by there and we almost shot him.”¹ Recounted by African American community leader Reverend McIntosh, this incident is emblematic of a hidden narrative present in Morganton’s race relations during the 1950’s and 1960’s. Targeted for his participation in the desegregation of the Morganton City School System, McIntosh suffered multiple attacks of this nature. He refused to resign, becoming one of the few African Americans teachers rehired after integration in 1965. Because no fatalities occurred, white moderates avoided reporting these attacks in the media, insisting that Morganton’s race relations were tranquil.² Clearly, McIntosh’s experience does not correspond neatly with Morganton’s progressive reputation.

During the 1950’s and 1960’s civil rights activists and progressive whites challenged Morganton’s racial status quo numerous times. White moderates responded to this activism by utilizing a combination of civility, paternalism, and accommodation to prevent protest and preserve Morganton’s progressive reputation. Concerned that protracted civil rights protest would hinder industrial development in Morganton, white moderates diplomatically dealt with challenges to segregation. This pattern of race relations manifested itself in both the private Department of Recreation and public space of the Morganton City School System. Analyzing how white moderates utilized these tactics in both private and public spaces evidences the pervasiveness and effectiveness of

¹ William Flemon McIntosh, interview by author, Morganton, NC, February 15, 2012.

² William Flemon McIntosh, interview.

the moderate strategy. This history, however, has been neglected by scholars and misrepresented by amateur historians.

Scholars have been inordinately fixated on areas where public, and often violent, clashes between civil rights activists and the segregationist leaders occurred. A recent example can be found in Karen Anderson's 2010 work, *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School*, which offers a nuanced analysis of how the NAACP battled local segregationists. Although her assertion that "the outcomes of the disputes in Little Rock would sow the seed for both the civil rights revolutions that culminated in the 1960's and 1970's,"³ is not entirely incorrect, it is reflective of an overall trend which simply evaluates areas which set precedents nationwide while neglecting how those precedents were applied. Although communities that experienced public discord, such as Little Rock, played a pivotal role in the South's desegregation they are not representative of the entirety of the region.

Professor Robin Kelly, in his work *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, agrees that "while dramatic acts of racial violence and resistance are usually well documented and make good stories, they represent only the tip of a gigantic iceberg."⁴ Significantly, Kelly argues that a reevaluation of what constitutes protest must be made in order to fully comprehend the true nature of the civil rights era. The quiet dialogue between leaders in Morganton conforms to this conception. Ander Walkers in his study, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown V. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights*, claims that "though the 'epic' battle between black

³ Karen Anderson, *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 243.

⁴ Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 33.

activists and white extremists has captured modern memory, the more important constitutional struggle at the time took place between black activists and white moderates.”⁵ Both Kelly and Walkers contend that areas in which white moderates negotiated race relations are relevant to the study of civil rights history.

In his 1981 work, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, William Chafe provides a probative analysis of the motivations of moderate North Carolinians during the 1950’s and 1960’s. Chafe contends that government officials and business leaders reacted to civil rights protests with a strategy he termed the “progressive mystique.” Chafe asserts:

“The progressive mystique’ is best understood through certain motifs that reflect—almost unconsciously—the underlying values of progressivism. Most North Carolina progressives, for example believe that conflict is inherently bad, that disagreement means personal dislike, and that consensus offers the only way to preserve a genteel and civilized way of life. The underlying assumption is that conflict over any issue, whether it be labor unions, race relations, or political ideology, will permanently rend the fragile fabric of internal harmony.”⁶

The progressive mystique provided a more complex and probative depiction of the motivation of Southern moderates than had been previously applied in scholarship. Shedding the naïve view that white moderates acted benevolently, Chafe offered a more skeptical and nuanced view of Southern politics.

Leon Fink in his work, *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South*, provides limited commentary on Morganton’s desegregation. Fink conducted minimal research, relying solely on two oral histories, for his reductionist account. Accepting the moderate narrative of race relations without scrutiny, Fink

⁵ Anders Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown V. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 157.

⁶ William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (London, England: Oxford University Press, USA, 1981), 7.

adopted the perspective that “integration of the local high school proceeded without incident in the mid-1960’s, years ahead of its North Carolina neighbors.”⁷ This simplistic analysis of desegregation in Morganton is not reflective of reality. A larger range of sources must be referenced before a coherent depiction of desegregation can be constructed.

The only comprehensive history of Morganton was compiled by amateur historian Edward Phifer. Although his work, *Burke County; the History of a North Carolina County, 1777-1920, with a Glimpse Beyond*, does not focus on the civil rights era, it offers some limited commentary on Morganton’s race relations during the 1950’s and 1960’s. Phifer contends that the “desegregation of schools, [was] peacefully accomplished, and other civil rights actions increased educational and job opportunities for black residents, so that by 1970, for the first time in more than one hundred years, the percentage of non-whites in the county was on the increase.”⁸ Although not entirely false, Phifer’s perspective neglects the underlying tensions which motivated Morganton’s response to civil rights agitators. Previous treatments of Morganton’s desegregation have relied upon inadequate source material and failed to critically analyze the actions of city leaders. A more thorough analysis, which accounts for the motivations of moderate leadership, is necessary to understand the history of race relations in Morganton during the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Historically Morganton’s race relations and economic development have been indelibly intertwined. The South’s defeat in the Civil War was disastrous to Morganton’s

⁷ Leon Fink, *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 9.

⁸ Phifer, Edward William Jr., *Burke: the History of a North Carolina County, 1777-1920 with a Glimpse Beyond* (Raleigh: NC: Department of Cultural Resources, 1982), 335.

economy. Describing the devastation of the post-bellum years Phifer posited that “the educational system was stunted, banking was destroyed, government services almost disappeared, and railroad development came to a halt.”⁹ Furthermore, emancipation eliminated \$2.5 million in property and removed over 2,300 slaves from the labor force.¹⁰ After emancipation the African American population in Burke declined from 29.5% of the population in 1850 to 7.1% in 1870.¹¹ Recovery was sluggish and, ultimately, Morganton began to shift from an agriculturally based economy to an industrial economy. Although industrial development began in in the early 1900’s, Fink asserts that “local industry boomed in the post-war period.”¹² By 1960 54.3 % of Burke’s population was engaged in industry and 23.9% were employed in white collar occupations.¹³ During this period Morganton’s business community recognized this development and predicted its continuation.¹⁴ Tumultuous race relations, however, threatened the city’s economic progress.

In order to preserve this newfound prosperity Morganton’s leadership adopted an obsessive desire to present the city in a progressive light. Managing race relations in a quiet non-confrontational manner was a critical component of maintaining the city’s progressive image.¹⁵ White leaders, especially in the wake of the 1960 Greensboro sit-in

⁹ Phifer, 130.

¹⁰ Phifer, 81.

¹¹ Carolina Population Center, *County Population Trends North Carolina 1790-960: State, Region, County Residence, and Color*, North Carolina Population Data Series No. 1, March 1969, 17.

¹² Fink, 8.

¹³ United States Census Bureau. *County and City Data Book*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census), 1967.

263.

