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Confronting the Haunted South: A Journey into the History, Legacy, and Life of Boggs Academy

Caroline G. Whitcomb

CONFRONTING THE HAUNTED SOUTH:

A JOURNEY INTO THE HISTORY, LEGACY, AND LIFE OF BOGGS ACADEMY

by

CAROLINE GREEN WHITCOMB

(Under the Direction of Daniel Chapman)

ABSTRACT

Boggs Academy was a private, Presbyterian boarding school for Blacks that operated from 1906 until 1984 in rural Georgia. The institution, recognized for academic excellence, marked by resilience, and beloved by alumni, existed because of the racism that has plagued this nation since its inception. The stated purpose of this research is four-fold: to record/compile a history of Boggs Academy, to carry on the work Mr. Charles W. Francis began in his Master's thesis on Boggs Academy, to demonstrate the value of togetherness in qualitative research, and to cast a vision for the future of education built upon the institution's historical past. This five-year postcritcal ethnography resulted in a detailed history of Boggs Academy, a collection of memories and reflections of alumni and faculty, an examination of Boggs through the lens of Black educational scholarship, and a reconsideration of critical distance in qualitative research. Through a hauntological lens, I examine the phantoms and ghosts which birthed, maintained, and plagued the school and the American south. Together, the Boggs Academy alumni and I, weave a story of the past, our lives, and the meaning of family.

INDEX WORDS: Boggs Academy, John L. Phelps, Burke County, Georgia, Keysville, Georgia, Postcritical ethnography, Critical ethnography, Ethnography, Hauntology, Participatory action research, Critical distance, Education, Black education, Black history, Private education, Ubuntu, Spectrality, American south, Racism, White supremacy, Christianity

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of Bertha Mae Crawford Jones (1915-2003).

This work is the embodiment and continuation of your love.

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I begin with my thwarters, Dr. Daniel Chapman and Dr. John Weaver. At last, my envoi. You "made of me what the right-handed majority compassionately call a thwarted left-hander, but which I have to describe joyously as a completed half. No other event sculpted my body with greater consequences, no one decided direction/meaning for me in a more revolutionary way" (Serres, 1997, p. 3). You pushed me into the middle place but remained my guides. You calmed me when I panicked, taught me to read the sea, and gave me books, beautiful books. Books that became lighthouses and stars. Thank you to the two "who trained me in the plentitude and saturation proper to a complete body. Nothing gives greater direction than to change direction" (Serres, 1997, p. 4). I am now gratefully "intermediary, messenger…hyphen. Forever outside any community, but a little and just barely in all of them. Harlequin, already" (Serres, 1997, p. 6).

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William Booher
William Scriven
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Willie Mae Allen
Willie Moses
Willie Oakman
Windy May Simmons
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CHAPTER 1

HAUNTINGS, BOOKS, AND OTHERS

Introduction/Personal Justification

> There is no going alone on a journey. Whether one explores strange lands or Main Street or one's own backyard, always invisible traveling companions are close by: the giants and pygmies of memory, of belief, pulling you this way and that, not letting you see the world life-size but insisting that you measure it by their own height and weight...I went on this journey to find an image of the human being that I could feel proud of. I wanted to reassure myself of mortal strength, of man's power not only to survive on this earth but to continue growing in stature. I wanted the faith to believe that we can fulfill our role in this evolving universe of which we have been given such awesome glimpses. *We human beings…*What haunting words! (Smith, 1964, p. 5)

Hauntings, books, and "Others" became my companions on this journey. The books were first to join me, at least I believed they were. As I held them one by one, I could feel their tug. They pulled at my clothes, my rings, my traditions, my beliefs, all I once considered "me." The voices within their pages united with the physical voice of my guide to thwart me. They removed my dock lines and cast me into the middle, watching as the words of Serres (2006) bobbed about me.

> Departure requires a rendering that rips a part of the body from the part that still adheres to the shore where it was born, to the neighborhood of its kinfolk, to the house and the village with its customary inhabitants, to the culture of its language and to the rigidity of habit. The body that crosses surely learns about a second world, the one toward which it is heading, where another language is spoken, but above all, where the body is initiated

> into a third world, through which it passes…With this new birth, it is now truly exiled. Deprived of a home. A fire with no hearth. Intermediary, Angel, Messenger, Hyphen. Forever outside any community, but a little and just barely in all of them. (pp. 6 & 7)

After my floundering about in the water and longing to pretend the journey wasn't real, I could hear the books and my guide again, urging me forward into such strange waters. It was there in the midst of this sea of change, I discovered the "Others," my societal opposites. People with every right to ignore my presence, my continued ignorance, and awkward swim. Yet these "Others" swam to my side, offering friendship and encouragement. When storms filled me with terror or I lost my way, I could feel their arms around me, whispers of love and verses of comfort soothed my frantic soul. Their patient wisdom became a current, easing the fatigue of the swim. My guide remained in the sea. He understood the pain of departure and the difficult necessity of my passage. He was often the one who forced me to consider the trivialities I drug into the water with me. Trivialities that became weights at my ankles and blinders over my eyes. The blinders and weights of privilege, Whiteness, comfort, and heritage repeatedly caused near-drowning. Yet the books, he and other guides continually supplied, fed my soul, and strengthened my body. After three long years of struggling through the middle place, I crossed. Exiled to a true home and eternally grateful. This is the story of my journey, the story of the land from which I come, and most importantly, the story of the "Others." "Others" who became my Thou. Austrian philosopher, Martin Buber (1958), describes the beauty found in true relationship with an Other, the wonder that occurs when we allow our hearts to rise above all the muck and lies that swirl around us and authentically love.

> I can set him in a particular time and place; I must continually do it: but I set only a *He* or a *She*, that is an *It*, no longer my *Thou*. So long as the heaven of *Thou* is spread out over

> me the winds of causality cower at my heels, and the whirlpool of fate stays its course. I do not experience the man to whom I say *Thou*. I take my stand in relation to him, in the sanctity of the primary word. Only when I step out of it do I experience him once more. In the act of experience, *Thou* is far away. Even if the man to whom I say *Thou* is not aware of it in the midst of his experience, yet relation may exist. For *Thou* is more than *It* realizes. No deception penetrates here; here is the cradle of the Real Life. (p. 9)

The unparalleled beauty of the new land I reached is the apprehension of my Thou. The recognition of humanity, the grasp of I in them, and them in me.

There was a profound understanding which became clear only months after crossing, the role of hauntings in my life, and my former land. We, and by we, I mean Whites in the south, typically avoid the topic of ghosts and hauntings, at least outside humorous cocktail conversation and ghost tours designed for tourist entertainment. It's almost as if we fear we might conjure up their power and reality just by mentioning them. Generationally, we are trained to ignore the existence of hauntings, to shove the eerie sense of their presence to the remotest portion of our psyche. Yet in recent months, these hauntings and their extreme significance in my life have become shockingly visible.

As a child, I had a nanny, Bertha Mae Crawford Jones. She passed away June 5, 2003, at the age of ninety. She cared for me from the age of one through my teenage years. I loved her dearly. After her passing, in dark or sad times, I found myself drawn to her grave. She is buried on a small hill in a beautiful cemetery, minutes from my home. When I began my doctoral journey, my crossing, I visited her more often. I sat, legs crossed, on the grass to the left of her headstone, in the empty space between her grave and the grave of her daughter, Willie Mae. Sometimes I talked or cried, but typically I just sat. Last fall, something unusual happened.

Disappointment and anger resulting from my broken marriage had me fuming. I had taken a year off from teaching to focus on my writing and completing my degree. Nothing about this break was going the way I envisioned. I was coming unglued. I needed a momentary escape, a breather. I grabbed my car keys and drove to see Bertha. Approaching her grave, I felt strange. I could hear her voice in my head. Not in the same way one who suffers from schizophrenia describes hearing voices, but it *was* there. "You don't belong here. You have work to do. This place is for people who are sleeping. Going on. Go." I tried to tell myself I was crazy and took a few steps forward, but the feeling of not belonging grew stronger with each one. I burst into tears and stormed back to my car. I was angry, not at Bertha, but at not being welcome, not allowed, not free to express all that was bubbling inside me. Yet, I knew she was right. I *did* have work. I *did* have a calling. For that matter, we all do.

I didn't go back for months. I was scared to feel the rejection again. After my crossing, much of my life, thinking, and writing became private. Not because I had something to hide but because there was no one in my former life, one where I still physically dwelled, that would or could listen and understand. For the most part, I was comfortable with the aloneness, but the day came when I again needed to talk. I needed to speak aloud all that was confusing my heart, all that I had buried deep inside.

On a cool morning in April, I pulled into the cemetery and climbed from my car. Eyes on her stone, I wound my way through the graves. All was quiet, I didn't hear her voice. Instead, I heard a mockingbird and the breeze gently rustling the leaves of a nearby magnolia. Following my former habit, I bent and pulled the weeds from the base of the urn which rests on her headstone. Task complete, I sat in the damp grass and began to talk.

For many years after her passing, I didn't think about Bertha often. I was busy with work, raising babies, and the general busyness of life. During those years, from the outside, my life probably looked much like a pretty picture of southern utopia and honestly, I did my best to convince myself it was. It wasn't until I endured the middle and arrived in the new land that I began to see my life, my world, for what it truly was, ghosts and all. In recent months, I've learned to welcome the hauntings, to listen and learn from them.

> To be haunted in the name of a will to heal is to allow the ghost to help you imagine what was lost that never even existed, really. That is its utopian grace: to encourage a steely sorrow laced with delight for what we lost that we never had; too long for the insight of that moment in which we recognize...that it could have been and can be otherwise...If you let it, the ghost can lead you toward what has been missing, which is sometimes everything. (Gordon, 2008, p. 58)

When I began to talk to and listen to Bertha again, to let those memories of her return to the surface and interrupt my daily doings, I began to grasp the magnitude of her impact on my life, my being. As a freckled-faced child in braids, I had loved an "Other." In my young mind, it was simple. I was hers and she was mine. Now I see how blessed I was to be loved by Bertha. I remember the painful moment she taught me to see the difference, not just between the color of our skin, but in our lives. It is only now, many years later, I am able to fully grasp that moment, and in light of it, long for the reality that never really existed.

In the south, and frankly the nation at large, we are haunted. Ghosts swirl about us, impacting every aspect of our lives. As Whites, we pretend they don't exist and often become angry and defensive when a ghost manifests and refuses to go quietly. Lillian Smith writes of her

childhood experience at the turn of the century, save for two telltale statements, her words could easily be my own.

> From the day I was born, I began to learn my lessons, I was put in a rigid frame too intricate, too twisting to describe here so briefly, but I learned to conform to its slide-rule measurements. I learned it is possible to be a Christian and a White southerner simultaneously; to be a gentlewoman and an arrogant callous creature in the same moment; to pray at night and ride a Jim Crow car the next morning and to feel comfortable in doing both. I learned to believe in freedom, to glow when the word *democracy* is used, and to practice slavery from morning to night. I learned it the way all of my southern people learn it: by closing door after door until one's mind and heart and conscience are blocked off from each other and from reality. (Smith, 1994, p. 29)

These doors we close, locking ghosts past and present from our minds and conscience, allow us to become the slave masters of today. Even as I write these words, I hear the quick intake of breath of friends and family and so I ask, have you ever felt a rush of fear as you passed a Black man in a desolate parking lot? Have you laughed at a joke, or made one, about the ineptitude of Blacks? Have you pondered what you might say if your son or daughter brought home an African American boy or girl to meet the family? Have you questioned the presence of Blacks in your places of worship, your private schools, your clubs, or the Oval Office? Have you expressed fatigue or annoyance when Blacks have pushed to take a place in local government or business? When telling a story, do you feel the need to identify the race of any character who isn't White? While you might answer yes to some or all of my questions, I know you are still bothered by my use of the term "master." What is missed is the power behind the compilation of all these acts multiplied by the number of Whites committing them daily. Each is atrocious but combined,

deadly. George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor. These human beings, these "Others," are victims of our mastery.

> What kind of case is a case of a ghost? It is a case of haunting, a story about what happens when we admit the ghost—that special instance of the merging of the visible and the invisible, the dead and the living, the past and the present—into the making of worldly relations and into the making of our accounts of the world. It is a case of the difference it makes to start with the marginal, with what we normally exclude or banish, or, more commonly, with what we never even notice. (Gordon, 2011, p. 24)

As a young child growing up in Augusta, I viewed Burke County, only 40 minutes away, as a destination. A trip there meant time with grandparents, fishing, bouncing around the family farm in the back of a beat-up Jeep, and drinking coca-colas at Bobby Fulcher's pharmacy. I enjoyed sitting on top of the dryer in the corner of my grandmother's kitchen, crunching on ice, and listening to the help talk as they fixed dinner. In the evenings, my grandfather and I would walk around the block, past the Waynesboro courthouse and the eternal flame, stopping to visit with friends and family out doing the same. I remember lying in bed at night, grinning as my grandfather's pack of bird dogs went nuts with each hourly clanging of the Methodist church bells. I loved being there. I loved the people and the fact, as I was often reminded, that I had Burke County blood.

Those moments, people, and places long gone, I sit in my study and pull *Saving Savannah* (Jones, 2008) from my bookcase. This book, stuffed full of index cards, marks the month and moment my understanding of the world began to change again. It is surreal to hold it as my eyes wander about. This room, once just a sitting room off the master, is now my sacred space, my sanctuary. Bookcases that were filled with an odd variety of children's books and

pleasure reads, now hold well over 400 works resplendent with thousands of yellow post-it notes. The wall above the sofa boasts an oversized painting of a gray-bearded mountain man, a man looking much like Myles Horton. Stacked on the coffee table are a gold-covered school annual with a black panther on the cover, *Daring to Look: Dorethea Lange's Photographs and Reports from the Field* (Spirn, 2008), and *Words in Air: The Complete Correspondence Between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008). My desk wall is covered in handwritten quotes, bits of poetry, and words with their corresponding definitions. On my desk sits a signed copy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1968, 1987), a photograph of Glenda Farrell, my Boggs Academy research liaison and me, and a framed index card. The card, yellow with age, in cursive reads, "Sincerely yours, Lillian Smith." Looking around produces a strange bucket of emotions. I turn back to the computer screen, to the writing of my dissertation. As I stare at the words I've written, I think, "This isn't a dissertation. This is life. This is my life."

The first summer of my doctoral journey, pages into *Saving Savannah* (Jones, 2008), I panicked. The story, which begins in 1851, portrays life in Savannah, Georgia. On page seventeen, Jones introduces Charles Green, a wealthy merchant. My father is Charles Green as was his father. My family has passed down names for hundreds of years. With this in mind and Savannah's proximity to Burke County, I worried Jones's Charles Green might be in my family tree, and in a book about slavery this could be problematic. Opening my computer, I began to research my ancestry for family members with the same name. Thankfully, Charles Green of Savannah is not my relative. My sigh of relief was short-lived, one more click of a computer key and I opened the Burke County slave census of 1860. My stomach rolled as I recognized my ancestors' names, Jesse Green- 69 slaves, Moses P. Green- 80 slaves, Edmund Gresham- 58 slaves, Edward Gresham- 41 slaves, and Moses Walker- 40 slaves. Wanting to know more about

these men, I began searching their names. When I entered Edmund Gresham in the search bar, an article appeared about a Burke County mayor, Emma Gresham. I was surprised. I had never heard of a female mayor in my family. I clicked the link. It was then I realized Mayor Gresham was Black. Curious, I read on. Emma Gresham had attended a private, Presbyterian boarding school for African Americans (Boggs Academy) located in Burke County. Baffled, I assumed it must be a Burke County in another state, not the same county where my family has lived for hundreds of years. Another Google search confirmed Boggs Academy was in Burke County, Georgia. The following morning, I climbed in the car, and forty minutes later pulled up to the school. As my eyes scanned the nearly abandoned, silent campus chills went down my spine; an empty, Olympic swimming pool, tennis courts, large dormitories, homes, a church, and academic buildings all surrounded by cotton fields. Standing there that day, I knew I had found the subject of my dissertation but I didn't know ghosts of past and present had found me.

Today, I understand the campus is where hauntings dwell, a sanctum for the marginalized. The ghosts of Boggs are hidden from history along with their truth and humanity. They are silenced in order that life as we, Whites, know it may go easily on.

In the pages to come, I'm surrendering myself to my Thou, to Bertha and the Boggs Academy alumni, to those I othered and who have loved me anyway. Together, as we conjure up these ghosts, it is my hope we witness their societal transfiguration from apparition and "Other," to fellow human beings and in so doing determine a world free from the necessity of hauntings.

Review of Literature

On a summer day in 2020, I was contentedly rocking on the porch of our family home in the Blue Ridge Mountains. As the afternoon came to a close, several family members wandered out to join me, taking their place in the row of rockers. Despite the peacefulness of the setting

and the serenity offered by the mountains rising before us, the conversation became heated and hard. Talk of recent police killings, protests, riots, looting, and the removal of Confederate statues quickly separated me from the others. One family member began quoting “truths” he recently read in an anonymous piece falsely attributed to the Baltimore Sun titled, “The Black Dilemma.” The fake news aspect of the article was completely lost on this highly educated member of my family.

The article, as recorded in Snopes, reads,

> Acting on a policy that was not fair to either group, the government released newly freed black people into a White society that saw them as inferiors. America has struggled with racial discord ever since. Decade after decade the problems persisted but the experimenters never gave up. They insisted that if they could find the right formula the experiment would work, and concocted program after program to get the result they wanted. They created the Freedmen's [sic] Bureau, passed civil rights laws, tried to build the Great Society, declared War on Poverty, ordered race preferences, built housing projects, and tried midnight basketball. Their new laws intruded into people’s lives in ways that would have been otherwise unthinkable...Through the years, too many black people continue to show an inability to function and prosper in a culture unsuited to them...But nothing changes no matter how much money is spent, no matter how many laws are passed, no matter how many black geniuses are portrayed on TV, and no matter who is president. Some argue it's a problem of culture, as if culture creates people's [sic] behavior instead of the other way around. Others blame White privilege. But since 1965, when the elites opened America’s [sic] doors to the Third World, immigrants from Asia and India, [sic] people who are not White, not rich, and not connected have quietly

> succeeded. While the children of these people are winning spelling bees and getting top scores on the SAT, black youths are committing half the country's violent crime, which includes viciously punching random White people on the street for the thrill of it that has nothing to do with poverty. (Evon, 2015, para. 6)

This article, this thinking is what is wrong with America. Retreating to my bedroom with tears of anger and frustration running down my face, I realized I wasn't alone. Suddenly, I was again aware of a spectral presence. The phantoms of the south, perpetrators of these myths to which we cling, myths which vilify our Black brothers and sisters while simultaneously justifying our comfort, seemed to almost dance about me. Each repetition of the article or articulation of similar thinking propels their work and secures their power.

Hauntology: In the Company of Ghosts

Here I must pause and situate my understanding of hauntings within the related literature. This awareness of hauntings and the need to understand their presence has been explored in both critical and psychoanalytical work from the 1990s forward. Two distinct camps emerged, that of Jacques Derrida and Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. For Derrida,

> Attending to the ghost is an ethical injunction insofar as it occupies the place of the Levinasian Other: a wholly irrecuperable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving...Hauntology represents the ethical turn of deconstruction...Spectrality...says...the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be. (Davis, 2005, p. 373)

While Derrida (1976) does include the work of Abraham and Torok in his essay *Precede de Fors: Les Mots Anglés de Nicolas Abraham et Maria Torok,* their impact on academia at large is frustratingly limited.

> Abraham and Torok had become interested in transgenerational communication, particularly the way in which the undisclosed traumas of previous generations might disturb the lives of their descendants *even and especially if they know nothing about their distant causes*. What they call a *phantom* is the presence of a dead ancestor in the living Ego, still intent on preventing its traumatic and usually shameful secrets from coming to light. (Davis, 2005, p. 374).

These specters, those amongst us on the porch, are the phantoms described by Abraham and Torok. They are the apparitions of a southern, White past that plague my family and drive me to tears. The phantoms are not the actual dead but "the gaps left within us by the secrets of others" (Lorek-Jezińska & Więckowska, 2017, p. 15). According to Abraham and Torok, these phantoms are liars "designed to mislead the haunted subject and to ensure that its secret remains shrouded in mystery" (Davis, 2014, p. 10). They cause my loved ones, those with eloquent, educated voices quick to speak Gospel truths and pray over every meal, to believe the lies which justify the systemic and continual mistreatment and murder of Black bodies. "The secrets of lying phantoms are unspeakable in the restricted sense of being a subject of shame and prohibition. It is not at all that they cannot be spoken; on the contrary, they can and should be put into words so that the phantom and its noxious effects on the living can be exorcized" (Davis, 2005, p. 378). It is these phantoms' words that become generational, changing only to match the jargon of the day. The phantom which drove the writing of "The Black Dilemma" leapt with joy as the story became viral, bouncing from one amused White person's email to another, and two

years later wound up as the topic of conversation on a cool afternoon in Cashiers, North Carolina. Its goal is to deepen the belief that any mistreatment or cruel act experienced by a Black person is essentially their own fault. White southerners are an easy target for the work of these phantoms. It is far easier to believe their lies than to engage in exorcism. To exorcise requires a willingness to acknowledge White supremacy and its ongoing societal impact. It forces one to own historic and present-day injustices and to admit personal participation. It also means examining the deep-rooted attachment to southern culture.

Southern phantoms attempt to press Others into a spectral state, a state of non-existence. Derrida's specters are neither dead nor alive but a "deconstructive figure hovering between life and death, presence and absence, and making established certainties vacillate" (Davis, 2005, p. 376) and the phantoms of Abraham and Torok are the apertures within our psyches. These apertures are where we send the societal realities we prefer to overlook, to make spectral. The only way to combat this evil, which is necessary for the sake of Others *and* ourselves, is to close the apertures and open our ears. Cornel West (2010) writes

> Black people in the United States differ from all other modern people owing to the unprecedented levels of unregulated and unrestrained violence directed at them...The vicious ideology and practice of White supremacy have left an indelible mark on all spheres of American life...Racial progress is undeniable in America...Yet the legacy of White supremacy lingers–very often in the face of the very denials of its realities. The most visible examples are racial profiling, drug convictions (Black people consume 12 percent of illegal drugs in America yet suffer nearly 70 percent of its convictions!), and death-row executions. And the less visible ones are unemployment levels, infant

> mortality rates, special education placements, and psychic depression treatments. (pp. XIII-XV)

Black Education

An examination of African American education in the United States provides an exemplary picture of the historic and ongoing violence experienced by people of color. While the White mind may race to discount such a statement, it is, in fact, irrefutable. Here, we briefly examine the educational history of African Americans in the United States. My hope is to provide a stage for these Black writers to exorcise the phantoms that have continually silenced their stories and covered their plight.

> 'There is one sin that slavery committed against me,' professed one ex-slave, 'which I will never forgive. It robbed me of my education.'... In 1879 Harriet Beecher Stowe said of the freedmen's campaign for education: 'They rushed not to the grog-shop but to the schoolroom- they cried for the spelling book as bread, and pleaded for teachers as a necessity of life.'...Booker T. Washington, a part of this movement himself, described most vividly his people's struggle for education: "Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for education. It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn.' (Anderson, 1988, p. 5)

Post-emancipation, the planter class in the south had little reason to promote the education of former slaves and poor Whites (a point often overlooked). Losing the war did not alter the southern caste system and the concept of free labor was unappealing, to say the least. "The South's slow rate of educational development and the planters' particular opposition to black education sprang from their clear economic and ideological interests in preserving the racially

qualified system of coercive agricultural labor" (Anderson, 1988, p. 25). As the years progressed, times changed, and technology advanced, the south continued to cling to its pre-war ideologies. The freemen's Reconstruction dreams quickly faded as southern Whites fought with all their might to prove slavery remained but under a new set of rules. The nation had declared slaves free but the laws and power of the dominant class proved otherwise.

> There were restrictions on every aspect of their lives, including where and how they lived, worked, and even died...The *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision of 1896 established the separate but equal doctrine that remained in place until the 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education* Supreme Court decree, and the epidemic of lynching terrorized blacks throughout the South. (McCluskey, 2014, pp. 3 & 4)

One afternoon, when I was nine or ten, I was sitting at the kitchen table with Bertha, snapping green beans. Bored by the task at hand, I asked her to tell me about growing up on the farm. Bertha and her siblings had grown up on our family farm in Burke County, Georgia. Her brother managed the farm operation and her parents and siblings lived with him in the large house at the farm's entrance. Amused by my question, Bertha began laughing her rich, cackley laugh. She said, "Law. It was just us niggers down there on that farm." I was shocked. She had used the "n" word and used it to describe herself and her loved ones. I cried out, "Don't say that, Bertha. Don't say that." She laughed harder and repeated her statement over and over, despite my growing angst and horror. I had hoped she'd share stories and experiences similar to my happy memories of the farm but instead, she used the moment to teach her young charge a lesson. We might have walked the same dirt roads and run about in the same fields but our realities would never be the same. In this moment, her love for me or mine for her didn't matter. I would never grasp the harsh realities of her childhood, nor the injustices she experienced

simply because of the color of her skin. Bertha received a sharecropper's education and I attended an elite private school. She would sit at my kitchen table and I was being prepared to take on the world. While I know little of Bertha's educational experience, it is logical to assume it mirrored that of the majority of Blacks living in the rural south.

> During the Great Depression...surveys compiled a grim picture of schools being held in decrepit structures, run-down churches, and ramshackle Masonic halls that lacked adequate lighting, heating, toilets, washing facilities, and even such basic items as desks and tables. In such places, a lone teacher, usually a young woman with less than a half year's training past high school, struggled with classes of as many as seventy-five children spread over eight grades. (the average class size in 1928-1929 was forty-seven) (Fairclough, 2000, pp. 68-70)

Post-depression the educational experience of Blacks in the south before Brown *v. The Board of Education* continued to be discouraging but did not quell their fight. They were struggling against a system designed to cripple their efforts. A system designed to maintain a disenfranchised laboring class. A system that made our dark-skinned brothers and sisters ghost-like, societal apparitions who became almost but not quite invisible, but always unworthy of the education given to those deemed human. For Jameson (1995), "Spectrality is...what makes the present waver" (p. 85). Bertha's presence at the kitchen table, a presence moving dialectically between a real and a labeled ghostly state, forced my understanding of reality to waver for the first time. Artfully and despite my youthful perception of the world, she evoked Black ghosts of past, present, and future inviting them to leave their mark on the small niche she had forced open within my heart. Our conversation and the ghosts' marks became that hidden place, the place

within every white southerner where we stuff the truths of racial injustice, and the memories of what we have seen and experienced, in hopes we can go on pretending they don't really exist.

With the passing of *Brown v. The Board of Education,* Americans, Black and White, believed the era of haunting was coming to a close. The nation was finally facing historic injustices and with their exorcism, we could begin crafting a far more just and democratic nation. Yet, those who believe *Brown v. The Board of Education* ushered in a new era of justice have fallen victim to the work of such phantoms as those who created the aforementioned *Black Dilemma.* For many Whites, while segregation was dealt a heavy blow, they could now rest on laurels of compromise. A compromise which required little else from them. Children would go to school where they were told, at least they would eventually. Case closed. Problem solved. Justice administered. Yet, reality and the mythological promise of *Brown v. Board of Education* were worlds apart. "Commenting on the separate school—integrated school debate back in 1935, Du Bois observed that: 'Negro children need neither segregated schools nor mixed schools. What they need is education'" (Bell, 2004, p. 22). This was true in 1896, 1954, and 2020. To build upon Du Bois, what is and has always been needed is education but more specifically, *equity* in education. However, equity in education is contrary to the purpose of public education. An authentic examination of public education in the US would "be a study in ideology and how dominant economic and sociopolitical interests shaped schooling for Blacks, the curriculum, and ultimately the social life of the country" (Watkins, 2001, p. 179)

I attended private schools from age four through college. As a child, I was told by teachers and administration that I was being prepared to have a seat at the table. The goal was not just to send me on my way with a rich liberal arts education, the goal was to shape me for a position of leadership. *Brown v. The Board of Education* may have forced open the doors of

White educational institutions but it in no way guaranteed or provided equity in education. Almost immediately after its passage, private schools, similar to the one I attended, sprung up across the south. Public schools, once White, quickly became filled with predominantly Black faces. The White response was an exodus to suburbs and private schools and this continues today. Georgia's Columbia County remains under court desegregation orders because of the disproportionate number of White students attending the county's schools as a result of ongoing White flight. The disparity in education, facilities, technology, and textbooks between inner-city schools and White flight schools is as disturbing as our acceptance of it.

> 'Sure, it's a bit unjust...but that's reality...In any case...there's no real evidence that spending money makes much difference in the outcome of children's education. Other factors—family and background—seem to be a great deal more important.' In these ways they fend off dangers of disturbing introspection; and this, in turn, enables them to give their children something far more precious than the simple gift of pedagogic privilege. They give them uncontaminated satisfaction in their victories. Their children learn to shut from the mind the possibility that they are winners in an unfair race, and they seldom let themselves lose sleep about the losers. (Kozol, 1991, p. 177)

Jonathan Kozol is correct. As a child growing up in a privileged world I was, for the most part, able to close my mind from considering the inequality embedded in it. Again, Lillian Smith's words, written nearly seventy years ago, remain true. "I learned it the way all of my southern people learn it: by closing door after door until one's mind and heart and conscience are blocked off from each other and from reality" (Smith, 1994, p. 29). By the grace of God, the voice of my first Thou, Bertha, forced the door to crack open, allowing my closed mind and heart to glimpse the truth of this haunted reality.

Bertha passed away nineteen years ago. When I think of her, except for that strange moment in the graveyard, it takes a while for me to remember her voice, to recall the funny smack-like sound she made with her lips which served as a word in itself. I usually have to dwell on a particular memory or conversation to sense her presence, to evoke her ghost. I would give anything for an afternoon with her, a chance to listen to her stories, to hear her thoughts and opinion on life, my life, and this frightening world in which we live. While communing with my beloved Bertha will have to wait, we all have the opportunity, the duty, to commune with Black ghosts of the past and Black people today. We, particularly southern Whites, must be willing to reject all that offers power and privilege for the sake of humanity at large. Christ asked Peter, "Will you lay down your life for me?" He didn't ask Peter to serve in a soup kitchen, to add a few more coins to the offering plate, or to participate in a short-term mission trip. He asked for his life, in its entirety. It is difficult to reconcile how Columbia county, with over 240 Christian churches, remains under desegregation orders.

One hundred and fourteen years ago, Georgia was in crisis. Issues of race were the focus of the coming gubernatorial election. Atlanta papers published inflammatory articles reporting "lurid stories about black men allegedly assaulting White women" (Newman & Crunk, 20068, p. 461). As the papers competed for readers, the stories continued, growing ever more sensational. On September 22, the papers reported four attempted assaults by Black men on White women. Hysteria broke in the White community. "Mobs of armed Whites attacked any blacks that happened to be in the downtown area...The coroner issued only ten death certificates but estimates from other sources range from twenty to forty-seven African American deaths...and one hundred and fifty critically injured (Newman & Crunk, 2008, p. 461). Reading the details of

the Atlanta riot of 1906 is disheartening and frightening in light of current events. We remain a state, a people, torn apart by racialized tension and the greedy hunger for power.

Birth of Boggs Academy

Those living in 1906 and those alive today are left with a choice and in many ways the choice becomes the legacy we, as individuals and as a collective, leave behind. We can choose to ignore the issues plaguing society or we can choose to become involved. In 1906, Reverend Dr. John Lawrence Phelps made his choice. Phelps, aware of the lack of education provided for Blacks living in Burke County, Georgia, and the ongoing strife within the Black community, believed in the power of education and felt called by God to start a school. After walking the thirty-plus mile distance between downtown Augusta and Keysville, Georgia. Phelps began meeting with people in the farming community, befriending them, and seeking their support.

> These were the days of rugged resistance and inertia. Thoughts of no money, no church, no school, and limited friends coursed through Phelps' mind, yet he was steadfast in his ambition for those who did not realize what it meant to be without the benefits of education. (Parker, 1977, p. 210).

Phelps began his school in a brush arbor with less than ten pupils, a mix of both boys and girls. What began as one man's determined vision became an institution. One hundred and fourteen years later, the singing of the school's alma mater still brings tears to alumni's eyes.

Boggs Academy grew from a Sunday school under a brush arbor to a prestigious private Presbyterian boarding school for Blacks. In the beginning, Boggs Academy served primarily as an elementary school and offered grades first through six with the goal of giving, "boys and girls of the community an opportunity to improve themselves mentally and morally and to make of themselves useful and substantial citizens" (Francis, 1967, p. 59). Over time, the institution's

focus shifted from elementary to high school with more and more students choosing to board on campus.

> In 1940 the boarding school population began to increase and in 1955 the school developed three tracks: general, commercial, and vocational education. Extracurricular activities included athletics, the a Capella choir, newspaper, photography, science club, and Boy Scouts. The 'Boggs Program' consisted of four parts: study, worship, work, and play. The Boggs student body originally came from the rural sections of Georgia and were both 'unchurched and unschooled', but in time, students came from other parts of the state and other states also. Ninety-five percent of the graduates went on to colleges, which ranged from Ivy League schools such as Dartmouth College to Morehouse in Atlanta and Howard University in Washington, D. C. (Durham, 2003, p. 11)

Boggs Academy remained open until 1984.

Beginning in Reconstruction, Blacks realized they could not rely on the generosity and honorability of southern Whites to provide the education they desperately wanted and needed. The work of Phelps and others produced numerous private schools for African Americans across the south. Most of the schools were created and sustained by religious organizations. Initially, as in the case of Boggs Academy, the focus was predominantly on elementary education. "Some academies were supported by the Freedmen's Bureau, some...by the missionary societies of major Protestant denominations, but the Black community also contributed to the support of the schools. The cultural capital of the African-American community was always in evidence" (Durham, 2003, p. 4). In the case of Boggs Academy, Virginia P. Boggs, the corresponding secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen, saw to the establishment of the school on a two-acre plot donated by a local church elder, Morgan Walker. Morgan's father,

Moses Walker, upon his death, left each of his thirteen children three and a half acres. Morgan Walker, also known as the first Black Walker, generously gave over half of his land inheritance for the building of a school. We will return to this in a bit. (Durham, 2003) The work of Boggs and other White missionaries and church representatives from the North played a significant role in Black education from Reconstruction onward.

While the history of Boggs Academy smiles proudly on the generosity and dedication of Virginia Boggs, it would be reinforcing the work of phantoms to avoid an honest glimpse into the impact of northern missionaries and philanthropists. "Yankee missionaries were guided...by a sense of democratic idealism...Class, ideology, race and region all intersected in complex and conflicting ways to present the former slaves with contending conceptions of the meaning and purpose of education in the new social order" (Anderson, 1988, p. 280). In Carter G. Woodson's (1933, 2005) *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, he describes subsequent generations of Northern missionary teachers, "They do not measure up to the requirements of education desired in accredited colleges. If Negro institutions are to be as efficient as those for the Whites...the same high standard for the educators to direct them should be maintained" (p. 16). Inez Moore Parker, a former English professor at Johnson C. Smith University and a scholar of Black Presbyterian Church History, begins her book, *The Rise and Decline of the Program of Education for Black Presbyterians of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A., 1865-1970*, with these words. "The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. was tardy in responding to the urgent plea...The church was reluctant to attack vigorously due to potentially explosive emotions, particularly in the South, combined with complacency and apathy among many in the North" (1977, p. 13).

From Reconstruction forward, it became increasingly clear African Americans were on their own and in response developed "their own ideas about learning and self-improvement.

Blacks soon made it apparent they were committed to training their young for futures that prefigured full equality and autonomy" (Anderson, 1988, p. 281). While the work of Boggs and other missionaries and philanthropists played a critical role in Black education, their impact proved problematic and fell short of providing the means for societal freedom and equality.

> Before 1920 southern black public secondary education was available primarily through private institutions...There were about 216 private black high schools in the South in 1916...Although black children throughout the former slave states depended heavily on the private system for the rare opportunity to attend high school, such dependence was greater in the deep South. Although scarcely a fourth of the black pupils enrolled in secondary grades in the border states were in private schools, slightly more than three-fourths of the pupils in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina combined were in private institutions. In 1916...in the deep South the proportion not enrolled in public secondary schools was 97 percent...Black children had been bypassed by the southern revolution in public secondary educational opportunities. (Anderson, 1988, p. 197)

The historic necessity of private secondary education for African Americans in the deep south is indisputable and inexcusable. Unfortunately, many of the schools that opened during reconstruction and the years that followed did not survive the Great Depression. In addition, from 1930 forward, northern churches began a steady curtailment of their financial support of southern Black academies. In 1933, The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. discontinued their support of 35 schools. The Haines Institute of Augusta, Georgia (where Reverend Dr. Phelps and his wife worked prior to Boggs Academy) and Boggs Academy survived the initial funding cut. Haines was kept partially alive and her founder, Lucy Craft Laney, "had the pleasure of seeing

her work continue before she died in October 1933" (Parker, 1977, p.54). By 1958, only five of the 157 schools sponsored by the Presbyterian Church remained open and by 1970 four schools remained active: Barber-Scotia, Boggs Academy, Mary Holmes, and Knoxville College. (Parker, 1977, p. 58)

> Black communities gradually began to realize that pitted against this step toward quality education were major losses: impressionable black children were placed under the instruction of dissenting White racists; black principals and teachers were frequently dispossessed, and many organizations and projects geared especially to the needs of the black community were absorbed and lost. Always integration seemed to mean the loss of the black school. Even more, many regretted the loss of the church schools that had been independent of the state and therefore of the surrounding White society...Community life revolved around them. Loved ones had been buried within the shadow of these schools...Deep and mixed emotions characterized the temper of the black community at the closing of these schools. (Parker, 1977, p. 58)

In many ways, the African American academies of the south represent the glory days of Black education. Unlike segregation academies, most Black academies had extensive scholarship opportunities and served students of all socio-economic backgrounds. An in-depth study of Boggs Academy offers insight into the curricular choices of African Americans from 1906 until 1984, the benefits of such curriculum, and the impact of highly trained, dedicated teachers. An examination of the lives of alumni demonstrates the educational power of these institutions and the academic abilities, despite poverty levels and prior education, of the students who attended directly counters the phantom voices claiming the ineptitude of African Americans and justifying continued educational inequality.

Theoretical Framework and Methodological Justification

Growing up, the southern tradition of storytelling, where knowledge is passed from one generation to the next, was a favorite personal pastime. I loved dinners with extended family when the grown-ups would recollect their childhood, each story leading to another. It didn't matter if I'd heard a tale one time or one hundred, I loved them all. These were the moments I learned or thought I learned, who I was, who my people were, and where I belonged. It is chilling to realize the work of phantoms in what I once believed were sweet memories. The tales, in and of themselves, were harmless, in fact often downright comical. It isn't in the actual tales where the phantoms lurk, it is in the gaps, in the unspoken content. Abraham and Torok, taking an approach contrary to Freud and Lacan, posit

> An individual's behavior might be traced to a secret kept by a family member in another generation...From a methodological perspective, it implies a shift in the analytic process, which does not aim to link an individual's symptoms with his or her unconscious (understood as a repository of repressed wishes) but to trace these symptoms to an unspeakable drama in the family's history. (Rashkin, 1992, p. 22)

In many ways, storytelling for southern Whites is a masked tool for engraving the keys of systemic racism into the minds of future generations. For those of color, storytelling is a history book of sorts. It is how children learn the unwritten truths of the past. The non-story of Boggs in White Burke County, a story buried by the work of phantoms, deepened my interest and fueled my desire to tell her tale. By telling this story in written word the tradition of history being written and told by the winners is disrupted, and he phantoms' work is derailed. The recording of this history becomes an encouraging foundation for the marginalized seeking a more democratic and just society.

Early in the research process, I learned the Burke County historical archives are stored in the old Waynesboro jail. With children in tow, I stopped in to see what information they might have on Boggs. While waiting for the curator to return with the files, an older gentleman, seated at a corner table, asked what brought us by. I explained I was researching Boggs Academy. With a pause and a scoff he responded, "Why?" In the incurring silence, the eyes of my two children became the size of saucers as they roved back and forth between our tight, determined faces. With one word the gentleman taught my children more about the south than any file in the old jail or textbook in their classroom could ever teach them.

My discovery of Boggs Academy did not occur in the final year of my doctoral journey, the point when most students flesh out a topic and begin their research. I began the Curriculum Studies Doctoral Program at Georgia Southern University in May of 2017 and found Boggs Academy two months later. My conversations with the Board of Alumni began that September. Essentially, I was new to the doctoral world, new to qualitative research, and striking out on a journey with little knowledge of the process.

Initially, I planned to use a case study approach for my examination of Boggs. Creswell (2007) defines case study research as

> ...a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (*a case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. (p. 73)

This form of qualitative research seemed to fit quite well. Case study would allow me to have an objective, thorough, systematic, and detailed approach to research. It felt neat, tidy, and doable despite the 78-year existence of the institution.

Early on, it became clear my assigned point of contact, Ms. Glenda Farrell, was highly organized and motivated. To my surprise, by February of the following year, she had gathered a current list of all alumni involved in the alumni association, many of whom were quite elderly, and categorized them by age/graduating class in ascending order, taking into consideration family relationships, friendships, and marriages and assigned them to weekly interview slots spanning the course of well over a year. Per her design, three Wednesday evenings each month would be given to recorded conference call interviews. Each call would be hosted and recorded by a present board member. Interview questions were supplied ahead of time and the calls were to begin with a word of prayer by the board member or designated alumni on the call.

I recall being a nervous wreck in the days before the first interview. Questions raced through my mind. Would my strong, White southern accent be problematic? Would they answer the questions honestly or White-wash their thoughts on my behalf? Would they push back and use the time to explain, and rightly so, the reasons I should not be the one to tell their tale? Would there be awkward silence? In keeping with the guidelines, the alumni and I joined the call promptly at 8:00 p.m. The chatting on the line while the recording was being set up was strained. Eventually, the board member joined the call, welcomed everyone, and opened with a word of prayer. All seemed to relax a bit after hearing the prayer. The interview went well overall, answers were honest and insightful, school pride resonated and I breathed a huge sigh of relief.

In the months before the reunion, the interviews continued. Over time, I became more

comfortable with the calls and began looking forward to them more and more. The first reunion I attended took place in September of 2018. Per our agreed-upon guidelines, set forth by the board, I addressed the alumni. As I stood before them, it struck me. I was the only White person in the room. I had never experienced this before. Yet, strangely, I felt comfortable. I began the talk by sharing why I believe the story of Boggs is important both historically and presently. I shared the story of the Google search that began with Edmund Gresham, moved to Mayor Gresham, and ultimately to Boggs Academy. Early that year, they dedicated and named the library, the only building maintained on the Boggs campus, the Emma Gresham Research Library. In an attempt at full disclosure, I shared that my brother is Walter Gresham Green, III. I felt it was important that the alumni were aware of my relationship with the county, my family's past, and the connection of the Gresham name. I continued on explaining a documentary would be incorporated into the project. I concluded by thanking them for the privilege of telling their story and promised to do all that I could to honor their beloved institution.

After I completed my speech, a gentleman in the back of the room stood and asked to speak. Eyes on mine, he shared his belief that my Whiteness would prevent me from understanding the school's significance and would distort the telling of the institution's story. He petitioned the board to reconsider their decision to support my research. As he was speaking, Joseph Barnes rose from his seat, walked to where I was sitting, and stood quietly behind my chair, arms folded across his chest. Early that year when I arrived at the library dedication on the Boggs campus (my first time in the presence of alumni), Mr. Barnes, a retired Army sergeant major, was the first to introduce himself. Sensing my nervousness, he didn't leave my side and gave his time to introduce me to other board members, alumni, and relatives of Mayor Gresham. Mr. Barnes's quiet stance meant the world as Mr. Singleton spoke. When Singleton finished, the

board chair explained the reasons why they granted permission for the project and the guidelines I had agreed to follow. The chairman announced the project had been voted on and would move forward. Attempting to remain calm on the outside, I was shaking on the inside. Again, I recognized my Whiteness in the room and, this time felt very out of place. When the meeting adjourned, I returned to my hotel room and called my point of contact; Glenda had been unable to attend the reunion in person. She told me not to let Singleton's words bother me. She reminded me that she believed God had called me to this research and we were in this together. Thanking her for her support and encouragement, I hung up. Together? The word echoed within me. This is case study research. I am the investigator and the alumni and school are the objects of my study. Joseph Barnes's willingness to come to my aid at the library dedication and again that evening also pointed toward "togetherness." The inner turmoil produced by the reactions of Glenda and Joseph wasn't simply a result of my research methodologies being challenged, their love and protection challenged my ingrained understanding of society. Shoving these thoughts aside and scooping up my video equipment, I returned to the reunion determined to conduct as many film interviews as possible over the next two days.

At the beginning of the reunion, I had placed a sign-up sheet in the hotel lobby, hoping alumni would volunteer to be interviewed. Instead of signing up, alumni continued to come to me, on their own or with friends in tow, wanting to tell me their stories. Over and over, I tried to get them to join me in the quiet room so I could film or record our conversation, and over and over, they just began talking. At the gala that night, a gentleman approached me with two of his buddies and asked if he could tell me his story. Exhausted from the long day, I didn't bother asking to record the conversation.

Howard Christopher Worthy III attended Boggs in the late seventies. Not long after arriving, he became quite ill. The school nurse felt he needed to see the doctor in Waynesboro. He was shocked to discover the office was still segregated. Howard approached the window on the White side and was refused service. Upon moving to the "Black" window he was immediately helped. After treatment, he returned to school and slept through the next two meals. Waking the next day just before lunch, he was hungry and went to the dining hall for food. Mrs. Gresham, the woman who eventually became mayor, was in charge of the food service. She refused him, explaining he needed to wait for lunch to be served. After a back and forth, Howard eventually flipped out, cursing Mrs. Gresham, the school, the church, and anything else he could think of. This fit resulted in his being expelled from the school. Mr. Worthy's mother wrote a letter on his behalf and he was readmitted but given the worst work detail. Tears began to course down my cheeks as he explained the root of his anger wasn't Mrs. Gresham, the school, or the work detail. It was, in his words, "the *f-ing* racist doctor and his *f-ing* office. He concluded, "forty-one years later, it still makes me mad." It was then he noticed my tears. With a shaky voice, I said, "I was honest with you all this morning and have to be honest with you now, the doctor was my grandfather." We both stood there, staring at each other in shock. His shock due to my announcement and mine because the grandfather I loved and thought so highly of had operated a segregated medical practice into the seventies and who knows how much longer. Still crying, I told him I was sorry. I was also sorry on behalf of my grandfather and my family. After what seemed an eternity, he stepped forward, grabbed me in a bear hug, and said, "I forgive you." The experience rocked both of us and we spent time the following week talking and working together through our thoughts and emotions. At one point, Howard shared that what

once had been a source of pain had become a point of healing. Once again, I was forced to consider "together" in light of my research.

Before the reunion, I would have described the research process up to that point as smooth. The interviews were going well. I was gathering historical documents from the campus, online, and through several institutions that had offered to preserve them upon Boggs' closing. Ms. Farrell, the point of contact, was extremely helpful and kind. I could not have asked for a better situation.

However, as my relationships with alumni deepened and research continued to crash into my personal life, case study began to feel cold and disengaged. It didn't fit Glenda's "together," a term I continued to wrestle with.

As my mind replayed the conversation with Howard and the words of Mr. Singleton, I realized I needed to examine my Whiteness and its impact on both the participants and the story itself. Julius Lester (1969) writes, "White radicals must reach the point where they react to the racism that inevitably exists in them, not by guilt of sycophancy, but by choosing to identify…with the oppressed and the dispossessed" (p. 46). I needed to pause and examine areas of racism in my life, thinking, and even family history. Not to rid myself of it, but to come to terms with it, to recognize that I am not pure and we have all been soiled by racism. Whiteness convinces us that we belong anywhere and can do anything, especially if it is something we are passionate about. Robert Coles (1997) describes his moment of awakening,

> Race and class presented no apparent problem for me…I was a White knight who needed to have no fear, and who thought he could go anywhere, and talk to anyone. I cringe, today, at my naïveté and my self-assurance, and maybe my unknowing (as it often is!) arrogance…But the considerable obstacles in the way of such an inquiry would soon

> yield to another kind, not sociological or historical or even necessarily racial: What are one's obligations not to oneself, one's career, the academic world, but to the people who are becoming one's graciously tolerant open-handed teachers and friends.

I needed to understand how my Whiteness interrupts togetherness. I had yet to discover hauntology and the work of Derrida, Abraham, and Torok but was wrestling with a world of phantoms and ghosts. The Boggs alumni, those attempted to be made ghost-like by White society, were, like Bertha years before, forcing me to see my grandfather, my world, and my life unveiled.

Before the reunion, as requested, I had created a Facebook account. I did not have one before and honestly, had no interest in spending time on social media. Not wanting to lose my relationship with Howard and a few others with whom I connected at the reunion, I decided to dip my toe into the world of Facebook. One Boggs "friend" led to another and before long, nearly two hundred Boggs alumni or faculty were in my friend group. Initially, I chose to include my professors and a few key theorists, but no one else.

Facebook changed my research and life dramatically. A local pastor once asked me how often I attended class and my response was, "every night." The alumni posts are fascinating and extremely educational. Often, alumni post the untold and impactful stories of historic and present-day African Americans. They post Scriptures, prayers, and words of encouragement. On the Boggs Alumni page, they regularly post countless pictures and memories, often feeding off of each other. Daily, I receive multiple personal notes on Facebook messenger. Some alumni prefer to send voice messages while others write their thoughts, memories, suggestions, or upsetting recollections they don't want to relive publicly. Strangely, over time, walls began to come down. Slowly, I began sharing what I was learning, reading, and on occasion a life moment

I thought they might find interesting or amusing. My research was becoming my life and my life my research. Messenger chats became more intimate; both parties were more honest. The feeling of my scheduled interviews changed, often those being interviewed had previously engaged with me on Facebook. They had seen my posts and I have "liked" or "loved" theirs. The struggle to get the interviewees past the hurdle of my Whiteness somewhat, but not completely, diminished.

One particular Wednesday, I received some frightening health news late in the day. I was supposed to interview that evening but was concerned I would not be able to focus. I reached out to Ms. Farrell, shared what was going on, and asked if we could reschedule the call. She graciously agreed. Moments later my phone rang. Glenda had gathered a small handful of alumni on a conference call. Tears quietly trickled down my face as they prayed over me and shared verses of encouragement from the Bible. They ended the call by reminding me of how much I am loved. Together. Slowly, the term was growing on me.

Robert Coles (1997) describes the work of American poet and researcher, Kathleen Norris. For her second book, Norris becomes closely connected to a Benedictine monastery. Maintaining aspects of her secularism, she took monastic vows. "Norris soon enough experienced in full panoply the 'solemnities and feasts' of the various saints in a monastery that became for her a spiritual home, even as she left it rather often for her life in Lemmon, South Dakota (Cole, 1997, p. 200). Cole describes both Norris and the Benedictines

> ...these are people who live close to the bone, materially; who every day try hard to become part of a community, to relinquish aspect of the very egoism that the rest of us spend our lives trying to enhance. Put differently, these are the cloistered ones-with whom...Norris was privileged to 'walk': alongside them, but not fully one of them. (Cole, 1997, p. 201)

Norris's work epitomizes togetherness. Research and life entwined. As the interviews continued on, more stories regarding my grandfather's racism emerged. Each story, each moment, made me increasingly aware of the grace and generosity of my participants and the ongoing obtrusion of my Whiteness and southern background *despite* our ever-growing friendships.

As research and life commingled, I was becoming more aware of the overlapping of my methodology and theoretical framework. Case study no longer seemed appropriate and I began searching for something more fitting. I began to consider oral history and ethnography. "Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events" (Oral History Defined, (n.d.), para. 1).

While oral history appeared to be a better fit, I continued on to examine ethnography. Admittedly, at first, I was perplexed as to whether ethnography was a theoretical or a methodological approach to research. Nader (2011) writes,

Ethnography is never mere description, rather it is a theory of describing that has always been controversial as to the what and how thus inspiring a dynamic intellectual process. The process has been methodologically eclectic and innovative, governed by both consensual and outdated rules...Ethnography has been summarized as description, albeit description in context, but not exactly theory. Yet, theory is defined as the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another, or the general or abstract principles of any body of facts, which to my mind makes ethnography most definitely a theoretical endeavor, one that has had and still has world significance, as description and explanation...*Ethnography is a theory of description*. (p. 211)

While choosing to follow Nader's line of thinking, it was still necessary to explore ethnography as methodology. Still confused, I struggled to understand if they are not one and the same. Theory is used in ethnography as an interpretive or analytical method. The researcher engaged in ethnography, ethics, and performance needs both theory and method...Critical theory finds it most compelling method in critical ethnography...Theory is linked to methods, and methods to the scenes studied, grounding one's work. (Madison, 2005, pp. 12-14)

Based on this research, I chose to explore ethnography from a theory united with method perspective and moved forward in a deeper examination of ethnography as it relates to the research of Boggs Academy.

Ethnography in qualitative research is the study of people and culture. Drawing from the field of anthropology, researchers collect extensive and detailed data from a personal, lived-in perspective. Using an emic and etic approach, ethnographers probe beneath the surface seeking to understand a particular community or culture. To my disappointment, I learned the field of ethnography, like that of its foundational field, anthropology, is tied to settler colonialism and has a dark past. According to Clair (2004)

Ethnography is a practice and an expression with a capacious historical past that necessarily includes philosophical, political, spiritual, and aesthetic elements. These elements have at times defined cultures, named people, and told them who they are and what they might become. In short, ethnography grew out of a master discourse of colonization. (p. 3)

In an examination of a historical Black education institution located in the American South, ethnography, in its traditional sense, is problematic. Clair (2004) writes, "Today, scholars

question the legitimacy of that discourse...The days of naive ethnography are over; if they ever truly existed" (p. 3) The idea of trying to justify to the academics amongst Boggs alumni and former school faculty my choice of ethnography as a theoretical framework or methodology did not sit well. Yet, I was still drawn by the intimacy this form of research provided and continued to research.

In the United States after the 1960s, qualitative researchers began to apply critical theory to ethnography. A merger of the two provided the opportunity to examine participants' milieu from a critical perspective. "Post-1960s critical ethnographers began advocating 'cultural critiques' of modern society and its institutions" (Marcus & Fisher, 1986, as cited in Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 2). Rejecting the positivist perspective, these critical ethnographers "explore the intense self-other interaction that usually marks fieldwork and mediates the production of ethnographic narratives...The road to greater objectivity goes through the ethnographer's critical reflections on her subjectivity and intersubjective relationships" (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 3). According to Harvey (2012), some critical ethnographers "will incorporate ethnography directly into dialectical analysis. In this approach, the understanding developed...is integrally related to the deconstruction of social structures" (para. 6). Critical ethnography thus becomes a political act resulting from the researcher's intuneness with their ethical responsibility. To frame it in terms of this research, critical ethnography intentionally seeks to evoke and exorcise societal phantoms for the betterment of humanity at large. "The critical ethnographer also takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the status quo, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (Madison, 2005, p. 5). While oral history fit the research design it did not create space to examine the need for Boggs Academy's existence.

Boggs existed because of racism in the South. Racism which plagued us historically and continues today to destroy us from within. The faculty and administration of Boggs Academy recognized this and considered it their duty to stand for change and create hope for a democratic future. Mr. Francis (1967), Boggs teacher, choir director, and administrator, writes

> An additional sociological problem that [sic] confronts the teacher is that one that directs his energies to discover how he may best plan methods and techniques which are designed to affect change in human beings who have been dwarfed by a legacy of social stultification, economic deprivation, and racial inhumanity. This is one of the persistent problems that further plague [sic] the culture and it has not, as yet, been resolved. (p. 25)

To attempt to tell a story of Boggs Academy without situating it within the racist south and without carving space for the voices of her ghosts is a disservice to those who gave their lives to this institution in the past and the alumni who dearly love her in the present. With this in mind, I completely abandoned the oral history approach, moved away from traditional ethnography, and continued an examination of critical ethnography.

Postcritical Ethnography

However, as I further explored this field it became evident this theoretical framework was *still* somewhat problematic. Thomas (1993) suggests, "Critical ethnography... does not stand in opposition to conventional ethnography. Rather, it offers a more direct style of thinking about relationships among knowledge, society, and political action" (p. vii). While much of critical ethnography aligns with my thinking, it does not take into account my 'otherness' as a White researcher of a Black institution, an 'otherness' that continually impacts my research and relationship with participants. With critical ethnography, my "attention to ethnographic positionality still must remain grounded in the empirical world of the Other" (Madison, 2005, p.

8). Postcritical ethnography offers both the crucial ties to critical theory and respect for the role positionality plays in ethnographical studies. Understanding my position in light of the power and privilege afforded by Whiteness is necessary for the process of denouncing the systemic structures that plague my Thou. Understanding my service to and support of the work of phantoms is a crucial aspect of conducting postcritical ethnography. "Noblit (2004) noted that 'critical ethnography wishes to reveal domination and ideology, but in doing so replaces the hegemony of power in social life with the hegemony of the critic" (Anders & Lester, 2018, p. 1). Noblit, Flores, and Murillo (2004) explain,

> The issues that need to be considered in conducting postcritical ethnographies include but are not necessarily limited to: positionality, reflexivity, objectivity, and representation...Positionality involves being explicit about the groups and centers the postcritical ethnographer wishes to serve as well as his or her biography...Reflexivity is about 'redesigning the observed' and about 'redesigning the observer'...Objectivity is usually eschewed in postcritical ethnographies but is never really escaped whenever ethnographic interpretations are inscribed. 'Theorizing postcritical ethnography of education should be represented in the same tone as its writing—balancing tentativeness and surety and evoking a sense of temporality'... Representation is about the issues involved in inscribing a postcritical ethnography. Representation involves acknowledging the uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality and working through the myriad of decisions critically. (pp. 20 & 21).

Ultimately, postcritical ethnography requires both a deep moral commitment and an understanding of the fact we are all responsible for the construction of society.

Participatory Action Research

While I felt that postcritical ethnography met my theoretical and methodological needs by creating the appropriate space and approach for telling the story of Boggs Academy through the lives of the alumni, related historical documents and artifacts, and my problematic lens, I once again sensed something was lacking. The "togetherness" I felt and longed to explore within the research paradigm was still missing. To avoid an examination of the transition of those I once othered to those I now held dear would be choosing to avoid a lesson in exorcism. The power of phantoms is not maintained by the White hood of a Klan member or the building of a Confederate monument. Their power and control reside in the compilation of what we avoid and repress.

A little over a year ago, I attended my second Boggs Academy reunion. This reunion was held in Jacksonville, Florida. I was looking forward to the weekend because this would be the first time my point of contact and I would meet face to face. The miles between Augusta, Georgia, and Las Vegas had previously prevented Glenda and me from meeting. After hours and hours of working together online and talking on the phone, I was excited to look into her eyes and spend some one-on-one time together. I arrived in Jacksonville tired from the drive and still recovering from an extended illness. I decided to slip into the back of the opening dance party, held in a hotel conference room, and quietly set up my video equipment. I was hoping to avoid people for just a bit longer. Before I could get the tripod out of the bag, I heard a loud voice echo above the music, "You're here! You're here!" Glenda was rushing towards me, arms extended. Grabbing me in a big hug while rocking back and forth, she announced, "Everyone this is my Boggs daughter! Caroline is here!" Immediately, I was engulfed in a sea of hugs, kisses, and

welcomes. One alumna stepped forward with a dampened paper towel to clean the “smooches” from my cheeks.

Throughout much of the boarding school years of Boggs Academy, the students created their own “play families.” The older students paired off as mothers/fathers and adopted younger students as their children. Interestingly, they even added an elaborate system of aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and cousins. As children separated from their biological families, these “families” were a coping mechanism for their feelings of absence. Today, alumni often reference their Boggs families and treasure those memories and relationships specifically. When Glenda introduced me as her daughter, it was a profound moment. I had previously claimed her as my Boggs mama but to have her acknowledge it was touching. In that moment, I transitioned from researcher to “Boggsite.” I was being grafted into the Boggs “family” and while many in the room already knew me, this was a new introduction.

The nicknames: Doll, Sweetheart, Angel, and ‘Lil Sis have become “normal” in my conversations with alumni. I hear them often in the telephone calls with Glenda and the handful of others I’ve developed close friendships with over the past couple of years. Glenda never fails to remind me regularly she loves me and is praying for me. Weekly, alumni reach out with words of encouragement, a Bible verse, or a written prayer. Alumna Sherry Combs keeps me grounded by ensuring I laugh out loud at least once a day. She tags me on comical Facebook posts and sends jokes via messenger. While nearing the end of this research, I was looking for a specific email from Glenda. I was shocked to discover we had corresponded nearly 600 times.

Over the years, alumni have visited my home and former faculty have stayed here. I have spent hours and hours with alumni in their homes, on road trips to Boggs, enjoying dinners out, exploring their home towns, sitting on park benches, cleaning the campus, and eating down-

home picnics. This research feels far from the cold approach of case study and yet, isn't completely fulfilled in postcritical ethnography. Numerous alumni have given me documents, photos, and written histories; their own countless hours of research in support of this telling of the story of Boggs. "Together" *has* to play a significant role in this research. "Together" is how I navigate the trials of a White researcher of a Black institution. "Together" we produce something far more accurate, meaningful, and impactful. "Together" exorcizes ghosts, silences phantoms, and returns us all to humanity.

This desire for "together" furthered a search in the world of theory and methodology, ultimately leading to the consideration of participatory action research. Social psychologist Kurt Lewin developed the concept of action research in the 1940s. Lewin, using a dialogical approach, sought to raise the self-esteem of the subaltern through participatory research. Building on Lewin's work, there were several waves of action research.

The fourth generation of action research emerged in the connection between critical emancipatory action research and participatory action research that had developed in the context of social movements in the developing world, championed by people such as Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda, Rajesh Tandon, Anisure Rahmna, and Marja-Liisa Swantz as well as by North American and British workers in adult education and literacy, community development, and development studies such as Budd Hall, Myles Horton, Robert Chambers, and John Gaventa. (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 273).

The fourth generation of participatory action research " has its roots in liberation theology and neo-Marxist approaches to community development but also has rather liberal origins in human rights activism" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 273).

The work of Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart in the field of participatory

action research is extensive and profound. After focusing for a number of years on research that valorized the researcher, they made a crucial shift.

> We reject the heroic view of history as being 'made' by individuals–great men and great women–then we must see the real transformations of history as transformations made by ordinary people working together in the light of emerging themes, issues, and problems. *We now see a central task of participatory action research as including widening groups of people in the task of making their own history, often in the face of established ways of doing things and often to overcome problems caused by living with the consequences of the histories others make for us–often the consequences of new ways of doing things that were intended to improve things but that turned out to have unexpected, unanticipated, and untoward consequences for those whom the new ways were intended to help people.* (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 324)

This is the quote and the moment I had hunted for in my further consideration of theory and methodology. *Together*, the Boggs Academy alumni and I could chart a new course of research, exorcize southern phantoms, create a fresh and impactful telling of Boggs Academy history, discover new ways of challenging the unjust educational system and stand united, lies of race and color pushed aside, ultimately demonstrating the power of the south as it *could* be, as it *should* be.

The Question of Critical Distance

Upon learning of Boggs Academy three years ago, I never expected the multi-faceted journey which ensued. The study of Boggs impacted my personal life, my thinking, my academics, and research. It has been nothing short of a journey of a lifetime, a journey of transformation. If I look left on my desk, I see a framed photo of Glenda and I hugging, and

another of me standing with Joseph Barnes, his arm around my shoulder. If I look right, I see the preserved flower which was pinned on my chest at a reunion, marking me as part of the class of 1969. The intimate aspect of my relationship with participants pushes against the notion of critical distance in research.

Critical distance in qualitative research calls for a relational space in order to ensure appropriate rigor and sensitivity when considering a subject. In other words, if the researcher is too close to participants objectivity suffers. While this seems logical, I posit objectivity and sensitivity *increase* as relationships deepen. For example, without an intimate relationship with Glenda, I would not fully understand the uncomfortableness participants feel when asked to share their thoughts and memories with me, a southern, White researcher. Ms. Farrell, of her own volition, often reassured future participants that I had been vetted and deemed trustworthy to tell their stories. Our intimate relationship was apparent to the participants and in turn, increased their openness and transparency. As humans, we crave and treasure deep familiarity with others. We long to truly know and be known. Intentionally holding a participant at arm's length can be a disservice. The word apapachar comes from the Náhuatl language (also known as Aztec). Apapachar, a word without an equivalent in the English language, means to caress the soul. Embracing, treasuring, and promoting intimacy enriches life and research. Learning to apapachar one's participants and allow them the opportunity to reciprocate produces rich and deeply resonating work.

My doctoral journey exposed the gap in my humanity and transformed my other into my Thou, my beloved. For Hegel,

> The beloved is not opposed to us, he is one with our own being; we see us only in him, but then again, he is not a we anymore—a riddle, a miracle [*ein Wunder*], one that we

> cannot grasp. [As] Maria del Rosario Acosta explains: 'Love, therefore, takes place in the never-ending passage towards others. A passage already open to and by the alterity that transverses it.' (Fareld & Kutch, 2020, p. 171)

While the journey drew me to my Thou, it also exposed the haunts around me. At times, it drove a saddening wedge between myself and those I once considered part of me. As a White southerner, I can never fully escape the work of phantoms but I have learned to distance myself by recognizing their work, and by aligning my heart with history's ghosts and Others, my beloved. Critical distance occurred but with new meaning. Returning to Serres (2006), post-transition I became an "Intermediary, [a] Hyphen. Forever outside any community, but a little and just barely in all of them" (p. 7). In a hyphenated state, critical distance from my participants diminished but increased between self and former culture. Through my journey and search for a theoretical/methodological framework, I've come to understand Burke County and the south should not and do not define who I am, the people group I was born into aren't necessarily *my* people, and the world I once loved, with all its earthly treasures, is far from where I belong. Mikhail Bakhtin writes,

> I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a thou). Separation, dissociation, enclosure within the self is the main reason for the loss of one's self. The very being of man is the deepest communion...To be means to be for another, through the other, for oneself. (Madison, 2005, p. 9)

There is such joy in learning what it "means to be for another, through the other, for oneself" (Madison, 2005, p. 9) In this knowledge are beauty and peace. In a world once

consumed by appearance, treasured objects, and traditions I was missing what makes getting up in the morning worthwhile. Debord (1971) explains,

> The first phase of the domination of the economy over social life brought into the definition of all human realization the obvious degradation of *being* into *having*. The present phase of total occupation of social life by the accumulated results of the economy leads to a generalized sliding of *having* into *appearing*, from which all actual 'having' must draw its immediate prestige and its ultimate function. At the same time, all individual reality has become social reality directly dependent on social power and shaped by it. It is allowed to appear only to the extent that it is *not*...The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life. Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world. (theses 17 & 42)

Yes, I was teaching and volunteering but it was in vain because my Thou was missing. I was consumed by the world of the spectacle. All I saw was its world, a phantom controlled and contrived world, empty of the joys and pains of reality, and void of the rich communion which occurs when Others become Thous.

> She will thus be reborn, from herself, from them, from the forest, in herself and otherwise, a daughter who is mother of herself. There is no teaching without this self-begetting...Learning consists of such crossbreeding. Strange and original...the child evolves only through new crossings; all pedagogy takes up the begetting and birthing of a child anew: born left-handed, he learns to use his right hand, remains left-handed, is reborn right-handed, at the confluence of both directions. (Serres, 2006, p. 49)

Great peace comes when we learn to see the spectacle and break from it. For those born into the spectacle, this learning occurs through reading, which cultivates empathy, but more importantly, through the patient and sacrificial teaching and love of those privileged society has othered. When we welcome our Thous, the ones from which we learn, the ones who teach us to see the world and hold our hand as we walk in it, authentic critical distance occurs. We become real and understand where we and our research belong.

The Message, Significance of the Study, and Proposed Structure

The Message

My mind drifts back to the porch, to the moment I understood the workings of phantoms and felt the pain of their power. Phantoms create the myths we Whites call history and tradition.

> Myths are efficient ways of speaking by means of which some situation or other comes about and is maintained. We know how: by carrying out, by means of their manifest content, the repression of the latent content. The myth then points to a gap in our communication with the Unconscious. If it offers understanding, it does so much less by what it says than by what it does not say, by its blanks, its intonations, its disguises. An instrument of repression, the myth serves also as a vehicle for the symbolic return of the repressed. (Abraham & Rand, 1979, p. 26)

The conversation on the porch and the writing, believing, and forwarding of the *Black Dilemma* are examples of the countless, generationally reasons this research is not merely relevant, but necessary.

Recently, my mother's best friend and a woman who is like a second mother asked me to share with her granddaughter about my research. I gave Charlotte a quick description of Boggs Academy and its historical significance and then, without realizing it, began talking about the

alumni I have come to love. I shared the story of meeting Glenda Farrell at the reunion, described how I had recently seen Joseph Barnes and in my excitement forgot all pandemic protocol and hugged him hard, and recalled the evening Howard Christopher Worthy III and I became friends. After my rambling, Susan said, "Those are wonderful stories but tell Charlotte the *purpose* of your research." As I considered the tentative chapters for this dissertation, Susan's request kept coming to mind. The initial research goal is to carry on the work of Mr. Charles W. Francis, Jr., as outlined in his thesis on Boggs Academy. Mr. Francis valued and promoted education for African Americans that was excellent, democratic, and transformative. In the conclusion of his thesis, he requests that "a follow-up study be undertaken immediately to determine the extent to which its graduates have made and are now making significant contributions to their own time and generation" (Francis, 1967, p. 111). I believe Mr. Francis saw a follow-up study as a means to justify the necessity of institutions like Boggs Academy and rightly so. However, the personal narratives of Boggs alumni offer more than a justification of the institution's existence, they are a critique of our nation. This research promotes their critique, pushing it from ghostly status into the honest light of day.

Significance of Study

Freedom comes only when love abounds. In the midst of my crossing, when storms surrounded me and I lost my way, it was the voices of my Thou that sustained me. In their arms, their prayers, and their whispers of love and encouragement, I found the ability to journey through. I found an example of the cross like none I had seen before, and I found freedom; blessed, life-altering, redeeming freedom. The stories I shared with Susan and Charlotte *are* significant to the research purpose. These stories exorcise the phantoms which plague us all,

humanize our Others, and fuel the desire for educational transformation and transformative education.

The justification for the compatibility of my chosen theory and form of inquiry/methodology is found in the marriage of postcritical ethnography and participatory action research. United, these create a framework in which Boggs Academy alumni and I can, together, exorcise the ghosts of a remarkable Black educational institution that survived and thrived despite and because of its location in the racist south. Boggs Academy successfully developed and applied a transformational curriculum that needs to be examined in light of the ongoing miseducation of children of the subaltern. *Together*, through the dissertation process, we seek to push the boundaries of qualitative research, offer a vision of an alternative, democratic education, prove the lasting impact of said education, and demonstrate the beauty and power of unity beyond the contrived walls of race and class. The dissertation chapters interweave the continuation of Mr. Francis's work, the institution's history, stories belonging to Boggs Academy alumni, the beauty of participatory action research, my transformation, an examination of the scholarship of those who wrote about Boggs Academy, a consideration of the ongoing work of phantoms and those in academia today (particularly those in the field of Black Intellectual Thought) seeking their exorcism, and the joys of life that result when Others become Thous.

Structure of Chapters

The first chapter, "Hauntings, Books, and Others" serves as a personal introduction, a description of my finding of Boggs Academy and ensuing alumni relationships, a review of related literature, and a research justification. The second chapter, "Born Beneath the Brush Arbor," tells the history of Boggs Academy. The third chapter, "Dead Ringers" describes the

work of today's dead ringers, those speaking and writing truth regarding the current education of America's subaltern. The following chapter, "Sanctuary," seeks to heed Francis's entreaty, "that a follow-up study be undertaken...to determine the extent to which its graduates have made, and are now making significant contributions to their own time and generation" (1967, p. 111). This portion will include the stories, memories and lives of Boggs Academy alumni, faculty and administration. The final chapter, "Exorcism," discusses the moments of collision between my research and personal life. Here I discuss the meaning of family, the joining of researcher and participants, and the healing that results. The chapter calls for the exorcism of societal phantoms, for all those forced into a state of apparition. The work concludes with a consideration of the necessity of "togetherness" in research and life, and the beauty that results in this occurrence.

> The *Thou* meets me through grace—it is not found by seeking. But by my speaking of the primary word to it is an act of my being, is indeed *the* act of my being. The *Thou* meets me. But I step into direct relation with it. Hence, the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one...The primary word *I-Thou* can be spoken only with the whole being. I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I*, I say *Thou.* All real living is meeting. (Buber, 1958, p. 11)

This research is the celebration of meeting. Through becoming, we seek the exorcism of societal phantoms and strive toward equity in education. Together, we fight to remove the need for an examination of the transformative curriculum and education of Boggs Academy outside of its value historically.