¹⁴ “Gain Seen in Employment, Outlook Stable.” *News Herald*, February 24, 1955.

¹⁵ For additional discussion on the link between moderate race relations and economic policy reference James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: the Southern Crusade for Industrial Development 1936-1990* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 147.

demonstrations, feared public civil rights demonstrations.¹⁶ Reacting to Greensboro the *News Herald* proclaimed that sit-ins could provoke “a blot on Morganton’s record and set back the cause of improved race relations by more than fifty years.”¹⁷ Another editorial on September 30, 1962 demonstrated the city’s desire to attract industry succinctly and concretely. After the H. H. Brown Shoe Company decided to build a plant in High Point, rather than in Morganton, the *News Herald* embodied this desire in an editorial which asserted “let nobody misjudge us. Morganton and Burke County mean business in their eagerness to attract new industry. One slipup, if indeed it proves a defeat can be charged to one or two people but not to an entire county, however, it may suffer as a result.”¹⁸ Leaders in business and government attempted to cultivate a progressive image which characterized Morganton as “better” than other Southern communities.

Morganton’s demographics influenced how desegregation occurred. By 1950 Burke County’s population had grown to 45,518 residents, with Morganton having 11,041 inhabitants. Significantly, a relatively low percentage of the population was African American; roughly 3,833 in the county and 1,435 in the city.¹⁹ African Americans were afforded more economic security in Morganton than in many areas of the South. Fink posits that “thanks to an uncommonly large public sector, African Americans in Morganton gained access to steadier and higher-paying jobs than were available elsewhere.”²⁰ Employment in state institutions equated to a more stable African American middle class, which was less inclined to protest and risk their economic position.

¹⁶ For a description of the Greensboro demonstrations reference Chafe, 79-95.

¹⁷ Editorial, “Looking Beyond Sit-Down Demonstrations,” *News Herald*, March 16, 1960.

¹⁸ “Call it Bad Publicity,” *News Herald*, September 13, 1962.

¹⁹ Carolina Population Center, 17.

²⁰ Fink, 9.

The threat of white violence complicated African American activism and served to further undergird Morganton's system of moderate politics. Although white moderate leaders strategically avoided the use of violence, radical white supremacists did not. This threat manifested itself throughout the process of desegregation in the form of several cross burnings and gun battles.²¹ African American student Artie Logan described the response of a white supremacist to the integration of the school system:

[Reverend Hunt] call[ed] the men of the church together because shortly after, after the um integration of the schools that...a taxi driver had overhead some of his passengers saying that they were going to choose, um, some young black girls and violate them. I do remember, um, that was pretty frightening, that was pretty frightening. And um, I do remember that the fathers would take us to school and they would not leave until we got into the school and later they were there to pick us up. We were not allowed to even go out [of] the yard.²²

Although community solidarity prevented this act of sexual violence from occurring, it is emblematic of the threat white supremacists posed to the African American community when the racial status quo was challenged. Constant fear of violence further discouraged African Americans in Morganton from engaging in public demonstrations. Therefore, rather than risk repercussions African Americans, often acting through the NAACP, engaged in a quiet dialogue with white moderates.

In September 1955 the NAACP challenged the racial status quo in Morganton by requesting the use of Recreation Department's facilities for a meeting space. In an attempt to form a strategy to deny the NAACP use of the recreation center W. T. Robertson, the Department's director, contacted parks and recreation departments in Clemmons, Raleigh, Charlotte, and Durham for guidance.²³ On September 30, 1955

²¹ William Flemon McIntosh, interview.

²² Artie Logan, interview by author, Morganton, NC, October 25, 2011.

²³J. M. Chambers to W. T. Robertson, October 3, 1955, Unnamed Folder, Board of Recreation Foundation Minutes, Collett Street Recreation Center, Morganton Parks and Recreation.

Robertson contacted Marion Diehl, the superintendent of Parks and Recreation in Charlotte asserting “we have just recently received a request from the N.A.A.C.P. to use our negro center for monthly meetings and we are not sure at this point just how is best to cope with it.”²⁴ Diehl outlined Charlotte’s seemingly non-discriminatory policy which was geared towards denying activist groups access to the private space of the recreation facilities. Diehl advised Robertson that “we do not let any private clubs or organizations such as above use our clubs or comm. centers. We say they are for recreation purposes only and are all scheduled up.”²⁵ Diehl’s tactic of denying admission on the basis of race neutral factors allowed white moderates to deny the NAACP without risking conflict.

Robertson and the Recreation Foundation, which was a private board charged with managing the recreation facilities, crafted a purposefully ambiguous policy geared towards excluding the NAACP. The plan divided “legitimate” groups into four categories: recreational groups, religious organizations, charity organizations, and civic groups. It is probable, given the context of Robertson’s correspondence with other recreation departments in 1955, that the vague language of the policy was used to exclude the NAACP in a seemingly race neutral fashion. The NAACP’s inclusion rested upon the vague term “civic group,” which segregationist Recreation Foundation members could arbitrarily define.²⁶ There is no indication that NAACP gained access to the Recreation Center, evidencing the effectiveness of the white moderate strategy.

On November 14, 1963 the Human Relations Forum requested that the newly constructed Collett Street facility be integrated upon opening. The Forum, a 16 member biracial committee formed in 1960, was charged by the City Council to minimize racial

²⁴ W. T. Robertson to Marion Diehl, September 30, 1955, Unnamed Folder, Morganton Parks.

²⁵ Marion Diehl to W. T. Robertson, undated, Unnamed Folder, Morganton Parks.

²⁶ “Unnamed Policy,” undated, Unnamed Folder, Morganton Parks.

tensions in Morganton.²⁷ Forum chairman Billy Joe Patton, reading a prepared statement before the Foundation, informed members that “it was brought to our attention that there is some interest on the part of the colored population of this community to have the privilege of using the new Collett Street recreation building and facilities.”²⁸ Patton then requested that the facility be integrated.²⁹ This request, while framed in civility, represented a fundamental challenge to Morganton’s racial status quo. Discussion between members of the Forum and the Foundation further exacerbated the fears of the white moderates present. Reverend Hunt, the president of the local NAACP, reified the suspicions of the Foundation when he declared that “having gauged the mood and temper of the colored people that there would definitely be demonstrations and, possibly, it would advance to having outside assistance in organizing and directing these demonstrations.”³⁰ Although Hunt insisted this was not a threat, but rather an analysis, this possibility troubled white moderates who feared Morganton’s record of progressive race relations would be tainted. Reverend Hunt understood the desire of white moderates for civility and manipulated it in an attempt to alter the racial status quo.

In a subsequent meeting of the Foundation on November 29, 1963 segregationist Foundation members sought to undercut the validity of the Forum’s request. Adelaide Reece “questioned the validity of the human relations forum as a representative group” and later argued that it would be impossible for Reverend Hunt to “report that he could gauge the mood and temper of the colored citizens of the community without a mass

²⁷ “Report from the Chairman of the Board of Human Relations,” December 5, 1960, Book 9, 23, City Council Minutes, Morganton City Council Building.