CHAPTER 2

BORN BENEATH A BRUSH ARBOR

The Birth of a Sanctuary

> It is necessary to speak of the ghost, indeed *to the* ghost and *with* it, from the moment that no ethics, no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable and *just* that does not recognize in its principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born. No justice...seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some *responsibility*, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppression of capitalist imperialism or any of other forms of totalitarianism… (Derrida, 2006, p. xviii)

Listening to an Other can be a precarious thing. Sometimes, it is easy and relaxed, and yet, in the blink of an eye, one can wreck a conversation and send an Other, even a loved Other, racing for cover and safety from White oppression. Two such moments spring to mind, and as always, produce a deep ache, the ache that comes from knowing I hurt a loved one. Both times, *I failed to listen*. My Whiteness and the privilege it affords barreled forward, ignoring the words of an Other. In one case, I believed my perspective and understanding of the world were accurate, *despite* being told otherwise. In the other, I believed my expression of care mattered more than the unintentional harm it caused each time I expressed it. One friend extended undeserved patience and grace, and the other for some time, could not. I write this not to deter Whites from attempting authentic communion but as a reminder, to myself and others, of the critical necessity

of *listening*, listening to ALL who've experienced societal spectrality. While this research focuses on the Black population, their plight is, in many ways (but not all), exemplary of all who are marginalized. We can never fully know or grasp the experience of an Other, inside or outside racial lines. We can never fully understand the deep and gaping wounds society, we, have inflicted. Learning to listen, refusing the phantom bait of self-defense, is love. Carl Jung writes, "Where love rules, there is no will to power, where power predominates, there love is lacking. The one is the shadow of the other" (Jung, 1966, p. 97). Power's pain doesn't always result from an iron fist or slave's shackle; power can wound or anger another in something as gentle as a whisper.

The story of Boggs Academy began beneath a brush arbor, deep in the cotton country of Burke County, Georgia. From there, the story grew and extended as the world changed and students and faculty came and went. Initially, I felt strongly this story belonged to the alumni, former faculty, Black historians, and Black educational theorists. It was their story, not mine. At first blush, this seems logical, politically correct, and historically accurate. Edward Singleton felt this deeply enough to voice his thoughts to a roomful of alumni. Singleton desired to protect his beloved institution and entwined family history from Whitewashing, a desire completely justified and honorable. Treacherous waters emerge when a White researcher attempts to describe a Black experience, institution, and/or culture. A person of privilege attempting to tell such a story is ripe for the work of phantoms, phantoms who gleefully wait to continue their generational pain and control. This thinking draws to mind the singing of Black spirituals by predominantly White southern choirs. While the words are beautiful and articulate Biblical teachings, the choice to sing those hymns, in my opinion, ignores the pain from which they were born, the pain caused by Whites, and the pain experienced by Blacks today. It is cruel to risk reminding our brothers and

sisters of societal cruelty in the midst of a worship service. Along a similar line, and as mentioned before, I've wrestled with the potential harm I cause in this work. No matter how deeply I love Boggs Academy and her alumni, these *are* treacherous waters. For days, I wrestled with how to write the history of Boggs Academy. What do justice and responsibility look like in this historical account? How do I avoid the pitfalls of traditional U.S. history, a history built on the stories and perspectives of the dominant culture? Part of the answer lies in the fact that this isn't "their story" and it isn't "my story," it is *our story.* Yes, there are dominant and subdominant issues that must be addressed but failing to examine hidden history only furthers division. Ignoring historical truths never moves us towards unity. That said, to engage in this research, consideration of responsibility is necessary.

> No justice...seems thinkable without the principle of some *responsibility*...Without this *non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present,* without that which secretly unhinges it, without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who are not there, of those who are no longer or who are not yet present and living…
>
> (Derrida, 2006, p. xvii)

When I sat to write this section, I initially believed justice and responsibility required I attempt, while recognizing it is not fully possible, to withdraw my hand and the determinedness of my mind, from the telling of the story. I planned to turn to the words of Phelps, Francis, and other Black historians who previously recorded partial histories of this institution with the intent of letting their voices speak while I made mine intentionally quiet. However, this became problematic. For weeks, I couldn't identify what was causing my writer's block. I came to this chapter believing it would be the easiest to write. I read and re-read the works I planned to use but the words simply wouldn't come. After weeks of anguish and frustration, the problem

became clear. Embedded within the words of Reverend Phelps, Mr. Francis, and the other historians, are somewhat veiled, at least to the White eye, descriptions of racism, pain, and hardship. When I first read their words, my privileged perspective allowed me to glide over the racist world embedded in their descriptions. Again, I failed to listen. With this realization came another, the Whitewashing of Boggs history would occur, not by my failing to quiet my voice, *but by failing to use it*. As I tell this historical account of Boggs Academy, I will stop, when necessary, to quiet the phantoms within White minds and increase the volume of the Other. I beg all who read this to listen, and as you do, carve out a space within your heart. Carve out a place for Others to sit and rest as they share their memories, thoughts, and perspectives.

Responding to the Call

According to the U.S. Census of 1860, the Burke County, Georgia population consisted of 5,013 Whites, 12,052 slaves, and 100 "free colored" (Blake, 2001, p. 3). The education of upper-class White children began in 1791, with the creation of Burke Academy. By the time of the Civil War, there were a handful of White, fee-based academies sprinkled throughout the county. An 1840 advertisement for a teacher for Waynesboro Academy stated, "None need apply unless qualified to teach ancient and modern languages, mathematics, natural history, chemistry and other kindred branches, Geography, Grammar, and Arithmetic" (Hillhouse, 1985, p. 165). This highly qualified teacher was being sought to teach the middle to upper-class White children living in the area. The county's poor Whites were not as fortunate. In 1822, the state of Georgia established the poor school fund. The fund supplied Burke County with a meager $487.00 and by 1838 the amount diminished to $122.98. Simply put, in Burke County and Georgia at large, only White middle to upper-class children were deemed worthy of an education.

The post-war Constitutional Convention of 1868 paved the way for the establishment of county school systems. The Burke County Board of Education met for the first time eight years later, on June 13, 1876. A census taken by the Georgia State Legislature in 1887, shows the number of White school-age children in Burke County was 1,859. The number of Black school-age children in the county was 7,325. The number of White school-age children enrolled in school in 1887 was 1,859 and the number of Black school-age children enrolled in school was 1,040. While there were a number of schools for White students to attend, there was only one school, by White definition, available to Blacks in Burke County, Haven Academy. The majority of Black students counted in the census attended, on an irregular basis, the overcrowded and undersupplied one-room schoolhouses scattered about the county.

Haven Academy (fascinating name) was established in 1868 in Waynesboro, the county seat. The academy was founded by the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was, for many years, operated by White teachers from northern states. In 1889, Principal E. C. Fairchild, a White woman from the North, unsuccessfully petitioned the Burke County Board of Education for financial support for Haven. She was told financial aid was not possible because state law prohibited White teachers from teaching in Black schools. In addition, state funds could not be used for church-supported schools.

> Local officials had long ignored the school [Haven Academy] because of its northern background...The True Citizen [the county paper] mentioned the school only once and with the words: 'The fire alarm came from the Negro school located on the ditch.' (Hillhouse, 1985, p. 181)

Despite the lack of government support and financial aid, Haven Academy pressed forward. "An 1882 report listed Rev. C. P. Wellman as principal, with 80 students and two

teachers. By that date, around 1,000 students had studied at the Academy (Hillhouse, 1985, p. 181). In 1895, the school had 170 students and three teachers but by 1913 “enrollment declined to 68 students and seven boarding students” (Hillhouse, 1985, p. 95). The Methodist Episcopal Church withdrew its support of the school in 1919 and the academy was absorbed into Burke County’s public school system.

> The limited provision of educational opportunities for Negroes extended well into the first half of the twentieth century for several reasons. A paramount one, of a certainty, was inherent in the relatively widespread indecisions regarding just how much and what kind of education should be offered to Negroes. In the South, the idea generally prevailed that Negroes should not be educated at all. (Francis, 1967, p. 3)

Overcrowded and underfunded schools could not damper Black determination for education. In 1886, down the road from Haven Academy, Lucy Craft Laney, a child of former slaves, extraordinary scholar, and activist founded the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, Georgia.

> Listen to the words she spoke at the Hampton Negro Conference in July of 1899,
>
> Last, but not least, is the burden of prejudice, heavier in that it is imposed by the strong, those from whom help, not hindrance, should come. They are making the already heavy burden of their victims heavier to bear, and yet they are commanded by One who is even the Master of all: ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law.’ This is met with and must be borne everywhere. In the South, in public conveyances, and at all points of race contact; in the North, in hotels, at the baptismal pool, in cemeteries; everywhere, in some shape or form, it is to be borne. No one suffers under the weight of this burden as the educated Negro woman does, and she must help to lift it. (Laney, 1889, para. 6)

A young woman, Miss Mary Rice, was one of fourteen teachers employed by Lucy Laney at the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute at the turn of the century. There is no doubt she was handpicked by Ms. Laney, who, by that date, had developed a national reputation as an activist and educator.

> The future Laney envisioned would be built upon progress in education, politics, and religion...In the Hampton speech, she also assailed the injustice that landed black men in jail for stealing two 'fish hooks' and blamed courts for their practice of handing down stiffer punishment to black offenders. Her vision of a transformed society required blacks to do three things: develop the right kind of mother-centered Christian home life, fight racial discrimination; and gain access to a good education. (McCluskey, 2014, p. 20)

Laney, who had studied "higher mathematics, physics, ancient history, literature, philosophy, composition, Latin, Greek, and nursing" believed in the value of a rich liberal arts education (McCluskey, 2014, p. 24). Laney's political and educational activism was recognized by W. E. B. Du Bois who, after Booker T. Washington's death, recruited her to join him in charting a new course for Black education. (McCluskey, 2014, p. 25).

Mary Rice Phelps was born on May 1, 1867. Her parents were Adeline and Hilliard Rice. In the book, *The Colored American from Slavery to Honorable Citizenship* (Gibson, Crogman, Washington, and Barrier, 1902), Mary Rice is described this way,

> Many names of the rising young women of her race have, doubtless, received more public eulogy, but few names deserve a more worthy mention than that of Mrs. Mary R. Phelps. There were many qualities noticeable about her when quite young, all significant of her future usefulness. But the one especially interesting to her parents and friends was the voluntary devotion to books and other reading matter…At the age of five years, she

> entered the public schools of Union County, the annual terms of which were all but two or three months in duration. So remarkable was her progress as a student and scholar under adverse circumstances, that at the age of 13 she accepted, with consent of her parents, the charge of a large school in a rural district of Spartanburg County, South Carolina, was examined, received a certificate of qualification, and taught the term with such remarkable credit as to win the approval of both her patrons and trustees. Her parents… sent her to Benedict Institute (now Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina), and afterward to Scotia Seminary, at Concord North Carolina. She spent each vacation of her school life in teaching, which experience greatly increased her devotion to that work. Hence, when she was no longer a schoolgirl she entered into the teachers field as a profession. She was principal of a public school at Glen Springs, South Carolina, for 3 years. In 1890 she resigned school to accept a position in the graded school at Rome, Georgia, where she taught for some time. She then taught in Milledgeville, after which she was married to Mr. J. L. Phelps in 1891. The demand for well-trained teachers was so great that in 1893 she again consented to act as assistant principal in Cleveland Academy, Helena, South Carolina, and more recently has held a position in Haines Institute, Augusta, Georgia. Mrs. Phelps is an earnest Sabbath school worker, and her labors for God and the church have been greatly blessed. (pp. 607- 608)

Laney's activism and ambition impacted her faculty and students for generations. It was her work that attracted the attention of Mary Rice's future husband, John Lawrence Phelps. Phelps was a graduate of Paine College and a frequent visitor to Haines. It was during his visits with Ms. Laney that Mary Rice caught his eye. The pair began attending Christ Presbyterian Church together and, before long, were married. After the wedding, Phelps sought to further his

educational training and attended Biddle University, graduating three years later with an A.B. degree. During his time at Biddle, Phelps operated a shoe shop and served the community as a supply pastor. During those years, Mary continued her work at Haines. After Biddle, Phelps returned to Augusta, earned a B.D. degree from Paine College, and completed his educational career in 1906.

Lucy Laney's beliefs and activism impacted the lives of Mary and John Phelps. The couple would give their lives, each in their own way, to combating racism through education. Armed with degrees and a vision, young Phelps felt accepted the call to begin a school of his own. This is his recollection, printed in April of 1911 in the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A.'s *Home Mission Monthly*.

Reverend John Lawrence Phelps

> In the early summer of 1906, in the law office of Reynolds and Reynolds, Augusta, Georgia, the idea of a Presbyterian Church and an industrial school for colored people in the rural district of Burke County, Georgia, took its beginning. Hon. Joseph S. Reynolds, the prosecuting attorney for the Augusta Circuit of the Superior Court of Georgia, said that most of the criminals coming before him were young, ignorant negroes who were sadly lacking in proper moral training. Mr. Reynolds said that a great many of them were or had been church members, but only a few had any conception of what it meant to be a Christian. He thought that God would hold the negro preachers and teachers responsible for much of the criminality existing among the race. He felt that they- the colored ministers and teachers- were neglecting a golden opportunity.
>
> I assured the gentleman that I was anxious to go with my family into the darkest corner, and that there were plenty of educated people of my race who were anxious to work

among the negroes of the ‘quarter’ and on the large cotton plantations, were it not for the race prejudice and the misunderstanding that are certain to cause dangerous friction. Mr. Reynolds assured me that the better element of the White people stood ready to cooperate with any sane negro leader endeavoring to help the race on the right lines. He pointed out to me this particular section in Burke County, promising his own cooperation and assuring me of the good wishes and financial help of the leading White people of Burke County and the State at large.

In company with an efficient Sabbath school missionary, in May 1906, we visited the field, organized a Sunday School, and set ourselves to the task of building a church and school. We collected money, built a neat little house of worship, and in December of the same year, we opened its doors for members. Eight persons presented themselves for membership. The Presbytery of Hodge sent down a Commissioner and the way became clear. The Church was duly organized and called Morgan Grove after Mr. Morgan Walker, the donor of the two acres of land on which the church stands. In January 1907, we opened our independent school in our church. Five children were enrolled and we called the school Boggs Academy after Mrs. Virginia P. Boggs (Freedmen’s Secretary of the Women’s Board), who had been a substantial friend to me while I was a student at Biddle University. In naming the school Boggs Academy I was endeavoring to honor the name of the one who was giving her strength and life to the uplift of my race; it was my hope then, and is now, that this school would so grow in usefulness that it would be a fitting tribute to her worth and work.

I am glad to say that our hope has been in a measure realized. Beginning five years ago, with nothing substantial save faith in God, at this writing, we have two neat and attractive

churches valued at $1,000 and $1,400 each, with more than one hundred communicants, with two large and flourishing church Sabbath schools and one mission Sabbath school with every department of the church organized and in good working order.

Our school campus contains nearly forty acres of land with six buildings, valued at $12,000. The Virginia P. Boggs Memorial Hall is a two-story ten-room building, erected at a cost of $5,000. The money was the gift of the women's missionary societies as a silver offering, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Freedman's Department of the Women's Board of Home Missions. The four acres of land on which the building stands was the contribution of Hon. R. C. Neely, a White gentleman of Waynesboro, Georgia, one of the school's best friends.

The school has an enrollment of a little over one hundred, with four teachers. Two of our teachers are paid by the Freedman's Board and two are paid by the Board of Education of Burke County. The president of the Board of Education of this county says that the work done at Boggs Academy is the most satisfactory of any work done in Burke County among the colored people.

About twenty-five percent of our students are boarders. Some board in our home and some board in the community. We are much in need of a boarding hall, to be used for domestic science for girls.

In the school, we endeavor to give the students a sound elementary training in the English branches. We devote most of the industrial part of the training to agriculture, as about eighty-five percent of our people in this section of the country live by agricultural pursuits, but we will not be able to do much with the industrial side of our school until we

> can have a foreman for our shops and a foreman for our farm. In other words, we must have some equipment before we can develop the industrial side of our school.
>
> Our school, being located in a community with eighty-five percent of its population colored, has an extraordinary opportunity to be helpful. As soon as the means in hand are sufficient, we will endeavor to develop other departments of the school. (Hillhouse, 1985, p.187).

Here, we must pause. Reverend Phelps wrote these words knowing they would be published in the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A.'s monthly newsletter, a newsletter read by predominantly Northern, White Christians. With this in mind, listen to the Reverend's words again.

> Hon. Joseph S. Reynolds, the prosecuting attorney for the Augusta Circuit of the Superior Court of Georgia, said that most of the criminals coming before him were young, ignorant negroes who were *sadly lacking in proper moral training*. Mr. Reynolds said that *a great many of them were or had been church members, but only a few had any conception of what it meant to be a Christian*. He thought that God would hold *the negro preachers and teachers responsible for much of the criminality existing among the race*. (Hillhouse, 1985, p.187).

Phelps's words are intentional, brave, and contain a message for the White Christians to whom he was writing and, I would add, to those today. The audacity of Judge Reynolds to suggest Blacks at the turn of the century lacked an understanding of what it meant to exemplify Christian living is or should be, shocking. It is also noteworthy that Phelps articulated the prejudice against the education of Blacks and his grave concern about the likelihood of "dangerous friction" (Hillhouse, 1985, p.187). It is with this clarity, we take a closer look at the beginnings of Boggs Academy.

> Dr. Phelps started out on foot for the designated plantation area but reached the Walker Grove community by mistake and stopped in the home of Mrs. Martha Boyd, who had two nieces attending Haines Institute. This chance acquaintance proved to be a fortunate coincidence as the years passed. Mrs. Boyd was well acquainted with the temper and character of the Burke County community. (Parker, 1977, p. 210)

Mrs. Boyd introduced Rev. Phelps to many in the Black community. Through these introductions, Phelps found the support and friendship of seven who believed in the critical importance of starting a school, Horace and Lizzie Gresham (who supplied Phelps with a horse and buggy), Martha Boyd, Sylvia, and Lucy Ware, Giles Glasock, and Mozella Griffin (Parker, 1977, p. 210). Together with a plan, the eight began by speaking to the congregation of Noah's Ark, a church in Keysville, Georgia. They explained they wanted to start a school like Ms. Laney's in their community. Their request was met with a mixed response but, according to Parker (1977), a Baptist elder donated "two acres of land on the old 'Dunn Place' on which Phelps built a brush arbor (p. 210).

A Lesson from Dr. Joseph T. Durham

In 2001, Dr. Joseph T. Durham published an article in the *Journal of Presbyterian History* titled, "The Founding of Boggs Academy: A Historical Note from an Oral History." Durham posits the identity of the 'Baptist elder' referred to by Parker has been a matter of dispute. One researcher identified him as White. However, "the oral tradition in the Walker family of Philadelphia has identified him as Morgan Walker, who was black" (Durham, 2001, p. 173). Dr. Durham recorded the Walker family history as told by fourth-generation Phinazee Walker. According to Mr. Walker,

> His great-great-grandfather, Moses Walker, who was White, had two slaves who bore him thirteen children between them. Moses Walker gave land to each of his thirteen children in the northwest section of Burke County, near Waynesboro, Georgia. This section became known as the 'Walker Settlement'...and is still intact…Morgan Walker was the son of Moses Walker (White) and Elizabeth Walker (Black). As the generations developed, Rodney Walker, the son of Ryas Walker (known in family history as the first black Walker) became the grandfather of Phinazee Walker, and Morgan Walker, the brother of Ryas Walker, became the great-great-uncle of Phinazee. (Durham, 2001, p. 173)

Again, differing from Parker's 1977 account, Phinazee Walker explains,

> Phelps approached members of the Walker family, described his vision of a school, and successfully persuaded Rodney Walker and Morgan Walker to give two acres so that the first buildings could be affected. The tradition in the Walker family is that the land, given through a 'gentlemen's agreement,' would never be sold and would always be kept available for the welfare of African Americans in the county. (Durham, 2001, p. 174)

Again, I suggest a pause and a shift. A pause from our state of relaxed reading and a shift into a mental space suited for critical examination. A space where Durham's voice can reach beyond spectrality and into our hearts. Simone Weil (1942, 1970) writes, "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity" (n.p.). Generous attention allows the reader to understand Durham's message is far more salient than his title suggests. At the age of 78, Dr. Durham, a distinguished academic, former college president, and member of Maryland's State Board for Higher Education took the time to write and publish an article in the Journal of Presbyterian History examining the identity, particularly the racialized identity, of a man who donated two

acres for the creation of a Black school almost one hundred years earlier. At the time of publication (2001), the membership of the Presbyterian Church of America (USA) was 91% White and 4% Black. Durham knew the readers of his article would be predominantly White Presbyterians. Why wield the pen? I believe there are several reasons.

Carter G. Woodson, the “Father of Black History," understood power is embedded in historical representation. He believed in the necessity of an accurate and just telling of history and the importance for Blacks to see themselves in the history of the nation. Woodson, along with other early African American scholars, also recognized power is rooted in literacy and education. For Blacks, “literacy opened up new political and spiritual horizons and provided a medium to ideologies alternative to hegemonic practices of slavery” (Hale, 2016, p. 21) Joseph T. Durham recognized the value of preserving, telling and promoting the story of a highly successful Black, private boarding school located in the deep south. The publication of this “historical note” on Boggs Academy, demonstrates his belief in the critical importance of the story and in the necessity of precision in African American history. The crux of the article is not to demonstrate the flaws in Parker’s historical account but to cleanse Boggs’s history from Whitewashing while bringing the institution’s story to light once more. According to Durham, one historian claimed a *White* Baptist elder donated the initial acreage to Phelps. Durham (2001) clarifies, “The Walker family of Philadelphia has identified him as Morgan Walker, who was black” (p.173). Per Durham, we understand Boggs came into existence because of Black determination and generosity. We also recognize the importance of telling historical truths from non-White perspectives. While I believe in the importance of both takeaways, I included this story for personal reasons as well. I will return to the Walker family lineage in the final chapter.

Exhuming the Legacy of Virginia Pocahontas Graves Boggs

To understand the significance of Boggs Academy, her history must be considered in light of its dialectical relationship with the White power structure in the United States and in particular, the south. While systemic and structural racism created an ongoing need for private Black education, Whites did, at times, positively contribute to the cause. During his studies at Biddle University, Reverend Phelps developed a “substantial friendship" (Phelps, 1911, p. 128) with Mrs. Virginia P. Boggs. In the years before her death, Virginia Boggs served as the Freedmen’s Secretary of the Women’s Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Phelps (1911) writes, “In naming the school Boggs Academy I was endeavoring to honor the name of one who was giving her strength and life for the uplift of my race; it was my hope then, and is now, that this school would so grow in usefulness that it would be a fitting tribute to her worth and work” (p. 128).

As I prepared to write about the work and legacy of Virginia Boggs as it relates to Boggs Academy, I returned to Phelps’s article in the April 1911 printing of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.’s *Home Mission Monthly.* Glancing over the table of contents, I noticed Phelps had a second article in the journal, “*The Farm Home Scheme,”* turning there, another title caught my eye, *“A Southern Woman Speaks.”* Curious as to the thoughts of a southern Presbyterian woman in 1911, I began reading. What follows is not the complete text but enough to demonstrate the writer’s intent.

> I am a pure-blooded Southern woman. I was born and raised within eight or nine miles of my present home. I was a child in years when our slaves were emancipated, which had my approval after I had reached years when I could form an opinion. I really think it better so, and it would have been still better if they could have been colonized.

> I never had any trouble with the race. We read of extreme cases but have not had anything of that kind to contend with. I think with others, that it is well to try to improve their morals- there lies the greatest defect to be found in their nature. It seems to be natural for all human beings to err. We have to be prayerful and watchful at all times to combat evil.
>
> I am of a missionary turn of mind and have offered to undertake this work of Freedmen's Presbyterial Secretary...I feel that for the negro race there is a great necessity of having spiritual needs attended to for they are naturally a religious people; they can shout louder than anyone; they go into a trance, and they have their churches everywhere in the State. Their morals are very slack. The old slave-time "Uncles" and "Aunties" are considered as being a better class than the younger generations, and that without education. By the grace of God, our all-wise Father, I pray this may be different for their own good and for the Redeemer's sake who died for all. I look at this from a purely religious view. It is a most deplorable state of affairs, a problem which I am sure will be difficult to solve.
>
> I favor very much their owning their own lands, churches, and parochial schools, and I think it is a wise thing to work on the "Farm Fund" proposition. (Phelps, 1911, p. 146)

Reading these words, I was again impacted by the condescending, twisted arrogance of White Christianity. Unlike the other articles in the journal, this one is anonymous. While considering this, I noticed the fine print under the title, "This letter is from a former Cumberland member, born and brought up in the South, who offered her services as Presbyterial Secretary in the Freedmen's work." As I read these words again, I was surprised by the tears in my eyes.

In the years before her death in 1908, Virginia P. Boggs served as the Freedmen's Secretary of the Women's Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Virginia

Boggs was born and raised in Virginia and was a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church denomination. At the time of this publication, the position of general secretary of the Women's Board of Mission for Freedmen, a position that began in the late 1880s, had been held by only several women. Virginia Boggs was the only secretary who was also a member of Cumberland. Later in the journal, we come to the second article by Reverend Phelps (1911), "The Farm Home Scheme" (p. 140). Echoing Boggs's interest in farm initiatives Phelps writes,

> It was the one idea of our late Freedmen secretary, Mrs. Boggs, that the negroes living out on the plantations ought to have more inducements and a better opportunity along the line of home-owning and home-making. She believed that there should be negro communities formed by industrious and intelligent negroes, with a church and school as the center, where they could be encouraged to rear their children under the best Christian influences. Boggs Academy, having been honored by being permitted to use her name, is endeavoring to carry out the ideas advanced by this Christian woman and lover of humanity. (Phelps, 1911, p. 141)

As I wiped the tears from my cheeks, I considered their cause. Why did the probable discovery of the racist thinking of Virginia Boggs bother me? Why did it bother me enough to evoke a wave of emotion? Du Bois' (1920) words echo in my ears, "The number of White individuals who are practicing with even reasonable approximation the democracy and unselfishness of Jesus Christ is so small and unimportant as to be [a] fit subject for jest in Sunday supplements" (p. 21). These are hard words but true words. My tears result from having grown up believing the lies of American exceptionalism. I *wanted* to believe in the virtue and morality of abolitionists and the turn of the century Christians living in the North. My thinking was similar to Lillian Smith's (1960),

> I went on this journey to find an image of the human being that I could feel proud of...I wanted the faith to believe that we can fulfill our role in this evolving universe of which we have been given such awesome glimpses. (p. 5)

I was hungry for those images. Sadly, more often, we are left with historic mirages. When we quiet the phantoms and make space in our minds and hearts for truth, we are able to see the reality we often willingly avoid. In taking a closer look at famous abolitionists and "woke" Christians of the early twentieth century, we find a consistent current of racism and White supremacy. William Lloyd Garrison, admired social reformer and abolitionist, was by no means free from the spectral attack. In the pre-face of the *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American slave, written by himself* (1845, 1995), Garrison writes,

> Nothing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind; and yet how wonderfully they have sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries! (p. 12)

Garrison failed to understand suggesting slavery is dehumanizing and stating that slaves have been dehumanized are radically different arguments—the first is accurate, and the second is racist. The writing of Harriet Beecher Stowe was also marred by racism. A quote from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Shmoop Editorial Team, 2008) drips with White supremacy,

> If ever Africa shall show an elevated and cultivated race,--and come it must, some time, her turn to figure in the great drama of human improvement.--life will awake there with a gorgeousness and splendor of which our cold western tribes faintly have conceived. In that far-off mystic land of gold, and gems, and spices, and waving palms, and wondrous flowers, and miraculous fertility, will awake new forms of art, new styles of splendor;

> and the negro race, no longer despised and trodden down, will, perhaps, show forth some of the latest and most magnificent revelations of human life. Certainly, they will, in their gentleness, their lowly docility of heart, their aptitude to repose on a superior mind and rest on a higher power, their childlike simplicity of affection, and facility of forgiveness. (In all these they will exhibit the highest form of the peculiarly Christian life, and, perhaps, as God chasteneth whom he loveth, he hath chosen poor Africa in the furnace of affliction, to make her the highest and noblest in that kingdom which he will set up, when every other kingdom has been tried and failed; for the first shall be last, and the last first. (p. 11)

In the process of writing this dissertation, I've pondered the ambiguity of history. By nature, we want to believe the histories we read are comprised of incontrovertible facts. While there are plenty of incontrovertible facts in historical accounts, someone still crafts the account. Someone, or possibly a group of people, told the story, and their lens matters. For example, I could have written a story about Boggs Academy without a serious discussion of racism and what I produced would have been a far different historical account. For this nation to become a truly just and democratic nation, we must be willing to read and write historical accounts that include the successes *and the failures*. The train of willful ignorance will only end in self-destruction. Future generations can't learn from history if they don't know the actual history. This isn't a move toward divisiveness but towards a better society.

Attempting to see history from multiple perspectives requires examining the bits of history that escaped the spotlight. Often, in those bits and pieces, we find a new group of heroes, men and women like Mary and John Phelps, Lucy Laney, Myles Horton, Mary McCloud Bethune, Lillian Smith, Morgan Walker, etc. Throughout history, unsung heroes gave their lives

to the service of humanity, and good Samaritans who spent their lives caring for society's least. In telling their stories, our perspective changes. We are reminded of the necessity of serving others, and, more often than not, we can see fresh paths towards change. In our nation's early years, there were abolitionists who were both anti-slavery *and* anti-White supremacy.

Abolitionist Joshua Evans (1741-1798) was considered radical by fellow Quakers. Evans was a minister, a self-taught physician of sorts, and a zealous follower of the teachings of Christ.

> He loved humanity—indeed all living things as creations of his divine master. He was especially fond of blacks and Indians, the Acadians, the poor, and the oppressed. He spent much of his time among the ill and afflicted, having, he said, a 'near feeling for the suffering seed.' Indeed, he was something of an amateur physician, knowledgeable of herbs and roots and their proper mixture for curative concoctions. According to Abraham Warrington, Joshua Evans' son-in-law, Evans always maintained that physick should be freely dispensed for love of others without any fee or favor just as the word of God was. Less for his charity than his scrupulous interventionism, Evans endured a lifetime of intermittent trouble and embarrassment among certain Friends within the Society and fared even worse in the allegedly-godless environment beyond the periphery of the Quaker world. (Kelly, 1986, pp. 74 & 75)

Evans refused to fight in the French and Indian war and refused to pay for his replacement, a common practice at the time. He rejected a market economy that perpetuated war. His clothes were drab because he refused to wear anything dyed with slave-harvested indigo. He objected to the making and consumption of extravagant goods.

> He went further than most Quaker abolitionists, however, in denying himself the use of West India slave-harvested produce. Many Friends cast reflections upon him…for his

> singularity. Still, 'the Cries of the Slaves in the West Indies reached [his] ears day & Night' and in a special manner when partaking of the products of bondage labor. There was nothing to be done except to abstain. (Kelly, 1986, p. 76)

At first blush, this discussion of Joshua Evans may seem a bit out of place in the story of a twentieth-century Black educational institution. However, Evans represents a new path forward, a better path forward, and for those seeking to follow the teachings of Christ, an all-cards in path forward. He was not perfect but his abolitionism intentionally resisted the benefits of White supremacy in its many manifestations. It is safe to say, Evans would have supported the work of institutions like Boggs Academy while simultaneously working to end the systemic oppression that evoked its existence.

Virginia P. Boggs Speaks From the Grave

It has been a while since I wrote what you just read, maybe a month or so. It's summer now, and the humid, stifling heat is a constant reminder of my Georgia location. Per the recommendation of Dr. Clayborne Carson, an advisor to this project, I'm reading *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin (1960). Griffin, a White Texan, darkened his skin with the aid of medications and a sun lamp and entered the south's most racist states as a Black man. *Black Like Me* (Griffin, 1960) is the story of his journey to expose the heart of racism. Midway through the book, he writes,

> The hate stare was everywhere practiced, especially by women of the older generation. On Sunday, I made the experiment of dressing well and walking past some of the White churches just as services were over. In each instance, as the women came through the church doors and saw me, the "spiritual bouquets" changed to hostility. The transformation was grotesque. In all of Montgomery, only one woman refrained. She did

> not smile. She merely looked at me and did not change her expression. My gratitude to her was so great it astonished me. (Griffin, 1960, p. 117).

Reading these words, I suddenly heard the voice of Virginia Boggs. “Don’t you see Caroline? I *was* different. I *was* trying, or, at least, I believed I was. I was doing the unthinkable. I, a White woman from Virginia, was engaging Blacks in conversation. I was doing what I could to help them, to improve their lives and their children’s lives. Had you known me in my time, you would have, at the very least, labeled me ‘progressive.’ Caroline, take a long look in the mirror. Are we so different? A hundred years have gone by and yet, you seem to be in a similar position. Instead of helping start Boggs, you are telling her story. Some around you might call you ‘progressive’ but are you any more free of racism or the benefits of White privilege? Those tears of disappointment might need revisiting.” She’s right, you know. The difference between us is my quickness to judge another while patting myself on the back. Racism *is* systemic but it is also deeply embedded in nearly all Whites.

As I wrestled through those moments of self-awareness, I began to see things differently. I not only recognized my similar complacency but I also realized I had also misinterpreted Reverend Phelps. I previously suggested Phelps was intentional in the wording of his articles, knowing they would be read by a White audience. I now posit he was intentional *and* he was calculated and deliberate. Edward Bernays, the father of public relations/propaganda and nephew of Sigmund Freud, is recognized as being the first to figure out to manipulate the thinking and actions of the American masses. I posit Phelps discovered the art of propaganda well before Bernays. It’s as if he saw life as a game of chess while artfully convincing Whites they were winning at checkers. DuBois also recognized the elevated game.

> High in the tower, where I sit above the loud complaining of the human sea, I know many souls that toss and while and pass, but none there intrigue me more than the Souls of White Folk. Of them, I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage...I am native, not foreign, bone of their thought and flesh of their language. Mine is not the knowledge of the traveler or the colonial composite of dear memories, words, and wonder. Nor yet is my knowledge that which servants have of masters, or mass of class, or capitalist of artisan. Rather I see these souls undressed and from the back and side. I see the working of their entrails. I know their thoughts…" (Du Bois, 1999, p. 17)

The southern mentality in the early 1900s is evident in the article attributed to Virginia Boggs. Her sentiments echo throughout the April 1911 edition of the *Home Mission Monthly, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* These words are found in the editorial notes located at the journal's onset.

> It is often complained that there is no greater discouragement in the attempt to lead the negro to an improved condition than his 'happy-go-lucky improvidence, together with what seems to be the inveterate vagrancy of so many men of the race…' To make an honest, self-respecting, and reliable person one needs to get at the motive power of all right action-Christian faith and practice. (Finks, 1911, p. 125)

It is safe to say Phelps fully grasped this thinking and it is likely he used it to his advantage and for the uplift of his people. As the long-standing general secretary of the Women's Board of Mission for Freedmen, Virginia Pocahontas Boggs played a significant role in allocating mission funds. She traveled extensively, visiting many of the academies and universities supported by the

Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Naming the school in her honor would almost guarantee financial support for the institution.

In the fall of 2021, I traveled to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. When Boggs Academy closed, documents and artifacts were sent to the society for safekeeping. There, I came across a report for the Board of Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church. The report confirmed my belief in the ingenuity of Phelps. Edward P. Cowan, Board Secretary, writes,

> It is eminently fitting that the name of Mrs. Virginia P. Boggs should be linked in some permanent way in connection with the work in which she labored so faithfully and untiringly, and for which, in her consuming zeal for its advancement, she may well be said to have laid down her life.
>
> For some two years previous to her death Rev. John L. Phelps, a colored minister in Georgia, had been calling the school which he had started near Keysville, the Boggs Academy. Mrs. Boggs had been greatly interested in him and his work, and although she had continually refused to give her consent to have the school bear her name. Mr. Phelps persistently continued to cling to the name... The death of Mrs. Boggs...has naturally suggested the idea among the friends of Mrs. Boggs of making a silver offering, a memorial to her memory, being a strictly extra gift over and above all other contributions to the work, as a tribute to her faithful efforts in behalf of the education and evangelization of the colored people in the South…It will be interesting under these circumstances to read a letter written by Mr. Phelps to the office of the Board, dated April 6–less than two weeks before the death of Mrs. Boggs. (Phelps, 1911, p. 130)

The letter arrived *two weeks* before her death. Two weeks before her death in 1908, Phelps crafted a letter, taking care to describe Boggs in such a way that each board member might feel

as if they single-handedly educated and Christianized Blacks in rural Georgia. He was careful to include details about the importance of the farm home scheme and the educational progress of Boggs students, both topics dear to the heart of Virginia Boggs. As evident in the Board of Freedmen report, the letter worked, and the donations flowed.

October 24, 1910, Phelps held the dedication of the Boggs Memorial Building, a building that cost $5000 to build. Today, the equivalent would be around $140,000. Mary Rice Phelps' (1911) description of the dedication, published in the *Home Mission Monthly*, brings a smile as it, too, nods at the well-played game of chess.

> The most beautiful day we have ever seen under the Southern skies was the twenty-fourth of October, 1910. It was a day full of hope, for it was the day appointed for the dedication of our new Memorial Building...Among the distinguished White friends were judges of the city of Waynesboro, president of the Board of Education of Burke County, merchants, physicians, cotton buyers, bankers, and many others. The personnel of the audience represented the interest that the best White citizens of Burke County take in the work at Boggs Academy. (p. 143)

The History of Boggs Continued

The Farm-Home Concept

Both Phelps and Boggs had a particular interest in the farm-home concept. Yet again, Phelps builds upon his relationship with the late Virginia Boggs to artfully and skillfully sway the thinking of the White Presbyterians to improve the lot of his people. In the *Presbyterian Home Mission Monthly*, he writes,

> She believed there should be negro communities formed by industrious and intelligent negroes, with a church and school as the center, where they could be encouraged to rear

> their children under the best Christian influences. Boggs Academy, having been honored by being permitted to use her name, is endeavoring to carry out the ideas advanced by this Christian woman and lover of humanity...Thus the 'Boggs Academy Farm Homes' offer the colored farmer an opportunity second to none in the South, in that it is possible for him to buy his home on such terms that he need not fail. (Phelps, 1911, p. 141)

I can't help but wonder if a smile graced the countenance of Phelps as he wrote these words, or if they caused Mary to chuckle as she read them.

In 1911, The Board of Missions purchased a plantation adjacent to the current Boggs property and by 1912, the thousand-acre farm was subdivided into 40-acre sections. These tracts were rented out with a one-year rental agreement. After the year was complete, desirable tenants were allowed to purchase the land. "According to terms, the renter was to prove himself an honest, industrious farmer before being allowed to buy" (Parker, 1977, p. 211). Phelps further explains,

> The Boggs Academy Farm Homes offer the colored farmer an opportunity second to none in the South, in that it is made possible for him to buy his home on such terms that he need not fail. He makes no mistake in settling near Boggs Academy...This plan helps the negroes to help themselves, which is the only safe way to help any number of people of any race. (Phelps, 1911, p. 141)

The Farmers Institute of Boggs Academy served to meet community needs. "The best agriculture consultants, black and White, were secured for the institute's program" (Parker, 1977, p. 211). Farming and agriculture also played a critical role in sustaining Boggs Academy. The school operated a farm throughout its existence. Today's trendy "farm to table" concept was a necessary component of Boggs. Students participated in a work/study program attending daily to

farm/operational chores in addition to their studies. The alumni recollections about learning to farm are amusing, especially the recollections of those coming from big cities.

While farming was necessary for Boggs and the surrounding Black community, we are remiss not to follow suit and incorporate it in education today. The nature-deficit children are experiencing today is pernicious for their futures and the earth. Whitman (1855) writes,

> There was a child went forth every day,
> And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
> And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
> Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.
> The early lilacs became part of this child,
> And the grass and white and red morning glories, and white and red clover…(Cohen, Folsom, Price, n.d., para. 1 &2)

Students at Boggs were well acquainted with the cycle of life, they valued food and understood the effort behind its acquisition. They rose early to milk cows, plant crops, can harvest, and cook in the kitchen. Today, we rise and look at a device and allow our children to do the same.

Additional Voices from the Early Years

In his master's thesis on Boggs Academy, Charles W. Francis (1967) includes his notes from a personal interview with one of the students who attended Boggs in the first year of its existence, Mrs. Sallie Gresham Wells Glascock. He writes,

> Rev. Phelps first held his school in a 'brush arbor' in a clearing near some trees not too far from here, and with only a little help from most of the people who were living in this community at the time. There was no building until 1908; the church was built first, during this year. A house for the Principal was built in 1907.

> Mrs. Glascock had attended the Walker Grove School for four (4) years before coming to Boggs. She completed Grade 6, the highest grade, in 1908; and she recalls the names of her other classmates, who finished with her: Misses Eliza Smith, Olivia Blount, Viola Hudson, Viola Mobley, Mamie Lovett, and Mr. Henry Gresham. Six other pupils entered the school with her; Misses Eliza Smith, Bessie Smith, Viola Mobley, Messrs. Clarence Gaines, Granell Burke, and Jack Hooks. Those pupils who completed the Sixth Grade were employed, in the community, to teach Second and Third Grades.
>
> The Principal and his wife, Mrs. Mary Rice Phelps, were the only teachers at Boggs in 1908; however, two other teachers, in the persons of Miss Amy Jenkins, of Greenville, South Carolina, and Miss Anna B. Collier, from Savannah, Georgia, joined the staff in 1910.
>
> The first graduating exercises occurred in 1926 since the school had become a high school then. The Ninth Grade was added in 1910.
>
> Goods and commodities such as corn, cornmeal, potatoes, pork, chicken and eggs, were accepted in lieu of cash payment for the tuition fees, and for room and board.
>
> Mr. Phelps first lived with various community families before they built a dwelling on the campus for the Principal. Mrs. Phelps, who had taught at Paine College in Augusta, joined Mr. Phelps at the Academy in 1907. (p. 57)

Francis also included notes from an interview with another student from the first years of Boggs, Mrs. Eliza Smith Robinson.

> Mrs. Eliza Smith Robinson was born in Burke County in 1897. She was also reared in this county. She entered the Fourth Grade at Boggs and completed the Ninth Grade. The school year began in October and ended in April. She believes that the Ninth Grade was

> added to the school program in 1910, but she does not insist that this is the correct year, because her attendance at the school did not continue on a year-to-year basis.
>
> Mrs. Robinson reports that the following subjects were taken by students at the time she completed Grade Nine: (1) Reading, (2) Writing, (3) Geography, (4) History, (5) Spelling, (6) Sewing, (&) Arithmetic, (8) Latin, (9) Algebra, (10) Physics; these latter three subjects were added, she believes, around 1910. Altogether, there were nine persons in her class at the time the Ninth Grade was completed, there were only two teachers on the staff at the time; the founder and his wife. (Francis, 1966, p. 58)

While a discussion of the curriculum and the changes in grades offered is necessary for describing the historical impact of the institution, these topics, along with topics relating to faculty and students, will be discussed in later chapters.

The Physical Campus

The landscape surrounding Boggs has changed little since the school began. Driving down Quaker Road, you still pass field after field, the monotony only broken by the occasional grove of planted pines. The land is flat, the air thick, and gnats and mosquitos abound. Boggs Academy is the last thing one expects to discover in the midst of rural Georgia farm country. Interestingly, forty-two years before Boggs began Sherman marched his troops down that very road, passing the academy's future site. Parker (1977) describes Boggs Academy in 1915 and the years following.

> In 1915 a girls' dormitory and three cottages were on the farm-home site. The following four or five years were devoted, to a large extent, toward increasing the school and community relationship, using the farm-home scheme as a major device to that end.

> Adams Hall, a brick dormitory for girls put up in the fall of 1920, at a cost of $25,000, was donated by George H. Adams of Latrobe, Pennsylvania. This building contained a dining room, kitchen, reading room, music room, teachers' lounge, and dormitory facilities. (p. 211)

Mr. Francis attributes the success of Boggs in the early years to Reverend Phelps, Virginia Boggs, and George Adams.

> Mr. George H. Adams, this Presbyterian from Latrobe, Pennsylvania, proved to be another friend of the institution who assisted the founder in his early pioneer days. Although he was not a local community citizen, he is reported to have visited the school on several occasions, prior to 1920, in the interest of assisting the founder with the construction of living quarters for the students. It is not known whether or not he became a friend of the institution as a result of the founder's efforts or those of Mrs. Boggs; however, it is a fact that Mr. Adams made it possible that the dormitory built for girls in 1914 to be modernized, at a cost of $25,000. [Roughly, $333,00 today.] This building which was named for him was veneered with brick in 1920 and became the only building on campus to have any architectural character. (Francis, 1967, p. 49)

Fire played an unfortunate role throughout the history of Boggs, repeatedly disrupting the already oppressed efforts of her administration and staff. The first fire occurred sometime between 1907 and 1920, destroying the frame cottage home of John and Mary Phelps. The second fire took place in 1920, consuming Boggs Memorial Hall and all its contents. After the destruction of Boggs Hall, classes were held in the church sanctuary for the following four years. In 1940, Adams Hall was consumed by fire, killing one student, "Rosebud Lewis of Millen...and several other students and two other teachers were seriously injured. These injuries were

sustained by these occupants because their only means of escape from the burning building was through their second-story windows, from which they jumped" (Francis, 1967, p. 76). Francis (1964) notes the cause of these fires is unknown. Adams Hall was rebuilt in the same location.

The boys' dorm, John L. Phelps Hall, located where the Phelps' administration building now stands, lacks a recorded construction date. However, the building was condemned in 1938 due to the original poor construction. It was restored in 1939 but demolished in 1954 because of the coming Phelps' administration building.

The Home Economics building, built in 1936, has an interesting history. This was the cheapest building project in the school's history, not because of cheap construction but creativity in the midst of the Great Depression.

> The materials used to construct this building had previously comprised the old Georgia-Florida Railroad passenger station, which was located at St. Clair, Georgia, just three miles west of the school campus. This railroad had discontinued its passenger service in 1936 and had put its well-preserved property up for sale. The station property was sold to the school at a nominal cost of $300.00 plus the cost of dismantling it. (Francis, 1967, p. 78)

The building was still in use in 1964 but was no longer used for home economics.

Throughout the history of the institution, Boggs sought to serve both students and the community. While White educational institutions had the luxury of focusing on educating the child, Boggs, like other Black institutions, was doing all it could to support, protect, and uplift the surrounding Black community. This was readily apparent in the years following WWII. The G.I. Bill offered the dream of middle-class American life, however, that was far from the reality experienced by returning Black veterans. Representative John Rankin of Mississippi, known for

his racism, helped draft the bill. The bill made sure states controlled the distribution of the bill's benefits and, in the south, that meant Whites would benefit and Blacks wouldn't. In 1947, The trades building was constructed to provide job training courses for returning veterans. Courses in agriculture, mechanics, carpentry, and masonry were offered. The building eventually became the student center and remains standing today.

In the years between 1953 and 1966, ten additional structures were built on the campus. By and large, these buildings were built as a result of funding from the United Presbyterian Women's ministry. The relationship Phelps carefully crafted with Boggs and subsequently, the women of the Presbyterian Church continued to benefit Boggs Academy for decades after his passing. In 1953, the Charles W. Francis Community House was built. The gymnasium/auditorium was constructed with brick and was the first gymnasium for Blacks to be built in the county. Rev. Charles W. Francis, D. D. was the second president of Boggs and held the position from 1936 until 1942 (Francis, 1967).

In '54, the first John L. Phelps administration building was built. Constructed of brick, it was the institution's first building with indoor restroom facilities. It contained nine classrooms and three offices. "The building and all of its contents were destroyed by fire on the night of February 25, 1965" While the Klan made their presence known on the campus multiple times, this fire was not believed to be their doing. Alumni recall it beginning in either the lab or the boiler room. Also, in 1954, the school purchased 525 acres of land for additional buildings. The land was purchased for $17,000.00 from "a local cotton 'baron' of Waynesboro" (Francis, 1967, p. 80). Built on the newly acquired land were Elinor K. Purves Hall (1955), the Women's Teacherage (1958), Harbison Hall (1958), John L. Phelps Administration Building (1966), four

cottage-style homes (1966), and a campsite with two well-built lodges on either side of the lake (1966) (Francis, 1967).

I would be remiss to complete a discussion of the physical campus without mentioning the one feature left out of all previous historical accounts, the love tree. The love tree, a stately oak located behind the dining hall, was a gathering spot for students generation after generation. Countless alumni shared their memories of the love tree. Michael Holyfield recalls, "The house mother, Ms. Ethel Sanders (whom we lovingly called 'the colonel'), would always allow us a few minutes to smooch…before making a personal appearance to round up her flock of 'hot chicks and little friskies'" (Personal correspondence, April 2022). When I asked alumna, Dr. Eunice Washington about the tree she joked, "*Nobody* will tell the real story and trees don't talk!" (Personal correspondence, April 2022).

Presidents of Boggs Academy

A Google search for the top five greatest leaders of all time produced interesting results. A combined list of the first four search results included: Mahatma Gandhi, Winston Churchill, Napoleon Bonaparte, Nelson Mandela, Adolf Hitler, George Washington, Joseph Stalin, Alexander the Great, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mao Zedong, Abraham Lincoln, and Che Guevara. Clearly, there are very different perspectives as to what makes a leader great. The leadership styles of those listed above are radically different. It is interesting that Jesus and Muhammad did not make the list. Jesus has been followed by more people than any other leader. Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington, and Mother Teresa were followers of Christ. Mahatma Gandhi considered Jesus to be one the greatest teachers of all time. Mandela, Mother Teresa, King, and Gandhi exuded the leadership style of Jesus. Jesus led with compassion, love, and servanthood grounded in active, not passive, nonviolence. With world

peace and prosperity in mind, I would argue this subgroup of leaders are the ones to exemplify. The others significantly impacted the world but countless lives were lost along the way. That said, Mandela, Mother Teresa, Gandhi, and King were not perfect. However, their sacrificial leadership positively impacted the world and uplifted the oppressed.

As I consider the work of Reverend Phelps and those who led Boggs after him, I can't help but be moved by their similar leadership style. Lao-Tzu describes ideal leadership this way,

> When the Master governs,
>
> the people are hardly aware that he exists.
>
> Next best is a leader who is loved.
>
> Next, one who is feared.
>
> The worst is one who is despised. (Mitchell, 1988, p. 17)

Reverend Phelps' leadership and philosophy of education impacted Boggs until the day her doors closed in 1984. On November 15, 1936, Reverend Phelps retired from Boggs Academy and took the role of pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro (Parker, 1977).

Following Phelps, Reverend Charles W. Francis became the second President of Boggs Academy. Francis, who received his Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB) degree from Biddle University in 1915, worked at Boggs for 21 years prior to taking on the role of president (Parker, 1977). His children and grandchildren would continue to serve Boggs long after her doors closed. In 1941,

> Dr. Francis was granted sabbatical leave following a period of serious illness. T. E. Ross, the principal, was appointed chairman of an executive committee of three to administer the work of the school. In 1942, however, Dr. Francis resigned and Ross was appointed executive as well as principal of Boggs. After filling the position for one year, Ross

> resigned, July 1, 1943. In anticipation of Mr. Ross' resignation, Harold N. Stinson, a science teacher at Boggs, was appointed principal, May 1, 1943. Stinson, though thought to be very young for the demanding responsibilities of such an executive position, proved to be a capable administrator. (Parker, 1977, p. 212)

Harold Nathaniel Stinson may have been young for the job but was well versed in private, Black education. His father, H. M. Stinson, became president of Cotton Plant Academy in Cotton Plant, Arkansas in 1910. Like Boggs, the school was founded by the Presbyterian Church and operated by the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen. Its doors opened in 1886. Stinson, upon graduating from Cotton Plant, attended Mary Allen Junior College, an HBCU in Crockett, Texas. He completed his B.S. degree at Johnson C. Smith University in 1941 (Parker, 1977). Stinson remained the Boggs Academy president for 24 years. In his first year, Boggs became accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (SACS). In 1949, the school gym and a trades building went up, new training programs were added for veterans, and the school received an A rating from the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools.. (Parker, 1977). The school continued to thrive and expand during Mr. Stinson's administration. In 1968, Harold M. Stinson, now Dr. Harold M. Stinson, resigned from Boggs Academy to become the third president of Stillman College. He was the first Black president of the institution and remained in that position until health issues forced him to retire in 1980.

Dr. Calvin E. Thornton was selected to fill the shoes of Dr. Stinson. Thornton, an avid student, did his undergraduate work at the Hampton Institute. After earning a master's degree from the University of South Carolina, he went on to study at the University of Georgia, the University of Massachusetts, and State Teachers College in Massachusetts.

Boggs alumni, Alonzo W. Smith, Sr., recalls his memories of Dr. Thornton.

> Calvin Thornton was a highly regarded high school administrator in Charleston, South Carolina. He ranked high among the area high school principals. He was heavily recruited by the Presbyterian Church to lead Boggs Academy. He and his family were well known. My godmother taught at his school and he knew my mother very well. Both my mother and godmother were teachers. Once Mr. Thornton was offered the job he put an all-out press on recruiting folks from the Charleston area. He put a heck of a sales job on my mother. She asked me if I wanted to go to Boggs and I said yes.
>
> Well, when it was time to go and the tuition was paid, I didn't want to go and my mother started second-guessing her decision. She said a 14-year-old boy is not ready to go off to school by himself. We spoke with Thornton and he said, "Heck no, let that boy go and he'll be fine. That night my mother and godmother dropped me off. My mother cried the whole way back to Charleston. Thornton also recruited Herby Fielding, Steven Fielding, and my cousin, Leroy Connor. They all came the year after me in 1968.
>
> During my time at Boggs, I thought he was a very good administrator. He was engaging with the students. I noticed he had regular faculty meetings. Items in need of repair were always taken care of. The Boggs Greyhound Bus was always in great repair. The teachers were always well prepared and I never heard complaints about the administration. The boys' basketball team got new uniforms and the award-winning choir had everything they needed. (A. Smith, personal communication, September 7, 2021)

When Dr. Thornton stepped down, Reverend John Morton Ellis, pastor of the John L. Blackburn Presbyterian Church, the campus church, and Director of Christian education at Boggs, served as interim president. He would play this role again after the stepping down of the

next president. Reverend Ellis was the final president of Boggs Academy, a position he held from 1981-1984. Ellis attended Johnson C. Smith University. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and later, a Master of Divinity degree. He continued his education at I.T.C., Princeton University, McCormick Seminary, and Union Seminary. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from Morehouse College. He was a pastor at the campus church, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro, and Rand Memorial Mission Church in Midville, Georgia. His daughter, Reverend Evelyn Ellis, the current pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro, and Boggs Academy alumna (class of 1963), wrote a poem for her father's funeral service. Below is a portion of the sweet tribute.

And you cared, my dear Daddy
For the condition of men.
So you stood up and fought,
And my, how you'd win.
    You fought for the teacher,
    You fought for the poor,
    You faced racial storms,
    Encouraging all to endure.
And God blessed your efforts
My courageous, dear Dad
Lives were improved
For you gave all you had.
    And oh, how you loved
    The Church and its call.

With integrity and dignity,

You gave Her your all. (W. H. Mays Mortuary, 2001)

These words could easily be used to describe King, Mandela, or Mother Teresa (if a few words were changed). Twice this month, I've had the privilege of joining a Zoom meeting with Dr. Clarence B. Jones. Dr. Jones was Dr. King's personal council, speech writer, advisor, and close friend. On both occasions, Dr. Jones recalled his conversation with King about the sanitation worker's strike in Memphis. He said,

> I didn't want him to go to Memphis. He had asked me to set up some important fundraising meetings. After I set them up he said, 'Clarence, you've got to cancel them because I have to go to Memphis because they need me.' I said, 'Well, they don't need you, you know. Let it happen.' I replay. I replay. There was nothing I could do." (C. Jones, personal correspondence, January 16, 2022.)

From there, Dr. Jones went on to describe what it was like living under the stress of those times. He began to sob as his mind returned to that period of his life. He described waking up each morning wondering if this was the day his friend would die. Reverend Ellis and Dr. Jones both remind us of the painful fight that many in the nation were forced to endure. John Ellis, like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Clarence B. Jones fought an endless war. There were no tours, no promised points of reprieve. The battle was there every day and every day they fought, encouraging each other and those around them to follow their lead. This sweet image of Harold Stinson comes to mind.

The handwritten message on the back of the photograph reads, "Harold Stinson helping local resident with voting." Dr. Stinson didn't just run a school, like Ellis, King, and Jones, day in and day out, he uplifted his community.

On June 16, 1977, Dr. Wayne D. Watson became the sixth president of Boggs Academy. Watson, 31, grew up and attended school in Chicago, earning three degrees from Northwestern University. Before coming to Boggs, he was the general manager of a Black-owned commuter airline company. According to the *Augusta News-Review* (1977),

> Dr. Watson has expressed two primary objectives for Boggs Academy, "I plan to make it a 'lighthouse' educational institution for the development of youth and I also plan to develop the school into a fiscally sound educational enterprise. In addition to the regular curriculum, we need to work in the affective domain to develop a positive attitude and a strong work ethic in the students. (Dr. Watson Named President of Boggs Academy, 1977, p. 1)

Dr. Watson remained at Boggs from June 16th until November 30th, 1977. This baffled me. I searched and searched for an explanation. Long after I had given up the hunt, I stumbled upon a filmed interview with Dr. Watson. His description of his time at Boggs was shocking, to say the least.

> I wanted to get out of the airline industry, get back into education which was my real love anyway. And I loved flying, but, you know, there were a number of challenges getting ready to come down the pipe. And so I went to Boggs. I lasted there maybe six months to eight months at most (chuckle)...Well, I decided to do an audit. The Chairman of the Board told me not to do an audit. And so I brought some friends in and said, you know, 'I need to find out what money we've got…' I didn't charge the academy. I had some friends who were accountants and found that there was a considerable amount of money that could not be accounted for. So I called him, really somewhat innocent, saying, 'Hey, just completed this audit, and guess what? There's some money missing.' And he said, 'What are you talking about? I thought I told you not to do an audit…' And he said, 'Well, have you told anybody?' I said, 'No. I'm calling you.' And he said, 'Well, don't tell anybody. I'll get back to you tomorrow.' Well, you know, I was married at that time. We went to bed that night at about nine-thirty, living in the deep South. About eleven o'clock, the grounds person came and woke me up. He said, 'Dr. Watson, wake up, please come quick.' I said, 'What's wrong?' He said, 'The business office is on fire.' This was a cinderblock business office. It burned to the ground. It was on fire. It turns out that either the Police Chief or the Fire Chief, somebody from the town was on the board. And the Chairman of the Board was from Norfolk [Virginia], and there were about seven to nine people somehow, some way, they had been dealing with the money. Somehow, some

way, it took that fire department a whole, real long time to get there to put out that fire. So I said, "You know, I guess it's time for me to retire from this job." So I left and came to Chicago.' (Larry, 2003)

After gaining an understanding of why Dr. Watson left months after arriving at Boggs, I did a bit more research. I've come to believe the financial issues he uncovered played a role in the financial distress that led to the closing of Boggs.

Upon Dr. Watson's resignation, per the Boggs Academy board's request, Reverend John Ellis served as a temporary replacement. At the same time, Dr. Canute M. Richardson, former vice president of Paine College, came out of retirement to become Boggs Academy's Special Assistant of Academic Affairs.

On March 23, 1978, Dr. Yenwith K. Whitney, a former Tuskegee airman, and recipient of the Air Medal, became acting president of Boggs Academy. Whitney earned his bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1962, he completed his Master of Teaching in mathematics at the Teachers College, Columbia University. He was awarded a doctorate in African Education from Columbia in 1977. In addition to working as an aeronautical engineer, Dr. Whitney spent time as a teaching missionary in West Africa.

Listen as he teaches about the Black military experience and his time as an airman.

Four, three, two, one...take-off! A P-51 engine roared into life, a steel corrugated runaway picking up speed until leaping into the blue sky. Close upon its tail followed another and another, until the sky was filled with the sleek silver airplanes making a lazy circle around the Ramitelli airstrip.

I was one of those who piloted a beautiful Mustang fighter, which I called, “Lovely Lady,” on that historic mission. It was my 32nd mission during the war. Rendezvous was at 32,000 feet over Berlin with the mission to protect the 15th Air Force B-17 and B-24 bombers which were pounding that battered city into final submission at the twilight of World War II.

As the crew and bombers looked out and saw the glistening Red Tails, their protection against the angry swarms of German jet fighters, there was reassurance in their hearts because they knew that they would not be abandoned by the all-black fighter squadrons before the battle was joined.

But it was not ever thus. Those historians conversant with the struggle black Americans have had in U.S. history, know that we have always been asked to prove our courage and skill again and again when it came time to bear arms for our country. World War II was no exception. Forgotten was the bravery of black soldiers like Peter Salem at Bunker hill during the Revolutionary War, the heroism of black sailors who served under Commander Perry during the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813, the black regiments under General Grant at Milliken’s Bend in the Civil War and the valor of the black soldiers of the 269th in World War I.

Old stereotypes, fueled by prejudice, were revived and ‘scientific’ data was drawn upon to give full credence to our incompetence. In the late 1930s when, despite the United States’ isolationism, the pundits knew that we would be at war, the armed forces were being strengthened as never before.

The U.S. Army Air Corps, the most elite and glamorous of the services, was

> mobilized, but they did not allow blacks to enlist. A civilian pilot training program was instituted because our strategists knew that airpower was to be the new and definitive weapon.
>
> The Luftwaffe had already proven its effectiveness, but black Americans were delegated to play secondary roles- construction, supply, and cooking. No pilot training for these citizens, as people with high blood pressure were not acceptable as flyers.
>
> They said blacks did not do well in World War I 'due to the emotional characteristics of the race.' The Army War College, the ultimate scientific authority on strategy and soldiers in 1925, said the 'cranial cavity of the Negro is smaller than the white.' The college concluded that blacks did not have the mental ability to compete with whites. Obviously, people of lower intelligence could not be properly trained in the complex skills demanded by the modern complicated instrumentation of the warplane. But the clincher was, 'What would we do with them if they could fly? What white pilot would fly with them?'
>
> The stony road that blacks have trod through history had taught them much, however, they were well aware of the plans being made and the stratagem to be used against them. They had organization and were equipped to fight for their freedom where and whenever necessary. (Whitney, 1980, p. 1)

In his article, Dr. Whitney goes on to describe the role of Harry Truman and Eleanor Roosevelt in opening the doors of the Air Corps for Blacks. He describes the early years of the Tuskegee aviation program and concludes with the story of Charles Hall, the first airman to take down a German aircraft. While Whitney's words are somewhat unrelated to the story of Boggs, they

provide an excellent glimpse into his perspective on the Black experience in the United States, a perspective that no doubt, impacted his leadership at Boggs.

Upon accepting the position at Boggs, Dr. Whitney gave this statement to the *Augusta News Review* (1978, March 23),

> There are more than 1,000 nonprofit, accredited private prep schools in the United States. Among all, rich and poor, great and small, Boggs stands out as the only prep school suited to provide the Black experience...This unique trust has been placed in my hands to see that the best possible education happens- a trust to see that the Black experience is growing, does not imbitter but enriches, does not narrow vision but opens new vistas- a trust to see that respect and love of fellow humans grow in the context of Christian understanding. I foresee for Boggs a fulfillment of these trusts. (p. 1)

Sadly, on August 22, 1978, months after arriving at Boggs, Dr. Whitney's wife, Muriel Eleanor Johnson Whitney, passed away. Mrs. Whitney had taken on the role of Academic Dean of Boggs Academy twenty-seven days before her death. Dr. Whitney remained at Boggs until 1981.

The Boggs family would grieve again on March 24th, 1983 with the passing of Dr. Calvin E. Thornton. Dr. Thornton died from a heart attack at the age of 59.

The Cessation of Sanctuary

As previously discussed, when Phelps began Boggs Academy he was intentional in his courting of the Presbyterian Church. In the 1930s, the Presbyterian Church Board Missions of Freedmen operated 108 schools. It was at this point we begin to see a decline in their support of Black education. The initial decline resulted from the Depression. Parker (1977) writes,

> In the midst of it all, the Board's schools were kept alive by curtailment and consolidation to provide increased efficiency without increased cost. It was decided that

> the strong schools should continue to be supported although many weak ones would have to cease. (p. 51).

On June 1, 1933, the Board of Missions of Freedmen closed the doors of 35 schools located throughout the South. Boggs Academy and Lucy Laney's Haines Institute in Augusta were two of the seventeen schools that survived the cut. Several of those seventeen were merged for further consolidation (Parker, 1977). On May 17, 1954, in a unanimous vote, the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. Parker (1977) notes,

> In the midst of this educational revolution, two Presbyterian churches made a move toward unification at the national level. In 1958, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and the United Presbyterian Church of North America brought together their educational programs as they became the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A...The new united church, however, continued the policy of curtailment. With the closing of Harbison in June of 1958, only five of the schools originally sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. were left. (p. 57)

Before I discuss the impact these events had on Boggs Academy, I believe a brief discussion of *Brown v. Board of Education* is necessary. Many Americans view the case as one of the greatest civil rights victories in the nation's history. I disagree. Bell (2004) explains,

> The Brown decision substituted one mantra for another: where 'separate' was once equal, 'separate' would now be categorically unequal. Rewiring the rhetoric of equality (rather than laying bare Plessy's white-supremacy underpinnings and consequences) constructs state-supported racial segregation as an eminently fixable aberration. And yet, by doing nothing more than requiring the rhetoric of equality, the *Brown* Court foreclosed the possibility of recognizing racism as a broadly shared cultural condition. In short, the

> equality model offered reassurance and short-term gains but contained within its structure the seeds of destruction. (pp. 196, 197).

Even the "short-term" gains were questionable. Ten years after the ruling, Martin Luther King, Jr. (1964, 2018) makes this statement,

> Any assessment of the extent of progress made in the last 10 years since the Supreme Court's decision of May 17, 1954, must be done under careful analysis of the real and the imagined. The naive might believe that great strides have been made in school desegregation over the past decade, but this is not at all true. Today, the tragically real picture of school desegregation, particularly in the South, is still one of stark tokenism or no desegregation at all. (para. 1, 2)

In 1951, a sixteen-year-old student, Barbara Johns, orchestrated a school strike. She wasn't striking for desegregation but equal facilities. The NAACP attorney who took her case required that she seek desegregation, not equity in education. Johns' case became one of the five cases in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Ultimately, *Brown v. Board of Education* did little to remove or prevent racialized injustice in education. Sixty-seven years later, Columbia County, the county abutting the Georgia county I live in, remains under desegregation orders. A 2016-2017 national report found,

> The typical white student attends a school that is 69% white...Additionally, more than 40% of black and Latino students attend intensely segregated schools, where at least 9 in 10 students are people of color. Most of these schools have a majority of low-income students, which a 2016 government report concluded harmed students' educational opportunities. The percentages of black and Latino students in intensely segregated schools have risen since the late 1980s after the Reagan Justice Department stopped

> asking courts to implement busing as a remedy in desegregation cases. (Frankenberg, 2019, para. 13, 17-18)

I can't help but wonder where we would be today if the attorneys in Johns' case and the other four cases had argued for equity instead of desegregation. The compromise, one they felt necessary, plagues us today.

Now, let us return to Boggs. From the 1930s onward, Boggs continued to thrive but the weights of racism, the Presbyterian Church's continual closing of schools, and the false narrative of *Brown v. Board of Education* were ongoing, worrisome burdens felt by administration and faculty alike. When Mr. Charles W. Francis, Jr. completed his master's thesis on Boggs Academy in 1967, he wrote, "The essential import of this study concerns itself with the establishment and continuation of Boggs Academy as a pioneer, church-related educational institution for Negroes in Burke County and some community factors which influenced its origin and subsequent operation" (p. 98).

By 1970, the need for a new vision or a revision of the school in light of current times was evident. The minutes from a Boggs task group meeting read,

> We have gained some understanding of the dynamics of the region and the present and potential influence and impact of Boggs Academy in Burke County in the Southeast. In Burke County, the white landowners and the large-scale farmers will continue to dominate the economy, oppress the poor, and hold the line of racial change. The public schools are in deep trouble. Society, as a whole, is in deep trouble as the gulf between rich and poor grows wider. Institutions controlled by Blacks can bring life and help. The agents of change and renewal in large sections of Georgia, including Burke County, are

> Black people and Black institutions. Change and renewal will come only when Blacks press and exercise corporate power.
>
> The needs of the region are staggering. The housing in some parts of the county and the bottoms of Waynesboro is even worse than Joyce Odum's [a news editor for The True Citizen] powerful descriptions. The lack of leadership in the public sector, especially public education, and the neglect of fundamental education for adults, the appalling lack of medical care, the continued brain drain, are exemplified in this statistic- 94 % of high school graduates leave and never return. (A New Image-A new function for Boggs, 1970, p. 1)

The task group's vision for Boggs included becoming an ABC center. A Better Chance, a non-profit organization founded in 1963, initially sought to recruit gifted Black boys for a college preparatory program. They went through a summer training program and then had their private school tuition covered by the organization. Boggs *did* become an ABC school and the stories of the alumni who attended on ABC scholarships are powerful. (I will share their stories in the coming pages.) The task group also suggested the creation of a "New Careers Program" aimed at developing the student vocational skills and a "Community Oriented Program" designed to meet the needs of local adults of all ages (A New Image-A new function for Boggs, 1970, p. 1.)

Early in 1973, after 69 years of financial support, The Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church of the United States of America pulled its funding from Boggs Academy. While digging through the Boggs Academy archive housed in the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, a document printed on blue paper caught my attention.

As previously mentioned, when the doors of Boggs Academy closed a large number of documents and artifacts were sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society for safekeeping. When

the time came for me to examine the Boggs archives, the pandemic was raging. As a result, I was only granted a few hours of access to the Society. For five hours, I stood, masked and gloved, over a large, antique wooden table. At a near frantic pace, I photographed anything and everything that seemed significant on the two rolling carts piled high with yellowed boxes. It took months to work my way through the images I collected. Repeatedly, I was amazed by what emerged on my computer screen and over and over again, awed by the story of Boggs Academy… Returning to the blue document, the title page reads,

An Examination of White Presbyterian Attitudes

Toward the Black Christian

by

Bud Hearn

for

Dr. Cruz

Interim Project January 1970

> "I see white teeth in a black face.
> I see black eyes in a white face.
> Help us to see persons, Jesus - not a black person
> or a white person, a red person, or a yellow person,
> but human persons." (Hearn, 1970, p. 14)

I'm unsure of this document's exact relationship to Boggs Academy. However, as we consider the end of the Presbyterian Church's support, the spirit of Bud Hearn has much to say.

Certainly, the reading of the pronouncements from the General Assembly cites the noble intentions of the Church and expresses the deep concerns felt by many. And yet the gap

> between such statements, and their actualization at the grass root levels of the Christian life is large indeed. The revolutionary message of Christian scripture is blunted by the cautious and conservative nature of man. Where greatest action has come from the black man, not the white man. One can understand the impatience and skepticism of blacks toward the white Church. In truth, it seems that salvation for black men can only come from their own institutions. Certainly, the white Presbyterian Church has not applied its message in the context of black frustrations and needs. Pride can be taken by the Presbyterian Church for its high standards, especially in the field of education; somehow, however, these standards have failed to do business with a people who have been stoned, whipped with horse and cattle prods, spit upon, and mocked. (Hearn, 1970, p. 14)

In 1973, the Boggs Academy Board of Trustees received the deed for the property and all improvements. One alumni recalled Dr. Thornton was eager for the school to gain its autonomy and may have pushed the transfer before replacement funding was secured. Three years later, a New York Times article on Boggs Academy, quotes Dr. Thornton,

> We're doing a private job, but we're doing it in a different manner and with a different constituency. Our fundraising becomes more and more difficult as our autonomy grows. Too, the fact that we are dedicated to minority education at a time when the thrust is toward an integrated setting raises some difficulties in the minds of some who would be disposed to give to us. (King, 1976, para. 20)

It appears that with integration and desegregation, White America felt it had given more than enough to the Black cause.

A 1982 article in the *Albany Sunday Herald* promotes the work of the Academy, often quoting Richard S. Stone, the Boggs Academy Recruitment officer. Stone notes the institution's

annual tuition was $3500 but the actual cost of educating each student was $7,800 per year. At the time the school was still offering scholarships and financial aid. The operating budget was $900,000. In 1982, there were 135 students enrolled and a faculty-student ratio of 14-1. Per Stone, the school's additional funding was being provided by local churches, corporations, and individuals. (Keadle, 1982, n.p.) Without considering the financial detriment of scholarships and financial aid, the institution needed a minimum of $580,500 to educate its students.

Another article, published in 1982 by the Augusta Chronicle, further depicts the financial state of Boggs.

> With integration, many of the students Boggs would have attracted chose instead to attend public school and rising tuition costs also have discouraged enrollment. In response, the school has mounted a three-year 75th-anniversary fund drive to raise $1.5 million. The money will be used for scholarship aid, to supplement teacher salaries, to help balance the budget, and to renovate two dormitories. Boggs officials hope that will keep the academy moving forward and serving generations to come, continuing a goal begun long ago with a dream and two acres of land. (Powers, 1982, n. p.)

In '82, they developed a fascinating three-year hail Mary plan. One aspect of the plan called for the re-creation of the animal husbandry program with the hope of generating income through the selling of livestock. Dr. Clarence Chestnut, head of Boggs agricultural program, received 17 goats from Heifer Project International. The goats were donated to clear 1,236 acres of land as well as the land surrounding the 25-acre pond (n.a., 1982). In March of 1983, after the land was cleared, Heifer Project International donated 60 head of cattle (McCall, 1983, p. 2a). In addition to the husbandry program, the school planned to sell 200 acres of timber as part of its agricultural

program. The last aspect of the plan almost seems worthy of a drum roll. According to Reverend Joseph Donchez, director of development,

> The school will breed nine Arabian Stallions worth $30,000 each. A Chicago horse broker is donating the horses in April…The school has received promise of assistance from local extension agents, and a vocational agricultural teacher will train the students. (McCall, 1983, p. 2a)

Sadly, the horses never arrived, possibly because the writing was on the wall. Despite grasping at every available straw, in May of 1984, distinguished alumni, Dr. J. Oscar McCloud gave the final Boggs Academy commencement speech. In a conversation with Dr. McCloud, he recalled, "talking about the commencement as a 'beginning.' Maybe the context was that while that occasion was the end of Boggs Academy as it had been known, it was the beginning of something new for those who were graduating."