²⁸ Billy Joe Patton, “Prepared Statement of the Human Relations Forum,” November 14, 1963 Unnamed Folder, Morganton Parks.

²⁹ Patton, “Prepared Statement of the Human Relations Forum.”

³⁰ Arthur Sakowski to Sherrod Salisbury, November 20, 1963, 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder, Morganton Parks.

meeting of all the colored citizens to gauge such a mood and that all colored citizens in the community were not members of the NAACP.”³¹ Augmenting Reece’s argument, Director W. T. Robertson attacked the notion that the Forum should be allowed to meet with the Foundation. Robertson “did not believe that the Board of Governors [of the Foundation], who are a policy making group, should meet with teen-agers who are members of the Human Relations Forum.”³² By disputing the legitimacy of the Forum, segregationist members attempted to divert attention from the issue of integration. Robertson’s and Reece’s comments are indicative of how white moderates denied the legitimacy of black discontent through technical means.

A primary concern throughout the discussion was maintaining the appearance of racial harmony within the community. Foundation members, both segregationist and progressive, desperately sought to minimize the public impact of their discussion. In an attempt to discourage demonstrations Mayor Riddle argued that “the opening should be delayed and when it does take place the center should be opened without any dedication or notice.”³³ The Foundation utilized Riddle’s strategy numerous times throughout the desegregation of the Recreation Department. Concealing the opening of the Collett Street facility was geared towards maintaining civil race relations and minimizing the possibility of protest.

On December 2, 1963 the Foundation requested advice from attorney Russell Berry in an attempt to formulate a legally defensible method with which to prevent desegregation. The Foundation requested that Berry review a myriad of different options

³¹ Adelaide Reece in “Foundation Meeting Minutes,” November 29, 1963, 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder, Morganton Parks.

³² W. T. Robertson in Adelaide Reece, “Foundation Meeting Minutes,” November 29, 1963, 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder, Morganton Parks.

³³ Adelaide Reece, “Foundation Meeting Minutes.”

for how to maintain segregation in the Collett Street facility. Significantly, none of the proposed plans included any degree of integration.³⁴ Berry asserted that privatization of the facilities provided the most legally sound option.³⁵ Robert Connelly, after reviewing Berry's recommendations for how to fund a privatized center, was "of the opinion that we could not stimulate any of these programs with the recreation center closed."³⁶ The Foundation acted on Berry's advice and opened the Collett Street facility, which was still operated with municipal funds, on a segregated basis.³⁷

The Foundation's decision to open the Collett Street facility instigated grassroots activism from the African American community. A group of eight working class African American mothers, who referred to themselves privately as the West Concord Mothers, sought to alter the racial status quo. Artie Logan, a student activist, recollected:

...integrating the Collett Street Recreation Center was pretty traumatic. What we did, we organized. Um, some mothers, parents, organized the children to go to the recreation center to play basketball after school and so we were met there numerous times with excuses. No you can't come here and play on the floor because your shoes are soiled and they'll scratch up the floor. Well, we washed our shoes and we carried them back and they looked at us and said no these shoes have been worn outside. But we noticed that the white students were wearing their shoes and going in and playing. So, what the mothers and fathers did was bought us brand new shoes and we tied the laces together and carried them over our shoulders and the excuse at that time was no you can't come in because we just refinished the floor. So that went on and on and on.³⁸

This activism tested the persistence of the white moderate's strategy. By repeatedly engaging white recreation officials, the West Concord Mothers challenged the validity of

³⁴ C. P. Rinehart to Russell Berry, December 2, 1963, 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder, Morganton Parks.

³⁵ Previously the Recreation Foundation had operated with a combination of municipal funds and private donations.

³⁶ Robert Connelly to Sherrod Salisbury, January 10, 1964, 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder, Morganton Parks.

³⁷ Following Mayor Riddle's advice the Collett Street Center was presumably opened quietly. There is no mention of its opening in either the Foundation's records or in the *News Herald*. Although it is difficult to determine the exact date, it is clear the center was open by March 1964.

³⁸ Artie Logan, interview.

Morganton's racial status quo. White moderates, however, repeatedly disarmed the activists by denying their admission on the basis of racially neutral criteria. By repetitively reacting civilly to the West Concord Mothers' attempts desegregate the Collett Street facility white moderates avoided public demonstrations.

Reacting to the mounting tensions surrounding the Collett Street facility, Reverend Hunt and Recreation Director Clinton Foust met privately on March 7, 1964. A token solution, which would have given African Americans access to only the gymnasium, was proposed by Hunt, but rejected by Foust. This denial led Hunt to charge that NAACP attorneys based in Asheville had "examined a copy of the Morganton Park and Recreation charter and felt that they had a good case."³⁹ In an effort to prevent Morganton's progressive reputation from being shattered the Foundation decided to close its facilities entirely. Foundation members viewed this action as transitional, with privatization as the final solution to desegregation efforts. On April 1st, 1964 the Foundation voted to initiate a fundraiser in order to privatize the Recreation Department. In a letter which attempted to solicit donations the Foundation claimed that "if at the end of two weeks we have not received contributions, or pledges, from the public totaling \$27,500, we will know the public is unwilling to contribute the necessary funds for operating the recreation program."⁴⁰ Driven by Reverend Hunt's political maneuvering, the Foundation sought to protect the city's reputation by privatizing the facilities.

The campaign to privatize the center served as a breaking point for progressive Foundation member Dell Wilson. In a letter announcing her resignation from the

³⁹ "Recreation Governors Close All Facilities," *News Herald*, March, 11, 1964.

⁴⁰ Special Committee Appointed to Explore Possible Methods for Raising Operating Funds for the Foundation's Recreation Facilities to the Executive Committee of the Morganton Parks and Recreation Foundation, "Report," March 26, 1964, Clippings and Etc. Related to Closing of Facilities Folder, Morganton Parks.

Foundation, dated March 23, 1964, Wilson rationalized her decision. Wilson disgustedly inquired “how can 10 people, claiming to represent all the people of Morganton, bring about such a situation, with no communication? I think it is deplorable and inexcusable. Worst of all children are learning to hate. American children.”⁴¹ Wilson’s resignation was further dramatized by her decision to publicize her letter of resignation in the *News Herald* on March 31, 1964. In an addendum to the published letter Wilson unmasked the Foundation’s true intentions by asserting “this action of a majority of the Foundation is in support of segregation, in recreation. This will be **vehemently**[emphasis in original] denied by this majority.”⁴² By disengaging herself from the segregationist Foundation Wilson publically demonstrated her disdain for the moderate political discourse.

Utilizing letters to the editor, citizens both condemned and condoned the actions of the Foundation. A typical condemnation can be found in George Lowman’s March 29 letter, entitled “Negroes Need Patience.” Lowman paradoxically asserted that “while I personally do not have anything against integration, neither I nor my friends can condone ‘integration for integration’s sake.’”⁴³ Although Lowman adopted a civil view, it was clear that he was unwilling to integrate the Collett Street Recreation Center. Mildred Largent, one of the West Concord Mothers, took a starkly different tone in an April 5th letter to the *News Herald* entitled “Practicing and Preaching.” Largent exclaimed that “it is surprising to me, in this day and time when the world is changing so fast, that members of the Recreation Foundation would be so stubborn and dictatorial that they would refuse

⁴¹ Mrs. Henry T. Wilson to My Friends and Fellow Members of the Recreation Foundation, May 23, 1964, 1964 Correspondence Folder, Morganton Parks.