Gambian student, Mo Ndow, was the valedictorian of the final senior class. These are his reflections,

> Most of the students were fully aware of the financial challenges the school faced. The administration was transparent and creative. The amazing thing is that the quality of service and standards were never compromised. They made every effort to keep the doors open. Unfortunately, the economic challenges that affected the country were too big for Boggs to sustain. Families had to prioritize sending their children to a private school or paying their mortgage.
>
> The standards at Boggs were excellent on every level for every student. Beside academic excellence, the life lessons were unmatched. The way we dressed, going to worship service before class every morning and church every Sunday, study hall time, leadership

> training, vocational training, and the one-on-one interaction with every faculty, staff, janitors, all set Boggs Academy apart. When you survived and graduated you were prepared for excellence on every level. Boggs Academy closing was a great loss to Blacks in America, the African continent, and Burke County. Boy, do I wish I could have given that experience to my children. (Personal communication, October 9, 2021)

The Lost Voices

On October 14, 2021, I received this Facebook message from Hillary-Brooke Francis,

> Um...I'm sure you know but I was wondering if you included the class of 1980's commencement speaker in the Boggs Academy portion of your dissertation. Dorothy Height was a BIG DEAL & was the President of The National Council of Negro Women. (H. Francis, personal communication)

I responded to Ms. Francis with,

> I don't know whether to laugh or cry. This is going to sound crazy...This weekend, I sent the history of Boggs section off to my chair but I've had an uneasy feeling for the past two days. As much as this work is about telling untold histories, I feel I've managed to quiet the Black female voice. I'd planned to discuss the women more in the alumni chapter. The history chapter was just so long, getting through the presidents took forever. Yet, your message is the message I needed to hear.

I was not aware of Dr. Height's commencement speech. I would have loved to have heard her words. The choice of bringing one of the most prominent Black, female civil rights activists to give an address at Boggs in 1980 speaks volumes about the mentality of the administration and faculty.

From Lucy Laney and Mary Rice Phelps forward, women played a significant role in the history of Boggs Academy. For that matter, Black women played a significant role in Black education from the nation's inception through desegregation. It is interesting to consider my omission of the female voice in this chapter. This is a curious example of how hegemonic thinking is ingrained in our psyches. Even in my attempt to write against oppressive power structures and inequity, hegemony slipped into my thinking and in turn, my work. I was telling history the way it's almost always told, chronologically with a focus on male leadership. Yes, this chapter differs from traditional US history in that it focuses on a Black institution and Black males but I still managed to follow the societal guidelines for documenting history. Yes, Boggs did have male leadership but women equally contributed to her success. bell hooks writes (1981), "Feminism…is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels--sex, race, and class, to name a few--and a commitment to reorganizing U.S. society" (p.194).

CHAPTER 3

DEAD RINGERS

Savannah, Georgia is considered to be the most haunted city in America. The city is literally built on top of the dead. Countless remains are located beneath the city's streets and structures. During the 1820 yellow fever epidemic, people were dying in droves. Graves were hastily dug because it was believed even the dead to could spread the fever. Yellow fever often caused people to go into a coma and people thought to be dead were being buried alive. They began tying long strings to the wrists of the dead. The strings were then tied to above-ground bells. The hope was if they woke in the grave and began to move about the bell would signal the watchman and he could dig them out, hence the sayings "dead ringer" and "saved by the bell."

Thus far, we've considered the ghosts and phantoms that haunt the story of Boggs Academy and now another group of beings must be given space to speak, the dead ringers. The dead ringers are educators/curriculum scholars of color whose voices must be granted space to speak truth to the dominant discourse. Throughout US history, the Black intellectual educational perspective has been buried under the work of white male scholars. Beverly Gordon (1993) explains,

> It is of signal importance that while there is voluminous literature written about the education of African Americans in the first decades of this century, the extensive literature written *by* African-American scholars and educators on this subject is neither represented nor referenced in the dominant educational literature. (p. 266)

I can't imagine the frustration felt by these scholars. I can't imagine having things to say about the education of my people, *of my children*, and not being granted space to speak. When we allow voices to be ignored or buried, we perpetuate the notion that academia is comprised of

White males and other discourses simply don't exist. In so doing, we fail *all* our future students. In fact, we fail our nation's future. "Our failure to understand how racism undergirds educational institutions will ultimately lead to further racial polarization" (Castenell, 1992, p. 5). This chapter is a taste of Black educational scholarship. It is not meant to be read as a literature review or criticism. Additionally, I am not attempting to rescue the scholars' voices but to consider their ideas and perspectives on the education of their people. The necessity of considering subaltern academic voices is not limited to the Black voice or the field of education. It is time academia, at large, intentionally turns towards BIPOC voices and listens carefully to their research and scholarship.

The Black Curriculum Orientations of William H. Watkins

Before engaging with specific scholars, it's necessary to gain an understanding of the history of Black curriculum orientations. Such a consideration is foundational in order to understand their perspective and recognize their impact and/or relationship with Boggs Academy. William Watkins describes seven orientations of Black curriculum that have occurred throughout the nation's history: functionalism, accommodationism, liberalism, reconstructionism, Afrocentrism, Black nationalism, and social reconstructionism (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995).

Functionalism, per Watkins, describes the education Blacks received during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was "characterized by self-effort, religious altruism, and the 'involvement of benevolent Whites'" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 320). It was basic, highly oral, and shaped by the confines of slavery. Functionalism was preparation for life. While Black curriculum orientations changed over time, an element of functionalism has always remained.

Accommodationism is best exemplified by the work and thinking of Booker T. Washington. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Washington believed vocational education coupled with training in the virtues, particularly patience, would win the respect of Whites and result in Black acceptance in society. This educational approach was strongly opposed by W. E. B. Du Bois. Du Bois (1990) writes,

> Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,—
>
> First, political power,
>
> Second, insistence on civil rights,
>
> Third, higher education of Negro youth,—
>
> and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. (pp. 42, 43)

Like functionalism, accommodationism continues to play a role in curriculum development. According to Donaldo Macedo,

> Schools in the so-called open and free societies face formidable paradoxical tensions. On the one hand, they are charged with the responsibility of teaching the virtues of democracy, and, on the other hand, they are complicit with the inherent hypocrisy of contemporary democracies, where, according to Noam Chomsky, the term democracy 'refers to a system of government in which elite elements based in the business community control the state by virtue of their dominance of the private society, while the population observes quietly. So understood, democracy is a system of elite decision and public ratification, as in the United States itself. Correspondingly, popular involvement in the formation of public policy is considered a serious threat.' (Chomsky, 2000, p. 1)

The necessity of accommodationism, education with the intent of adjusting the subdominant to their political and economic subordination, is evident in the current battle over Critical Race Theory. The notion of discussing the racism that historically and presently plagues the nation has terrified a portion of our population, as it always has to some degree. Power is a high-stakes game that requires the involvement of the elite at every level. Phelps, Laney, W. E. B. Du Bois, and, others we will soon discuss, took an honest look at the state of the nation and chose to take Black education into their own hands.

Before continuing with Watkins' curriculum orientations, we must stop for a brief discussion of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Several months ago, on a local Facebook page, a CRT argument erupted and the two sides were divided by race. The description of CRT being purported by those against it was grossly inaccurate. I posted a brief synopsis of the history and meaning of Critical Race Theory. My brief, non-partisan, fact-filled post opened a hornets nest. I was shocked by the angry, hate-filled responses of fellow Augustans. I received horrible messages and was even stopped twice in public. One gentleman went so far as to suggest I was faking my "southerness" and I was really a liberal, communist Yankee. That brought a laugh. I digress, simply put, Critical Race Theory states that racism is embedded in our social institutions, institutions such as public education, healthcare, the criminal justice system, the labor market, etc. CRT is not saying Whites are racist. It claims our institutions are laced with racism. As a nation, we have become tribal in our political perspectives and lost our understanding that our political preferences are not our identity. This trend toward two-party tribalism disrupts our objectivity, thinking, and creativity while driving us further and further from democracy. Serres (2008) writes

> There can be no verbal squabble if a gigantic noise, coming from a new source, covers up every voice with its static…We never talk anymore, that's for sure. To keep us from it, our civilization sets motors and loudspeakers screaming…The phenomenal spectacle of the noisy and inflamed dialogue still hides them and distracts our attention. The debate hides the true enemy. (pp. 8 & 9)

It only takes clicking through our news channels to witness the enflaming noise that drives us from our best selves. Critical Race Theory brings to light our nation's inequalities, both historic and present. It isn't about blaming us (Whites) for the past but simply about asking us to seek a more equitable and just future. Many argue that instead of focusing on CRT, we need to be focusing on loving others, yes and no. Yes, we should *always* focus on loving others but love won't fix systemic racism. Systemic change fixes systemic racism. This draws me back to the heart of this research, the South African philosophy of ubuntu, the notion that I am because you are. Ubuntu is grounded in the belief that if you diminish, I diminish. When we take time to know our Other and let them become our Beloved, our natural response is to want the best for them just as we would for our own family and loved ones. At the moment, I am subbing in a middle school science classroom. The students are sitting quietly at their desks completing projects on soil erosion. Imagine if I said I wanted this class period to be an enjoyable, positive experience for 15 of the 25 students or roughly 60 percent of the class. You would likely believe I am a terrible teacher and should be removed from the sub-list. We know the best classroom experience occurs when the teacher wants what is best for the students individually *and collectively*. When we seek to lift everyone, we all benefit.

Returning now to the Black curriculum orientations as described by Watkins. One of the few encouraging turns in Black education occurred at the end of the nineteenth century and the

beginning of the twentieth century. Liberal orientations created space for institutions like Boggs Academy to be born. Black educational bastions sprung up across the south. Fisk University and Morehouse College began during this time. Often, the schools were supported by church denominations and Christian philanthropists. This orientation sought to provide excellent liberal arts education while improving societal conditions. Watkins (1993) writes,

> Black liberal education differed little from traditional liberal thought. A clear connection to Deweyan themes is evident. The curriculum was designed to develop the student's analytical and critical faculties and to help students become worldly, tolerant, and capable of significant societal participation. Black liberal education placed much significance on leadership. It strove to educate teachers, preachers, civil servants, and others who would be committed to the ideals of the liberal democratic state; these ideals encompassed gradual change, electoral politics, and planned societal transformation. (pp. 328-329)

Before Brown v. Board of Education, there were over 100 private Black boarding schools in the U.S. The boarding schools and colleges consistently demonstrated the power of Black liberal education.

Black Nationalism began in the late 1700s. "Nationalist and separatist 'views were linked to international slavery, colonization, the debasement of Africa, and the mistreatment of African peoples scattered throughout the world" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 321). Separatists, like Malcolm X, promoted the creation of a separate society within a society. They desired economic self-sufficiency and even self-government at times. They also had distinct opinions on the state of American education. In a speech given in 1964, Malcolm X stated,

> A first step in the program to end the existing system of racist education is to demand that the 10 percent of the schools the Board of Education will not include in its plan be turned

> over to and run by the Afro-American community itself. Since they say that they can't improve these schools, why should you and I who live in the community, let these fools continue to run and produce this low standard of education? No, let them turn those schools over to us. Since they say they can't handle them, nor can they correct them, let us take a whack at it. What do we want? We want Afro-American principals to head these schools. We want Afro-American teachers in these schools. Meaning we want black principals and black teachers with some textbooks about black people. We want textbooks written by Afro-Americans that are acceptable to our people before they can be used in these schools. The Organization of Afro-American Unity will select and recommend people to serve on local school boards where school policy is made and passed on to the Board of Education. And this is very important. Through these steps, we will make the 10 percent of the schools that we take over educational showplaces that will attract the attention of people from all over the nation. Instead of them being schools turning out pupils whose academic diet is not complete, we can turn them into examples of what we can do ourselves once given an opportunity. (Blackpast, 2007, para. 36-39)

I believe Malcolm X's approach to education is important and will return to it at greater length in the final chapter. However, for now, it's important to view Boggs Academy through this lens. While Boggs didn't hold to the tenets of Black nationalism, the institution does provide a working example of what Malcolm X describes.

A somewhat similar Black curriculum orientation is Afrocentrism. This orientation focuses on the perspectives and history of people of African descent. It seeks to reconstruct Black culture while pushing against the Eurocentric curriculum. Those promoting this orientation believe that the current curriculum educates and empowers Whites but does not necessarily

educate and empower the nation's Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Afrocentric Asa Hilliard et al. (1990) identifies six failures of the Eurocentric curriculum.

> 1) The history of Africa before the slave trade is omitted; 2) the history of the people of the African diaspora (including, for instance, Fiji, the Philippines, and Dravidian India) are ignored; 3) cultural differences rather than similarities among Africans in the diaspora are underlined; 4) the struggle against racism is insufficiently communicated; 5) analyses of the global systems of racial oppression are under-taught; and 6) the history of the peoples of Africa is omitted. (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 322)

Continuing along a similar vein, the social reconstructionism orientation seeks to solve the nation's problems through education. George S. Counts (1932/1978), a social reconstructionist, writes,

> If Progressive Education is to be genuinely progressive, it must emancipate itself from the influence of this class, face squarely and courageously every social issue, come to grips with life in all of its stark reality, establish an organic relation with the community, develop a realistic and comprehensive theory of welfare, fashion a compelling and challenging vision of human destiny, and become less frightened than it is today at the bogies of imposition and indoctrination. (p. 7)

As I reread the words of these dead ringers, I can't help but feel frustrated by the relevancy of their writing. What does this say about us as a society if the issues that plague us do not disappear but merely evolve? Fellow reconstructionist, Theodore Brameld, states,

> We must forego narrow nationalistic bias and embrace the community in a worldwide sense. This will involve world government and a world civilization in which peoples of

> all races, all nations, all colors, and all creeds join together in the common purpose of a peaceful world under the banner of international order. (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 800)

What if we listened? What if we chose to move toward each other instead of swearing allegiance to our political tribes and our nations? What if we heeded George S. Counts' advice and set about the "task of creating a vision of a future America immeasurably more just and noble and beautiful than the America of today" (Counts, 1932/1978, p. 51)? What if we pledged allegiance to humanity before a flag?

In Watkins' seven orientations, we see evidence of the dominant culture's attempt to control Black education and the varied attempts of Black resistance. To grasp the true significance of Boggs Academy, we have to consider the institution contextually. The coming pages are space for dead ringers of past and present. Those whose voices rang out during the years of Boggs's existence and today.

W. E. B. Du Bois

Reading W. E. B. Du Bois is a breathtaking experience. His words are powerful and beautifully poetic. In his 1903 work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois (1990) includes a chapter about Georgia titled, "Of the Black Belt" (pp. 83-99) where he invites readers to join him on a fictitious Jim Crow train car ride through the state. As the landscape changes outside the train car windows, Du Bois unpacks the racism of the state.

> Out of the North, the train thundered, and we woke to see the crimson soil of Georgia stretching away bare and monotonous right and left. Here and there lay straggling, unlovely villages, and lean men loafed leisurely at the depots; then again came the stretch of pines and clay. Yet we did not nod, nor weary of the scene for this is historic ground…And a little past Atlanta, to the southwest, is the land of the Cherokees, and

> there, not far from where Sam Hose was crucified, you may stand on a spot which is to-day the centre of the Negro problem, — the centre of those nine million men who are America's dark heritage from slavery and the slave trade. (Du Bois, 1990, p. 83).

In this work, Du Bois describes the race problem historically and in his time. Via elegant and artistic rhetoric, he encourages his Black brothers and sisters while, simultaneously, demonstrating their intelligence and capability.

> I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line, I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls…I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil. Is this the life you grudge us, O knightly America? Is this the life you long to change into the dull red hideousness of Georgia? Are you so afraid lest peering from this high Pisgah, between Philistine and Amalekite, we sight the Promise Land? (Du Bois, 1990, p. 82).

Nearly a hundred and twenty years have passed since Du Bois wrote these words. Du Bois' words leave me wondering what *are* the real roots of the ongoing racism that plagues the nation. Looking into my own heart, I would say self-interest and selfishness. I once heard a White person ask, "If racism isn't a big deal, would you willingly swap lives with a Black person?" It's an excellent question and, if we're honest, the answer likely exposes the racism within us.

Lucy Craft Laney and Mary McLeod Bethune

Reverend John Lawrence Phelps, the founder of Boggs Academy, was born in 1866, two years before W. E. B. Du Bois. Phelps would have been well aware of the work of Du Bois, his approach to education exemplifies it. In 1911, formerly mentioned Lucy Craft Laney, friend and mentor of John and Mary Phelps, wrote a letter to Du Bois asking him for financial advice

regarding the Haines Institute. Interestingly, she tells him of her distinct frustration with Booker T. Washington. A portion of the letter reads,

> Do you know anyone who will help us? I want to raise $3,000 to get out of debt this amount will make me even with the world. I had hoped to raise it here among the tourists but Dr. Washington came and rallied all the money-giving people for Tabernacle Church and Walker Institute. I was so unfortunate several years ago as to incur the displeasure of Dr. Washington. Since then he has not allowed anyone to give us money. He stopped Mr. [?] and Mr. Carnegie from helping us and prevented Miss Stokes from giving what she had led me to believe she would give. (Letter from Lucy C. Laney to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 26, 1911)

After the death of Booker T. Washington, Laney was one of the leaders Du Bois selected to assist him in charting a new course for Black America (McCluskey, 2014, p. 25). It's important to recognize the impact of Du Bois' thinking on both Laney and Phelps. As I mentioned before, it is interesting to consider Phelps' marriage of industrial education and a rich liberal arts education, one worthy of Du Bois' stamp of approval. It's as if he took elements of Washington's industrial approach to education, united them with a rich liberal arts experience, and, in so doing, stripped away the original hegemonic underpinnings.

Excellent education is like a dandelion, it produces countless seeds that spread and multiply. Lucy Craft Laney's impact on the lives of John and Mary Phelps impacted thousands of students, students she never personally taught but whose lives were transformed. In 1895, Laney mentored future educator Mary McLeod Bethune. Bethune decided to start a school of her own. After examining Florida, she decided to build a school in Daytona. A book for young adults describes her decision this way,

> The river glistening like silver in the sun, the palmettos and evergreen oaks hung with moss, the low rolling hills—incredibly beautiful! She strolled back to Colored Town and stood in the midst of the human exploitation. Deep down inside of her, a voice seemed to say, 'This is the spot. This is the place for your school.'" (Pearce, 1951, p. 85)

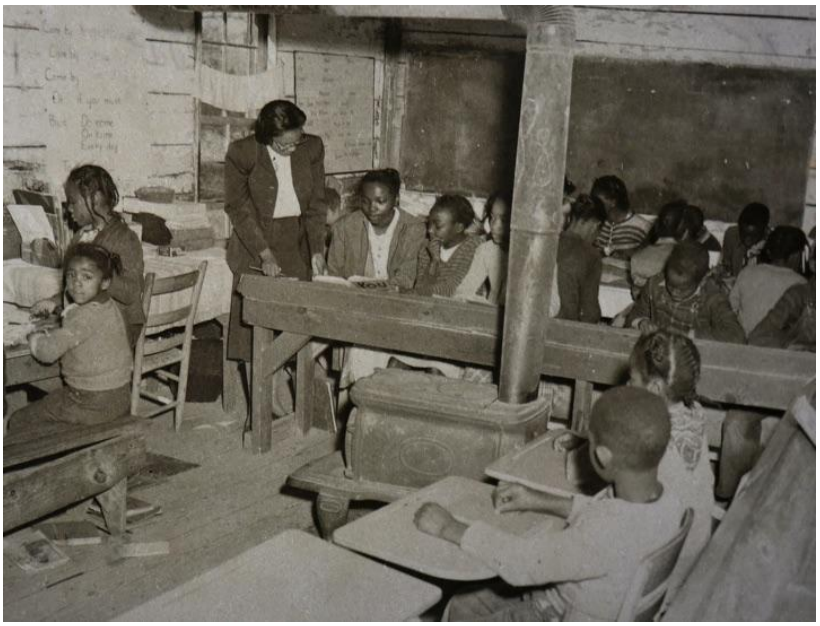
Bethune arrived at Dayton at the age of twenty-nine, determined to create a school for destitute Black girls. Funny enough, "folklore has it that a local minister gave Bethune an old engine bell and told her to 'go ring you a school" (McCluskey, 1994, p. 205). I get emotional each time I read her recollection of those days. I can almost hear her bell ringing.

> We burned logs and used charred splinters as pencils, and mashed elderberries for ink. I begged strangers for a broom, a lamp, and a bit of cretonne to put around the packing case which served as my desk. I haunted the city dump and trash piles behind hotels, retrieving discarded linen, and kitchenware, cracked dishes, broken chairs, and pieces of old lumber. Everything was scoured and mended. This was part of the training—to salvage, to reconstruct, to make bricks without straw…Students and teachers worked side by side building a purposeful, self-sufficient community. (Bethune as cited in McCluskey, 2014, p. 60)

Holly Hill, Florida, about 6 miles from Daytona, has the history of the city's school building structures on its community website. While they fail to mention who the schools were built for and who they weren't built for, they do offer a rich description of the buildings. Unlike the school Bethune literally scraped together, the schools for the White children of Holly Hill were constantly being upgraded and rebuilt.

Before we continue to examine Bethune. We must stop and consider the significance of physical structures. Countless studies have proven that the physical learning environment has an

impact on student learning. There remains an alarming difference between schools in poverty-stricken areas and schools in wealthy areas. The difference is a portrait of what we, as a nation, value and what we don't. It is interesting to consider the rudimentary physical conditions Laney, Bethune, and Phelps grappled with during the early years of their institutions *and* the amazing, transformative educations they still provided. I note this not as a justification for lack of equity in school buildings and grounds but because it points to the Black desire for education and the determination of some to provide it. The image below is from the early years of Boggs Academy.



As I write this, I hear the societal phantoms, "If students were able to gain an excellent education in such poor conditions, why aren't students of color successful today? The conditions, while they might not be equal, are far better than those just described. Maybe kids back then wanted it more than they do today." I believe the answer is segregation. At one point in my teaching career, I taught alongside Mrs. Julia Joiner. I taught pre-kindergarten and she taught third grade. My son attended the school and was fortunate enough to have Mrs. Joiner as his teacher. At Parent Night in August of 2014, I sat at my son's desk and listened as my colleague

shared her plans for the year. She began by explaining that her students were "her babies." It was clear she meant it. After years of teaching, my pedagogical practice changed in a blink. When a teacher or an administrator sees their students as their children, it changes *everything*. Suddenly, you are truly in their camp. One's discipline, level of expected success, affection displayed, and personal effort all undergo radical change. I use the "my babies" approach even when teaching at the graduate level. It allows me to see students as family. It causes me to pause before I grade, to listen more carefully, and critique with gentleness and encouragement. This mentality allows grace and patience to bubble up when a student misses a due date or bumbles an assignment. While segregated Black schools struggled greatly, they had autonomy over their education. Administrators and students recognized the struggle and many determinedly found ways to overcome it. When students arrived at Boggs Academy, it was a given they would succeed. They weren't tested for learning disabilities or funneled into educational tracks. They were taught. Yes, some needed more help than others but their success was never doubted. On the flip, I have listened to numerous Boggs alumni describe their experiences with integration. Not one ever told me it was a positive experience. Pulitzer prize-winning poet, Gwendolyn Brooks (1949) words it this way.

> What shall I give my children? who are poor,
> Who are adjudged the leastwise of the land,
> Who are my sweetest lepers, who demand
> No velvet and no velvety velour;
> But who have begged me for a brisk contour,
> Crying that they are quasi, contraband
> Because unfinished, graven by a hand

> Less than angelic, admirable or sure.
>
> My hand is stuffed with mode, design, device.
>
> But I lack access to my proper stone.
>
> And plenitude of plan shall not suffice
>
> Nor grief nor love shall be enough alone
>
> To ratify my little halves who bear
>
> Across an autumn freezing everywhere. (p. 318)

Physical structures matter but the key to educational success isn't found in cinder block walls, it's found in the hearts of the teachers, administrators, and community.

Returning now to Bethune, after establishing the school, she recruited excellent Black female educators from around the nation. Her school provided the students with both an academic and vocational education. Tuition was what a parent could afford and she accepted payment in goods as well. Bethune, taking her cue from Laney, offered community outreach programs. Speakers and artists were brought to Daytona to share their work with the Black community. After a heartbreaking experience with one of her students, Bethune went on to build the first hospital for Blacks in St. Augustine.

> When one of her students became critically ill with appendicitis, she begged a white physician to admit her to the all-white hospital. Bethune later appeared at the door of the hospital, but a nurse ordered her to the back. 'I thrust her aside and found my little girl segregated in a corner of the porch behind the kitchen. Even my toes clenched with rage,' she later recalled. (McCluskey, 2014, p. 63)

Bethune created an outreach program for children trapped in the horrific turpentine camps and supported Black-owned businesses by hiring them to work at the school. (McCluskey, 2014).

Bethune's school eventually became Bethune-Cookman University. Mary McLeod Bethune's vision and determination impacted thousands of lives and permanently changed the city of Daytona. What's interesting about the dead ringers discussed thus far is that none of them designed an educational system that resembles what we have today. We will return to this point in a bit.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mary McLeod Bethune passed away in 1955, one year after Brown v. Board of Education, and one year after Martin Luther King became a leader in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1956, King addressed the National Committee for Rural Schools. In the speech, he suggests three reasons why segregation is evil. First, it inevitably brings inequality. Secondly, "equality is not only a matter of mathematics and geometry, but it's a matter of psychology" (King, 1956, para. 8) King (1956) explains it this way,

> Segregation is evil because it scars the soul of both the segregated and the segregator…Segregation is as injurious to the white man as it is to the Negro. The festering sore of segregation debilitates the segregated as well as the segregator. It gives the segregated a false sense of inferiority, and it gives the segregator a false sense of superiority. It is equally damaging. (para. 13)

Finally, segregation is evil because it strips humans of humanity. King recognized that segregation leads to the spectrality of the oppressed. With a nod towards Martin Buber, he states, "The segregated becomes merely a thing to be used, not a person to be respected…It substitutes an "I/It" relationship for the "I/Thou" relationship" (King, 1956, para. 15). As his speech continued, he called for those listening to give generously to support litigations, for new leaders to rise up, and for everyone to stand against segregation however and whenever they encounter

it. Today, school segregation is at an all time high. A 2017 study found, "Black children are five times as likely as white children to attend schools that are highly segregated by race and ethnicity…Black children are more than twice as likely as white children to attend high-poverty schools" (Garcia, 2020, para. 6 & 7). In Richmond County, Georgia, the county where I live, the student population is 83 % minority, predominantly Black, with an "average math proficiency score of 21%...[and] reading proficiency score of 26%" (Richmond County School District, para. 3 & 4.) Simply put, little has changed. I am going to return to this in the final chapter because I believe there is value in a deeper discussion of segregation. While we need to fight for educational equity, we must simultaneously be seeking to improve the education of the subaltern. Phelps, Laney, Bethune, Du Bois, etc. chose to work within the confines of the system *and* speak against it.

Carter B. Woodson

In 1933, Carter B. Woodson published, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Woodson, 2005). Carter G. Woodson, known as the "Father of Black History," published over a hundred articles and authored more than thirty books. In his seminal text, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Woodson, 1933/2005), Woodson critiques the education being offered to Blacks at the time. He posits the industrial curriculum failed to provide Blacks with the necessary tools to gain meaningful employment. Additionally, he argues classical education was merely a mental discipline because they were given limited opportunities to apply their knowledge outside of industrial labor. Woodson held that classical education resulted in Blacks turning away from their commitment to the uplift of their community. He critiqued the failure to teach "Negro" history. Woodson (2005) writes,

> You might study the history as it was offered in our system from the elementary school throughout the university, and you would never hear Africa mentioned except in the negative. You would never thereby learn that Africans first domesticated the sheep, goat, and cow, developed the idea of trial by jury, produced the first stringed instruments, and gave the world its greatest boom in the discovery of iron. You would never know that prior to the Mohammedan invasion about 1000 A.D. these natives in the heart of Africa had developed powerful kingdoms which were later organized as the Songhay Empire on the order of that of the Romans and boasting of similar grandeur. Unlike other people, then, the Negro, according to this point of view, was an exception to the natural plan of things, and he had no such mission as that of an outstanding contribution to culture. The status of the Negro, then, was justly fixed as that of an inferior. (p. 13)

Ultimately, Woodson calls for the end of miseducation and suggests a re-development of the curriculum, a burden he places directly on teachers and ministers. He doesn't call for the closing of the current Black colleges and universities but suggests they be completely re-tooled.

> We should not spend less money for the higher education of the Negro, but should redefine higher education as preparation to think and work out a program to serve the lowly rather than to live as an aristocrat…In theology, literature, social science, and education, however, radical reconstruction is necessary. The old worn-out theories as to man's relation to God and his fellowman, the system of thought which has permitted one man to exploit, oppress, and exterminate another and still be regarded as righteous must be discarded for the new thought of men as brethren and the idea of God as the lover of all mankind. (Woodson, 2005, p. 82).

Woodson's writing is honest, profound, and, again, shockingly relevant. He brings us back to ubuntu, the necessity of lifting others instead of focusing on personal gain. While he is writing to the Black community, his recommendations apply to education at large.

Anna Julia Cooper

When I applied to Georgia Southern University's Curriculum Studies program, I was required to produce a lengthy writing sample based on one of a handful of articles. The article I selected discussed the life and work of Anna Julia Cooper. In hindsight, I was likely drawn to the examination of Cooper because of my interest in Lucy Laney. Like Laney, Anna Julia Cooper, (1858-1964), sought to challenge the White world of power and privilege, focused on the uplift of her people, particularly her Black sisters, and believed that everyone was made in the likeness of God.

> When the image of God in human form, whether in marble or in clay, whether in alabaster or in ebony, is consecrated and inviolable, when men have been taught to look beneath the rags and grime, the pomp and pageantry of mere circumstance and have regard unto the celestial kernel uncontaminated at the core.when race, color, sex, condition, are realized to be the accidents, no the substance of life, and consequently as not obscuring or modifying the inalienable title to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness… then is mastered the science of politeness, the art of courteous contact, which is naught but the practical application of the principle of benevolence, the backbone and marrow of all religion; then the woman's lesson is taught and woman's cause is own—not the White woman nor the Black woman nor the red woman, but the cause of every man or woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong. (Cooper, 1998, p. 108)

Grounding her work in her belief in the sanctity and wonder of every human being, Cooper focused on educating those neglected by society.

> The old education made him a "hand," solely and simply. It deliberately sought to suppress or ignore the soul. We must, whatever else we do, insist on those studies which by the consensus of educators are calculated to train our people to think, which will give them the power of appreciation and make them righteous. In a word, we are building men, not chemists or farmers, or cooks, or soldiers, but men ready to serve the body politic in whatever avocation their talent is needed. (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 47).

Anna Julia Cooper believed in the transformative power of education. She would have believed in a Boggs Academy education, an education that sought to prepare students to be the best they could be and to serve their communities. She believed teachers, particularly Black teachers should be sages in their schools and communities. She felt educators should have extensive academic knowledge as well as an up-to-date knowledge of world affairs. At the same time, Cooper recognized a hidden handicap that plagued/plagues the lives of many Black educators. In the unpacking of the handicap, Cooper first clarifies she is not referring to the obvious handicaps such as,

> the exclusion from the very atmosphere of current life and thought, from lectures, plays, symphonies, oratorios, from airplanes, hotels, and even in some sections from public libraries and parks,—all this is well-known and bewailed from every pulpit and platform. (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 47)

That said, Cooper begins to describe the Black educators' diligence and desire for excellence, noting teachers are most often women. She describes the constant pressure they felt to stay on top of the latest curriculums and educational trends. She writes,

> All of which are commendable and highly necessary. But—the lectures and summer courses are unavoidably sketchy and packed in under pressure…Besides, a White man doesn't always mean all he says in a book, and hardly ever does all he suggests in a speech. A lecturer must sell his books…He naively admits the whole subject is in flux and never supposes any rational creature would try to do all it says and keep on doing it just as it says…And just there is where the conscientious teacher, sensitive over her 'standards' becomes unwittingly and innocently a handicap and a hindrance to the equally conscientious student. She insists that the 'Standard' (meaning the book) must be reached. She is sensitive about her 'material' (meaning the colored folk she has to carry along), sensitive about the quality of her work and the mark she is to get on it, and deep down sore about her color and the suffering that entails. She is determined there shall be no flies on her teaching—and there aren't, except that she gives herself no joy in the act and loses entirely all sense of humor in the process. (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 234)

For Cooper, a teacher's loss of their sense of humor is significant. At first blush, this may seem an odd point of concern in a field riddled with significant issues. However, the point she was driving at in 1930 remains relevant today. Cooper explains, "If she were on the other side of the color line she would laugh over the mistakes she now spends sleepless nights blue-penciling" (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 234). Black teachers remain bound by rigidity and often teach from a place of worry stemming from their sense of duty to uplift their people.

> Naturalness on the part of the students, initiative, and an easy give and take in discussing a thought or its application to life with a chance to focus it down to 'cases" is a thing too daring to be tolerated and must be summarily squelched as impudent and not duly respectful to teacher's opinions and decisions. *Thus saith the book*—and that puts the

> inviolable closure on all further debate…The trouble I suspect is that those who furnish the coin and 'suggest' the promotions in Negro Education are not themselves a-wearying and a-worrying to see any Renaissance or primal naissance of real thinking in Negro Schools, and yet God knows they need it. (Lemert & Bahn, 1998, p. 235)

While this could very well be true of Black educators today, I believe the forced loss of naturalness plagues many, if not all, K-12 public school educators today. Our forced curriculum, strict adherence to standards, teaching for scores on standardized tests, and scripted curriculums strip the necessary humor and naturalness from education. These elements deprive teachers of personal pedagogical cultivation and prevent students from growing and engaging healthily.

Anna Julia Cooper willingly chose the hard road for the sake of her people. She stood bravely against the mistreatment of Blacks while simultaneously acting as a teacher, writer, speaker, and school administrator. The daughter of a slave, Cooper was one of the first Black women to graduate from college. She earned a Masters degree from Oberlin College in 1884 and a Ph.D. in Latin from the Sorbonne in Paris with a dissertation titled, *L'attitude de la France à l'égard l'esclavage pendant la revolution* (Cooper, 2017).

Nannie Helen Burroughs

One of Anna Julia Cooper's students at M Street high school in Washington, D.C. was Nannie Helen Burroughs. Burroughs was an educator, activist, school founder, and administrator. She was a brilliant orator and feminist. She fought her way into the male-dominated discussion on the betterment of the Black race. Despite her staunch feminist beliefs, she was a dear friend of Booker T. Washington and saw value in industrial training and moral teaching. In 1909, three years after the opening of Boggs, Burroughs started the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C. (McCluskey, 1992). The school's

motto was, “We specialize in the wholly impossible” (McCluskey, 1992, p. 102). Burroughs saw through societal lies and the lies of White Christianity. She grasped the weight and challenge of the countercultural task of educating Black girls but took up the burden anyway. In “How does it feel to be a Negro,” Burroughs (1950) writes,

> We look down at our lashed bodies, bleeding feet, and ravished souls. ‘Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chastening rod.’ We move staggeringly slow through relentless race prejudice, age-old, and as ‘black as a pit from pole to pole.’ We look with eyes of faith beyond our human tragedy and see God, who ‘is no respecter of persons’ sitting high and exalted and we hear His voice saying, ‘Lo I am with you.’ We try again. The voice of God sets our unconquerable souls on fire. We sing, ‘I feel like going on,’ and we go. Every noble impulse within us is awakened, charged, and super-charged with divine fire. We feel like a man among men. We do not care what men think, do or say—with God on our side we feel that we are their match. We know that in the last round, character and not color—right and not race triumphs.
>
> We stand up and put our faith in the ultimate triumph of justice over the world, the flesh, and the devil. We feel like living and working in a way that will discredit every lie that has ever been written, told, or implied about the innate inferiority of the Negro….We feel that our divine mission in the world is to join other noble souls who are working to build a Christian social order in which respect for human personality will be the dominating virtue. We feel eminently superior to those who waste their lives trying to ‘keep the Negro in his place,’ or trying to break his spirit or penalize him because God saw fit to make him Black.

> Wrong attitudes grow out of ignorance. Being a normal, decent aspiring Negro makes you feel that it is your duty to help educate the ignorant in both races, by right living, and helping to teach the truth about races.

These words should give every White, Christian American pause. Phantoms want us to buy into the myth of American exceptionalism, They want our chests to swell with pride as we recount our nation's history. They want us to believe that the United States is uniquely virtuous, a city on a hill, a beacon of light in a dark world. Yet, we are the lashers of bodies, the source of bloodied feet, and the ravishers of souls. My ancestors were the reason Nannie Helen Burroughs cried out to God. The divine fire that gave her the strength to fight each day for her Black sisters and brothers did so because of the horrific sin that plagued (and in many ways continues to plague) this "great" nation. Once again, we mustn't forget, Boggs Academy existed solely because of racism.