⁴² Dell Wilson, “How Public or How Private: the Long-Term Recreation Dilemma in Morganton,” *News Herald*, March 31, 1964.

⁴³ George D. Lowman, letter to the editor, *News Herald*, March 29, 1964.

to listen and discuss this serious problem confronting all citizens of Burke County.”⁴⁴ Residents, who had previously been passive observers, began to publically challenge the Foundation’s decision. Contrary to the intentions of white moderates, the closure of the recreation facilities brought race to the forefront of the public discourse.

Amidst substantial public discontent the Foundation’s fundraising efforts proved insufficient. “Contributions have been slow and small,”⁴⁵ described Foundation member Sherrod Salisbury. This lack of support for a disruptive fundraiser coincides well with Chafe’s notion of the progressive mystique and the necessity of consensus. Chafe posited that in divisive situations “progress can occur only when everyone is able to agree—voluntarily—on the appropriate course of action.”⁴⁶ Due to the fundraiser’s failure the Foundation, devoid of options which would preserve segregation, attempted to lease the entirety of its facilities to the city on June 26, 1964. Initially, moderate members of the city government were reluctant to inherit this controversy. Mayor Riddle, although proclaiming a desire for the center to be open to the public, epitomized this concern when he stressed that “under city operation it could be an explosive situation and the city could be stepping into trouble.”⁴⁷ Despite the inherent dangers the Council ordered the city Attorney to draft a lease agreement which would allow for the Council to consider purchasing the facilities.⁴⁸ It is likely that the Council’s decision to acquire the recreation facilities was influenced by the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964 which significantly undercut the legal basis of privatization.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Mildred Largent, letter to the editor, *News Herald*, April 5, 1964.

⁴⁵ Bob Cloaninger, “City Asked to Lease Facilities,” *News Herald*, June 29, 1964.

⁴⁶ Chafe, 6.

⁴⁷ “Discussion with Recreation Board,” June 26, 1964, Book 10, 50, Morganton City Council.

⁴⁸ “Discussion with Recreation Board,” June 26, 1964.

⁴⁹ Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: the Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 196-197.

The Council, attempting to avert protest, acquired the Recreation Department's facilities without public notice. However, it can be deduced that the center was opened on an integrated basis by October 1964.⁵⁰ The Council's strategy of concealing the opening of the center proved ineffectual and instead stimulated visible acts of racial hatred. On January 25, 1965, during an integrated basketball game, a cross was ignited on the Collett Street Center's lawn.⁵¹ In response white moderates sought to undermine the legitimacy of the cross burnings and prevent a backlash from the African American community. An editorial in the *News Herald* asserted that the "cross burnings [were] the work of crackpots, whatever their age, and they are too few in number to justify [retaliation] with its resultant investigation and prosecution."⁵² Contrary to the fears of segregationist Foundation members, Morganton accepted an integrated recreation center without an overwhelming white backlash. The Council's decision to purchase the recreation facilities served to end the recreation crisis.

Morganton's failed attempt to privatize its recreation facilities was not unique. Many communities in the South during the 1960's explored privatization as an option to avoid segregation. Unlike other areas, however, Morganton did not experience the violence which became associated with the desegregation of recreation facilities.⁵³ The significance of Morganton's campaign for privatized recreation lies in the fact that white moderates prevented major demonstrations from occurring. The patterns of civility, accommodation, and paternalism which dictated the desegregation of the Recreation

⁵⁰ "Burning Cross Found on Rec. Center Lawn," *News Herald*, January 25, 1965.

⁵¹ There is an indication that another cross was burnt on the lawn directly after the center was integrated, but not reported at the time. "Burning Cross Found on Rec. Center Lawn," *News Herald*, January 25, 1965.

⁵² Editorial, "No More Cross Burnings," *News Herald*, March 26, 1965.

⁵³ Wolcott, 8-9.

Department were not limited to the private sphere. Faced with challenges to the Morganton City School System, white moderates utilized similar tactics to prevent demonstrations. By viewing how white moderates responded challenges to segregation in both public and private space the pervasiveness of moderate strategies becomes apparent.

On May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court declared the inherent inequality of segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*.⁵⁴ Morganton, along with the rest of the South, was forced to begin considering how to reconcile its racial status quo with the *Brown* decision. In the immediate aftermath of *Brown*, white school administrators in Morganton adopted positions of purposeful ambiguity in order to avert public strife. Maston Parham, superintendent of Morganton City Schools, argued that “I don’t see where anybody can make a statement on the thing. The only thing the Supreme Court has done is rule that segregation is unconstitutional. I think the only thing you can do is wait until the Supreme Court hands down a decree.”⁵⁵ Parham’s noncommittal attitude strategically navigated the potentially explosive issue. White moderates in Morganton sought to stabilize potentially volatile race relations by emphasizing racial gradualism.

After *Brown* white moderates argued for racial gradualism as a solution to segregation. On May 20, 1954 an editorial in the *News Herald* maintained that “it will be a thinking-out time for both whites and Negroes, and the degree to which sober, practical minds gain dominance over emotionalism in working out a fair and acceptable course of action...will decide whether the transition will be made with a minimum of lasting

⁵⁴ For a more thorough discussion of North Carolina’s reaction to *Brown v. Board of Education* and its implications for moderate politicians see Chafe, 44-45.

⁵⁵ Stanley Moore, “Moderation Marks Attitude Toward Anti-Segregation Ruling in School Circles,” *News Herald*, May 20, 1954.

scars.”⁵⁶ White moderates stressed that only through deliberate and dispassionate action, which clearly excluded public protest, could the racial status quo be altered in a meaningful manner. Furthermore, white progressives sought to construct a façade of good race relations in order to promote the concept that Morganton was “better” than Southern communities experiencing racially based strife. The *News Herald* in a May 24 editorial asserted that “there is one bright spot on which we can particularize—the foundation of good race relations which have existed in Morganton.”⁵⁷ The white moderate response to *Brown* strategically sought to reduce racial tensions in the community by emphasizing the slow pace of change.

Awaiting the conclusions of the Pearsall Plan report, which was North Carolina’s response to *Brown v. Board*, the Morganton City School System chose to postpone any desegregation action in the 1954-1955 school year.⁵⁸ During this period the racial status quo was maintained and segregation remained.⁵⁹ When the Pearsall Plan was ratified on September 8, 1956 it served to shift the responsibility for desegregation from the state to the local level. This development served, initially, to stall desegregation in Morganton. White moderates understood that pressure for desegregation would continue to build, however, and enacted strategies to prevent demonstrations in the community.

Throughout the late 1950’s the *News Herald* strategically criticized massive resistance tactics as a response to the Civil Rights Movement. Progressive white editor Stanley Moore played a critical role in steering the *News Herald*. His dedication to

⁵⁶ Editorial, “There’s Plenty of Time for Calm Thinking,” *News Herald*, May 20, 1954.

⁵⁷ Editorial, “A Present Asset—Good Race Relations,” *News Herald*, May 24, 1954.

⁵⁸ The Pearsall Plan shifted responsibility for desegregation from the state government to local districts. This plan allowed districts to shut down the public schools if the issue became volatile. Scholars view it as a form of legal obstructionism meant to delay integration. For analysis see Walker 53-67.

⁵⁹ “Schools Order Segregation Study: Continue Unchanged for a Year,” *News Herald*, August 11, 1955.

achieving racial equality is evidenced by his later role integrating Morganton's downtown.⁶⁰ Adopting progressive rhetoric writers sought to demonize the mobs which blocked integration in other Southern communities. Reacting to the mob violence that met Dorothy Counts in Charlotte, North Carolina when she attempted to integrate Harry Harding High School in September 1957, the *News Herald* asserted that "the pros and cons of segregation have no bearing here. But it is extremely important that a person, of any race, in Piedmont North Carolina should become the object of mass violence by school students."⁶¹ By emphasizing common humanity, rather than commending the segregationist mob, the *News Herald* actively attempted to quell segregationist action. Similarly, after the mob actions at Little Rock, editors decried massive resistance tactics. Appealing to North Carolina's moderate image, an editorial declared that "Tar Heels may not like any part of integration, but we have not allowed it to reach a point where we were willing to pit an unruly mob against the United States army," and assessed that "the mob at Little Rock did nothing for the cause of the South."⁶² Viewing national events through a moderate lens the *News Herald* played a vital role shaping the debate around race relations.

White progressives in Morganton strategically improved the quality of African American facilities in an attempt to avert protest and stall integration. The accreditation of Olive Hill, Morganton's only African American high school, served as a key component to this strategy. In a radical change in policy, Board of Education members spent substantial amounts of money in order to prepare Olive Hill for accreditation. After J. V. Morris, Olive Hill's principal, requested funding to modernize the school's facilities

⁶⁰ William Flemon McIntosh, interview.

⁶¹ Editorial, "More Here Than Segregation," *News Herald*, September 18, 1957.

⁶² Editorial, "Little Rock Mob Didn't Help South's Cause," *News Herald*, September 25, 1957.

on December 5, 1960, Board of Education member “Clifton K. Avery moved that ‘we spend whatever is necessary in the opinion of our superintendent to be a correct host’ to the inspecting committee.”⁶³ Accreditation had previously been granted only on a racially segregated basis. Morganton High, the city’s only white secondary education facility, had been accredited since 1923.⁶⁴ Olive Hill’s accreditation is emblematic of how white moderates utilized accommodation in an attempt to preserve segregation.

On September 11, 1961, frustrated by issues of race and class, the West Concord Mothers petitioned the City Council arguing that the costs transporting their children to Mountain View Elementary, which was Morganton’s only African American elementary school, was too financially burdensome.⁶⁵ This request was a façade for more substantive goals. Meeting in the basement of Reverend McIntosh, the West Concord Mothers sought to have their students enrolled in white schools which were much closer in proximity to their homes.⁶⁶ The West Concord mothers revealed this intention in a City Council Meeting on September 18, 1961, when an unnamed mother “pointed out that if something was not done about this, that the colored children plan to attend white schools next year.”⁶⁷ This thinly veiled threat yielded the usual paternalistic responses which characterized race relations in Morganton.

Although Superintendent Parham and BOE member Dr. Lang were blocked by state statute to utilize city funds to provide transportation for the West Concord Mothers, they worked diligently to ensure the children received transportation privately. Although

⁶³ Dorothy Cable, “Board Pushing to Get Olive Hill High School Accredited,” *News Herald*, December 13, 1960.

⁶⁴ “Patton Says Simpson Made Gross Error,” *News Herald*, September 26, 1963.

⁶⁵ “Petitions,” September 11, 1961, Book 9, 109, Morganton City Council.

⁶⁶ William Flemon McIntosh, interview.

⁶⁷ “Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Morganton,” September 18, 1961, Book 9, 100, Morganton City Council.

officially Dr. Lang was forced to take the position that “it is not possible for us to help you with [this] restriction placed upon us,”⁶⁸ privately he orchestrated efforts to provide transportation. Responding in a paternalistic manner, Dr. Lang helped neutralize this threat to segregation. During the September 18th meeting Dr. Lang informed the West Concord Mothers that “he would be glad to talk to the Manager of the Suburban Coach Company and see if the Company would be willing to give the children a special rate to ride to and from school.”⁶⁹ Dr. Lang’s attempts to arrange privately subsidized transportation were successful.⁷⁰ By reducing the difficulties inherent to segregation white moderates sought to reduce African American activism and maintain Morganton’s progressive image.

Further efforts were made to reduce the disparity between Morganton’s black and white schools in a Board of Education meeting May 14, 1962. In a reversal of typical practice extensive improvements were granted to improve the campuses of Mountain View Elementary and Olive Hill, while paltry funds were allocated for use at Morganton High. The Board approved “\$20,123 for an addition of two classrooms at Olive Hill: \$40,000 for [the] addition of two classrooms and shower and dressing rooms at Mountain View School.”⁷¹ These improvements, when coupled with the accreditation of Olive Hill, represent a pattern of strategic accommodation which can be interpreted as an effort to discourage demonstrations.

On June 10th, 1963 the Morganton City School Board allowed token integration to take place in Morganton. Thirty students were assigned within the system on a

⁶⁸ John W. Beach, “No Transportation to School Allowed,” *News Herald*, September 19, 1961.

⁶⁹ “Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Morganton,” September 18, 1961.

⁷⁰ William Flemon McIntosh, interview.

⁷¹ Dorothy Cable, “School Board Okays Plans For Additions at Negro Schools,” *News Herald*, May 15, 1962.

geographic basis.⁷² After the decision was made the editorial staff at the *News Herald* attempted to emphasize Morganton's progressive image to prevent a segregationist backlash. Acknowledging the growing pressure to desegregate, from both local and federal sources, the *News Herald* asserted that "the school board could do no less than what it did. And it has the right to expect that an earnest, thoughtful citizenry of both races will accord it nothing less than full cooperation."⁷³ By all indications token integration was a minimally traumatic event in the community. Distinguished historian John Inscoc, a fifth grade student attending Forest Hill elementary during the 1963-1964 school year, credits careful preparation by Morganton's teachers for the ease of the transition.⁷⁴ Successful token integration evidenced how moderate leadership could shape the city's race relations.

Token integration persisted unchallenged until 1965 when, under pressure from Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, federal funding for the city school system was threatened.⁷⁵ Acting on a report issued by N.C Deputy Attorney General Ralph Moody, the Morganton Board of Education began discussing options for desegregation. On February 9, 1965 the *News Herald* reported that "several possible plans for compliance with integration directives of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare were discussed during the Monday night Meeting of the Morganton City School Board..." and that the options discussed included "assignment through geographical location to freedom of choice."⁷⁶ In an attempt to reduce public discontent with desegregation the

⁷² Dorothy Cable, "City School Board Assigns Negroes," *News Herald*, June 11, 1963.