German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer spent a year in New York before returning to Germany in 1931. The majority of his free time was spent in Harlem. Reggie Williams (2014), author of *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, writes,

> Bonhoeffer became a lay leader at Abyssinian Baptist Church, where he encountered a tradition of Jesus and a communal experience that stressed attention to concrete historical realities and gave him a model for *Stellvertretung*, the coordination of all of life under the gospel. (p. 77)

Bonhoeffer's Christology was formed during his time at Abyssinian and in Harlem. He came to believe in a Jesus who stands with the oppressed and resists alongside them. In a letter home, Bonhoeffer describes what he witnessed,

> The separation of Whites from Blacks in the southern states really does make a rather shameful impression…The way southerners talk about Negroes is simply repugnant, and in this regard, the pastors are no better than the others…It is a bit unnerving that in a country with so inordinately many slogans about brotherhood, peace, and so on, such things continue completely uncorrected. (Williams, 2014, p. 80)

In 1942, just before he was taken away by the Gestapo, Bonhoeffer described the importance of learning to see from below.

> It remains an experience of incomparable value that we have for once learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcasts, the subjects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, and the reviled, in short from the perspective of the suffering…that we come to see matters great and small, happiness and misfortune, strength and weakness with new eyes; that clearer, freer, more incorruptible; that we learn, indeed, that personal suffering is a more useful key, a more fruitful principle than personal happiness for exploring the meaning of the world in contemplation and action. (Williams, 2014, p. 134)

Burroughs didn't have to learn to see from below, she was born in that space and operated from it. Below will continue to exist until those above choose to see the world from the perspective of the suffering. For those claiming Christianity, failing to attempt this perspective is failing to follow the teachings of Jesus. When Jesus taught in the temple for the first time, he read from the prophet Isaiah. His first words were,

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the

> blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (New International Versions, 2022, Luke 4:18.)

Jesus didn't begin with a promise of individualized salvation or a focus on global missions. He began with a focus on the poor, the oppressed, and those in captivity, as did Nannie Helen Burroughs.

At a women's convention in Philadelphia Burroughs was asked, "What does the Black race of America want?" (Burroughs, 2019, n.p.). She responded,

> We don't want your teachers, we have our teachers; we don't want your furniture, nor your clothes, we have plenty of clothes; we don't want your doctors nor your preachers; we have our doctors and our preachers; we don't want what you have earned; all we ask of you is a man's chance. What we ask is fair play and to be let alone. Talk about dividing the fund for education: that white men are paying for our education. Our education was paid for in advance by our mothers and fathers, our great-grandmothers, and our great grandfathers. (Burroughs, 2019, n.p.)

Friend, pastor, and scholar, Gregory Thompson, along with Duke Kwon (2021), write about reparations and, in so doing, describe White supremacy as theft.

> The simple fact is that American White supremacy originated in the theft of Black bodies, sustained itself through the theft of Black wealth, and justifies itself through the theft, the erasure, of truths that expose its lies. Theft is, therefore, not simply an expression of White supremacy; it is, rather, both its most elemental impulse and its most enduring effect…We also contend that this theft is best understood not merely in terms of wealth but in the more comprehensive terms of truth and power. (p. 20)

In her 2006 presidential address, Gloria Ladson-Billings argued the focus on the achievement gap is misplaced (p. 3). “We need to look at the ‘education debt’ that has accumulated over time. This debt comprises historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 3). Ladson-Billings’ argument is an interesting one. Metaphorically, she notes the similarities between the U.S. fiscal and educational situations. She states,

> Our focus on the achievement gap is akin to a focus on the budget deficit, but what is actually happening to African American and Latina/o students is really more like the national debt. We do not have an achievement gap; we have an education debt. (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 4)

The education debt she describes is the educational resources that should have been invested in students from the subaltern. The resulting deficit leads to social problems that require public resources. Resources that could be used to help solve the problem. In a nutshell, if we reduce the education debt we can begin to close the achievement gap (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Again, Ladson-Billings (2006) suggests the education debt comprises of “historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components” (p. 3). Educational inequities for Black and Brown bodies began at our nation’s inception and were systemically embedded from the onset. “Black students in the South did not experience universal secondary schooling until 1968” (Anderson, 2002, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 5) The treatment of Indigenous students, of both Native and Mexican descent, is equally horrific. Boarding schools for Native Americans sought to “kill the Indian and save the man.” Estimates suggest that nearly 40,000 students died in these schools in the United States (Koenig, 2021). According to Ladson-Billings (2006), Mexican students/students of Mexican descent have also experienced egregious disparities in education dating back to 1848. “Historic desegregation cases such as Mendez v. Westminster (1946) and

the Lemon Grove Incident details the ways Brown children were (and continue to be) excluded from equitable and high-quality education" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 6).

In Ladson-Billings' (2006) discussion of the economic debt, she unpacks the disparities between the amount spent per student in schools predominantly serving the subaltern and those with a majority White student population.

> We must ask ourselves why the funding inequities map so neatly and regularly onto the racial and ethnic realities of our schools. Even if we cannot prove that schools are poorly funded because Black and Latina/o students attend them, we can demonstrate that the amount of funding rises with the rise in White students. (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 6)

The socioeconomic debt reflects how families of color have been historically detached from civic rights. By limiting access to lawyers and legislators, they have been excluded from the decision-making processes that impacted their children's education.

The notion of moral debt will likely be the most difficult for Whites to grasp. Per Ladson-Billings (2006),

> It reflects the disparity between what we know is right and what we actually do. Saint Thomas Aquinas saw the moral debt as what human beings owe to each other in the giving of, or failure to give, honor to another when honor is due. This honor comes as a result of people's excellence or because of what they have done for another. (p.8)

Thompson and Kwon (2021), as mentioned before, describe the moral debt as theft; theft of bodies, wealth, and historical truth. Ladson-Billings (2006) concludes by suggesting three reasons why we need to address the education debt, "The impact the debt has on present education progress, the value of understanding the debt in relation to past education research findings, and the potential for forging a better educational future" (p. 9). We are all aware of the

national focus on STEM or STE(A)M education and the need to prepare students to be capable of recognizing and solving the complex problems of today and tomorrow. By not providing excellent, equitable education for all of our nation's students we are foolishly limiting our potential from the onset. To put it in Southern football terminology, no SEC coach would intentionally choose to play a game with only 8 players. It would be ridiculous. Handicapping our nation's future is beyond ridiculous, it's insane.

Gloria Ladson-Billings' work echoes the writing and speeches of all the dead ringers discussed in this chapter and the countless others who've gone unmentioned. The issues this nation began with are with us today. If we care about democracy, if we care about justice, liberty, general welfare, and domestic tranquility, then change *must* occur. Those of us not aligning ourselves with the nation's oppressed and intentionally seeking their uplift must then recognize and own the willful rejection of the democratic values and grounding principles of our nation's Constitution. Truth be told, it is the dead ringers who have earned the right to say, "I pledge allegiance to the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all."

CHAPTER 4

SANCTUARY

> Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." (New American Standard Bible, 1995, Isaiah. 30:20-21)

Reading this verse, my mind returns to that day in the cemetery, the day I went to visit Bertha and heard her voice in my head reminding me I had work to do as she shooed me from her presence. I chalked the moment up to one of those unexplainable life experiences. I had no clue I'd continue to hear voices as I engaged in the work set before me. This journey has not been easy. At times, I've felt isolated and alone. However, without fail, in the darkest moments, the voices of my Thous, my societal Others, come forth. A few weeks ago, I felt, once again, like my world was again crashing down around me. At 2:35 in the afternoon, I received a text from Boggs Alumni, Alton West. A portion of it reads,

> I appreciate everything your relationship has afforded us…I thank you for your CARE! For caring enough to want to embark upon a journey of this magnitude, for caring enough to continue when naysayers and doubters and the fatigue of writing and rewriting and preserving amidst struggles shared and private and perhaps brief moments of questioning yourself and wondering why. I want to ENCOURAGE YOU AND BLESS YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE AND ALL YOU MEAN TO BOGGS! It's PRICELESS. And it's here that I pray for your constant mental, physical, and emotional health, and for the strength and endurance to reach your goal(s). (personal correspondence, February 7, 2022)

By the grace of God, I *have* voices behind, beside me, and in front of me. Voices belonging to those who chose to disrupt traditional research practices and enter into an undeserving life. They not only shared their stories and memories with me, but they also shared their lives. This chapter is dedicated to those I've come to love. I wish I could share every story I've heard, every interview I conducted. I honestly believe, if every White southerner could switch places with me, the south would be a radically different place, a radically better place. I'd give anything to weave the alumni's words, memories, and generous love into a quilt that every person of privilege could feel draped about their shoulders. That said, settle in, and listen as a few of the alumni speak. Welcome their voices, and let their words wrap around your heart.

This chapter is given to dedicated to the alumni interviews. Over the past five years, I have spoken to over two hundred alumni. I wish I could share every story, memory, and life perspective I've heard. It is important to note, these interviews of primarily Black alumni/faculty (with a couple of exceptions) were conducted by a southern, White female researcher. While most interviewed recognized my belief in the importance of the Boggs Academy story, their words were still those spoken in the presence of and to a White person. Being honest, there was a marked difference in the interviews with alumni who serve as mentors for this project and in my life and those who were acquaintances. The former were, and understandably so, more frank about issues of racism and the Black struggle. That said, I am grateful for each person who engaged in this work. Together, we hope is to tell a story of Boggs Academy. This is not the definitive story of Boggs Academy, it is a story. It is our story. Through this telling, we counter the dominant narratives about Black culture and intelligence. In addition, we seek an honest account of history. Boggs Academy *was* an impressive institution that accomplished much good but the institution and its people were not flawless. In this work, we demonstrate the way history

should be told, honestly and without rose-colored glasses. If we overlook the flaws, we glean little applicable knowledge for today, we miss the warnings and examples of how things go sideways.

As mentioned before, the interviews for this project were painstakingly mapped out by Ms. Glenda Farrell. Recorded conference calls were held on periodic Wednesday nights for two years. In the coming pages, you will read portions of these interviews. For Georgia Southern University's Internal Review Board to grant permission for me to work with the Boggs Academy alumni, I had to provide them with a list of interview questions. The questions were as follows:

1. What led you to attend Boggs?
2. What do you recall learning both inside and outside the classroom?
3. Do you have a favorite memory from your time there?
4. How has Boggs influenced your life?
5. To what degree did the curriculum push against White politics, power, and ideology?
6. Why do you think the story of Boggs is important today?

As I considered how to share the thoughts and memories of the alumni, it seemed logical to work my way through the interview questions. Essentially, to provide you with a glimpse into one of my Wednesday nights with the alumni. While I posed the interview questions, the alumni typically guided the conversation, sharing memories and perspectives as they came to mind. To unpack the richness of the story of Boggs, in this space I will follow their lead letting their memories flow as they respond to the questions. I wish I could insert a sound button, like those found in children's books, into this chapter. It was such a treat to hear their voices, to listen as their tones and tempos changed with excitement, sadness, seriousness, and laughter. Some alumni have voices so distinct I would recognize them anywhere. All are voices I've grown to

love and cherish. I hope you will open your hearts to their words. Make space for these dear people and let them touch your soul.

Per the request of the Boggs Academy National Board of Alumni, each interview was to begin with a prayer offered by one of the alumni. Before we explore the interviews, it seems fitting to share one of the many prayers spoken over this work. At 7:00 p.m. on January 6, 2018, Martin Cooper prayed,

> Proverbs three and six says, 'In all thy ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.' Let us pray. Gracious Father, we're thanking you for this day. We come before you with our heads bowed and our hearts humbled. Thank you for all the blessings that you have allowed us to enjoy this day. We're praying for your intervention into our meeting tonight, let what is said be useful for the project, and we just want to thank you. We want to bless you and please continue to bless Caroline in her endeavors. In Jesus' name, amen. (M. Cooper, personal correspondence, January 6, 2018)

Post prayer, I began each interview with the same question, "What led you to attend Boggs Academy?" While the alumni responses varied greatly, the root of each answer remained the same. They attended Boggs because the opportunities it afforded were far better than those offered by the public schools. Keep in mind, for most of Boggs Academy's existence, the public schools were segregated and even though the Brown v. Board of Education case occurred in 1954, many southern schools did not integrate for decades. The last school to desegregate was Cleveland High School in Cleveland, Mississippi. It desegregated in 2016.

What led you to attend Boggs?

Martin Cooper (Class of 1966):

> When I was a little tyke, there were some kids, older than I, who attended Boggs. They would come home on the holiday breaks and they would have on shirts that said Boggs Academy. It was noted throughout the town that Boggs was a prestigious place to be because it was a boarding school and it wasn't free, like the regular public schools…I wanted to attend Boggs but I was from a family of thirteen and knew that was out of my reach…I've always been one who prayed, as far back as I can remember. One day I said, 'Jesus, I sure would like to attend Boggs.' Lo and behold, when I went to school, I saw Miss Lucy McCleod. I was in the 9th grade…I didn't want to go to WH & I in Waynesboro. I knew that she had attended Boggs. 'How do you get to enroll in Boggs Academy?' She said, 'Martin, do you want to go to Boggs?' I said, 'Yeah, but I know I won't be able to afford to go.' She said, 'No, no, no…It has a work program, a summer work program. You can go and you can work your way through. Your parents won't have to pay that much. I will help you to fill out the application and everything.' To make a long story short, I mailed off the letters, and lo and behold, I got a return letter saying I was accepted at Boggs Academy and to be at the bus station in Waynesboro. That was in June of 1958. (M. Cooper, personal correspondence, January 6, 2018)

From inception, Boggs students contributed to the school's maintenance and sustainability. In 1911, The Presbyterian Board of Missions purchased a 1,000-acre plantation for a farm-home scheme to support both the school and the surrounding community. Some of the earliest images of Boggs Academy show students caring for livestock, working in fields, and chopping wood.

(Presbyterian Historical Society, n.d., N2. G1)

The 1962 Boggs Academy Student Handbook reads,

> Since work is an important factor in the livelihood of every individual and forms a large part of the school's philosophy each student will be required to do some work…Jobs will be assigned at the beginning of each twelve-week period and are designed to serve as a learning experience as well as assuming responsibility for a share in the total work program…The development of sound habits and attitudes of work is an essential element for living in a Christian Democratic society. (The Boggs Academy Handbook, 1962, p. 30)

Mr. Cooper worked on the campus during the school year as part of his education and then worked at Boggs during the summer for financial aid. According to the handbook,

> Applications for work-aid will be studied by the administration and aid will be given to the student on the basis of need, his academic ability, his ability to learn and perform the duties required, and his willingness to help himself gain an education through work. (n.a., 1962, p. 31)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some students arrived at Boggs via A Better Chance (ABC), a non-profit organization. Oscar Green, class of '74, in his deep, rich voice, recalls his journey to the institution.

> I asked my principal for a scholarship. My sister had received a scholarship through ABC, A Better Chance. She was going to school in Minnesota. ABC was a program to get students out of an impoverished area and get them in a position where they could have upward mobility through education. I wasn't really what you would call a deserving student, like my sister, but I knew I wanted to do something different. I wanted to leave town. I grew up in a little town in Mississippi. It was a pretty depressed area. When it worked out, I didn't know anything about Boggs. The principal came over and told me I had gotten in. He talked to my parents and told us about it. I was ready to go. I was sixteen years old and a few days. I jumped on a Greyhound bus, for the first time, with a couple of guys from home and we headed to Boggs Academy. (O. Green, personal correspondence. October 17, 2019)

The current conversations about educational equity, power structures, and systemic racism overlook the issue of private schooling in the United States. Cookson & Persell's (1985) work, *Preparing For Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools*, examines how the "philosophies, programs, and lifestyles of boarding schools help transmit power and privilege and how elite families use the schools to maintain their social class" (p. 4). I would argue that

this is true, to some degree, of private schools in general. Yes, we have to work towards correcting the inequality in our education system but even if all of our schools became democratic bastions of educational equity, unjust power structures would not necessarily change. The small, private school I attended in Augusta, Georgia holds no candle to the nation's elite boarding schools. That said, off the top of my head, I can think of at least 6 alumni who took jobs on the Hill. Some alumni work for Fortune 500 companies and others are high-ranking officers in our nation's military. Private educational institutions create elite, powerful inner circles on local and national levels.

Although a superb private boarding school, the mission of Boggs Academy differed from our nation's other private schools, the majority of which opened as a result of integration. Boggs's motto was, "Christian purpose, Christian preparation, Christian performance." While this motto could easily be the mission statement of many private, Christian schools, it had an alternative meaning and a different outcome. There are marked differences between "Black" Christianity and "White" Christianity. I posit the two interpret Scripture quite differently. The Christianity of Boggs was a jazz theology of sorts. Carl Ellis (1996) suggests classical orthodoxy lacks, "the power to blast us out of the 'paralysis of analysis" (p. 181). He goes on to explain,

> You may sleep through a symphony, but most people will pay attention to a jazz riff. Jesus calls us to stay awake and be involved in the movements of the times. That is what jazz theology does. It involves us where the 'nitty' meets the 'gritty.'" (Ellis, 1996, p. 181)

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a jazz theologian. All jazz involves syncopation, improvisation, and blue notes. Syncopation is a variety of rhythms played together creating a feeling of forward movement. Improvisation is the creation of new melodies over a repeated order of chords. It

involves knowing the tune, those playing with you, and your instrument's role. A blue note is a flattened note, one played at a pitch that differs slightly from the standard. Cornel West calls his students to "stay true to the blue note" (Lagace, 2000, para. 1) For West, "That blue note is a moment of disturbance, of dissonance, or defiance when everyone else is preoccupied with sunshine" (Lagace, 2000, para. 1). In jazz theology, the blue note is the willingness to speak truth against societal evil. Syncopation occurs when brothers and sisters join together in the application of Scripture toward the betterment of society. Improvisation in jazz theology is the recognition of the role you play within and for the collective.

Listen to Reverend John Ellis's jazz theology as preached on a Sunday morning at Boggs Academy,

> Oh, I know there are those who pride themselves on their so-called 'rugged individualism' and their ability to say or do anything they please, regardless of the hurt and the unhappiness it may bring to others. Friendships are a means to an end… and that is their own selfish advantage. Such people think they are self-sufficient but in reality, they are miserable and living in hell. For hell is that place where I no longer have the capacity to love. Friendship is life's greatest blessing but it is also life's greatest responsibility. It means that one is not only a stakeholder in another's joy and good fortune; but also a keeper of his trust and welfare. If we should accept our brother's friendship, we also must accept the truth that we are our brother's keeper. (Ellis, 1960, p. 4)

Boggs Academy welcomed students like Oscar Green and Martin Cooper and prepared them to be highly educated uplifters of each other and humanity. Students came to Boggs to receive the education they deserved, an education all students deserve.

What do you recall learning both inside and outside the classroom?

My doctoral work is in the field of Curriculum Studies. In the coming paragraphs, we are going to consider the curriculum of Boggs Academy from the alumni's perspective. However, before we embark, I want to define curriculum. The term curriculum can be quite muddy. Depending on one's background, field of study, and/or line of work, the term will likely be used differently. In this space, curriculum is defined as all that is learned both inside and outside the classroom, intentionally and unintentionally. Curriculum comes from the Latin word, *currere*, which means to run, as in to run a racecourse. Using this infinitive term for curriculum, Pinar suggests that education expands beyond the classroom walls. His work marries well with the Boggs Academy perspective and approach to curriculum. Pinar (2011) writes,

> Currere emphasizes the everyday experience of the individual and his or her capacity to learn from that experience; to reconstruct experience through thought and dialogue to enable understanding. Such understanding, achieved by working through history and lived experience, can help us reconstruct our own subjective and social lives. (p. 2)

Pinar's work was influenced by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl's phenomenology with the auto**,** meaning phenomenology with the self. Pinar uses Husserl's notion of *Lebenswelt*, or lifeworld, "the point of coherence is the biography as it is lived in the subjectivity of everyday life" (Pinar, 1975, p. 1). In other words, "Thinking about subject and object, self and other, self with him, her, this, that, those, and they, time and space, mind and body – from a relational perspective – leads us to our notion of auto" (Gouzouasis & Wiebe, 2018, p. 2) We are most fully human in our recognized relationship with those, chosen and unchosen, around us. Education in its noblest form, leads, not only, to a deep understanding of Lebenswelt but a kind and generous engagement with it. Martin Buber (1970), as mentioned before, writes of the

relationship between *I* and *Thou*, "In the eyes of him who takes his stand in love, and gazes out of it, men are cut free from their entanglement in bustling activity…Love is the responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*" (p. 15). Through my research and alumni interviews and conversations, this approach to curriculum, one grounded in the concepts of currere and Lebenswelt, is evident throughout the existence of Boggs Academy. In a book about the entanglement of matter and meaning in relation to quantum physics, Barad (2007) states, "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another as in the joining of separate entities…Existence is not an individual affair…Individuals emerge through and as part of the entangled intra-relating" (p. IX).

Deborah Willingham, a former Boggs Academy English teacher and oration coach) shared,

> As a teacher, I would say that the main thing about Boggs was that we loved our students. We loved and cared for our students. We were *allowed* to love and care for our students. That is not common today. Teachers are not allowed to touch their students. When we passed our students between classes we hugged them. The kids would come by and we would give hugs. That makes a difference in the lives of young people. It makes a difference when students know you love them and care about them. (D. Willingham, personal correspondence, November 7, 2018)

Modou N'dow, an alum from Banjul, Gambia, and the final valedictorian of Boggs Academy, was on the interview call with Ms. Willingham. He responds to her words this way,

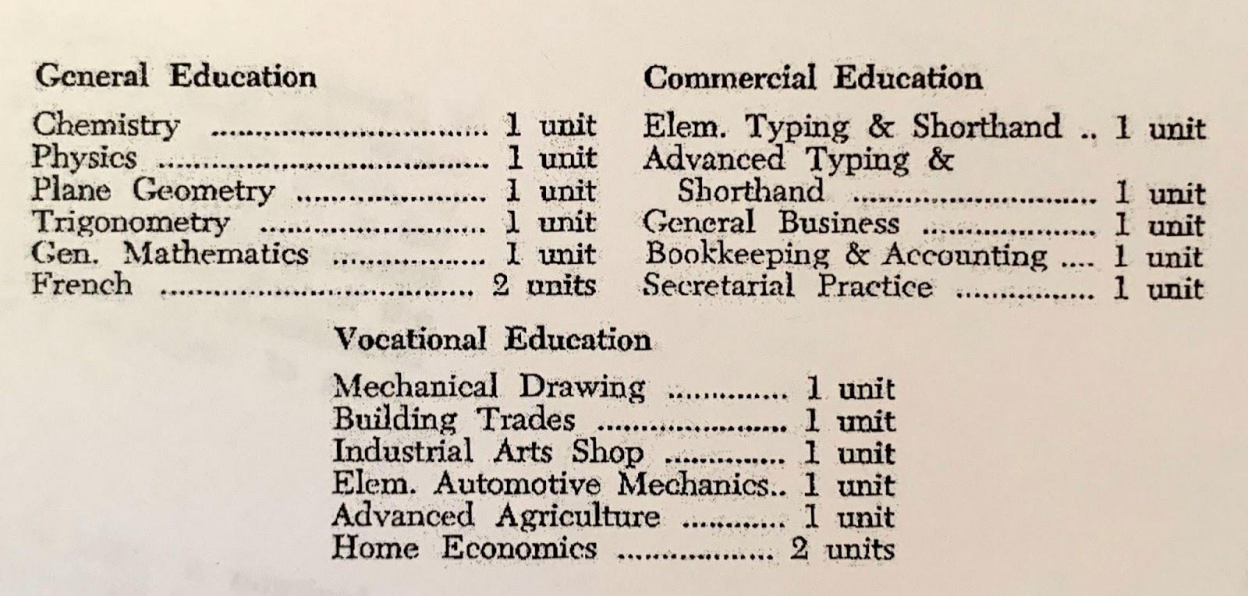
> Let me tell you how good these teachers were to us. One of them is on the call with us, Ms. Willingham. I felt free to walk up to any of their apartments, their residences, at any time, to talk with them. This was not just true for me but for all of us. We could go to the president, the dean, or the English teacher and share our intimate thoughts and

> feelings…It was a community, a village. It was a village within itself from an African point of view. There were elders, there were children. Boggs was like nowhere else. You couldn't find it anywhere else in the world and this is coming from someone who's traveled all around the world, speaks many languages, and knows different cultures. Boggs was unique in its own way. It is in our hearts, it's in our spirit. Asking someone to describe Boggs is like asking someone to describe the taste of water. How do you describe that? There are just no words. Other than the fact that when we left we were the best at everything that was put before us. We could sit down next to anybody, from any school in the world, and be better than them. Hands down. (M. N'dow, personal correspondence, November 7, 2018)

Love was the foundation of Boggs. The teachers and administration loved the students and the students grew to love them and each other. That said, I'm not suggesting Boggs was an educational utopia, the institution had her struggles, and I will come to those soon, but her legacy of love is undisputedly evident.

This foundation of love drove the administration to provide a rich liberal arts education. The 1962 handbook reads, "In its broadest scope, the curriculum is organized into two integral parts…curricula and co-curricular activities. These account for everything the student does while in school; study, work, worship, play, and dormitory living" (The Boggs Academy Handbook, 1962, p. 18). Instruction at Boggs Academy was divided into three areas, "General Education, Commercial Education, and Vocational Education" (The Boggs Academy Handbook, 1962, p. 18). The Boggs curriculum is a fascinating combination of the perspectives of W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. Washington believed in vocational education, and the cultivation of morals, such as patience. Du Bois sharply disagreed and felt Washington's strategy undergirded

racism. Du Bois called for the "talented tenth" to receive an extensive liberal arts education at the college level. Note the following academic courses offered at Boggs in 1962.



General Education

Chemistry	1 unit
Physics	1 unit
Plane Geometry	1 unit
Trigonometry	1 unit
Gen. Mathematics	1 unit
French	2 units

Commercial Education

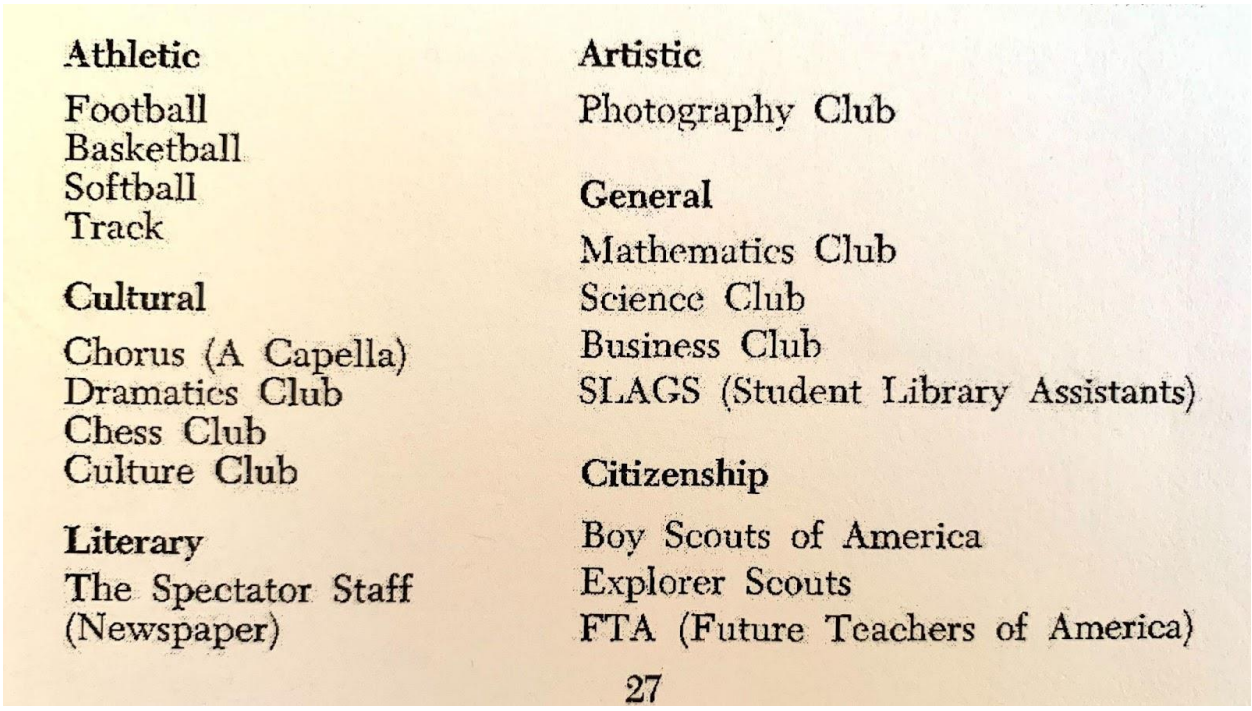
Elem. Typing & Shorthand	1 unit
Advanced Typing & Shorthand	1 unit
General Business	1 unit
Bookkeeping & Accounting	1 unit
Secretarial Practice	1 unit

Vocational Education

Mechanical Drawing	1 unit
Building Trades	1 unit
Industrial Arts Shop	1 unit
Elem. Automotive Mechanics	1 unit
Advanced Agriculture	1 unit
Home Economics	2 units

The handbook goes on to explain,

> Activities constitute an essential part of the curriculum and are given equal importance with other phases of the Academy's program…Activities designed for the cultural development of the student are provided on a regular basis and include seminars, forums, debates, and a music appreciation hour. Outstanding scholars from colleges and universities, community and civic leaders, and staff members are secured for seminars and forum activities. The music appreciation hour seeks to acquaint students with the best musical literature through the ages. Activities for the recreational and entertainment needs of the student include movies, weekend recreation hours in the gymnasium and formal parties in the fall and spring. Students are required to participate in these all-school activities. In addition to these activities, recreation is provided in the dormitories which include television, games, periodicals, and books for reading. (n.a.,1962, p. 28)



Athletic

Football
Basketball
Softball
Track

Cultural

Chorus (A Capella)
Dramatics Club
Chess Club
Culture Club

Literary

The Spectator Staff
(Newspaper)

Artistic

Photography Club

General

Mathematics Club
Science Club
Business Club
SLAGS (Student Library Assistants)

Citizenship

Boy Scouts of America
Explorer Scouts
FTA (Future Teachers of America)

27

The Boggs approach to curriculum is different from any school I've encountered. They saw every moment of the day as an opportunity to educate their students. Glenda Farrell, class of 1969, reflects on the role and impact of dance and performance at Boggs.

> Ulysses Dove, a famous ballet dancer who performed with the Alvin Ailey dancers, attended Boggs. He became an international ballet instructor…He was one of the most innovative contemporary choreographers of that time and he credits Boggs for his dance training…Geoffrey Holder, a famous actor and dancer, he would come to Boggs and teach dance. Sometimes, Boggsites went to Atlanta for dance classes, and sometimes they would go to Augusta…Butterfly McQueen, the actress in *Gone with the Wind* [film] (Fleming & Cukor, 1939), had a little dance studio in Augusta. Some of the students took classes from her. We had impressive interpretive dance routines at just about every assembly. We had shows on the weekend. We were always busy doing something. They

> gave us so many opportunities to create. We always did creative things alongside the academics. (G. Farrell, personal correspondence, October 24, 2019)

Music also played a significant role at Boggs Academy. In 1948, Mr. Charles W. Francis, Jr. created the acapella chorus program. The acapella choir sang on Sunday mornings at the campus church and functioned as the school choir during the week. In nearly every competition, the choir received a superior rating. The jacket cover of a Boggs Academy Acapella Choir vinyl record has a picture of the choir in their robes. The words below the image read,

> These 35 outstanding high school students had just completed a two-week tour of the Eastern United States when this record was made. The tour included 21 concerts in Washington DC, New York City, and other cities and towns in New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. (The Boggs Academy Acappella Choir, 1970)

(The Boggs Academy Acappella Choir, 1970)

In every alumni interview, the choir became a topic of conversation. Sandra L. Johnson (class of 1969) shared,

> The voice training I learned from Mr. Francis took me to Rutgers University's chorus which took me to Montreal's Expo in 1967. My memories were of the concerts off-

> campus and traveling on the bus to whatever city we were going to perform in. After all, Keysville was in the country. Mr. Francis told us to go further than expected and we did. We had extra rehearsals when preparing for concerts…I remember basic music training, learning to read it, and studying all genres. Quincy Jones released some quintessential jazz during that time and Mr. Francis taught us about those elements. He taught classical techniques and expected our best. Concerts usually included classical pieces and Negro spirituals. Hallelujah was a beautiful selection but hard as hell to do acapella. It had several key changes but when we nailed it, it was magnificent. (S. Johnson, personal correspondence, November 29, 2021)

Catherine Young (class of 1971), the very first alumni I spoke with and the one who shared my desire to research Boggs with the board, recalls her experience with the choir.

> I unexpectedly auditioned and was selected as a second alto. Mr. Francis had a bad habit of emotional outbreaks. He would shout, "Yes" and that meant you came in on key. Singing acapella requires you to hear music keys well. The choir required late after-school practices and during tour time we practiced long and hard. After practicing, you still might not be selected for the tour. At competitions, we were unbeatable. We were definitely the best that I ever heard. "In Bright Mansions Above" (Quivar, 1998, 2-10) and "Every Time I Feel the Spirit" were my favorites. When I was in the choir, Stan Jackson, now Baatin Muhammad was selected to be the student choir leader. For Mr. Francis to trust him with the responsibility spoke volumes about his appreciation of Baatin. He is a world-class musician today. We traveled to cities like Augusta to perform in churches. My father was one of the bus drivers. My Dad loved to travel and also could help mechanically maintain the bus. He took a lot of pride in helping gifted youth have

> opportunities to be seen and heard. Mr. Francis loved classical music. I remember him dismissing the queen of soul herself. Aretha Franklin's music was not worthy of being called music! Mr. Francis is worthy of all praise for the quality of music we were blessed to experience. He brought in Morehouse College annually for music and Spelman College for dance. Mr. Francis was my Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. If you've ever seen the movie, that same passion that flowed through Mr. Francis daily…He would cry because of the excitement he felt when we sang. (C. Young, personal correspondence, November 29, 2021)

In the midst of my final proofreading, tears filled my eyes reading Ms. Young's words. Baatin Muhammad passed away just weeks ago. Ms. Young loved him very much. They shared a sweet, long-lasting friendship. I cared for Mr. Muhammad as well. He was kind to me and sent words of encouragement. He was also honest with me. When I began this work, I, subconsciously, wanted Boggs Academy to have an activist bent similar to the Mississippi Freedom Schools. It was Mr. Muhammad who gently helped me to see Boggs for what it was, a school that provided students with an excellent education and set them on a path to become their best selves. On June 13, 2022, three days before my final defense, I donned a hijab and mourned with his loved ones as they buried the body of this dear man. Baatin Muhammad will be missed by many. I'm grateful he was part of this work and my life.

Returning now to the discussion of the choir, Gail Perdue, a friend of both Ms. Johnson and Ms. Young, shared her choir memories as well.

> There is an old quote that goes something like "A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions." I was a member of the choir for four years. We traveled, and sang from Keysville to Niagara Falls. We practiced after classes

> during the week but it was so much more than just singing. When we traveled we mostly stayed in the homes of church members and what an experience that was! It opened up a whole new world for a small-town Georgia girl. I remember Mr. Francis told us as guests we should always leave a home the same way we found it or better. One particular trip has stayed with me for over 50 years. This very stylish, elegant, little woman said she could house four of us. My brother happened to also be one of the four. Her home had once been a barn or stable but it had been converted into a fabulous house. Everything was white and fabulous. We each had our own bedroom with the Whitest linen I had ever seen. When I got into bed I thought, 'Oh my goodness, what kind of heaven is this?' That was when I learned about something called thread count and what difference it can make in the sleeping experience. Sheets were never quite the same after that! I've been trying to recreate that experience for over 50 years to the detriment of my 401k [laughter]. (G. Perdue, personal correspondence, November 29, 2021)

In addition to extensive training in the arts, Boggs Academy students were taught African American studies. Education in this area was, at times, a specific course but it was always woven into the Boggs educational experience. The image below is a powerful glimpse into the institution's curriculum. Pride, determination, history, political awareness, beauty, power, and art all dancing on the former plantation fields of Burke County, Georgia.