⁷³ Editorial, "Decision Has Been Expected," *News Herald*, June 11, 1963.

⁷⁴ John Inscoc, interview by author, Asheville, NC, January 29, 2012.

⁷⁵ For context on the Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, reference Peter Bernard, "The 1964 Civil Rights Act and Education," in Grofman, ed., *Legacies of the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 92.

⁷⁶ Dorothy Cable, "City Schools Study Ruling," *News Herald*, February 9, 1965.

Board surveyed the PTA on March 4, 1965.⁷⁷ The response from the PTA overwhelmingly supported the proposed freedom of choice plan. Superintendent Parham, favoring the method of geographically based assignment, argued against the PTA's recommendation. Parham believed that "both Olive Hill and Mountain View would lose students in a freedom of choice program. This could result in some schools crowded and others with room to spare."⁷⁸ Although support for geographical assignment was shared by the majority of the BOE, a plan which could satisfy the PTA was necessary to prevent strife in the community.

The plan formulated by Superintendent Parham and the BOE moderated the desire for freedom of choice and the necessity to avoid overcrowded schools. Federal judge Braxton Craven succinctly described the 1965-1966 plan:

Pupils in grades one through six inclusive were accorded complete freedom of choice in the selection of school to be attended. Pupils in grades seven and eight were likewise accorded the same freedom of choice. All pupils, regardless of ethnic origin, in the ninth grade were assigned to West Concord School (previously known as Olive Hill High School). All students, regardless of ethnic origin, in grades ten, eleven and twelve were assigned to attend the Morganton High School.⁷⁹

This plan effectively preserved segregation on the elementary and middle school levels. Importantly, Mountain View Elementary remained entirely African American during 1965-1966 school year, with only eight white pupils in attendance.⁸⁰ Unlike token integration this plan's implementation was not passively accepted.

On July 17, 1965 nine African American teachers sued the Morganton City Board of Education after they were not rehired. Alleging that discriminatory hiring practices

⁷⁷ Dorothy Cable, "Survey Requested on School Preferences," *News Herald*, March 5, 1965.

⁷⁸ Dorothy Cable, "City Schools Nearing Compliance Formula," *News Herald*, March 9, 1965.

⁷⁹ *Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, Civil Action Number 523, U.S. District Court, Western District of North Carolina, August 3, 1965, 3.

⁸⁰ *Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, 4.

had resulted in their termination, these former teachers filed suit in conjunction with the North Carolina Teachers Association, an African American teacher advocacy group. Specifically “the plaintiffs alleged that ‘the continued operation of the Morganton City School system on a racially discriminatory basis violated the rights of plaintiffs secured to them by the Due Proces[sic] and Equal Protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.’”⁸¹ Central to the plaintiffs’ claim of discrimination was the startling fact that the number of African American teachers was to be reduced from 26 to 11 between the 1964-1965 and 1965-1966 school years.⁸² Significantly, the removal of African American teachers from the Morganton Public School System was part of a national trend.⁸³ An editorial in the *News Herald*, entitled “A Lawsuit Nobody Can Win,” termed the lawsuit “regrettable...” and “premature.”⁸⁴ Officially entitled *Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, this legal action publically exposed racial tensions in Morganton.

Tried in federal district court, this trial represented the only substantive challenge to Morganton’s desegregation plan. During the trial attorney Melvyn Zarr, arguing for the plaintiffs, insisted that the reduction of African American teachers in the 1965-1966 years indicated systemic racism. In oral argument Zarr charged that “it defies common sense that experienced teachers should be given such short shifts. Yet no experienced white teachers were misplaced.”⁸⁵ Zarr further alleged that racial quotas, not impartial criteria, explained Morganton’s hiring practices. Adopting a legalistic argument Sam

⁸¹ “Negro Teachers Sue Local School Board,” *News Herald*, June 21, 1965.

⁸² *Arthur Baglis, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, 4.

⁸³ Adam Fairclough, “The Cost of Brown: Black Teacher and School Integration,” *The Journal of American History* 1, no. 91 (June 2004): 54, 0-
search.ebscohost.com.wncln.wncln.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=13481388&site=ehost-live (accessed October 22, 2012).

⁸⁴ Editorial, “A Lawsuit Nobody can Win,” *News Herald*, June 21, 1965.

⁸⁵ Dorothy Cable, “Judge to Hand Down Decision On Monday,” *News Herald*, March 19, 1965.

Ervin III,⁸⁶ counsel for the defendant school board, argued that “the law requires the plaintiff to come into court and sustain the burden of proof. Now Zarr admits very candidly that there is no direct evidence of discrimination.”⁸⁷ HEW postponed approving Morganton’s desegregation plan until the court issued a decision. This case fundamentally challenged the effectiveness of white moderate policies in Morganton.

The verdict rendered by Morganton native judge Braxton Craven reaffirmed Morganton’s moderate politics. Craven’s decision, which was filed on August 21st, 1965, rejected the plaintiffs request for relief. Significantly, Craven noted in his decision that he believed that “the decimation of negro teachers is not inexplicable. Until the current school year 1965-1966, negro teachers did not have to compete with white applicants.”⁸⁸ Additionally, Craven emphasized that the current desegregation plan altered the demographics of Morganton City schools. Prior to the integration of other districts within Burke County, only Morganton City offered education for African American students. In 1965, however, these districts, under similar federal pressure, integrated diverting 225 African Americans to other districts within the county.⁸⁹ After a thorough review of each dismissed teacher’s qualifications, Craven concluded that because the plaintiffs’ lacked definitive evidence that their “argument is a novel one – analogous to the res ipsa loquitur rule of evidence.”⁹⁰ It has no support in law, nor, so far as I know, in human experience.”⁹¹ Craven’s decision effectively quashed the only legal effort to check discrimination in the Morganton City School System.

⁸⁶ Author’s grandfather.

⁸⁷ Samuel James Ervin III in Dorothy Cable, “Judge to Hand Down Decision Monday,” *News Herald*, March, 19, 1965.

⁸⁸ *Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, 5.

⁸⁹ *Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, 4.

⁹⁰ The Latin phrase “res ipsa loquitur” translates to mean “the thing speaks for itself.”

⁹¹ *Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education*, 5.

Although the plaintiffs appealed Craven's ruling on September 3, 1965, this effort proved ineffectual.⁹² Despite the appeal, on October 25, 1965, Morganton received a notification from HEW approving the desegregation plan. Francis Keppel, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, asserted that "I have determined the plan is adequate to accomplish the purpose of the Act and the Regulation of the Department of Health Education and Welfare."⁹³ HEW's approval served to undercut the legitimacy of the plaintiffs' appeal. As a result the plaintiffs' quietly withdrew their appeal on October 27, 1965.⁹⁴ HEW's approval of the plan signaled a pivotal moment in the desegregation of the Morganton City School System. Although significant advances were still to be made, namely the implementation of a geographically based system of assignment, HEW's approval rendered desegregation in Morganton a foregone conclusion.

The absence of massive resistance tactics in Morganton should not be mistaken for a lack of racial tensions. Rather, the strategies of paternalism, accommodation, and civility successfully masked racial oppression and discouraged public demonstrations in Morganton during the 1950's and 1960's. These tactics transcended the barriers of public and private space, effectively dictating how Morganton's white leadership responded to civil rights activists. These strategies, however, were insufficient to preserve the system of segregation. Civil rights activists in the community deftly used threats of protest to force white moderates to alter the racial status quo. The determination to avoid protest combined with an increased level of federal intervention forced white moderates to abolish segregation before the issue became too volatile.

⁹² "Teachers File Appeal to Court's Ruling," *News Herald*, September 3, 1965.

⁹³ Dorothy Cable, "HEW Approves Compliance Plan for Morganton City Schools," *News Herald*, October 25, 1965.

⁹⁴ "Court Appeal is Withdrawn," *News Herald*, October 27, 1965.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Newspaper Articles

News Herald, May 20, 1954-October 27, 1965

This was the only newspaper in Morganton during the civil rights era. It is the most comprehensive source on desegregation in Morganton. This liberal paper, with an affiliation to the Democratic Party, embodied rather progressive attitudes towards race. Significant events in Morganton's desegregation, including the protests at the Collett Street Recreation Center, the desegregation of the school system, were covered by this paper. This source can be used to understand how progressive journalists could guide desegregation efforts. Also, community members often utilized this paper to submit letters to the editor which expressed their perspectives on desegregation.

Moore, Stanley. "Moderation Marks Attitude Toward Anti-Segregation Ruling in School Circles." *News Herald*. May 20, 1954.

Editorial. "There's Plenty of Time for Calm Thinking." *News Herald*. May 20, 1954.

Editorial, "A Present Asset—Good Race Relations," *News Herald*, May 24, 1954.

"Schools Order Segregation Study: Continue Unchanged for a Year." *News Herald*. August 11, 1955.

Editorial. "More Here Than Segregation." *News Herald*. September 18, 1957.

Editorial. "Little Rock Mob Didn't Help South's Cause." *News Herald*. September 25, 1957.

Editorial. "Looking Beyond Sit-Down Demonstrations." *News Herald*. March 16, 1960.

Cable, Cable. "Board Pushing to Get Olive Hill High School Accredited." *News Herald*. December 13, 1960.

Beach, John W. "No Transportation to School Allowed." *News Herald*. September 19, 1961.

Cable, Dorothy. "School Board Okays Plans For Additions at Negro Schools." *News Herald*. May 15, 1962.

"Call it Bad Publicity." *News Herald*. September 13, 1962.

Cable, Dorothy. "City School Board Assigns Negroes." *News Herald*. June 11, 1963.

Editorial. "Decision Has Been Expected." *News Herald*. June 11, 1963.

"Patton Says Simpson Made Gross Error." *News Herald*. September 26, 1963.

"Recreation Governors Close All Facilities." *News Herald*. March, 11, 1964.

Lowman, George D. letter to the editor. *News Herald*. March 29, 1964.

Wilson, Dell. "How Public or How Private: the Long-Term Recreation Dilemma in Morganton." *News Herald*. March 31, 1964.

Largent, Mildred. letter to the editor. *News Herald*. April 5, 1964.

Cloaning, Bob. "City Asked to Lease Facilities." *News Herald*. June 29, 1964.

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Cable, Dorothy. "City Schools Study Ruling." *News Herald*. February 9, 1965.

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- Editorial. "No More Cross Burnings." *News Herald*. March 26, 1965.
- Editorial. "A Lawsuit Nobody Can Win." *News Herald*. June 21, 1965.
- "Negro Teachers Sue Local School Board." *News Herald*. June 21, 1965.
- "Teachers File Appeal to Court's Ruling." *News Herald*. September 3, 1965.
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Government Documents

Arthur Baglis Buford, et al v. The Morganton City Board of Education. Civil Action Number 523. U.S. District Court. Western District of North Carolina, August 3, 1965.

In this case nine former teachers and the NCTA filed suit against the after the number of African American teachers was reduced significantly after a desegregation plan was enacted. This source provides a thorough description of the BOE's desegregation plan as well as in depth descriptions of the why each of the plaintiffs was no longer employed. Also, this case evidences the difficulty African Americans had obtaining legal relief without directly incriminating evidence. This source shows a clear fracture in Morganton's veneer of good race relations and how desegregation could, if enacted inequitably, could harm the African American community.

Carolina Population Center. *County Population Trends, North Carolina, 1790-1960; State, Region, County, Residence, Color*. North Carolina Population Data Series No. 1. March 1969.

This study, which was sponsored by the University of North Carolina, examines how race and residency, qualified as either urban or rural, were distributed throughout North Carolina. The data interpreted was produced by the U. S. Census Bureau.

Meeting Minutes and Petitions. Books 6-10. Morganton City Council Building, Morganton City Council.

These minutes address a variety of racial issues in the community, including dialogue between of African American leaders and the white City Council. These petitions include the request for an African American police officer, a request for

school integration in 1961, and a request for the desegregation of the Morganton Recreation Center. Close analysis of these records unveils how white moderate leaders facilitated a civil racial dialogue in order to avert protest in Morganton. Similarly, the desires of African Americans and the level of token integration they were willing to accept in exchange for their cooperation with leaders can be derived from these minutes.

“Report from the Chairman of the Board of Human Relations.” December 5, 1960. Book 9, 23. City Council Minutes. Morganton City Council Building.

“Petitions.” September 11, 1961. Book 9, 109. City Council Minutes. Morganton City Council Building.

“Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Morganton.” September 18, 1961. Book 9, 100. City Council Minutes. Morganton City Council Building.

“Discussion with Recreation Board.” June 26, 1964. Book 10, 50. City Council Minutes. Morganton City Council Building.

Recreation Foundation Documents. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

These records provide a probative look into the inner politics of the Morganton Recreation Foundation during the 1940’s to the 1980’s. These minutes, which were never publically available in anyway during the period in question, provide account of how the board members of the Recreation Foundation attempted to maintain segregation while simultaneously preventing protest. This body of evidence provides the most straightforward perspective on what white leaders were attempting to accomplish.

Robertson, W. T. to Diehl, Marion. September 30, 1955. Unnamed Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Diehl, Marion to Robertson, W. T. undated. Unnamed Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Chambers, J. M. to Robertson, W. T. October 3, 1955. Unnamed Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

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Patton, Billy Joe. "Prepared Statement of the Human Relations Forum." November 14, 1963. Unnamed Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center, Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Sakowski, Arthur to Salisbury, Sherrod. November 20, 1963. 1953-1963 Correspondence Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Reece, Adelaide. "Foundation Meeting Minutes." November 29, 1963. 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center, Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Rinehart, C. P. to Berry, Russell. December 2, 1963. 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Connelly, Robert to Salisbury, Sherrod. January 10, 1964. 1953-1969 Correspondence Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Wilson, Mrs. Henry T. to My Friends and Fellow Members of the Recreation Foundation. May 23, 1964. 1964 Correspondence Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

Special Committee Appointed to Explore Possible Methods for Raising Operating Funds For the Foundations Recreation Facilities to the Executive Committee of the Morganton Parks and Recreation Foundation. "Report." March 26, 1964. Clippings and Etc. Related to Closing of Facilities Folder. Recreation Foundation Minutes. Collett Street Recreation Center. Morganton Parks and Recreation Department.