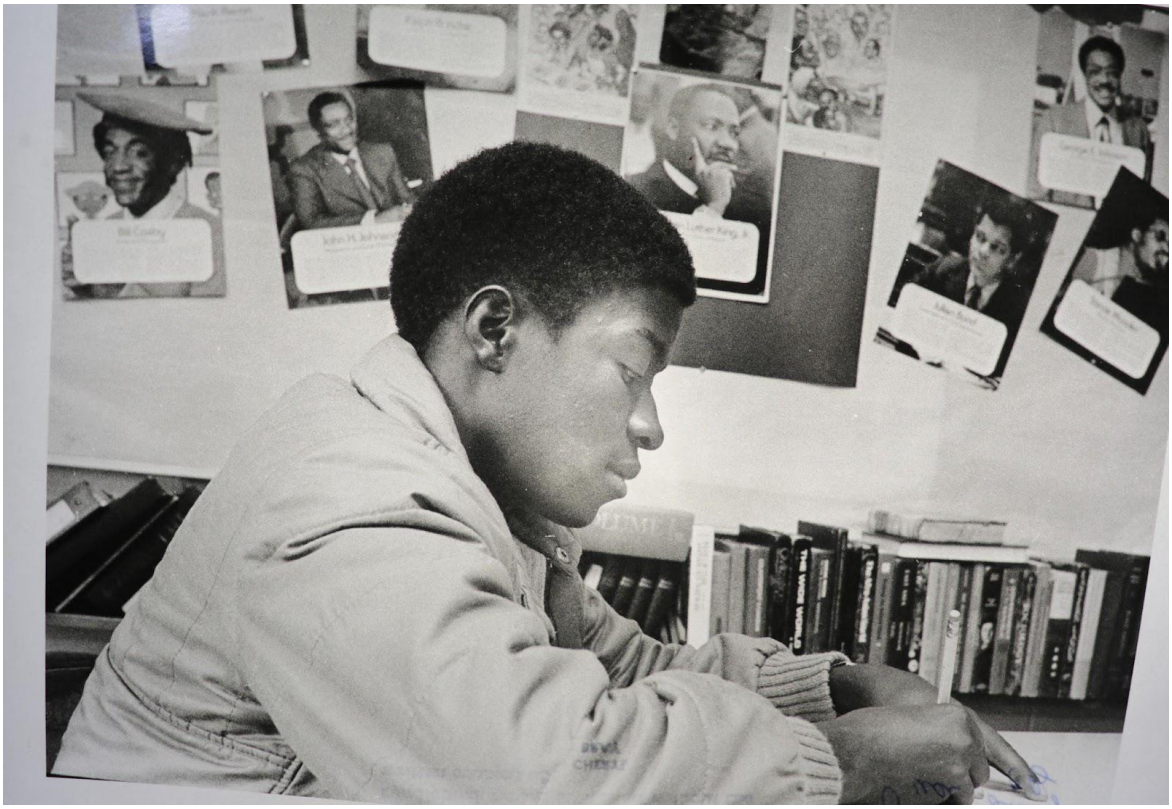
(Presbyterian Historical Society, n.d., N2. G1)

Dorcus Miller, class of 1984, came to Boggs Academy from New York.

> Boggs gave me an experience different from the one I was having at home in terms of the environment. Boggs was a safer environment than in New York…I was able to come of age in a structured space and in a culture based on the Black historical perspective. That is something you don't get everywhere. The concept of self gets reinforced. You learn the history that you were a part of…They taught us to understand our positionality as a person of color and how to navigate and combat that. We had a Black psychology course that was fascinating. It opened a whole new world for me. We also had to do an oration, everyone had to do one. You had to prepare in order to present. A lot of the topics chosen were geared very much toward our Blackness or what our experiences were which centered a lot around the quest for social justice. We also had to go to chapel. The

> sermons and speeches you were exposed to naturally lent themselves to this type of thinking. (D. Miller, personal correspondence, November 7, 2018).

Local alumni gather every few months in an attempt to maintain what they can of the campus. One cold, wet, November morning, I arrived at Boggs in a puffy jacket and rain boots and spent the first couple of hours of the work day trudging along behind Joseph Barnes and Ryan Thompson, bagging clippings as they trimmed the hedges. Despite popsicle toes, I loved listening to their recollections, their laughter, and hearing their stories about the interesting discipline practices of Mr. Willie Coward, a man they both respected. After Mr. Barnes was satisfied with the campus bushes and hedges, we joined those working in the library. My cold feet were grateful for the change. Jackie Bosby has worked diligently to transform the Phelps building into an African American research library. Recently, someone donated an amazing collection of Black literature. At one point that afternoon, I was accused of reading more than I was working. While looking at the bookshelves, an image I came across in the Boggs Academy archives in Philadelphia came to mind. It was a picture of a focused young man studying in the Boggs library. What stood out to me was the wall behind him, it was decorated with pictures and biographies of famous Black men.



(Presbyterian Historical Society, n.d., N2. G1)

This picture supports Ms. Miller's suggestion that Boggs intentionally sought to reinforce the concept of self and I would add, in a positive, countercultural manner.

While Trump is no longer president, the war he began on Critical Race Theory (CRT), rages on. While Trump may pat himself on the back for this, he is *far* from the first to use such tactics. CRT is doing today what abolitionist literature did hundreds of years ago (Conwright, 2021). CRT is being used by scholars and theorists to identify systemic racism in education. Boggs provided students with an education that uplifted students of color. Through the faculty's teaching, students could envision a world outside of their home neighborhoods, a world beyond the fields and plantations surrounding Boggs.

In 1973, Waldo and Faye Miller moved their young family to Boggs Academy. They couldn't find housing right away and moved into the vacant dean's house on campus. Miller was

hired to teach history and government courses. Before classes began, he rearranged the furniture in his classroom into a U shape to prevent a back row. He was determined to give Boggs students the best educational experience possible. At one point, he invited Bo Ginn, a Georgia congressman, to teach in his classroom and he did! While recounting this story in our interview, Miller chuckled, "I doubt if too many students have their congressman come into their high school and teach them" (W. Miller, personal correspondence, January 30, 2019). A lecture from a congressman was only the beginning for Mr. Miller's students. In November of 1974, as part of his "The State of Power" course, Miller drove a group of students, in a van loaned to him by the local Ford dealership, to Washington, D.C. He describes the trip this way,

> We arrived at midnight and met our host at the Lincoln Memorial. Now, you can imagine arriving at the Lincoln Memorial at midnight with a van load of African American students and what that must've looked like. The park ranger gave them almost an hour-long guided tour. He took them downstairs, below the monument, and showed them the inner workings of the monument, how they protected it from earthquakes and vandalism…[Later}, we went into the White House and we went to Congress. We met in one of the hearing rooms with three congressmen and a senator. We also went down and had a visit with the Architect of the Capitol and he let the students run the flags up the flagpole. They run the flags up the pole so that congressmen can present them to people. The students spent three hours running those flags. The flags had to stay up for five minutes and then they brought them down, folded them, and placed them in a box. I doubt any student today has had an experience like that. (Personal correspondence, January 30, 2019)

A couple of years ago, I drove to Charlotte to film an interview with the Millers. We met in the library of their church. At one point I asked them, “Why Boggs?” They said they had witnessed the horrific treatment of Blacks in the south and felt called to respond. I remember thinking, this is it. This is what Christianity in action looks like. It’s truly sacrificial. It recognizes the pain and hurt of others and seeks to intervene, to stand in the gap. Later in the interview, Mr. Miller told me that during the summers the church on campus closed and they had to find another place to worship. The Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro told them they could attend *if* they said they were missionaries at Boggs. Two strikingly different depictions of faith in action.

Do you have a favorite memory from your time at Boggs Academy?

I actually want to answer this question before I get to the answers of the alumni. I love witnessing the moments when alumni greet each other. It’s incredible to watch pure joy wash over their faces. The hugs and bursts of laughter are truly something to behold. I’m in a Bible study with alumni from the class of 1969. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month on a conference call. Joy rings out each time a classmate joins the call. The annual reunions are also amazing. It’s fascinating to watch them celebrate, love, affirm, and uplift each other. It looks a bit like the meeting of soldiers who shared a foxhole but these greetings don’t bear a mark of pain, more a sense of we became who we are together. Through their hugs and greetings, it’s as if they are saying, ‘You are part of me, I am part of you, and together, at this moment, we are joyfully whole.’

Thinking about unity and joy resulting from time spent at Boggs Academy calls to mind the interview with Wil McLaurin, class of 1976.

> Growing up, my family wasn't rich…I was at Boggs, in eleventh grade and it was time for the prom. Eleventh-grade students set up for the prom and I've always been handy. I've always had the ability to do those kinds of things well. The junior class was pretty small and I had good ideas on how to set up the gym. The problem was I wasn't going to be able to go because my parents couldn't afford a tuxedo. Even so, I still put effort into fixing up the gym. I did a lot of the work with my present wife, Cheryl. We spent a lot of time together working on it. On the day of the prom, Mr. Bailey, one of the coaches and faculty at Boggs, brought a tuxedo to my room and said I was going to the prom. The tuxedo he brought me was someone else's but it fit me perfectly… I really think that if I had not had the opportunity to go to that prom and be with my wife, we wouldn't be together today. (W. McLaurin, personal correspondence, October 30, 2019).

After I stopped saying "aww" and sighing, with a chuckle, Mr. McLaurin went on to explain that as graduation approached, he planned to return home to Mississippi and work for a year before college but Boggs required all students to apply for college. He was accepted at the Naval Academy and hoped to become a pilot. However, due to poor vision, he was told he could be a navigator. That didn't appeal and he decided on Morehouse where he received a scholarship for the engineering program, a dual enrollment program with Georgia Tech. Mr. McLaurin's interview is a testimony of the impact of Boggs Academy. He came to Boggs via the ABC program, found his wife, landed a spot in a distinguished educational program at Morehouse, and went on to work for Coca-Cola for thirty-four years before retiring. When I think about Mr. McLaurin, I see him on the roof of the president's home at Boggs, cleaning out the gutters. He drove two hours from Conyers, Georgia to participate in a campus clean-up. Forty-five years after his graduation, Mr. McLaurin gave up a Saturday to tend to the upkeep of a school he

attended for just two years. Boggs Academy changed lives and the alumni remain dedicated to the institution and its legacy.

As mentioned before, extracurricular activities were important at Boggs. Every part of the day was an opportunity to learn and athletics received its fair share of attention. Sylvester R. Ginn (class of 1968), a man I now consider a friend, shares a favorite memory from the basketball court.

> One of my most memorable moments during my stay at Boggs occurred my senior year, 1968. Our basketball team played in the District semi-finals at Soperton's gym, the home of one of our major rivals. Our opponent that night was Oconee High out of Dublin, another major rival that had two tall stars playing in the paint. Soperton was scheduled to play in the other semi-final game at the conclusion of our game. The game was tight from start to finish. Both teams executed very nice plays. Our primary stars Willis Daniels, Herman Profit, Calvin Thornton, and John Harden put on a show. Harden, a sophomore known as "Foots," battled both big men and turned the gym out with the "Foots Shuffle" all night long. The excitement in the gym was beyond belief. We won in a close contest. For me, the highlight of the night occurred when we went to our dressing room. While there, several of Soperton's players excitedly entered the room to tell us that was the best game they had seen and gave us heartfelt congratulations. To be recognized, in that manner, by an arch-rival was an outstanding experience for me. (S. Ginn, personal correspondence, January 23, 2019)

As a former basketball player, I love this story. I know the crazy rush that occurs playing in a championship game, the jitters, the nerves, the excitement. But this isn't a simple feel-good sports story, there's more. What strikes me is Mr. Ginn's memory didn't stick because he was

one of the key players who brought about the win. He credits four other teammates. However, Ginn still felt the full glory of the victory and claimed for himself, as well as his teammates, the congratulations of Soperton's players. In the retelling, he's an example of the consummate teammate. Yes, great coaches create a deep sense of camaraderie amongst players but this is Boggs camaraderie. A camaraderie I've witnessed in person. In 2021, as I mentioned before, Joseph Barnes, lost his wife and months later, his daughter. After his daughter's graveside service, I watched Sylvester Ginn, and a handful of other alumni move under the shade of a large oak tree a few feet away from where Mr. Barnes was speaking with those offering their condolences. Ginn and the others didn't feel the need to be in the line. They just stood there, his teammates, offering the same quiet, powerful solidarity and support Mr. Barnes offered me at the reunion four years ago.

In his story, Mr. Ginn mentioned John "Foots" Harden (class of 1970), another alumnus I've come to hold dear. Every morning, Mr. Harden sends me a prayer for the day via Facebook Messenger. At the end of the prayer, he lists those he's praying for and my name is always included. Daily, I'm reminded of how blessed I am to have these amazing people in my life.

Boggs Academy cultivated camaraderie throughout its curriculum, inside and outside the classroom. Jackie Merriweather (class of 1976) recalls,

> My memorable moment occurred around Christmas time. We had the opportunity to send Christmas cards to each other by addressing them to our friends and putting them in a box in the library. The morning before leaving for Christmas break, we had this wonderful breakfast in the cafeteria. The cafeteria was decorated with candles and the lights were turned down low. Next to our seats were name cards and next to those were the Christmas cards created for us by our friends. It was lovely. We all sat together and had a

> wonderful breakfast and then went home for Christmas break. I think I was in the 8th or 9th grade, either 1973 or 1974. (J. Merriweather, personal correspondence, November 11, 2021)

When I sat to write this section about their favorite memories, I realized I often had to cut this interview question due to time constraints. Because of this, I opted to post the question on the Boggs Academy National Alumni Association Facebook page. The quotes, minus that of Mr. McLaurin, are the responses I received. There's a beautiful thread of fellowship that runs through their comments and through the story of Boggs Academy. It's evident in this memory but in a slightly different manner. My adopted Boggs mama, Ms. Glenda Farrell, shared this,

> I had a lot of good memories from my Boggs years. One of my very favorite memories occurred during my first year. I was 15. I learned I would be able to sing a song in the annual Boggs Academy talent show. I was super excited. I knew the words to just about every hit song of Motown and beyond! My song choice was "It's Going to Take a Miracle" by Deniece Williams (1976). On that eve, I came out onto the stage and sang my heart out. I didn't win anything. I really wasn't a singer but to have the opportunity to sing the words of a song so close to my heart *and* pretend to be a famous singer was just heaven to me. I'm sure it was not a big deal to anyone else but as a young teen, I was over the moon that night! The next act had 3 students. They dressed and sounded exactly like the Temptations, one of my very favorite groups. The guys performing were Cesar Maddox, Theodore Benefield, and, I think, Leroy Hammond. They sang the Motown hit song "My Girl" (Temptations, 1964), another song I knew and adored. Every August and January, Gail Purdue and I could hardly wait to get back to campus. We'd race to each

> other and giggle as we named, discussed, and compared all the songs we had heard over the break. (G. Farrell, personal correspondence, December 1, 2021)

Again, fellowship comes to mind. While very little intimidates Ms. Farrell, it is still worth noting that as a young student, she felt completely comfortable standing on stage in front of the whole school and singing her heart out. She was in a safe place. She was surrounded by those who were simply happy that she was happy. Her recollection didn't focus on who won the talent show, it focused on the joy she felt and experienced from and with her schoolmates. This is true fellowship. Fellowship grounded in love, exuding joy, and uplifting all involved.

To what degree did the curriculum push against White politics, power, and ideology?

This question was often a challenging point in the interview process and, at times, evoked a pregnant pause. I believe the alumni paused for at least two reasons: first, to consider the question itself, and second, to consider how they would articulate their response to a White researcher. If I sensed the alumni on the call were hesitant or nervous, I would interject a bit of my perspective to create a safer space for them to vocalize their thoughts. In time, I found it helpful to talk about my relationship with Richard Swanson. Mr. Swanson was a White activist in the Mississippi Freedom Summers of 1964 and '65, who taught at Boggs after his time in Mississippi. Richard, now a retired attorney living in Seattle, has become a dear friend and advisor to this project. He was a favorite teacher at Boggs and remains close to a number of alumni. He taught US History, World History, Civics, Economics, and World Geography. In the interview pause, I talked about our friendship and shared some of his stories. I described how Richard played Bob Dylan for the students and led them in a discussion about the meaning/value of the songs. I discussed his teaching about war and anti-war protests One of my favorite Swanson stories was particularly good for setting the stage for conversation. In one course, he

asked the students to write a letter to a government official. Charles Kennedy, a student somewhat known for vocalizing his frustration with the inequality and oppression experienced by Blacks in the U.S., opted to write the governor of Georgia, Lester Maddox. Unfortunately, Richard didn't pre-read the students' letters, just dropped them in the mail. Not long after mailing the batch containing Kennedy's letter, he was informed there was a gentleman at the school office wanting to speak with him. The FBI agent asked Swanson if he always let his students write threatening letters to the government. Apparently, Charles Kennedy had shared with Governor Maddox a couple of personal solutions for altering his racist behavior. This story usually got the interviewees laughing and ready to discuss their memories. Again, this portion of the interview was a bit uncomfortable for some alumni. I remain grateful for their willingness to share their memories with me and hope those from a background similar to mine will open their hearts as they read the coming responses. Ueland (1998) writes about listening to others,

> I want to write about the great and powerful thing that listening is. And how we forget it. And how we don't listen to our children or those we love. And least of all — which is so important too — to those we do not love. But we should. Because listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. Think how the friends that really listen to us are the ones we move toward, and we want to sit in their radius as though it did us good, like ultraviolet rays. (Ueland, 1998, p. 1)

It behooves us all to make space in our thinking and lives for those with whom we rarely engage. I learned this from the Boggs alumni. Not only did they agree to my telling their story, but they also pulled me into their world and showered me with love. In so doing, they changed my life forever.

This first response is from Baatin Muhammad, class of 1972.

> I didn’t feel as if there was active pushback. It was more of a focused determination on knowing who you were. You are a Black person. You don’t have to take a backseat to anybody. You are capable. You are intelligent. It wasn’t so much pushing back. At that point, in the history of America, Black folks were in a defensive posture anyway. It wasn't anything that I thought needed to be taught. We had people like Mr. Francis who encouraged us to strive for excellence. He taught us the importance of striving for excellence. If we did that we wouldn’t just survive, we would thrive, regardless of racism. We studied the autobiography of Malcolm X as students. We read parts of it on our own and some of it we read in classes. I remember we read cultural offerings from the Harlem Renaissance and we read Langston Hughes. We did have some Black studies. I don’t remember the names of the courses. Ms. Wilma Jean Brown, a White English instructor, made sure we had balance there, some familiarity with Black writers and Black culture. When I first came there, I was exposed to the first real rap group, The Last Poets. The Boggs brothers from New York brought it. A lot of what those students brought enriched our experience, especially for me being from the country. Boggs wasn’t an activist school. Yet there was a lot of Black consciousness in the school. That’s just how it was at the time. As I was saying, the posture of Black people was sort of a fighting posture. When you go out, a lot like today, you don’t know what’s going to happen, a lot like driving while Black. We have that same opposition. Boggs seemed to be dedicated to giving us the highest quality of education they could. We could compete whether we went to Tuskegee, Notre Dame, or wherever. (B. Muhammad, personal correspondence, January 1, 2019)

Jamar Ogburn, who attended Boggs from 1982 to 1984, offered a similar response.

> I'm not going to say it taught how to fight racism. It wasn't about training us to fight racism. It was about developing a sense of belief in yourself. The ideas and ideologies that they taught me outside of the classroom mattered. My family gave me a value system and they [Boggs] enhanced it to the point that I became aware of who I was as a person. (J. Ogburn, personal correspondence, January 1, 2019)

Annette Young, a former teacher at Boggs (1969-1971), on the call with Mr. Muhammad and Mr. Ogburn, responded to their comments this way,

> I learned a lot by beginning my teaching career at Boggs…I learned something that would impact the rest of my teaching career. I learned students need to be empowered. They are capable. Give them the opportunity and let them go. They can do it. One of the things I witnessed at Boggs was the orations the students had to do during their junior year. Also, they were introduced to the possibility of attending college and that was something that the school highlighted. When I went out into public school, I went to a school that was somewhat near Boggs. We had students coming to school after the cotton was picked…I started the Phoenix Career Club because of what I learned at Boggs and I got in trouble with the guidance counselor for starting it. I insisted that the students needed to understand that they had abilities, there was a way to attend college. They didn't have to stay in the small town and suffer through all that they were suffering through…The guidance counselor told the principal I was doing his job for him. In my mind, he wasn't doing his job that's why I wound up doing it. Students didn't know how to apply for colleges. They weren't told what courses they needed to take. I gathered career books, college books. In the club, they could fill out all the forms and applications. After the principal called me in, I had a racist thing happen to me. I had a water problem

> at the house. My washing machine's water was muddy so I called the water department. Instead of the man explaining what was going on with the water that day, he said, 'Oh, you're that teacher stirring up trouble over at the high school.' I still stood strong…It became my life mission to help students know they didn't have to stay where they were. They could grow. They could recognize their dreams. I will always be indebted to Boggs for teaching me to be an advocate for students. (A. Young, personal correspondence, January 1, 2019)

As I mentioned before, I wrestled with wanting Boggs to fit in the Freedom School mold. Freire (2000) writes, "Education is the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (p 34). This quote is representative of the educational approaches of Highlander Folk School and the Mississippi Freedom Schools. Again, Boggs Academy's motto was "Christian purpose, Christian preparation, Christian performance." At Boggs, they were not seeking to train future activists, they were seeking to prepare their students to be the best version of themselves. In addition, Boggs Academy prepared students to serve others.

Dr. Charlie Rouse (class of 1980) explains,

> Being thorough in what you do and serving mankind has been a platform for me and for the things I've been able to do in my life. I applied the [Boggs] mindset and experiences and now I have the opportunity to travel around the world doing mission work. The level of compassion, warmth, expectation, and spirit that I gleaned from Boggs became a foundation upon which I grew. Not only do I do mission work, but I also have the opportunity to serve the community we are in. Boggs pushed me beyond what I thought I

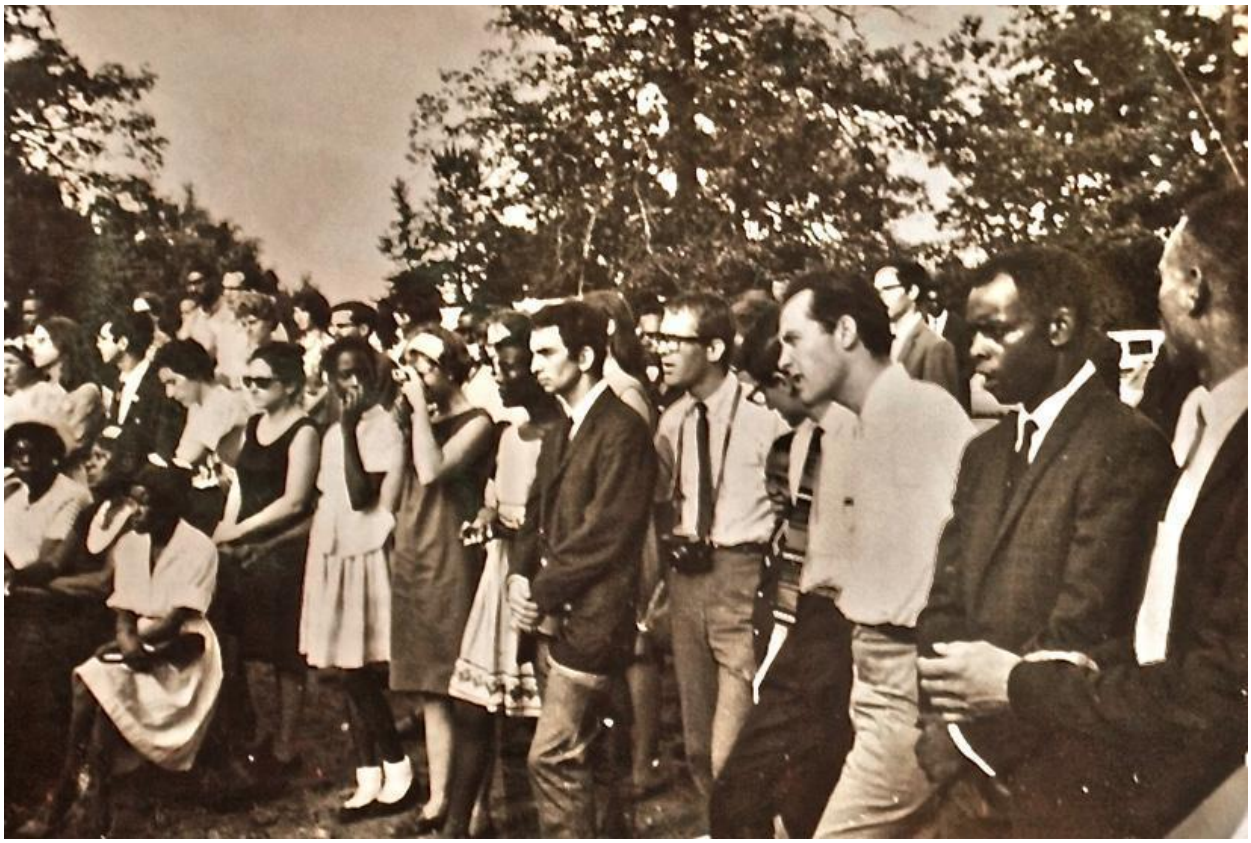
> could do, beyond what I expected of myself. (C. Rouse, personal correspondence, January 9, 2019)

Jamar Ogburn serves humanity by volunteering at a homeless shelter in New York. Annette Young started a club to help students envision a brighter future. It's incredible to consider an approach to education that imbues in students a compassion-based desire to serve others. Initially, I may have wanted to see Boggs Academy linked to anti-racist activism but this perspective is far greater. Yes, I believe in the value of activist training but the foundation of such training must be love. When students cultivate compassion and love for humanity, they will act. Some will travel the world using their medical training to heal the sick, others will volunteer in shelters, and others will stand against injustice in the classroom.

Why do you think the story of Boggs is important today?

Mr. Richard Swanson, a teacher previously mentioned, reached out at the onset of my research. He was determined that we have a phone conversation. It makes me smile thinking back on that initial call. He asked *a lot* of questions. I think he, like a number of Boggs alumni, wanted to make sure I was capable of telling the story. As noted before, Richard and I have become close. We talk regularly. His phone calls typically begin with, "How's my second favorite Southerner?" In case you are wondering, Ashley Judd, is his first. Richard peppers our calls about Boggs and my research, with jokes, memories, history lessons, and sports trivia. He grew up in Washington. While in college, he was invited to interview with John Lewis for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964. In June of '64, he arrived in Oxford, Ohio for Freedom Summer training. Not long after being checked in by Rita Schwerner (now Rita Bender), they learned that Rita's husband, Michael, along with Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney were missing. Two months later, their bodies

were found. During his time in Mississippi, he taught in a freedom school and registered people to vote, his recollections of those summers are worthy of a book in and of themselves. The image below is of a SNCC gathering in Mississippi. Richard has a camera around his neck.



(R. Swanson, personal correspondence, n.d.)

After graduate school, Richard took a position at Boggs Academy. He remained there from 1966 until 1969. Per Swanson,

> I think the story of Boggs is important because it showed that the Black community realized how important education was. Parents realized their children weren't going to be sufficiently educated in regular schools. The regular schools were just horrible for Blacks. Parents sent their children to Boggs so they could get a proper upbringing and to get a great education. I think the fact that 92% of the students went on to college after they graduated is testimony to the fact that there was a hunger for education. The story of

> Boggs is also important because of the boarding school aspect. Having the kids always on campus gave the school an opportunity to educate them well beyond just reading and writing. It gave the students an opportunity to learn how to be adults and to be responsible and obviously you don't get that in public schools. That kind of education provides so much more. So many kids went on to college because they had learned the importance of learning, the value of knowledge. (R. Swanson, personal correspondence, June 2, 2020)

Reverend Evelyn Ellis (class of 1963), mentioned in a previous chapter, is the daughter of Reverend John Morton Ellis. Reverend J. M. Ellis pastored the John L. Blackburn Presbyterian Church, the Boggs Academy campus church, as well as churches in Waynesboro and Midville. Reverend Evelyn Ellis began attending Boggs in 1960 when her father began working there. She explains why the story of Boggs is important,

> Boggs gave students a head start. The students that came through Boggs were able to move from there onto college, and from there onto professional degrees. The high school instruction at that time was deplorable. Our teachers could only teach us as much as they knew and they didn’t have much education. Supplies at the schools were almost nonexistent. My dad went to work at Boggs because he wanted to give me a better education. I was behind and even when I got to college I still had to take some remedial courses because of the education I had previously received. The educational opportunities were so poor for African American children and for some, they were almost nonexistent. Some students, like the children in Waynesboro, couldn’t go to school until they finished the cotton crop. Our educational opportunities were so stunted but the teachers at Boggs, who came from all over, did everything they could to catch us up and make us ready.

> They were successful in so many ways…The experience was so rich. It's a shame more people couldn't take advantage of it. Every part of our lives was paid attention to at Boggs. We were trained live in the real world. Our life skills were honed. Our academic skills were elevated. Our teachers were involved with us, they developed us. If there had been a hundred Boggs Academies in the south so many kids could have gone further. In the group I was in, kids went on to become professors at Columbia University and other colleges. We had a dancer who became a famous choreographer, and many of us became teachers and administrators. I'm here to tell you if it hadn't been for Boggs many of us wouldn't have made it. By the time we got ready to go out into the world, even with all the racism and segregation, intellectually we were prepared. We felt more equal. We didn't feel as insecure as we would have had we not had that experience. It inspired us to increase our knowledge because we knew how far behind we had once been. We need a hundred more Boggs right now, a hundred Boggs right now. (E. Ellis, personal correspondence, June 19, 2019)

The questions I did not ask

When I began this research, I knew I would encounter multiple gaps in my knowledge. Despite near-constant reading in Black education, thought, and history, I am incapable of ever fully understanding the Black experience. One of the biggest gaps in my understanding came to light in a conversation with alumni, Michael Holyfield. Holyfield is a dear friend, just thinking about him brings a smile to my face.

Michael Holyfield, class of 1974, reached out to me via Facebook Messenger. From the onset, I could tell he wanted to talk, needed to talk. I explained that my interviews were typically recorded conference calls but if he was up for it, I could pose my questions to him in Messenger.

He agreed. The resulting interview threw me for a loop. After reading Holyfield's interview question responses, I was rattled. I called my chair, Dr. Daniel Chapman, and asked if we could meet, I was already on my way to the Savannah area for a reason I now can't recall. Two hours later, with the printed interview in hand, I arrived in Savannah. My chair was at a neighbor's party and suggested we just talk on their porch. Within minutes of arriving, in typical Savannah fashion, I was seated in a rocking chair with a drink in hand. Pulling the interview from the folder, I began to read Holyfield's words aloud.

> To answer your question directly: NO, Boggs Academy did nothing (through its teachings during my time there) to impact or encourage me to stand against society's evils. In fact, due to COLORISM, Boggs made me determined NOT to participate in the racial myths of a polarized society. I grew up in the shadow of an HBCU (Fayetteville State University). All of my teachers were Black - both male and female - and I was among the unfortunates who were poverty-stricken in an area filled with Black professionals. It was immediately noticed that I was 'dark' and those who were the guardians of the status quo were all 'lighter than me.' I dealt with classism, colorism, and a host of other indignities that no one- let alone a child - should ever have to deal with. Luckily by the time I enrolled at Boggs, I was well prepared with the ins and outs of the broken interracial caste system. Boggs made me determined NOT to attend an HBCU because, truthfully, 11 years of ALL BLACK educators was enough to last a lifetime.
>
> COLORISM and pettiness are chief among the reasons Boggs lost the respect of many alumni. True, forty years on everyone looks back with rose-tinted glasses but I distinctly remember a study of alumni participation that was done in the early 70s. The results were so dismal and unflattering that the board and administration shelved it and

> claimed it wasn't valid because they had not gone back far enough to survey the alumni who had been decades gone. Administration cronies were extremely closed-minded and sought to sanitize everyone's experience to match their propaganda. They used to claim that everyone who graduated would be Christian in attitude and faith but Jesus would have wept at some of the crap we were forced to put up with. 'In loco parentis' was the order of the day and they were darn repressive. To this day I am embarrassed and ashamed of some of the things that I witnessed. (M. Holyfield, personal correspondence, April 5, 2018)

I stopped there and looked at Dr. Chapman, "This is just the tip of the iceberg. He goes on to provide specific details and names. He discusses relationships between faculty and students." I can't remember Dr. Chapman's exact words but I know he reminded me the story of Boggs isn't a fairytale. It was a real institution and therefore, inherently, flawed. My role as a researcher is to tell the good and the bad, to paint an honest picture.

Michael's interview reminds us that using appearance to judge or degrade others, intentionally, or unintentionally, hurts people in real and profound ways. As a White woman, writing about colorism is tricky. Please know that I'm proceeding with caution into an area I know little about. Holyfield was not the only alumni to bring this topic to light. Before hearing from Ilene Barnes, an explanation of colorism is needed.

> A racialized group can simultaneously be subordinated and a subordinate of others…The concept of 'simultaneity' also applies to situations in which some members of racially subordinated groups, like blacks, redeploy structures of oppression like colorphobia against other members. In-group colorism reflects not only the ways in which Whites sometimes distinguish among blacks but also the ways in which the racially subordinated

> black community internalizes White attitudes towards light-skinned blacks while simultaneously subordinating dark-skinned blacks. (Banks, 2000, p. 1716)

Ilene Barnes, the daughter of an American diplomat, was sent to Boggs to experience life in the American South. Her transition from Jamaica to Burke County, Georgia was not an easy one. Although born in Detroit, Ms. Barnes lived the majority of her childhood outside of the United States. Her Native American, African, East Indian, and Irish roots coupled with growing up in Surinam, Barbados, and Jamaica provide Ms. Barnes with a unique perspective on Boggs Academy and the world. She is a world-renowned singer and songwriter. Her perspective, music, and friendship I've come to treasure. These are her words,

> I am privileged to be living where I am and in the situation I am but I did work for it. My family was against me being an artist. From a young age but I was determined to live in France and be a writer. When friends come over from America they say, 'It's nice to see a Black American can live in this kind of a situation. They can be respected and accepted and not have to fear walking down the street.' My friends from Boggs talk about living in constant fear and when I'm in the states, I feel the fear. When I'm there I have one desire, to leave. I don't think Black Americans even realize they are living in such fear. When they come to France they relax, they let go.
>
> Boggs did open my eyes to what was happening in the world…I learned there is a lot of racism amongst Blacks. There is a hierarchy, almost a caste system amongst lighter and darker-skinned Blacks. I went through colorism at BU [Boston University]. My mother told me, 'Be careful. You're dark-skinned, you might not be accepted' She warned me and she was right. Because I was foreign and handicapped, I never really tried to be part of groups or to be in a sorority. At BU, I was not accepted because I didn't pass

the paper bag test. When I tell people there is a caste system, they don't believe me…I see it all the time. There's this whole system that we just don't talk about. It goes really far. Africans feel they are better than us because we were the ones sold into slavery. I heard this out of the mouth of a former friend who is from Africa. She would say things about slaves that were really degrading and insulting and I would tell her to stop. When I told her that it bothered me she said to me, and excuse my language, 'The slaves from Africa are the shit we didn't want in our country and that is why we sold you all into slavery.' This is part of that hierarchy and I feel it even in France. There is this Black notion that we are better than you are because we weren't sold into slavery.

My sister is the head of a hospital in Virginia. She has to meet a quota when she is hiring. She goes through hell every time they want her to hire someone Black. Whenever she hires them they think they are better than she is because they are lighter. She is the head of the hospital! The color thing is deep. You aren't supposed to be educated. People don't believe I went to Ivy League schools or that I am the child of a diplomat all because of the darkness of my skin. It is tiring, fatiguing, and a waste of time. Sometimes, you just become a color. Honestly, I was hesitant about doing this interview because of my experience. I can't say I hated it at Boggs but I can't say it was the best time of my life. I do wonder if I have forgotten certain things simply to protect myself. I did see the colorism. I heard comments from girls especially. My boyfriend at Boggs was a grade younger than me and couldn't take me to the prom. No one would take me to the prom because I was so dark. Jerome Hartzog told his girlfriend, 'I'm going to take Ilene because she doesn't have an escort." Because I had grown up in an Indian neighborhood, I bought yards of black silk, all the other girls had these beautiful little, frilly dresses, and

> I made a sarong. I walked into prom wearing that black silk sarong and black turban and said, "You think I'm Black, look at me now [laughing]!" I didn't get asked to prom because I was Black. It was an eye-opener but in some ways, I needed that. I needed to learn that darker skin can make you an outcast. I have mixed feelings about Boggs. The racism stood out, I have souvenirs of that. I do have other souvenirs, my two wonderful friends, Beverly and Abby. They are still my friends today. The rest of it, I just survived. (I. Barnes, personal correspondence, May 18, 2018)

I love Ms. Barnes' usage of "souvenirs." What a beautiful word picture. We *do* collect souvenirs in life and the majority of them are intangible. We collect souvenirs and we give souvenirs to others. Due to my Whiteness and privilege, I'm not going to delve further into colorism. As Mr. Holyfield and Ms. Barnes expressed, it existed at Boggs and exists in racialized groups around the world. There are no perfect institutions or perfect heroes. The key is not to worship the institution or person but to consider the valuable lessons they offer. We can learn as much from their flaws as we can from their strengths. We have an innate desire to see our heroes and/or beloved institutions as perfection, to place them on historical pedestals and worship them. A few months ago, I was on a Zoom call with a group of peace activists from around the globe. We were listening to a presentation on Mahatma Gandhi. During the post-presentation discussion, some of Gandhi's flaws were brought up. The presenter refused to engage in the dialogue and essentially said the statements couldn't be true because of all the wonderful things Gandhi did in his lifetime. This way of viewing one's heroes or institutions is a slippery slope and I now know this all too well. I failed to include an interview question that created space for a critical examination of Boggs. I should have asked the alumni to also describe the flaws of Boggs Academy. Looking back, it seems such an obvious question, but I was holding my version

of the truth of Boggs Academy too close to my eyes and heart. Heidegger (2014) suggests we must learn to step back from our truths to examine their validity. He asks,

> Are these safe promenades in the old gardens of earlier conceptions and doctrines not a comfortable avoidance of responsibility in face of the demands of the day, a diversionary spiritual luxury to which we no longer have any right (today least of all)? (Heidegger, 2014, p. 6)

By listening to Others we reject safe promenades into comfortable histories and the results are an understanding of the aches and pains of those around us, and an understanding of reality that creates space for growth. We become more fully human not only when we choose to see the world unveiled but when we choose to engage in the betterment of it and of others. Desmond Tutu writes, "We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders" (Helmick & Petersen, 2002, p. xiii).

I've thought a lot about the difference between Abolitionist Joshua Evans and Virginia Boggs. It was difficult to step back and realize I am far more like Boggs than Evans. Grasping this reality was a turning point in my thinking. I began to consider what my life would look like if became more like Evans and less like Boggs. Before the pandemic, I volunteered with a group called Common Good Atlanta at Whitworth Women's Facility. As a tutor under University of Georgia professors, I was deeply moved by my time learning alongside and from incarcerated women. Recently, I applied to teach at the local youth detention center. When I think about all the possible job opportunities available, this is the one that tugs at my heart, excites my mind, and feels right. Coming alongside incarcerated students is an opportunity to pay forward the love the alumni have heaped on me. I've been told by more than one I'm crazy to want this. I've

decided those words are confirmation I am moving in the right direction, closer to the "singularity" of Joshua Evans.

CHAPTER 5

EXORCISM

I'm sitting on the screened-in porch of a coastal Carolina home. The table is littered with books, journals, and files I hauled here from Augusta. Instead of writing, I've been staring out at the lagoon and the moss-draped trees. I can't believe this moment has arrived. After nearly five years of research, reading, and interviews, I'm writing the final chapter. I've thought about what wanted to say in this chapter countless times but now, the words won't come. I think a small part of me doesn't want them to come. Despite the challenges, I've loved this journey. I've loved being a student. I love the Boggs Academy story and I love being part of their community. It's fear that's holding me back. I know what I've written will not be well received by some of my friends and family. It is one thing to be isolated *with* my work, there's comfort there and tasks to occupy my mind. Without it, I'm simply alone. Typing these words causes my heart to palpitate. I know there is plenty to tackle post-dissertation and future projects are already stacking up but much of my perceived identity has centered around this research. I love being the point person for the history of Boggs. It's incredible to be united with alumni as we work towards a common goal. The alumni have nurtured, encouraged, guided, and challenged me in ways I have never experienced before. Selfishly, I don't want that to end. They are the Thou who met me through grace. The alumni are the beautiful part of me. I know if Catherine Young could see what I was writing she would comedically roll her eyes, pat my back, and tell me to get to work. So Ms. Young, here we go. Let's finish this.

In the book, *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative,* Esther Rashkin (1992) proposes a theory of the phantom based on the work of Abraham and Torok. The phantoms she describes embed secret, havoc-wreaking languages in the unconscious while masking them with logic and normal cognitive progress. "Analyzing a phantom implies understanding how words

can be stripped of a crucial portion of their signification and how coherence can be reestablished in the face of apparent enigma and discontinuity" (Rashkin, 1992, p. 32). Rashkin argues a person's behavior might be traced to secrets kept by former generations and these secrets generate phantoms that haunt future generations. As I suggested earlier in this work, I've come to believe phantoms such as these haunt the White south. They embody flags, silver patterns, old shotguns, monuments, family Bibles, etc. while whispering lies of pride, division, othering, and systemic injustice. They embed hidden codes and meaning in the words and stories we learn from birth forward and convince us of their innocence. Until we force the phantoms into the light, name them, and break the chains that bind them to us there will be no true societal change. Phantoms convince us we need to cling to their codes, words, and stories and that without them our culture will cease to exist. What we fail to grasp is that exorcism makes room for a richer and more beautiful culture than we can even begin to imagine. My daughter orders her hamburgers with just ketchup and a bun. She's convinced she won't like all the "extras." She doesn't know what she's missing and has no interest in finding out. We, Whites, cling to bland burgers when we could enjoy delicious meals. Boggs Academy was created and existed because of the work of phantoms. My hope is this work is a beginning step toward mass exorcism.

The purpose of this research is four-fold: to record/compile a history of Boggs Academy, to carry on the work of Mr. Charles W. Francis, to demonstrate the value of togetherness in qualitative research, and to cast a vision for the future of education. The underlying purpose of the research is to exorcise White supremacy's phantoms while unveiling the beauty of a society built on ubuntu, a society that believes if one diminishes we all diminish.

The History

In 1906, Boggs Academy was born beneath a brush arbor in Burke County, Georgia, a county

once known for its wealth, the size of its plantations, the vast number of slaves, and its rich, workable soil. The dreams of Reconstruction were decades past and any hope of education rested on the shoulders of Black Americans. The burden of self-education was not sufficient enough for southern Whites, they sought to disrupt Black education through unjust sharecropping practices, harvest duties over education, refusal of funds and resources, the burning of crosses, and at times, the destruction of school buildings. Mary Rice and John Phelps, and the brave men and women who followed in their footsteps overcame that which was meant to crush them and faithfully educated and uplifted their people. Boggs was born because of a racist society that denied men and women, boys and girls, the right to an education. Boggs continued for seventy-eight years because racism continued. When the doors of Boggs Academy closed in 1984, they did not close because racism came to an end. They closed for the financial reasons noted earlier in this work. While desegregation laws and civil rights legislation brought significant societal change, their success masks two significant truths. Thompson and Kwon (2021) write,

> The first is the fact that it had to happen at all. Remember, in this time period—Rosa Parks was arrested, Black students were dragged from White establishments, Black children were blocked from going to White schools by screaming adults, buses were bombed in Alabama, churches were burned in Mississippi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot in the face—nearly *two hundred years* after the Revolutionary War and *one hundred years* after emancipation. Centuries after the American founders chose to institutionalize White supremacy in the new republic, Americans were still at war over that choice. This points to one of the most important features of White supremacy: its *endurance*…The civil rights movement did not simply emerge out of the context of mid-century southern American racism. It was, rather, a contemporary expression of one of

> the most abiding struggles in American culture—the struggle against the enduring dominance of White supremacy. (p. 67)

The history of Boggs Academy is significant for several reasons. Boggs Academy counters the lies of White supremacy that suggest Blacks are intellectually inferior. Not only does the institution disprove the nonsense that skin color and intellect are linked, but it also demonstrates the incredible intellectual capabilities of Black Americans. The majority of students who attended Boggs arrived there with significant gaps in their education courtesy of a system determined to relegate Black bodies to the bottom rung of society. Over a few short years, sometimes even just one year, once struggling students were prepared to attend top colleges and universities around the nation. Numerous alumni noted they were better prepared for college than the majority of the freshman class. They were academically ready, mentally grounded, schedule-driven, and could function without parental guidance.

The history of Boggs Academy matters because it *is* history. The institution played a significant role in Black education in Georgia and the nation. My mind wanders back to the encounter with the gentleman in the old Waynesboro jail, the holding place for the county's historical documents. I can still see the look of disdain on his face when I explained I was researching Boggs Academy. His response of "Why?" is exactly why this history matters. Over twelve million Africans were violently brought to this nation and sold as commodities. In 1999, Charleston, South Carolina erected a large Holocaust memorial in Marion Square, a beautiful square in the heart of the city. Until 2020, the monument stood beneath a 115 feet tall statue honoring former Vice President John C. Calhoun, a staunch supporter of slavery and White supremacy. Holocaust memorials can be found around the world. The museum at Auschwitz is a permanent reminder of the atrocities committed against Jews. Sullivan's Island, located just

outside of Charleston, was the Ellis Island of the slave trade. Forty percent of the slaves brought to the United States landed and were quarantined on Sullivans before being sold in Charleston. Where is our Auschwitz? Where is the slave museum on Sullivans Island? Where is the memorial, the sacred space in downtown Charleston? I posit we don't have these memorials, these museums, or record and teach these histories because *they aren't history*. We still mistreat the bodies of people of color. We, Whites, aren't ready to own our sins, or truly repent of them. We would rather cry "HISTORY" at the feet of the 700 Confederate memorials erected throughout the United States. Recording, telling, and teaching the history of Boggs Academy, and other similar institutions, are baby steps in the direction of truth. Students of color, all students for that matter, need to learn these histories. Black students need to learn their ancestors' stories of resilience, brilliance, and achievement. They are *not* descendants of slaves. They are descendants of wrongfully enslaved people. Our ESL students are *not* underachievers or academically challenged, they are impressive, multilingual students operating in an exclusive system that bizarrely prides itself on monolingualism.

The history of Boggs Academy matters because it provides insight into almost eighty years of curriculum created for Black students by Black administrators and educators. An examination of U.S. curriculum history from the late 1800s forward typically involves names such as G. Stanley Hall, Frederick Taylor, John Dewey, Franklin Bobbit, Ralph Tyler, Joseph Schwab, etc. Examining the work of these men provides insight into educational trends, practices, and their ongoing evolution. Historically, there have been critical educationalists whose work unveils the ongoing inequities in schooling and the ways curriculum reproduces the master script of the dominant society. However, the majority of these scholars are, not surprisingly, White men. While their work *is* important, it is also problematic. BIPOC

educational experiences and curriculum theories must be first considered through the lens of BIPOC scholars and educators and then through the lens of other critical theorists and educationalists. An examination of Boggs Academy offers insight into the perspectives and practices of Lucy Craft Laney and John L. Phelps. An examination of Boggs Academy's curriculum represents the work of numerous Black educators over an extended period. Examinations of the curriculum of similar institutions, including HBCUs and pop-up freedom schools like those in Mississippi in 1964 and 1965, are also necessary in order to push against the marginalization of Black scholarship on the Black experience. To be frank, even my writing about this is problematic. While the Boggs Academy alumni welcomed me into their world and have worked diligently with me to record the story of their institution, it is important to note again that I am recording *a* story of Boggs. Black scholarship on Boggs Academy is important. At a Boggs reunion, I overheard an alumnus asking one of the Boggs Academy National Alumni Association board members why I was being allowed to do this work. The board member replied, "she's the only one asking to do it." For the record, I was not offended in the slightest. Telling a story of Boggs is a privilege and one I don't take lightly but again, there is important work here for Black scholars and historians.

Finally, the history of Boggs Academy matters because of the results the institution produced. Boggs demonstrates that excellent, transformative education can exist, even in the harshest of environments. There is much we can glean from this educational model. I will return to this near the end of this chapter.

The Work of Charles W. Francis, Jr.

In 1967, Mr. Charles Francis, beloved choir teacher, and educator defended his Master's thesis on Boggs Academy at Atlanta University. His work is foundational to this research. Like

Laney and Phelps, Francis provides insight into Black intellectualism, educational theory, and educational practice. Mr. Francis believed a follow-up study focused on the lives of the alumni was critically important. He had access to the data regarding the number of graduating students and the schools they attended after Boggs. He was aware that throughout the institution's history, Boggs maintained a ninety percent or above college graduation rate. However, Francis felt it was important to examine the long-term impact of Boggs Academy on student lives. Chapter three of this work sought to complete the task put forth by Francis and I believe he would be pleased with the findings. The Boggs Academy alumni I interviewed were, by societal standards, successful. While the bulk of them are now retired, most had excellent careers in a wide variety of fields. Recently, Ms. Glenda Farrell, with the assistance of Mr. Alonzo Smith, created a document honoring distinguished Boggs Academy alumni living today. The document includes the alumni's impressive accomplishments alongside their memories of their time at Boggs. While this information is important and necessary for understanding the impact of Boggs Academy, I believe Mr. Francis would still want to know more about the lives of the alumni. Did they give back to the community? Did they give back to Boggs? Did the family atmosphere cultivated at Boggs live past adolescence? The answer to each of these questions is yes. As a population, the alumni are some of the most giving and caring people I have encountered. They actively volunteer in their communities and, in addition, many volunteer their time maintaining the Boggs campus. Hundreds of alumni remain active members of the Boggs Academy National Alumni Association and gather together once a year to share their memories, announce alumni-funded scholarship recipients, and celebrate the year's distinguished alumni, an award last bestowed on my dear friend, Mr. Joseph Barnes. Alumni's support of this project and the hours they have given to sharing documents, pictures, and memories are also a testament to the love and

appreciation they have for their alma mater. The love they have bestowed upon me is a deeply touching indication of their collective character.

While writing this, I learned of the passing of Mr. Alvin Lee, an alumnus I had come to know via Facebook. Mr. Lee shared his cancer battle and his faith openly and regularly. His bravery, determination, passion for work, heart for God, and friendship touched me deeply. He had an intense surgery and was recuperating at home when he passed away in his sleep. The day before his surgery, I told him I would be praying for him and that I had set a reminder on my phone for the time his procedure would begin. I wish I could have thanked him for sharing his struggle and his heart. Aware of my sadness, Ms. Young reminded me that Mr. Lee would want me to press on, to finish the task given to me. Alvin Lee's life exemplifies the lives of many of the alumni and can be seen as a case-study response to Mr. Francis' requested follow-up examination. May he rest in peace.

Togetherness in Qualitative Research

As discussed in the first chapter, it was a struggle to decide on a grounding theory and methodological approach for this research. Ultimately, I chose postcritical ethnography and participatory action research. While critical ethnography "works," I still found it problematic. Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) believe critical ethnography is the physical work of critical theory. It is the methodology of critical theory. Their rationale is that adding the label of critical to ethnography transforms the field into a form of "intellectual rebellion" (Madison, 2005, p. 13). However, they overlook ethnography's problematic and frankly, quite contradictory history. Ethnography, born out of anthropology, bears the scars of its colonial past. Anthropology resulted from European colonial expansion. Anthropology's practice of being an "objective outsider" and describer of societal Others is academic colonialism. The trickle-down impact of

these roots leads the field of critical ethnography into a world of constant adjustment, explanation, and, correction and not into intellectual rebellion. Postcritical ethnography was the next step in the journey to adjust the field. Flores, Noblit, and Murillo (2004) write,

> Critique is increasingly understood as giving interpretive and political powers to the critic. As the critique of women and people of color have repeatedly demonstrated, critique usurps and appropriates the rights of representation even as it seeks to emancipate. (p. 13)

While I fully agree with their concern, I still find the field problematic. I grasp it is merely a label but labels have an impact. Marrying "critical" with "ethnography" will always be problematic, no matter how many terms are added. It's a bit like saying "liberatory prison" or "democratic schooling." Through this research process, I've discovered the power of togetherness in research. Togetherness extends beyond postcritical ethnography's focus on dialogue. Togetherness involves the heart. Togetherness produces deep, insightful research. My understanding of the world, Boggs Academy, the alumni, and my research grew far richer as "participants" became "family." At the beginning of anthropology, researchers gazed down at Others and "objectively" described them. I posit objectivity comes in the depths of togetherness.

It was the combination of these two issues—the problematics of linking "critical" and "ethnography," and the need for love-based togetherness—that led me to initially call for a new field of research, a field which, from the onset, separates itself from the terms ethnography and anthropology. Yet, I've come to realize that isn't the solution either. The issue isn't the labels of ethnography and/or anthropology, it is the need for labels, frameworks, set methodologies, guiding principles, and theories. When we force research into categories and require adherence to unnecessary guidelines, we hem in both researcher and research. Frameworks, theories, and

methodologies *are* helpful but should be strayed from when they stifle necessary work. The best research and thinking comes not from coloring outside the lines but occurs when the lines are removed and the crayons are taken away. When theories can be mixed and expanded and methodologies can be altered or created research has the freedom to discover. Qualitative studies need space where the boundaries of researcher and participant are stripped to a minimum. A space where lengthy, in-depth research, grounded in deep, love-based participatory relationships, particularly amongst, but not limited to, societal opposites, can exist.

A Vision for the Future Grounded in the Past

Relatively early in my doctoral coursework, Dr. Ming Fang He asked the cohort to write about our vision for education based on the work of the curriculum theorists we were reading. It's amazing how much my thinking has changed since then. In the previous chapter, I mentioned I would come back to the writing of both Malcolm X and Nannie Helen Burroughs, I'll begin with Malcolm X. He writes,

> Since they say that they can't improve these schools, why should you and I who live in the community, let these fools continue to run and produce this low standard of education? No, let them turn those schools over to us. Since they say they can't handle them, nor can they correct them, let us take a whack at it. What do we want? We want Afro-American principals to head these schools. We want Afro-American teachers in these schools. Meaning we want black principals and black teachers with some textbooks about black people. We want textbooks written by Afro-Americans that are acceptable to our people before they can be used in these schools. The Organization of Afro-American Unity will select and recommend people to serve on local school boards where school policy is made and passed on to the Board of Education. And this is very important.

> Through these steps, we will make the 10 percent of the schools that we take over educational showplaces that will attract the attention of people from all over the nation. Instead of them being schools turning out pupils whose academic diet is not complete, we can turn them into examples of what we can do ourselves once given an opportunity. (Blackpast, 2007, para. 36-39)

I've come to believe Malcolm X is right. I've listened to and read countless perspectives on the future of education, why some schools fail, the evils of testing, CRT, arguments for and against standards, and endless streams of seemingly useless information. The bottom line is, from this nation's inception, there has been intentional miseducation or refusal to educate the minds of the BIPOC population. In recent years, we've tried to cover the truth by citing test scores, blaming schools, or purporting pity-laden statements about the problematic "achievement gap." It isn't an achievement gap that haunts us, it's the unending opportunity gap. John L. Phelps noted it in 1900. Carter G. Woodson discussed it in the 1930s. Malcolm X pointed it out in 1964. And Lauryn Hill sang it in her 1998 album, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (Hill, 1998). Yes, some people are doing amazing things, and some schools appear to have found the educational sweet spot but by in large, for a significant number of the nation's students, the education system simply isn't working nor is there hope for significant change on the horizon.

That said, I see two roads forward. We can continue the current trajectory of pointing out the flaws in the system and attempt to plug one gap while another ten open, or we can declare the educational system for poor BIPOC students moribund. Nannie Helen Burroughs (1934) writes,

> You are wasting your time begging the White race for mercy. In fact, the Negro does not need mercy. He needs common sense. Figuratively speaking, there are five classes of people: mud sills, doormats, stepping stones, hound dogs, and bulldogs. What will

> become of these five classes?... The mud sills will be walked over; the stepping stones [and doormats] will be walked upon; the hound dogs will be kicked around, and the bulldogs will get what they go after. (McCluskey, 2014, p. 109)

I mean no disrespect with this quote. I think all of us who truly care about the state of education need a solid dose of common sense. The key is to consider the moments when education *has* worked for students relegated to the subaltern. For such evidence, we can turn to institutions such as Boggs Academy, Haines Institute, Mississippi Freedom Schools, Dunbar High School, M Street High School, Spelman College, Howard University, etc. Unfortunately, Brown v. Board of Education had a devastating impact on such institutions and Black education in general. Tens of thousands of highly educated Black educators and administrators who staffed Black schools lost their jobs because Whites were not ready for Black educators/administrators to teach their children or oversee their schools. In addition, families who sent their students to Black schools and colleges believed their children would be equally educated in public schools and universities. This belief played a role in the closing of many Black colleges and universities as well as the demise of the remaining private Black high schools. Many Black students found themselves in hostile learning environments.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a resurgence of Black private education in New York City. According to Ravitch and Viteritti (2000),

> There was a renaissance in HBI [Historic Black Independent] schools, fueled by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville struggle for community control of local school boards, a movement led by African American educators and parents in Brooklyn with collaborative efforts in Lower Manhattan and Harlem. Frustrated with their efforts to improve public schools, participants formed an independent school in 1969 called Uhura Sasa Shule

> (Kiswahili for 'Freedom Now School'). Direct control allowed the educators and parents to create what many felt was a model school, with committed teachers, African American role models, high expectations, and an emphasis on culture and community values. At one point it enrolled as many as five hundred students. Another seven or eight schools were founded as offspring of Uhura Sasa. These schools collectively became known as the Brooklyn Family Schools…They were a direct outgrowth of the efforts of the New York African American Teachers Association's initiative for the improvement of public schools through community control. (p. 298)

The Black community's belief in segregated, Afrocentric education has continued to thrive in Brooklyn and has spread to Oakland, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Today, there are six Afrocentric private/charter schools in Brooklyn alone. These schools have predominantly Black faculty and administration. A similar and recent approach to education can be found in the Chicano community of East Los Angeles. The charter school's website reads,

> Semillas represents a community-based charter school continuum in East Los Angeles, Anahuacalmecac International University Preparatory High School of North America for grades kinder through 12th. At Anahuacalmecac, students strive to become internationally-minded, culturally wise community members. Beyond public schools, Anahuacalmecac advocates for the internationally recognized rights of children, and Indigenous Peoples as proclaimed by the United Nations through cultural relevance and community empowerment across the continent…Co-founded by Indigenous Mexican educators born in Mexico, Anahuacalmecac embodies a dream of an entire movement, the Chicano Movement - for an alternative education capable of fostering dignity in our children through autonomous intellect and knowledge. Moreover, Anahuacalmecac

> represents a community-based response to the international and local call for Indigenous education guided by the UN-DRIP as a model for decolonization by Indigenous Peoples across the continent. The Semillas co-founders arose from humble beginnings, consistently committed to sacrifice, turning the privileges of education into the promotion of a generational struggle on behalf of one's People, and the whole of humanity. (Anahuacalmecac, n.d.)

After gaining autonomy from the district, Anahuacalmecac administrators expanded the curriculum and services provided. The school seeks to educate in a way that deepens the students understanding of Indigenous cultures, increases unity, and prepares students to carry on the work of the Chicano Movement. These schools align, in part, with the thinking of Malcolm X.

> Since they say they can't handle them, nor can they correct them, let us take a whack at it. What do we want? We want Afro-American principals to head these schools. We want Afro-American teachers in these schools. Meaning we want black principals and black teachers with some textbooks about black people. (Blackpast, 2007, para. 36-39)

Currently, 36 of the 50 schools in my county are "failing" and Georgia is ranked 34th in the nation for education. Again, we have a problem and to date, no working solution. That said, I suggest an experiment, an experiment similar to Anahuacalmecac and the Brooklyn schools. I believe the time has come to let failing school communities have a whack at it. The first step is to allow the non-White county population to nominate and elect a school administrator and school board. Now, before any White person calls fowl and begins to utter the word "democracy," I want to remind us all, that this nation has never applied the same democratic values afforded the dominant culture to the subaltern. Historically and presently, we have robbed millions of Black bodies of education. We are light years behind in righting those wrongs. Returning to the

experiment, the selected administrator and board may claim one of the failing schools as their own. They should be given full autonomy. School funds, personnel selection, curriculum, technological, and athletic decisions, modifications, and updates to the physical campus become fully under their control. There will be no standardized testing, and no county or state influence other than what school officials choose to allow. I believe the creation of such a school would evoke tremendous community support. I also believe the educational outcomes would be radically different. The historic and present-day examples I've described exemplify this reality. I realize I am stepping out of the bounds of traditional or even radical conversations about curriculum and education but it's time we viewed society and its systems as they truly are not as we want them to be. It's time we returned power to its rightful owner.

I want to take this proposition one step further. I've spent the past few months in a weekly book study led by author, pastor, and activist, Gregory Thompson. We have been examining his recent work with Duke Kwon (2021), *Reparations: A Christian Call for Repentance and Repair.* This exemplary work changed my view of reparations and my perspective on the previously discussed path forward for education. I now suggest the historic White churches of the south, those who supported slavery, the Confederacy, condoned Jim Crow, *and those now calling for reconciliation,* supplement the experimental schools' funding with *no* strings attached. There should be no effort to advise the schools, partner with the schools, or provide outside programs for the schools. These stringless funds postulate, "We are truly repentant. We want to repair what we historically and presently helped destroy, both intentionally or by lack of intervention. We value your autonomy, respect your leadership, and trust your wisdom." Earlier, I expressed my concern regarding White congregations singing Black spirituals. I think reparations could be a possible solution. Each time a hWite congregation

opts to sing a spiritual, they could give a donation to the mission work of a Black church and note the donation in the bulletin. In so doing, the perspective of both the choir and congregation shifts and a moment for repentance is created.

On my desk, I keep a small document, yellowed with age. The rare pamphlet, stamped "CONFIDENTIAL," is titled, *Behind the Cotton Curtain* (Remsburg, 1963). In 1963, the Presbyterian Church National Board of Missions paid journalist Charles Remsburg to travel to Mississippi to write a report on what was taking place with race relations and the Movement. Upon receiving Remsberg's honest and gut-wrenching report the Board of Missions became concerned about the image of Mississippi's Presbyterian churches. They destroyed all ties to the document and sent the handful of existing copies to the National Council of Churches, the largest ecumenical organization in the nation, who promptly sent the document on to activists working in the Movement. Here is a brief glimpse into the report,

> Within the churches, discussion seems taboo as it is elsewhere in Mississippi. The Sunday after Medgar Evers' murder, John Garner, a Tougaloo faculty member, tried to explain in his Sunday school class some of the inaccuracies in press reports of the slaying. The next Sunday, the class president announced that in the future all members of the class are not to say anything that might offend the basic beliefs of anyone else in the class, in other words, cease all discussion of race relations. More recently, when Galloway's Women's Society of Christian Service voted to withdraw support from its national organization because the parent group had furnished bond money for the demonstrators, Garner's wife spoke against the resolution. Women crowded around her, screaming: 'You're a Communist! You're a Communist!'...And at one church, where the minister resigned in protest against the barring of Negroes, the board of stewards passed a

> resolution saying it wanted a ‘minister that will preach what the congregation wants to hear.’ (Remsberg, 1963, p. 36)

I keep the document in sight as a reminder of the pitfalls of institutionalized White American “Christianity.” If White church congregations choose not to stand against systemic racism, they are no different than abolitionist societies condoning White supremacy, the Presbyterian National Board of Missions, or the National Council of Churches. For those questioning the reality of systemic racism, let us first consider the focus of this work, Boggs Academy. Again, Boggs Academy existed because of unquestionable, perpetual, systemic racism. Its doors did not close because racism disappeared, they closed due to financial distress, distress initiated by the Presbyterian Church. Systemic racism continues today. In 2012, the Department of Education examined every public school in the nation, schools serving a total of 49 million students. Upon completion, they released a series of four papers with their findings:

1. Black students accounted for 18 percent of the country’s pre-K enrollment but made up 48 percent of preschoolers with multiple out-of-school suspensions.
2. Black students were expelled at three times the rate of White students.
3. American Indian and Native-Alaskan students represented less than 1 percent of students, but 3 percent of expulsions.
4. Black girls were suspended at higher rates than all other girls and most boys.
5. American Indian and Native-Alaskan girls were suspended at higher rates than White boys or girls.
6. Nearly one in four boys of color, except Latino and Asian American students, with disabilities, received an out-of-school suspension.
7. One in five girls of color with disabilities received an out-of-school suspension.

8. A quarter of the schools with the highest percentage of Black and Latino students did not offer Algebra II.
9. A third of these schools did not offer chemistry.
10. Less than half of American Indian and Native-Alaskan high school students had access to the full range of math and science courses, which consists of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, calculus, biology, chemistry, and physics.
11. Black and Latino students accounted for 40 percent of enrollment at schools with gifted programs, but only represented 26 percent of students in such programs.
12. Black, Latino, and Native American students attended schools with higher concentrations of first-year teachers (3 to 4 percent) than White students (1 percent).
13. Black students were more than three times as likely to attend schools where fewer than 60 percent of teachers meet all state certification and licensure requirements.
14. Latino students were twice as likely to attend such schools. (Hsieh, 2014, para. 4).

The evidence is clear, and this is just a glimpse at one aspect of systemic racism in the United States. We, White Christians, cannot claim we are about the work of reconciliation and simultaneously turn a blind eye to the cruelty inflicted on our nation's children. Our care for the children of our nation must go beyond the womb and skin color. The Department of Education data demonstrates the problematics of allowing the dominant population to educate the children of the subaltern. Again, it is time we place BIPOC education in the hands of the related BIPOC communities.

Burke County Blood

In the first chapter, I discussed at length an article written by Dr. Joseph T. Durham (2001). In a publication for the Presbyterian Church, Durham described the early history of

Boggs Academy and sought to correct a version of the story that suggested the Baptist elder who donated the initial land for Boggs Academy was White. The man who donated the land was Morgan Walker. According to the Walker family, Morgan was the first "Black" Walker. The Walker family has remained faithful to Boggs throughout the institution's history. A number of alumni are Walker descendants. There are also Walkers still living in Burke County. Edward Singleton, the gentleman who publicly expressed concern about my researching Boggs Academy, is a Walker descendant living in the county. Durham's brief description of the Walker family tree piqued my curiosity. I began tracing the family's ancestry, beginning with Morgan Walker and working my way backward. As stated, Morgan was the son of Moses and Elizabeth Walker. Elizabeth Walker was enslaved. Moses Walker was the son of Moses and Susan, and this Moses was the son of George Walker, Jr. and Mary Jenkins Gerhardt Walker. George Walker was an Irishman who worked as a blacksmith and farmer and was the first Walker to arrive in Burke County. He was born in Ireland in 1720 and died in Waynesboro in 1779. Curiosity abounding, I wondered who was the first person in my family to arrive in Burke County. I wondered if he or she knew the Walker family. I opted to begin with my great grandfather, Walter Gresham Green, Jr., and climb down the tree from there. Walter's grandfather was Jesse Green, the son of Sarah and Col. Gresham. Col. Gresham was the child of Job and Margaret *Walker* Gresham. Margaret was the daughter of John and Mary Walker. John's father was *George Walker, Jr.*

A shared bloodline. After the shock began to subside, my next thought was "Burke County blood." As I shared in the first chapter, I grew up being told I had "Burke County blood." It was a statement I was proud of as a child. In my school's yearbooks, there was an ad titled, "Burke County Blood" picturing my brother and me alongside some distant cousins with Burke

County bloodlines who attended the same school. “Burke County blood” tied us together, tied our families together, and still, in many ways, continues to tie us together today. The day I found the Walker ancestral connection was the day my perception of “Burke County blood” changed forever.

I opened the dissertation with this quote from Lillian Smith (1964),

> There is no going alone on a journey. Whether one explores strange lands or Main Street or one’s own backyard, always invisible traveling companions are close by: the giants and pygmies of memory, of belief, pulling you this way and that, not letting you see the world life-size but insisting that you measure it by their own height and weight...I went on this journey to find an image of the human being that I could feel proud of. I wanted to reassure myself of mortal strength, of man’s power not only to survive on this earth but to continue growing in stature. I wanted the faith to believe that we can fulfill our role in this evolving universe of which we have been given such awesome glimpses. *We human beings…*What haunting words! (Smith, p. 5)

“We human beings.” They are such haunting words. Societal phantoms dance and swirl around them. They pull at the label, stripping some of their titles, suggesting others are partly human. They remove the “we” and add racialized and stigmatized subcategories to what remains. With glee, they push us away from each other while fueling the fires of power and greed. I *did* go on “this journey to find an image of the human being that I could feel proud of” (Smith, 1964, p. 5) but the image I was seeking was my own. “I wanted the faith to believe that we can fulfill our role in this evolving universe of which we have been given such awesome glimpses” (Smith, 1964, p. 5). Early in my doctoral coursework, I began to see my greed, selfishness, arrogance, pride, and the flaws in my faith unveiled. For the first time, I saw myself as Others saw me and it

was the most humbling experience of my life. It also changed my life. The change didn't occur in a specific moment but as a result of a collection of experiences, readings, and hard conversations.

Several months into the pandemic, I realized the masks weren't going away anytime soon. With that in mind, I ordered a light gray mask with a black fist and BLM stamped on the left side. Wearing the mask was a fascinating experience. People of color began conversations with me in checkout lines, in parking lots, etc. It struck me as funny when their eyes would notice the mask and then slowly look me up and down. It seemed as if they were trying to make sense of opposing images. The women working at the local grocery store treated me differently. On a road trip last summer, we stopped at a McDonald's to grab dinner. I opted to order inside because of the line of cars wrapping the restaurant. Mask in place, I ordered our food and stepped back to join the handful of others waiting on their meals. Glancing around, I noticed a large, White, maskless man on the other side of the waiting area glaring at me. At first, I was confused by his anger and then I realized it was because of the mask. I could tell he wanted to say something to me and I was trying to figure out what I could say to diffuse the situation. As my mind raced, an older Black gentleman crossed the room and stood silently beside me. It seemed to be the final straw for the glaring man. He grunted, glared at the slow-moving staff, and stormed out of the restaurant. I looked at the kind soul beside me and gave him my best eye smile.

When I wore the mask, people of color let down their guard in ways I had not experienced before. Honestly, I had never stopped to consider the notion that their guard might be up. I realized that again I had assumed people saw me the way I saw myself. I believed the image I chose to portray was the image that was seen. I had not considered the underlying

messages I sent nor the underlying message my Whiteness sends on its own. I had not contemplated the way those messages led others to feel about me and respond to me. Grasping the guardedness of Black strangers forced me to consider the cause. Personally, my guard goes up when I don't trust someone or sense danger, two fairly rare occurrences. I am not going to attempt to climb inside the collective Black mind, if there is such a thing. The take-away is simple. Their guard is up because of a lack of trust and the weight of that lack of trust falls squarely on our White shoulders. We have historically and presently let down our brothers and sisters. I'm thankful my children were able to repeatedly witness the results of my wearing the BLM. I hope they never forget the brief joy it brought others simply to know I stood in solidarity with them. For those who are running through the conservative list of ills tied to the Black Lives Matter movement and are appalled I would wear such a mask, you've missed the point. The point isn't the words "Black Lives Matter," the point is a simple sign of care for those labeled my societal opposite touched people enough to evoke a positive reaction. I wish every person from the dominant culture could experience my mask for just one day. I fully believe it would be a day they would never forget.

While the masks are physically gone, I've come to realize we actually wear them our entire lives. Our masks labeled "White," "Black, "Brown," etc. cover our bloodlines, our interconnectivity, and our humanity. It's incredible to look at the faces of Walker descendants, people such as Alma Walker, Lola Scott Russell, or Edward Singleton, and realize a bit of what pumps through them pumps through me. We are kin. We are bound by blood. We are bound by our shared humanity. *We are family.*

Before discovering the shared Walker bloodline, I had learned about my great, great, great, great grandmother, Penny, who was born in Liberia, enslaved, and brought to the United

States. I, along with my brother and father's side of the family, fail the one-drop rule. I would argue, as George D. Tillman did at the 1895 South Carolina constitutional convention, that very few of us, especially those with southern ancestry, are fully hite. While some may not have Black or Indigenous blood in their veins, they likely have Irish, or Italian blood or are of Jewish descent. All three of which were not initially "White" in America. On April 4, 1968, in Indianapolis, Senator Robert F. Kennedy stood on the back of a flatbed truck looking out over primarily a Black audience. After breaking the news of Dr. Martin Luther King's death, he called for national change, for a nation grounded in love and compassion, and to calm angry hearts reminded those listening that his brother, too, had been killed by a White man. Kennedy's speech that day was spot on. We don't need more hate, more anger, more division. We need justice and hearts bent towards those who suffer in this nation, and I would add, as Dr. King would, we need hearts bent towards those who suffer not only here but around the world.

With teary eyes, I beg you to silence the phantoms once and for all. Celebrate and memorialize the story of Boggs Academy. See this beloved institution as a beautiful and powerful bastion of education and end the ongoing need for her existence. Welcome your Other and claim him as a brother, as your sister, as your family. With a mix of joy and sadness, I shift my gaze to the wall of quotes above my desk. The moment has come to share the underlined quote titled "THE END."

> Hear my cry, O God the Reader; vouchsafe that this my book fall not still—born into the world wilderness. Let there spring, Gentle One, from out its leaves vigor of thought and thoughtful deed to reap the harvest wonderful. Let the ears of a guilty people tingle with truth, and seventy million sigh for the righteousness which exalteth nations, in this drear day when human brotherhood is mockery and a snare. Thus in Thy good time may

infinite reason turn the tangle straight, and these crooked marks on a fragile leaf be not indeed. THE END. (Du Bois, 1903, p. 191).

Amen.

Dear Old BA, we love the true

With all our wonders to pursue.

We will always keep thee in our hearts

and always hate from thee to part.

Dear Old BA, the blue and gold,

Our alma mater loved by all.

Our very souls for thee

For thee rejoice.

Our very souls for thee

For thee rejoice.

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