United States Census Bureau. *County and City Data Book*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1967.

This is a report compiled by the Census Bureau which provides demographic information pertinent to the demographic and economic makeup of Morganton and Burke County during the early 1960's.

Oral Histories

Logan, Artie. Interview by author. Morganton, NC. October 25, 2011.

In this interview Mrs. Logan discussed her experience integrating Morganton High and engaging in community activism. She took care to discuss the actors which both smoothed and hindered the transition for the students in the school. The topics discussed included the school system, recreation center, and the

general racial attitude of Morganton during the 1950's and 1960's. Her interview is particularly useful because it offers an African American perspective of desegregation and unveils cracks in Morganton's progressive veneer. This interview was conducted in her home. She was recommended by Jodie Hill. This interview is currently being processed by Special Collections in Ramsey Library and will soon be available to the public.

Inscoe, John. Interview by author Asheville, NC. January 29, 2012.

John Inscoe was an elementary school student and the child of a BOE member during the 1960's. He has specific memories of the freedom of choice plan and the eventual desegregation of the school system. Also, his formal training as a historian allows him to understand the city's desegregation in the context of North Carolina's race relations. Of particular interest is his perspective on how the freedom of choice students were received at Forest Hill Elementary in 1963. Inscoe is a noted historian who is an associate professor at UGA. This interview was conducted over the phone. Dr. Inscoe was recommended by Dr. Pierce, the chair of the History Department at UNCA. This interview is currently being processed by Special Collections in Ramsey Library and will soon be available to the public.

McIntosh, William Flemon. Interview by author. Morganton, NC. February 15, 2012.

McIntosh, a local reverend, school teacher, and active member of the NAACP, was intimately involved in the desegregation of Morganton. He was directly involved in campaigning for the first African American police officer, desegregating the lunch counters, and desegregating the city schools. His perspective illustrates how successful protest strategies and moderate city leadership facilitated desegregation. Also, he discusses the white backlash which accompanied civil rights agitation. Interview conducted at the *News Herald* Building. He was selected to be interviewed because of his prominent stance as a leader of the African American community. This interview is currently being processed by Special Collections in Ramsey Library and will soon be available to the public.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, Karen. *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010.

This book examines the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock Arkansas. Anderson critically analyzes how the forces of massive resistance combated concerted efforts to desegregate the school. Significantly, Anderson notes that Little Rock set a desegregation precedent nationwide, influencing how other areas dealt with the issue of race. Her analysis is emblematic of an overall pattern in the historiography of overemphasizing dramatic events.

Bernard, Peter. "The 1964 Civil Rights Act and Education." in Grofman, Bernard, ed. *Legacies of the 1964 Civil Rights Act*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2000.

This essay critically examines the forces which brought about the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Act's ramifications for American institutions. Specifically this essay provides further context as to how Title IV was utilized to desegregate public school systems and how Title II influenced the decision to end the campaign to privatize the recreation facilities. These pressures ultimately drove the desegregation of the Morganton City School System and the Recreation Department.

Chafe, William H. *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle For Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Chafe uses a great deal of oral sources in order to construct narrative of desegregation in Greensboro which was not shackled to a distinctly white perspective. His narrative pays considerable attention to educators and other active community members in explaining the mechanics of social change. Chafe's thesis is that desegregation in Greensboro, and to some extent North Carolina, was guided by the "Progressive Mystique," which was a strategy combining a civil dialogue about race relations, legalistic obstruction, and token integration to suppress the potential for civil rights protest. In many instances the leadership in Morganton adopted the tactics of the "Progressive Mystique."

Cobb, James C. *The Selling of the South: the Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1980*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982.

This study examines the manner in which Southern politicians attempted to attract industry in the mid-20th century. Specifically, this source highlights how Southern leaders balanced the need for continued economic development with the desire to block desegregation. This study will provide context with which to analyze the decisions of city leadership in Morganton.

Fairclough, Adam "The Cost of Brown: Black Teacher and School Integration." *The Journal of American History* 1, no. 91 (June 2004): 43-55. 0-search.ebscohost.com.wncln.wncln.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=13481388&site=ehost-live.

This article provides an analysis of the effects which school desegregation had upon African American teachers and school administrators. Fairclough argues that desegregation forced African Americans to lose a distinctly "black" institution and significantly reduced the number of African American teachers.

This source evidences how Morganton's situation was not dissimilar to many other Southern communities.

Fink, Leon. *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the New Nuevo South*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

This work analyzes the community of Guatemalan workers who staff the Case Farms poultry processing plant. It examines how the community of workers resisted the oppressive labor practices of the plant's management. This book contains the only available economic history of Morganton during the 1950's and 1960's. Also, it provides a reductionist account of desegregation in the introduction.

Kelley, Robin D. G. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: Free Press, 1994.

This study examines methods and forms of protest which have been traditionally ignored by scholars and historians. By evaluating individual non-organizational protest Kelley provides an insightful view into the Civil Rights Movement. Protest, as argued by Kelley, was not confined to the actions of groups such as the NAACP, but rather was undertaken on a subtle everyday level. Even minimal deviations and rejections of the status quo constituted protest. This book offers a more inclusive perspective on the Civil Rights Movement which helps dismantle the overemphasis on national movements presented in previous scholarly treatments.

Phifer, Edward William. *Burke County; the History of a North Carolina County, 1777-1920, with a Glimpse Beyond*. Raleigh: North Carolina Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1979.

This is the only comprehensive history of Burke County that has been written. Although a medical doctor by profession, Dr. Phifer dabbled in amateur history writing. This book and several of his articles have received awards and commendations from the Southern Historical Association. Although Phifer's history represents an impressive synthesis it lacks proper scholarly detachment when it discusses race relations.

Walker, Anders. *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown V. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

This work explains the varying moderate methods used by Mississippi Governor J. P. Coleman, North Carolina Governor Luther Hodges, and Florida Governor Leroy Collins to stall the progress of the Civil Rights Movement. In general they utilized the vague language of the *Brown I* and *Brown II* decisions to make token changes to the racial status quo appear to represent adherence to the law. Also,

this source expounds upon how the evasive actions of these governors have been mistakenly perceived as progressive. Specifically, this source will be utilized to contextualize how moderates were able to enact seemingly race neutral strategies to stifle potential protest.

Wolcott, Victoria W. *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: the Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America (politics and Culture in Modern America)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

This work describes how white community members attempted to preserve segregation in recreation after *Brown*. Importantly, Wolcott notes that the response to desegregation efforts was often violent. Also, this work documents how the 1964 Civil Rights Act was used to delegitimize the tactic of privatization. This work is used to present Morganton in a broader context.